

**PAINT AND PAINTING IN TRADITIONAL GHANAIAN ART:  
EVOLUTION, APPLICATION AND MEANING**

By

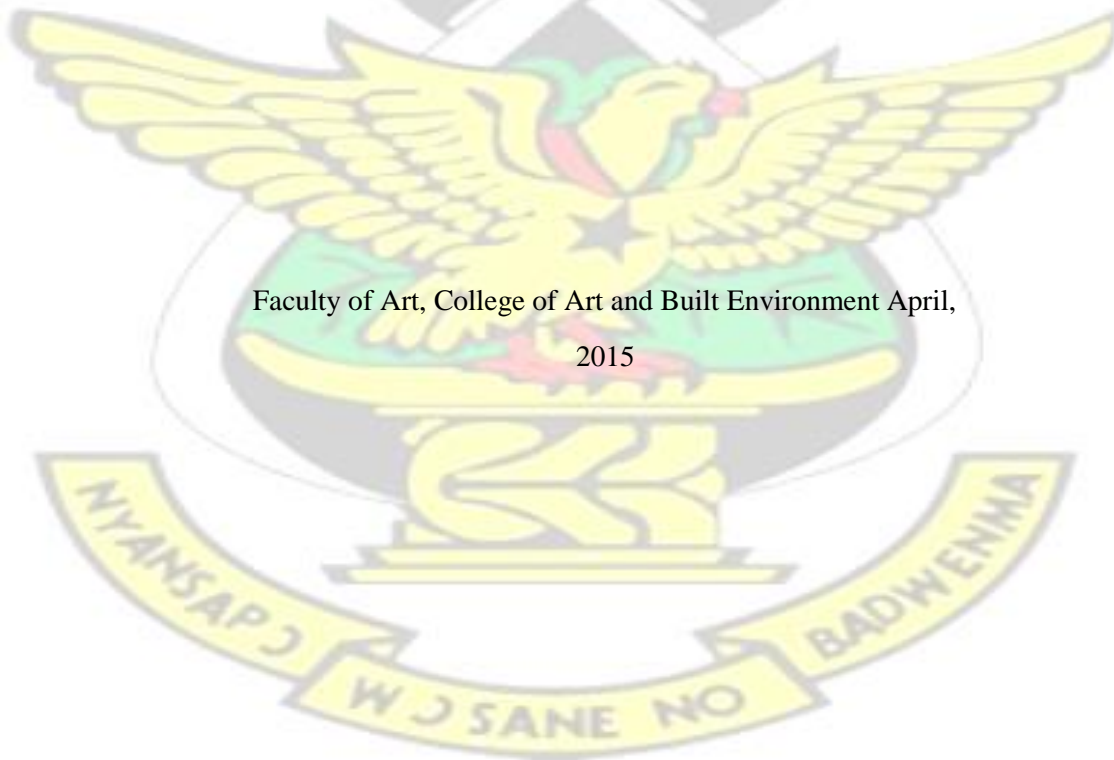
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in African Art and Culture and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for any other degree in this university or elsewhere, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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## ABSTRACT

The research is about paint, pigments or dyes used in traditional Ghanaian art; its evolution, application and meaning. It focuses on Ashanti and Upper East, two regions with considerable traditional art background involved with the unit of research. The study employed a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm driven by aesthetic contextualism. The methods adopted were ethnographical, historical and phenomenological employing observational, focus group and open-ended interviews as instruments. Eventually twenty-three people were interviewed using the purposive and snowball approach. The work revealed a rich and colourful traditional art culture rife with paint and pigments of various kinds, culminating in eleven different media, classified according to their origin. It was observed that traditional Ghanaian ethnicities freely explored and used different kinds of paint to protect surfaces, decorate and express both proverbial and philosophical ideas. They respected the environment and wisely explored it to meet their needs. The environment was nurtured rather than exploited. Sustainability was a concept well ingrained within the traditional mind. The paints found in this research were all organic; implying that continual involvement with its use should enhance rather than deteriorate life. All the art forms mentioned in the study are vested with history, philosophy and cultural values of the people. Contrary to what most documents hold about African art, it abounds in sculpture as it does in paintings. In Ghana the practice of painting harks back far beyond the 1900s when easel painting was introduced to Ghana in Achimota, the painting tradition was well ingrained in traditional Ghanaian art before the fifteenth century when Europeans arrived in the Gold Coast. Therefore it could be described as integral with Ghanaian culture. The study suggests several recommendations including the possibility of establishing a Traditional Ghanaian Industry among others that are hoped to make positive impact on Ghanaian art and culture.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Paints, dyes and inks have been proven over the centuries across the world as indispensable art media. The study focuses on how these materials came about during the Palaeolithic era, up until the ancient times, and how it has been used over the generations among different ethnicities in the traditional art of Africa, and Ghana for a focus. Paint culture in this wise stands as a creative medium, clearly underscoring local and global visual practice and the significant intercultural exchange, characteristic of the human society since Prehistoric times.

Before the arrival of the European, Africa had already been peopled in the form of permanently organised settlements such as villages (2000-500 B. C.) and small towns and chiefdoms; they had learnt to grow crops, hunt, and raise domesticated animals. This was common "...in a number of 'Kintampo culture' sites, such as Hani, Brong Ahafo aged around 1400 ... ; 1600 B. C. Ntereso, Northern Ghana aged around 1300-1700 B. C. Chukoto also in Northern Ghana..." (Anquandah, 2006:3).

Land was collectively owned by clans and ethnic groups. Some of these chiefdoms like that of Akwamu and Asante grew to become empires (Anquandah, 2006). Though the people grappled with their own problems of periodic minor violence and full blown wars, the various ethnicities had learnt to live with one another within what may be described as naturally evolved geographic locations, far different from the current colonially imposed geographic border demarcations.

When an ethnic group had peacefully settled in a locality, land was administered by chiefs and elders or clan heads among the local people and strangers that might have followed or migrated later to settle among them. Once relative peace was secured the arts flourished.

Different forms of traditional art were imbued in the various cultural traditions found in this land; writing of pictograms and ideograms; painting on the body, pottery, carvings and painting on domestic walls; painting/dyeing of cloth; printing and many other creative activities.

The contextual study of paint in the traditional art of Ghana is pertinent not only to the field of Visual Art, but also to the total historiography and historio-cultural background of Ghana. It is evident that the earlier study of “Traditional African Art has usually been done by anthropologists” (Okpewho, 1987: 301) whose historic methods imperceptibly propagated Darwinism (1809-1882), in their evolutionary flavour (Hartt, 1976: 19). The theory ratifies with that of da Vinci, as noted by Jan Laude; “the hierarchy of the arts is in complete harmony with the level of civilization practicing them” And “since painting is the foremost art” Laude reports Da Vinci’s words, “the blacks, limited to sculpture, are necessarily inferior artists...painting is the art of countries already advanced in terms of civilization” (Laude, 1973: 15). From this line of reasoning, one should then question the art of the Palaeolithic man who without any civilization commenced his art practice with the ‘highest’ art of painting. Of course (perhaps) Da Vinci would have rethought his statement had he an earlier information on the achievement of the Palaeolithic age. It is this paradigm thinking – in yet another vein, in the historiography of African Art that led to Kasfir’s (1984) ground-breaking work; *One Tribe One Style?*

As beings of construct, individuals have always sought to realise their visualised impressions by suitable and possible means that communicate with others, as well as define them. In using paint, either sourced locally or elsewhere, for various purposes, traditional Ghanaians have freely

employed it to simultaneously identify themselves and their impressions while communicating with others. This was done by sourcing and processing the medium to their appropriate state applicable to achieve the purported end.

The role of paint in the art of humanity of all time is remarkable: Beginning from the cave man's vegetable and organic medium, used in all continents of the world including Africa, media which was largely obtained from the earth and plants, Egyptian natural mineral paint, through classical and renaissance tempera and oil, up till the discovery of acrylics, all the way to contemporary 'multiple-choice' brand-packaged paint, of different forms aiding creative people to express themselves in numerous ways.

One may or may not categorise the traditional blackening of an Asante Royal stool as painting, nor would the daily dressing of the hearth and floor of the traditional kitchen, using a mixture of red ochre (clay) and water by Akan women, be seen as one. One might take the liberty in debating the identification of these two cases as paintings though, it cannot be refuted that paint is present in both situations.

Why and how has paint as a medium proven ubiquitous in the universal journey of the visual creative process? The answer is found in its liquefied nature, and a consistency that could be achieved and controlled by the user lending it to extensive mode of application techniques. Though occurring in different forms as composed by diverse people in different parts of the world, with different materials and methods, the characteristics are always the same. It is only the consistency that may need to be thinned or thickened. It is certain that, the nature and value of painting may be poles apart in outlook for the African and European; however, the "feel" of the common medium experienced by each of them is the same.

While marking, scratching or drawing tools are excellent in registering linear effects, they are difficult to use in covering broader areas, whereas paint does with gracious ease. A light form of engraving technique is even possible using a stylus, when paint is applied on a hard surface and left to dry. It is also possible to apply using an atomizer or the air brush approach. Needless to say, the medium lends itself to a myriad of application techniques making paints and dyes indispensable in the pursuit of artistic expressions.

Documentation regarding the art history of Sub-Saharan Africa, and for that matter Ghana, are replete with bias of readily representing the traditional Ghanaian, more as a sculptor, (arguably) never as a painter. To these writers, the creative endowments of Ghanaian traditional artists mostly lie in three dimensional expressions than in two which is deemed as more sophisticated.

This distortion, which heightened during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, has been responsible in misguiding many, including prominent professional artists to surmise that, painting has no origin in the Ghanaian culture (Antubam, 1963). They trace the history of Ghanaian painting to the twentieth century, when 'easel painting' was introduced in Ghana, at Achimota College in 1936 under H. V. Meyerowitz (Mount, 1936). This impression has eventually caused interested but unsuspecting people to miss out on the origin, role, and hence the value of paint (and painting) in the traditional art of Ghana.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Though a number of African Art authors Kasfir (1984), Picton (n.d), Vogel and Ebong (1991), Vansina (1984) and others have written from different perspectives in a bid to depicting holistic

view of African art, there is still the need to focus on, and systematically study paint as a medium in the primary context of traditional Ghanaian art, and consequently determine its role.

In view of the above, the research sought to focus on, and study paints and painting in Ghanaian traditional art, looking out for any possible transformations in media that might have taken place, how these media were applied to specific supports among the ethnicities, and their significance to the people that practiced them.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To find the origin and evolution of paint in Ghanaian traditional art (with a focus on the Upper East and Ashanti Regions), in order to construct a useful classification.
2. To examine the supports and tools for the various paints/pigments used in the context of Ghanaian traditional art.
3. To discuss the significance of paint to the Kasena Nankana and Asante ethnicities.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to tackle the problem stated above, the following research questions were pursued:

1. How has paint evolved in the traditional art of the Kasena Nankana and Asantes?
2. What supports and tools were used in these traditional paintings?
3. How significant is the use of the various media to these traditional ethnicities?

## 1.5 Delimitation

The purview of this research does not go beyond the geographical borders of Ghana. Though the continent of Africa and other parts of the world may be cited, segments of the ethnic groups that lived within the current border demarcation of Ghana during precolonial times remain the focus of the study.

It would specifically look at how paint/pigment has originated, developed over the generations, and used among two ethnicities in Ghana; the Kassena – Nankana people of Upper-East region and the Asantes in the Ashanti region.

## 1.6 Limitations

Paucity of documentation on the unit of research made review of related literature frustrating, limiting by extension the secondary data to support the analysis of the primary data attained.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Paint** – Coloured liquid applied to a surface in order to decorate or protect it, or in order to create a painting.

**Painting** – The application of paint on a support in order to decorate, protect or express an idea(s).

**Pigment** –

1. Colouring substance: a substance that is added to give something such as paint or ink its colour.

2. Natural Colouring for tissue: a natural substance in plant or animal tissue that gives it its colour

**Dye** – a soluble or insoluble colouring matter used to colour something.

**Traditional art** – In this thesis traditional art refer to works of art executed by indigenes that lived within the current borders of Ghana from circa 1000 to 1400 AD. The definition covers that art which is “...village based, and is made by artists who work mainly for members of their own ethnic group. They have been trained through a relaxed form of traditional teaching – apprenticeship – and make works that serve old functions” (Vogel, 1991).

**Ghanaian** – The term as appears in the title of the work comprise that which belonged to the people whose land previously covered the Gold Coast, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and later Trans Volta Togoland (all together further earlier part of the land mass referred to by Europeans as Upper and Lower Guinea. Consequently, the term refers to that which belonged to the land currently known as Ghana.

**Evolution** – The term as used in the title indicates the change or/and improvement of paint(s) used in various segments of Ghanaian traditional art, by different ethnic groups.

**Application** – This is in reference to all the modalities and technicalities employed in using paint in Ghanaian traditional art. It indicates the ways and means or the process of registering paint on selected supports by traditional artists.

**Meaning** – This term as found in the title of this dissertation, denotes the contextual role of paint as phenomenologically experienced and interpreted by the local ethnicities in Ghanaian traditional art. It seeks to draw forth the significant quality or value of the use of paint by the local

people, touching on the impressive, expressive, constructive, and even the preservative use of paints/pigments in the traditional setting.

**Uli aesthetics** – wall and body designs of the Igbo people of Nigeria.

**Totem** – an animal, plant, or object that has religious or spiritual importance for a particular group of people.

### 1.8 Assumptions

The study is undertaken with the following assumptions:

1. People are generally interested in paint and pigments; this concept is affirmed by their attraction towards the application of such media resulting in colourful objects and places.
2. The idea of paint and colour does not occupy a greater domain of interest in the Ghanaian culture as pertains among western cultures.
3. An array of colour pigments or paint that are identified as stemming from studies in traditional Ghanaian art is currently none existent.
4. A meaningful research in traditional colours could set a good platform for further development of this local media into superior quality levels for contemporary use.

5. A systematic study of pigments and paints in traditional Ghanaian art may open up to enhance use of local media and sensitize artists the more to meaningfully interact with their environment.

6. Paints and pigments employed in traditional Ghanaian art have been used in ingenious ways that is worth studying for contemporary appreciation, development and possibly adaptation.

7. Artists being rational, would not consciously close themselves away from all accessible local media in the execution of their works, no matter how effective and useful. Rather, as open and experimental as most artists are, would be willing to explore all useful local media that are introduced to them.

### **1.9 Importance of the Study**

1. Previous anthropological and historical content on African art has largely ignored information on painting traditions and values in the culture of Africans, especially south of the Sahara, which has hence led to a neglected field of study, as it skews knowledge in SubSahara African art forms mostly to sculpture. This is why a dissertation to focus on a systematic study of paint/pigment from a historical perspective of Ghanaian traditional art should be of interest to researchers, practicing artists, historians, museum professionals and art students.

2. This thesis should be a relevant document to researchers in African art because of the knowledge that it explores in traditional Ghanaian paint, an aspect scantily covered by most African art writers. Though the study is centred on one country, it provides pointers that might reflect similar experiences in other countries in Africa.

3. The findings of this research should encourage artists among others to locally obtain paint/pigment materials for their projects, a step that would deepen their interaction with the environment and be economically advantageous to artists and the nation as a whole, in the face of recent economically challenging rates of art materials.
4. The health dangers associated with certain brands of art media, which are largely chemicalbased, are professionally hazardous to artists in the long term. This should make the possibility of an organic paint development, which could emanate from this study, a welcome idea.
5. The investigations done in the study by virtue of its concern with paint and colour in traditional Ghanaian art, documents a defined area of paint related traditional art, a focus that should be of interest to artists, curators, art historians, and art educators.
6. The recommendations given at the end of the study highlight suggestions regarding traditional art in national development that should specifically be important towards system and policy developments by government in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in the functions and goals of the traditional art industry.

#### **1.10 Organisation of the rest of the Text**

This thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter one introduces the work, beginning with an overview to the subject of paint in traditional Ghanaian art, as a background to the study, leading to establishing the problem with which the thesis concerns itself, followed by the objectives, research questions, and the importance of the study as well as the definition of terms and finally assumptions of the study.

The second chapter contextualises the study within theoretical frameworks and reviews the related literature available on the subject, starting with the theoretical framework, followed by paints and its dynamics as well as colour theory and perception. The Akan traditional model of colour symbolism is also looked at. The following are further reviewed; Palaeolithic cave paintings, painting in other parts of Africa, Egyptian painting, and traditional painting in Ghana. Even though the research is centred on Ghana, a wider geographical purview was captured from other parts of Africa in order to contextualise the study within the various kinds of media used in the traditional art of Africa, before narrowing down to Ghana.

Chapter Three concerns itself with the description of the research paradigm and design, population for the study, sampling methods, types of data collected, administration of instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis approach.

Chapter Four deals with description, analysis, discussions and interpretation of the findings. Chapter Five comprises the summary, gap for research, conclusion and recommendations of the thesis.

### **1.11 Abbreviations used**

**GNA** – Ghana National Archives.

**GNM** – Ghana National Museum.

**GSM** – Ghana Science Museum.

**NCC** – National Commission on Culture.

**SWOPA** – Sirigu Women Organization of Pottery and Art. Formed in 1997 by madam Melaneili Kasisi, now has about four hundred women working there. The activities there are

mainly basketry, pottery and painting on walls and canvas. The place today serves as a tourist centre with a number of guest rooms.

**UG** – University of Ghana.

# GNUST



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **2.1 Overview**

In this chapter, various theoretical frameworks are explored to carve a perspective for the study, before documents relative to the subject under study are presented. Paint is defined and its colour dynamics explained. Paint, as has been used from Palaeolithic times, through the ancient Saharan culture, ancient Egyptian kingdoms, during the migration of ancient kingdoms, early West Africa, the traditional period of west Africa, as well as in traditional Ghana have been discussed. Eventually, eight areas of traditional Ghanaian art that involve painting on wall, body, hearth, textile, calabash, pottery, leather, stool and sculpture are reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Any study worth its while requires a theoretical basis within which to logically posit and effectively steer the research through its course. Exploring different sorts of empiricism, formalism, and structuralism on one hand, and different sorts of deconstructionism, nihilism, and relativism on the other, aesthetic contextualism was deemed appropriate in guiding the discourse of traditional Ghanaian art. This I thought should result in a more effective perspective in looking at this art form in its creation, ontology, meaning interpretation and evaluation; as works by a particular people, employing a particular means, within a particular period in history, for a particular reason. Levison (2007) says it well; “For contextualism, artworks are essentially historically embedded objects, ones that have neither art status, nor determinate identity, nor clear aesthetic properties nor definite aesthetic meanings, outside or apart from the generative context in which they arise and in which they are proffered” (p.4).

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework for Paint usage in Traditional Ghanaian Art**

The trend of paint usage in traditional Ghanaian art, is identifiably set in three main directions by art historians; a) Writers who are absolutely silent on the issue of paint in traditional African art, b) those who deny painting as a Ghanaian traditional art form, these are those who would usually cite a period of time as to when painting was introduced into the Ghanaian posttraditional culture. Finally, c) writers who agree that paint is integral to African culture and hence painting is a traditional form of artistic expression.

### **2.3.1 In the Beginning**

Cave art stands as evidence in the cradle of almost all cultures globally, preventing any one people from claiming hegemony over painting. Nonetheless, ancient historians like Ptolemy, Herodotus and Polybius wrote extensively about Africa, but were selective in their report. They did not capture anything concerning the art of sub Saharan Africans (Gillon, 1984). The curious question is how the history of other Africans such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Nubia and Aksum were meticulously recorded and others left out.

Considering one art as higher above the other, as for instance, seeing painting (a higher art) higher than sculpture (a lower art), is a futile argument. Because then, cave art should have begun from some other form of art (lower art) to refine toward painting (a higher art) and not differently. These bizarre conclusions were drawn by anthropologists who had their own biases towards certain races as primitive, and therefore preferred to consider them as without normal human intelligence. Some writers claimed that in art, an African is not capable of reaching even a moderate degree of proficiency (Oloidi, 1981). These were the people who stretched their

competence to pioneer the then new field of Art History (Okpeho, 1987; Hartt, 1976; Kasfir, 1984). The issues of primitivism, and even sub-humanity were raised, stirring various racial and cultural challenges that were sometimes approached with inflamed passions and even violence. The fact that Africa had no form of recorded history gave room for enough inaccurate records to be peddled on her behalf. Nothing existed on recorded history of Africa until the arrival of the Arabs in the seventh century (Gillon, 1984).

Selecting African art initially as objects of curiosity, it later caught the attention of Western artists with sweeping influence over Europe at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and later in America, at the time when western art sought for new directions, having been saturated with the ‘naturalistic baggage’ from renaissance art (Fosu, 1993).

This conceived bias blinded the anthropologists and art historians from opening up to appreciate an entire body of Ghanaian art practice, not to mention the detailed appreciation of particular art forms, unfortunately as a result, wood sculpture, only one of the practiced art was nominated to stand in Africa above the rest. Of course, it is easier and desirable to haul away large quantities of sculpture pieces at one expedition than to spend quality time trying to understand a large stretch of traditional wall paintings of some socio-religious significance, or to look for paintings from the most unlikely supports. The first offer material satisfaction, the path easily chosen by expeditious men, and the second is cognitive; transcending the mundane. It is easier to take than to think (Antwi & Adi-Dako, 2014).

### **2.3.2 The introduction of Easel Painting by Colonialists to Africans**

Colonial art training in Africa, the period erringly marked by some writers as the time when painting was introduced to Africans, could be understood as two different programmes rolled out by the French and English colonial powers within their colonies. The French, specifically Belgium and France were the first to begin this training for the local people. Three schools sprung up in the Republic of Zaire, formerly known as the Belgian Congo between 1944 and 1951 (Mount, 1973).

Pierre Romain-Desfosses and two other founders were eager to train Africans who would paint without European influences. So they only provided them with canvas, paper, and paint with the lone rule of non-repetition. Desfosses believed by so arranging, his students would be able to produce pure African art devoid of all foreign influences. Hardly did he consider that the very elements of the school's foundation defeated the essence of the expected outcome.

In the English West Africa, the oldest school was the art department of the University of Science and Technology, whose establishment dates back between 1909 (Asihene, 1978) and 1936 (Mount, 1973) in Accra-Achimota. It was after about twenty years that two other schools started in Nigeria; the art department of Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria, and Yaba Technical Institute in Lagos. The Oshogbo workshop school started in the 1960s.

The Director of the art department in Achimota was H. V. Meyerowitz an experienced sculptor and designer, whose wife was also an artist. His three years art and craft course included modelling and traditional wood carving, mural painting, basketry, pottery, weaving, lettering and wood engraving.

These courses were introduced into the country without relating them to similar forms already being practiced traditionally, towards a synthesis with what existed, as if to say Ghanaians apparently had no art practice. Contrary to this view, mural painting was copiously being done by several ethnicities in both the South and Northern territories of Ghana. Wood carving was heavily being practiced in the Southern as well; body painting, pottery and basketry were being practiced almost throughout the country at the time.

In 1946, Meyerowitz died and Makendrick, a Scottish painter became the head of department of art. When enrolment increased the following year, the school's expansion caused relocation to its current premise in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. E. V. Asihene became the new director after Makendrick resigned in 1961. To the school that believe that painting does not originate in the Ghanaian culture, this is the period where writers locate the adoption; The Achimota Art school era.

### **2.3.3 Autochthonous Paintings in Ghana**

Autochthonous Paintings practiced in Ghanaian traditional art include murals in the South among some Akans, and North, Upper East and Upper West among the Kassena-Nankani at Sirigu and other ethnicities, Body painting among the Krobos of Somanya, Gas of Accra, and some Ewes, Hearth, floor and interior wall painting among the Akans, Sculpture and stool painting among the

Ashantis and Akuapims in Kumasi and on the Eastern ridges respectfully, and calabash painting among the Ewes of Tetekope. However, writers on African art have blamed the reduction of most other art forms, to sculpture on the tropical climate and its attendant deteriorating condition of sub Saharan Africa, which is known to increase decay and destruction in relatively a short time (Gillon, 1984), avers that wood in the humid climate could hardly live beyond mere five decades, (thoughtless however) of other more fragile art forms like painting with non-permanent media and supports.

#### **2.3.4 Two views**

Art as currently practiced among these ethnicities for the most part, stretch from the traditional era, some with very minimal changes or none at all. Asihene (1978:79) agrees that “Painting in Ghana is as old as wood carving”. However Antubam (1963) admits; “Maybe it is true that painting is not a traditional form of culture in Ghana,” he further argues; “...but what is wrong with making use of a borrowed medium of art to express what is within one” (p. 131). Whiles Asihene regards painting as rooted in the Ghanaian culture, Antubam considers it as a cultural implant that could however, be mastered for one’s own purpose, and the two views are not same.

#### **2.4 The meaning of Paint (colour) and its dynamics**

Paint is a coloured medium or pigment mixed with a suitable liquid and a binder, to form a paste of applicable consistency for the purpose of coating surfaces. Two elements must be present in all paints: (1) the coloured pigment which defines the hue, and (2) the liquid which serves as the vehicle of the mixture (Mayer, 1985). These are the elements that should be found in all paint. The third (binder) may be any one of a group of components which is optionally added based

upon desired state of the cured film. The binder, which ensures adhesion to the surface to which it is applied, also to a large extent determines the flexibility, durability, toughness and glossiness of the medium.

Paints of many different kinds have been developed and/or improved for several purposes over the times. It becomes necessary in the process to improve mediums for obvious reasons. The two most important factors upon which the evolution of paint has hinged are the attributes of permanence or fastness and variety of hue.

Except in somewhat special instances, people usually desire that the creative impressions they make in their visual inscriptions remain permanent. "...the urge for continuance..." through our art (Horace, 1953). This is why cave men, rock artists and all ancient cultures left works that have long outlived their existence. Museum collections and exhibitions across the continents confirm this human obsession.

On the second factor, "cultures have evidently worked to expand their working spectrum of colours in order to maximize the expression of their concepts as well as making it last" (Stewart, 2006: 52). Why should one be limited this way when we are surrounded in full colour with nature and manmade objects? This is most essential because the human eye has been psychophysiologicaly designed to perceive and enjoy well over a thousand different colour shades (Drew, 1996). Itten (2001:8) elaborates that "Colour is life; for a world without colour appear to us as dead. Colours are primordial ideas, children of the aboriginal colourless light and its counterpart, colourless darkness". In fact, the unique resonance that different colours have with the human spirit (psychologically and emotionally) makes colour a necessity to human life and wellbeing.

## 2.5 Inks

Ink could be defined as coloured liquid used for drawing, writing, printing and duplicating. The vehicle or solvent is what allows the ink to move in doing its work. Colorants give colour to inks, and they may come as either dyes or pigments. They may be organic or inorganic based. Dyes are known to have a quality of transparency and saturation however, they are susceptible to the attack of chemicals and water. Pigments are small insoluble particles found in the solvent. Because they are insoluble, inks that contain pigments are resistant to several agents including heat and water.

The terms **dyes** and **pigment** are usually used interchangeably since they are commonly found in shared applications. For instance colorants usually used for textile or in food production may also be used in paint and ink manufacture. The nomenclature of pigment or dye is attributed to a colorant based upon what happens to its molecular structure during use. The Nuffield Foundation of Advanced Applied Science (2008) reports that; Strictly speaking, the difference is what happens to their crystal or particle structure during use: a pigment keeps its structure; e.g. by dissolving a solvent.

## 2.6 Perception of colour

A study of paints would obviously require the understanding of the process of perception to serve as an appropriate foundation in order to better appreciate its use and effects. Colour perception require a look into the basics of sensory physiology and interpretive psychology, that is, respectively, the internal processes in the eye and their subsequent interpretation by the brain. The

brain is involved because, perception as a whole involves the organisation of *sensations* (raw, immediate, and unprocessed information that reach the sense organs from the outside world) into meaningful experiences by means of *cognition*, one of the main functions of the brain.

According to Holtzschue (2011), colours, one of the stimuli from the environment that we perceive in this manner, are first, sensory *events*. They are true sensations, and not abstractions or ideas. The beginning of every such colour experience is a physiological or biological response to a stimulus of light. But then she further explains that a sensation alone, be it a touch, taste, smell, sight, or sound — is an incomplete event. The occurrence of a sensation is immediately followed by *perception*; which as explained earlier, is the needed interpretation that allows human beings to adapt to their environment. It is the *knowing* or the understanding and awareness of what has been sensed. She explains that Perception *decides* what has been sensed; *recognizes* and *identifies* the sensation, by acting as a filter that separates useful and important information from other competing stimuli in the environment.

The process by which our eyes see and respond to colour therefore, is termed perception and this is valid for a number of reasons, as Daggett, Cobble & Gertel (2008) explain:

Colour is “perceived” because each of us views colour differently, and because the same colour appears differently off a textured or reflective surface. Not only are some...more sensitive to colour and its applications, while others do not consciously take notice, but also about 8% of males and 1% of females have some form of colour impairment that makes them see colours differently than everyone else (p. 4).

Thus, before we learn of the perception process, we should come to understand that our final perception and interpretation of any colour stimulus depends on the quality of the colour that the eye receives, and then our overall cognition. Thus the spectral characteristics of the object in terms of how much light it absorbs, reflects, and transmits is also important to the overall process of colour perception; some of these properties of the raw stimuli of reflected light are considered

later. What is important to understand is that, usually, the appearance of colour as reflected from objects is unstable because of many different factors. *Lighting* and *placement* are understood to be the main factors. Lighting for example, has a potential to change the appearance of reflected colour. The lighting factor does not alter additive colours of light though, as they maintain their individual wavelengths. However placement can alter the appearance of both direct and reflected colour. These two factors therefore have a bearing on the quality of light that will first enter the eye as a sensation. I next follow with discussion on how the body responds to light/colour sensations of various qualities.

### **2.6.1 Physiological response to light (colour)**

Human Physiology studies how the body originates, performs its varied functions including all physical and chemical processes (Guyton & Hall, 2006). It is a science that can be used to measure the body's physical responses to a stimulus of colour as well as others.

Colours, being a dimension of energy, have a physiological effect on our bodies and wellbeing. They have different energy and affect capacities on our bodies, relative to their different wavelengths. Thus, when the eyes receive this information, their interpretation by the brain is distinctive to each wavelength. Our eyes can perceive a very many of these bands of wavelengths and consequently, be affected by them; granted, the closeness of some of these wavelengths to one another might make their cognition less removed, one from another but the normal human brain should be able to interpret the peculiarities of all these.

Physiologically, the first level of colour perception takes place like this; when the eyes encounter light, it is received by the optical structures for vision - the cornea, the iris, pupils and lenses and then the retina. This last organ is made up of 'nerve' cells; rods and cones which connect to the optic nerve, which also transmits the sensory message to the brain.

Of these structures, the colour depicting devices are the cones, which also enable the eye to see finer details; rods however help the eye see in dim light, a situation in which colours are not discernable. Rods are thus responsible for peripheral (less focused) vision. These two nerve cells therefore respond selectively to available light. Cones will dominate vision when a great deal of light is present, but when the rods take over, colours appear subdued and fine detail are more difficult to see (Holtzschue, 2011).

Humans normally have three different types of cones that sense three different portions of received light as a colour spectrum; primarily can sense long wavelengths (red), middle wavelengths (green), or short wavelengths (blue), referred respectively to as L-, M-, and S- cones. Habitually therefore, light at any wavelength in the visual spectrum (ranging from 400 to 700 nm) will excite one or more of these three types of sensors. The Optical nerve cells (retinal ganglion cells), then analyses and compares the stimulation of neighbouring cones, and calculates whether the light reaching a patch of cones is more blue-or-yellow and red-or-green. The determined signal afterwards travels to the brain by means of the nervous system. The brain will then have the function of determining what colour is perceived by comparing the different signals that each cone senses and transmits (Biggs & McPhail, 2012).

Now, the nervous system is the channel for information coming from the outside world to the brain. This system is made up of three kinds of cells: receptor cells, transmitter cells, and brain cells. Receptor cells receive information from the outside world (stimuli) and change it into a

form of electrical energy that the brain can use. Transmitter cells then carry these signals to the brain. Usually, signals from each sense are received in separate, specific cell locations in the brain; the sensation of light is received in two areas of the brain: the cerebral cortex and the hypothalamus, or midbrain.

The second level of colour perception can hence take place in these regions. The cerebral cortex receives information and processes it; recognizing, interpreting, and structuring a response to each stimulus. The midbrain or hypothalamus on the other hand, controls the internal environment of the body; that is, the kind of response that the body will generate for interpreted stimuli. It is also part of the glands of the endocrine system. This is the system that exerts the greatest influence on the body by creating and secreting hormones that regulate many body functions. Thus hormones are the biological messengers in our body; they tell the different parts of the body what to do at what time.

As part of the endocrine system, the midbrain contains the centre for regulation of blood pressure and body temperature. When the brain is stimulated by a thought, mental image, or transmitted outside stimulus (such as light), the midbrain prompts the release of hormones. Sensations of light transmitted to the midbrain act as a biological stimulus to the central nervous system, and affect some of the strongest human needs and emotions — stress, hunger, thirst, and sex, to name a few.

It could better be registered at this point, how sunlight, which contains all colours, is essential to human life. Besides, the human body is genetically tailored to function at a normal level when in response to the sun's pattern of energy emission, so that changing the strength of a colour stimulus causes a change in the body. Exposure to a high level of red for example, stimulates hormone production in the midbrain and raises blood pressure, while exposure to a high level of blue has

been shown to lower blood pressure and depress hormonal secretions. Daggett *et al* (2008) also add:

Colours produce different physiological responses in blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, digestion, body temperature, and brain activity. Even blind individuals, as confirmed by neuropsychologist Kurt Goldstein, have skin that “sees” in Technicolor, (dermo-optic vision), and they experience different physiological sensations under different coloured lights. Colourblind and blind-folded subjects also can distinguish colour and shape. Since electromagnetic wavelengths below red (infrared, radio waves) and above violet (ultraviolet, X-rays, gamma rays) have a physiological impact, there is evidence that the electromagnetic waves we actually see (visible spectrum) can also impact our well-being (p. 5).

## **2.7 Culture, Conscious symbolism-association**

In support of the facts presented above Carl Jung (Wong, 2009), explains that deep down in the human’s psyche is a collective unconscious where there are contents of archetypes - the original pattern or model from which other things of the same kind are made. Those are the foundation images that are developed and formed from our ancestors over thousands of years.

Meerwein *et al* (2007) have also explained that the perception of colour is linked to associations and previous experiences where colour played a role, making the human experience and response to colour as diverse as people themselves. Thus, we adjust what we see based on our experiences but these experiences also occur within the context of the culture we live in and we develop culturally symbolic ways of sensing colour. We also have to understand that colour concepts among the various cultures have a whole historical and geographical background to them. Further, according to colourist and art educator Sloane (2001), Response to colour symbolism is a response to colour preconception, and is a predetermined response based on literary and psychological ideas about colour, rather than a response to the nature of colour itself. Symbolism attached to colour therefore differs from culture to culture. For example, white is associated with death in

Japan, while for most Westerners it immediately calls to mind purity, as in the state of maidens before marriage. It is not possible to generalize the experience of colour, the effect of colour, or the human response to colour.

White, in many cultures indicates purity, innocence, peace, truce and victory. In India, the brides traditionally wear red. Black is used in Africa and Europe for mourning. It is authoritative and strong; it represents the absence of colour and emptiness or void. However in China it indicates joy.

## **2.8 Colour Symbolism in Ghana**

Black is a powerful colour; classical. It is the combination of all pigment colours. It derives its significance from the notion that new things get darker as they mature. Black symbolizes an intensified spiritual energy; things in which ancestral spirits are believed to reside are usually blackened. A ready example are the black stools of Ashanti (Antubam, 1963; Kumah, 2009).

White has a link with egg albumen, white clay, the cloud, seeds and fruits in nature. It symbolizes contact with spirits, ghosts ... it is combined with black, green gold or yellow to express spiritual vitality and balance.

All variations of yellow are associated with egg yolk, ripe fruits, vegetables and gold (mineral). *Dto*, the traditional dish of the Akans made from either yam or plantain is yellowed with palm oil before serving; it symbolizes sanctity, preciousness, wealth, spiritual vitality and fertility.

Yellow is associated with the female essence of life. It is viewed as red rendered mild and gentle and is therefore associated with tenderness, calmness, pleasantness, and sweetness. Akans believe a true woman should possess all these attributes.

Red is associated with alarm, warning, sacrifice, readiness for all forms of encounter; spiritual, physical and political. It is used by participants (warriors, sportsmen, worshipers etc) of different activities to heighten their spiritual and emotional moods for action.

Blue is associated with the blue sky, the abode of the supreme Creator, it is therefore used in variety of ways to symbolize spiritual sanctity, good fortune, peacefulness, harmony and love related ideas.

Green is associated with vegetable, and other vegetation tender green leaves are used in sprinkling water and other mixtures during purification rituals. Green is most balancing of all the colours. It symbolizes growth, vitality, resourcefulness, prosperity, fruitfulness, abundance, health and spiritual rejuvenation.

Purple is viewed in the same way as maroon. It is considered as earth associated colour used in rituals and healing purposes. It is also associated with feminine aspects of life.

Grey derives its symbolism from ash, used for healing and spiritual cleansing ritual to recreate spiritual balance when spiritual blemish has occurred. It is also used in rituals for protection against malevolent spirits.

To surmise the associative aspect to psychological colour perception therefore, we may quote Wong (2009), as she explains;

Colour symbolism is a learned behaviour but it has associative power that affects how we perceive a colour and the mood or emotion produced by it, for example, red can convey excitement and a romantic mood, green always helps promote relaxation, and brown is the cosy colour that always creates a stable and comfortable atmosphere. Given that colour symbolism is learned, some colours can convey universal messages while others may vary by ethnicity, cultural, or socioeconomic background (p. 2).

## 2.9 Paint in Palaeolithic art

Palaeolithic people did express themselves with home-made paint in and on their cave walls, and surrounding rocks (Plates 2.1; 2.2; & 2.3). This fact is well established in history. Many attempts have been made by art historians to explain why those works were done. In all the theories advanced, the hunting-magic premise seems to dominate. Could it also not be that the cave man captured these works simply as a form of diary or journal of special encounters? The cave man also had a right to keep a journal especially of her/his most adventurous hunts. The interesting phenomenon about their occurrence all over the world in one way or another attests to the availability and versatility of the substance, paint, used in different ways in executing these splendid works. (Plates 2.6).

“Cave artists either applied powdered mineral colours directly to damp walls,” in which case the drying wall dried along with the paint “or mixed their pigments with a liquid, the medium or a binder to adhere them to dry walls” (Schneider, 1999: 27).

The words medium, vehicle, or binder are used interchangeably. Cave men are believed to have made use of animal fat, blood or vegetable juice for the purpose of getting pigments fixed unto their support.

Prehistoric men did not limit their expression to a few monochromatic hues. Though their colours are commonly described as earth colours, due to the perceived limitation in the range of colours sourced from the earth, they had a good range of them.

“...relatively rich browns, reddish browns, ochre, yellows, and reds...soot or charcoal” (Myers, 1967: 10) were used.

Cave Art is found widely distributed in the world. Substantial records are observed in Europe, Australia, China, Africa and other parts of the world. In Africa, the art is mostly found in the East continuing down to the rocky regions of the South, present a selection of these sites in Africa (Plates 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; & 2.7). It is important to see as many sites of cave art in this continent, for the significance they hold in the outset of the culture of painting, as they mark the beginning of the ancient art in Africa.



Plate 2.1: South Africa: Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Paintings  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukhahlamba / Drakensberg Park.html](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukhahlamba_Drakensberg_Park.html)

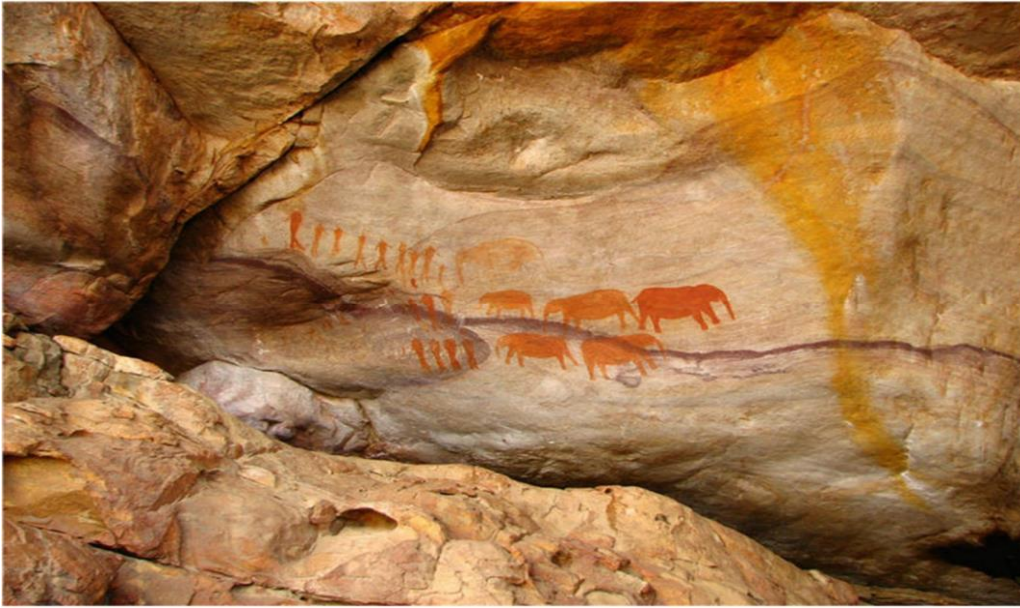


Plate 2.2: South Africa: Cederberg Paintings.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\\_painting#Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting#Africa)



Plate 2.3: Storm Shelter, Drakensberg Mountains  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UKhahlamba / Drakensberg Park.html](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UKhahlamba / Drakensberg_Park.html)



Plate 2.4: Laas Gaa'l.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas\\_Geel\\_alcove.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas_Geel_alcove.jpg)



Plate 2.5: Laas Gaa'l. A single cow

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas\\_Geel\\_alcove.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas_Geel_alcove.jpg)

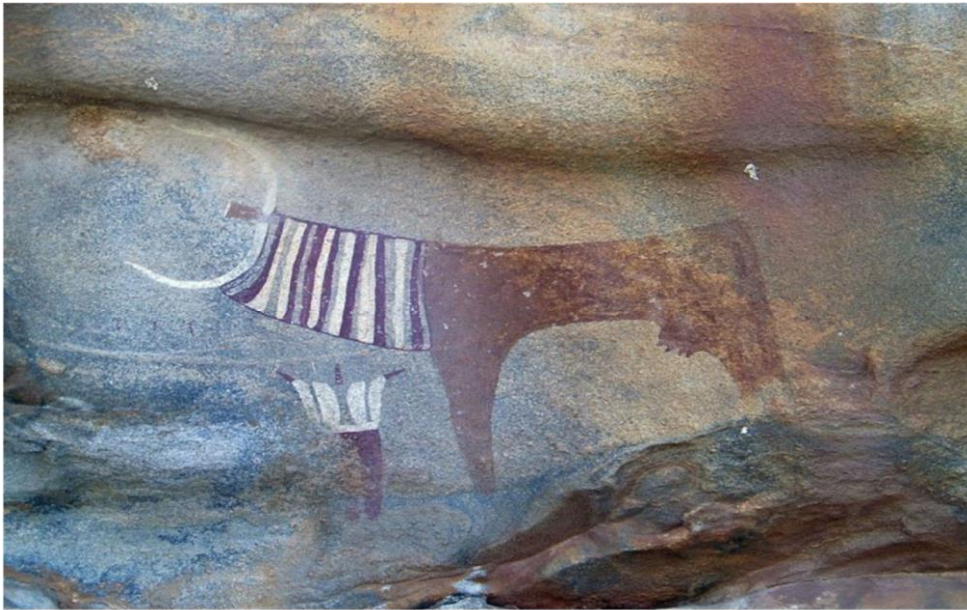


Plate 2.6: Laas Geel. A cow and Human  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas\\_Geel\\_alcove.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas_Geel_alcove.jpg)

### 2.10 Paint Experience in the Great Saharan Culture

The experience of Africans with paint obviously, does not end with cave and rock art, neither is the practice new to the culture of Africans, but continues through the ancient times; “...in other words drawing painting and engraving are not new art forms in Africa” (Picton, n.d.) (Figure 2.7).

The Sahara, being the largest desert in the world, has not always been bereft of vegetation (Vansina, 1987). It used to be a luxuriant green forest (Fosu, 1993). As change occurred and the fecund vegetation started to transform, it became necessary for the people to migrate in different directions in order to survive, by seeking for more fertile lands that could better support their lives.

Life had gone on in the Sahara for millennia before the civilization of Ancient Egypt. Many art historians agree that the art of ancient Egypt picks many of its iconography, style, and thrust from

the great Saharan tradition which has been proven to precede it. Vansina (1987) observes that “indeed Egyptian graphic art owes something to the great Saharan tradition that both preceded it and ran parallel to it for most of its history”. Thus, leading Picton (1992:28) to interrogate; “why is it always assumed, however, that it was North Africa [or for that matter, outsiders] that influenced the sub-Saharan region rather than the other way round?”. The admirable historian Durden (1974:45), who did extensive research in Africa, argues along similar lines that Egyptian culture has basis on that of Sahara. Vansina goes on to capture the possible life of nomadic people as migration becomes inevitable for survival after the desertification of the Green Sahara; “Painting and engraving” he comments “are typical for nomadic people, and were probably practiced all over the continent before the spread of settled life”.





Plate 2.7: Tassili N'ajjer, Sahara Desert Algeria, North Africa carvings of Fauna  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas Geel alcove.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Laas_Geel_alcove.jpg)

### 2.11 Paint Experience in African Art - Egypt

Ancient history of “3,000 – odd years of tomb painting in Pharaonic Egypt” (Walch & Hope, 1995: 2), is replete with several art forms including relief on walls, stone carvings in the round, and paintings. An art form spells its medium. The identification of a work of art leads to identifying the elements put together for its creation. This is why it is important for this research to study art forms, tracing its composition in retrospect by ‘deconstruction’ in order to find the

medium that was employed in constructing them. The choice of a particular medium in any one composition would obviously place the artist within a certain range of applicable technical possibilities that should guide the rendition of the work on various levels from start to finish. The art that was done in ancient Egypt was no exception to these basic principles.

Egyptian artists used simple tools (Plate 2.8) and a wide range of paint to choose for their many art forms. Robins (2000) gives exhaustive information in her monumental work on the “Art of Ancient Egypt”. In describing how painting was done he explains;

Paint was laid on in flat washes, pigment by pigment, so that painters mixed as much of one colour as they needed, painted in all the appropriate areas, and then moved on to another colour. For this purpose they used thicker brushes made from fibrous woods, such as palm ribs, or from bundles of twigs tied together that were beaten at one end to separate the fibres and make a coarse brush.... The final stage of painting was to outline figures and add interior details with a fine brush.... Many details in relief work and on statues were often only added in paint and not cut into the stone (p. 27).

The author, further informs us of the mineral pigment sources that naturally occurred in Ancient Egypt. White, he said, was generally made from calcium carbonate (whiting) or calcium sulphate (gypsum). A third mineral, huntite which was already used in the middle Kingdom and became common in the New Kingdom is more intensely white and was sometimes employed to paint white areas, such as clothing, so that they would stand out against a white background of calcium. Black was produced from one of the several forms of carbon, most commonly soot or charcoal. It is clear that the Ancient Egyptian artists had a very wide range of colours to explore.

For the range of yellow, red to dark brown, ochre (iron oxide) was used depending on the level of hydration. Orpiment was sometimes used according to Robins, to obtain a more intense yellow commonly used to represent gold, but the medium had a lower fastness and therefore could not

carry its intensity over the centuries. Another yellow was obtained from jarosite which was paler than the previous.

Blue, he says was either sourced from azurite (copper carbonate) or heating quartz, ground malachite and calcium carbonate together. She writes that different shades of blue could be obtained according to the way in which the resulting compound was ground for use, since the finer the grain the paler the blue. The proportions of malachite and the calcium carbonate could also be varied to obtain green instead. However green could be obtained from naturally occurring malachite.

The following was related of Inherkhau, a chief artist who lived during the reign of Ramses II, writing to the state treasurer to supply his team of artists with the required materials for work. This group had the onerous duty of excavating and decorating the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings. Robin reports;

We have been working [in] the places (the royal tombs) which my lord said must be decorated in proper order, but there are [no more] pigments at our disposal (?). may my lord [let] me carry out his good purposes and [have] a message sent that Pharaoh, life, prosperity health, in order to supply us...yellow ochre, gum, orpiment, realgar, red ochre, blue frit, green frit, fresh tallow for lighting and old cloths for wicks... (p. 29).

To get the paint ready for work, the pigments are smoothed by grinding on a hard stone mortar and the powder mixed either with plant gum or animal glue before application. The vestige of Egyptian works available today offer loud evidence of hard earned technical knowledge and craftsmanship in their artistic executions (Plates 2.9 and 2.10).

From another perspective, in order to appreciate the vividness of Egyptian graphic art; that, the divine procreation that results from the intercourse between the Queen of Egypt and the god Ammon who at the time assumes the being of the reigning king, is “carved and painted in great

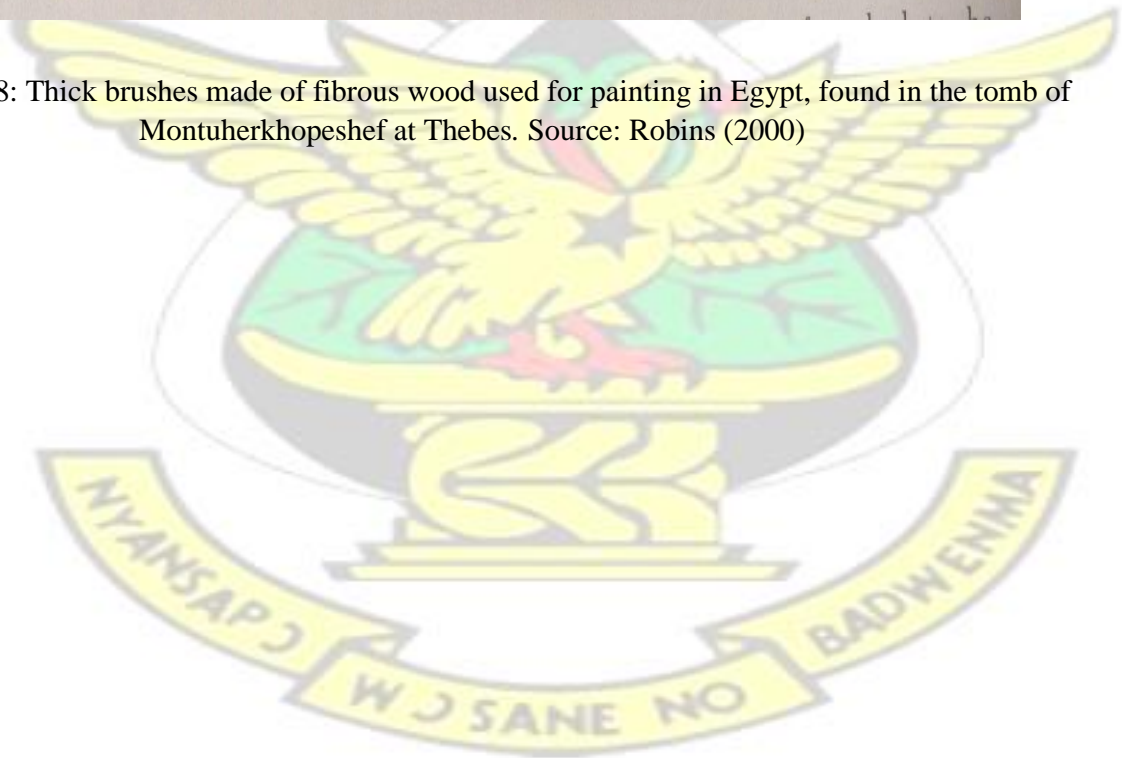
detail on the walls of the oldest temples in Egypt, those of Deir el Bahari and Luxor; and the inscriptions attached to the paintings leave no doubt as to the meaning of the scenes” (Frazer, 1933: 142).

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Plate 2.8: Thick brushes made of fibrous wood used for painting in Egypt, found in the tomb of Montuherkhopeshaf at Thebes. Source: Robins (2000)



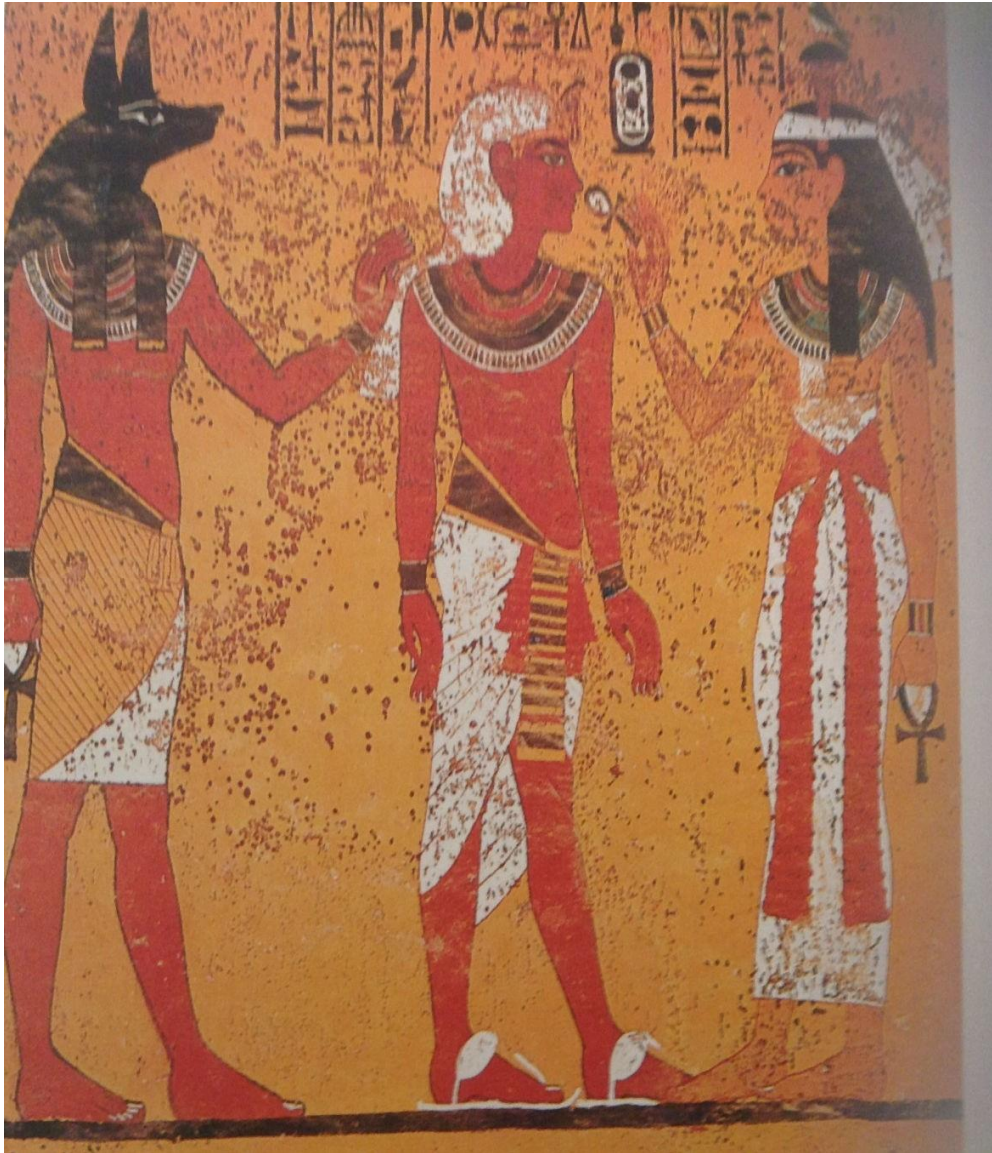


Plate 2.9: King Tutankhamun flanked by Anubis and Hathor the goddess. Source: Robins (2000)



Plate 2.10: King Horemheb offering wine to the goddess of the west – Hathor. Robins (2000)

## 2.12 The Migration from Ancient Empires

As their forebears, art was practiced by West Africans who migrated from Western Sudan about 1000-1300 AD. As confirmed by Asihene (1978:14), “The arts of the Great Sudanese empires

have been carried on by the people of Ghana for centuries”. And this artistic culture only grew with time, since life in Guinea assumed a more sedentary nature, after they developed a settled culture through the planting of crops and domestication of animals.

Most historians surmise that this great migration towards Guinea from the grassland plains of Western Sudan was caused by the probable confusion that might have followed on the collapse of earlier great empires like; Ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (Davidson,1965 ; Kyeremateng, 2004).

### **2.13 Beginning of Painting in Ghana**

Ackam (1992), cites the “rasps”; clay implements used during the Stone Age (Figure 2.1). These tools were found in old excavated settlements around Wenchi and Kintampo. The “rasps” identified by Anquandah (2006) as “flake-tool” are described to consist of clay with some element of iron content. Ackam reports;

They have fairly uniform shapes, rather like flattened maize or millet cobs. However it has not been easy to determine their use. Flight seems to suggest that they were used for rasping, while others think they might have been used in pottery work or stamping patterns on skin of animals or on bark cloth (p. 100).

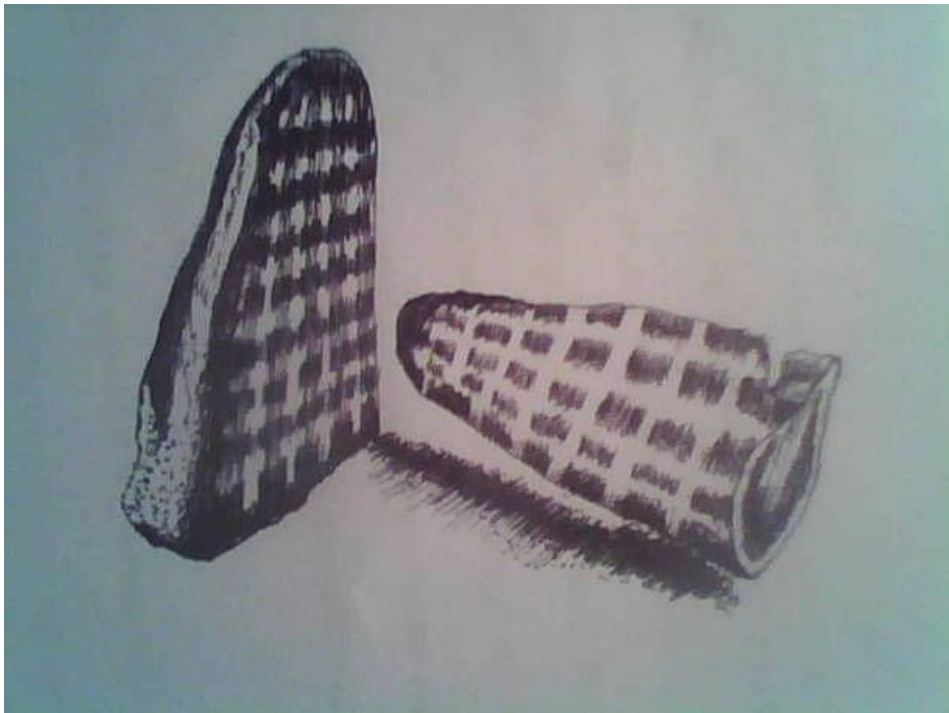


Figure 2.1: The Rasp as illustrated from Agorsa (1981) by the Researcher.

By Agorsa's (1981) description, the surface of the clay "rasps" were scored with criss-cross or grid pattern, or single line decoration. Ackam (1992) relates that, the single line decoration brings to mind the linear characteristics of a child's scribble which represents the earliest form of drawing or painting by man...with this evidence based on the "rasps", we can assume that the Ancient Ghanaian started painting as early as anyone else in prehistoric times. Whatever use was found for them, their creation as a tool made of iron and clay occur among other vessels and implements even with pottery having artistic designs on them excavated around the same region. Anquandah (2006) avers that "The earliest records we have of the making and use of vessels of clay are those obtained from excavation of sites of late Stone Age hunter-gatherers dated to 3000-4000 B. C. at Bosompra rockshelter, Abetifi-Kwahu, at a number of Kintampo rock shelters..." (p. 3).

## 2.14 The traditional Period of Ghana

Nana Frimpong Boadu affirms that the traditional art of Ghana spans centuries into history. In a similar vein, Sarpong's mention of over three-hundred years does not necessarily contradict, since in both instances no specific period was given. These statements rather create another patina of interest as regards the era of the traditional period in the passing years of history. The presence of stone-age man probably inhabited Ghana about half a million years ago, and archaeologically, knowledge of agriculture and pottery is set about 2000-1500 B.C. (Cole & Ross, 1977).

Defining this period and demonstrating an appreciation of the practices of these times in relation to modern era will enhance the understanding of the culture and arts, upon which this thesis is hinged. The present discussion should therefore consider as its focus, the conscious attempt to define the period of history that demarcates the boundary of the traditional era and the inception of colonization.

According to Maté (1966);

The movement of the ancestors to this country started about the middle of the thirteenth century and continued up to the early part of the sixteenth century at the latest. The people who came in were the Akans, MoshiiDagombas, Ga-Adangbes and Ewes. The Akans did not come in one body to this country. They divided into three sections, the Guan, Fante and Twi people, and entered the country in that order...The fantes were the next wave of Akans peoples to enter the country. They are believed to have moved from Techiman, near the source of the Tano, where they had made their home to occupy the coastal stretch of land from Cape three points to Cape coast. This occupation of the coast took place about A.D. 1400.It is believed that the Twi-speaking people were the last Akan section to enter the country in about the year A.D.1550.The earliest groups among these people to form themselves into states were the Adansi, Akwamus and Denkyiras.later, the Ashantis set up a state which became the most powerful kingdom in the country and remained so for a long time (p. 4).

This statement creates credible scenery of the migration of the Akan people into Ghana to their present respective settlements. He provides a vivid time boundary which ranges from the

thirteenth to the fourteenth century. It could not, however, be possible for a people as organised as these migrants to have lived and planned of settlement without a tradition and culture governing their conducts and way of lives.

It could be deduced that the period of the Traditional era commenced in the 'Ghanaian traditional setting' from thirteenth century sweeping down through the fourteenth century. This period is further affirmed by Anquandah (1982), in the following statement;

The period A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1400 seemed to have witnessed the emergence of the earliest towns and principalities with centralised political authority and social institutions in the Akan areas of Asebu, Ahanta, Fetu, Elmina, Abrem, Kommenda, Adanse, Twifo, Bono Manso and Begho...Typical Akan regalia associated with statehood such as the wooden stools, drums, ivory trumpets and military array were on display when Diego d'Azambuja ;the Portuguese captain who built the Elmina castle ...It is evident, therefore ,that the Edina monarchy and policy associated with the stool were first established prior to the European advent...At Bono Manso , two main periods of town development have been distinguished. The first period, spanning the thirteenth century and the fifteenth century (p. 96).

The assertion, however, made in the previous statement is endorsed in this statement above. It therefore becomes clear that the Akans and for that matter the various ethnicities of Ghana had a way of life which included their art, before the advent of European colonisation. This period which defined a set pattern of the early inhabitants of the land could be identified as *The Traditional* era where their culture and traditions had not been influenced nor acculturated by that of the West. The period ranging from A.D. 1000 to A.D 1400 as mentioned here further, could safely be defined as the era of Ghanaian traditional society.

This point was further made concrete by Anquandah (1982);

...recent comparative archaeological and ethnographical research has shed light on the immediate past of the modern Akan and has shown that the period between A.D. 1300 and A.D. 1800 constituted a major formative era in the art of the Akans (p. 100).

Anquandah (1982), affirmed this fact by making reference to Bowdich (1819), in his *Mission from Cape Coast*, he stated that in 1817, Bowdich thoroughly overwhelmed by the magnificent welcome ceremony accorded him at Kumasi, wrote:

...More than a hundred bands burst forth at once on our arrival with the peculiar airs of their several chiefs; the horns flourished their defiance with the beating of innumerable drums and metal instruments and then yielded for a while to the soft breathings of their long flutes which were truly harmonious and pleasing instrument like a bagpipe was happily blended... (p. 34).

This statement reveals the advent of the Europeans on the Ghanaian shores. It clearly portrays an imagery of the rich Ashanti tradition and culture which was of a great astonishment to the missionary in question. This is evident of the fact that the Traditional era was within a period that prevailed long before the Whiteman docked on the West African shores. This statement as mentioned above was made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century precisely in 1817. It was not made to describe the commencement of a tradition in a teething stage, but rather to affirm an existing culture and tradition which has grown with richness and purpose in its function.

Lovejoy's (2000) commentary on matrilineal and patrilineal structures as well formed by the early sixteenth century, further reveal the establishment of most of the ethnicities prior to the arrival of the Europeans. In fact, Boahen, (1966; 1977) believes the Bono Empire thrived at the west part of present Brong Ahafo region of Ghana before 1300 AD. This is evident that the traditional era of the Ghanaian traditional society existed long before our common era in modern history. The traditional era through archives of recorded history could be viewed through the time length of A.D.1000 to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

When Europeans explored Africa, and eventually colonised it, their most consequential move against Africans probably, was its arbitrary geographical partitioning. National borders in Africa

largely, just define political boundaries rather than geographical or ethnic ones. What went on in Berlin in 1884/1885 was not for the good of the continent; the greed-motivated conference that presumptuously partitioned Africa really cost her, and Africa still pays for it. It is common to find ethnic groups, even close families with members torn behind border demarcations in adjacent countries. The Nankani and Kassena people of northern Ghana for example, have relations (some even immediate families) living across the border in Burkina Faso. The Lobi people live in a triangular region within the boundaries of Ghana, Burkina Faso and Cote d' Ivoire; while the Toucouleur, by way of their semi-nomadic lifestyle, move back and forth between Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali (Courtney-Clarke, 1990). Travelling towards the eastern part of Ghana, one finds many Anlo people in the Volta Region, who have close relations living across the border in Togo. Towards the west of Ghana, the eastern part of Gyaman land in present Cote d'IVOire was seeded to the British by the French (without informing let alone consulting the Gyamanhene) in 1892 to become part of the Gold Coast (Arnaut, 2004).

### **2.15 Domestic Wall Painting by African Women**

In light of the previous paragraph, it is not too strange to find that one particular cultural tradition is shared among most of the working women in Africa, especially those found within the savannah belt. I refer to the great art of wall painting. Women in Mauritania, Senegal, Mali Cote d'IVOire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, down to South Africa among the Ndebele, all share in this art (Plates 2.11, 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14).



Plate 2.11: Ndebele wall painters

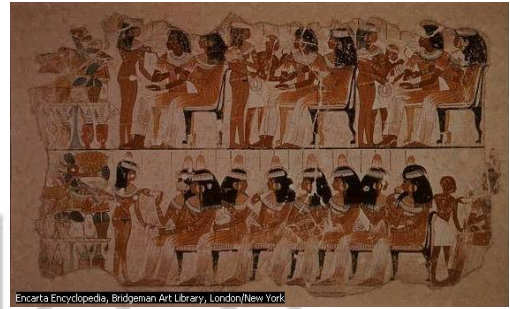


Plate 2.12: Egyptian tomb painting



Plate 2.13: Uli designs of Igbos of Nigeria.  
([www.africa.si.edu](http://www.africa.si.edu)).



Plate 2.14: Sirigu wall painting

Willet (1994) asserts that the Dogons of the Niger bend do decorate their rectangular houses and tube-like granaries with vertical and rectangular relief works similar to those appearing on their masks. Uli art, among the Igbos of Nigeria is done on the body of women and on domestic walls (Plate 2.13) – a move to reflect and enforce feminine power of nurture and care in the domestic environment as the Sothos of South Africa (Riep, 2005). In a similar vein, “Ndebele women of South Africa apply painted versions of their beaded initiation attire to the exterior walls of their compound dwellings to maximize the communicative effects of the initiation beads they wear” (Aronson, 1991: 565-566) The traditional African woman sees her role in the community as essential and indispensable, which must therefore be preserved from one generation to another.

Courtney-Clarke in her brilliant work gives some sources of the paint, prepared and used across Africa in these wall paintings. She recounts that, “yellow chalk-like pigment is a primary colour in wall painting and is found near water throughout West Africa (Clarke, 1990: 102).” She continues; “Red, black and ochre soils abundant throughout Africa are ground into a fine powder and then mixed with water to form a paste” (Clarke, 1990: 149). Anaba (1995) explains that in southern Ghana mural decorations were employed to beautify important structures such as palaces, shrines and headquarters of Asafo companies. The Author revealed that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century a mural school was established to offer training to indigenous court artists in Asante. Anquandah (2006) reports that white paint was derived from mollusc shells, sourced from oceans streams or lagoons for the painting of upper part of traditional buildings. Red ochre was also used for the lower part.

### **2.16 Leather painting**

Asubonteng (2010), in his extensive work done on leather reveals that the trade was introduced in Ghana by Trans-Saharan traders, but it was Hausa peasant settlers from Northern Nigeria who actually established it. The author reports that their initial establishment was at the Coast, specifically in Accra and subsequently moved hinterland to Kumasi and further to Tamale and Bolgatanga, even Bauku, Nandom and Pusiga. For what might trigger this back rout of settlement towards the North, He explains it to be by reason of accessibility to skins and hides for the vast grassland which allows for the tending of livestock on a large scale.

Hides and skins collectively known as pelt have to be treated and transformed from their initial state before it could become useful leather. The pelt is carried through three different operations.

Namely; 1, Beam house operation 2, Tan-yard operation and 3, Finishing-yard operations. Though traditional people may not have designated their activities under such technical rubrics, they employed simple local technics to achieve similarly needed results. Under the beam house operation, dealers immerse pelts in baths of saturated lime and other “sharpeners” in order to give the initial cleaning for pelts. At the tan-yard operation, pelts are treated further, in the case of traditional folks local vegetables like acacia nilotica are employed in order to transform the pelts from decomposable material to non-decomposable, when the material could then be called leather. Finishing-yard operations, usually called post-tanning techniques focuses on inducing additional properties desired in the leather to make it more applicable for its intended use (Asubonteng, 2010). With the understanding that leather is prepared for specific end use, it is only reasonable that specific treatments would be induced to make it more appropriate for that use; in the traditional context. Leather has a very broad usage; saddles, bottles, bags, sandals and shoes, purses, talismans, amulets, hats, foot-rests, furniture, drums, clothes, head-rest, and more.

In terms of colour effects seen on leather, I describe two of them; white and black. I reserve the third colour which is red for the third chapter where it is appropriately dilated in context. One observes cream (white), black and red. The white or cream results from the natural leather purged of all pigments. This is the finished leather without any colour application.

Black colour on leather is achieved by means of either immersing the whole leather in a concentrated bath of *asidro*, or inscribing with the pigment using a pointed metal tool. This gives a partial design with the negative parts left in white. *Asidro* is ferrous metal pieces immersed in lime, palm-wine or pito solution and left to stand for a week or two. The result is golden brown to black colour that could render watercolour effect of transparency on white paper.

## 2.17 Body Painting

Apart from paint used in the painting of domestic walls, other paint sources were explored in addition to the ones already mentioned by Africans for painting on the body as hinted earlier. The human body is probably the oldest painting support. It is difficult to find one culture today whose people did not or do not practice this form of art in one way or the other. Among some ethnicities in Africa, body painting is combined with scarification and cicatrices and other body markings. An example is of Bena women in Nigeria (Aronson, 1991). Body painting is practiced among several other cultures across Africa. Ndebele body painting is done in South Africa. Henna dye is also much used (Kreamer, 2010), and in other countries in Africa. Uli body painting is done among Nigerian Igbo women, using 'edo', a yellow chalk-like pigment usually found by water bodies. Krobo and Ga women in Ghana use vegetable sources of paint during the celebration of certain cultural rites (Antubam, 1963).

Body painting is a form of body art that is an integral aspect of most cultures. Generally people do body paintings for body adornments, rituals, entertainment, and identification.

Marijke (2005: 261) explains that a mixture of "boa", some leaves and white clay are mashed together and sprinkled unto "*dipo*" girls for decoration. *Dipo* girls with sprinkled mixture of "boa" leaves and white clay. Jefferson (1993), in offering an anthropological perspective to the practice stated that:

Painting and staining the body may have resulted from the simple impulse to beautify, though in some cases decoration has a ritualistic or protective purpose. In many tribes the body is oiled and covered with colour for ceremonial dances while some groups, the Hottentots for instance, practice body paintings to keep off insects, without any evident decorative reason. In addition body painting may be employed to terrify the enemy or to serve in a charm-like capacity to ward off evil or danger (p. 120).

The body paintings associated with these reasons obviously involve temporal application of pigment, some pigments however stay for a number of days while others, and particularly tattoo is a permanent form of body painting.

The Igbo of south western Nigeria, as mentioned earlier practice a form of body painting known as Uli (Plate 2.22). Different plant species that provide coloured liquid from their seed are used to make uli designs. Women would use a sliver of wood or the tip of a knife to apply the paint, which stains the skin for approximately eight days.

Typically, the designs were described as elegant as they travelled around different parts of the body. It was said that the artist's desire was to create harmony, clarity, and precise marks that were compatible with the body, all of which remarked on a woman's morality and beauty... It must be noted here that although the "Uli" designs are temporal, the stains left on the skin last for about eight days before it fades away.

When it comes to body painting, the Surma are genuine artists (Plate 2.23). They see their skin as the canvas of a painter, a medium to express themselves in paint. The patterns vary from warrior figures to frighten their enemies, to decorations to seduce the other sex. Men are seen as the better artists than their female counterparts. Adult men paint their entire bodies with white clay. In general, Surma men go naked and decorate their whole body. Some in solid white and others in stripes or waves.

Osei (2002: 57) states that "when Asantes lose very close relatives, the deceased is smeared with red clay on the foreheads which is smeared to reach the shoulders. This is also done by chief mourners".

## 2.18 Body Painting Among the Krobos of Ghana

Rites of passage are marked by initiation or separation rites which inducts an individual into his or her new status (Huber, 1993). He further states that “there is a special feature deeply rooted in Krobo ritual which in some way reveals the idea of initiation...” (p. 136). In all the ceremonies that mark the transition from one stage to the other “mime” (Plate 2.15) is used for body painting (Plate 2.16). *Nguo* is also used in some cases but mostly by traditional leaders and during some rites that mark the *Dipo* custom.

Body painting is an integral part of the ritual culture of the Krobos as most ceremonies are accompanied with body paintings. These ceremonies range from fertility rites and naming ceremonies to initiation rites and ‘fetish’ rites among others.

In the performance of a conception and pregnancy ritual, white clay is used at the final stage Huber (1993:140), “to complete the ceremony, the woman was ritually washed and marked with dots of white clay”; “when a girl menstruates during “dipo”, it is seen as a blessing and she is smeared with white clay” (Marijke 2005, 251).

Teyegaga (1985) reaffirms that the forehead, temples, breast, shoulders, arms and legs of initiates are decorated with dots of white clay (Plate 2.17 and 2.18) before the sacred stone ceremony prior to a pregnancy test. Reddish clay locally known as *boa*, blood from animal sacrifice, red cam wood, special dyes called *boa*, soot from smoke, charcoal, talcum powder are used. Millet which is a traditional meal of the Krobo people is also used as a body painting medium on some occasions (Plate 2.19). During the celebrations of the *ngma Yemi* festival (millet eating) millet paste is applied on the traditional priest. “... after some have been offered to the deity and with the rest besmearing their foreheads, *kone adzuemi ehi* (that their minds be sober) their breast... *kone atswi mi edzo* (that their hearts be gentle) and the size of their body *kone ana hewami*

*saminya* (that they become strong and healthy)” (Huber, 1993: 255)., “...another assistant thereupon marks each candidate’s forehead, temples, breast, shoulders, arms and legs with boia powder of a reddish sandstone and in some places also with milletflour... (Huber, 1993: 175).



Plate 2.15: *Mime*

Plate 2.16: Body painting.

Source: Photographed by Researcher.





Figure 2.17: Girl with *mime* celebrating victory. ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))



Plate 2.18: Girl with *mime* on her body. ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))



Plate 2.19: Krobo girls going through initiation. (www.flickr.com)



Plate 2.20: Body painting. (Johannes Stötter)



Plate 2.21: Body painting with five figures. (Johannes Stötter)

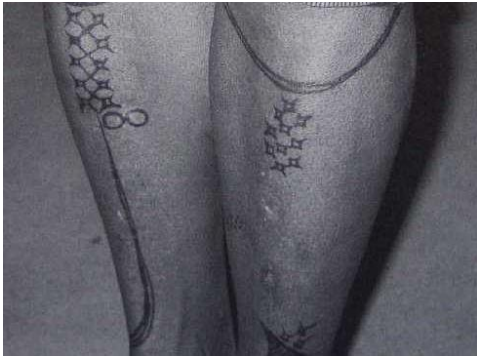


Plate 2.22: Uli' designs ([www.africa.si.edu](http://www.africa.si.edu)). Plate 2.23: Surma body painting. (Beckwith 2012)

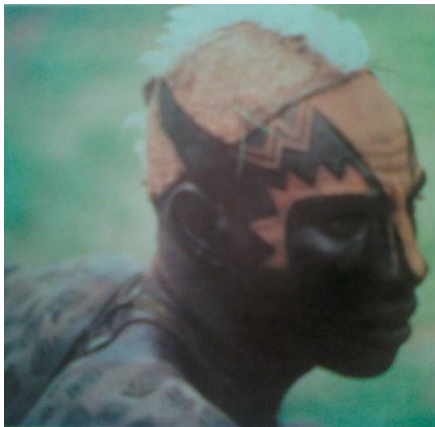


Plate 2.24: A Nuber man.. (Beckwith..., 2012) Plate 2.25: Mechanical tattoos ([www.tattoolove.org](http://www.tattoolove.org))

## **2.19 Body painting for health**

Body painting has sometimes been done for the purpose of direct healing or to enhance health. The association between health and body painting has a long history in indigenous medicine and hence could not be overlooked. Body parts that ache, swell (mumps), or develop rashes are dotted or smeared with charcoal mixed with red clay or the appropriate herbal mixture. It is said that in order to dance vigorously for hours, some Akan traditional priests and priestesses smeared their legs with a paste processed from the root of a particular tree.

Schildkrout (2006) sums the concept of body painting better that;

There is no culture in which people do not or did not paint, pierce, tattoo, reshape, or simply adorn their bodies. Fashions change and forms of body art come and go, but people everywhere do something or other to package their appearance. No sane or civilized person goes out in the raw; everyone grooms, dresses, or adorns some part of their body to present to the world (p. 56).

This and more including some elaborate body paintings (for the purpose of exhibition) are captured above in Plates 2.20 to 2.25.

## **2.20 Hearth Painting**

Schneider (1999) alludes to the word in reference to the nature and elements of Palaeolithic home setting, since fire had been in use some 600, 000 years earlier. The use of the hearth today in many rural and traditional homes in Ghana is a survival of a means of cooking since the era of the cave man. It was first used as three stones with dry sticks set between the spaces to set fire for cooking. The stones served as props that supported what was being cooked to receive maximum heat.

Ancient homes had hearths in either enclosed or open kitchens with its structure transforming from simple stones to more permanent clay-moulded props, a clear indication of change from a previously nomadic life. Later, it appeared in the traditional Ghanaian kitchen with still further

changes making it more useful and lasting by creatively building it in multiples, close to one of the four walls of the kitchen, in order to be able to set more than one pot on it at a given time. To prevent the clay from cracking, a mixture of clay paint is used on it daily before setting fire in it.

Whether in an open or enclosed kitchen, traditional *Akan* women delight themselves in the early morning painting of their hearths before setting fire to cook. Where the hearth is located in a kitchen, painting of the hearth extends to the floor as well as half way up the wall where it is set. By the same approach non cemented floors of traditional homes are kept smooth and tidy.

Clarke (1990:135), captures a scenic arrangement of calabashes and pots in the home of “Akanjaglie Kwame of Wiaga” (Plate 2.26) Northern Region, in the process, she brings to us vivid pictures of a kind of traditional hearth, where the two sets of pots are found resting.

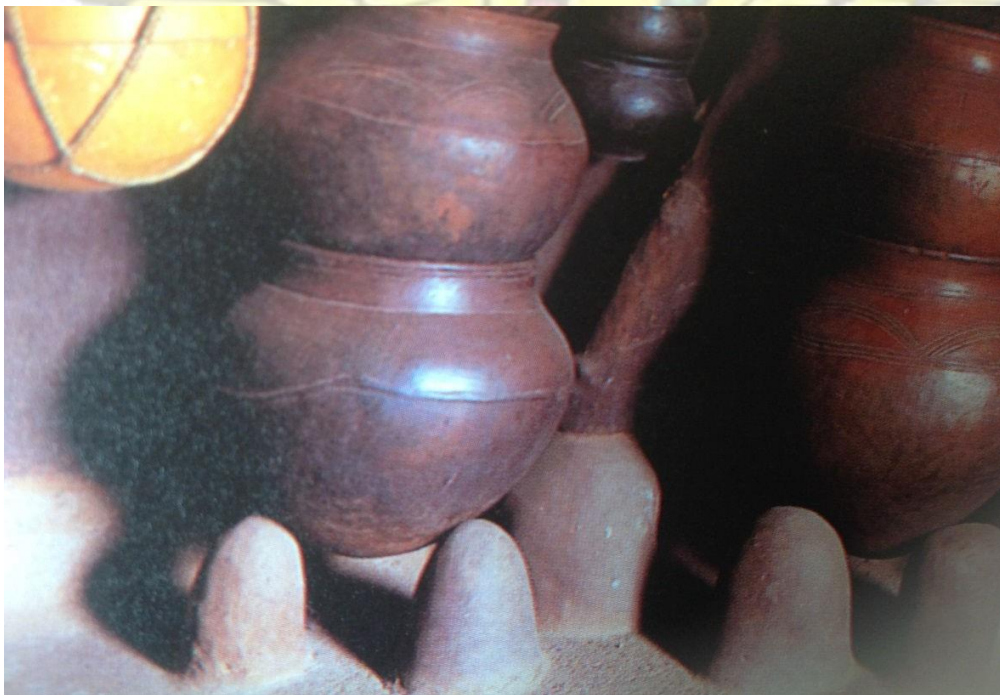


Plate 2.26: Pots arranged on hearths. (Courtney C. 1990)

## 2.21 Textiles and pigments applied

The oral tradition of most ethnicities in Ghana report of the use of *Kyɛnkyɛn* – back cloth (Antiaris), as cloth. The bark of the tree when removed is softened by soaking in water; it is then beaten on wood with a wooden mallet until the texture of a soft thick cloth is achieved. Woven, dyed, painted (Cole & Ross, 1977), and printed textiles were all practiced by Africans. Anquandah (2006) refers to Early kente weaving by Ashantis which was blue and white. The indigo plant comes to mind. A widespread plant introduced from Sierra Leone to Cameroon and even Equatorial Guinea. Lovejoy (2000) cites the cultivation of the indigo plant among other vegetable and tree crops by slaves on African plantations. It is reported by Schumach and Thonn

(1954), to have been particularly cultivated in Sierra Leone and Ghana. The Baule of central Cote d' Ivoire heavily use it in dyeing cloths. The South Western Nigerians refer to the indigo plant as *elu* using it in a kind of batik technique dyeing. In Sierra Leone the *Gara cloth* result from dyeing a locally woven cotton cloth called “country cloth” that has a wide local use and export base. It was an art, taught Temme women in Kabala-the Northern Province of Sierra Leone by Madinka traders who knew about it through their commerce with the people of Guinea.

Clarke confirms that, Mali women painted the “mud cloth” - Bogolan fini (Plate 2.27) using a dark liquid obtained from boiling the bark of the *wolo* tree and leaves of the *n'golama* tree. A strongly toned chequered cloth results after a series of painting layers upon layers, interspersed with washing and coating with gray black mud over the yellow brown pattern, till the dark part become pitch black sharply contrasting with the background (Courtney-Clarke, 1990: 140-143). This directly compares with “adinkra cloth” in Ghana by Ashantis, the only difference being the stamping process instead of direct painting by Malian women.

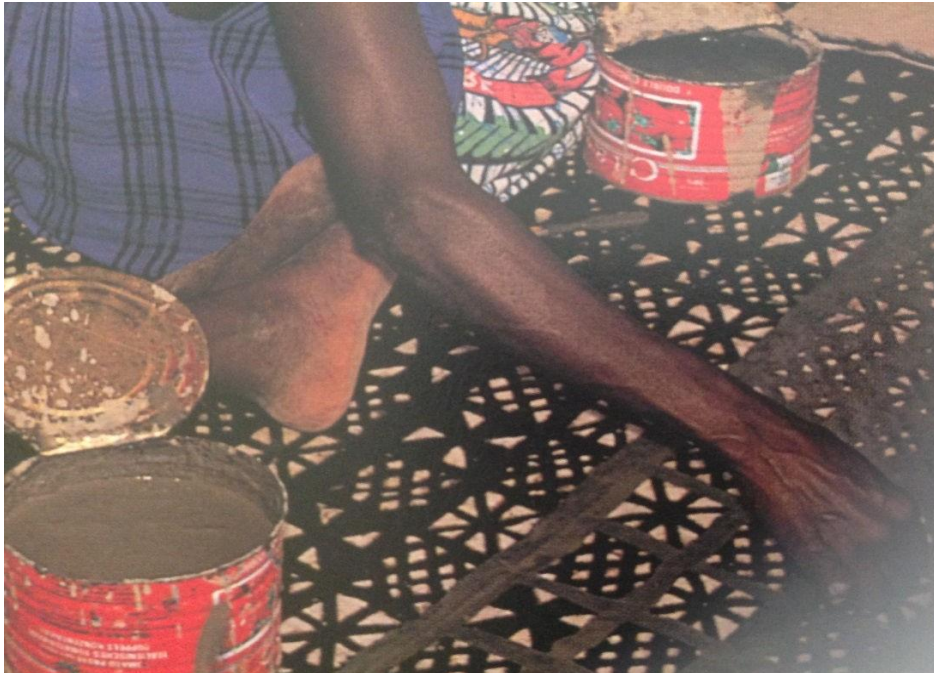


Plate 2.27: Bogolan Fini cloth design in progress. (Courtney C. 1990)

Adu-Akwaboa (1994), confirms that before the introduction of weaving in Ghana, many used the bark of trees for clothing with the *kyenkyen* tree (*antiaris Africana*) being the commonest of the barks. The author corroborates that the process involved the beating of the bark with clubs or sticks to loosen their fibres, after which it is washed, dried and beaten again to soften it before finally being used.

The author reveals that the indigenous textile industry has been carried out by the Asantes, Ewes, and the people of the Northern part of Ghana. Ashantis produce the popular *Kente*, and the Ewes, the Ewe *Kete*, woven especially among the *Anlos* of the Keta lagoon area, as well as those in Kpetoe and Kpando. The Northerners on the other hand produced the *Fugu* cloth. The *Kente* and *Fugu* were both woven fabrics. The Ashanti's however produced other fabrics like the dark brown *Kuntunkuni*,

the brick-red *Kobene* and the black *Brisi* which are dyed fabrics, the *Ntiamuu* or *Adinkra* which is hand stamped with Adinkra designs and the *Nwomuu* which is made up of large strips of cotton cloth hand-sewn together with coloured yarns. Other kinds of Adinkra cloths exist which are not suggestive of funerary cloths on the bases of their colours which is characterized by light or bright backgrounds and they are *Kwasiada Adinkra* or Sunday Adinkra and means fanciful wear and suitable for festive occasions or even daily wear.

The story traditionally run that, the king of Gyaman named Adinkra, annoyed the *Asante Hene* (King of Ashanti) by making a replica of the sacred Golden Stool of Ashanti, and for that reason war was declared on him. He was captured wearing the Adinkra cloth. The Ashanti's later forced the war prisoners of the Gyamans to teach them the technique of making this fascinating cloth. Another version run that, after conquering Kofi Adinkra, the *Gyaman Hene* the designs were found on his stool after bringing it to Kumasi. The Ashanti's are currently the sole producers of the Adinkra prints. The Adinkra cloth was originally a woven cotton fabric dyed with *Kuntunkuni* a local dye processed from the bark of the *Badie* tree and stamped with a variety of Adinkra designs.

Traditionally, the cloth was used exclusively by royalty and spiritual leaders for very important sacred ceremonies and rituals. The printing process entails stamping one symbol at a time onto large sheets of cotton cloth. The stamps are cut from pieces of calabash and the dye, *Adinkra aduro*, is prepared by boiling the bark of *Badie* together with iron slag. Originally the Adinkra cloth was printed on the ground, however today raised platforms with sack coverings act as the printing table. In addition to its traditional sacred usage, today Adinkra cloth is also used to make clothing for such special occasions as festivals, church-going, weddings, naming ceremonies and initiation rites.

## 2.22 Gourd or Calabash Art in Ghana

Calabash or gourd art come in either painted or pyrography, that is burnt designs on the surface of wood or calabash (Plate 2.28). The art is common today in Ghana and in many places around the continent of Africa.

Cole and Ross (1977: 220), refer to a pyrographic calabash hat from Bolgatanga in Northern Ghana (Plate 2.29). The *Anlos* of the Volta Region of Ghana are particularly noted to have practiced the art in a different vein as one of their traditional art forms.

Although the *Anlos* generally perceive it as a medium that link the living with their ancestors and to the land of the dead, the individual in whose name the *Kla* (Plate 2.30) is prepared should have a strong belief that the medium has influence on his existence on earth. The *Anlos* who are said to practice the art process it by using blue or black and white pigments to draw intersecting stripes with dots. The work is eventually covered with fishing net and hanged on the wall of the owner's room.



Plate 2.28: Decorated calabash from the Northern part of Ghana. (Cole & Ross, 1977)



Plate 2.29: A decorated calabash  
(Cole & Ross, 1977)

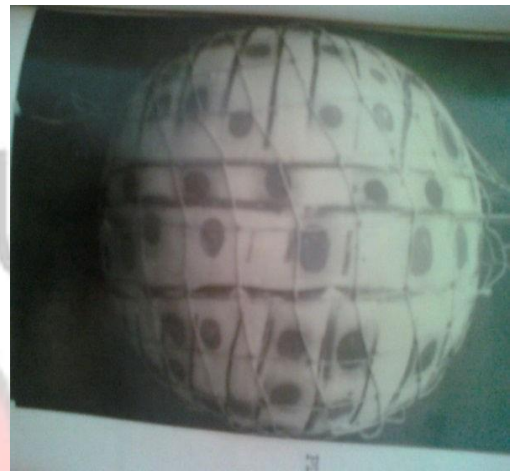


Plate 2.30: A kla covered with net.  
(Cole & Ross, 1977)

The Anlos, settling eventually at Anloga are said to be one of two, and later splinter groups that wholly migrated from Oyo in the Yoruba Kingdom of western Nigeria, about the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The Blu and Uifeme ethnicities sprung among the Anlos after settling in their present location in the Volta Region - Anloga.

The term *Blu* as used by the Anlo Ewes today, in reference to the entire Akan or other communities not rooted in Ewe line of descent. Therefore, a child whose father is not originally an Anlo but descended from aliens is *Blu*. Descendants of aliens, such as the Akans, Krobos and Gas that were assimilated into the Anlo culture through wars and other activities were the original members identified as the *Blu* people. A similar group are the *Uifemeawos*, which literally means 'people from *Ui's* household'. The story runs that a woman called *Ui* welcomed a band of strangers into her house. These people lived courteously with their benefactor for several years, intermarrying over several generations, they became intergrated into the Anlo society.

Every Anlo belongs by hereditary to a clan or *Hlo*. They are divided into fifteen patrilineal clans. Membership in a *Hlo* is mainly of descendants from the same paternal ancestor; membership is also acquired on grounds other than hereditary. All the clans have their ancestral homes at Anloga with the exception of only the *Tsofowo* and *Xetsopeawo*. Each clan or *Hlowo* has a governing council which consists of a head; a custodian of the clan's property in trust. The membership of a clan imposes certain obligations and taboos.

### *Clans of Anlo*

Clans ( <i>Hlowo</i> )	Location ( <i>Kponu</i> ) <i>Hanuhanu</i>
1. Lape	Agave
2. Amlade	Lashibi
3. Dzovia	Agave
4. Bate	Lashibi
5. Bame	Agave
6. Ame	Lashibi
7. Like	Lashibi
8. Tovie	Agave
9. Klevie	Lashibi
10. Dzevie	Agave
11. Blu	Lashibi

12. Tsiamé	-	Agave
13. Agave	-	Agave
14. Wipeme	-	Lashibi
15. Xetsope	-	Lashibi

They may be divided into two groups according to the observances of funeral rites. Those in the first group- *Lafeawo, Ameawo, Likeawo, Toviawo, Kleviawo and Xetsopeawo* are called *Nkekekpuicawo* or short period clans because of the usual night long vigil for a deceased who is a member of any of these clans is held on the fourth day, counting from the day of burial. The fifth day is set aside for ritual and prayers of parting for the dead – *yopopo*. The second group, *Nkenkelegbetawo* or long periods clans, which consists of *Tsiameawo, Agaveawo, Dzeviawo, Uifemeawo and Bluawo*. In the case of this group, the customary observances are held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> days. The *Wifemeawo* and the *Bluawo*, however perform their rites on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> days. The Dzevi, Uefeme and the Blu clans share common practices and taboos. Generalizing, these clans referred to as alien clans. However the Blu is regarded as more alien than any other of the above named.

Though the detailed histories of these ethnicities were hardly captured in writing, most are remembered in songs and mythologies. In a dance known as *Halo*, much hostility is displayed against members of other clans. Songs revealing the origin of some of these clans are sung in a very offensive language, feature members of the other clans are expected to reciprocate. This could sometimes have disastrous repercussions and in recent years this practice has been banned in order to preserve peace during these sessions. It is strongly believed that nearly all (if not all) these clans came into being after the migration from Notsie.

## 2.23 Pottery

Traditional potters in Ghana are universally female since traditional times, who employ freehand in making excellent pots. All the pots in Plate 2.32 and 2.33 were produced by freehand as shown in Plate 2.31. The practice has remained so without any adaptation to technological gadgets. The practitioners believe that their industry is a religious gift from God handed down to them by the ancestors and should not be tainted by modern adaptations, even if modern tools and techniques will mean greater efficiency and productivity (Anquandah, 2006). Osei (2002) describes how utensils used in cooking the foodstuffs were locally made in those days. The people moulded the bowls for cooking with the local clay. “They fetched the clay, treated it and moulded it into the cooking bowls, cooking pots, water pots, water coolers and other clay containers...” (p.146). In the past there were some locally made utensils which were used in storing food and were used during ceremonies such as marriage ceremony, funerals and others. It was decorated with different kinds of paints or colours to make shine and preserved it for a long period. The containers for cooking and other things come in different forms or shapes.

According to Antubam (1963)

...traditional pottery in Ghana follows certain set patterns of form-oval, circle, semicircle, symbolically, oval shapes are for pots used for cleaning and hence the Akan Ghanaian *kutu* (traditional washing pot) and *Akotokywa* (the palm wine container) have the oval shape. The circle which is the symbol used to represent all things sacred and pertaining to God and petty gods, is looked upon in pottery as the source of continuity of life and therefore used as for *ahina* (the container for drinking water)... (p. 149).

Pottery painting in the Ghanaian traditional society is acquired through many means. Some apply the paints or colours to the pot when it is fired whilst others too burn the pot to gain the colours.

Painting the surface of the pot with paints or colours is normally done in the northern and some other parts of Ghana. In the south, most of the pottery wares are not painted but rather, fired to acquire their colour.

Anquandah (1982) observes;

...Painting as a form of decoration was often executed as an overall coating but sometimes it was executed in linear patterns, in an early variety of this tradition, impressed decoration in zones and incised decoration were executed side by side with design-painting. In a later variety of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, painting in geometrical patterns and occasionally naturalistic designs was affected on a slip background. It is in its slip and painted pottery tradition that northern Ghana stands out as a cultural, are distinct from the regions further south. The southern areas known to have had slip or painted ceramic traditions in antiquity are Begho, Bono Manso and old Wenchi. These southern traditions reflect both acculturation and direct export of these wares from northern Ghana to the northern Akan markets... (p. 122).

Ghanaian traditional society pottery is gender oriented. The art is usually practiced by women.

It remains so on account that its domestic nature ties in well with the traditional role of women.

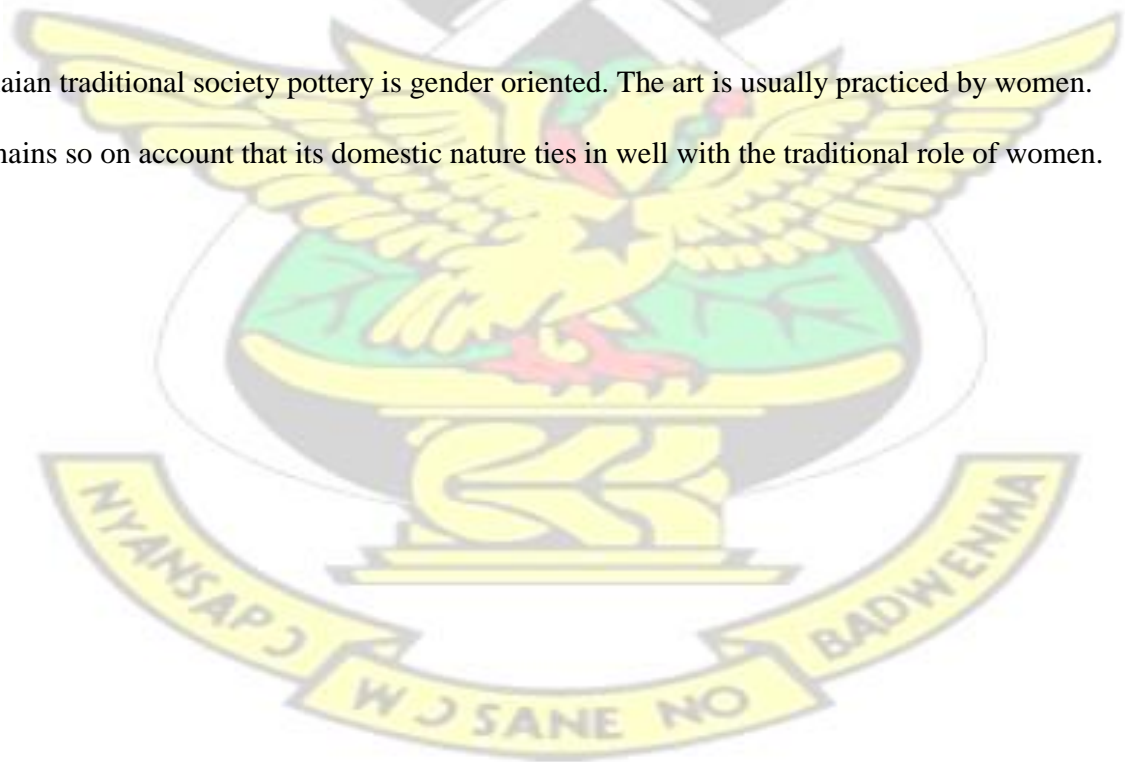
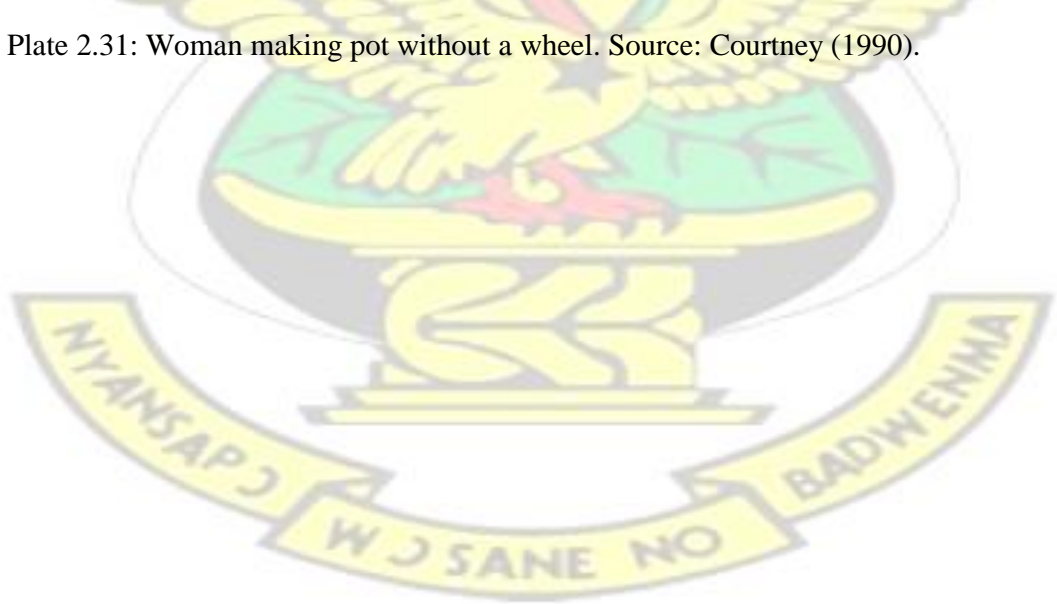




Plate 2.31: Woman making pot without a wheel. Source: Courtney (1990).

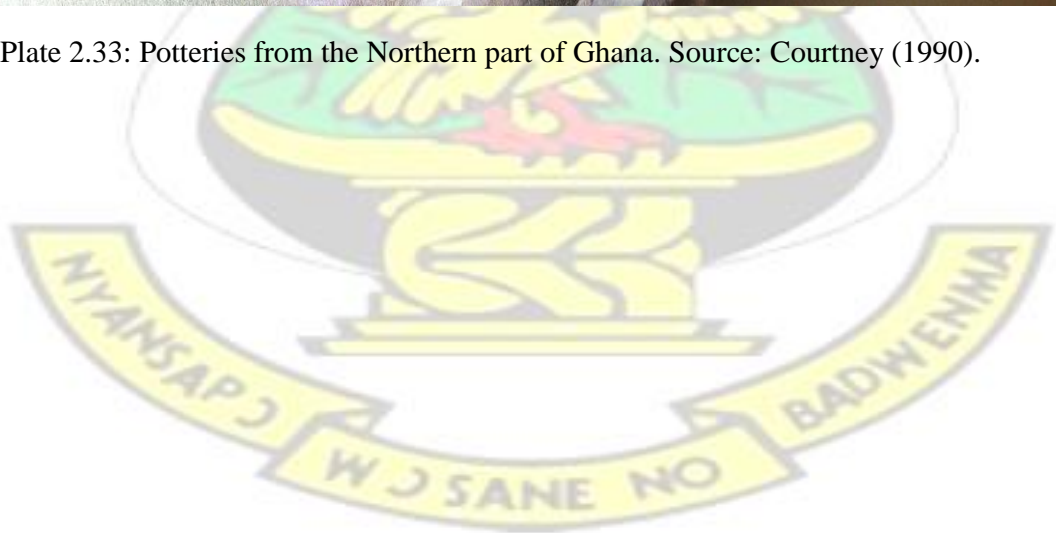




Plates 2.32: Some pottery collections from the Upper East Region. Source: Photographed by Researcher.



Plate 2.33: Potteries from the Northern part of Ghana. Source: Courtney (1990).



## 2.24 Stool Painting

Asantes boast of the creative skills that made them unique even before the white man docked on the shores of West Africa. Such skills at carving could be seen in the making of the stool which is free from the punches of nails and drills.

The use of the stool is not relegated to the palace alone, but to the entire household of the Akan traditional society. The stool has been the seat for all household chores and for the reception of guests as well.

There are several kinds of stools: Firstly the ordinary white stools carved from the *sese* and *Nyamedua* wood which are both white wood. Besides the periodic washing and white-washing, which the Akan decency and self-respect demand, nothing much is done to these domestic stools.

There are the silver stools; ‘white stools’ which are stools which have been entirely plated with silver. These stools are not commonly found.

Still rare is the one which form the third group under the name; the Golden stools. It is the title that identifies the highest stool of the Asante Kingdom, which is not allowed to be replicated.

Stools are also classified according to the sex of the user. There are men’s stools and women stools these are usually presented by a bride-groom to his bride. And there are stools used by both men and women.

The social status of the persons who use a stools for official purposes, affords still a third division of stools. We have the *Ahennwa* (chief's stool) the *Ahemmaadwa* (queen's stool) and the *Adammadwa* (literally put, the two-penny stool i.e. the poor man's stool).

Priests who are known to play vital religious roles in the state have their special stools with single centre supports, and so have certain attendants in the palace, e.g. the Padlock stool is used by the chief's spokesman.

A further category of the stool is provided by the names given to them. There are special types of stools which more or less serves as the patterns for the carvers. Five of these stool-models are: The porcupine stool upon which sits the members of the chief's council; the moon stool, used by ordinary people of either sex; the Draught board stool, the Amulet stool and the Leopard stool (Sarpong 1971).

One creative skill exhibited in the making of the stool is that it is carved out directly from a log with all its joints carefully fashioned out by the carver without nailing or gluing whatsoever.

The stool among the *Akans* could be classified into two categories;

- a) Stools meant for domestic activities
- b) Stools used for rulership and governance.

The stools used for political purposes are the *Ahennwa*, the chief's stool and *Ahemmaadwa*, the queen's stool.

The reverence of the stool stems from its traditional symbols but the power of the stool lies in the pigment that adorns its appearance coupled by the prayers and libation that are poured on the stool during every *Adae* a forty-day period in the *Akan* traditional calendar. It is this pigment

application that gave the stool its name as the Black Stool. It should however be noted that it is not all stools in the palace that get painted or blackened; only stools of significance get this honour.

And by stool of importance the reference is on stools that commemorate an ancestor of great importance. The question that is usually asked is what comprises the pigment of the blackness of the Black stool? Labi (1993) includes gun powder in his mixture without mentioning spider's web as against that of Nana Frimpong.

## 2.25 Sculpture Painting

The traditional sculptor or carver did occupy a very important place as regards works contributed to the repertoire of traditional art forms. In addition to carving stools, he carved drums, deity and initiation masks, ancestral figurines, games, linguists' staff, sword handles, handles for agricultural implements, and even domestic utensils.

Extracting pigments and dyes from botanical sources for purposes such as staining sculpture and dyeing cloth should be among the things that traditional men and women experimented with. It should therefore not be strange to find them adapting colour media encountered through Hausa trans-Saharan-traders to their local needs. Colours such as sorghum leaves, asidro and indigo dye. Painting or staining of sculpture was explored by traditional Ghanaian artists possibly using extract from the *brisi*, or the wild indigo plant that commonly grew in West Africa (Plate 2.34 and 2.35). Schuman and Thonn (1954), report that the *gara* or West Africa wild indigo plant was extensively cultivated in Sierra Leone and Ghana, and widely used in several countries in West Africa. They refer to its multiple usefulness thus; "...used to dye blue to blue-black cotton cloth,

bark cloth (formerly), raffia and other vegetable fibres, leather, hair and wood carvings. Cole and Ross (1977: 108), present one of the best example of sculpture works painted with this dye in their book, entitled; “Queen Mother with Child seated in *Asipim* Chair” (Plate 2.35).

# KNUST





Plate 2.34: Sculpture piece possibly finished with indigo dye. Source: Cole and Ross (1977).



Plate 2.35: Queenmother with child seated on asipim chair; possibly finished with indigo dye. Source: Cole and Ross (1977).

## 2.26 Summary

Paint is a ubiquitous element in most art forms, and ancient art of Africa and traditional art of Ghana were no exception. As observed since Palaeolithic times, people expressed themselves through appropriate media sourced from their environment. This obviously was the practice through the ancient Saharan culture, ancient Egyptian kingdoms, persisting through the migration of ancient kingdoms and during their settlement in West Africa. In order to set a fitting focus for the study, the traditional period of Ghana was located, and established as between 1000 BC and 1400 BC.

It was found that on domestic architecture walls, human body, hearth, and calabash, clay of various hues and treatments were used to paint on their surfaces. Whiles textile and pottery, were printed and painted with the substance processed and extracted from certain tree backs or roots, beside the southern technique of firing to acquire other colour tones on the pottery. In stool painting we find an interesting combination of either spider's web, sooth and blood from sheep mixed together to form one medium or the use of kaolin mixed with water to paint stools. Other extracts from plants as well as the indigo dye were useful for painting or staining wood sculpture, leather and vegetable fabric. It is understandable that, clay, being an abundant and ready deposit, would dominate in the medium for paint in traditional art of Ghana.

The review demonstrates that the art practiced then, which was deeply woven into the fabric of the cultural life of the people was rife with the use of paint and various colorants in several different ways.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHODOLOGY

# KNUST

### 3.1 Overview

This section looks at the blueprint for the research. The preparations prior to work on the field, as well as the actual work done among the different groups of people in the two regions selected. In all there were 23 respondents. The study was guided by a constructivist paradigm, and based upon a qualitative approach. Other areas considered in this chapter are; Research design, Library research, Population for the Study, Sampling, Data collection Instruments, Types of data collected, Administration of Instruments and Data Analysis Plan.

### 3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 183). Researchers generally acknowledge four major paradigms – post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory and pragmatism (Creswell, 2007). This study was based upon a constructivist paradigm, which is hinged upon these ideas as sensitively captured in Shuhua Chen’s recent work; “(a) We make subjective meanings of our experiences” (b) “our meanings are diverse and multiple and (c) our meanings are formed by interaction with others and are shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts” (Chen, 2012: 35).

The following are the major philosophical and epistemological assumptions of constructivism as stated by Vrasidas (2000): (1) There is a real world that sets boundaries to what we can

experience. However, reality is local and there are multiple realities. (2) The structure of the world is created in the mind through interaction with the world and is based on interpretation. Symbols are products of culture and they are used to construct reality. (3) The mind creates symbols by perceiving and interpreting the world. (4) Human thought is imaginative and develops out of perception, sensory experiences and social interaction. (5) Meaning is a result of an interpretive process and it depends on the knowers' experiences and understanding (Cobb, 1994; Jonassen, 1992a; Philips, 1995). As the study progresses, I situate the constructivist assumptions within contextualism (Levison, 2007) to maintain the traditional context for the study.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The design of every good research is pivoted on the answering of certain salient questions; which questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results. Philliber et al. (1980), observe two things on which the best design for a research should be based; the research question as well as the orientation of the researcher. In considering the nature of research questions at stake, the work is best posited in the domain of what Robson (1993) calls flexible or what most writers refer to as 'qualitative' research design. However flexible design should not always be qualitative. The purpose for adopting a flexible research design is the freedom in data collection that it allows, and also the fact that the unit of interest in this kind of research is not quantitatively measurable. For instance the kind of colour pigments used by the Ashanti royalty in blackening their Royal stools cannot be measurably processed and therefore yields "unquantifiable facts" (Berg, 2007:8).

Having settled on a qualitative research design, the following methods were further adopted for this study: ethnographical and phenomenological, historical, and descriptive methods. I tackled

the study with different methods including ethnography since the data of interest could only be retrieved not only by detailed interviews but in certain cases the need to live among the people to observe and appreciate certain characteristics essential in their culture. It was phenomenological because I did not study a situation to derive an experiential knowledge of a phenomenon, but also, there was the need to understand how the people from the area of study understand and interpret the phenomenon thereby managing the “etic” “emic” balance. In Plates 3.36, 3.37 and 3.38. I engaged in pottery and painting in Sirigu style, under a local instructor as part of the means to integrate into the society. The history of the population had to be reviewed in order to appreciate the dynamics of the culture of the people, as well as determine the traditional period required for the study. Content analysis lends itself as a legitimate method for the study given the unit of study “paint” in its context of Ghanaian Traditional art. Finally, the descriptive approach was adopted to guide the narration of report on data for onward analysis and interpretation based upon aesthetic contextualism (Levison, 2007).

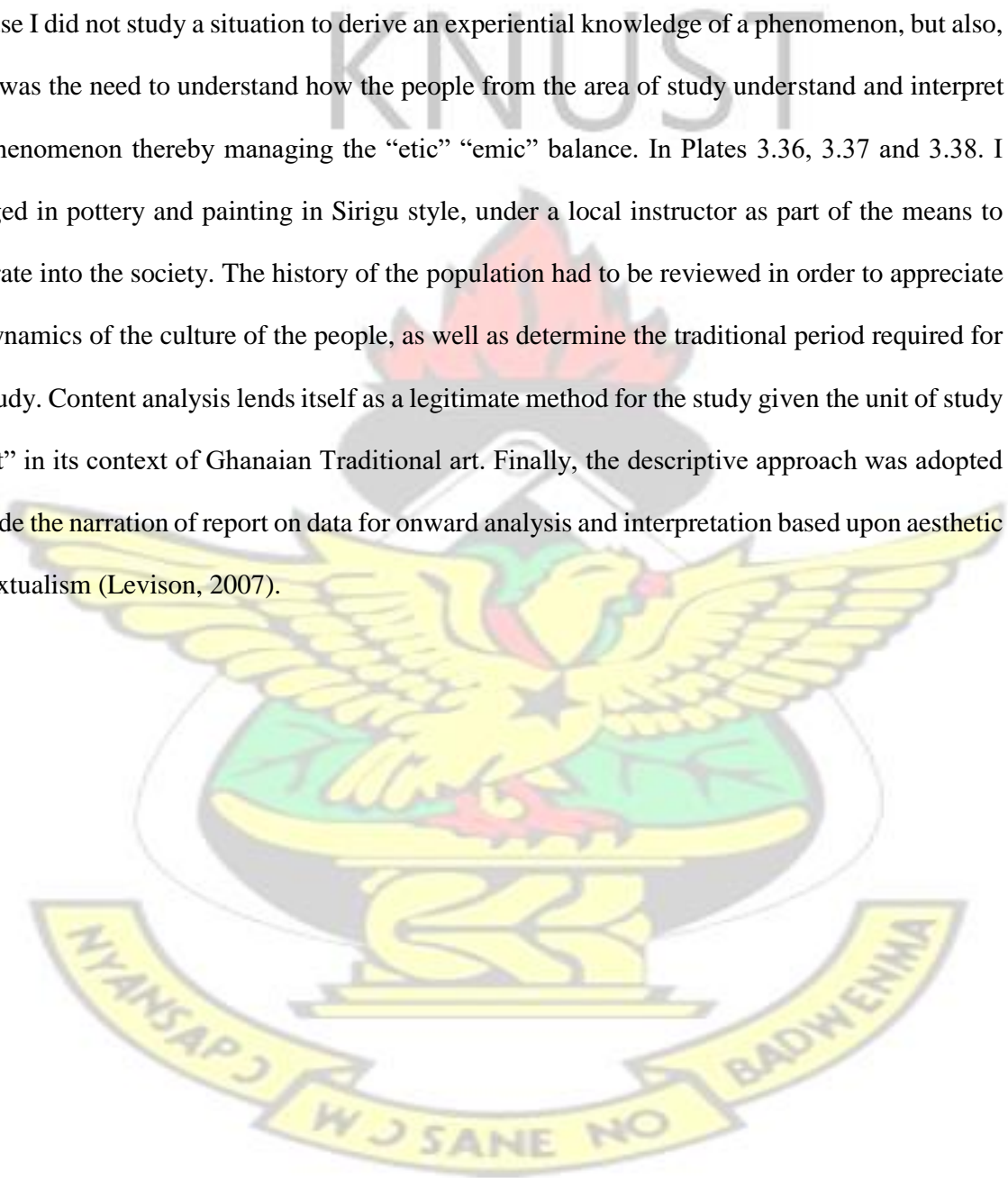




Plate 3.36: The researcher exploring Sirigu Painting styles at the SWOPA studio. Source: Photographed by Researcher.





Plate 3.37: Pottery workshop 1. Source: Photographed by Researcher.



Plate 3.38: Pottery workshop 2. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

### **3.4 Library Research**

Library research forms a major part of this work and it involves the summation and collection of existing research on the subject of inquiry. This contrasts with information sourced primarily from the field. It is referred to by other writers as desk or secondary research. In this study it was undertaken to determine available knowledge in the field as well as to inform appropriate design for the research. This extensive study falls under Chapter Two (Review of Related Literature). It includes sources from journals, books, published and unpublished thesis, and internet publications. The following libraries were visited; the Central Library of KNUST, College of Art Library, the Balme Library, and Institute of African Studies libraries at the University of Ghana Legon. Other facilities were visited for the purpose of this research apart from the libraries. These include Ghana National Archives in Kumasi and Accra, Ghana National Museum, Ghana Science Museum, Sirigu Women Centre, Sirigu, Bolgatanga Museum, the Prempeh Museum at the Centre for National Culture, and the Manhyia Palace Museum.

### **3.5 Population for the Study**

The population for the study are all found within Ghana. The four groups of people studied were all purposively selected from two regions of Ghana. They were selected on the basis of their connection with traditional paint “colour” medium being the unit of research. The first group of accessed, were from Sirigu community in the Upper East Region, which is the target population. The other four groups of respondents accessed were from Ahwiaa, Ntonso, Asokwah and Ayigya, all as target in the Ashanti Region.

### **3.6 Background to the Populations studied**

#### **3.6.1 Upper East – Sirigu**

Crossing the savannah belt to the north provides a fresher view of place and experience that partially explains the elaboration of the Northern population studied and its environment as against those down south where I have lived the most part of my life.



Plate 3.39: Map of Ghana showing the Upper East region in red

#### **3.6.2 Location and Climate**

Historical reconstructions in Ghana keep pointing to a good number of autochthonous ethnicities as indigenous to the land, against the traditions that speak of northern origins. The Kassena Nankana people, of which Sirigu (Plate 3.39) forms part may be among these earliest ethnicities.

Sirigu is well known for its traditional architecture, pottery and wall paintings (Haverkort, 2007). It is a village in the Upper East Region of Ghana, bordered in the north with Burkina Faso and with Togo in the East. The people of about 5,000 people are noted for their peasant farming and rich indigenous culture. The folks are warm and courteous to strangers, seeking to make guests comfortable. The area is annually faced with a very dry weather condition commonly called harmattan, which is caused by a north-easterly wind over the West coast of Africa, taking effect from November to May. The weather becomes cool and very dry with strong winds leaving cracks on the lips and heels of the people. June to October is the wet season where farming activities are done. Flood is easily encountered due to the consistent land topography (Plate 3.40). The building of large dams for rain water storage by farmers could be effective in checking flooding as well as providing water for farming during the lean season. The general landscape is less disturbed in terms of infrastructural development compared to the South. However, what bedevils the region currently is the indiscriminate felling of trees for the production of charcoal.





Plate 3.40: All flat nature of the Upper East landscape. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

### 3.6.3 Architecture

It is only reasonable to discuss the architecture of Sirigu people since the walls have remained, consistently, as support for their paintings as found in other parts of Africa (Plate 3.41). The architecture in this region exists as a result of the materials available in the environment, which is earth, and much of it everywhere else. Although one might encounter much rock in abundance at several other locations (I called them rock gardens), it is apparent that building in stone is not a cultural flare. The buildings are mostly in the form of what is locally known as compound (enclosed) houses as a result of the importance attached to larger families through polygamy. A man with several wives and children has the labour advantage of many hands to work the fields, to result in the wealth that is hoped to go with it.

One house may cover a land area of about twenty to thirty meters square. Set amidst a farm field. Looking at a house from the distance, one only sees a cluster of round and rectangular

shapes with conical thatch and flat roofs. Entering through the gates, one sees several rooms of about eight to fifteen in a circular or rectilinear form with several gates, barns and animal pens leaving a courtyard in the middle of the compound. The roofs of the circular rooms are made of thatch in a conical form. The rectangular rooms have ceilings made of roof beams, covered flat with mud on top resting on load bearing walls standing on a foundation of about 2ft. In most cases, windows are opened on the flat tops to allow sunshine and ventilation.

Short walls are built to join these structures to obtain an enclosed courtyard. The man of the house has a room in which he lives with either the senior or youngest wife. The rest of the wives have separate rooms and the man does visit each as and when necessary. The compound expands as the family size increases.

The building process which is commenced by libation is the sole responsibility of the men, and the women help in fetching water and preparation of food for the workers. Finishing of the walls is equally the sole responsibility of the women. The work in the background was done by Mme Asaase and Aputugna with their groups respectively (Plates 3.42 and 3.43).



Plate 3.41: Alina Tsotesi's Home, from van Wyk, Gary N. African Painted Houses: Basotho Dwellings of Southern Africa. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998. P. 42.



Plate 3.42: the Researcher with Mme Asaase in her home. Source: Photographed by Researcher.





Plate 3.43: Interviewing Mme Aputugna Akolibire with the help of Ferreol my interpreter. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

#### 3.6.4 Kumasi

Kumasi (Plate3.45) is the capital city of the Ashanti region, which shares boundaries with four other regions in Ghana; Brong Ahafo in the north, Eastern region, Central region in the south and Western region in the south west. Kumasi was founded by the *Asantehene* Osei Tutu in consultation with his senior priest and friend, Okomfo Anokye in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Adarkwa,

n.d). He extensively describes the city's flourishing beginnings covering just about two square kilometres on a rocky laterite hill with straight and wide streets in 1817. Sir Garnet Wolseley's war of 1874 brought Kumasi to its knees, followed by the razing of the town in 1896. Thus her glories were finally fallen by the British crown. In the years that followed up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kumasi gradually grew and regained an enviable place as the Garden City of West Africa. Four suburbs; Ntonso, Asokwa, Ahwiaa and Ayigya were studied for their traditional media (Plate 3.44).

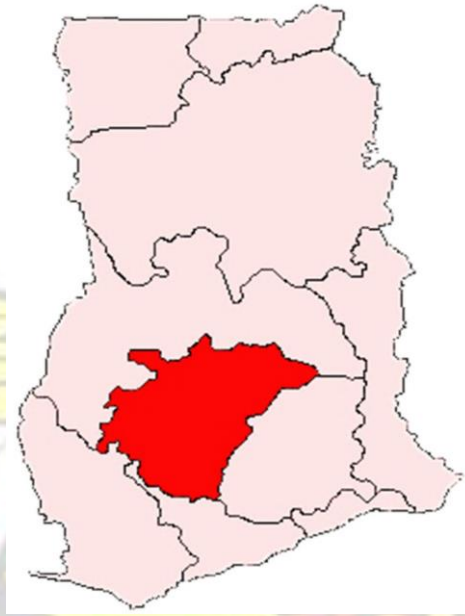


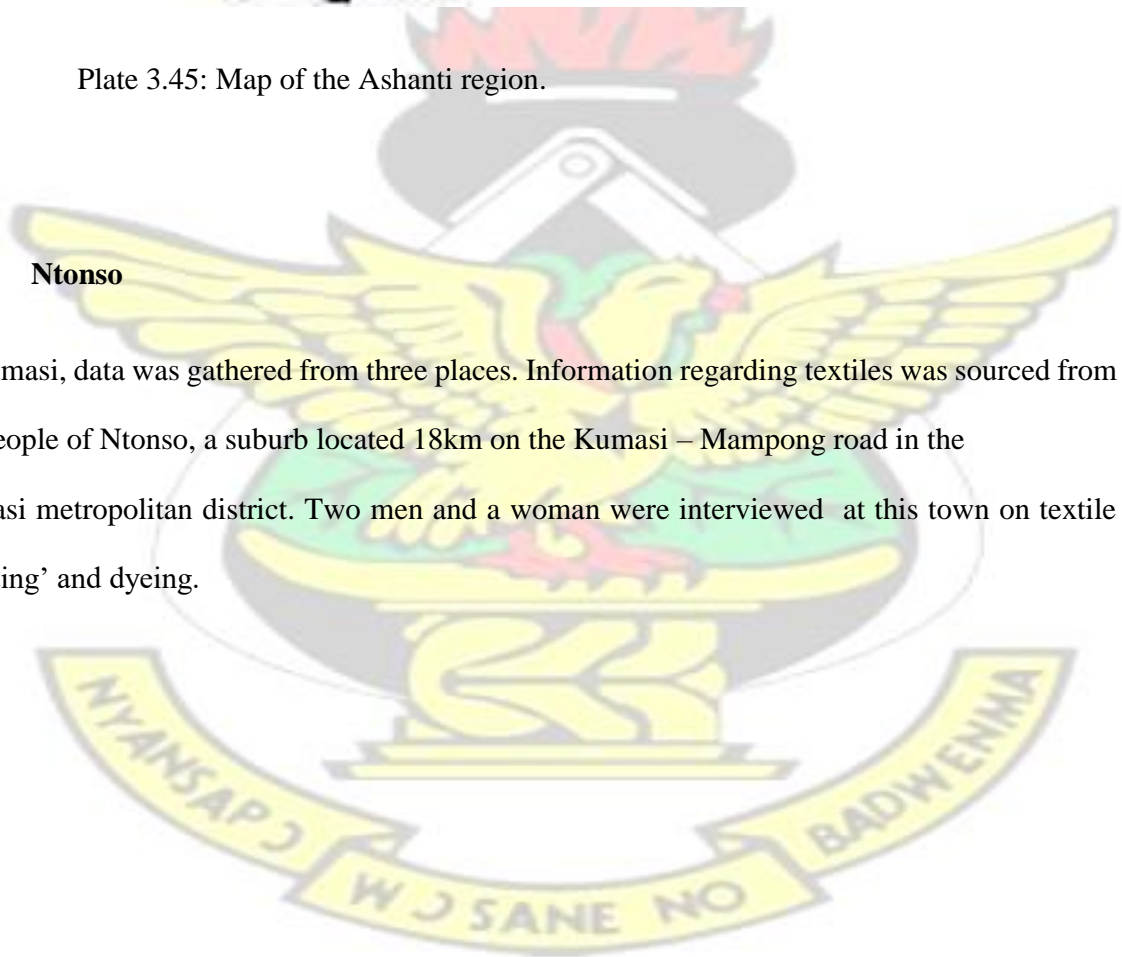
Plate 3.44: Map of Ghana showing Ashanti Region in red



Plate 3.45: Map of the Ashanti region.

### 3.6.5 Ntonso

In Kumasi, data was gathered from three places. Information regarding textiles was sourced from the people of Ntonso, a suburb located 18km on the Kumasi – Mampong road in the Kumasi metropolitan district. Two men and a woman were interviewed at this town on textile ‘printing’ and dyeing.



### **3.6.6 Asokwa**

Asokwah is currently merged with the city of Kumasi. It holds a greater portion of the industrial area. It is an important Asante suburb that cradled technological innovations born by Gyaman war captives in 1818 (Arthur, 2001). The author explains that it was through their innovative work that adinkra production advanced from application of pigment with feather in a painting technique to the calabash stamp process. Since then adinkra cloth production has thrived here.

### **3.6.7 Ahwiaa**

Ahwiaa is located about six kilometres north of Kumasi. Harked as the ancient capital of the Asante Kingdom (Hope, 2007), it housed the great royal carvers whose expertise supplied the Kingdom with all the stools and sculptural paraphernalia crucial to royalty. Traditional carvers creatively applied various materials to finish their sculpture. Usually this is done with the use of the piece in view. A blackened stool, as found in the case of royal (memorial) stools takes on a special significance unique to ancestral royalty.

Five men were contacted at Ahwiaa and interviewed on sculpture and stool painting.

### **3.6.8 Ayigya**

The last place was Ayigya. A suburb near the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, where information regarding hearth and bed painting was retrieved. The indigenous inhabitants of Ayigya are basically made of various Akan stocks immigrated to the

area in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The name of the town (Ayigya), attests to its relation to the then *Asante Hene* (King of Asante) Nana Sir Agyeman Prempeh of whom the story is told that during war, he brought his wife to this town to be taken care of till he returned.

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### 3.7 Sampling Techniques

Sampling involves the selection of a small group out of a larger population to be studied, and it varies based on the kind of research. In this study, three main sampling methods were adopted. These are purposive sampling, expert sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is the way to go when particular groups of people have been targeted on purpose (Trochim, 2000). Expert sampling method is adopted when particular kinds of individuals versed in the required information are targeted for data. Snowball sampling is used when the researcher desires to contact people of specific fields but relies on affiliates to introduce them to him by referrals.

Purposive sampling method was used to guide the selection of the population group needed for this study. White (2005: 120), shows that purposive sampling is done on the “basis of the researcher’s knowledge of the population”. Expert sampling was used to select individuals of specific specialty to make the needed data available to the researcher. Through snowball sampling the researcher was able to find a ‘continual chain’ of competent folks for the needed data. Ten women and one man were interviewed at Sirigu in the Upper East region. At Ntonso, there were three people interviewed, one person was interviewed at Asokwah, four more people at Ahwiaa and four persons from Ayigya.

### 3.8 Data Collection Instruments

It is agreed among most writers (Creswell, 2007; Leedy, 1997) on qualitative research that the researcher is a primary factor as an instrument in data collection. This is because the entire research and its outcome are managed and filtered through his/her personal lens of inquiry and interpretation. He therefore features as the foremost data collection instrument. Disinterestedness, as required in most quantitative and experimental researches becomes incompatible in a qualitative research.

Data collection instrument is the essential means adopted by the researcher to retrieve the needed data from the field. They are usually selected based upon the unit of research. In this work, direct participant observation, informal interviews, an iPad with camera and video functions were used to record images and the voices of respondents, a journal in which observations and personal thoughts were recorded and focus group discussion were the research instruments used.

### 3.9 Types of Data

The data gathered were;

- a. Books, journals articles, periodical, Thesis, Government report, and Web information,
- b. Responses to interviews written and recorded,
- c. Video footages, photographed images, and
- d. Observations (direct participant and personal) as well as written thoughts through field reports.

### 3.10 Administration of instruments

In administering instruments on the field of research, one method may be preferable to another based upon the kind of impact that one particular mode might have on the respondent, and Bowling (2005) attests to this argument. In my assessment, face to face administration was seen as unlikely to have any threats or disturbance to the outcome of data collection, given the kind of data to be retrieved. Potentially instead, the approach was perceived to yield some advantages to data collection procedure. What was being sought from these groups by the open ended informal interviews as data were nothing maligning, but rather, a cultural production – a tradition of their forebears that is yet attracting scholarly documentation, and this spurred pride than stigma. Therefore, expectations were largely honoured as respondents mostly were rather forthright than elusive or reluctant in their responses. Further to this, they were better able to freely communicate cultural accomplishments with anecdotes, side stories and nuances that could hardly be found in other models of administration. Again the openness of the questioning structure for the study was better administered by this means, because it allowed for peculiar personal or social differences and the concomitant on-the-spot situational responsiveness creatively injected by both questioner and respondent on their feet.



Plate 3.46: In a focus group discussion at Sirigu. Source: Photographed by Researcher

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedures**

The fieldwork covered all the groups within the sample population discussed earlier; a group of ten (10) women and one (1) man were purposively selected and interviewed at Sirigu in the Upper East region, beside others who were interviewed through interactions whiles living there. At Ntonso, there were three (3) people interviewed, one (1) person interviewed at Asokwah, four (4) more people at Ahwiaa and finally four (4) persons from Ayigya.

Interviews done took between an hour to three hours per session depending on the mood and forthrightness of the respondents. Time did not permit me to reside there long enough to learn the *Nankane* language, conversations were therefore held through an interpreter, a young man of 28, of amiable character became a good friend. Ferreol was with me whenever I went out to meet folks in the village. At Ntonso, Asokwah, Ayigya and Ahwiaa there was no need for an interpreter due to my fluent Asante, even though an Akuapim by birth. A total of 12 people were interviewed in these places, making 23 people in all.

Video and/or audio recordings were done where respondents agreed for the use of the gadget. Photographs were taken where relevant examples were seen. Two focus groups were engaged at Sirigu (Plate 3.46) to enrich the data collected there, and one was organised at Ayigya.

There was no breach in ethical issues, since the respondents were informed of the study being conducted and the role being played by them. Up till now, the friendship built among respondent still bear on the research as we keep communications open regarding follow up questions on data collected for the study.

I was “intimately involved” with my “research” (Pope and Mays, 2006) process, being aware of my experiences and personhood, preconceptions and biases on issues of pre colonialism, colonialism and post colonialism as an “Afri[Akan]” born and bred in the eastern region, and later in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The implications of my involvement in this research procedure. This awareness helped me to approach the study mitigating these preconceptions and biases. Here, consulting Spradley (1980: 73) was helpful in his comments on the need to “approaching the activity in process *on the field* without any particular orientation in mind”

(italics mine), in an ethnographic research, but to only ask the general question, “What is going on here?”. This way, the ethnographer is able to fairly and with an open mind imbibe cues that would be needed to supply answers to his latter questions.

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### **3.12 Data Analysis Plan**

The data collected through interviews, photographs, journal thoughts and focus group contributions were subjected to qualitative analyses, which was necessarily dialectical (Jorgensen, 1989: 110). The analytical process was started by getting me further immersed with the available data after transcription and coding them under thematic categories. This was followed by Geertz (1973) foundational “thick description” which was reasonably laid to effectively facilitate interpretation. Merriam (1998) describes data analysis as a complex action of moving back and forth between data and concepts, between description and interpretation, using both inductive and deductive reasoning. Further to this, I made use of constant comparison method and content analyses. Thus, all three stages stressed by Patton (1987), in data analysis were explored; data organisation, data reduction through summarisation and categorisation and finally, the identification and linking of patterns and themes that arose in data.

The writing of the report was contextually described under subtitled categories after the analysis was epistemologically completed based upon the assumptions of constructivism.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

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#### 4.1 Overview

In this chapter, I deal with findings retrieved from the field through the various instruments deployed towards the answering of the research questions that formed the basis for the study. Under these, questions were raised on paint/pigments in the context of traditional African art, their evolution, application, support and meaning, and also about their art historical documentations. The report therefore cover Sirigu architectural mural, pigments found at Ntonso and Asokwa, hearth and bed painting at Ayigya, sculpture and stool painting at Ahwiaa. Finally, I highlight details that address the research questions posed at the introductory part of this study.

##### 4.1.1 Sirigu Architectural Murals

Sirigu murals locally called *Borinborihi* (F. Ayambire, personal communication, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2012), others call it *banbolse*, perhaps for ease in pronunciation, has remained a vital part of the local architecture over the centuries, even though building with cement currently seem desirable by Sirigu folks, implying that the soon loss of the art to Sirigu's history is imminent. The practice is a gendered art handled by women without the need for any formal training. Skill is rather acquired through understudying older more skillful women. The skill is usually transferred from mother to daughter as well as through continual practice. Painting is done annually before the rainy season and after harvest. Asked of the period of origin, response was that the art was with them while emigrating to Sirigu, still, some (including Mme Anya Atolia, an old woman of about eighty-

years) claimed they grew to find their forebears practicing the art. Others mentioned about two hundred years however, it was not possible to find exact dates from respondents. The oldest person alive at the time of interview was Mama Akanvole Agombire, whose age was pegged at about a hundred and forty-seven (147) years.

Architectural arrangements including acquisition of land and all structural demarcations and buildings are overseen and executed by men spearheaded by the head of family. The construction technique is that of using wet mud balls and dried bricks to raise walls. What Anquandah (2006) refers to as *atakpame*. But after the structure is built, finishing and painting of the walls lie in the domain of the women led by the chief draught woman and painter. All the other women of about eight to fifteen would be subject to her instructions till the entire work is completed. All the materials and tools used in this work are all sourced from the local region.

#### **4.1.2 Architectural finishing at Sirigu**

The mural work commences on the day plastering of the walls are done. Where designs include relief works like python, lizard, fish crocodile or cows, it is incorporated at the plastering stage. Pellets of clay are employed to create reliefs on the surface of the wall before they are painted (Mme Asaase, personal communication, July 18<sup>th</sup> 2012).

#### **4.1.3 Tools and Materials at Sirigu**

1. Quartz pebbles/smoothing stone (*saase*) - smooth stones of various sizes are employed by artists to define relief walls on the walls as well as burnishing the walls after painting has been applied.

2. Bowls, Pots, Calabashes and Buckets - Different sizes of bowls, calabashes, buckets and pots are needed for the fetching and storage of water, mixture of cow dung, varnishes and colour mixtures.
3. Hoe (*kunre*) - The hoe is needed for the mixing of clay, loam and cow dung used to plaster the walls.
4. Brushes, Twigs, Feathers and Millet Combs. Brushes, beaten twigs, feathers from fowls and millet cobs - These are used to apply colours to the walls. The hand freely works paint into the wall when needed.
5. Broken Broom (*somenka*) - This is a brush made from a bunch of straw tied together to form a brush, used for colour application.
6. White Stone/Lime Stone (*kugu pele*) - A porous stone dug or bought from other communities. The white stone is directly applied to the wall in the process of painting.
7. Red Ochre (*gare*) - Red stones gathered locally or from neighbouring communities and pulverized for red paint.
8. Red Soil (*Bole*) - Muddy clay dug from specific communities mixed with cow dung for plastering.
9. Black Stone (*Kugsab ga*) - A porous stone sourced locally or from nearby communities, powdered and mixed for black paint.
10. Cow dung (*nabeto*) - It is sprinkled with water on walls prior to burnishing, and also used as binder in colour mixtures.
11. Water - Water is extensively used throughout the process of mural painting.
12. Varnish - Vegetable extracts from boiled locust bean pods (*acasia nilotica*) and *dawadawa* (*parkia clappertonnia*) are sprinkled with the broom over the finished decoration to form a

water proof layer over the mural (Mme Aputugna Akolibire, personal communication, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

#### **4.1.4 Paint identification at Sirigu**

The colours available in Sirigu murals are constrained in three hues; white, black and red ochre, corroborating with literature as among the earliest of earth colours. Apart from the lime stone (white), the rest are pulverised, smoothened and mixed with water into consistent medium for painting.

#### **4.1.5 Sources of Paint at Sirigu**

Red stones (Plate 4.46) is readily obtained from the local community of Sirigu, especially where much deposits of laterite could be located. The black and white stones are usually imported from Burkina Faso (Mme Asaase, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2012). The woman told of how they travelled as a group in those days on foot with pans and baskets, on a two day journey to Yelewongo a mountainous region in Burkina Faso where their soldiers train. The black stones brought home to Sirigu are then crushed dampened with water and rolled into balls for the local market. White stones (Plate 4.47) are sold just as they were dug from source, since they are usually applied directly and not pulverised and powdered before mixing for application.



Plate 4.46: Red, white and black stones, Plate 4.47: White stone. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

#### 4.1.6 Evolution of media at Sirigu

One aspect among others that is important to this research is how traditional colour media have evolved over time. This aspect of the study sought to appreciate whether mediums used among traditional ethnicities had been substituted or changed as time went on. At Sirigu findings clearly revealed that locally sourced materials in Sirigu mural painting was gradually being substituted for other foreign media, especially the acrylic based colours. Here and there one encountered the media (acrylic) as the murals were accessed in the Sirigu community. Faustina Ayambire a facilitator at SWOPA (personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012) explains that the reason was due to accessibility. One could easily lay hands on acrylic paint from any hardware shop in town, which also happens to be more durable. As a result, almost all the mural found at the SWOPA environment were observed to be in acrylics. It is accurate for one to conclude that though mural painting in Sirigu has been practiced over the centuries using locally sourced materials, industrial colours are gradually being substituted recently.

#### **4.1.7 Application Technique of Mural at Sirigu**

The mural painting commences on the day of plastering to ensure that the work is integrated into the plastered surface when dried. In plastering the wall, cow dung is mixed with water and left for about three days. The mixture is stirred and strained to rid it of all fibre to obtain a smooth mixture, which is further mixed with smooth soil to a muddy texture. In recent times, industrial coal tar is used in place of the cow dung for the binding effect needed in the plastering mud.

#### **4.1.8 Preparation of Pigment at Sirigu**

At this point the colour raw materials apart from the white are crushed and pulverized to powder and mixed in separate containers to consistent colour pastes ready to be used. The plastering mud is applied to the entire walls with the hand. If the conceived design includes relief motifs, this is the point where it is incorporated by moulding with the hand with the help of the smooth stones. Motifs including python, crocodile, cow and lizard may be seen in the wall designs as relief or painted. After the relief work, more of the mixture of cow dung and water described earlier is sprinkled unto the surface with short brooms, and the wall is burnished all over with the quartz stones into a smooth finish. The smoothening stones are also present in Sirigu pottery for the same purpose of burnishing the surface and define relief motifs on leather-hard potteries, hence connection between Sirigu pottery and architecture is easy for the stranger to identify.

Work usually progress from the top downwards. When the wall is a bit dried the leader who has the concept of the entire design starts by mapping out the total design outline in black (Plate 4.48) for the others to appropriately follow with more black, red and white which is the final colour to apply (Plate 4.49), and done in a solid state by rubbing the chalk into the delineated spaces. For the outline drawing and subsequent painting, the women use brushes made from twigs with beaten ends. After the whole mural is done, meticulous smoothening ensues with different

stone sizes to ensure that the whole design become well integrated into the plastered surface. In the process of the smoothening however, care is taken not to smudge the fresh colours in the design. Murals in Sirigu are not limited only to external walls. Interior walls of rooms are equally painted by these women. Once the mural is done, the brown varnish made from *dawadawa* pods is sprinkled over the design with the broom, leaving a smooth shiny surface thus sealing the mural away from the harsh external weather condition.

A typical mural project is tackled amidst pageantry of singing, clapping and dancing as the senior wife of the house closely monitors the whole process making sure all tools, materials and enough food for participants is provided.



Plate 4.48: Faustina Ayambire outlining the design  
Source: Photographed by Researcher.

Plate 4.49: Abisiboba Adongo filling in.

#### 4.1.9 Symbols employed at Sirigu

Paintings done in Sirigu assume a number of symbolic designs based upon historical, sociocultural, environmental or domestic allusions. These designs readily reveal their objects of reference in the Nankana language (Plate 4.50-4.55)



Plate 4.50: *Tangonsi* – zigzag lines



Plate 4.51: *Akunyana ni* –person’s name.



Plate 4.52: Male *Zalinga*- calabash net



Plate 4.53: Female *Zalinga*.



Plate 4.54: *Wanzagsi*- broken calabash.



Plate 4.55: *Agrunusi*- school children. Source: Photographed by Researcher

#### 4.1.10 Some Animal Symbols

Conceived design that are painted on Sirigu walls include relief motifs, which are incorporated by moulding with the hand with the help of the smooth stones. Motifs including lizard crocodile and python may be seen in the wall designs as painted relief (Plate 4.56, 4.57 & 4.58).



Plate 4.56: Lizard.



Plate 4.57: Crocodile



Plate 4.58: Python. Source: Photographed by Researcher

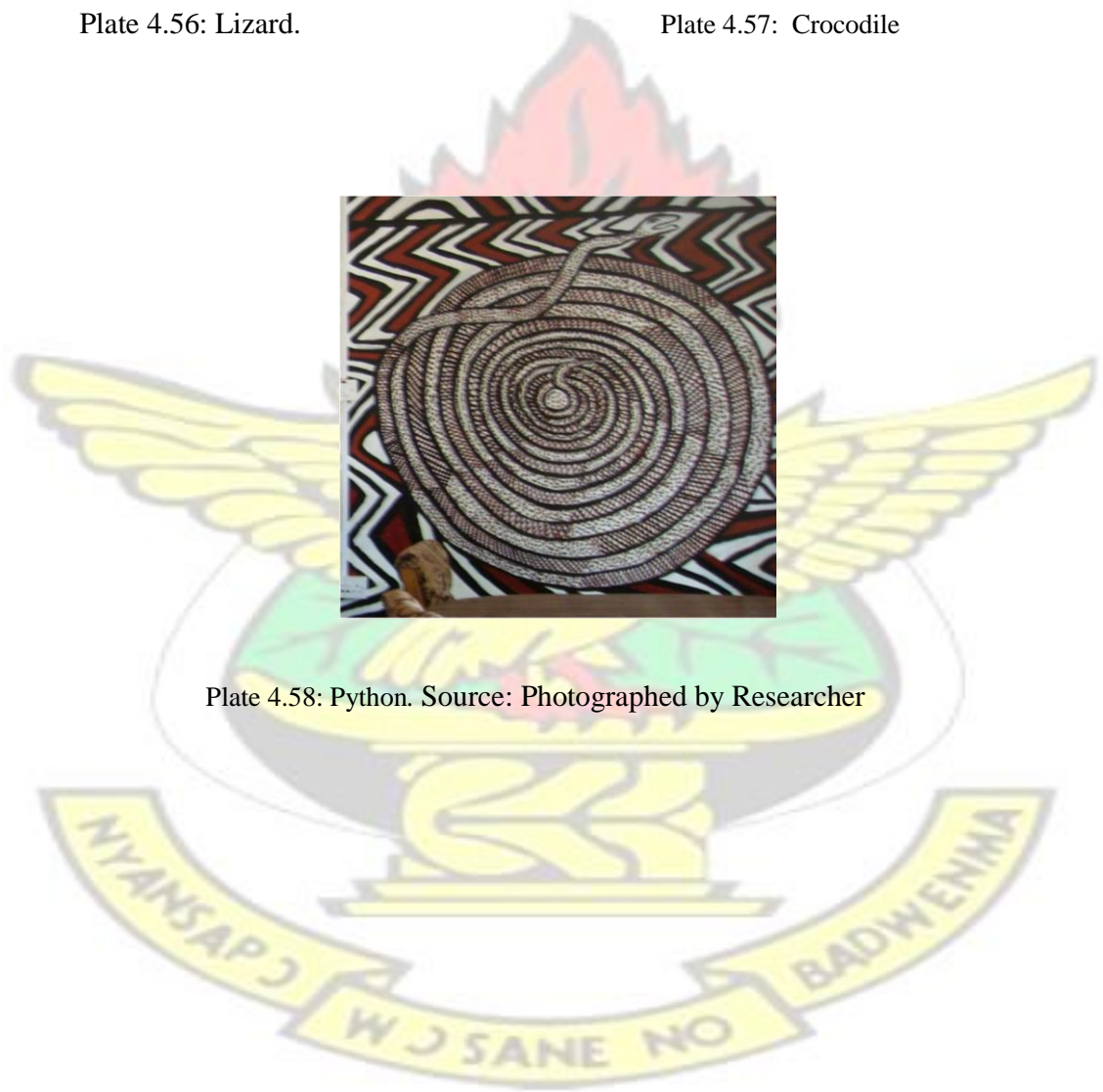




Plate 4.59: The Male Zaalinga painted by the Researcher at Sirigu. Source: Photographed by Researcher

#### 4.1.11 Purpose of wall Painting at Sirigu

Mural Painting in Sirigu, has been practiced by women apparently since the ethnic group immigrated to the area as a means of, among other roles of women, building a hospitable homestead that deploy all the support and care that family members and strangers may expect. This harks back to what seem to be a traditional national cultural outlook as regards women and home – keeping. For instance the Akan women paint and meticulously burnish their traditional kitchen hearth, platform and floors daily with red ochre and *fufu* varnish for similar reasons. The concept is validated by the Akan adage that *enye obaa biala ne obaa*, literally meaning: “not every woman is a true woman”. Doubtless, these paintings do more than meets the eyes. It expresses the values, beliefs, concerns, interests and ambitions of the women folks who engage in them. Avae (1990) holds the view that murals reflect the characteristics of the communities within which they are found. In the same vein, Adams (1993) reports of the murals of the women of Canton Boo of Western Cote d’Ivoire, linking beautiful murals with high managerial skills and home management.

The findings of the study reveal that the decorative murals of Sirigu have evolved in adaptation to cultural make and expression. The period of painting provides not only a time of respite from farm work, but also that of merry making, sharing and good neighbourliness, all being qualities necessary for effective community living. While the execution and process of the work themselves echoes the indispensable essence of womanhood.

#### **4.1.12 Symbolism of wall colours at Sirigu**

Red, white and black are the colours found in Sirigu mural painting. Similarly the Akans down south are limited to the same palette; red white and black – *kokoo, fufuo/fitaa and tuntum*. No symbolic significance was attributed to these colours on the field. This leads one to conclude that the people of Sirigu do not give any symbolic meanings to these three colours. Though this conclusion accords with Wemegah (2009) it runs contrary to Anaba (1995), who found among the people of Sirigu that white stood for purity, happiness and faultlessness; black represented death, gloom, wickedness and uncertainty; and red represented danger and importance.

#### **4.1.13 Significance of Painting at Sirigu**

Twofold significance emanates from the study. The plastering, painting and varnishing combine to beautify and preserve the building (Plate 4.60). The Sirigu murals beautify the home and the society and gives presence and identity to the woman/women of the house. It provides an expressive seal of hospitality, home – management and effective womanhood to strangers, friends and family.



Plate 4.60: A Sirigu building crying for refurbishment. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

#### **4.2.1 *Asidro* and *karandafi* pigments at Sirigu**

Leather craft is commonly practiced currently among the northern and upper regions of Ghana. This is on account of the geographical location which augur for herding on large scale. Some of the animals whose hide are used for such goods are goat sheep and cattle. Other useful animals are bush cow, python and crocodile. In Sirigu, two main colour media of black and red were found applicable to leather. Between these two, other tones of reddish and dark browns are obtainable. A number of colours can be seen on the leather from Plates 4.61 to 4.64; black, brown, red and white, produced by *asidro*, *karandafi* and the uncoloured leather.

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Plate 4.61: Decorated leather hand bags. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

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Plate 4.62: Smock designed with leather amulets. Source: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

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Plate 4.63: An extensively decorated hand bag. Source: Photographed by Researcher.



Plate 4.64: Cap designed with Asidro and karadafi. Source: Photographed by Researcher.



Plate 4.65: Hand bags designed with Asidro only. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

#### 4.2.2 Pigment Identification-*asidro* and *karandafi*

*Asidro* is a colourful pigment ranging from golden brown to black depending on how it is prepared and applied. It is a well-known traditional medium whose use cuts across many ethnicities from the north of Ghana to the south in leather design. *Karandafi* or *waakye* leaves has sorghum bicolor as the scientific name. this plant is well known across Ghana mainly for its use in the preparation of *waakye* – a popular Ghanaian dish, hence its local identification as *waakye* leaf.

#### 4.2.3 Source of Materials-*asidro* and *karandafi*

Nails or iron fillings and lime or *pito* – a local wine, being the only materials, are sourced from the locality. Iron dross and fillings are collected from the black smith's shop and lime or *pito* could easily be obtained from surrounding farms, and *pito* could be obtained locally. Sorghum bicolor locally known as *karandafi* or *wakye* leaves are easily obtained from local farms.

#### 4.2.4 Evolution-*asidro* and *karandafi*

In recent times acrylic paint and other industrial paints and dyes are combined with *asidro* and *karandafi* in leather design. Due to its easy preparations, *asidro* and *karandafi* have had a long history and still promises a continual use by leather dealers.

#### 4.2.5 Preparation of *asidro* and *karandafi*

The black colour is obtained by placing ferrous metals into lime juice or *pito* (a local drink made from millet) to stand for a week or two, after which a black liquid results.

*Karandafi* (sorghum bicolor) which yields the red colour, is simply prepared by boiling the stalk of this plant in water to extract (Mr. A. Ferreol and Mr. G. Aaase, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

#### **4.2.6 Application *asidro* and *karandafi***

The pigment is creatively applied to the dried leather according to the design conceived by the artist using the hand, twig or a pointed metal scribe. In using the tool with a sharper point, a deeper colour registration is obtained on the leather surface due to the abrasions in the process. Alternatively; the whole leather is immersed in a bath to assume a red or black colour. Intensity of the colour depends upon the concentration of the colour bath, the structure of the leather, and the length of time the leather remains in it. A shade between the two colours mentioned which is brown, could be obtained by immersing the leather in the red bath, and then the black for shorter moments.

#### **4.2.7 Symbolism of colour on leather**

Unlike the Ashantis and other ethnicities, the Kassenas of Sirigu do not recognise any symbolism to their colours. To find a people (for the first time) who did not attribute any symbolism to their colours was interesting.

#### **4.2.8 Significance of colour on leather**

The colour is mainly applied to the leather for the purpose of design to enhance the aesthetic quality of the product.

#### 4.3.1 Pigment Identification at Ntonso/Asokwah

Pigments involved in the traditional textile industry may be studied from two functional perspectives; pigments for background colour and pigment for printing. Fabrics are dyed to obtain specific background colours (example, the *kuntunkuni* dyed russet brown) before they are block printed. Other mourning cloths that are not stamped though dyed are the *kɔbene* – vermilion red and *brisi* – indigo or black. Adinkra designs are also printed on cloths with white or yellow ochre backgrounds for use at occasions other than funerals.

#### 4.3.2 Sources of Pigment at Ntonso/Asokwah

The plants are usually sourced from the Brong Ahafo and Northern Regions. However in the Ashanti Region the materials could be obtained from Akomadan and Adwira.

#### 4.3.3 Evolution of media at Ntonso/Asokwah

Lots of innovations have occurred at various levels of the traditional textile industry. Dye – stuff and printing pigment of higher and superior qualities have been introduced to the local market making it unreasonably laborious for one to maintain the traditional trend. However there still remain families at both Asokwa and Ntonso who practice traditional textile the old way (K. B. Dauda, Personal communication, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

#### 4.3.4 Preparation of Pigment at Ntonso/Asokwah

*Kuntunkuni* as a background dye is produced from the bark of the roots of the *kuntunkuni* tree. On obtaining the roots of this tree, the bark is peeled and soaked to soften. Pounding and straining with water is done and repeated till the pigment is well extracted from the fibre. The liquid is boiled till the dye – stuff is ready to be used. A cloth may have to be dyed and dried over and over till the required colour shade is obtained. Next, the cloth is spread on a padded ground or table to be stamped.

The pigment used in stamping adinkra designs onto the cloth is called *adinkraduro*, produced from the bark of the badie tree (*bridelia micranta* – natural order *euphorbiaceae*). The bark is soaked for about three days to soften (Plate 4.66), and pounded to extract the pigment with water. The mixture is boiled with iron slag for about several hours till a thick sticky paint is obtained. The iron slag is said to hasten the evaporation process in yielding the printing paste (Agya Duro and Mr. B. Amoateng, personal communication, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

#### 4.3.5 Application of Pigment at Ntonso/Asokwah

Application of pigment is done by the two processes of dyeing and printing. The cloth is dyed to obtain a specific background colour over which printing is done. For a *kuntunkuni* dye for instance, the cotton cloth is submerged into the boiling dye and removed to be dried. Dyeing and drying continues till the desired intensity of russet brown is acquired. Following the dyeing is the printing which is done using the stamps - *adwini nnua* (Plate 4.70 and 4.71). After the background colour is done and dried, the cloth is spread taut on a padded ground or table by pegging the ends. The stamp is dipped into the print medium and applied directly to the stretched cloth (Plate 4.72). In earlier designs of Adinkra, Asihene (1978) states that horizontal bands of silk yarns arranged in repeat pattern of yellow, red, black, green, blue, and red are done prior to printing to heighten

the design. This *nwɔmu* design is gradually phasing out of production for the obvious reason of the time it takes to complete.

#### 4.3.6 Symbolism of Colours at Ntonso/Asokwah

The Asantes of Ntonso and Asokwa have a well-grounded colour range of three categories with their symbolism. These are black – *tuntum*, white – *fitaa/fufuo*, and red – *kokɔɔ*. *Tuntum* designates all dark shades, from lighter shades including all ranges of blue to total blackness. It is associated with night, death, loss, ancestors, history chthonic creatures and demons. It does not connote defilement and profanation as Hagan (1970: 9) indicates. *Fitaa* or *Fufuo* stands for all pale white, grey and cream colours and are associated with innocence, peace, coolness, purity, virtue, victory, virtuosity, happiness, God and other deified spirits including that of the ancestors. *Kokɔɔ* refers to all shades of browns, reds and yellows. Red is in association with grief, anger, heat, blood, danger and crisis. This interpretation agrees with that of Antubam (1963).

#### 4.3.7 Significance of Pigment on Cloth

Paint and pigment are applied to these cloths for the three fold purposes of beauty, documentation and communication. It is obvious that the traditional artist envisions a beautiful product in working on his *Adinkra* piece. He considers the colour in the background as against what is to be used for stamping. The work has to be visually appealing to his patron(s).

Secondly, the material nature of the cloth, dyes and the *Adinkra* designs rendered assumes a documentary status eligible for future contextual referencing and learning, conceptually akin to Arthur's (2001) metaphorical treatment of traditional *Adinkra* cloth where he evaluates it among others as a system of writing (Plate 4.69).

Finally, wearers of the cloth used it to communicate their thoughts or philosophies in occasions of social gatherings. If one appeared in a function wearing an Adinkra cloth of *aya* – (fern) designs, the wearer meant to say he is not afraid of anyone.

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Plate 4.66: Soaked Badie in dye production. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

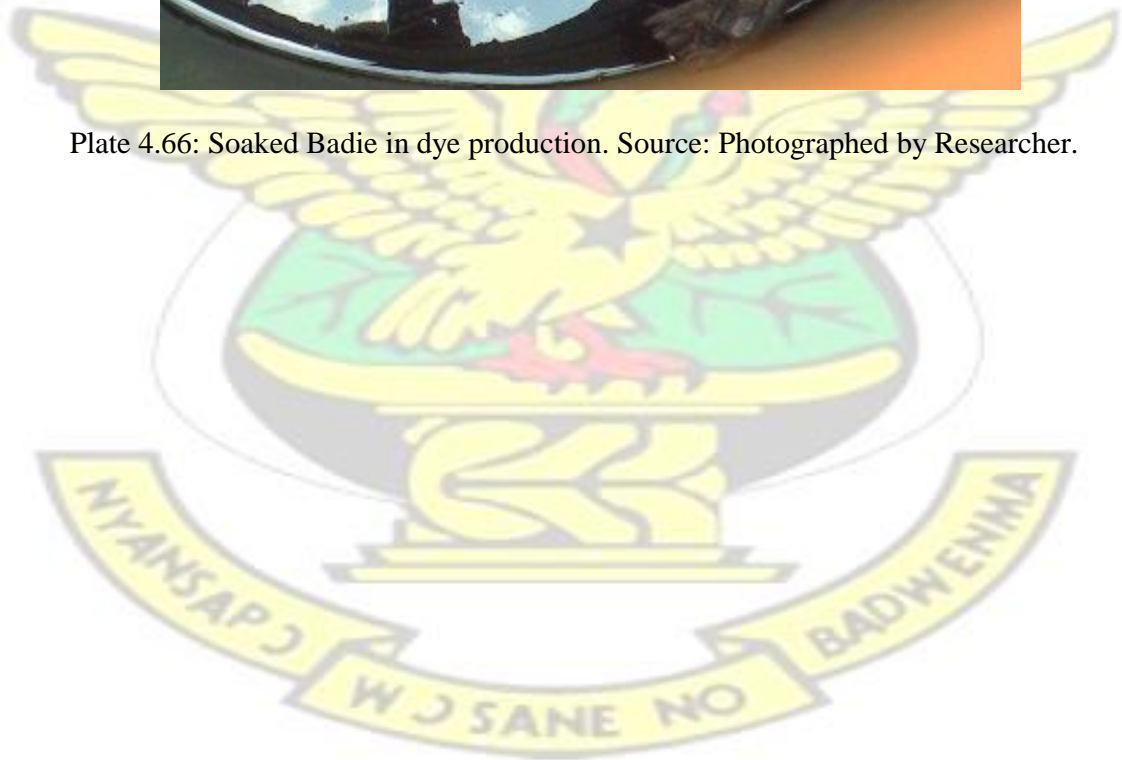




Plate 4.67: Examples of Adinkra symbols. Source: [www.earthmetropolis.com](http://www.earthmetropolis.com)



Plate 4.68: Adinkra block print designs. Source: [www.tienchiu.com](http://www.tienchiu.com)



Plate 4.69: Adinkra block print designs. Source: [www.tienchiu.com](http://www.tienchiu.com)



Plate 4.70: The printing process. Source: Photographed by Researcher.

#### 4.4.1 Hearth – *Mukyia* at Ayigya

Hearths were the stoves and cookers for the traditional Ghanaian (Plate 4.71). A cursory survey of the early kitchen will reveal in one corner a large water pot set within a clay mould, serving as

a source of cold drinking water for the family. In another corner of the space one may see two different mortars for the pounding of palm nut for preparation of soup and fufu a typical Akan dish. Still in another corner may be found two or three hearths with adjoining raised platform all moulded in clay. Over the fire-place usually hangs shelve made from wood and palm fronds where extra kitchen supplies are kept. The security of these supplies against insects is assured by reason of continual presence of smoke from the hearth below. The hearth is painted every morning by the woman of the house after sweeping before fire is set for cooking. This is among those kitchens that come closest to what pertained in those days (Plate 4.72).

#### 4.4.2 Bed (*bama/εεε*) and Hearth (*mukyia*) Painting at Ayigya

Before the introduction of wooden beds, most traditional societies especially among the Akans used earth beds. This kind of bed is made by ramming moist earth to form a platform of the required height and smoothed in one corner of the room (Figure 4.2). When it is dried, mattress or mat is laid on it, dressed and used for bedding. It is painted once in a week for maintenance.

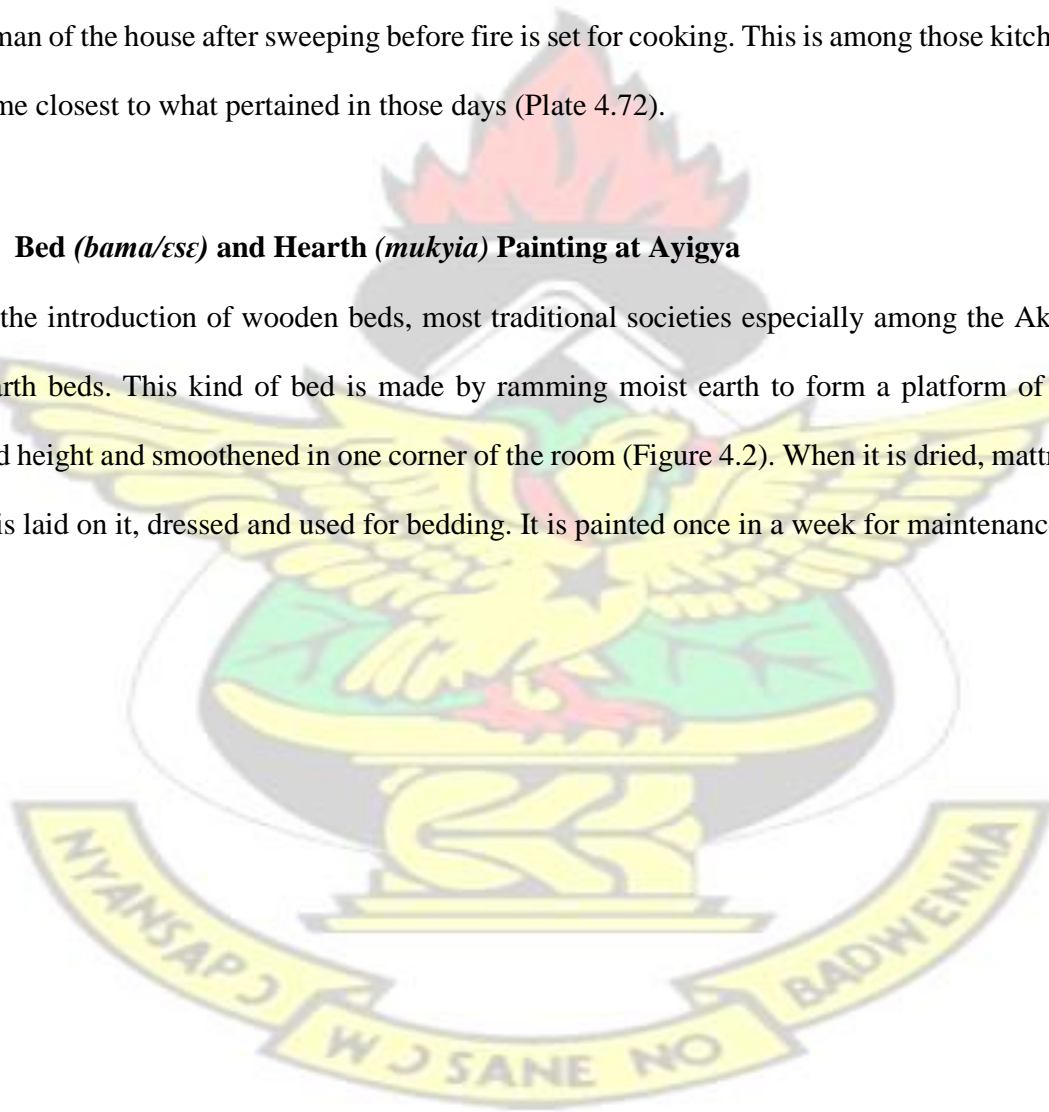


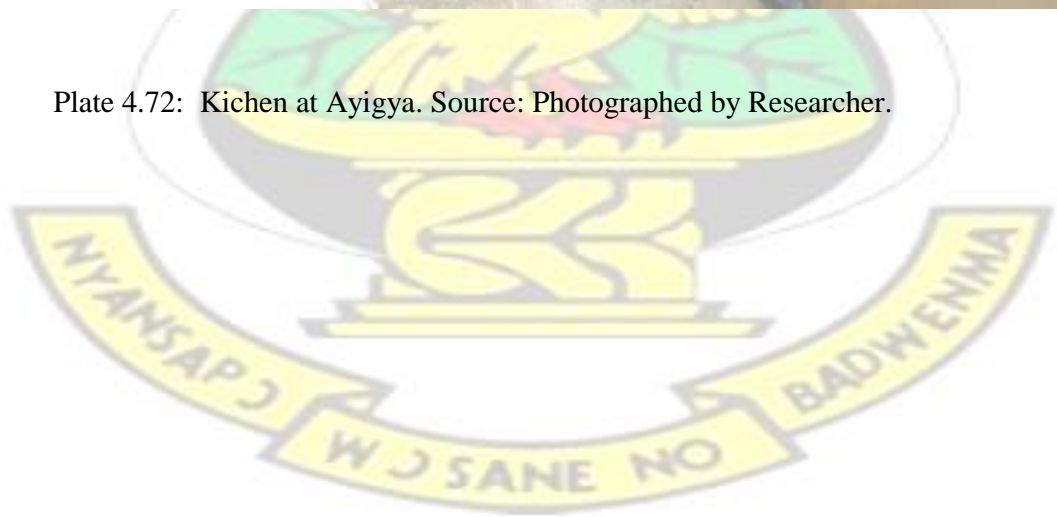


Plate 4.71: Hearth. Source: Photographed by Researcher





Plate 4.72: Kichen at Ayigya. Source: Photographed by Researcher.



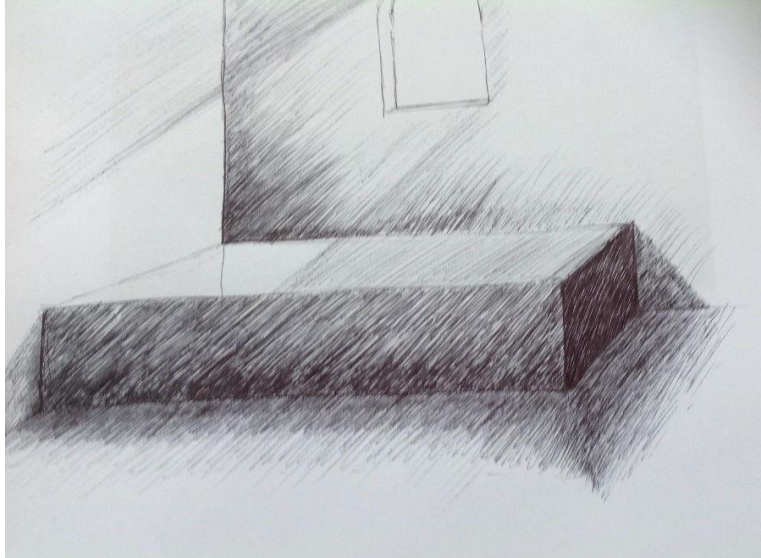


Figure 4.2: Illustration by the Researcher showing Traditional Bed located in one corner of the room.

#### 4.4.3 Pigment Identification/colours at Ayigya

Red ochre is used in painting both the hearth and bed.

#### 4.4.4 Source of Pigment at Ayigya

Donyina is a suburb of Kumasi and served as the source of red ochre for use by Kumasi women. When the soil load was brought, the women dumped it with little water and rolled them into balls to be sold on the local market.

#### **4.4.5 Evolution of media at Ayigya**

Red ochre is easily substitutable with other varieties of clay. It was discovered on the field that most users of traditional hearth make do with ordinary clay of any colour to paint their hearths, in the absence of red ochre. Earth beds are hardly found in use today, surprisingly not even in the remote rural areas where traditional life takes so long to die.

#### **4.4.6 Preparation of pigment at Ayigya**

The ball of red ochre is crushed to gather enough quantity into a pot and some water added. The mixture is allowed some time to dissolve well, and then stirred for a consistent paint to result (Akosua Manu and Comfort Agyarko, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014).

#### **4.4.7 Tools and materials for Application of paint at Ayigya**

1. Prepared Red Ochre paint – paint of red ochre made by mixing red clay with water.
2. Pot/calabash or any appropriate receptacle – this serves as the container in which the paint is kept during painting and afterwards.
3. Plantain Fibre – fibre prepared by beating plantain stalk (where plantain bunches directly hang) till it becomes fibrous. It feels like a soft rag after it is washed and dried. This is used to dip the paint with the hand to apply over the hearth or bed.
4. Water – water is needed in mixing the red ochre.
5. Left over *fufu* – this is mashed and strained to be used as varnish over the paint after it is dried. It is usually applied to the hearth only.

#### 4.4.8 Application of Paint to Hearth at Ayigya

The building of the hearth is a feminine role, and so is the painting of it. In the morning the woman of the house clears the hearth of all ashes charred coal and any pieces of wood. She then proceeds to paint by removing the plantain rag lying wet in the paint and start rubbing it over the hearth. The rag is dipped again into the paint when it feels dryer in her hand and brought back rubbing over the hearth. The hearth may be constructed in several different designs. There are those designed on little platforms in the corner on the kitchen floor. Others are designed to have a kind of shelf at the back. Sometimes this projection may rise to about halve the interior wall height. During painting all the parts mentioned above; platforms back-shelves and wall projections are all painted. When the surface is dried, the varnish prepared from the left over *fufu* is applied as varnish (*kuta*) using a fresh 'plantain rag' as one used for the painting, resulting in a shiny patina on the surface.

#### 4.4.9 Bed Painting at Ayigya

Unlike hearths, the construction of beds is a masculine role. Deemed as heavy duty assignment, the role could parallel the construction of the house itself which is the lot for men. Painting the bed is approached the same way as that of hearths, also feminine, the only difference being that after painting the bed which may be located in one corner of the room, one goes ahead to paint the whole floor also. Beds are not varnished and painting does not have to be done daily but weekly.

#### **4.4.10 Purpose of painting at Ayigya**

Painting of hearths and beds in traditional homes are done primarily for maintenance. It is reasonable that hearths that are daily exposed to fire are painted daily and beds which surfaces relatively go undisturbed are painted weekly.

#### **4.4.11 Meaning/significance of paint at Ayigya**

Traditional Ghanaian core values upheld the woman as an effective wife mother and home – manager. In order to honourably deploy these characteristics, the woman of the house creatively seeks out and initiates skilful actions that will make her the delight of her husband, the joy of her children and the happiness of the wider extended family and strangers. By engaging in such initiatives including these paintings, she distinguishes herself as a valuable and resourceful woman of worth. *Enye ɔbaa ne baa*. using Maame Akosua Manu’s words (23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2014. Personal communication) which literally means; “not every woman is a real woman”.

#### **4.5.1 Kinds of Pigments and Identification at Ahwiaa**

A myriad of pigment were found at Ahwiaa including plant root bark that yielded red dye which when boiled produced black. Still for red and black, red ochre and kitchen soot are used respectively. White clay is also used on sculpture as well as the combination of heat with extract from banana or plantain stem to obtain variegated antique effect on sculpture.

#### **4.5.2 Sources of Pigment at Ahwiaa**

All the pigments are sourced from Ahwiaa and its environs.

#### 4.5.3 Evolution of media at Ahwiaa

Materials like shoe polish of various colours, washing or laundry blue, white glue, potash and industrial dyes are among materials finding use in sculpture coloration and pigmentation in Ahwiaa in recent times. Reasons advanced for the gradual switch include continual scarcity of traditional mediums as against the industrial materials often accessible in local hardware shops (Personal communication, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013. with Kwame Amos).

#### 4.5.4 Preparation of Pigment at Ahwiaa: Black and Red – *Tuntum ne kokoo*

In Ahwiaa, it was found that the elders used the bark and roots of certain trees to produce red and black dyes to stain wood sculpture. The red dye produced by this root was boiled to produce black. The root is cut and the bark removed and crashed and the substance extracted out of it. At this point the liquid is used as red dye. When it is boiled, it changes to black. Green colour is obtained by extraction from the leaves of *Kwau Nsusua* - Turkey berries/ *Solanum Torvum*. In another breadth red ochre and kitchen soot are used to produce red and black pigments respectively. Soot is collected from the walls into a container and boiled with water since the mixture does not work cold. After boiling it thick, the liquid is ready to be applied. The red ochre is smoothened by grounding, sieved and mixed with water to be made ready for application to the sculpture.

#### 4.5.5 White Clay - *Hyire*

White clay often finds its way on wood sculpture especially in incision designs on wood before affecting the stain for the piece. It is processed by grounding it smooth, sieved and mixed with water.

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#### 4.5.6 Application of pigment at Ahwiaa

The black or red produced from the root bark as described above is directly applied to the sculpture with a fibrous twig beaten at one end or with a clean rag. This resulted in a stain of red or black on the wood. If the piece incorporated any incision designs these were filled with white clay before the red or black is finally applied. The processed soot and red ochre are likewise applied with beaten twig or rag. The white paint is easily applied with a smaller end – beaten twig or directly with the hand.

In recent times additives such as polyvinyl acetate commonly known as white glue is introduced into some of the pigments to increase adhesion to the wooden surface. Kwame Amos a sculpture finishing specialist at Ahwiaa, was willing to let the researcher into a process he described as a trade secret in the sculpture finishing industry. In this process, after the soot is applied, a grey like effect is registered. The piece is then exposed to fire to heat up the surface without burning. After the surface is well heated, the soft part of banana or plantain stem stump is scooped by hand and applied parsimoniously all over the hot surface which results in sizzling sounds. A variegated antique effect is achieved on drying. Green colour is also coldly extracted from *kwaunsusua* known as turkey berries (*Solanum Torvum*).

#### 4.5.7 Purpose of painting at Ahwiaa

Paint or colour is applied to sculpture by folks at Ahwiaa for preservation and beautification. The artists at Ahwiaa could be studied under two groups of carvers and shop owners. Finishing of sculpture pieces and figurines by way of pigment application is usually carried out by the shop keepers who deal directly with customers.

#### 4.5.8 Meaning of painting at Ahwiaa

Apart from rendering it presentable to the society Colouring of sculptures is done to categorize works according to cultural norms and values. For example all ancestral figures together with all other pieces associated with the ancients must appear black in accord with the cultural appreciation that *age darkens*. Thus soot collected from the traditional kitchen is literally referred to as ‘aged smoke’ – *apupunawisie*, hence the concept of darkness is associated with the historical and aged. Further to this, most sculpture pieces are finished black to withstand the dirt accumulation that might be encountered over several years through handling. The sculpture found in (Plate 2.34 and 2.35), with a remarkable indigo effect is likely to have been finished with indigo dye, a common dye sourced from the indigo plant effectively used across West Africa as reported by Schumach and Thonn (1945). Dark blue or *brisi* is categorised under black associated with mystery, the historical and that which is awesome.

#### 4.6.1 Stool Painting (blackening) at Ahwiaa

Indigenous Akan stools are either left unpainted showing the natural wood grain (Plate 4.76 and 4.77), or painted with white clay as commonly found in shrines (Plate 4.73 and 4.74). The white

washing of stools in Akan culture is confirmed by this traditional adage; “*Sɛ wo kamfo hyire a ama asedwa aye fɛ a, na wokamfo nsa ne akuma a eseneɛ*”. Literary meaning; “The white clay that beautifies the stool is not praised without acknowledging the hand and adze that carved it”.

Blackening of stools is a separate state traditional practice limited to Kingship and chieftaincy (Plate 4.78). Though the Golden Stool belongs to the State of Asante, it stands in its own unique and matchless category (Plate 4.75).

#### **4.6.2 Pigment Identification for blackening**

According to Nana Frimpong Boadu, Otumfoo’s chief carver, in an interview (April 2010), it comprises of spider’s web, kitchen sooth, eggs and the blood of sheep.

#### **4.6.3 Sources of Pigment for blackening**

The eggs, soot and sheep are obtained from the locality but the spider’s web is secured from the forest.

#### **4.6.4 Preparation of pigment for blackening**

The soot, spider’s web, and eggs are mixed together in a calabash or earthenware to be applied to the stool.

#### 4.6.5 Application of pigment for blackening

On the faithful day of blackening, which is also a day of mourning, all chiefs, sub chiefs and elders are to be present. The stools are brought out of their abode under the supervision of the *Nkonwasuafo*, the designated office in charge of royal stools and assembled in the palace hall from that of the earliest departed ancestor to the most recent. First, libation of alcohol is offered the ancestors to praise them for their gallantry and thoughtful provision for posterity; their blessings are invoked on the day's ceremony. This prayer is offered to the predecessors by pouring on all the stools from the eldest to the youngest. Next, eggs are broken into a calabash mixed with the spider web, soot and sheep's blood. This mixture is applied to smear the whole surface of the stool to be blackened. Labi (1993), includes gun powder without mentioning spider's web. Nana Frimpong mentions spider's web without gun powder. After this process of smearing the mixture with the hand all over the stool, the stool becomes a Black Stool – *Akonwa Tuntum*, a sacred religious object with taboos and prohibitions, and it is revered by the elders of the state. On posing the question whether human blood may ever be part of the mixture for blackening? The response given was that under no circumstance should that happen. However, Perbi (2011:7) reports “Some slaves were sacrificed in accordance with traditional beliefs and practices during festivals, ceremonial occasions, *blackening of stools* religious observances and the death of important personalities. *death of chiefs and kings*” (italics mine). This suggests that, the possibility of including human blood in blackening of stools cannot be entirely ruled out, though the idea may be vehemently denied by traditional custodians today.

#### 4.6.6 Purpose of painting royal stools black

Apart from the great need to preserve this royal and religious object by reason of its continual existence to receive offering and homage from the state, the black stool is painted this way to assume habitation of the departed. These tie in with the fact that it is the most used stool of the ancestor that is blackened. The items involved in the mixture; spider web, eggs, soot and gunpowder are believed to possess some preservative abilities that prevent the wood from decay. This traditional approach to conservation has been scientifically confirmed by Larbi (1993). As royal and religious objects these stools (as abode of the ancestors) are marked to occasionally receive ceremonial food and drinks during the *Adae* and other festivals. During such times the *Nkonwasoafɔ* would offer marshed yam and eggs, alcohol and blood to the ancestors. Sprinkling blood and alcohol continually on a black stool, which eventually turns darker, seem better than leaving them in their natural state.





Plate 4.73: Gyenyame-dwa.

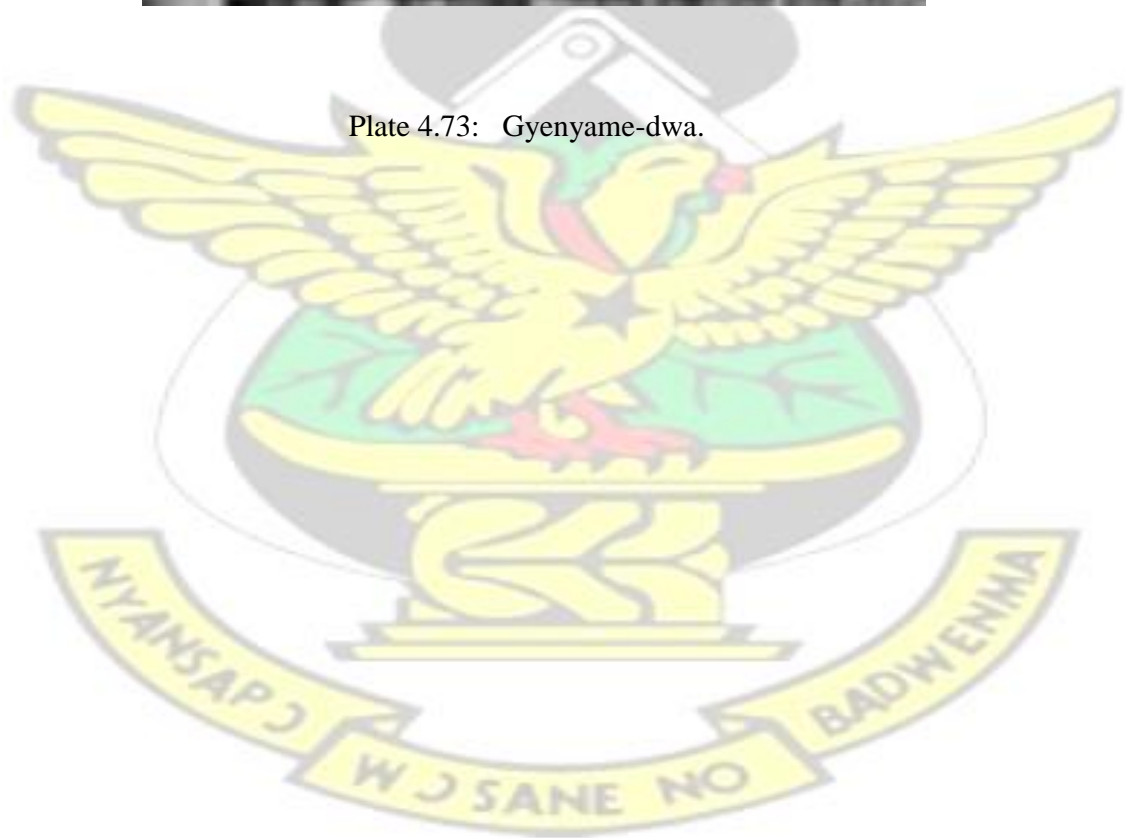




Plate 4.74: Mmaa-dwa





Plate 4.75: The Golden Stool of Asante

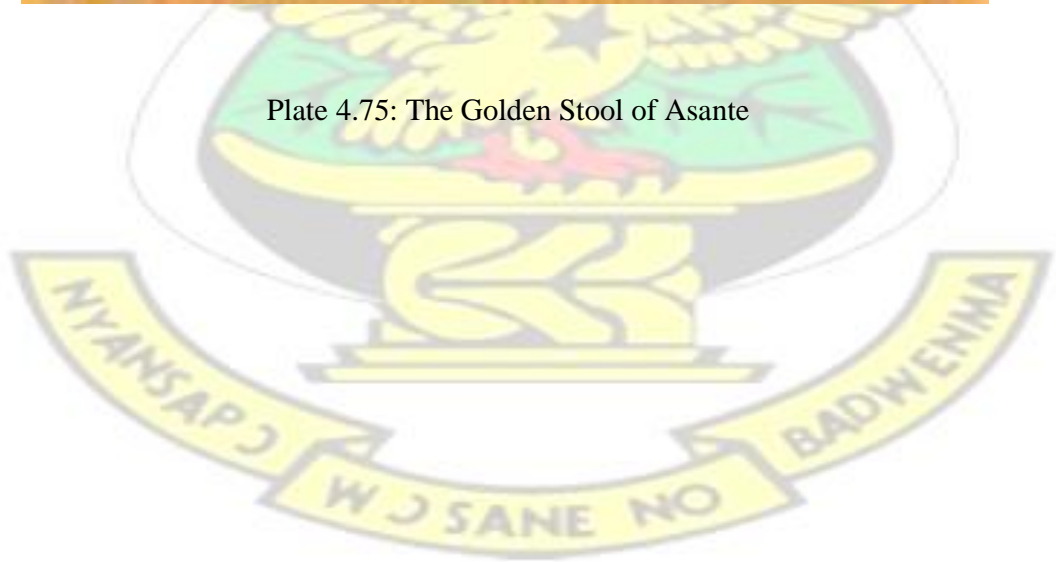




Plate 4.76: Obi te obi so-dwa





Plate 4.77: Abusua-dwa



Plate 4.78: *Nkonwasoani* (Stool-bearer) attending to Black stools. Source: Cole and Ross 1977

#### **4.6.7 Meaning of black royal stools**

Black is usually associated with night, death, loss and ancestors. Nana Frimpong explains that, since black remains the colour of mourning, it is appropriate for the living to commemorate the dead with this colour in order to reflect their state of mourning and sadness at the departure of the ancestors.

He further alludes to the fear ascribed to things black, saying the living must venerate the royal ancestors with deep respect and the stools are made black to invoke this feeling.

#### **4.7.1 Discussion**

Several discoveries have been made during this journey as reported above. However, I wish to further discuss by highlighting a number of them that are most relevant in response to the research questions outlined in the introduction; What kind of paint and pigments have been employed in the traditional art in the Upper East and Ashanti regions?

Why does traditional African art history documents, usually not include as much information on paintings as they do on sculpture; what tools and supports were used in traditional Ghanaian painting?

What were the significance of the media and their use to the various traditional ethnicities?

#### **4.7.2 What paint or pigment have been employed in the traditional art in the Upper East and Ashanti regions?**

Paint is a substance used as coating to protect or decorate a surface. It has pigments suspended in a liquid which dry after application to form a hard coating. Pigment may refer to Colouring

substance as in substances added to give something such as paint or ink its colour. Pigment may also refer to a natural substance in the earth, in plant or animal tissue that determines its colour. One could therefore speak of three main sources of pigment as earth, plant and animals. The findings of this study revealed pigments from the first two sources; earth and plants.

Three main colour media are used in Sirigu mural: red, black and white all sourced from the earth. The people of Sirigu do not have any cultural symbolism for these colours.

Some of the media are locally acquired while others are sourced from places outside Sirigu. Apart from the red ochre, the rest of the colours are sourced from Yelewongo a town on the border of Burkina Faso and Ghana.

*Asidro* and *Karandafi* are the media used in staining leather as practiced at Bolgatanga, Bauku, Nandom, Pusiga and other places in the North where large scale livestock is prevalent. What pertains at Sirigu are only on smaller scales. Dealers place ferrous metal; iron fillings or old nails into lime solution or pito (a local drink produced from millet) and left to stand for about a week. The result is a golden brown or dark brown to almost black pigment, depending on the degree of concentration. The second medium associated with leather at Sirigu is sorghum bicolor a plant known across Ghana as *waakye* leaves, commonly known for *waakye* preparation. It is called *karandafi* in the Housa dialect. The red colour is extracted by simply boiling the stalk in water for a period of time to achieve an appreciable degree of concentration.

In using to design on leather, the *asidro* or *karandafi* is either applied with a tool onto the leather or the leather is completely immersed into a bath of the pigment.

In addition to the above, leather workers in Kumasi especially those of Manhyia/Zongo area place iron fillings or old nails into palm wine to obtain *Asidro* in designing their leather.

Asidro in its most concentrated form appear black. The *waakye* leaves or *karandafi* as described above are also employed by leather designers in Kumasi. Between this colour and that of the *asidro* one could explore a range of colours; golden brown, reddish wine, brown, coffee brown, and black (Table 4.4).

At Ahwiaa, clear distinction is drawn between traditional pigments such as plant stem and root processed to yield colour, and modern applications like industrial dyes, paints and polishes. Soot, red ochre and white clay are still in current use even though they are described typically as traditional pigments.

Elements combined for use in the blackening process of stools are eggs, soot, spider web, gun powder and sheep's blood. This mixture is believed to possess preservative qualities, preventing the stool (wood) to deteriorate or be attacked by insects (Table 4.4).

At Ntonso and Asokwa, four kinds of pigments including the *adinkraduro* (*bridelia micranta*) - dark brown, were observed. This thick paint is obtained by soaking the bark of the *badiε* tree for about three days. After that it is pounded to extract the pigment out of it with water and boiled for several hours with iron slags (believed to be a catalyst for thickening). The other three colours are *brisi*-dark blue, *kɔbene*-red and *kuntunkuni*- brown (Table 4.4).

At Ayigya the hearth is painted daily with red ochre mixed with water to an appreciable consistency, by the woman of the house after sweeping in the morning. Like hearths, traditional beds *bama/ese* are also painted with red ochre, but done weekly since the absence of fire in this case rendered it relatively stable and therefore not required to be painted daily (Table 4.4). Table 4.8 shows the classification of the media from various sources in three categories.

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Table 4.4: Focusing on the media and colours

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>COLOUR</b>
<b>Sirigu</b>	Red stone/ <i>gare</i>	Red
	Black stone/ <i>kugsab ga</i>	Black
	White stone/ <i>kug peelee</i>	White

<b>Sirigu</b>	Rusted iron and lime <i>Asidro</i>	Dark brown to black and
	<i>Karandafi</i> (sorghum bicolor)	Red
<b>Ahwiaa</b>	white clay/ <i>Hyire</i>	White
	Red clay/ <i>Ntwoma</i>	Red
	Soot/ <i>Apupuna Wisie</i>	Grey
	Turkey Berries/ <i>Kwau Susua</i>	Green
<b>Ntonso/Asokwa</b>	Brown dye/ <i>Kuntunkuni</i>	Brown
	Indigo dye/ <i>Brisi</i>	Dark Blue
	Red dye/ <i>Kobene</i>	Red
	Adinkra dye-stuff/ <i>Adinkraduro</i>	Dark Brown
<b>Ayigya</b>	Red Clay/ <i>Ntwoma</i>	Red
	Red Clay/ <i>Ntwoma</i>	Red

#### 4.7.3 How has the Media Evolved?

An earlier discussion in the second chapter of this study pitched the traditional period between 1000 and 1400 AD. This is on account of appreciation that most of the ethnicities inhabiting in present day Ghana had by then settled already with a well-defined trade pattern and cultural practice. In the Chart below an attempt is made to use this diagram to explain categories of media used by the traditional ethnicities since 1000 AD until the year of this study.

The categories of media used are Earth, Vegetal and Industrial. Earth media has been used by Africans since the Palaeolithic era, because the practice extended to ancient cultures and subsequent generations continuing a painting tradition that has run deep and complex in both media and support. As could be seen in the graph (Figure 4.1) both vegetal and earth sourced media have concurrently been used from 1000 AD till now. The break at the end of Kumasi's bar registers the end of earth media application in Kumasi after the war of 1900, although the art of domestic wall painting in Kumasi continued in margins of the city. Where evolution seem imminent is in contemporary times beginning somewhere after the mid part of the past century. For example at Ahwiaa, industrial products has long taken over the role of staining or colouring of sculpture. The next table (Table 4.5) throws more light on this recent local evolution.



Figure 4.3: Chart showing time – line of media use in three categories. Source: Researcher

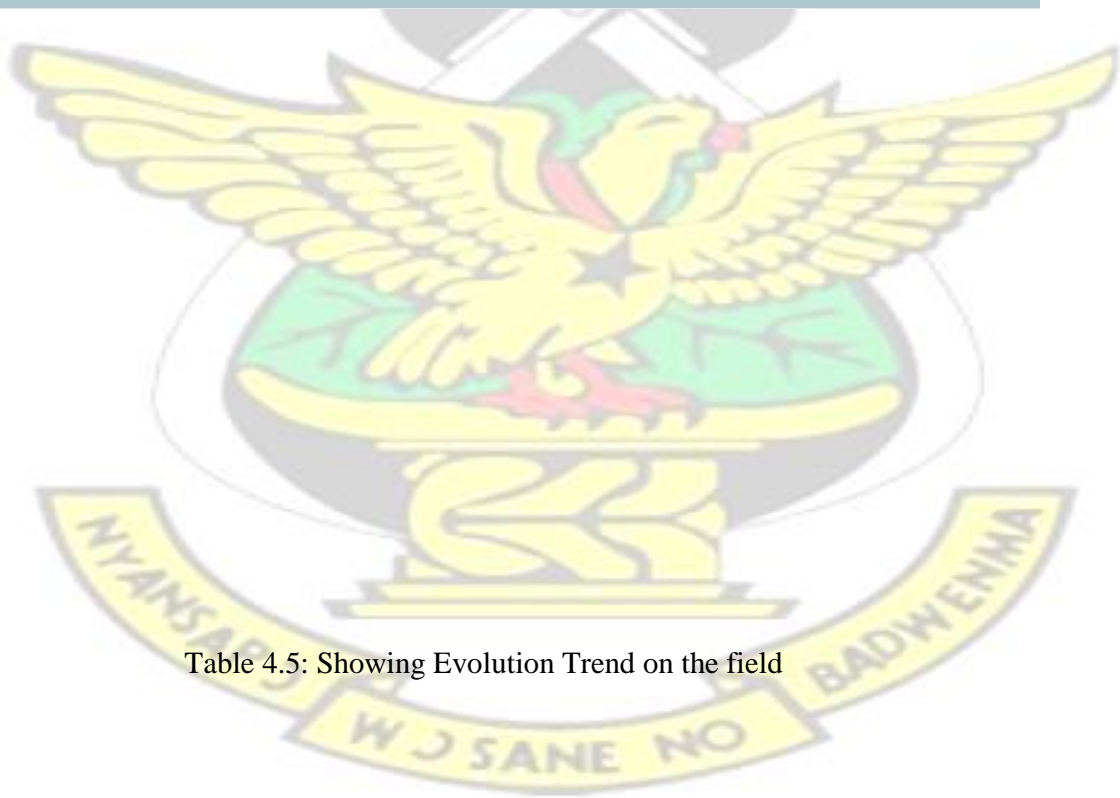
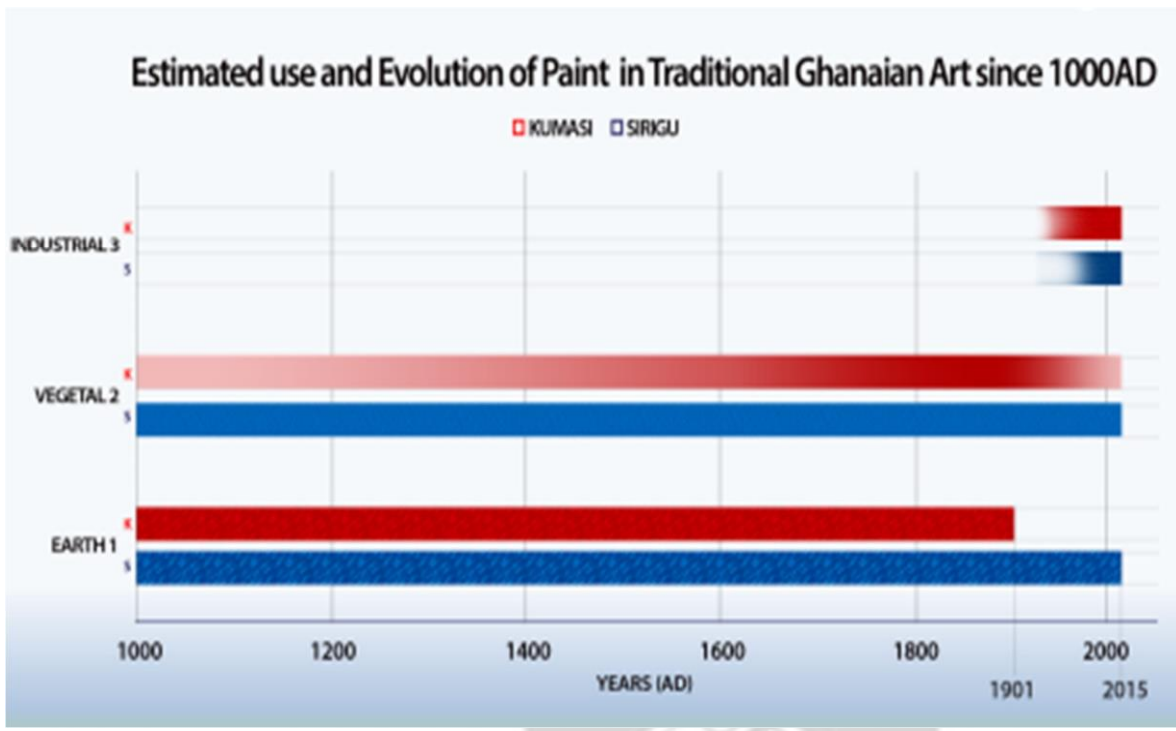


Table 4.5: Showing Evolution Trend on the field

PLACE	ART WORK	PAINT EVOLUTION
Sirigu	Wall Painting & Leather Dying	From Black, Red and White Stone to <b>Acrylic Paint</b> . But Leather retains its original media content of Asidro and Karandafi.
Ntonso/Asokwa	Adinkra Cloth	From Kuntunkuni, Brisi, Kobene & Adinkraduro to <b>Acrylic Paint</b>
Ahwiaa	Sculpture Painting & Stool Blackening	From Red Ochre, White Clay, Soot & Turkey Berries to <b>Industrial dyes &amp; Wax Polishes</b> . However Stool Blackening retains its original media content.
Ayigya	Hearth & Bed Painting	Traditional Beds were not encountered throughout the study. From <i>Ntwoma</i> (Red Ochre) to <b>any kind of clay available</b> .

#### 4.7.4 What tools and supports were used in traditional Ghanaian painting?

In Sirigu the tools used in painting are the hands, fibrous twigs, and in recent times, brushes necessitated by cement plastered walls and canvas. The supports for the paintings are the external and internal surfaces of domestic finished walls, done on the same day the walls are plastered. When it comes to application of pigment to leather, it is either by soaking or scribing with a metallic pointed tool or twig. An Ahwiaa the various media are applied by hand, endbeaten twigs, rags, brushes and by immersion of the sculptures which served as the supports.

Royal stools were painted by hand, pouring and by sprinkling.

As means of application of red ochre at Ayigya onto hearth or bed, plantain stalk is beaten to a fibrous mass as rag, repeatedly washed and dried. This rag is soaked into the mixed paint and applied onto the surface by the hand which is directly involved with paint (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Examination of Supports and Tools

PLACE	SUPPORT	TOOL	OBSERVABLE COMMENTS
Sirigu	Domestic walls, Leather & Canvas	Hand, Fibrous Twigs, brush Smoothing Stone, Short Broom, Metal Stylus, Complete Immersion into Pigment bath.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immersion of leather, textile and sculpture occur at Sirigu, Ntonso/Asokwa &amp; Ahwiaa respectively.</li> <li>2. Twigs &amp; brushes were employed at Sirigu &amp; Ahwiaa.</li> <li>3. Rags were used at Ahwiaa &amp; Ayigya.</li> <li>4. Smoothing Stone &amp; Broom were limited to Sirigu, where reliefs were also done on walls.</li> <li>5. The most streamlined process among them was Adinkra print at Ntonso/Asokwa, using either Block or Screen Print.</li> </ol>
Ntonso/Asokwa	Textile Materials	Hand, Complete Immersion into Pigment bath, Adinkra Block Prints and Silk Screen Printing.	
Ahwiaa	Sculptures & Stools	Hand, Complete Immersion into Pigment bath, Fibrous Twigs, brush and Rags, Pouring & Sprinkling.	
Ayigya	Hearths & Beds	Hand, Soft Rag made from Plantain Stalk, now substituted by any soft rag	

**4.7.5 What was the significance of the media and its use to the various traditional ethnicities?**

Sirigu people have an integral communal culture that embraces peculiar architecture including their mural. This integral communal culture with a special architecture and mural, is fast giving way for southern influences which is more western inclined. This is evidenced in the rate at which indigenes seek to change their round earth houses which is better adapted for their weather, for cement built ones, similar to those used in the southern parts of Ghana. Mural painting is a field

belonging to the feminine domain. Mothers teach their daughters through continual practice similar to the apprentice system of training. Throughout the painting from plastering to varnishing, a strict technical procedure is firmly adhered, to ensure the expected outcome.

The murals, philosophically convey a feminine impression of some sort of over all domestic responsibility to the immediate family, neighbours and visitors (Table 4.7). In Sirigu the colour media is not associated with any symbolic meanings. The role of carving on all levels from beginning to finishing is strictly limited to manual labour of men at Ahwiaa in Kumasi. The cultural symbolism found at Ahwiaa complies with all other Akan colour symbolism elsewhere as noted by Antubam (1963) and Asihene (1978); red connotes anger, crisis, grief, blood, energy, seriousness and warfare. Black stands for night, death, sorrow, depression, bereavement of the soul and memorial of the ancestors. The connotation of black is similar to that of brown. And white represents innocence, peace, purity, virtue, virginity, virtuosity, rejoicing, freedom, success and happiness. Green is associated with puberty, fertility, vitality and youthful life. Blackening of Stools is a highly significant event among Akan royalty, and the limited single colour of black employed might seem to underestimate its importance at face value. It is done to honour the departed who satisfy specific criteria among the ancestors. These criteria place the ancestor within a light worthy of emulation by others (Table 4.7). And the blackening process (ceremony) is done as a posthumous award and honour to this effect.

Stool bearers *Nkonwasoafɔ* are the custodians of all stools for the state and therefore responsible for all activities concerning them.

All things regarding history and ancestry are blackened among Akans to convey age, awe and respect. Black is further perceived as the most appropriate colour to withstand excessive handling

and in the case of the stool, continual sprinkling of blood which without a black local colour will render it despicable to the sight.

At Ahwiaa and Ntonso *Adinkra* colours are in tune with Akan colour symbolism, and therefore corroborate the colour symbolism and interpretations of Asihene, (1978); Antubam, (1963) and Arthur,(2001).

A kind of division of labour is observable from harvesting and processing of the materials to the printing of the cloth; women prepare the various dye-stuff as well as dye the cloth making it ready for the block printing. Men prepare the *adinkra aduro* and do the printing. Young boys are usually given the embroidery *nwomu* part to do. While the old men and women design the calabash pieces used for printing. The cloth is valued for its aesthetic appeal as well as their philosophical and proverbial meaning. Wearers of *Adinkra* cloth may put on to make philosophical statements when present in public.

At Ayigya the practice of hearth painting is strictly limited to females. The primary purpose of the painting is to maintain the structure from cracking and breaking eventually since it is fired daily. A well painted and varnished *kuta* hearth reflected the responsibility of womanhood in the home and an expression of virtue to visitors. Painting of the bed was extended to the entire floor of the traditional bed room, which was also made of earth.

The process for painting the hearth also goes for the bed, except that no varnishing *kuta* is done after painting the bed and floor, as done in case of the hearth. The painting of the floor and bed was part of the weekly cleaning and refurbishing that took place in traditional homes by the women or woman of the house. Women usually did bed and floor paintings but it was not

restricted as in the case of hearth painting which must be kept in expected order to reflect the care and management prevailing in the home (Table 4.7).

The use of red ochre on traditional floors dovetails into the modern practice of using red enamel paint to paint cemented floors, and still later graduating to the use of red carpets on floors.

Table 4.7: Showing Significance of media use to the various ethnicities

PLACE	ART WORK	SIGNIFICANCE
Sirigu	Wall Painting	Sirigu Women looked forward to the seasonal mural paintings of their domestic walls. The experience confirmed their role not only as home makers, but also as a means of presenting their homes as shelters of welcoming delight in the community.
Ntonso/Asokwa	Adinkra Cloth	Adinkra cloth designers saw themselves beyond their status as mere designers of cloth, and more as custodians and disseminators of wisdom in the society.
Ahwiaa	Sculpture Painting & Stool Blackening	The Nkonwasofo's (Stool-bearer's) role in royalty is a crucial one. Through the commemoration of stools by blackening, he is engaged in building and preserving the society by setting before the eyes of its members lives that have though departed, are worth emulating by all.
Ayigya	Hearth & Bed Painting	The Akan traditional woman perceived her importance in the management of and service to her household. One way she did this was by the painting, varnishing and burnishing of her hearth daily before setting her fire to cook – "Enye obaa biao ne baa".

#### 4.8.1 The Classification

Table 4.5 is further attempt to comprehensively outlay the various media according to their sources, colours and appropriate class for a suitable categorisation. Media studied at Ahwiaa for blackening of stools such as spider web, eggs, soot, gunpowder and blood of sheep were reduced to soot for the purported colour of black, since soot or other black pigments from other study locations could easily replace. From the previous table, it is observed that red, black and white

were commonly found in Sirigu and Ahwiaa. Ayigya shared red ochre only with Sirigu and Ahwiaa. In the present table therefore, the earth classified colours of black, red and white are sourced from Sirigu, Ahwiaa and Ayigya.

Sirigu again has two other colours – Asidro which is neither sourced directly from the earth nor vegetation but is iron – a mineral mixed with lime or pito (millet wine) to hasten the rusting process. It is therefore classified as ‘Vego/Mineral’ denoting its vegetable and mineral source. And karandafi (sorghum bicolor) colour, which is directly extracted from the stalk of the plant

The next medium in the table is *Apupuna wisie* (soot) from Ahwiaa is formed by smoke from burning wood, and is therefore identified as vegetal by source.

Following the soot is the green medium (also from Ahwiaa), extracted from *kwau susua* – a turkey berry which is of course vegetal. At Ntonso and Asokwa, we find *Kuntunkuni* (brown), *Brisi* (indigo), *Kobene* (red) and *Adinkraduro* (dark brown) which are all vegetal by source. All the eleven media studied have been eventually classified in the following table based upon their sources of origin.

Table 4.8: Identification and classification of the Media

PLACE	MEDIUM/COLOUR	CLASS
Sirigu	Red stone/clay	Earth
Ahwiaa	Black stone/clay	Earth
Ayigya	White stone/clay	Earth
Sirigu	Rusted iron and pito/Asidro/ Dark brown to black and Red karandafi	Vego-Mineral Vegetal
Ahwiaa	Soot/ Apupunawisie/Grey	Vegetal
	Turkey Berries/ Kwahu susua/ Green	Vegetal
Ntonso/Asokwa	Brown dye/ Kuntunkuni / Brown	Vegetal
	Brisi/ Dark Blue	Vegetal
	Red dye/ Kobene /Red	Vegetal
	Adinkraduro/ Dark Brown	Vegetal





Plate 4.79: A work solely done using different kinds of rocks finely processed and glued on panel.  
Artist: Eugene Kofi Edzorho. Source: Photographed by Researcher, 2009.

#### **4.9.1 Validation of Research Questions**

Needless to state, that this study does not claim to cover all the characteristics of traditional art or paint. Neither does it purport to access the writings of all African art historians in order to analyse why they mostly wrote about sculpture in the Sub Saharan Africa, nor find the reasons behind the absence of the use of paint in any traditional Ghanaian ethnicity. Nonetheless, the fact that substantial contribution has been made in the area of paint and pigments in the traditional art of Ghana could hardly be denied.

I limited the scope of study to enable me better focus on the proposed **research questions** and deal with them as shown below.

#### **4.9.2 Which kinds of paint/pigment have been employed in the traditional art in Ashanti and the Upper East regions?**

The study exemplified various paints and pigments in the eleven different media revealed in the end. The three media of red ochre black clay and white clay as used at Sirigu, Ahwiaa and Ayigya are safely defined as paint, whereas the botanical sourced ones such as those from Ntonso and Asokwa are categorised to fit the definition of dyes. As observable paints, for the body they carry- an insoluble pigment, and on application limit them to surfaces of their supports. However, dyes for their lightness as result of their solubility, end up soaking and essentially colouring or staining the material to which they are applied. What is painting? All through the study, painting could be defined as the application of a substance (paint) to a support for the purpose of decoration, protection or expression of an idea. The definition in line with the current study befits almost all endeavours of painting from Palaeolithic era to date. It embraces wall painting, body painting, calabash painting, sculpture painting, stool painting panel painting and canvas painting since paint is applied in all these instances for one of the purposes earlier stated.

#### **4.9.3 What tools and supports were used in traditional Ghanaian painting?**

All manner of painting supports have been employed in Ghanaian traditional era. Chief among them were wall, body, sculpture, leather and stool. Artists primarily used the hand, fibrous twigs and rags for media application unto the supports.

#### 4.9.4 What was the significance of the media and its use to the various traditional ethnicities?

This aspect of the study proved to be more phenomenological in its approach. Paints and pigments as used in all the localities studied broadly speaking conformed to its definitive application of decoration, protection or expression of idea(s). Beyond these functions the significance of paint use to the various ethnicities has been well captured in the fourth chapter of the study. It was found in Sirigu and Ayigya for instance that, a well painted wall, hearth, bed or floor indicates the presence of a virtuous woman in the home. The adage; *enyɛ ɔbaa bi ara ne ɔbaa* (Not every woman is a real woman) indicates the expected resourcefulness of traditional women in managing and maintaining the home.

Dealers in leather goods enhanced its appearance by applying *asidro* and *karandafi*. The purpose is mainly to design for decoration and beauty. In the process traditional signs and symbols vested with proverbial and/or philosophical meaning may be employed. The living usually use black in the commemoration of the dead. The colour is also used on artefact with vested historical knowledge. Black is believed to command awe and respect – an attitude desirable of the living toward the dead. The makers and wearers of *adinkra* cloth effectively use the pigment to record, express and communicate philosophical thoughts for and to the public. The pigment does not only serve as a means of recording knowledge, the user is also able to philosophically express her/his intentions to the public.

#### 4.10 Final Words

According to the study, the apparent partial information on African art history is attributable to a number of reasons; selective documentation by ancient historians, oral tradition, climatic and environmental conditions, anthropological perspective, paradigm thinking of art historians leading them to simply overlook as a result of their way of seeing.

Ancient historians like Ptolemy, Herodotus and Polybius wrote extensively about Africa, but did not capture anything concerning the art of sub Saharan Africans (Gillon, 1984). The curious question is how the history of other Africans such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Nubia and Aksum were meticulously recorded and others left out.

Literature informs that oral tradition had been the means of Africa's way of preserving history on most part of the continent. This meant that all documentations to be subsequently encountered were mostly written by non-Africans; therefore these writers wrote what they thought they were seeing or experiencing.

The tropical climate and its implied conditions are specified by certain African art historians as reasons for the limitation of traditional African art to wood sculpture. This view explains that due to the characteristic African humid environment with its attendant destructive organisms and insects worsened by oral tradition in place of recorded history, leaves too little evidence for meaningful reconstruction of the history of African art.

Another reason considered by the study accounting for limitation of African art to only sculpture is that, most pioneers of art history started as anthropologists for this reason, they had their observations and assessments funnelled by Darwinian concepts of evolution, which merely led to

the identification of art objects by regions of origin or distribution. "...they have made rather inadequate attempts to deduce a community's life and thought from the nature and content of its art. The effort has seldom been made to get to the roots of the aesthetic principles on which the art has been executed," the author continues that "the result of this failure has generally been to devise blanket theories which have an exotic appeal but which are incapable of giving us an insight into the fundamental creative spirit that brought such art to be" (Okpewho, 1977 p. 313).

It has been stated that art historians have often harboured paradigm thoughts in their historiographies (Kasfir, 1884) According to their way of seeing. Since these anthropologists could not see anything in semblance of painting in renaissance art, how could they be blamed for recording none within the African (Ghanaian) context? Consequently when easel painting was introduced in Ghana during the 1900s, it was perceived by some as marking the period when painting was introduced to the Ghanaian culture.

#### **4.10 Summary**

I have discussed traditional application of paint and pigments in five different localities; Sirigu, Ahwiaa, Ntonso, Asokwa and Ayigya. In Sirigu, paint prepared from red black and white stones were studied. Sourced from Sirigu locality and Yelewongo, the paint is processed and applied on domestic walls to philosophically reflect the caring and responsible nature of the women present in the homestead. Asidro, a pigment used in the staining of leather was encountered as well in Sirigu. It is produced by putting old nails or iron fillings into *pito* or lime solution and left for some days. A golden brown pigment results through the action of rust. A change in the liquid to either *pito* or palm wine darkens the colour to black. Karandafi or waakye leaves (sorghum bicolor) is another colour source for leather painting. It produces reddish wine colour when boiled in water. At Ahwiaa, I looked at the painting or finishing of two art forms; sculptures and

stools. Sculptures were painted with processed soot, red ochre, white clay red, green and black extracts from leaves and tree roots. Resulting in a variety of finishing for preservation as well as make them presentable. On the other hand blackening of stools are done using eggs, soot, gun powder, spider's web and blood of a sheep. A black effect results commemorative of honoured ancestors by the living. At Ntonso and Asokwa, I studied Adinkra clothes, which have varieties of colours including brown *kuntunkuni*, dark blue *brisi* and red *kobene* as background, with the use of *adinkraduro* print paste of dark brown used to stamp proverbial patterns onto the cloth. Apart from serving as recording of traditional concept and values, the wearer expressly communicates his philosophical thoughts to the public. In Ayigya, the sole paint of red ochre has been studied as used on hearths floors and earth beds. A well painted hearth, floor or bed in a home reflected the presence and role of a virtuous woman whose role spreads across the entire management of the home.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **5.1 Overview**

This chapter focuses on summarising the entire work done, followed by identification of gap for the research, constraints, recommendations, future research opportunities, validation of research questions and conclusions. I observe recommendations for this study in three categories; (a) Recommendations based upon the unit of research. (b) Recommendations regarding cultural practices, and (c) Recommendations towards policy institutionalisation by government and other stakeholders.

## **5.2 Summary**

The study commenced on the basis of paint cultural experiences of the traditional Ghanaian artist. This focus was drawn with the background information of how most writers in art history conclusively present African art as though it all had to do with sculpture alone. It is probable that the kind of works encountered locally by these anthropologists did not meet their criteria of painting, since it had nothing in the semblance of what pertained in Europe. Painting in Ghana then did not employ manufactured paint formally applied on canvas. As expected, some Ghanaian intellectuals had even argued that painting did not belong to Ghanaian culture. With this line of thought, it become obvious for one to see the 1900s as the only time the Ghanaian culture embraced painting through Achimota art programmes.

The objective of the study was set to track the evolution of paint and pigments in traditional art and classify them. The study also sought to examine the tools and supports for these media. Finally, it was to identify the significance of the application of paint in these works to the ethnicities in question.

Paint and its related media found in traditional works were reviewed across the Sahara, Egypt and Ghana. The areas considered in this review were wall painting, body painting, calabash painting, pottery, sculpture and stool painting.

It was a qualitative study with a constructivist paradigm, underpinned by contextualism. I tackled the study with main methods including ethnography and phenomenology, since data could only be retrieved not only by detailed interviews but in certain cases the need to live among the people to observe and appreciate certain conceptual characteristics essential to the culture. It was phenomenological because there was the need to understand how the people from the area of study understood and interpreted the phenomenon being studied. The historical aspect of the research was paramount since it formed the fulcrum on which all the other methods rested. In the end the multiple methods helped to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives.

Five localities; Sirigu, Ahwiaa, Ntonso, Asokwa and Ayigya were studied interviewing twenty three (23) people. The study culminated in eleven paint and pigments. Three are directly sourced from the earth, seven are plant based and the final one is both plant and mineral sourced, hence categorised as ‘vego-mineral’.

### **5.3 Gap For Research**

The research questions was set to probe into the medium of paint and pigments in the domain of traditional Ghanaian art; it focused upon finding the pigments, paints and colours that were used during the traditional era of Ghanaians in order to explore how these forms of media were used. The study sought to find how these paints and pigments evolved, how they were applied and the

significance it held to the users. The question as to why art historians apparently place more emphasis on sculpture in Sub Saharan art than painting? lingered in the background of the study as literature made it more evident.

The need for the study as proposed in the introductory chapter became clearer as related literature regarding the subject were reviewed. In various ways paints and pigments had been and in many cases continue to be used in Ghanaian traditional art, yet hardly was any work encountered with systematic study into the phenomenon, attesting to the need for the current study.

The work focused on paints and pigments in two regions Upper East and the Ashanti, to study paint or/and pigment culture in the traditional art of Ghana. The study culminates in eleven (11) different media in three categories of Earth, Vegetal/Meneral (Vego-meneral) and Vegetal as classified in Table 4.8. Before classification of these media the attempt was made to determine the macro and micro trend of evolution, that is to say the broader trend of evolution over the centuries as well as current evolutionary trends on the field locally as found in Graph 1, and Table 4.5 respectively. Supports and tools were examined (Table 4.6), as stated in the second objective to ascertain how they have changed along with media. Finally a phenomenological observation was made as regards the significance of the use of media to the ethnicities (Table 4.7).

E. V. Asihene did extensive work in the practical exploration of paint media. So did Kofi Antubam during his time in Achimota. I personally witnessed categories of earth colours well packed in little wooden boxes in a room that served as Asihene's personal office in the College of Art – KNUST in 1994. Other artists have done same to enhance their practice. My work on the other hand focused on researching the evolution and classification of traditional media as well as the cultural meanings underpinning its use during the traditional period of 1000 – 1400 AD. For this reason, the study holds significance to the practice of painting and its historiography.

Though a further research in other parts of the country especially in the Eastern and Volta Regions would broaden the knowledge base of the subject under consideration, the present study not devoid of oversights or clerical errors has meaningfully contributed to the intellectual discourse on paint in traditional art – their evolution, application and meaning as regards Ghanaian art.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In spite of the referenced limitations and/or shortcomings in this study, it is factual that the research satisfied its objective of a) Finding the origin and evolution of paint in Ghanaian traditional art (with a focus in the Ashanti and the Upper East Regions), in order to construct a useful classification. b) Examine the supports and tools for the various paint/pigment. And c), find the significance of paint to the various traditional ethnicities. The study also analysed gap for the research and validated its research questions. Based upon the findings. Therefore, one could conclude with the claim that Palaeolithic art of paint preparation and application for various purposes during cave art did not end with the era, and that ancient societies continued in the use of paint and pigments until the turn of divers populations who lived within the bounded area of what is currently known as Ghana. Traditional Ghanaian ethnicities freely explored and used different kinds of paint to protect surfaces, decorate and express philosophical ideas. They respected the environment and wisely explored it to meet their needs. The environment was nurtured rather than exploited. Sustainability was a concept well ingrained within the traditional mind. The study confirms that all eleven paints culminating out of this research were organic; implying that continual involvement with its use should enhance rather than deteriorate life. All the art forms mentioned in the study are vested with history philosophy and cultural values of the people. From the wall painting of Sirigu to hearth painting in Ayigya one better appreciates the role of traditional art as not always bound to ritual or religious purpose but are in many instances

employed directly as means to exploring creativity through the expressive means of paint. Finally, the recommendations outlined could go a long way to meaningfully build on the artistic and philosophical values of our past, thereby strengthening and validating the crucial connection between existence and cultural heritage (Antwi & AdiDako, 2014).

## **5.5 Recommendations**

I present recommendations emanating from this work under three sub-headings; (a) Recommendations based upon the unit of research. (b) Recommendations regarding cultural practices, and (c) Recommendations towards policy institutionalisation by government.

### **5.5.1 Recommendations based on the unit of research**

Since the past five years, lecturers in the Painting Section have successfully led their students in second year in the use of Asidro and Karandafi to paint on canvas and on paper with great results. Art teachers should therefore encourage students through assignments and group projects to tap materials directly from their local environments as exemplified in Plate 4.79. This I believe could open new ways of seeing and thinking through their work as they develop deeper interaction with their environment.

Furthermore, working with materials free from all forms of poisonous chemicals should be a priceless opportunity for any artist, because the danger of toxic colours is in their cumulative poisoning over a long period of usage, and colour media have had its share of chemical pollution and poisoning among others on the planet since the inception of the production of

synthetic dyes in the nineteenth century. Rossol reports of the churn that occurred within the organic and chemical industry after the discovery of mauve in 1856.

The origins of pigments and dyes are lost in antiquity, although we know that they sprang from common natural products such as minerals, berries, roots, and insects. When mauve, the first synthetic dye was discovered in 1856, it catalyzed the development of the whole organic chemical industry. Since then a host of synthetic chemical dyes and pigments have been created." Rossol (1994),

Performance Artists who apply paint often to their bodies should use these kind of media which are organic and hence rejuvenating on contact with their bodies. In the same vein students and other users who are allergic to industrial paint some of whose contents are known to be carcinogenic to the body in the long term, could help themselves by using these naturally sourced media.

The significant tricolour of White, Red and Black have much significance in traditional Ghanaian art. It could be used in the composition of a logo and a corporate identity under which Asihene's (1978) suggested Traditional Art Industry could finally be organised.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations regarding cultural practices**

Though Ghana is made up of so many ethnic groups of various cultures, there are yet, very cardinal values that all Ghanaians broadly believe in, being foundational to the African cultural heritage before colonisation, though contemporary Ghanaian lifestyle seem to rather snuff than sustain it; To mention a few; care for the earth (sustainability), cleanliness, honesty, care for one another, and responsibility in leadership. Thankfully these have long been integral part of traditional African culture. It is crucial for government and the governed to instil a sense of

importance and meaning this 21st century, into these valued cultural heritage, towards its effective preservation reorientation, and benefit by all. To this end, the government, should set up and strengthen the system to reward and penalise individuals, groups or corporations who pursue or tread down these cherished values, in order to clearly demonstrate the nation's unwillingness to compromise with irresponsible living which seem to be the order of the day.

There is the need to re-examine the life lived by our founding fathers and mothers in order to make informed choices between their virtuous and vicious practices. Condemning all that they stood for as nonsense might sooner or later force us to our knees in acknowledgement of their standards. A direct reference is what now pertains between state-of-the-arts agriculture (mechanized) and permaculture, which share much with traditional agriculture.

### **5.5.3 Recommendations towards policy institutionalisation by government and other stakeholders.**

Central government, non-governmental agencies, churches, private companies and corporations should have as part of their social intervention programmes, projects that encourage citizens to preserve best parts of their culture. Sirigu people for instance could then be motivated to maintain their original architecture and not seek to demolish them to erect modern concrete structures in their stead. If the effort fails, then central government could adopt a cluster of compounds as heritage sites to preserve the remarkable past of Sirigu, having reasonably compensated and relocated the occupants of the selected area.

Ghana as a people need the leadership towards re orientation on the benefits of cherishing our own culture. Almost on all fronts, the nation seems to be merely drifting on the global cultural sea without any effort to govern national cultural trends as though the subject is irrelevant.

Currently, there is no reflection of the importance of knowledge or appreciation of our cultural heritage as a nation. We seem comfortable drifting along with other countries of the world. Since the Cultural Policy document of Ghana was completed in 2004 under the previous government, one can only count a few people as those aware of Ghana's cultural position, and even of these few, it is difficult to tell whether they could effectively define the cultural position and policies of their respective institutions. This neglect is proven by the nation having witnessed no effort in the dissemination of the policies regarding the above mentioned cultural document to the citizenry. It is apparent that a people without any meaningful cultural values cannot hope to obtain any worthwhile future. This is the unfortunate scenario of a culturally endowed nation whose art and cultural heritage may be allowed to slip through her fingers like grains of sand, if drastic steps are not taken on all fronts to preserve it. Rules merely enshrined in the law without a commensurate cultural inculcation and appreciation shall maintain only a superficial attendance by the people. Since it is not heartily observed, in challenging moments the people will break it knowing that leaders do same and under life's pressures children will compromise knowing that their parents do not really believe in it. Preservation of Cultural Heritage ultimately leads to enhancement and fulfilment of life.

A personal adage run that; *“when you lack use for your stones, someone else will use them to build a wall in your path”*. There is the critical need for government to lead the way in placing more value upon the art and culture of Ghana, by directly beefing up funding as well as drawing comprehensive programmes (via academia) for effective local executions in the face of prevailing dynamic contemporary visual culture. Since the successful impact of African art on the world beginning at the 1900s, various governments have consistently neglected it over the years till the Chinese currently export industrially produced African art internationally. Asihene (1978: 91),

hinted this very idea where he sought to demonstrate how the traditional arts and crafts of Ghana could be harnessed towards the development of Ghana. The establishment of well-funded art and cultural museums with well displayed collections across the regions in the country would be an act loud enough to stress the importance of art and culture to the citizenry. It is within this frame of impression that individuals would emulate in cherishing our cardinal values, cultural ideals and productions.

There is currently a looming art and cultural problem that need urgent attention. During the fieldwork at Ahwiaa in the Ashanti region, I observed that the legendary Akan stool of rich history is about to phase out completely. Serious causes were discovered among them was huge generational gap. The apprenticeship system of the carvers demands a regular filling in of the next younger generation to continue the industry. This time, the current generation having been side-tracked by technology and other more profitable interests, have totally deserted the industry leaving the elders alone. The implication is that the industry would be grounded when the current elders phase out.

However, hidden in the above problem is the solution that can turn the stool carving industry around. Let government begin to direct a limited fund into the industry requesting for specific types of carved stools both utilitarian, decorative and as gift items (smaller sizes). When the National Commission on Culture takes the lead in showing to Ghanaians that not only could stools serve as furniture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century home but could also be used in monumental sizes in official premises for corporate identity with the nation, and in smaller sizes as award and decorative pieces. This will open up new ways of dealing with stools in Ghana. The private sector will follow suit by investing in this Ghanaian cultural piece. Tourists will focus on it as a great souvenir to be purchased from Ghana.

True development does not come just by following some strategic social and economic policies, but by constantly pursuing practices and values that are deeply founded in the culture (hearts and minds) of the people with premium on individual well-being and enhancement of life.

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#### **5.5.4 Future Research Opportunities**

A study on how these ten colour media could be organically processed and made portable for use by young artists should be desirable. A deeper study into the chemistry of the selected substances with their pigments will be appropriate, since it could auger for better means of refinement and concentrations for superior quality colour products.

The West African Indigo plant of which Schuman and Thonn (1954) reports as cultivated in Ghana and other West African Countries, two centuries ago deserve a further pursuit in research and production, in view of its great strength in producing very durable organic indigo.

Further research on traditional paint, focusing on ethnicities whose histories are associated with pigments such as the Krobos of Somanya, Ewes of Tetekope and even the Fantis canoe culture at the coastal area is recommendable.

A research on the imminent extinction of the Akan stool from the Ghanaian culture as stated above should be an appropriate subject for in-depth study towards effective diagnostics of the problem and recommendations to prevent it.

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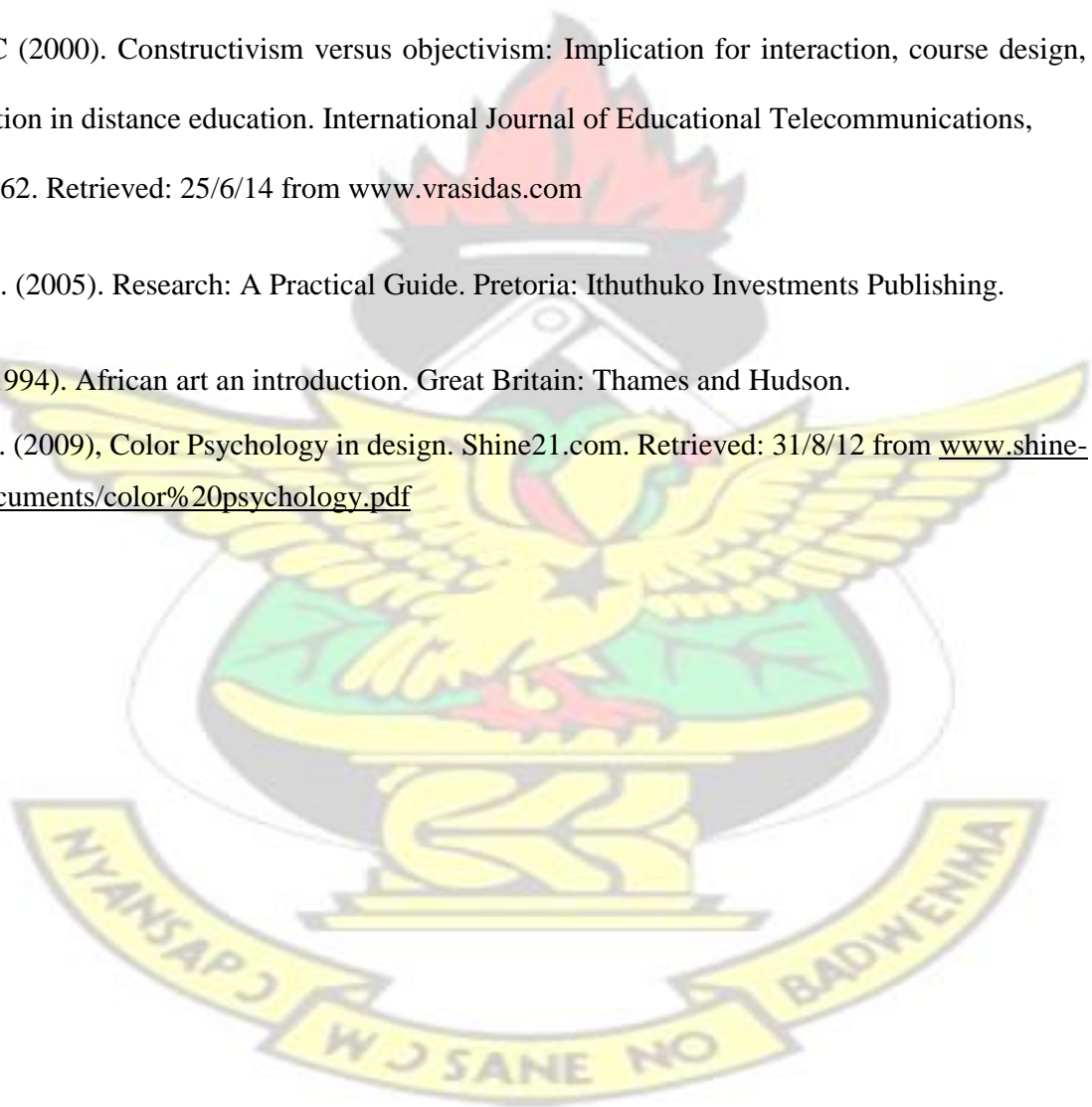
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# KNUST

## APPENDIX A

### A.1 Important terms in this research in the Nankam Language

*Agrunusi*- design name known as school children holding hands, Upper East, Ghana.

*Agrunusi/Sukuukomakoma*- school children holding hands, Upper East, Ghana.

*Akunyana ni* – another design which is a name of a person Kasena Nankani, Upper East, Ghana.

*Am* - local name for dawadawa pods in the builsa language, Upper East, Ghana.

*Ameziazuvaka*- hat/cap , Upper East, Ghana.

*Ampua*- bark of tree extract as fixative or varnish.

*Baasi*- lizard. Upper East, Ghana.

*Bangole*- sleeping place. Upper East, Ghana.

*Basie-uo tindou* – the clan that started the sirigu wall paintings, Upper East, Ghana.

*Bayatiem* - local name for black plus (+) wall marks in Bongo, Upper East, Ghana.

**Bole** – local name for red sand in Sirigu, Upper East, Ghana.

**Borinborihi** - is the local name of the Sirigu traditional wall designs. Upper East, Ghana.

**Borinborihi Tanne**- canvas painting. Upper East, Ghana.

**Burima**- shea-butter residue used as protective varnish, Upper East, Ghana

**Chenben duo** – local name for maize cob in the Builsa language, Upper East, Ghana.

**Danga** – cooking area. Upper East, Ghana.

**Diyanga/Danga**- kitchen. Upper East, Ghana.

**Eebga**- crocodile. Upper East, Ghana.

**Gare** – local name for red gravel or granite in sirigu, Upper East, Ghana.

**kug peelee** – local name for white stone Sirigu, Upper East, Ghana. **kugsab**

**ga** – local name for black stone, Upper East, Ghana.

**Kumpio** – calabash arranged in the order of a pyramid. Upper East, Ghana.

**Laasi** – calabash. Upper East, Ghana.

**Lungae** – traditional drums. Upper East, Ghana.

**Luul-ro** – local name for black plus (+) wall marks in Lambussie. Upper West, Ghana.

**Myirisika** – local for wall decorations in Wiaga, Upper East, Ghana.

**Naafo** – cow. Upper East, Ghana.

**Nankam** – Language spoken in Sirigu. Upper East, Ghana.

**Ndebele** – the name for a traditional wall painting in South Africa.

**Niila** – chicken. Upper East, Ghana.

**No bi na** – local name for cow-dung in the Sissala dialect in Lambussie, Upper West, Ghana.

**Nyee** - local name for smoothing stone in the builsa language, Upper East, Ghana.

**Pisko** – domestic sheep/goat. Upper East, Ghana.

**Sasigas** – white stone for painting on wall. Upper East, Ghana.

**Somenka** – local name for a broken broom in sirigu used for applying mixtures onto the wall surfaces during the painting, Upper East, Ghana.

**Soo** – name of the local broom in Sirigu, Upper East, Ghana.

**Tanmono** - local name for red sand in Wiaga, Upper East, Ghana.

**Tongonsi** – a name for one the Sirigu wall designs. It is made up of zigzag lines, Upper East, Ghana.

**Vayan** - local name for black plus (+) wall marks in Nansa, Upper East, Ghana.

**Waafo** – python. Upper East, Ghana.

**Wanne** – halved calabash used to hold water or grains.

**Wanzagsi** – design name known as broken calabash, Upper East, Ghana.

**Weefo** – horse.

**Wea** – local for wall decorations in Nansa Upper East, Ghana.

**Yagimbasa Wanzagsi** – a piece of calabash used for modelling pots.

**Yoka** – fish net. Upper East, Ghana.

**Zalinga** – name of a design directly translated as “calabash net”, Upper East, Ghana.

**Ziifo** – fish. Upper East, Ghana.

**Zinzaaka-Dentine** – the main structures that make up the complete family house. Upper East, Ghana.

**Zongo 1 and 2** – constitute the pens and kraal for the domestic cattle and other animals. Upper East, Ghana.

**Zuvaka** – round huts. Upper East, Ghana.

## A.2 Points for interview

The following are not limited to, but include foundational points on which the researcher's open ended interview questions were based.

1. What is the name of this form of painting in the local dialect?
2. What ethnicity practices this kind of art?
3. Since when (date) is it known to have been practiced? Pre-colonial/colonial/postcolonial.
4. Is the practice gender biased?
5. Does it take especially qualified persons in the society to do it?
6. What medium was used in painting this?
7. On what support is it usually painted?
8. Has the medium changed over time?
9. Has the support changed over time?
10. If yes what were previously used?
11. How long does it take for an average piece to be done?
12. What elements are combined to produce this painting?
13. How were these elements sourced? Is it from earth, vegetation or industrial materials?
14. How was this medium processed before use?

15. What is the pigment in this medium?
16. How about the medium, dry binder?
17. What tool is used in applying the paint to the support?
18. What environment are such works usually found?
19. Is the piece connected or involved in any custom/ritual or traditional rite?
20. What does the work mean to the people?
21. Does this ethnicity practice any other form of painting?
22. Are there any complementary works to this?

### **A.3 Rationale for questionnaire**

These questions offered the researcher the opportunity to record the ethnicities that practice the traditional paintings, names, histories, purpose, tools and materials used etcetera. The following table (1) explains the rationale for crafting the foundational questions around which conversation with respondents circulated. A summary for the rationale for the questionnaire is given in Table 1.

# KNUST

Table 1: Rational for questionnaire

Question	Rational
1. What is the name of this form of painting in the local dialect?	To find the local name for an identified paint-related work
2. What ethnicity practices this kind of art?	To be certain whether the work is produced by the ethnicity being encountered
3. Since when (date) is it known to have been practiced? Precolonial/colonial/post-colonial.	To obtain an idea of how long the product has been part of the ethnicity
4. Is the practice gender biased?	To know whether the art is gender specific
5. Does it take especially qualified persons in the society to do it?	To find out whether it is a specialized practice
6. What medium was used in painting this?	To find the medium used in painting the piece
7. On what support is it usually painted?	To find whether the paint is commonly found on a particular support
8. Has the medium changed over time?	Whether the paint has evolved from its original kind
9. If yes what were previously used?	To find the original paint if the current one is not the original one
10. How long does it take for an average piece to be done?	To have an idea of the period of time needed to complete a piece
11. What elements are combined to produce this painting?	To know the materials needed to produce this work
12. How were these elements sourced? Is it from earth, vegetation or industrial materials?	To know the source of medium; whether from earth, plants or industrial product

13. How this medium was processed before use?	To know the preparatory stages the medium went through before application
14. What is the pigment in this medium?	Seeks to know the specific colour present in this medium
15. Is there any binder in the medium?	To find if something is added to make the medium stick better to its support
16. What tool is used in applying the paint to the support?	Seeks to find the specific means of application
17. What environment are such works usually found?	To find whether the works done were sight specific
18. Is the piece connected or involved in any custom/ritual or traditional rite?	Whether the practice stands free by itself or linked to any custom, right or belief of the people
19. What does the work mean to the people?	To find what the work meant to the people
20. Has this meaning changed over the years or remained same?	Whether this meaning has remained or changed over the years
21. Are there any complementary works to this?	To find whether this work stand alone or linked to others
22. Does this ethnicity practice any other form of art?	Seeks to know other art forms among this group, in order to find possible links to other paint or pigment – based art works.

#### A.4 Face-Validation of questions

Face validation, according to Sanders and Mokuku is when a researchers ensure cogency and exactness of their instrument by consulting experts for “content or for construct validity” (1994). Though the questions formulated were only a guide for open ended informal interviews, it was needful to outline cogent questions that should lead to due retrieval of relevant data. My

supervisor experienced in African art methodologies, face-validated these questions, ensuring that responds from the questions led to answering of the research questions earlier posed for this study. Table 2 is a summary on studies done on the various media in the previous chapter.

Table 2: A distribution table in summary of chapter three

PLACES and PEOPLE	NUMBER OF PERSONS	MEDIUM	SUPPORT	SOURCE	EVOLUTION	MEANS OF APPLICATION
Sirigu Nankani	9	Red Ochre Black Stone White Stone	Domestic Wall	Yelewongo Sirigu	Substitutes with acrylic paint	Hand, End beaten Twigs and Brushes
Sirigu Nankani	1	Asidro	Leather	Sirigu locality	None	Twigs and pointed metal
Ahwiaa Asante	2	Soot, Red Ochre, White clay Plant Green, Red and Black	Sculpture	Ahwiaa and its environs	Substitutes with shoe polish and Loundary blue	Hand, Endbeaten Twigs, Rags and Brushes
Ahwiaa Asante	2	Soot Egg Cobweb and Blood	Stool	Ahwiaa and its environs	None	Hand/Pouring and Sprinkling
Ntonso Asante	3	Kuntunkuni, Brisi, Kɔbene, and Adinkraduro - Badie Tree Back – Dark Brown (Bridelia micrantha)	Textile Material	Brong Ahafo Region, Akomadan and Adwira	Substitutes with acrylic paint etc	Dyeing and Stamping, Screen Printing
Asokwa Asante	1	Kuntunkuni, Brisi, Kɔbene, and Adinkraduro - Badie Tree Back – Dark Brown (Bridelia micrantha)	Textile Material	Brong Ahafo Region, Akomadan and Adwira	Substitutes with acrylic paint etc	Dyeing and Stamping, Screen Printing
Ayigya Akans	3	Red Ochre	Hearth	Donyina	Substitutes with any other clay	Beaten Plantain Stalk Fibre

Ayigya Akans	4	Red Ochre	Earth Bed	Donyina	Hardly found today in Society	Beaten Plantain Stalk Fibre
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# KNUST

## APPENDIX B



Plate 1: Surma body painting



Plate 2: mechanical tattoos





Plate 3: Asante women mourning the dead



Plate 4: Asante men mourning the dead.



Plate. 5: supporter of a football team having her body painted



Plate 6: loyal supporters of a baseball team

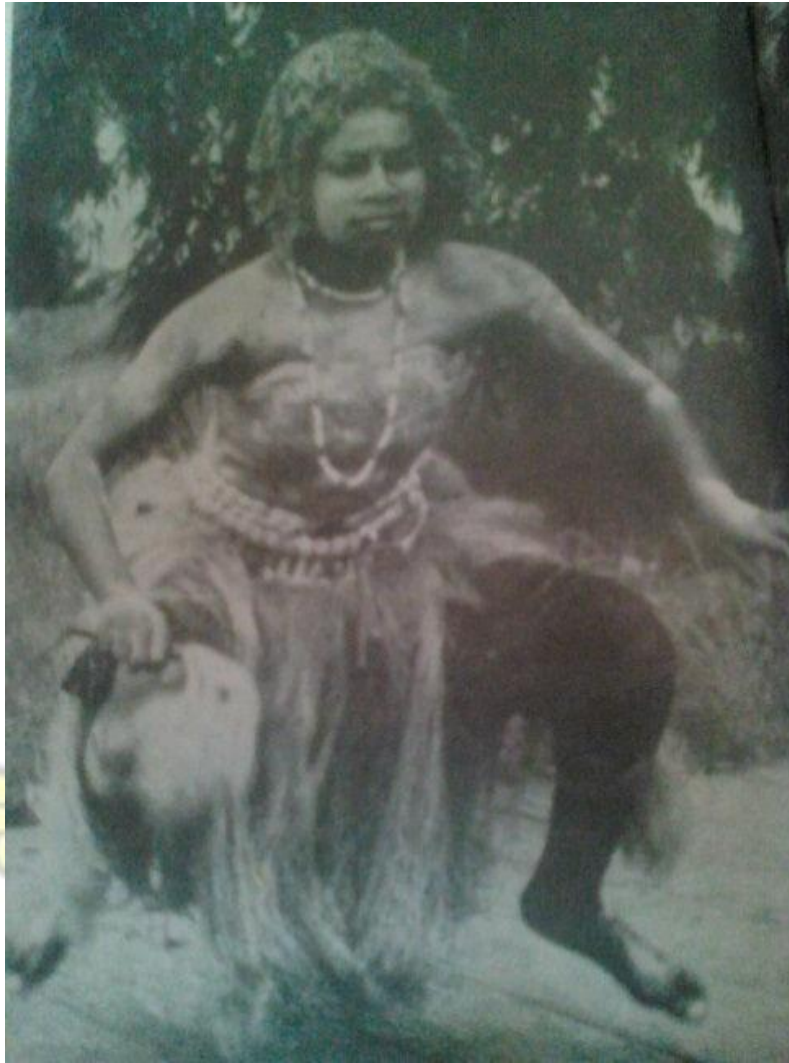


Plate 7: A traditional priest whose body has been painted with white clay.



Plate 8: A traditional priest smearing his chest with millet paste.

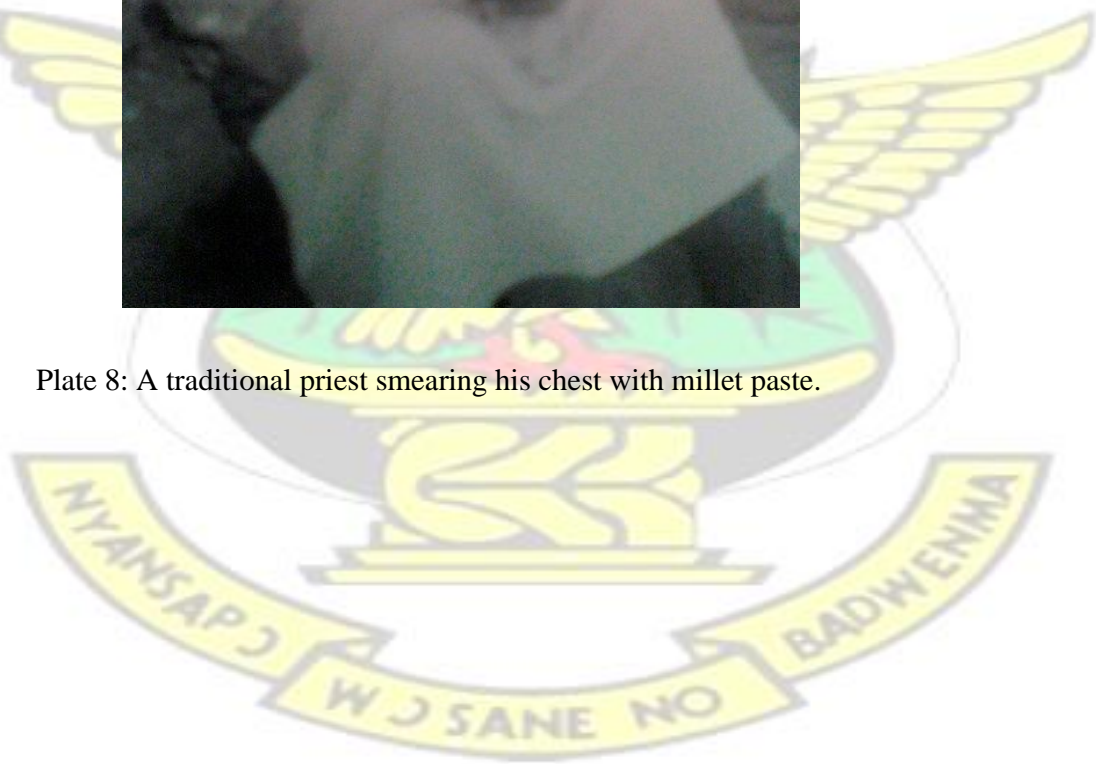




Plate 9: Surma girls face painting by the Dama river. (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)

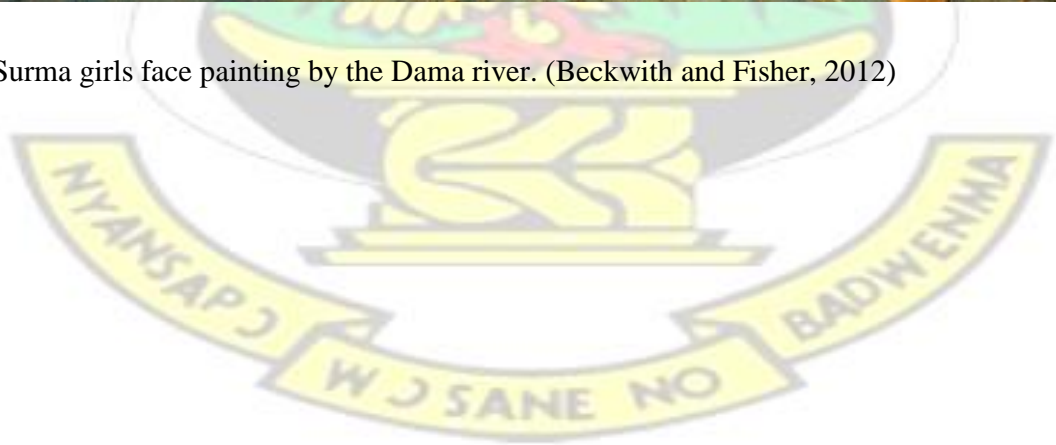




Plate 10:A sample Nwomu Adinkra cloth

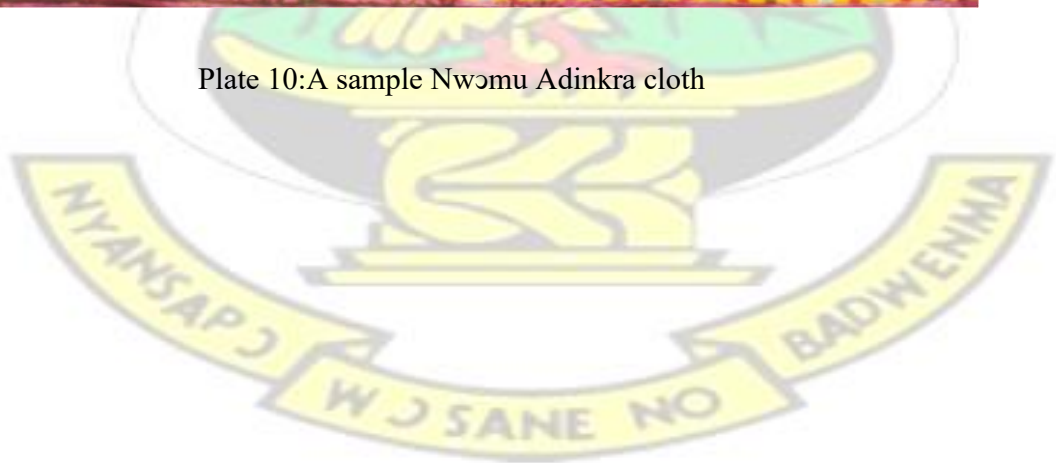




Plate 11: Nana Opoku Ware I in Kwasiada Adinkra cloth



Plate 12: Swahili woman decorating her hand with henna, Lamu Island, Kenya (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)

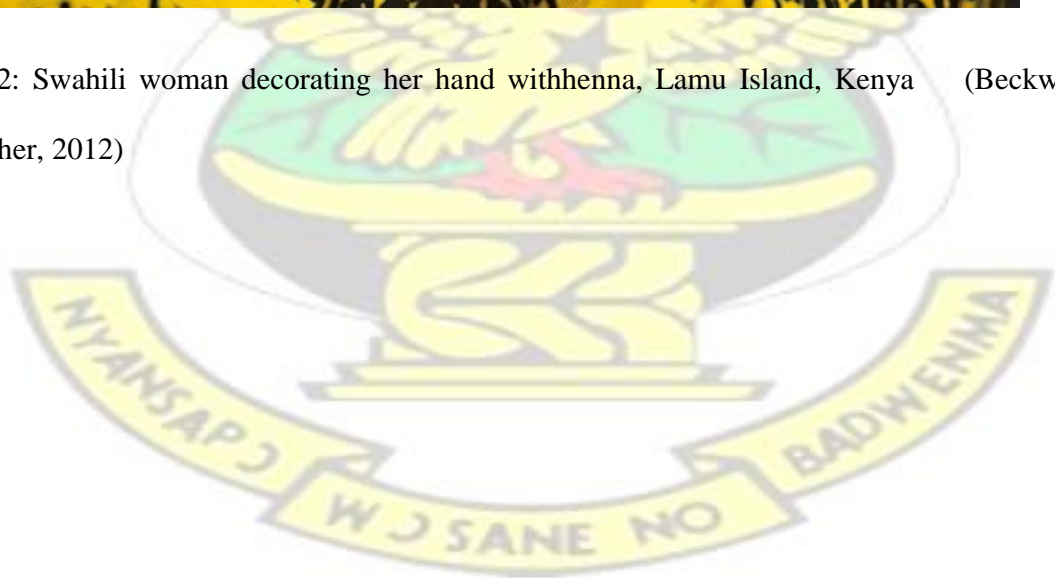


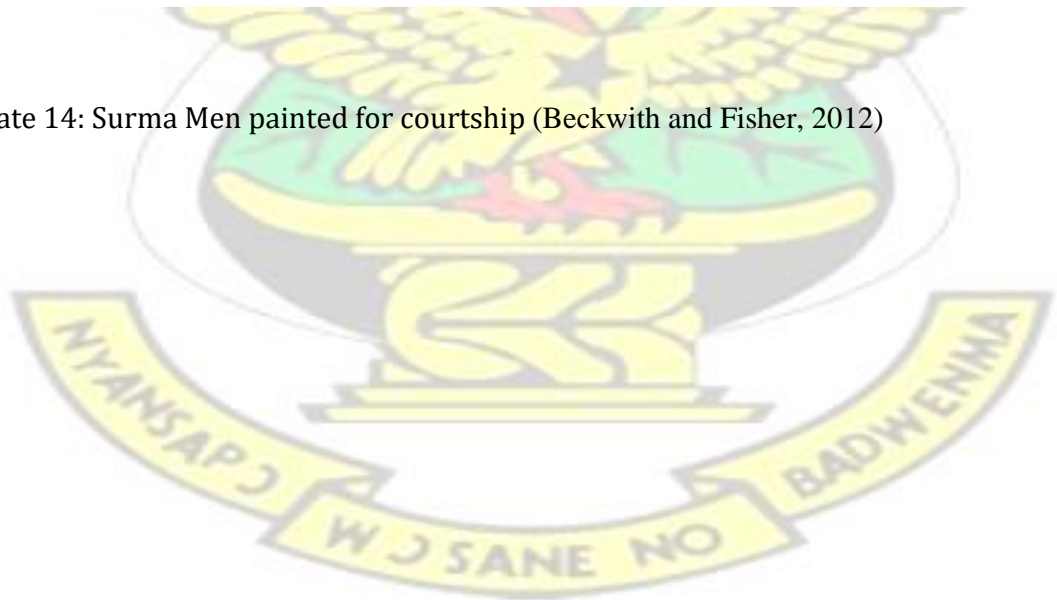


Plate 13: Surma men body painting (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)





Plate 14: Surma Men painted for courtship (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)



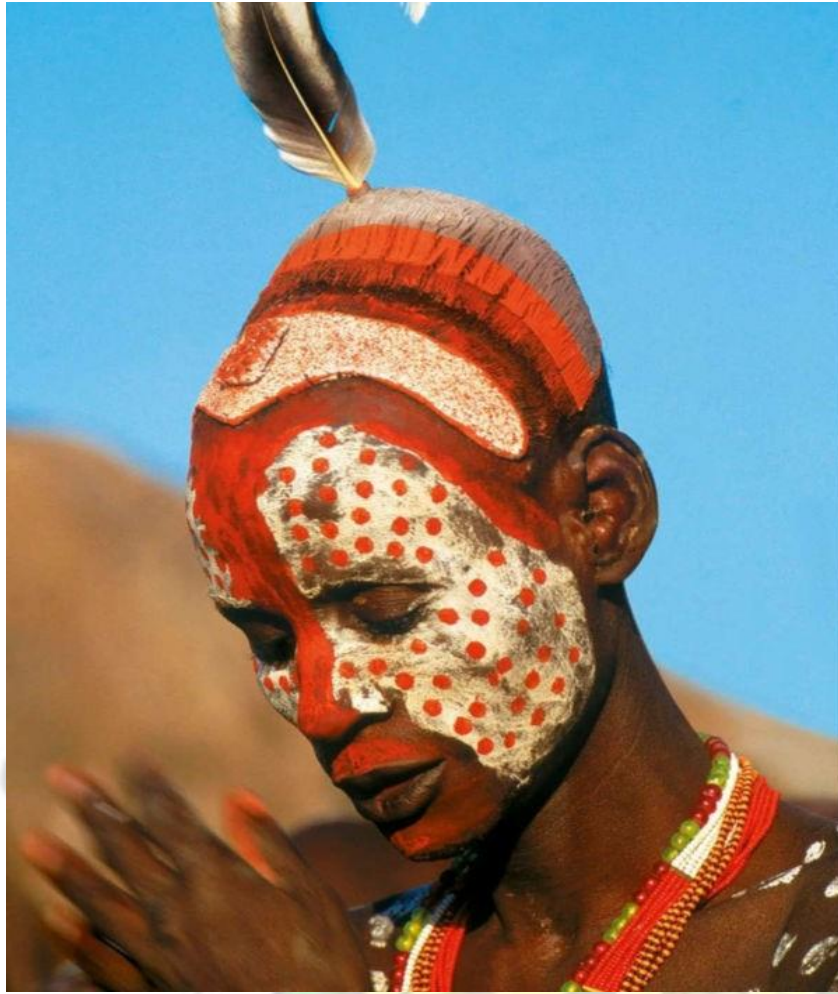


Plate 15: Karo Man painted for courtship dancing, Ethiopia (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)

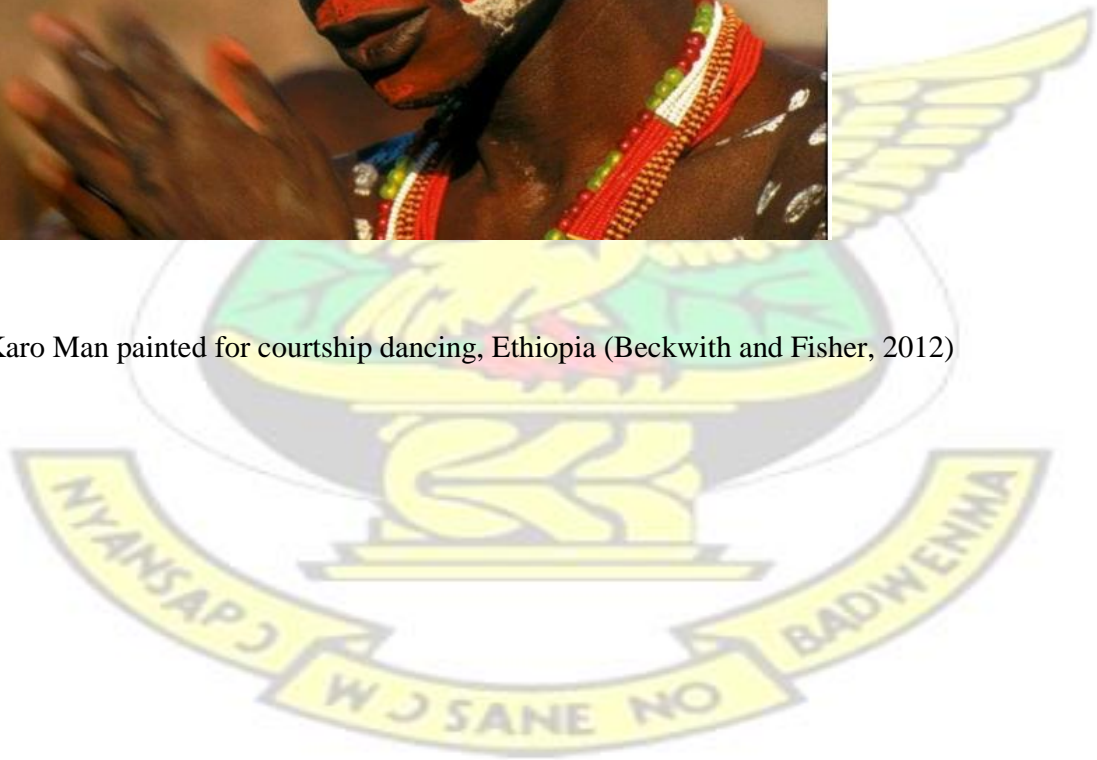


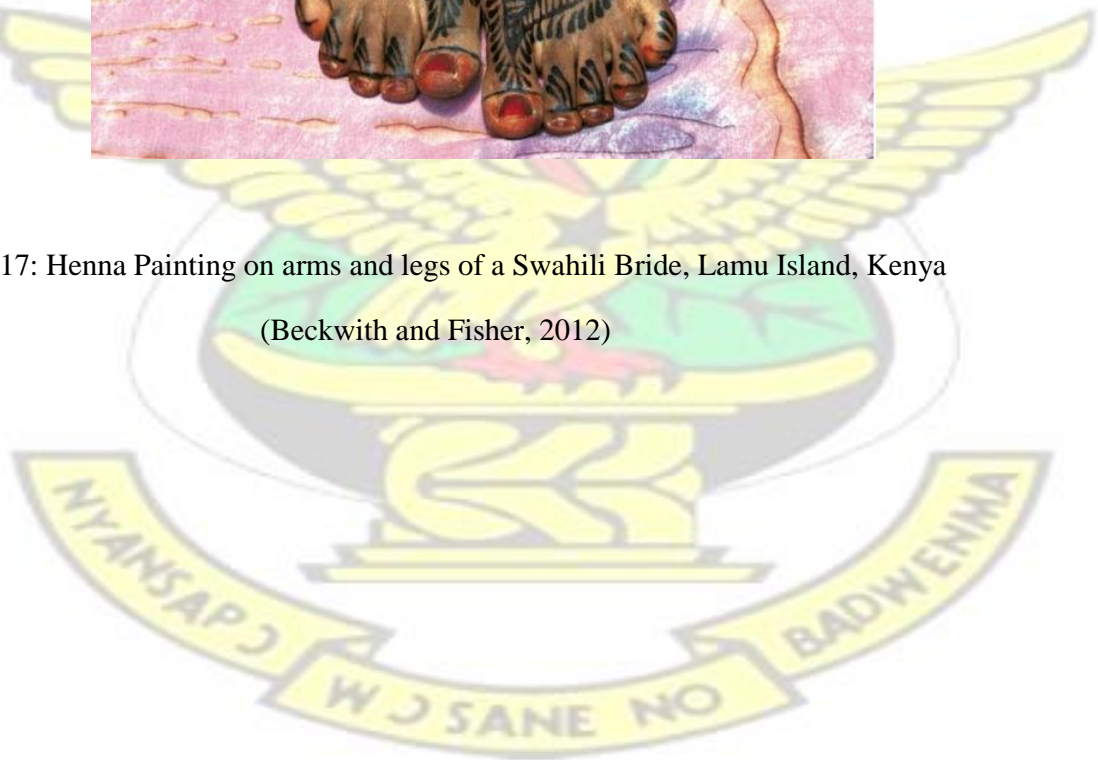


Plate 16: Karo man's painted chest, Ethiopia (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)





Plate 17: Henna Painting on arms and legs of a Swahili Bride, Lamu Island, Kenya  
(Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)



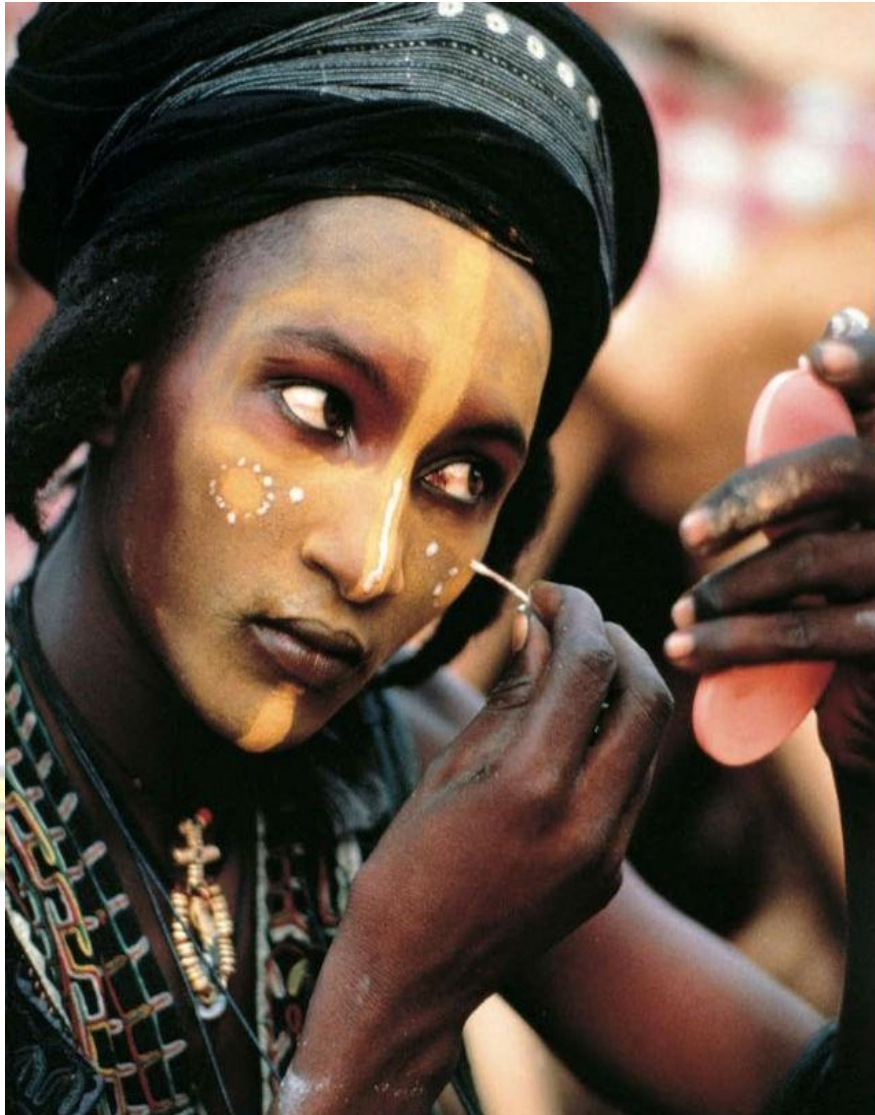


Plate 18: Wodaabi Charm Dancer preparing for the Geerewol, Niger

(Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)



Plate 19: Wodaabe Male charm dancers (Beckwith and Fisher, 2012)

