POINTILLIST EXPRESSION OF DANCE FORMS IN GHANA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE AWARD OF MASTER OF FINE ART (M.F.A.) DEGREE IN

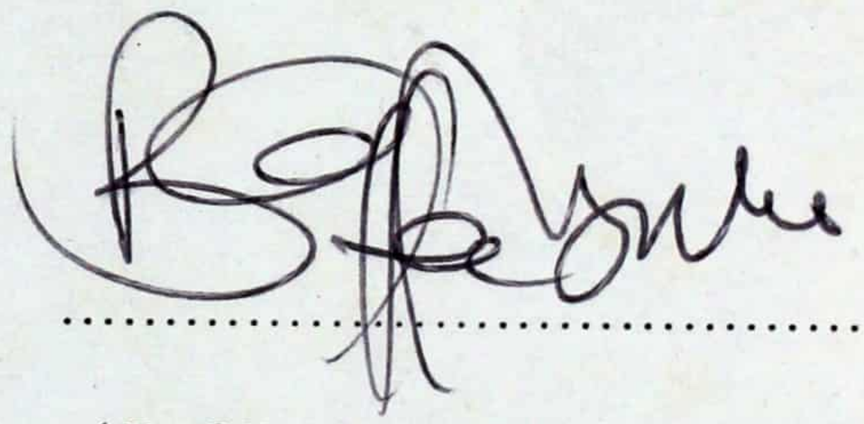
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CERTIFICATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to God and to my Lord Jesus Christ for giving me the strength and guidance for the successful completion of this course.

I also wish to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Mr. Benjamin Offei-Nyako, whose patient supervisory work and continual support has seen me through to the end.

My special thanks go to my uncle, Mr. H.B. Ato Delaquis and family whose encouragement and timely advice, especially in the tough times, were outstanding.

To Dr. R.T. Ackam, I would like to say a big thank you for his unrelenting faith in me that made it possible for me to undertake and complete the M.F.A. Painting course.

My appreciation goes to Miss Lucy Nelson, who took precious time away from her little baby Akwasi Aboagye, to type this thesis. Also to Mr. Joshua Addoquaye, I would like to say a big thank you for helping to proofread, and correcting the script.

I am indebted to my husband, Ernest Somuah Boateng, for his positive words of encouragement and financial support. I am also grateful to my daughter, Joycelyn Efua Serwah Boateng, for sacrificing time with mummy to enable me complete my project work.

I am particularly thankful to all the people of the College of Art, and the Board of Postgraduate Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, for offering me the opportunity to undertake this course.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family and loved-ones, especially Gam and Dorcas Dzordzorme and family and also my sister-in-law, Mavis Sampong, for their priceless support and prayers.

Finally, mention must be made of the late Professor Mawere Opoku of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Mr. Ampofo Duodou, Artistic Director, Ghana Dance Ensemble, and Sister Rose of the Centre for National Culture, Greater Accra Region for sharing with me their deep knowledge on the subject of dance.

I say, God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

There exist in the ten administrative regions of Ghana several tribes, each of which has a number of dance forms. The scope covers one dance form from each of these regions based on its popularity.

European and African artists have either painted the subject of dance or used the pointillist technique. The works of those who have used both the above theme and technique have been compared with those of the researcher.

The researcher made experiments in the following styles, realism, abstraction and impressionism. The media used were pencil, charcoal, pen, oil and acrylic paints.

The main project deals with ten dance themes painted in the pointillist technique by the researcher. Brief history of each dance form, the methods used in painting each work are analysed and the results discussed.

In conclusion, the researcher makes an appeal to artists (painters) to be creative and original in recording other dance forms in Ghana for posterity.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction:

Problem Statement:

There exist in the different communities of Ghana, several dance forms that are performed and enjoyed by their members. Documenting all of them in a project of this scope may be impossible. Some of these dance forms have been painted and documented by several artists like, Kwabena Buckner, Ato Delaquis, Wisdom Edinam Kudowor (WIZ), Benjamin Offei Nyako, Borsah Tanueh and Mark Buku. However, no artist has painted ten dance forms from the ten regions of Ghana and documented them in a project of this magnitude.

Research Objectives:

The aim of this thesis is to document through the medium of paint, selected dance forms performed in communities throughout Ghana based on their popularity or cultural significance. The purpose is to preserve for posterity the beauty, diversity and intricate movements in these dance forms. It is also to find out the nature and history of these dances. Another objective is to explore the versatility of the pointillist technique in painting.

Importance Of Study:

Culture is known to be a dynamic process, with new concepts often replacing old ones. Hence, it is important to find ways of storing and preserving in the museums and archives some of the cherished cultural practices that are in danger of extinction. An example of such practices is the dance forms of Ghana. At present, those dance forms that have not completely faded away have been relegated to stage performances and festivals.

There is therefore the need to put on record some of these dances, not only in the forms of writing, filming and photography, but also in visual expressions by an artist who through the medium of paint could help posterity revisit the experience, emotions and joys of their predecessors.

Assumptions:

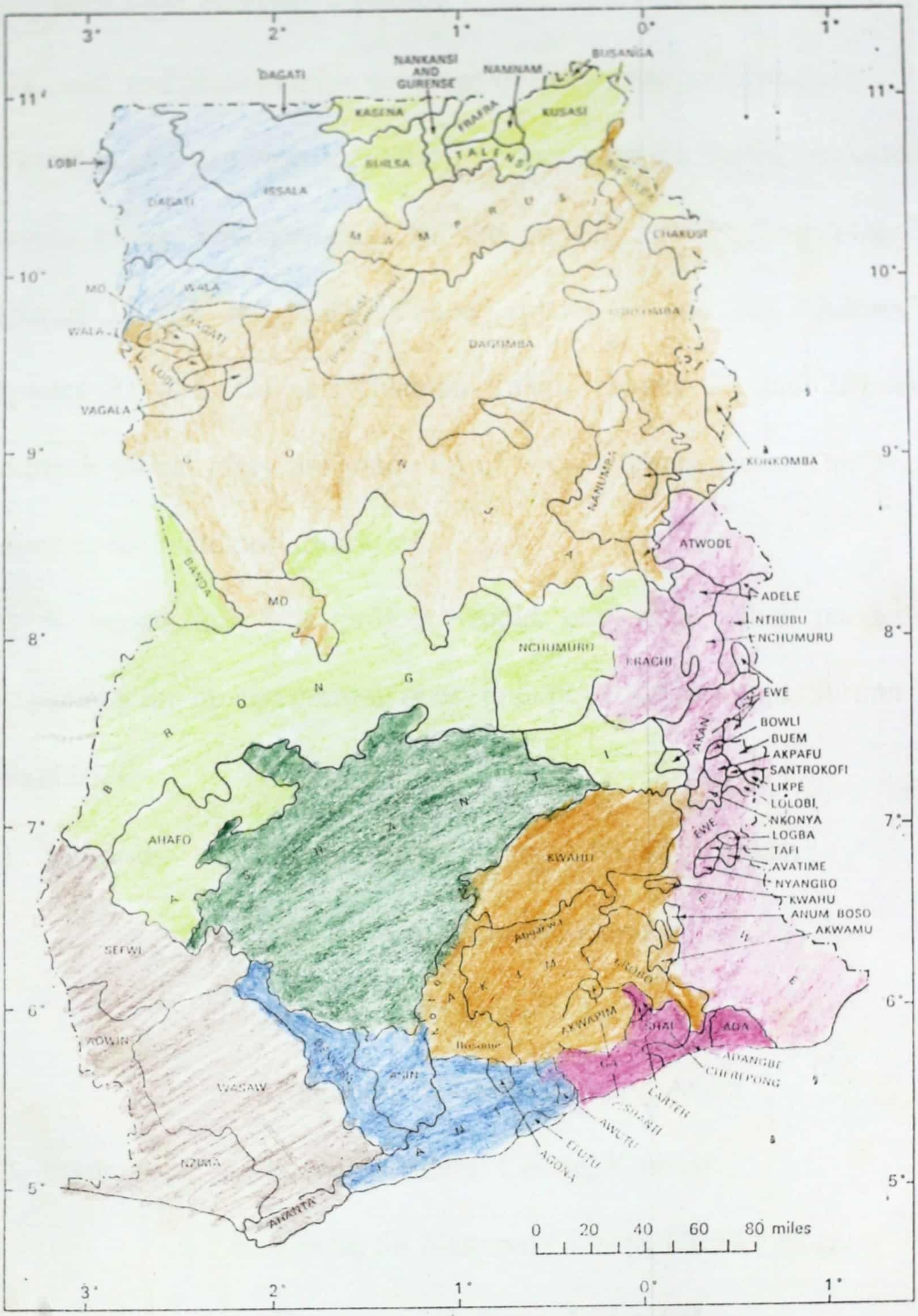
The technique of pointillism is known to have begun in France during the Neo-Impressionist era. It has been re-applied in some experimentation in a limited way by some Ghanaian painters such as Ato Delaquis and R.T. Ackam. It is assumed that there are various dances in Ghana and that it is possible to use pointillist technique to express them as indeed has been done by painters such as Wisdom Edinam Kudowor (WIZ) and George Seurat.

Scope:

The scope of this thesis covered ten selected dance forms in some communities within the northern, middle and coastal regions of the country. Sub-divisions within the northern belt cover the Upper West, Upper East and Northern Regions of Ghana. The middle belt includes Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Eastern Regions, while the coastal portion covers the Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions of the country. These together make up the ten administrative regions of the nation (Fig.1).

The researcher has embraced the technique of pointillism as an academic project to create a new and unique expression in painting under an African context, by merging the technique with the expression of movement in dance.

THE TEN ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS OF GHANA



Tribes (from Atlas of Population Characteristics, Accra, 1964)

Fig. 1

Key

- UPPER EAST REGION
- UPPER WEST REGION
- NORTHERN REGION
- BRONG AHAFO REGION
- ASHANTI REGION
- VOLTA REGION
- EASTERN REGION
- GREATER ACCRA REGION
- CENTRAL REGION
- WESTERN REGION

Methodology:

Methods used included, literature review, interviews with experts in the field, and photographic coverage of live dance performances.

Sketches and paintings were used to document the various selected dance forms. Four paintings for the project, namely, "Apatampa" (plates 15 and 16), "Dipo Dance" (plates 19 and 20), "Adowa" (plates 21 and 22) and "Damba Takai" (plates 27 and 28) are diptych pieces (they are made up of two matching parts. This was done to facilitate portability.

It is hoped that this project would encourage other painters, especially the up and coming ones, to explore the technique further.

Facilities:

1. Libraries: a. College of Art Library, KNUST, Kumasi
   b. KNUST Main Library, Kumasi
   c. Accra Central Library, Accra
   d. University of Ghana Library, Accra.
2. Institutions: a. Kumasi Cultural Centre, Kumasi
   b. Centre for National Culture, Greater Accra
   c. University of Ghana, Legon School of Performing Arts, Legon. Accra.
3. Space for Work: a. M.F.A. Studio, College of Art, KNUST, Kumasi.
   b. Personal Studio, Accra.

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Definitions:

Complementary Colour - each primary colour – red, blue, yellow - has a complementary formed by a mixture of the other two, and it is of the Impressionist theory that every primary has its complementary colour in the shadow cast by it. Thus, a yellow object will have violet in the shadows.

Composition – the art of combining the elements of a picture into a satisfactory whole to form a harmony that pleases the eye when regarded as two-dimensional shapes on a flat ground. This is the sole aim in most abstract paintings but in more traditional forms the task is made more difficult by the need to project the forms in an ordered sequence into an imaginary depth or picture space without losing their effectiveness as a pattern.

Cubism – it is a movement in painting and sculpture, recognised as one of the great turning points in western art. Its formative period was from 1907 to 1914 and was originated by Pablo Picasso and George Braque. They made a radical departure from the idea of art as the imitation of nature and abandoned traditional notions of perspective, foreshortening and modelling, aiming to represent solidity and volume in a two-dimensional plane without converting the two dimensional canvas illusionistically into a three-dimensional picture-space.

There were two stages of Cubism: Analytic Cubism and Synthetic Cubism. The former dealt with analysing form from every possible vantage point to combine the various views into one pictorial whole. The latter, a later phase of cubism in which paintings and drawings were constructed from objects and shapes cut from paper or other materials to represent parts of a subject in order to play visual games with variations and reality.

Dance – a series of rhythmic and patterned bodily movements usually performed to music.

Diptych – an artwork made up of two matching parts.

Ground – the surface or support on which a painting or drawing is executed, for example, paper on which watercolour is done or the plaster under a fresco. More specifically, it is the prepared surface on which the colours are laid. The purpose of the ground in the second more technical, sense is to render the support less absorbent, to provide a satisfactory surface for painting or drawing, to prevent chemical inter-reaction, and to heighten the brilliance of the colours.

Medium – a liquid used to bind powdered colour to make paint. By extension, the various techniques used in painting; thus, the oil medium is oil painting; the material used to mix powdered

colour to a thick consistency, usually linseed oil. Other media are size (for distemper), egg yolk (for tempera), and gum Arabic (for watercolour and pastel). In a more general sense it is possible to talk of pen-and-ink or pencil as media.

Pointillism – the theory or practice in art of applying small strokes or dots of colour to a surface so that from a distance they blend.

Priming – a thin layer applied on top of the ground to make it more suitable to receive paint. For example, if the ground is too absorbent the priming may make it less so.

Printmaking – a process of making a picture or design (usually on paper) from an inked impression of an engraved metal plate, wooden block etc.

Realism – the representation of things according to their appearance in visible nature (without idealisation).

Serigraphy- is also known as silk-screen printing, a colour printing process based on stencilling. A cut stencil is attached to a silk screen of fine mesh, which has been stretched on a wooden frame,

and the colour is forced through the unmasked areas of the screen on to the paper beneath by means of a squeegee. The process, which originated in the early twentieth century, has been widely used for commercial textile printing, but in the 1930's it was developed, particularly in the United States, as an art medium.

Size – glue made from animal skins, or, more loosely, any fairly weak glue. It is used in art mainly for filling the porous surface of wooden panels or canvases to provide a suitable foundation for the priming. Size is also used as a medium. The paint mixed with it is called distemper.

Stipple- is to make a design with small dots or flecks.

Vehicle – it is synonymous with medium, as something to bind or to thin stiff paint.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief History of Pointillism as a Style in Painting:

Pointillism is a style in painting that relies on the use of small dots of pure colour to create shapes, forms, tones and colour effects. These dots are placed close to each other, but do not overlap, so that from a distance they appear to merge. The same principle can be seen if one looks at a colour photograph through a magnifying glass; the image is composed of numerous tiny dots of colour that the eye forms into recognisable shapes. In modern times, it may also be compared to the pixels in a colour photograph on a computer screen.

The techniques of "broken colour" and "stippling" are closely related to pointillism and therefore would be described here. Using broken colour means applying paint or pastel in separate strokes of pure colour without blending to give a mosaic effect. From the appropriate view distance these small strokes appear to fuse, reflecting more light and movement than blended colours.

"Stippling", like pointillism, is a technique whereby; tones, colour and texture are built up with a mosaic of fine dots, applied with the

tip of a small pointed brush. Here, subtle gradations of tone can be achieved by varying the density of dots to create a darker and more solid tone whereas a light tone is a result of leaving bigger spaces between dots. Stippling may be used alongside or on top of washes or flat areas of colour to give the impression of texture or tone. For example, in a beach scene, a few stippled marks may be used to suggest small stones or pebbles.

The English landscape painter John Constable (1776-1837) was one of the first painters in Europe to use flecks of broken colour in his desire to capture "the dews, breezes, blooms and freshness of nature". His lush green meadows and sparkling foliage appear so because they are composed of large numbers of different greens, juxtaposed on the canvas rather than blended together (Fig. 2).

The French artist, Eugene Delacroix (1798-1863) further developed Constable's ideas by using pure unmixed colours in his works (Fig.3). However, it was the Impressionists who exploited the full potential of the technique of broken colour. Pointillism, a term coined by the English critic Roger Fry in 1910, started in small way with the first appearance of the Impressionists in 1870's. The style became most popular between 1870 and 1900. At the beginning the works seemed unintelligible, the very antithesis of what was considered to be "art" in those days, but by the turn of the century, this way of painting had swept through the Western world. The

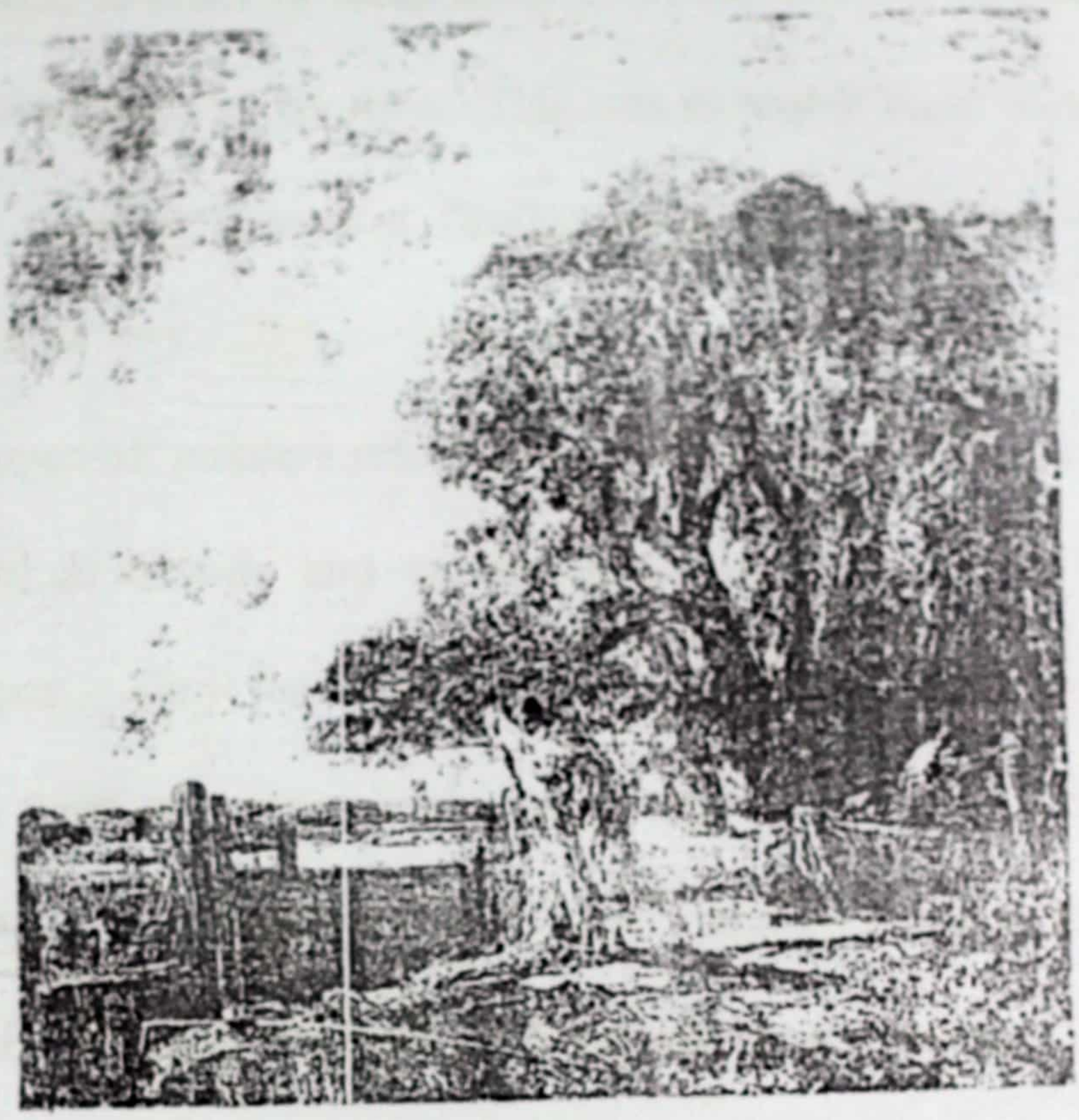


Fig. 2- John Constable, Title: "A boat passing a Lock", Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 56"x 47 ½"



Fig. 3- Eugene Delacroix Title: Sardanapalus", 1826 Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 12'1"x 16'3"

initial aim of the Impressionists was to fight for freedom, in terms of choice of subject matter, colour application and working procedures, in order to break away from the existing canons within the art academics of the time. This was to enable them capture and be true to even the most fleeting effects of nature in a more spontaneous way.

These open-air painters refused to remain in their studios, but were eager to go outside and capture evanescent effects of light on landscapes. They realised that small dabs and strokes of colour allowed them to work quickly and render these effects before the light changed or disappeared. Their paintings were, therefore, informal in approach, freely and spontaneously painted, showing everyday scenes, which they treated in bright colour. Till today, the Impressionists' vision is still regarded as the most natural way of "seeing" things as presented to us by nature, and not as we "know" them. Notable among those who started this approach to painting in Europe were, Claude Monet (1840-1926), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Camille Pisarro (1831-1903), Alfred Sisely (1839-1899), Mary Cassat (1844-1926), Berthe Morrisot (1832-1899), Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), Pierre Augustine Renoir (1840-1919), Edouard Manet (1832-1883), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), Andre Deraine (1880-1954) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954).

However, the painters who carried the pointillist technique almost to scientific proportions included George Seurat (1859-1891) fig. 5 and Paul Signac (1863-1935) fig. 4.

Seurat even preferred to call it "Divisionism". This Neo-Impressionist technique as it was dubbed by a critic called Felix Feneon, consisted one of application of broken colour in regular points or dabs which eliminated personal mannerisms of handling and rather imposed a quasi-scientific systems onto the representation of light. Camille Pisarro was the only artist of the older generation affected by their painting and for a time worked in their manner.

The new aesthetic direction was presumed to be fool proof and had been inspired by the colour theories of Michel-Eugene Chevreul, O.N. Rood, and Maxwell. Some of the scientific discoveries that stimulated the Neo-Impressionists were: Chevreul's colour wheel of the primary and intermediate colours which represent the component rainbow colours of white light when broken down by a prism; Chevreul's " law of simultaneous contrast of colours"; and Rood's discovery that optical mixtures of colour were more intense than premixed colour. Actually, Seurat and his friends, Odilon Redon, Henri Edmond Cross and Paul Signac scientifically rationalised discoveries that the Impressionists for the most part already knew and intuitively applied in painting.

From Chevreul's researches, Seurat deduced that local colour had a scientific explanation. It could be demonstrated that any hue modified its neighbouring colour by inducing an aureole of a tone, which was its own complementary. For example, red set down against yellow (if red was the dominant colour) not only produced sensation of orange, their intermediate colour, but also of green, which is red's complimentary. Rood's experiments in turn proved that red and yellow created a more intense orange as an optical mixture than the actual tube colour of pure orange could do.

Seurat also drew inferences about the possibilities of optical mixtures from Delacroix's expressive palette that suggested the possibility of the use of colour to create certain emotions. In time he became convinced that some elementary rules of harmony could be established for painting as they had been in music. He set forth his theory of optical harmonies and contraries in a letter:

> ***"...the manifold elements of painting could be simplified and codified as 'tone, tint, and line'; they were found to inspire gay, calm or sad emotions according to their character; with descending lines, dark tones and cold tints producing sadness; rising lines, luminous tone.1***

In 1884, at the age of twenty-five, Seurat began the methodical application of his theories in an immense painting project of a

1. Sam Hunter. Modern French Painting, Dell Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1956, pp. 73 and 74

magnitude of approximately seven by ten feet in dimension. Some twenty drawings and two hundred oil sketches preceded it. The title of the finished work was "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of la Grande Jatte". It showed a holiday crowd of Parisians on an outing, relaxing on the grass, promenading, fishing and frolicking in a park that was framed by a background of trees and water. The overall effect was one of mechanically placed figures that seemed to leave little personal mannerisms of handling, but natural enough to be convincing (fig.5).

This and other works of Seurat executed in this vein are best described in the words of the writer, Sam Hunter:

> ***"...there is always in his art a quality that recalls***
>
> ***the trance-like stillness of coastal regions and that***
>
> ***feeling of suspension in eternity of space...."1***

Ghanaian Painters and Pointillism

After Seurat died in 1891 at the age of thirty-two, Pisarro who had joined and then in 1890 withdrawn from the group, wrote to his son Lucien a letter saying:

> ***"I believe you are right, pointillism is finished***
>
> ***but I think it will give rise to other effects***
>
> ***which later will have great artistic significance"2***

Just as Picasso and other European artists were not shy of taking inspiration from African sources for their works, so have some painters in Ghana explored the technique of pointillism giving it their own

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1. ibid. p. 72
2. ibid. p. 73

interpretation. Notable among them are Dr. R.T. Ackam who has developed a technique in pointillism he dubbed "Ackamism". WIZ, who uses a technique he has dubbed "Dot-dynamics", concentrates on the use of the pure dot together with flat areas of colour. Ato Delaquis is also one of the Ghanaian painters who has experimented with the use of the dot and strokes of colour in a limited way.



Fig. 4- Paul Signac Title: "Dining Room" 1882 Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: Standard portrait for 50 format canvas.



Fig. 5: "An afternoon at La Grande Jatte", 1884 Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 7ft x 10ft

WIZ

WIZ has evolved through the basics of painting at the University of Science and Technology, College of Art, Kumasi, as well as through numerous exhibitions, both at home and abroad since 1981. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree (First Class Honours) in Art and a Mobil Award for best painting student in 1981. He was born in 1957 and had taught for six years before becoming a full time fine art practitioner in 1988 combining, painting, some sculpture, serigraphy and graphic design. Wiz has designed such public works as relief murals at the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park and Nestle Ghana Ltd both in Accra, and also Volta Hotel in Akosombo. The paintings of Wiz are characterised by vibrant activity and pure energy expressed by the dynamic possibilities of the dot. The use of dots, which the artist says is inspired by traditional beadwork, has over the years been translated into a different dimension of self-expression. In the artists own words:

> ***"The structure and rhythm of both representational and abstract African symbols (major features of my environment) are reference points from which I visualise a whole world of imagery".1***

Wiz prefers his works to be viewed as attempts to satisfy his own whim first and foremost and then to caress the expectations of anyone who cared to look. Some of the examples of works showing the full impact of Wiz's own version of pointillism can be seen in such works

---

1. Artists Alliance Gallery. Personal Icons (Paintings of WIZ). Ifenet Graphyx, Ghana, 1994, p. 3

as "Omni visionary", "Gye Nyame Totem", "Ethnic Geometry", "Horns in Reds and Ochres" (plate 1). However, some of the paintings that portray movements in dance include "Calabash Turns", "Drum Rhythms" (plate 2), "Adowa Vibrations" (plate 3), and "Puberty Dance". As mentioned earlier, Wiz's paintings sometimes have flat areas of colour a fact that may have caused Professor Ablade Glover to comment:

> ***"Wiz's painting cannot be simplistically categorised into the pointillist vein…."1***

Indeed Wiz's personal interpretation of the use of the dot is entirely and genuinely his own. In recent times however, the artist is exploring new techniques other than pointillism.

---

1. ibid. p. 1

PAINTINGS BY WIZ

1. "Horns in Reds and Ochres"

Painted in 1993, the medium is acrylic painted on a canvas support. This is a painting portraying five men blowing horns. They are clothed in the traditional cloth either draped over the left shoulder, or around the waist. Various shades of brown have been used for the skin of the figures, reds for their cloth and ochres of the horns and background. Their cloth and background are basically painted with varying sizes of dots while the skin areas and horns have very broad strokes and even some flat areas of colour. (plate 1)

2."Drum Rhythms"

This painting was made in 1992. The medium is acrylic and the support is canvas. The predominant colours are browns, reds, and ochres. It portrays several drummers, mostly men. The background is mostly covered with dots of lighter colour, while the figures have a combination of broad strokes, areas of flat colour and of course dots. The orchestration of the dots and strokes has been done in such a way that the whole surface is throbbing with activity. (plate 2)



Plate 1
WIZ-Title: "Horns in Reds and Ochres", 1993 Medium: Acrylic Support: Canvas

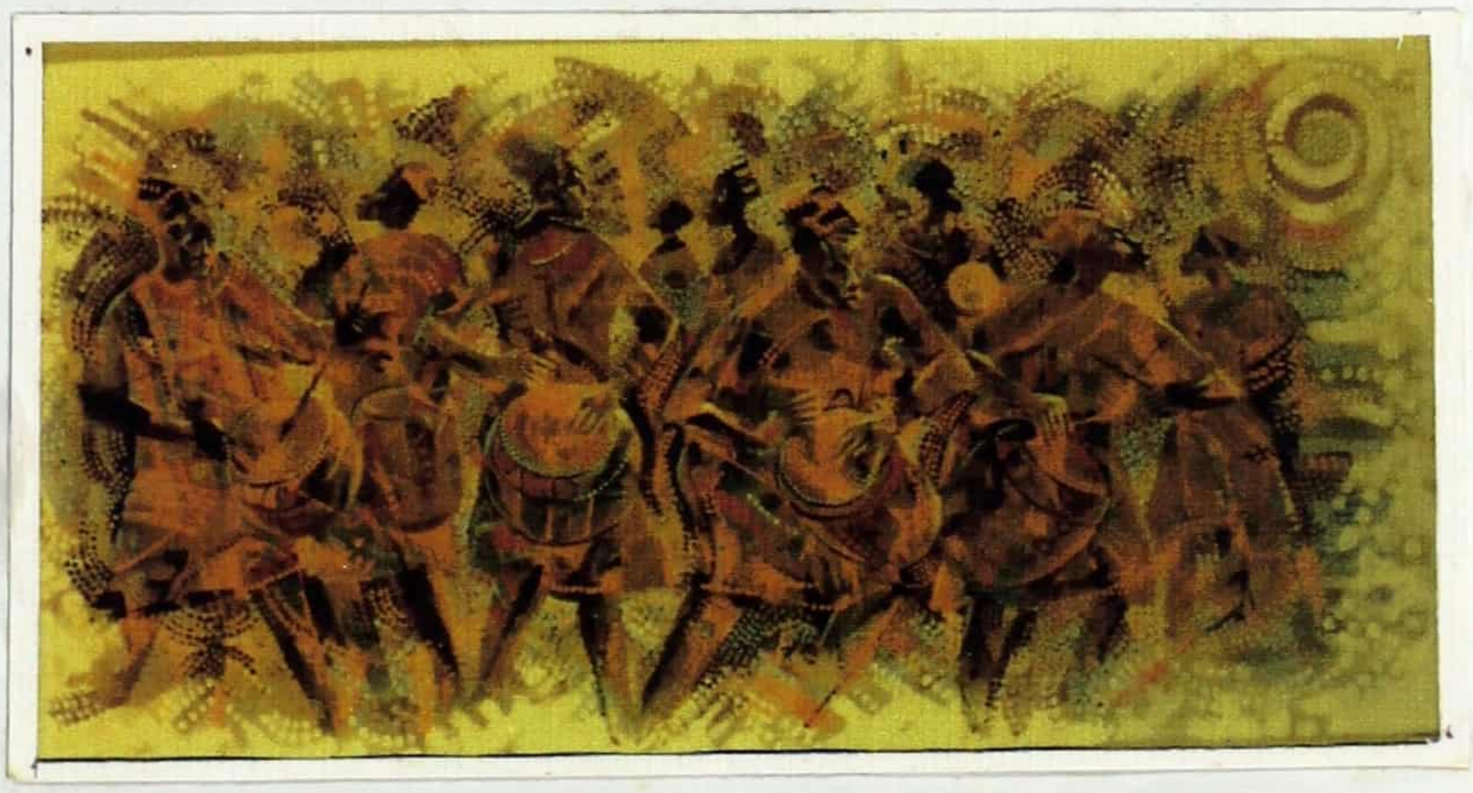


Plate 2
WIZ-Title: "Drum Rhythms", 1992 Medium: Acrylic Support: Canvas

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3."Adowa Vibrations"

This is an acrylic painting made on canvas in 1993. The length is thirty-six inches and the breadth is forty-eight inches. It is executed in a painted with broad flat strokes while their clothes have been painted with dots vibrant blue and orange colour scheme. The figures and background are painted with broad flat strokes while their clothes have been painted with dots.

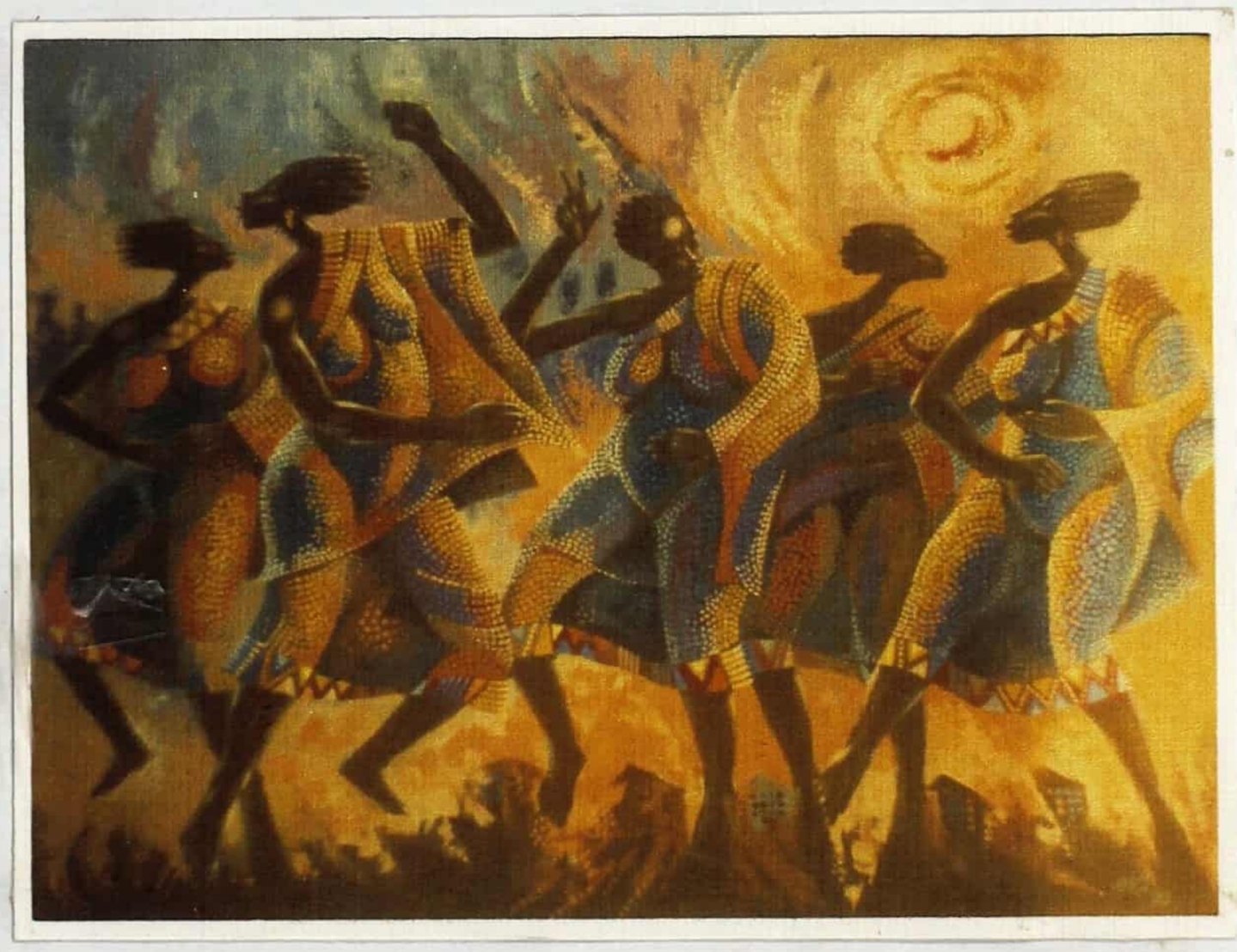


Plate 3
WIZ- Title: "Adowa Vibrations", 1993 Medium: Acrylic Support: Canvas Size: 36"x 48"

R. T. Ackam

Dr. Richmond Teye Ackam, born in Suhum on 1946 is a painter who has used the pointillist technique in a series of paintings. He has developed his own version of pointillism, which he has dubbed "Ackamism". Having obtained a First Class, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Painting at the College of Art, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, he further specialised in painting at the Howard University in U.S.A. where he obtained a Master of Fine Arts Degree. The artist also holds a PhD in African Studies from the University of Ghana, Legon.

Concerning his work, Dr. Ackam evolved his technique from using tiny dots or dabs of colour, the sizes of which have gradually been increased to the size of small circles. Some of these small circles have consequently been shaped into what looks like rows of neatly arranged cylindrical shapes. Another stage in the evolution of the style is a blend of "Ackamism" dots and friezes with Bomborisi mural idiom. The Bomborisi wall paintings are found in places like Sirigu, Bolgatanga and Navrongo in the Upper East Region of Ghana. They are basically geometric, in design having refreshing colour schemes painted in the abstract technique. Plates 4-6 are paintings by Ackam.

PAINTINGS BY ACKAM

1. "Fish Ball"

The painting shows two fishes with two balls. It has a vibrant colour scheme. According to the artist, the painting was an experiment to portray the glowing, shinning and illuminating effects of colour. In this painting the full effect of "Ackamism" dots is evident. It is no longer simply a dot, but can be classified as a shape, a circle or a cylindrical object. (plate 4)

2. "Kofi" (Companion of "Ama")

According to Ackam, this painting marks the beginning of a new phase after playing with the dots for twenty-one years. The painting shows a figure Kofi, represented by two small circles surrounded by broad bands of colour in the background and neatly arranged rows of cylindrical shapes in the foreground reminiscent of the Bomborisi doorway designs of Northern Ghana. (plate 5)

3. "Ama" (Companion of Kofi)

The painter, in a similar style, portrays the "female" version of the male in plate 5. As in "Kofi", the natural earth colours influenced the colour scheme used in painting "Ama"; red, black and white of the Bomborisi wall paintings of the Upper East Region of Ghana. (plate 6)

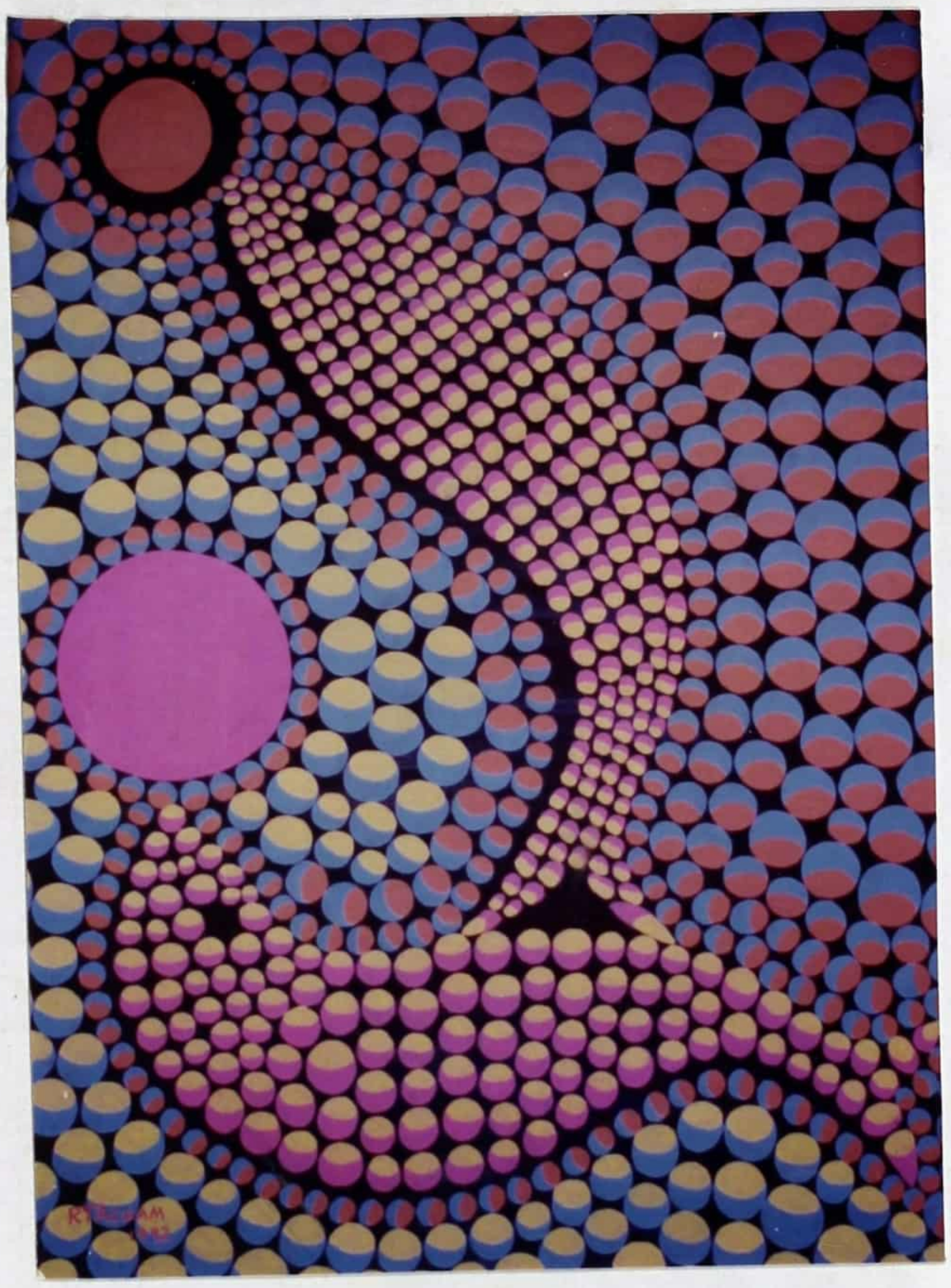


Plate 4. Ackam- Title: "Fish Ball" 1995
Medium: Acrylic Support: Canvas Size: 33"x 24"

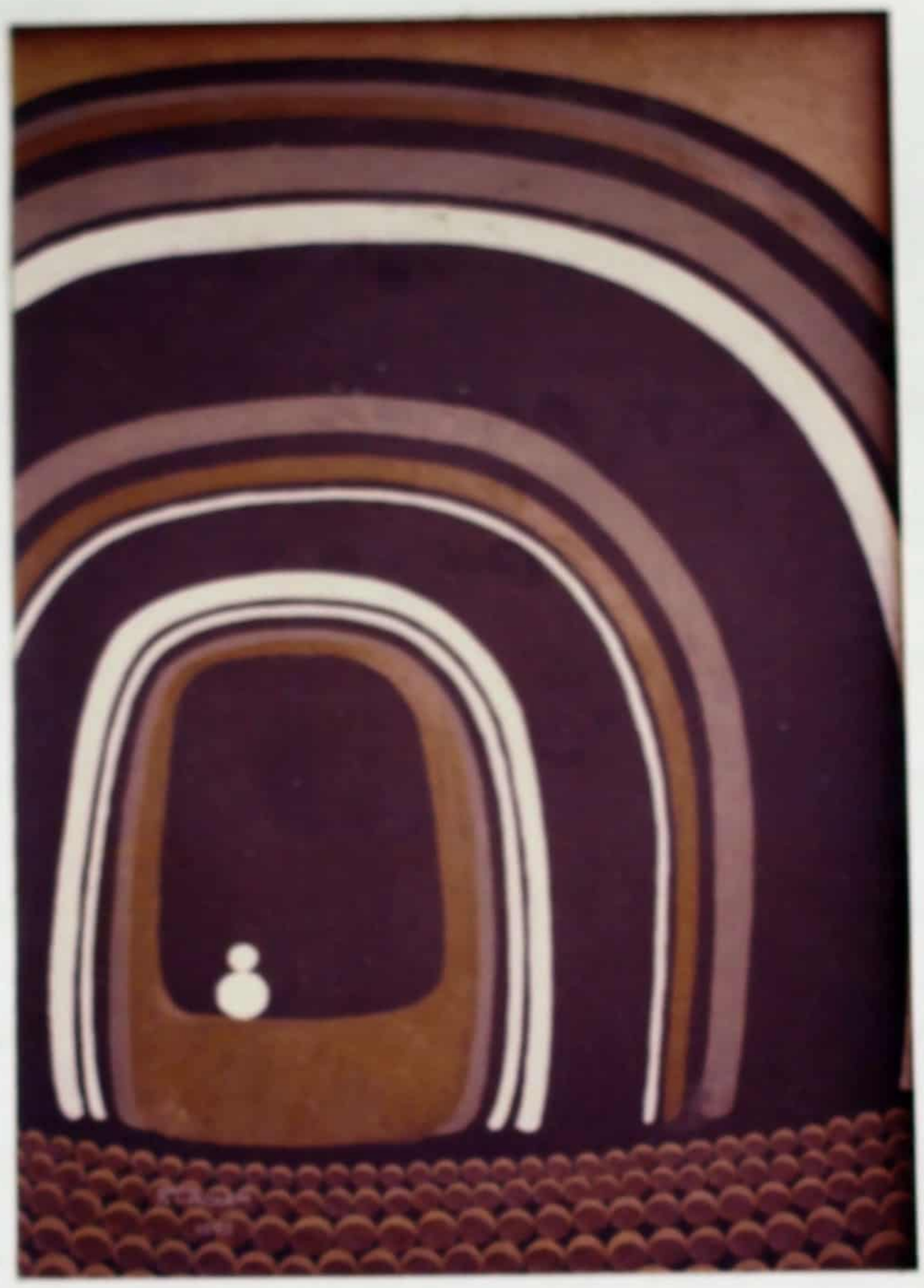


Plate 5. Ackam- Title: "Kofi" (Companion of "Ama"), 1995
Medium: Oil paint Support: Canvas Size: 24"x17

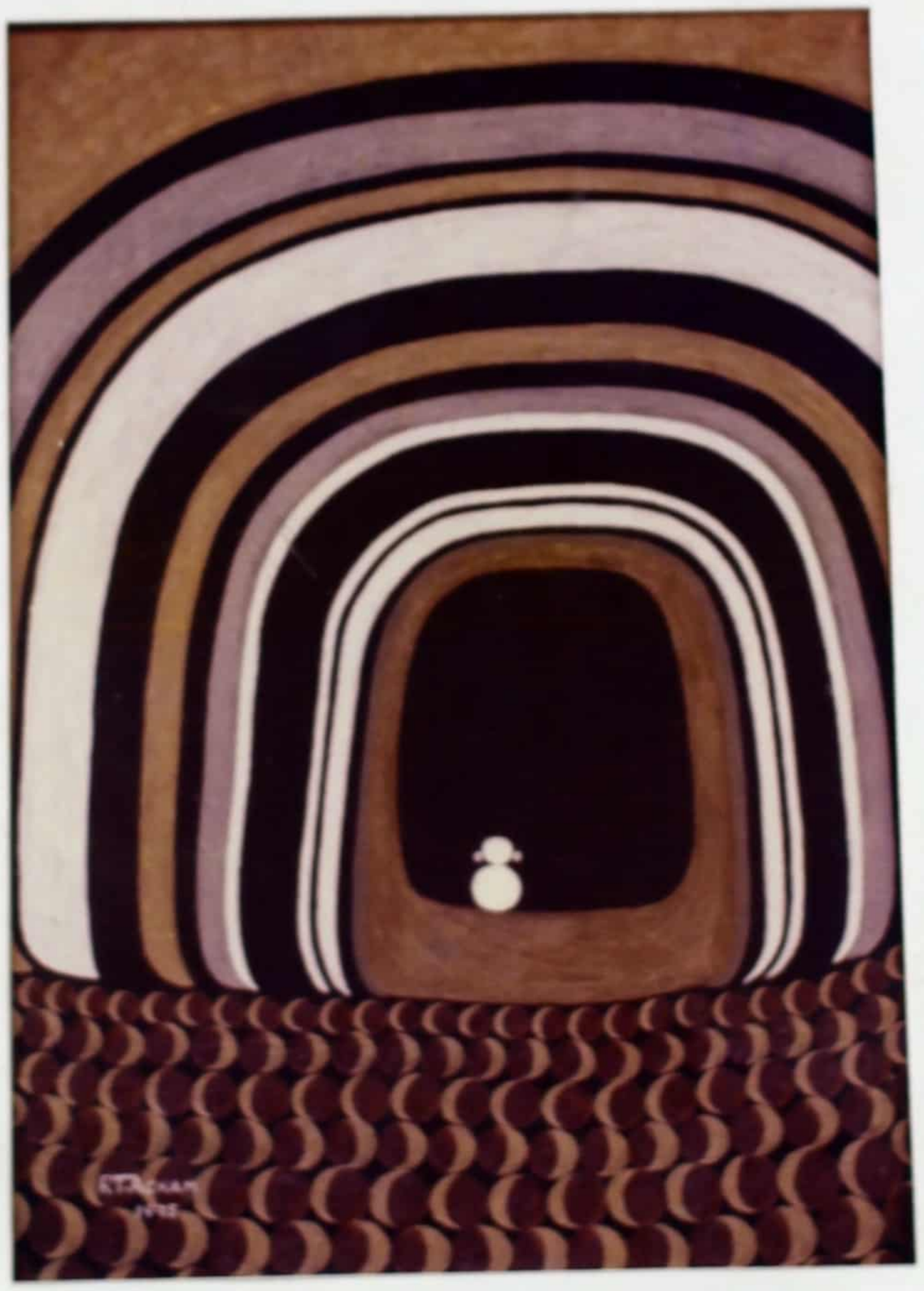


Plate 6. Title: "Ama" (Companion of "Kofi"), 1995
Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 24"x17"

ATO DELAQUIS

Born in 1945, Ato Delaquis holds a First Class Bachelor of Arts Degree in Painting from the College of Art, University of Science and Technology, and a Master of Fine Art Degree from the Tyler School of Art Philadelphia in U.S.A. He has achieved sophistication in work that can trace its roots through a long and arduous journey of numerous indeed thousands of sketches and studies, many of which are still preserved in his portfolio. The artist has a reputation as versatile and creative with unlimited capacity for experimenting with ideas and styles. One of such styles is the pointillist technique, which he used in over a hundred paintings between 1972 and 1977. An example of these is the painting entitled "Prayers, another is "Configuration" (plate 7)). Many of these paintings evolved from experimentations with sea - shells.

PAINTING BY ATO DELAQUIS

"Configuration"

The painting has a blue, yellow and red colour scheme. The darker tones are around the edges graduating toward lighter tints of colour in the centre of the painting. Painted on a perfectly round canvas marouflaged on thick single-sliced panel, the pointillist technique seems to whirl into a burst at the centre. The intention however is non descriptive and the dots seem to exist as abstractions rather than facilitate description. (plate 7)

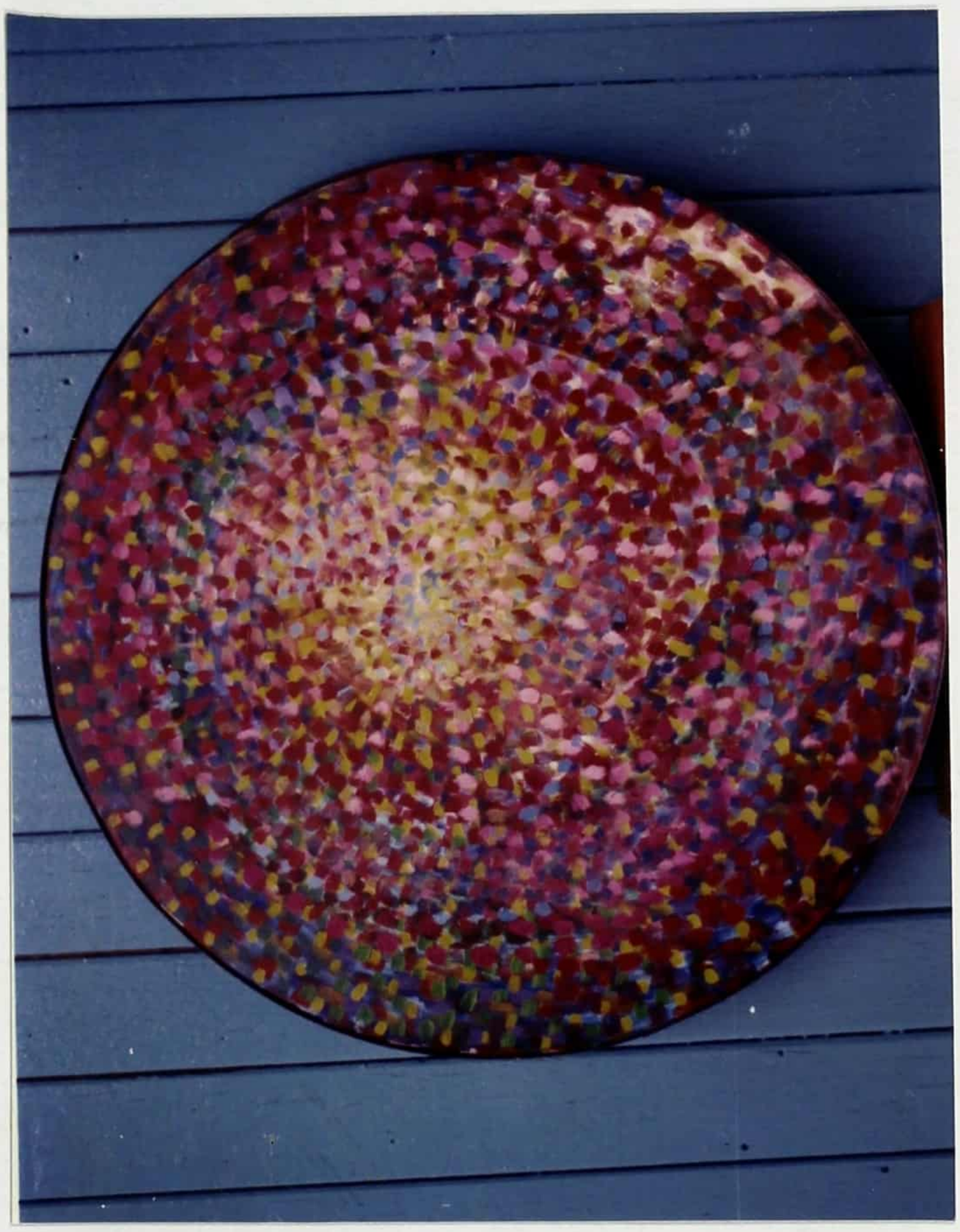


Plate 7. Ato Delaquis- Title: "Configuration", 1972 Medium: Oil paint Support: Canvas marouflaged on panel Size: Diameter 27"

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Dance Theme in Pointillist Technique

Many painters have at one point in time or other incorporated dancers in their work. However, I would like to consider two painters who have painted dance themes in the pointillist technique.

The first is George Seurat who painted "Can Can/ Le Chahut". This painting portrayed dancers in the theatre with musicians in the foreground. The canvas measured 169cm x 139cm (66 ½"x54 ¾"). Within a matter of years of their execution contemporaries began to note the dulling of the brilliant pitch of Seurat's colours. This made it difficult to assess the impact of the colour effects. (fig. 6)

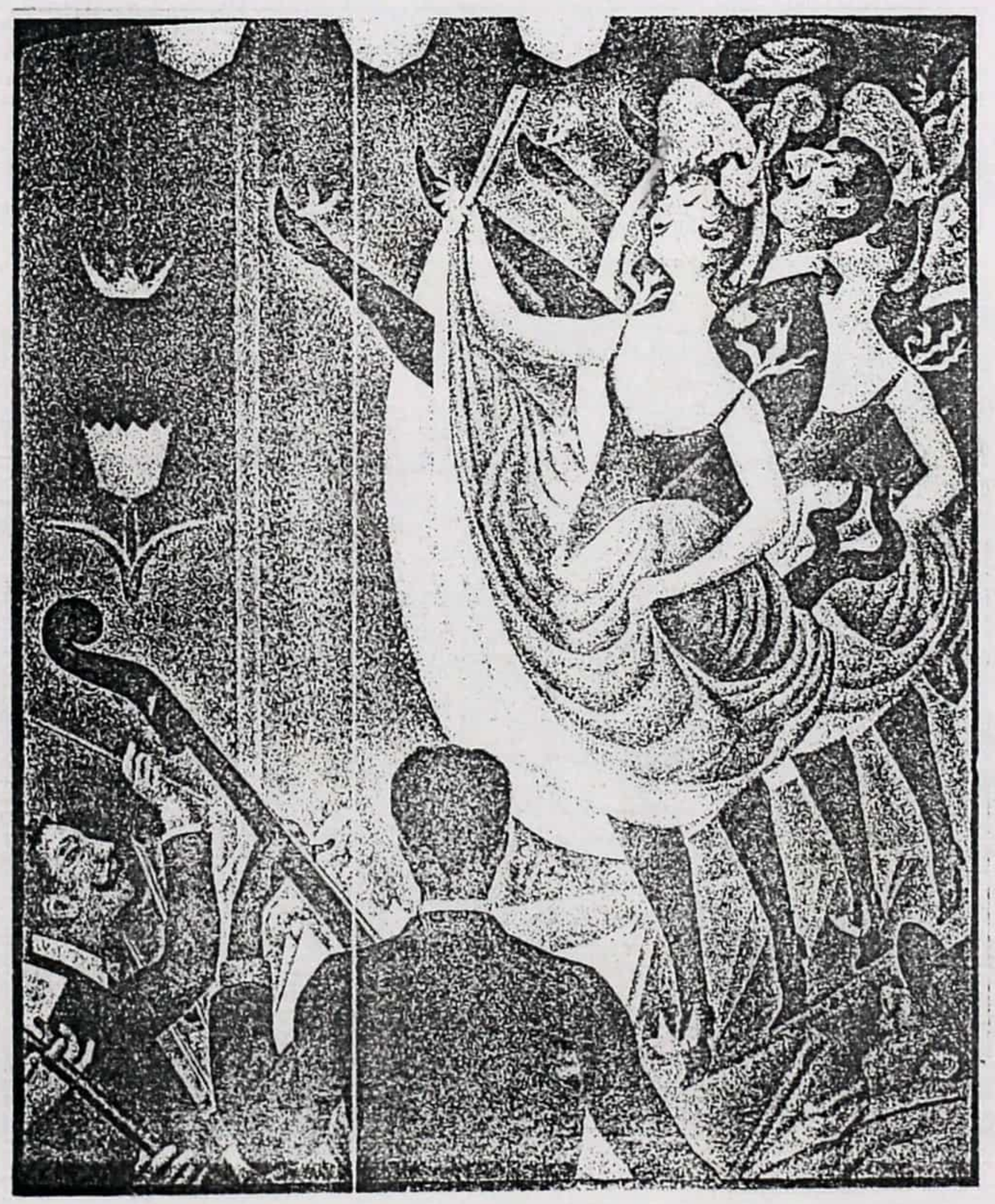


Fig. 6 Seurat- Title: "The Can-Can/ Le Chahut", 1889-1890
Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 169cm x 139cm (66 ½"x 54 ¾")

The second artist under consideration is Wisdom Edinam Kudowor (WIZ). An example of his work in the above theme is "Puberty Dance". (plate 8)

A comparison of the two artists' work shows some differences. Firstly, WIZ's dots are bigger than the ones used in Seurat's work. Secondly, the former sometimes incorporates the use of flat areas of colour not found in the latter's. Comparing these paintings of the artists mentioned above to paintings by the researcher, such as "Damba Duo" (plate 10) and "Kpanlogo Dance" (plate 14), also show some differences. These portray more blurred figures and the feeling of motion is also heightened.



Plate 8. WIZ- Title: "Puberty Dance", 1989
Medium: Acrylic Support: Canvas Size: 36"x 60"

BRIEF REVIEW OF DANCE AS A UNIVERSAL PRACTISE

The 20th Century dictionary defines dance as "...a movement of one or more persons with measured steps, especially to music". The Shorter Oxford dictionary defines it as "... a rhythmical skipping and stepping with regular turning of limbs and body usually to the accompaniment of music.

According to E.H. Gombrich, in the book, "The Story of Art", cave drawings made by pre-historic men in the caves of the North African Tassili Mountains show men in a kind of ritual dance. This suggests that dance has been in existence since prehistoric times. An Egyptian tomb painting dated about 1400B.C. shows girl dancers and musicians from Thebes, Upper Egypt (fig. 7). An Etruscan tomb Painting dated 480-470 B.C. in Tarquinia, Italy also portrays a pair of dancers expressing the Etruscans" ideas about the hereafter. The couple who are dancing are supposed to be in a "paradise" of eternal bliss.

It is possible that the origin of dance could be as old as the origin of man, before men learnt to live in communities. It must have been practiced due more to instinct than anything else. Perhaps in a bid to overcome his threatening environment, man discovered dancing as a therapeutic measure and also as a source of joy.



Fig. 7- Title: "Girl Dancers and Musicians", 1400 B.C., Thebes, Upper Egypt.

Dancing is a universal language that cuts across racial and language barriers. A dancer may be able to communicate with spectators who do not speak his language. Cave drawings of the Tassili Mountains of North Africa is said to portray men in a dance probably performed in their elation over the defeat of a natural enemy such as a wild beast. This may have caused man to instinctively leap, skip, twist and turn round and round with joy in an "unintentional" dance. This action may have later been developed into a ritual dance, and then performed "intentionally" in groups.

All the above is largely based on speculation since no one can state factually when dance started. There is one thing, however, that is certain about dance; it has been existent in all past and present cultures judging from the cave drawings of the Stone Age, and paintings in

history books. Life itself seems to be one long dance performance with its constant movement of limbs and body in a seemingly rhymical nature, accompanied by the music of the din of life.

Dances could be conveniently classified under these three major groups. The boundaries are, however, loose as some can function either as one or more at certain times: Recreational, Stage and Ritual/ Religious dances.

Recreational Dance

Recreational dances are usually for fun and are performed by anybody who feels inclined to dance. Figs. 8 and 9 illustrate examples of these.

Stage Dance

Stage dances are performed before an audience by trained dancers who have gone through a series of rehearsals. They are sometimes referred to as Theatre dances, because they are often performed in theatres. (figs. 10 and 11)

Ritual/ Religious Dance

Ritual dances are those that express deep emotions concerning specific occasions such as birth, death, victory in hunting, war, the need for rain, sacrifices to deities, and puberty rites. (figs.12-15)

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Fig. 8- Damba Takai dance; a traditional dance of the Dagombas of Northern Ghana.



Fig. 9- Bamaya dance: A traditional dance of the Kasena Nankasi people of the Upper East Region of Ghana.

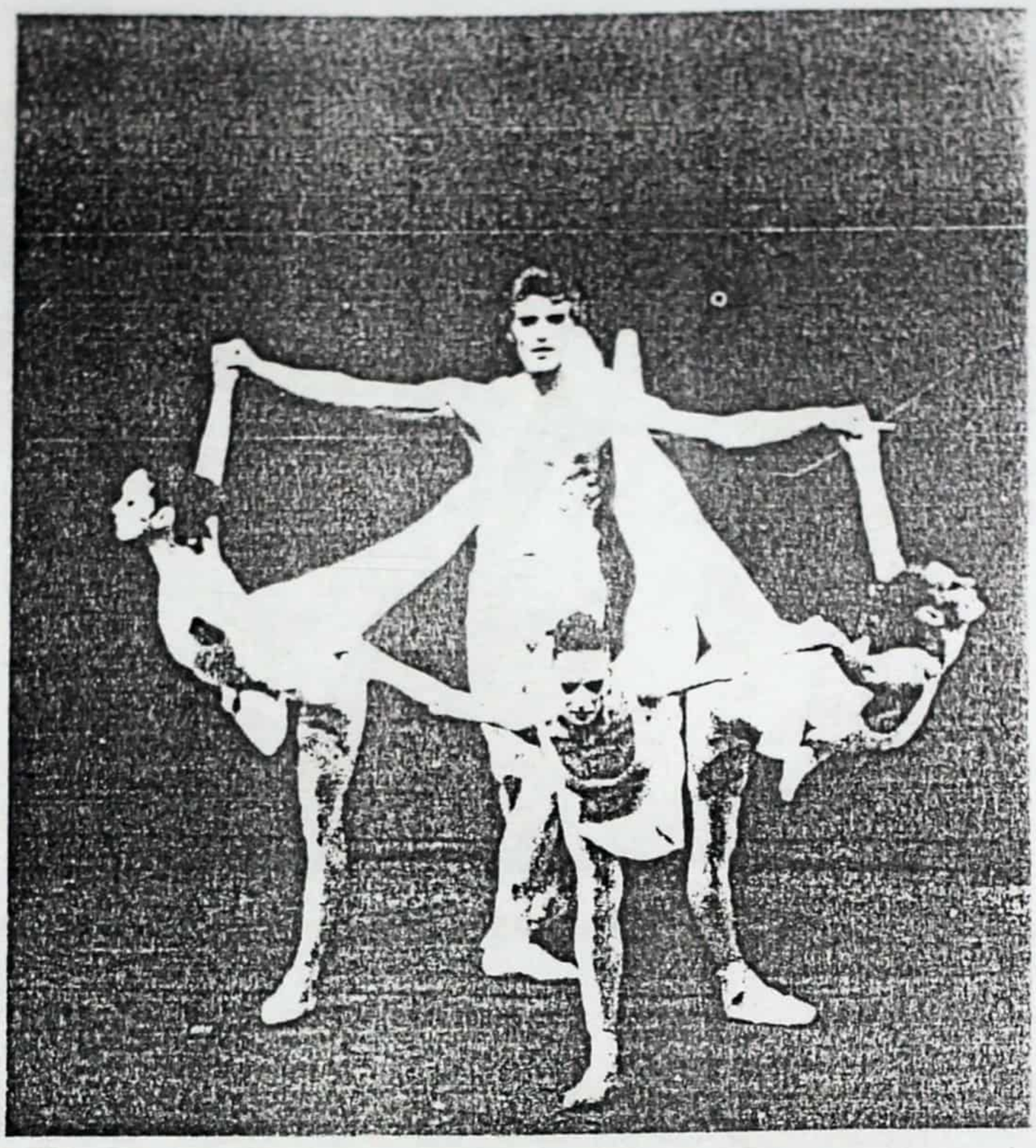


Fig. 10

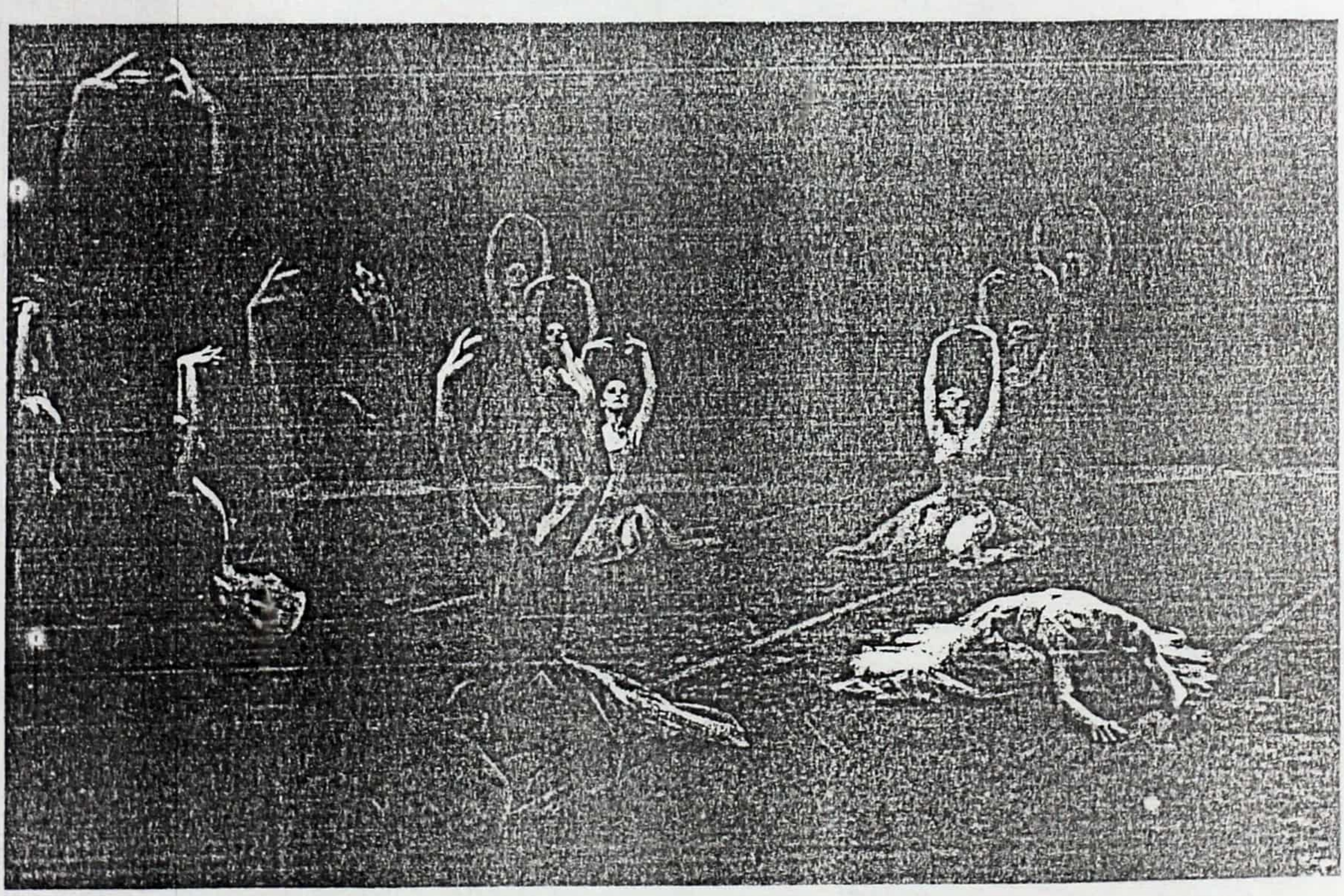


Fig. 11

Figs. 10 and 11- Stage Dance: Usually performed by European theatre groups.



Fig. 12- Ritual Dance: Priestess dancing in a temple in Benin City, Nigeria.

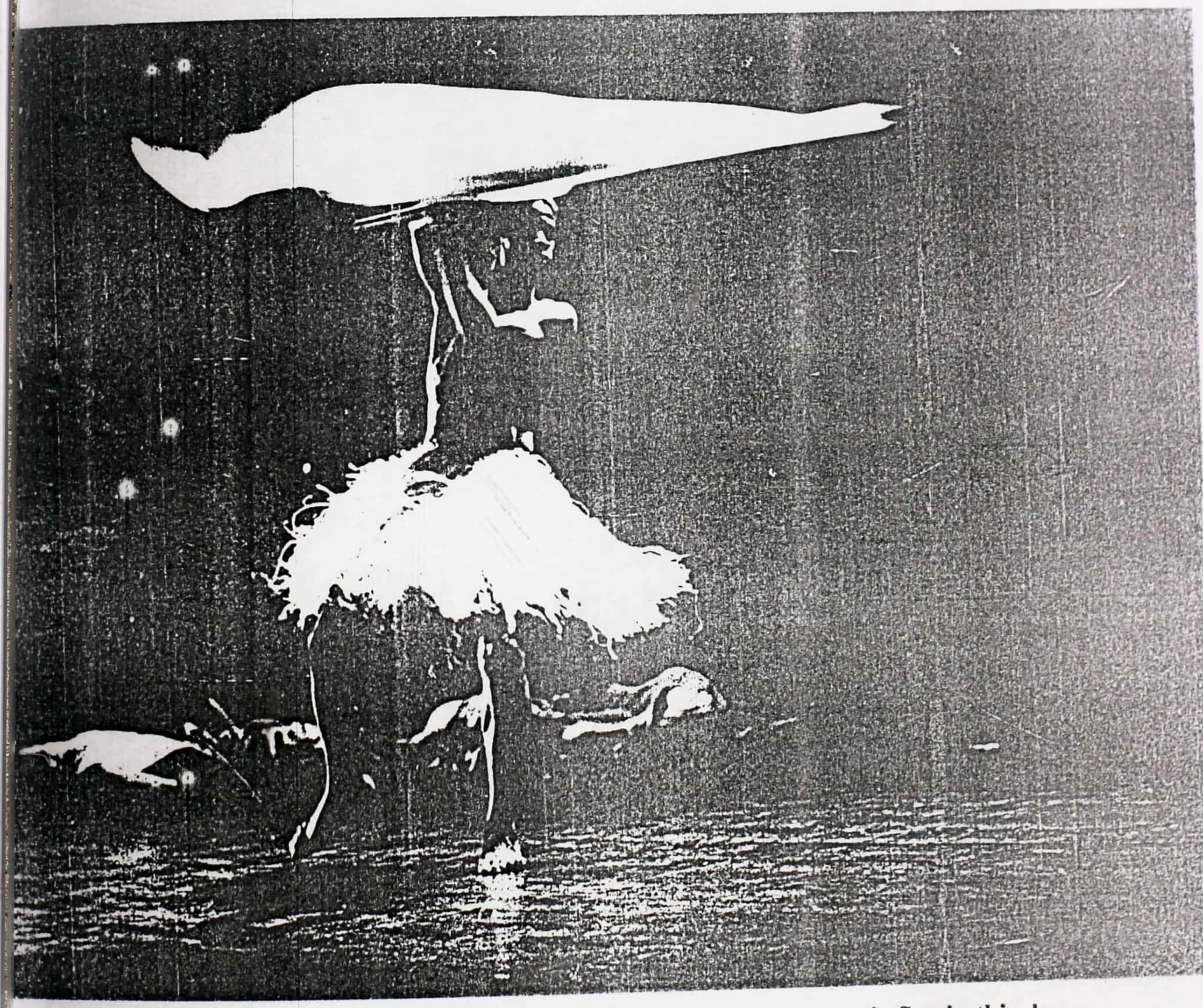


Fig. 13- War or "Asafo" Dance: The flag bearer waves the opponent's flag in this dance.



Fig. 14- Religious Dance: Worshippers at Sunday service of an Aladura church in Nigeria.



Fig. 15- Religious Dance: Christian missionaries impacting dances in Polynesia.

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Expanded" and "Closed" Dances

Dances may also be brought under these two broad classifications: "Expanded" and "Closed". Expanded dances have leaps, strides, claps and generally exaggerated movements. It is often performed by hunting communities like those of the northern belt of Ghana and elsewhere. An example is the "Damba Takai" dance of the Dagombas of Northern Region of Ghana (fig.8). Elsewhere, such as in Southern Africa, dance forms such as the "Ndlamu" stamping dance, among the Itlangwini clan (fig.16), the "Kupeka hahatsi" dance among the Chopi tribes (fig. 17), are classic examples of expanded dances.

Closed Dance

Farming communities often perform closed dances. They are relatively slower and softer in movement. Examples are the "Dipo" dance among the Krobos of the Eastern Region (fig. 29), "Gahu" dance by the Ewes of the Volta Region (fig.18), and the "Adowa" dance among the Ashantis of the Ashanti Region of Ghana (fig.19).

Gesture Dance

Dances, in general, vary in content and meaning. Some are highly abstract and seemingly meaningless. An example is the highly stylised European stage dances. These are not always meant to convey any specific messages, but are rather to be appreciated mainly on the basis of pure gracefulness and muscular coordination, an exercise in aesthetic movement. "Gesture" dances, on the other hand, often display a myriad



Fig. 16- Expanded Dance: "Ndlamu" stamping dance performed by Itlangwini Clan in South Africa.



Fig. 17- Expanded Dance: "Kupeka hahatsi" striding dance performed by Chopi tribe of South Africa.



Fig. 18- Closed Dance: "Gahu Dance" performed by the Ewes of the Volta Region of Ghana.



Fig. 19- "Adowa Dance" performed by the Ashantis of the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

of movement and gestures, some ever so slight, yet none of them without meaning. These dances are mostly found in Africa and Asia.

A Hindu manual written in the fifth century A.D. lists twenty-four movements of the eyes, six of eyebrows and fifty-seven of hands. Similarly, many Ghanaian dances, such as the Adowa of the Ashantis, though not so elaborate, do place emphasis on facial, hand and body signals (fig. 19).

There are some factors that have helped to mould the dance forms we see. Some of these factors are occupation, physical build, costume and ethics.

Occupation/ Physical Build

Hunting tribes, as mentioned earlier on, generally have more vigorous dance movements than farming ones. Even the physical build characteristic of a particular group of people may exert its own influence on the dance forms performed in their communities; a strong and agile personality may reflect violent, and more exertive dance form. People, who are tall, such as the Masai of Kenya, may incorporate high jumps in their dances, while people, such as the Ashantis of Ghana, who have a more sedentary life style, may display equally graceful movements in their dance forms.

Costume

The type of costume worn in a dance performance can exert some

influence on the character of the dance. For instance, the "Damba" dance of the Dagombas of Northern Ghana is graceful and fluid. This is due to the big and seemingly cumbersome smock, which dictates a rotating and twirling motion. (figs. 8 and 32)

People who wear only loincloth when dancing, such as the "Bamaya" of the Kasena Nankasi in the Upper East Region of Ghana, obviously have less inhibition in dancing (fig.33). Heavy jewellery such as those used by the Krobos of the Eastern Region of Ghana during the "Dipo" dance dictates a very slow movement of limbs and body. (fig. 29)

Ethics

Ethics within particular communities have their own way of exerting influence on their dance forms. Customs and taboos, for example, concerning part of the body, especially those parts that are considered to be sacred, prevent their abuse in dances. In the absence of such unwritten laws, most dance forms could degenerate into a destructive force instead of a unifying one in the society. It is only in societies where these ethics are not adhered to that vulgarity is often perpetuated in dances. For instance, in Ashanti culture certain gestures belong solely to the chief therefore dancers overstepping their boundaries could create misunderstanding and chaos. Ethics help to dictate which part of the body should be allowed to move freely and which part should be restrained in movement so as not to convey the wrong message to observers or other dancers in the group.

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CHAPTER THREE

EXPERIMENTAL SURVEY

In an attempt to arrive at a personal expression in painting a conscious effort was made to experiment with different ideas, styles, methods and materials. Some of the styles experimented with included realism and abstract. Techniques such as printmaking and marbling were also studied.

Materials

Materials used for the various experiments included:

Paint-

- poster colour, acrylic, oil and watercolour paints.

Drawing Media-

- charcoal stick, pastel, pencil and ink media.

Supports-

- paper, chipboard, and canvas for drawing and painting.

Tools-

- painting-knives, palette, and printmaking knives, easel,
- wood blocks, lino and rollers for printmaking.

Vehicles-

- turpentine and linseed oil as vehicle for oil painting and water as vehicle for poster, acrylic and watercolours.

Size-

- polyvinyl acetate or glue (for sizing supports like chipboard and canvas).

Primer-

- a mixture of glue, water and white emulsion paint.

Methods

Methods and materials used for the execution of selected works would be described in detail; however, general procedures used for the preparation of the ground for the paintings will also be outlined here.

In the preparation of a canvas support, a stretcher-frame was first prepared. A stretcher-frame is a wooden frame or chassis on which a canvas is stretched and fixed. After the canvas was fixed, a thin mixture of glue (one-part) and water (two-parts) was used to size the canvas in order to seal the otherwise porous surface. The same was done in the case of chipboard. After the glue size had dried, a first coat made up of a mixture of white emulsion (two-parts) and glue (one-part) as well as water (one-part) was applied to the surface. Subsequently, a second coat was applied after the first one had dried. In few cases, a third coat was laid when it was found necessary in order to give the ground a satisfactory surface for painting. The same was done with chipboard.

The primed canvas or chipboard was allowed to dry thoroughly, for a week before painting began.

The method of painting proceeded in the following manner: A desired sketch was made often with paint, charcoal or pencil as a first step. Mid-tones were usually applied as a second step, followed by darker tones for shady areas and lastly lighter tones used to pick highlights.

Different brush sizes were used, beginning with the bigger brushes. The brush sizes were decreased as areas to be covered also decreased in size.

In the case of watercolour paintings, sable brushes were used while bristle brushes, were used for acrylic and oil paintings.

Results

After series of paintings in the experimental stage were done, the first painting in the pointillist technique was executed. The title was "Still Life with Flowers" (fig. 22). An arrangement of flowers on a piece of chipboard was placed on the floor, and then using oil paint, a sketch of the still life was made on the canvas. In painting the flowers, brush strokes were made to run generally in a diagonal direction. The idea of using diagonal brushstrokes was to give a feeling of liveliness to an otherwise still subject. It was based on a deduction made by the Neo-Impressionist painter, George Seurat (1859-91) who for some time concentrated exclusively on the dynamics of the dot. He had a passion for reducing the results of sensation to abstract statements, such as:

> ***"...gaiety is given by ascending lines, calmness by horizontal lines and sadness by descending ones"***.1

A number of paintings were subsequently made with this idea in mind. Subject matter was expanded to include beside still life, landscape and figure painting. Examples of such paintings are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters. The idea of using diagonal brushstrokes to liven paintings was modified to using crisscrossing strokes and further pursued

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1. Phaidon, Seurat in Full Colour. Phaidon Press Limited, Oxford, 1965, p. 9

until a new idea evolved.

This new idea in dot dynamics saw brushstrokes not merely moving in diagonally or in a crisscross fashion, but actually following every action of figures in the composition. The subject matter was musicians, dancers and generally, figures in action.

The end result of the above exercise was often a surface pulsating with activity. Dancers appeared to turn round and round, figures seemed to walk and one could almost hear the tune from musical instruments.

Paintings in the pointillist technique, as far as the experimental stage was concerned went through different approaches. In some cases, both subject matter (be it figures or objects) and background were painted simultaneously. Occasionally, the background was treated first and then the subject matter or vice versa. Whichever approach was used ultimately ended with the whole surface of the painting being given equal attention. Complementary colours were often played against each other. For example, greens were often laid against reds, yellows against violets and blues against oranges in order to bring contrast into the composition. Sometimes, however, monochromatic colour schemes were used to portray harmony. Light tones were also often played against dark ones as a key factor in moulding the figures in the paintings into three-dimensional form.

PRELIMINARY PROJECTS

The researcher executed some paintings prior to the undertaking of this project. The link between these earlier works and the project are established and analysed in figs. 20-23.

1. "Self Portrait" (fig. 20)

Objective: This was an exercise in oil painting to capture the artist own reflection in a mirror, in the realistic vein. (fig. 20)

Materials and Methods: The primed chipboard was propped up on an easel. A medium sized mirror was placed beside it. A sketch was first made with a mixture of burnt sienna and ultramarine deep, using a size 5 bristle brush. The mid-tones of the skin were laid first using varying mixtures of burnt sienna, ultramarine deep, cadmium red and yellow ochre. Next, darker tones of the skin and hair were painted using brush sizes ranging between 6 and 2. Titanium white was added to the mixtures to create tints for picking highlights and in painting the iris. Both figure and background were painted simultaneously. The basic green of the dress was achieved by mixing cadmium yellow with black.

Results: After the work was completed, it was observed that although the image bore some resemblance to the artist, it was larger than life-size. The light tones in the background against the darker tones of the figure and the green dress, compared with the red earrings, have created contrast in the composition. The oval shape of the mouth is repeated in the eyes and ears.

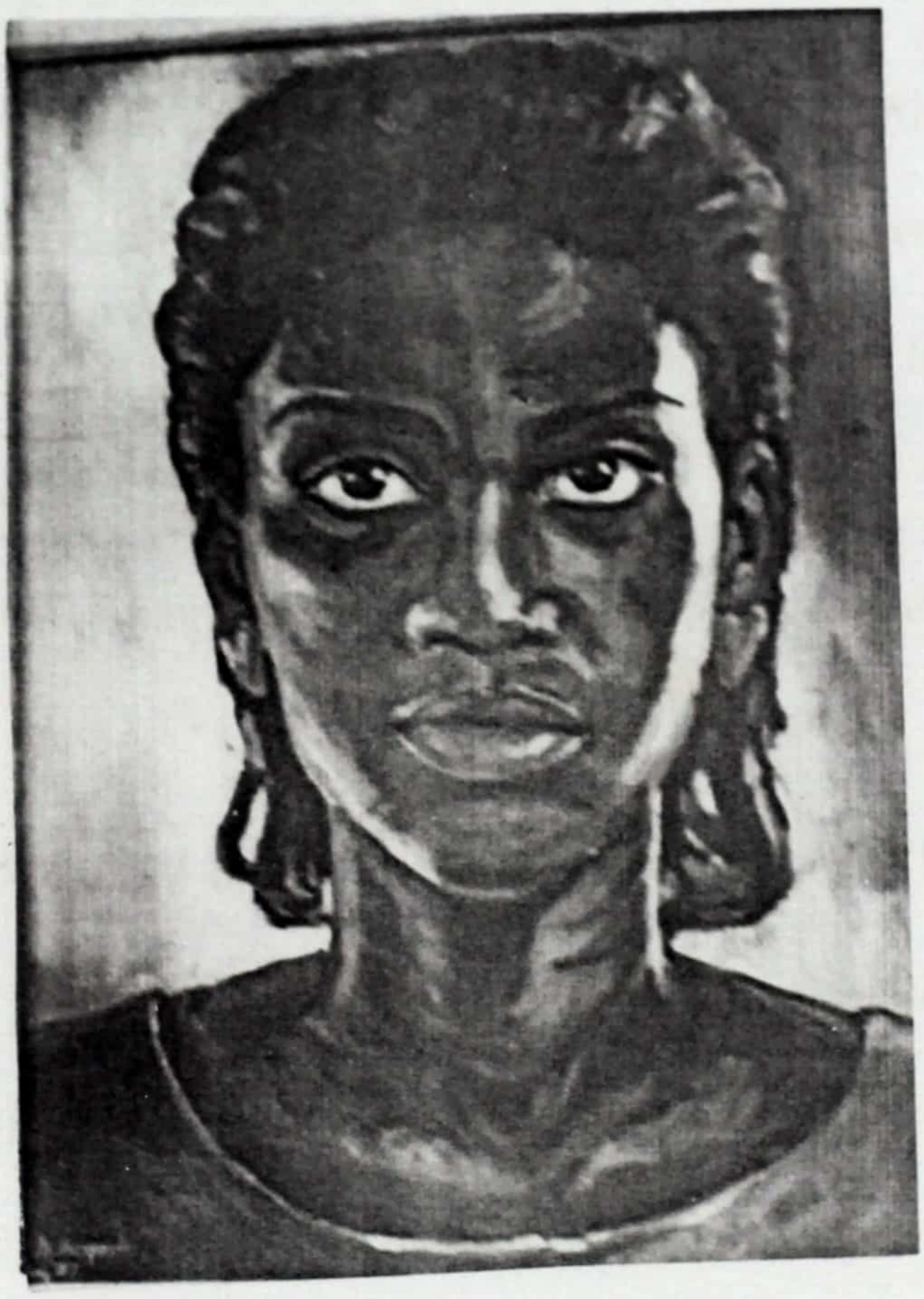


Fig. 20- Title: Self Portrait, 1987 Medium: Oil paint
Support: Chipboard Size: 30"x24"

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2. "Nude In Studio" (fig. 21)

Objective: To develop the ability of capturing a human figure in the nude through the use of oil paint. (fig. 21)

Materials and Methods: A sketch was made of a model on primed chipboard using burnt umber and ultramarine blue. With bristle brush sizes ranging between 2 and 12, the mid-tones of the skin colour were laid first. Mixtures of the above colours together with cadmium red, yellow ochre, cadmium yellow and titanium white were used. Darker tones were used for areas in shadow before the lighter tones and highlights were painted.

The subject was painted first and then the background.

Results: Reflected lights looked better in blue which is a cool colour while tints of yellow ochre looked better as highlights. In previous paintings of this nature, the same colours were used for both high and reflected lights. A fair distribution of dark colours against light ones provided balance in the composition.



Fig. 21- Title: "Nude in Studio", 1989 Medium: Oil Paint
Support: Chipboard Size: 36"x 30"

3. "Still Life with Flowers" (fig. 22)

Objective: To paint a still life subject with diagonal brushstrokes to make it look lively. (fig. 22)

Materials and Methods: An arrangement of flowers on a piece of chipboard was placed on the floor, and then using oil paint, a sketch was made on the primed canvas. In painting the flowers, brushstrokes were made to run generally in a diagonal direction. The idea of using diagonal brushstrokes was to give a feeling of liveliness to the painting. Colours used include, cadmium yellow, viridian green, sap green cadmium red, alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue and titanium white.

Bristle brush size 5, 3 and 2 were used. Complementary colours of red against greens, yellow against violets were also used.

Results: This painting marked a turning point in the experimentation period. The use of complementary colours of yellows against violets and reds against greens created contrast in the composition. Tiny dabs of colour gave the effect of texture and also livened the still object. Balance was achieved by the overall arrangement of the flowers on the chipboard.



Fig. 22- Title: "Still Life with Flowers", 1988 Medium: Oil Paint
Support: Canvas Size: 34"x28"

4. " Agbadza" (fig. 23)

Objective: To create vigorous dance movements using the pointillist technique. (fig. 23)

Materials and Methods: Smaller bristle brush sizes 5, 3 and 2 were used with brushstrokes emanating from the figures in a dance routine. By extending the dots of colour from the figures into the background and vice versa, a busy atmosphere was created. Colours used include cadmium yellow, yellow ochre, cadmium red, cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, burnt sienna and titanium white. The background and figures were painted simultaneously.

Results: Spreading the dots in a seemingly haphazard manner cause the blurring of the figures, which made them less static. The motion of the figures appeared to be sustained and continuous due to the busy atmosphere created by the scattering of dots colour all over the canvas. The dancers were seen to engaged in a vigorous dance.

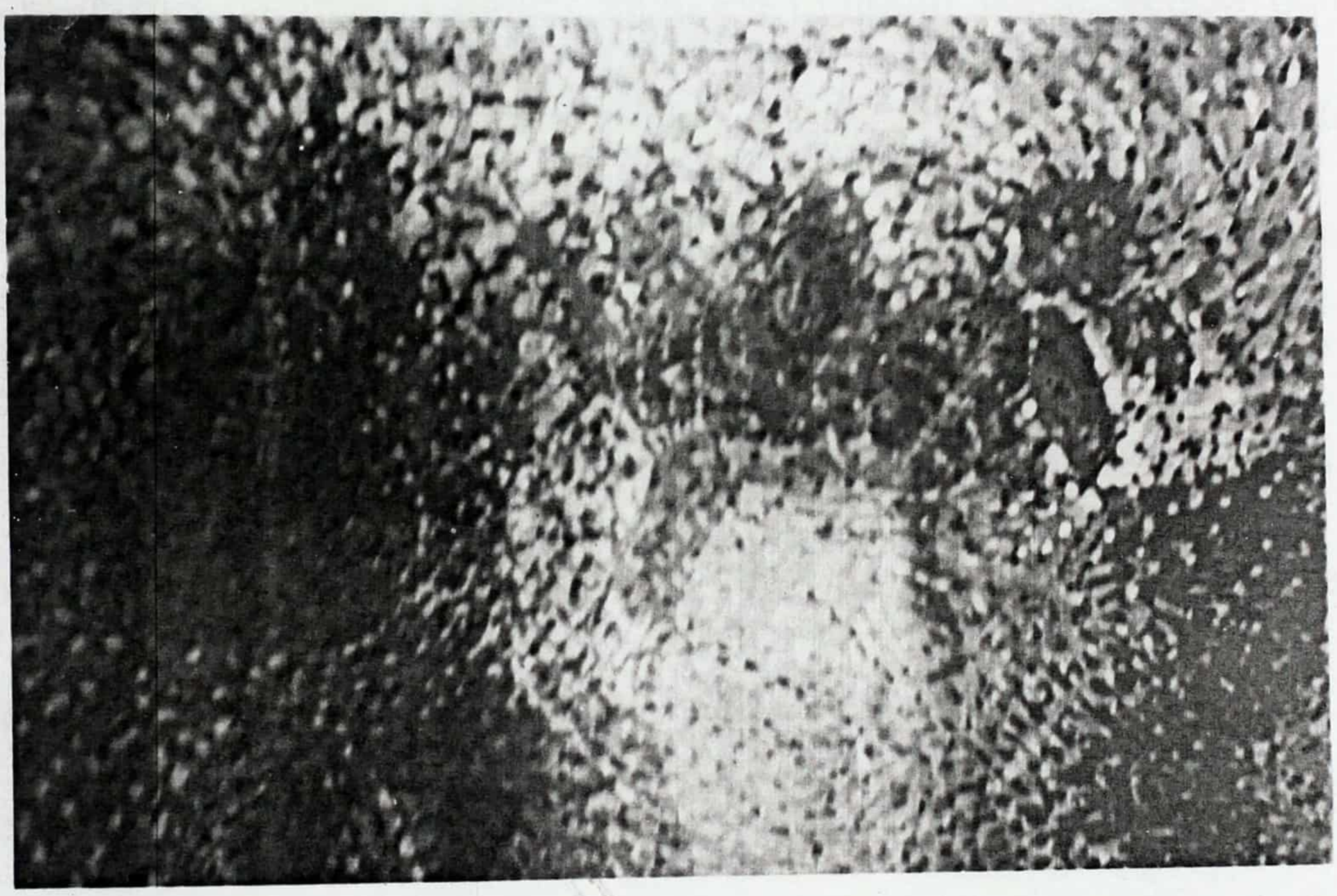


Fig. 23- Title: "Agbadza", 1994 Medium: Acrylic
Support: Canvas Size: 30"x40"

EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

The following are examples of experiments made towards the project.

Figs. 24 and as well as plates 9 and 10.

EXPERIMENT 1- "Canoes Afloat"(fig. 24)

Objective: To use strokes of colour to create the reflection of an object in water.

Materials and Methods: Brush sizes ranging from size 4 to 10 were used in this painting. Colours included titanium white, yellow ochre, ultramarine blue and alizarin crimson. A sketch of two canoes floating on a riverbank was made on a primed canvas of 32"x48". The canoes were painted before the background. Relatively horizontal brushstrokes were used in the entire painting. Very light shades of colour broken into the heavier colours of the canoes helped to create watery reflections of the latter.

Results: The use of densely compacted horizontal brushstrokes of heavy colour created a relatively calm atmosphere in the background. By the same token the canoes also feel solid. On the other hand, lighter shades of colour broken only by darker strokes in the foreground, helped to create ripples and water reflections of the canoes. Contrast was achieved by the use of sharp lights against dark tones. Harmony was created by an almost monochromatic use of blues.

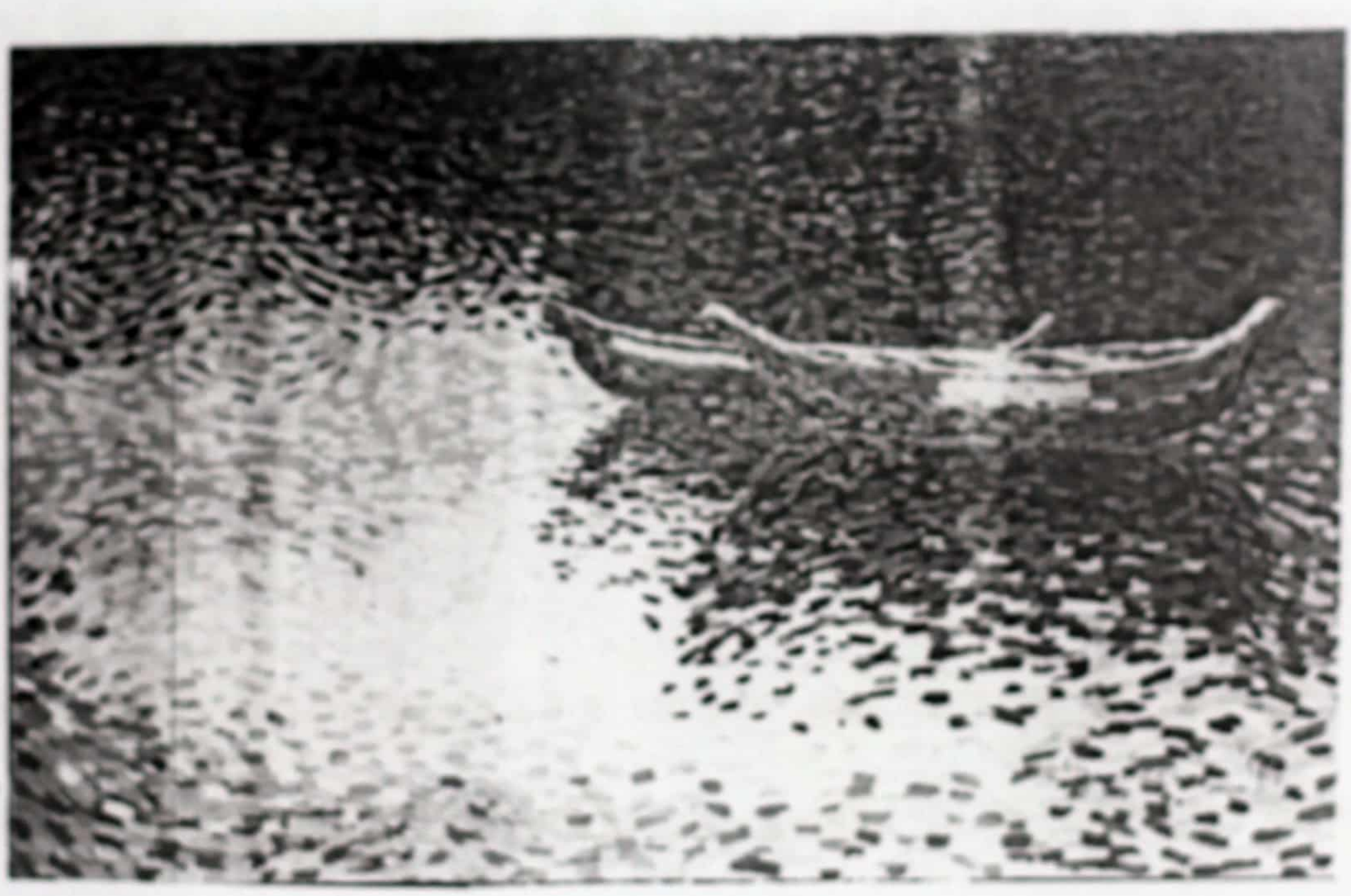


Fig. 24- Title: "Canoes Afloat", 1994 Medium: Oil paint
Support: Canvas Size: 32"x48"

EXPERIMENT 2- "Xylophone Blues"(fig. 25)

Objective: Using strokes of colour to portray sound.

Materials and Methods: The sketch of a xylophone player was made on the primed canvas using a number 5-sized bristle brush and ultramarine blue. Strokes of colour extended from the figure and xylophone into the background helped to create the feeling movement by the outstretched arms of the player, and echo from the musical instrument.

Brushes used ranged from 8 to 2 in sizes. Colours including, ultramarine blue, raw umber, yellow ochre and titanium white were used.

Results: A jingling-looking surface was created by the use of scattered strokes of colour. Using a blue monochromatic colour scheme created harmony, which is also an important principle in music. Ascending brushstrokes helped to achieve the effect of sound the xylophone.



Fig. 25- Title: "Xylophone Blues" 1994 Medium: Oil paint
Support: Canvas Size: 32"x32"

EXPERIMENT 4- "Unknown Charm"(plate 9)

Objective: Using brushstrokes to portray reflection of a figure.

Materials and Methods: The nature of the format made it possible to create the long reflected image of the solitary figure in the composition. Brushes used included the full range from size 2 to 12. The predominant colours were titanium white, yellow ochre, burnt sienna and burnt umber. Also a little cadmium red and viridian green was used in painting the shadow.

Results: The broad brushstrokes painted at the bottom part of the painting were used to create a reflection of the figure. Contrast was created by using dark tones in the figure against light tones in the background. A harmonious use of ochres and browns provided balance in the composition. Gradation from bigger brushstrokes in the foreground to tiny dabs in the background also created perspective.

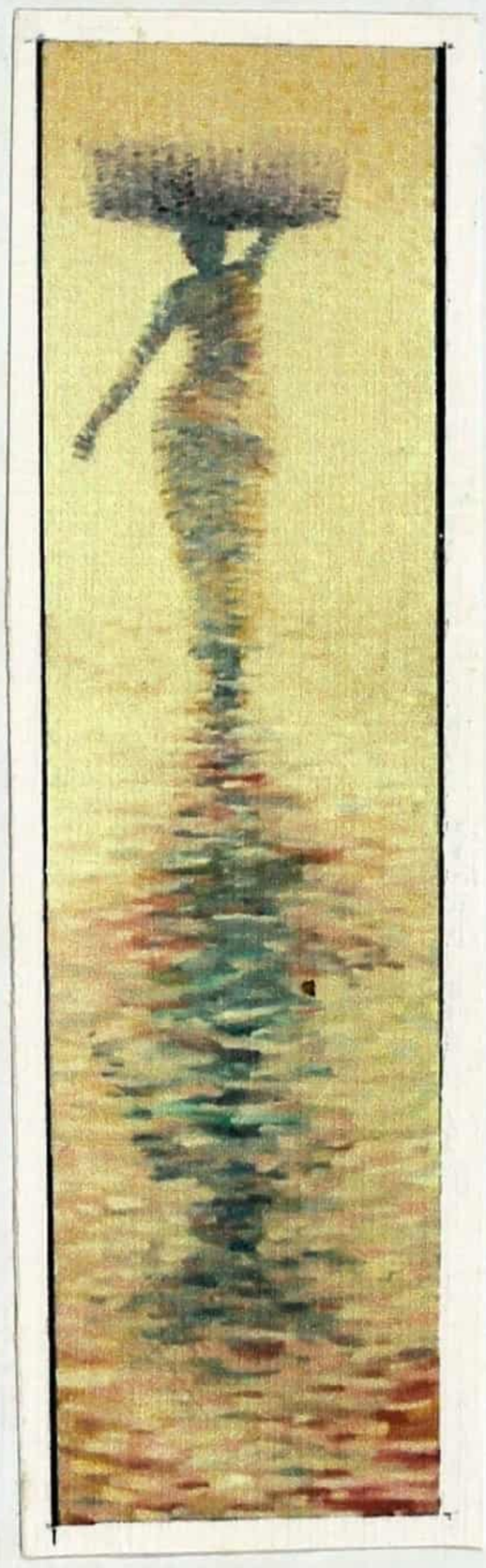


Plate 9- Title: "Unknown Charm", 1995 Medium: Oil paint
Support: Canvas Size: 60"x16"

EXPERIMENT 5- "Damba Duo" (plate 10)

Objective: To create twirling motion of costume worn by figures with brushstrokes.

Materials and Methods: A primed canvas of 60"x16" dimension was used. Brush sizes ranged from number 2 to12. Colours included titanium white, yellow ochre, cadmium red, as well as a mixture of black and cadmium yellow and ivory black for shades of green.

A composition of two dancing figures was made on the canvas using a number 5 brush and some paint. The figures and the background were painted simultaneously beginning with mid-tones followed by darker tones finishing with lighter ones. Broader brushstrokes were used in the foreground and smaller strokes in the background.

Results: The use of broad brushstrokes in the foreground against smaller ones in the background helped to create perspective. Brushstrokes painted in a circular direction also created a twirling motion of the figures. Contrast was created by the use of greens against reds, yellows against purples and lighter shades against darker ones.

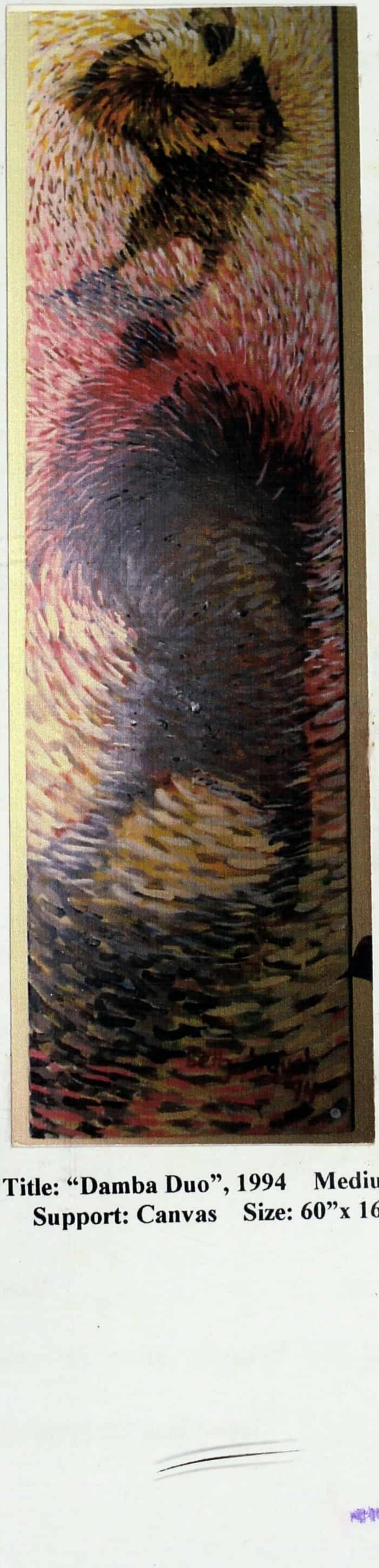


Plate10- Title: "Damba Duo", 1994 Medium: Oil paint
Support: Canvas Size: 60"x 16"

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT

Ten dance forms from the ten Regions of Ghana

The researcher having gone through the experimental survey combines some of the results and observations made together with new ideas, in making paintings for the main project. This chapter therefore looks at the composition and component of each of the ten main paintings described below. Theme for all the paintings for the project was dance. The technique used was pointillism or rather a modification of it, as would be made evident in the course of discussing the works. The paintings would be analysed by considering the following:

i. Topic
ii. Size
iii. Medium
iv. Support
v. Materials used
vi. Methods
vii. Symbolism (if any)
viii. Results
ix. History (if any).

Materials Used:

Bristle brushes, oil paint, linseed oil, turpentine, pen, cartridge paper, primed canvases and easel.

PROJECT 1 (VOLTA REGION)- "Abgadza"

History: Agbadza evolved from two dance forms. The slowest "Kpegisu", is a dance in remembrance of the ancestors. "Gagba" follows this. The current "Agbadza" dance which is regarded as the standard version has further been developed by the youth into a new version called "Ageshi" which has a very fast tempo. The men normally wrap cloth around their waists when dancing, sometimes securing it with a scarf. This is due to the vigorous body movements involved.

Materials and Methods: A rough sketch of two male dancers with their backs toward the viewer was made on a cartridge sheet of 7"x 7" with a pen (fig.26). The cartoon was sketched unto a canvas of 38"x 38" with a size 5 bristle brush. Bristle brushes ranging between sizes 1 and 6 were used for this painting. Colours used include yellow ochre, cadmium red, viridian green, burnt sienna, raw umber and titanium white. The figures were painted first followed by the background (plate 11). After this first layer had dried, a second layer was painted using smaller brushstrokes. (plate 12)

Analysis: Numerous strokes of colour scattered in all direction were used to portray the vigorous nature of the dance. There is no symbolic reason for choice of colour.

Results: As a result of using lighter strokes of interspersed with darker ones, the figures looked more active. Using lighter tones for the cloth and darker tones for the background created contrast.

STAGE I



Fig. 26- Title: "Agbadza", 2001 Medium: Pen
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 7"x 7"

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STAGE II

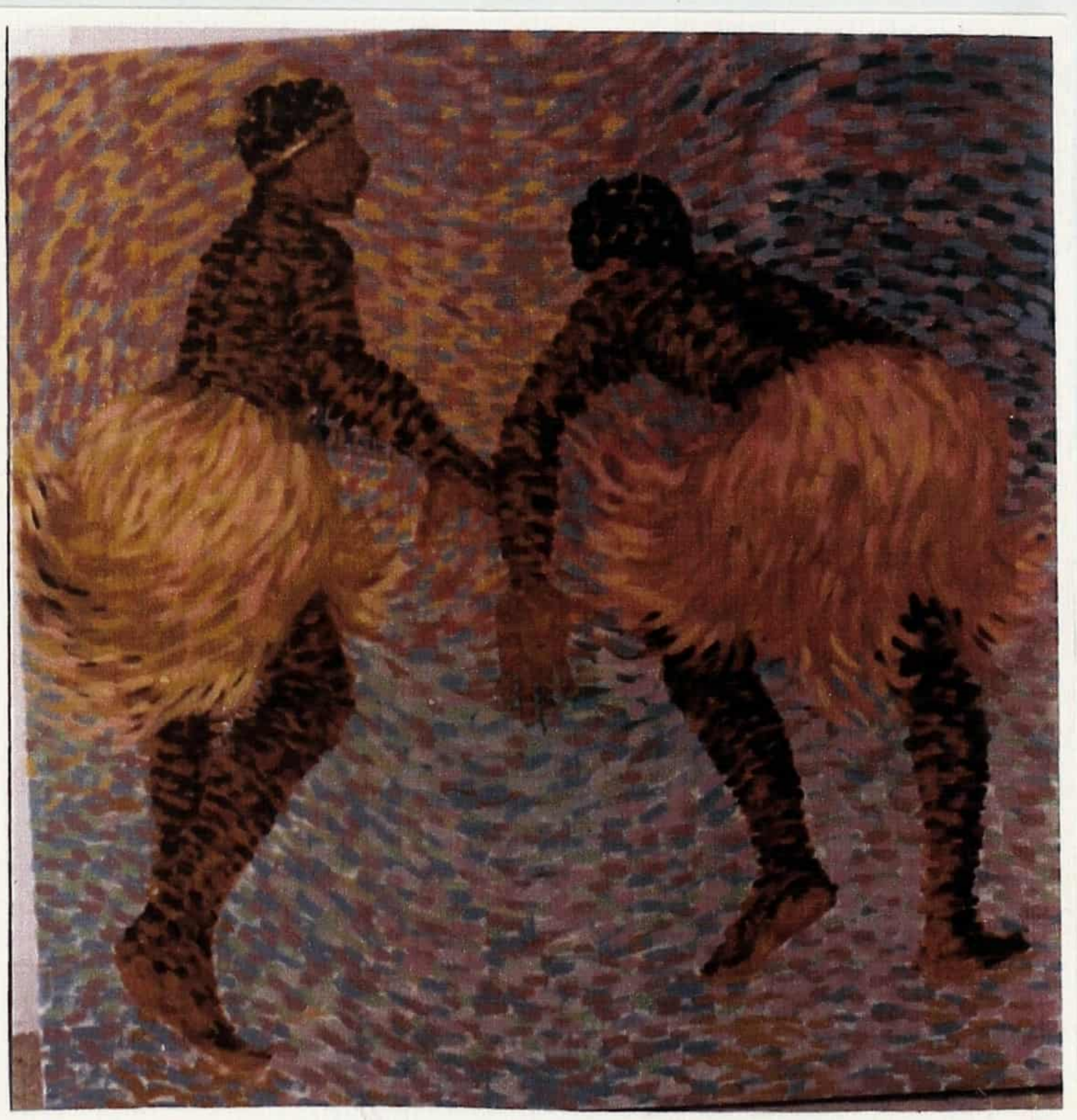


Plate 11- Title: "Agbadza", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 38"x 38"

STAGE III



Plate 12- Title: "Agbadza", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 38"x 38"

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PROJECT 2 (GREATER ACCRA REGION)- "Kpanlogo"

History: "Kpanlogo" is a recreational dance, which evolved, in the early 1960s by the youth and fisher folks of Accra. For the costume any kind of loosely fitting attire was appropriate. Since it served for all occasions no specific clothes were required. Gestures used in the dance included arm movements borrowed from the Akans, and this was what made it different from the stamping dances of La and Teshie. Because of the nature of body movement, it was considered at first to be vulgar.

Methods: A sketch of two figures on a cartridge paper of 5"x 5" was made with a pen. The figures were captured in frontal view (fig27). The sketch was copied unto a canvas with a size 5 bristle brush. The figures were painted in browns, their clothes in reds and violets and the background in ochres. Brush sizes ranging between 8 and 1 were used in the execution of the painting. Colours used include, cadmium yellow, yellow ochre, cadmium red, alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue, viridian green, burnt sienna, burnt umber and titanium white. The figures were painted first, and then the background (plate13). After that both subject and background were painted simultaneously, with smaller brushstrokes.(plate 14)

Analysis: By intensifying the number of strokes of colour, the feeling of motion in the picture was accelerated. The lighter tones in the background against the darker tone in the figure created contrast. Rhythm was created by echoing the circular shape of the heads in the background with brushstrokes.

Results: The figures in plate 14 look more active than those in plate 13 as a result of the increase in the number of brushstrokes.

STAGE I

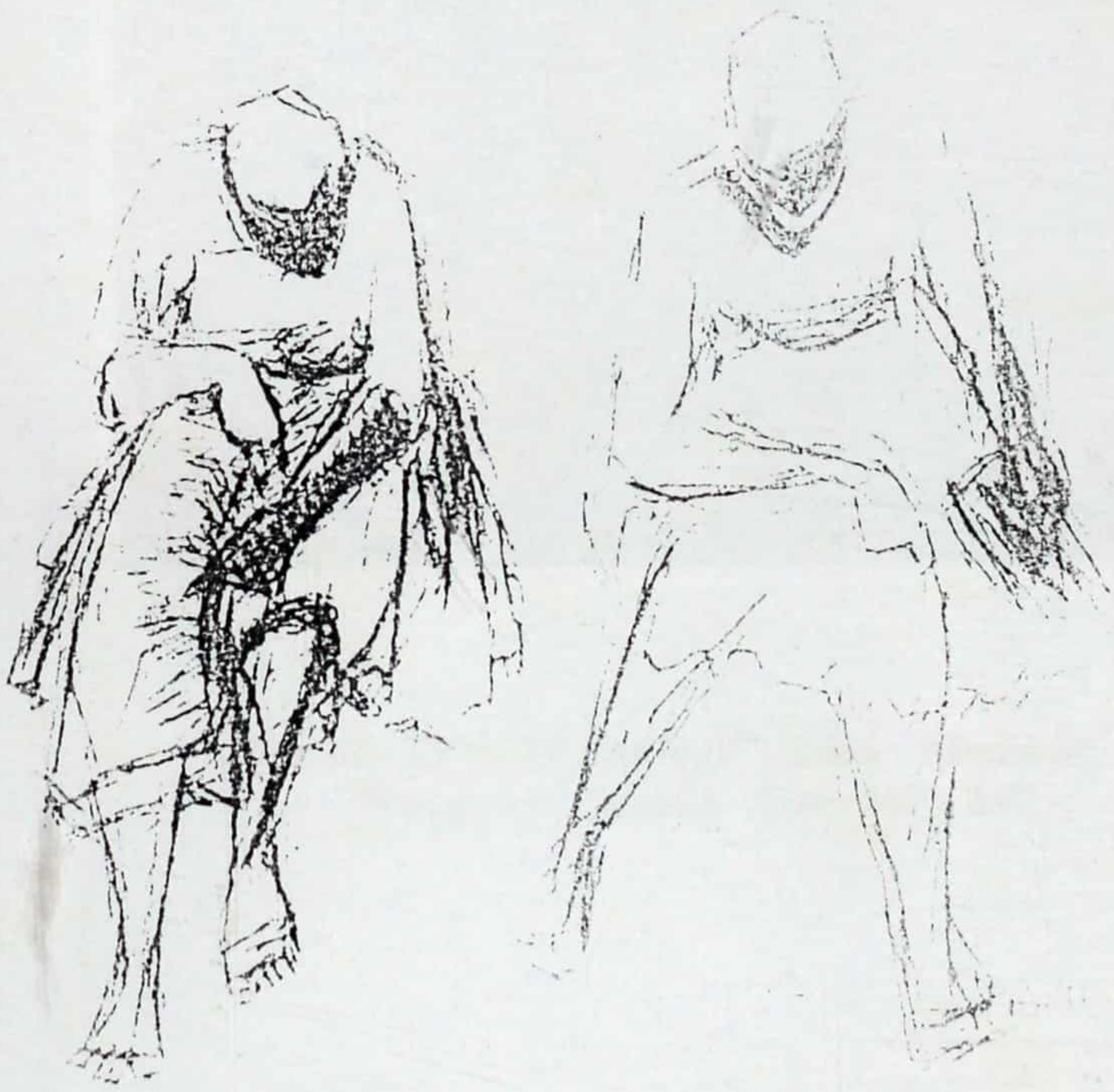


Fig. 27- Title: "Kpanlogo", 2001 Medium: Pen
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 5"x 5"

STAGE II

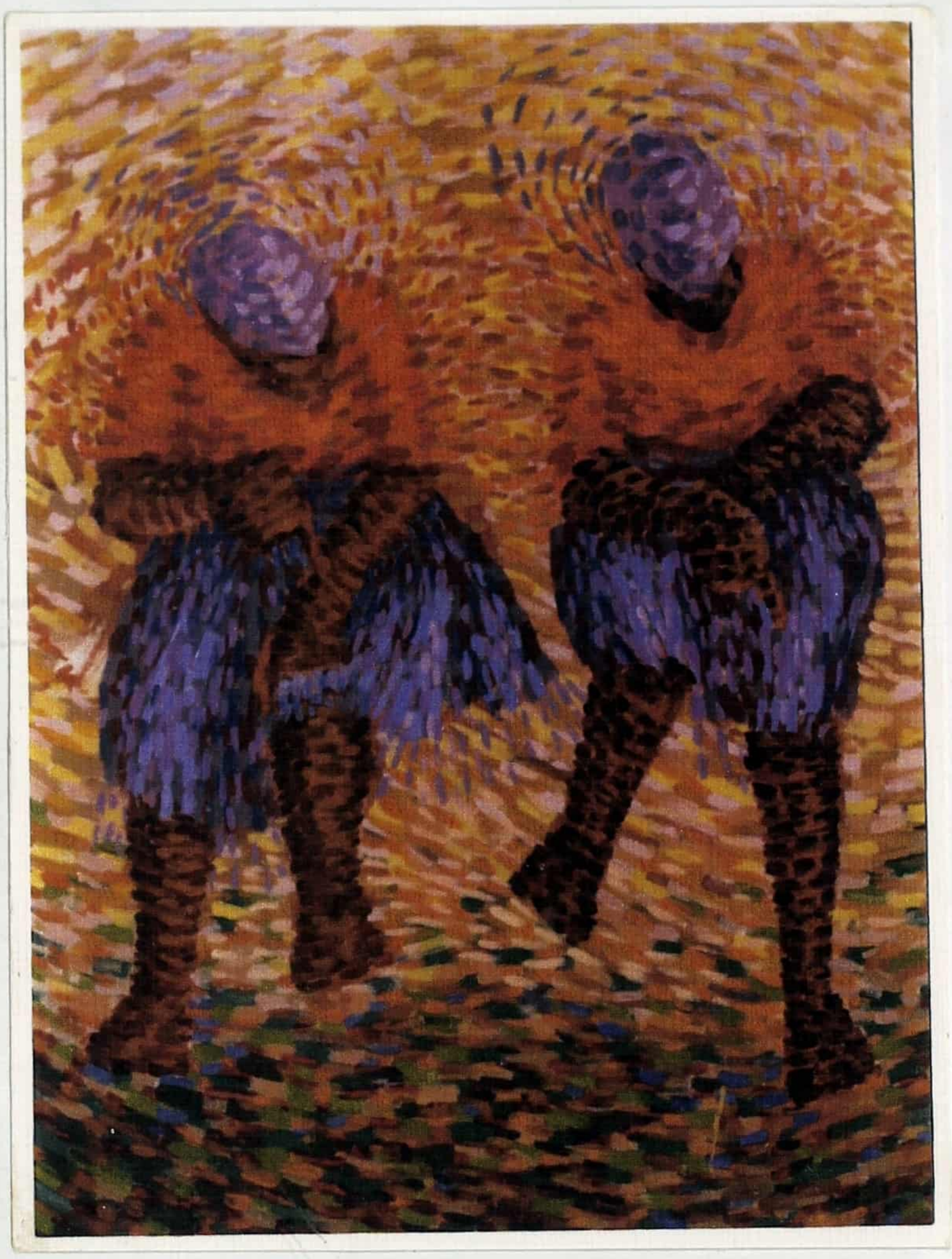


Plate 13- Title: "Kpanlogo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 38"x 38"

STAGE III



Plate 14- Title: "Kpanlogo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 38"x 38"

PROJECT 3(CENTRAL REGION)- "Apatampa"

History: Fanti women in the Central Region perform Apatampa. The costume normally worn is made of either a velvety material or a silky one. The cloth is wrapped around the body from chest down..A headgear called "Takua" is worn and beautiful clothing accessories such as earrings, necklaces and bangles may also be used. Hand gestures are normally in the following sequence; all dancers moving in unison, both hands (or only one) strike the hips of the dancer with palms turned flat against the body. This is followed by a clap of hands, and then a strike on the chest with one hand or a wave, while all the time moving in a circular direction with one dancer behind another.

One remarkable thing about the costume is the stuffing of the hips and buttocks with extra cloth to make the curves of the dancers body totally exaggerated often almost comical. This is called the "Antofo". The dance is a recreational one and many of the songs sang are mostly love songs.

Methods: A sketch of three figures was made on a cartridge sheet of 5"x 7" with a pen (fig. 28). The cartoon was copied unto a canvas of 64"x 36" with a size 5 bristle brush. The background was painted with tints and shades of crimson using long and broad brushstrokes (plate 15).

The figures were painted in browns and their clothes in lighter shades of crimson. Brush sizes varying between 1and 6 were used. Colours used included alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue, burnt and raw umbers and titanium white larger brushes were used to paint the background first and medium sized ones were used for the skin of the figures. Finally, using smaller brushes, tiny strokes of colour were used to complete the work.. (plate 16)

Analysis: Using monochromes of crimson created harmony. The composition was based on the shape of the circle. Figures were arranged in a circular manner to fit the format, which is emphasised by the circular brushstrokes. Darker shades were played against lighter tints to create contrast.

Result: Brushstrokes painted in circles helped to portray the circular motion of the figures. However an attempt to paint the figures in a two-dimensional plane was not successful. In previous paintings figures had been moulded in three-dimensional form. Painting the background before the figures contributed to this factor.

STAGE I



Fig. 28- Title: "Apatampa", 2001 Medium: Pen
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 7"x 5"

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STAGE II



Plate 15- Title: "Apatampa", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 64"x 36"

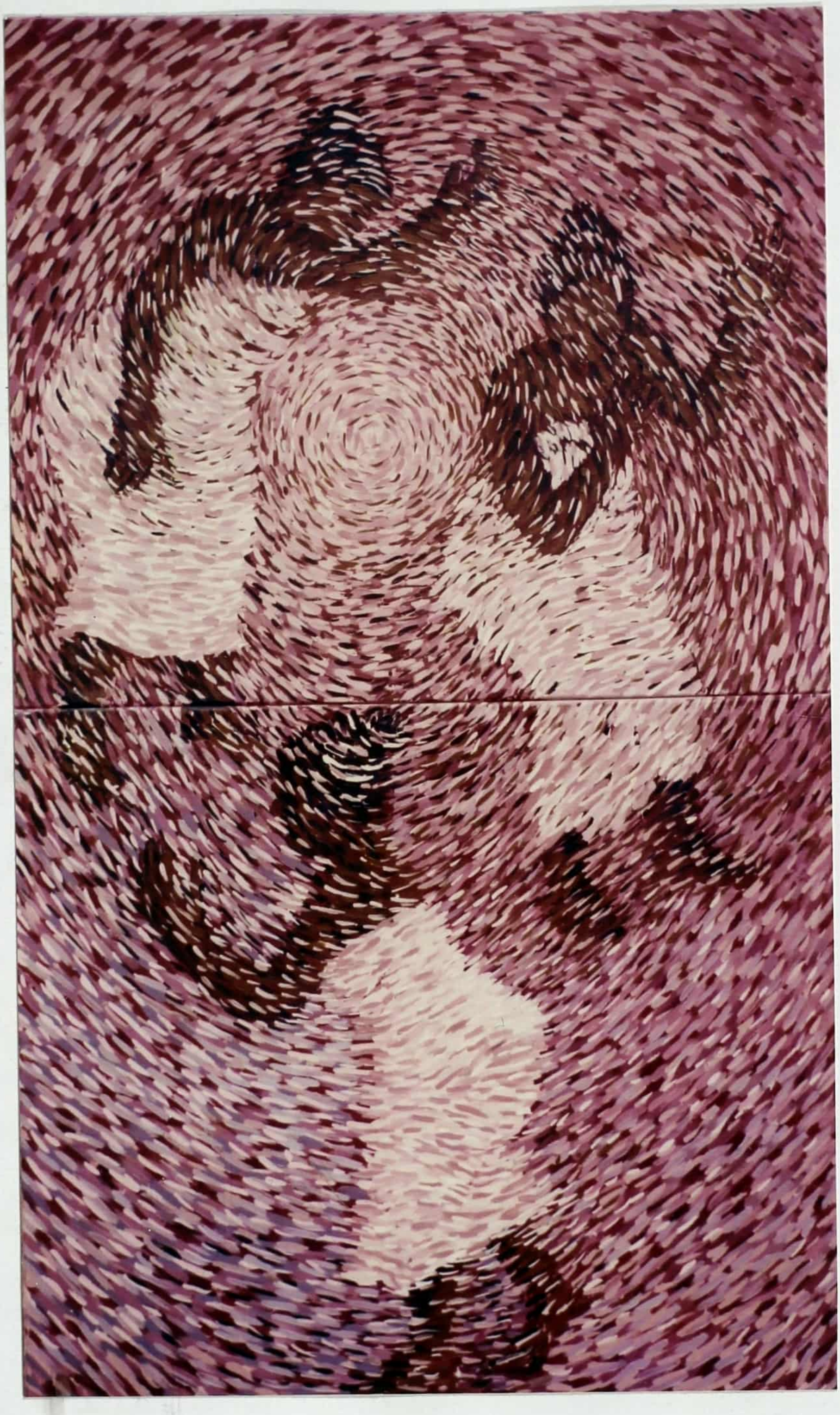


Plate 16- Title: "Apatampa", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 64"x 36"

PROJECT 4(WESTERN REGION)- "Kundum"

History: "Kundum" is a festival and a warrior dance of the Ahanta people of the Western Region of Ghana and it is danced during the Kundum festival. The celebration lasts for ten days. On the last day, a sheep is slaughtered beside a bonfire around midnight and forgiveness is sought by symbolically burning the sins of the people. Dancers wearing white clothes and cowbells perform the ceremony. Some people clothe themselves in banana leaves. They hold long poles, raising it now and then in unison as they sing a chorus. The poles held in hand during the dance represents the weapons used in wars. They are usually made of any strong wood and are about the size and length of a javelin stick.

Methods: A sketch of six figures was made from memory directly on a canvas of 20"x 60" with a bristle brush size 4. The background was painted with dark hues of blue and crimson and the figures in browns (plate 17). To intensify motion in the picture, smaller brushstrokes were used. Darker tones were laid first and highlights picked as a final step. (plate 18)

Analysis: Dark tones against sharp highlights were used to portray a night scene. The composition was based on a straight-line

arrangement. Rhythm was created by the systematic placement of figures in a single file. However, the lines created by poles held by the figures altered the monotony in the composition.

Results: Darker shades for shadows could have been used to portray the night scene more successfully.

STAGE I

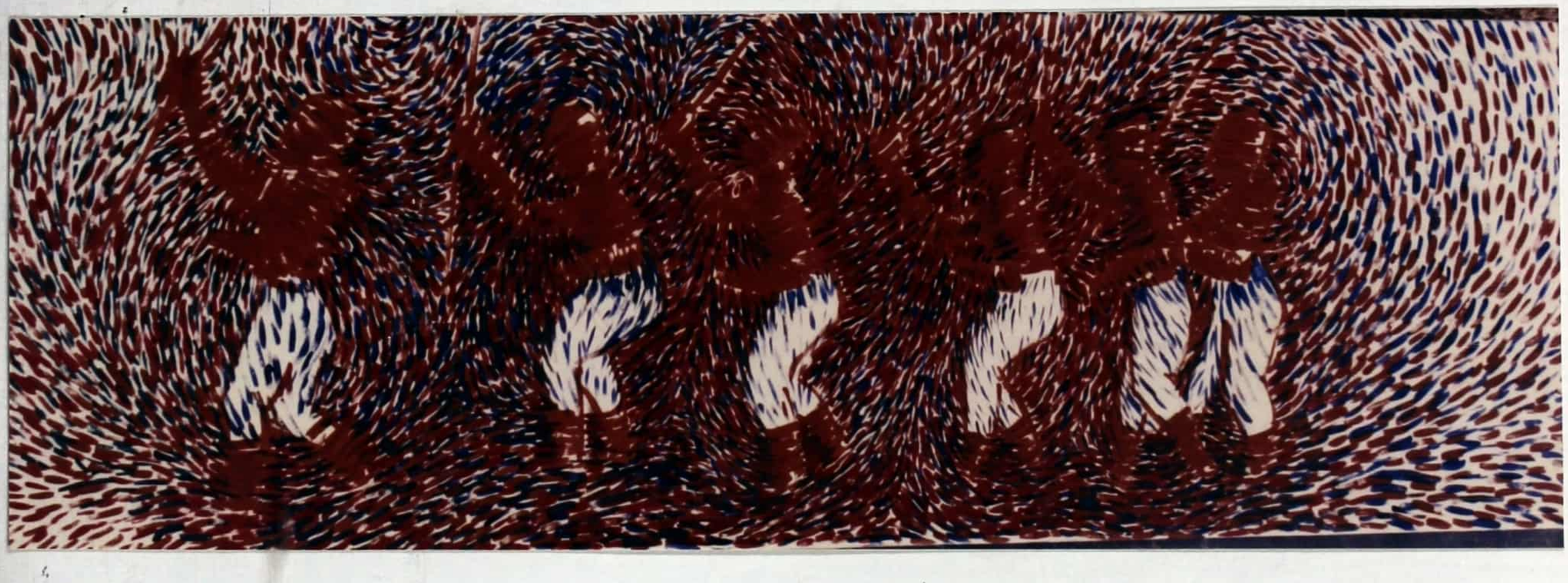


Plate 17- Title: "Kundum", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 20"x 60"

STAGE II



Plate 18- Title: "Kundum", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 20"x 60"

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PROJECT 5 (EASTERN REGION)- "Dipo"

History: Dipo dance also known as "Ashimi" is a customary dance of the Krobos of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The equivalent of this dance is the Otofo dance performed by the Ga Adangbe people of the Greater Accra Region. Young girls perform the dance when they reach the age of puberty. It is supposed to show that the girl was a virgin and also that she was ready for marriage. Hand gestures are very limited and the feet move at snail pace. Older and experienced women guide the girls in the dance. Hands are raised halfway and arms kept close to the body while the wrists are moved back and forth in swaying motion.

Methods: A sketch of five figures was made on a cartridge paper of 7"x11" with a pencil. The background was painted in ochres and the figures in browns (fig. 29).

Bristle brush sizes ranging between 1 and 6 were used. Colours included, yellow ochre, burnt sienna, ultramarine blue, cadmium red, viridian green and titanium white. Bigger brushes were used to paint the background, which was treated first (plate 19). The figures and bead jewellery were painted next with smaller brushes, followed by the lion cloths. Finally, very small strokes of colours indicated above were painted all over the surface. (plate 20)

Analysis: A wide landscape format and horizontal brushstrokes were used to portray a calm scene. Contrast was created by the use of light

colours in the background as against dark ones in the figures. A predominance of white has been used to neutralise the colourful effects of the loincloths in order to maintain a calm picture. Horizontal brushstrokes reduced the vibrations.

Results: Using white to tone down the colourful loincloth proved inappropriate because it made the painting look chalky. Less white would have reduced this effect.

STAGE I



Fig. 29- Title: "Dipo", 2001 Medium: Pencil Support: Cartridge paper Size: 7"x 11"

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STAGE II



Plate 19- Title: "Dipo", 2001 Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 20"x 60"

STAGE III



Plate 20- Title: "Dipo", 2001 Medium: Oil Support: Canvas Size: 20"x 60"

PROJECT 6 (ASHANTI REGION)- ''Adowa''

History: Adowa is a dance performed by the Ashantis of the Ashanti region. The women of the region invented it during the wars of the Ashanti nation. They used to gather in those days in the evenings and expressed their support for the men folk on the battlefield, playing and dancing. Now it is often danced during funerals and festive occasions. It is a graceful dance that incorporates a lot of hand and feet gestures, most of which are loaded with meaning. Costume used is the traditional cloth draped over one's shoulder or tied around the body. Dancers often wear accessories such as necklaces, bracelets, and anklets.

Methods: A pen sketch of two figures in frontal view was made on a cartridge sheet of 6 ½"x 6"(fig.30). The cartoon was copied unto a canvas, 68"x 36" in dimension. Brush sizes ranging between 1 and 6 were used. Colours used included yellow ochre, viridian green, ultramarine blue, cadmium yellow, burnt sienna, raw umber and titanium white. The figures were painted first followed, by their clothes, and then the background. (plate 21).

Analysis: The painting has a green and ochre colour scheme. Big brushstrokes run from top downwards towards the bottom part where they level out in a horizontal direction. This was an attempt to make

movement a flowing, rather than a vigorous one. Monochromes of green were used to portray harmony as well as the graceful nature of the dance. Outlines have been blurred to create the ephemeral nature of motion (plate 22). The green colour scheme symbolically represents the forest region, which is the location of the origin of the dance.

Results: Green being a cool colour was appropriate for the composition, it reflected the graceful nature of the dance.

STAGE I



Fig. 30- Title: "Adowa", 2001 Medium: Pen
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 6 ½"x 6"

STAGE II

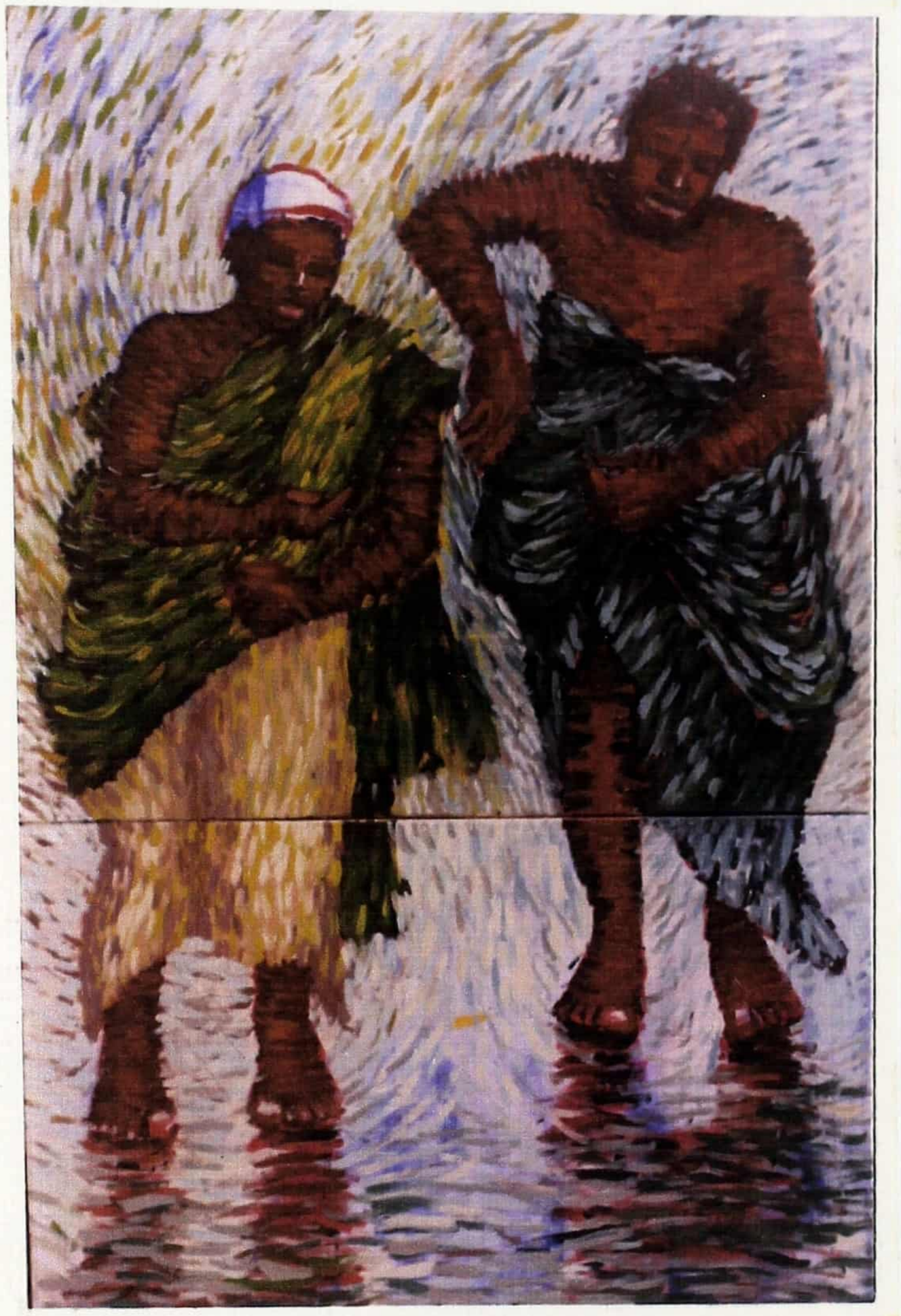


Plate 21- Title: "Adowa", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 68"x 36"

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STAGE III



Plate 22- Title: "Adowa", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 68"x 36"

PROJECT 7 (BRONG AHAFO REGION)-

"Apuo"

History: "Apuo" literary means to reject, or to refuse. It is the name given to the forceful dance of the Brong people of the Brong Ahafo Region performed during the "Apuo" festival. During the eleven-day celebration people are given the right to insult people who may have wronged them during the year and also demand an apology from them. Even the chief is not exempted from being insulted. However, there should be no fighting during the festival. The people have these eleven days with which to sing, play and dance, but afterwards, no Apuo songs should be heard.

The purpose of the festival, among other things, is to restore peace to the community. Costume includes fugu, the traditional smock, raffia skirts, the painting of faces with charcoal and other colours calculated to frighten.

Methods: A sketch of two figures was made on a cartridge paper of 5" x 4" with a pencil (fig. 31). Using a bristle brush the figures were copied unto separate canvases of 16"x12" each. The figures and background were painted simultaneously with bold strokes of green and brown (plates 23 and24). Bristle brushes varying from 2 to 6 were used. Colours included viridian hue, burnt umber, burnt sienna, yellow ochre, cadmium red and titanium white. The paintings were completed with smaller brush strokes. (plates 25 and 26)

Analysis: The rippling effect of brushstrokes created a vigorous motion in the picture. Using an almost monochromatic colour scheme toned down the motion. Darker colours of the figures against the lighter tones in the background, and the use of reds against greens, created contrast.

Results: Brushstrokes applied in a circular motion was appropriate for the portrayal of the vigorous nature of the dance. The size of the canvas did not diminish boldness in the picture.

STAGE I



Fig. 31- Title: "Apuo", 2001 Medium: Pencil
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 5"x 4"

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STAGE II (a)



Plate 23- Title: "Apuo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGE II (b)

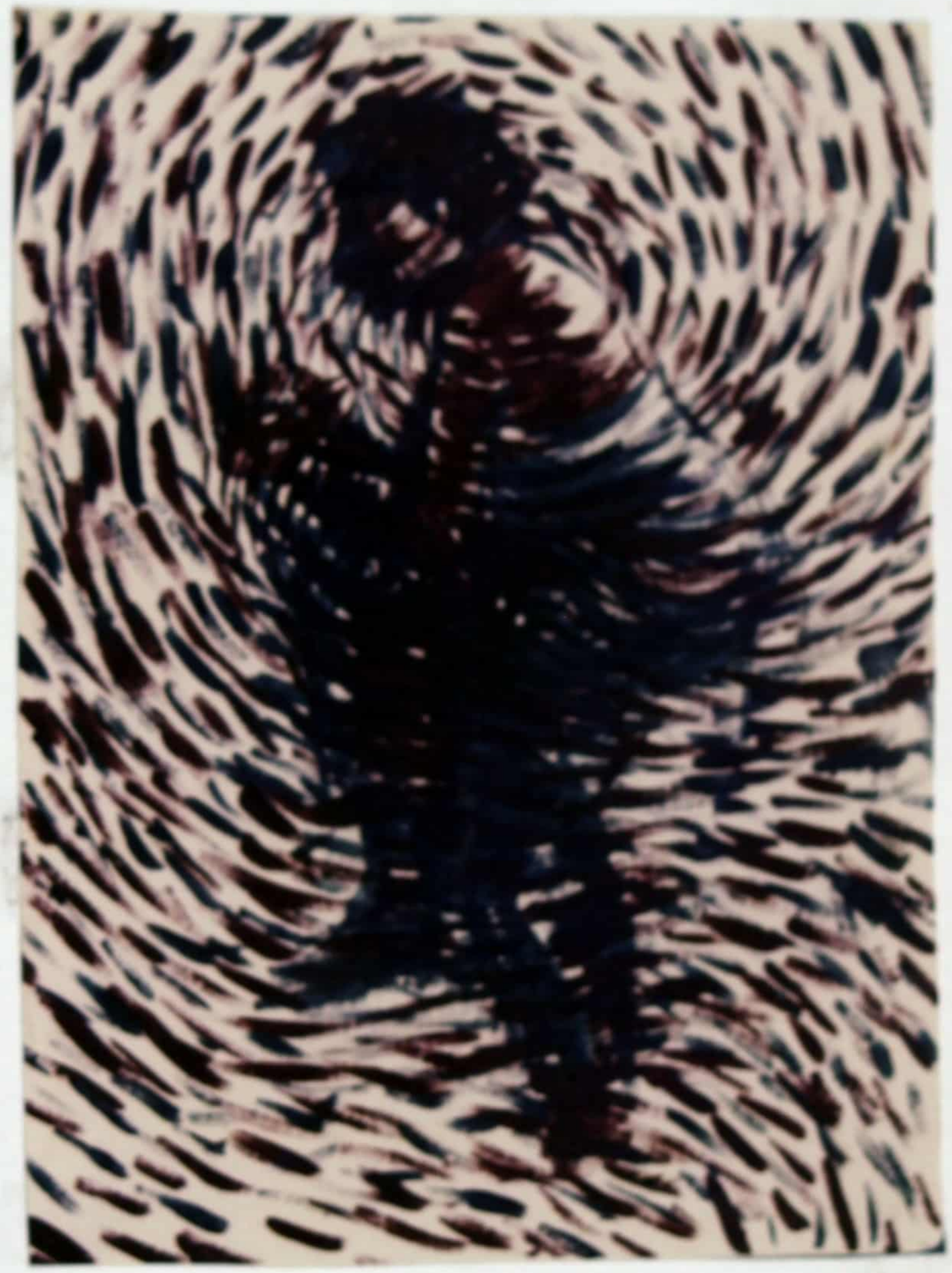


Plate 24- Title: "Apuo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGE III (a)

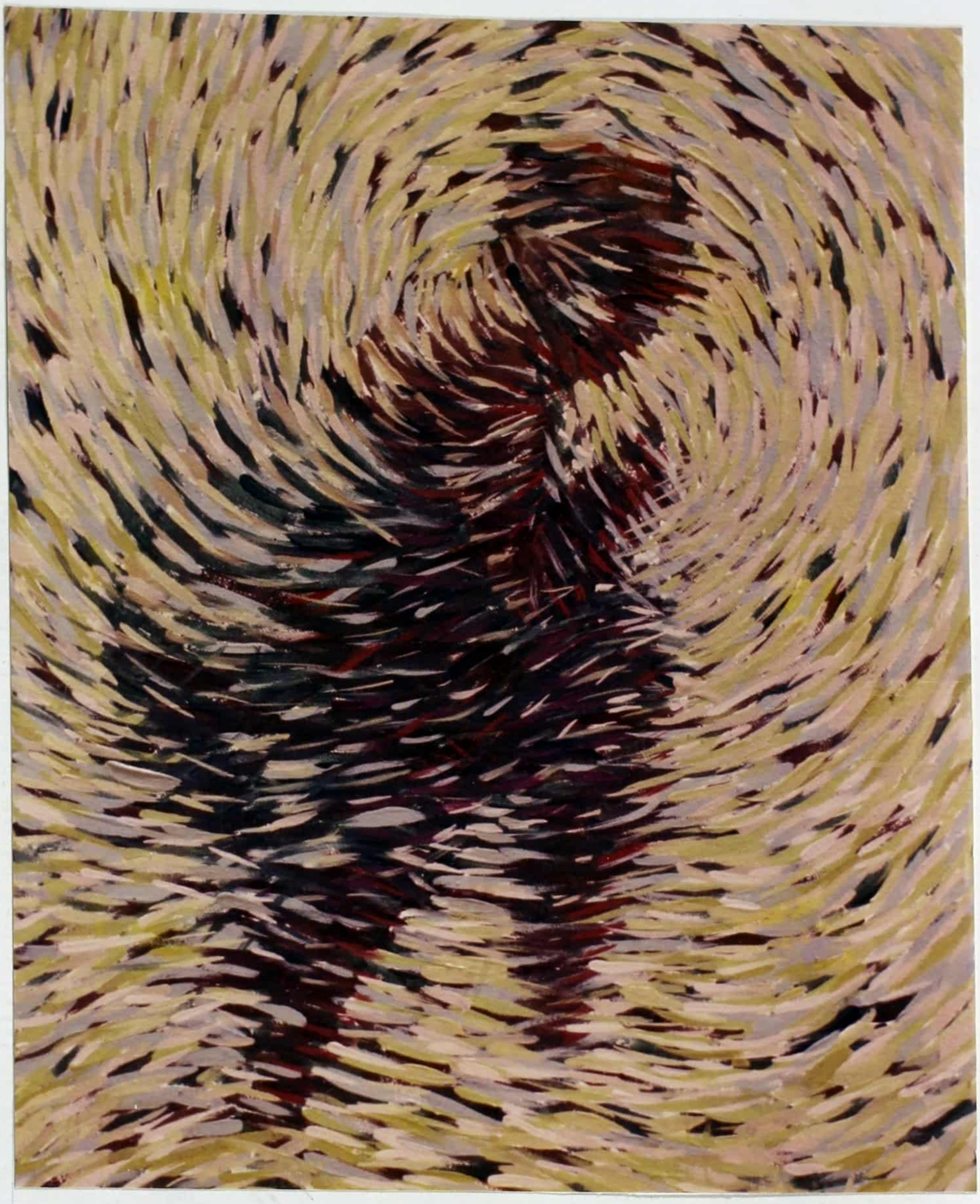


Plate 25- Title: "Apuo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGE III b

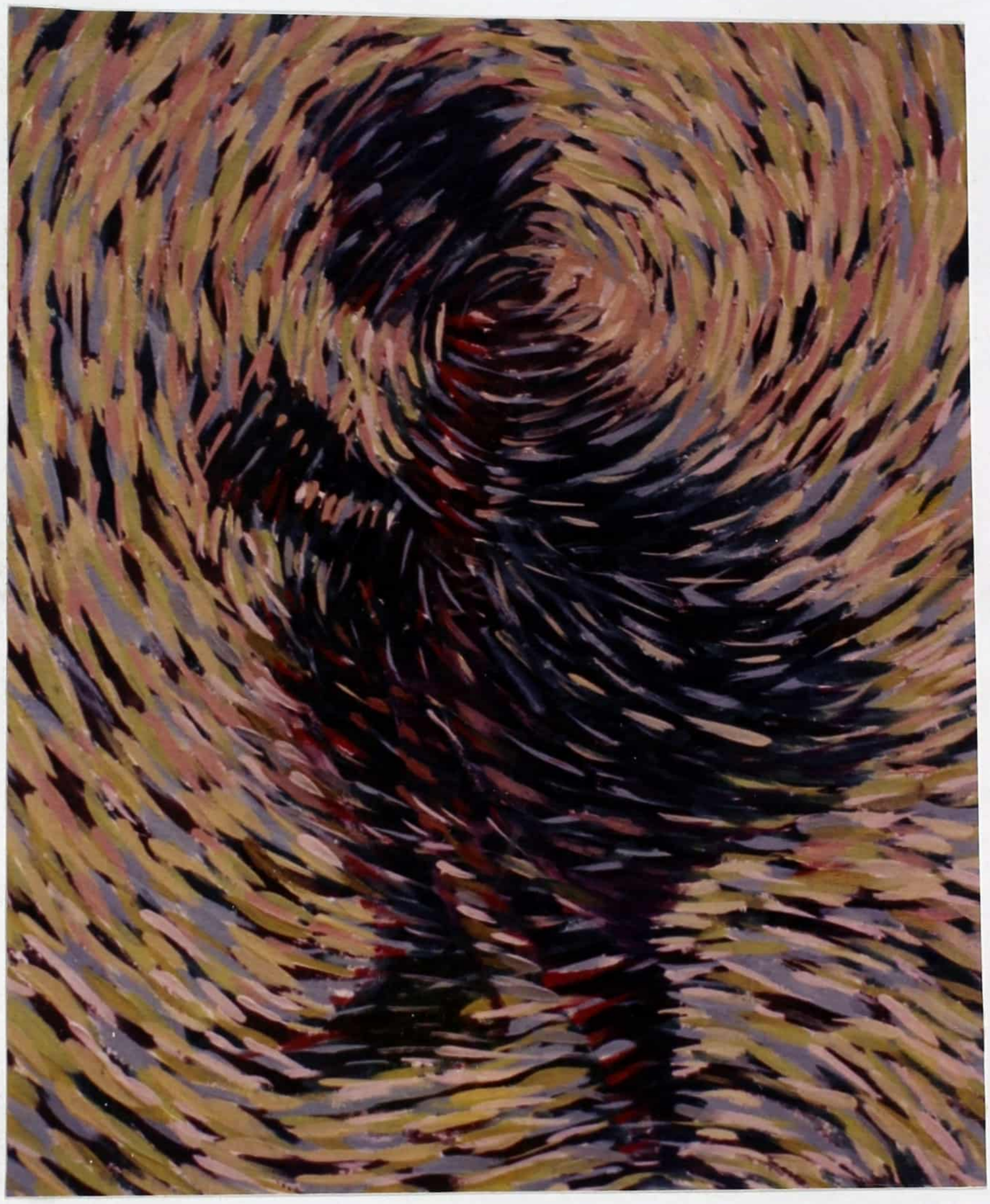


Plate 26- Title: "Apuo", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

PROJECT 8 (NORTHERN REGION)- "Damba Takai"

History: "Damba Takai" is a reconciliation dance. It was performed at a time when the Dagomba people of the Northern Region came together, in the celebration of peace. The chief was made to jump over a cow, after which it was slaughtered. The chief then led in the dance, moving majestically. At present it is performed during the Mohammedan holidays of the Ramadan. The beauty of the dance lies in the flaring of the "batakari", the loosely fitting attire used for this performance.

Methods: A sketch of four figures was made on a cartridge sheet of 8"x 8" with a pen (fig.32). It was then copied onto a canvas 68"x 36" in dimension. Figures to the left and right of the canvas were captured in rear-view, the one above in frontal-view and the one in the foreground in side-view. Brush sizes ranging between 1 and 6 were used for the painting. Colours included, cobalt blue, ultramarine blue, raw umber, burnt sienna, alizarin crimson and titanium white. The figure and the background were painted simultaneously. Mid-tones were laid first, followed by darker tones and then the lighter portions were painted (plate 27). Finally, with the use of small brushstrokes the whole surface was given a second layer of paint. (plate 28)

Analysis: Brushstrokes painted in a circular motion portray the twirling of smock worn by the dancers. Blue, being a cool colour, was used to reflect a smooth action in the picture rather than a vigorous one. Linear perspective is emphasised by the arrangement of the four figures in the composition.

Results: The use of tiny strokes of light blue over the surface of the painting created a decorative, rather than an expressionistic effect.



Fig.32- Title: "Damba Takai", 2001 Medium: Pen
Support: Cartridge paper Size: 8"x 8"

STAGE II



Plate 27- Title: "Damba Takai", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 68"x 36"

STAGE III

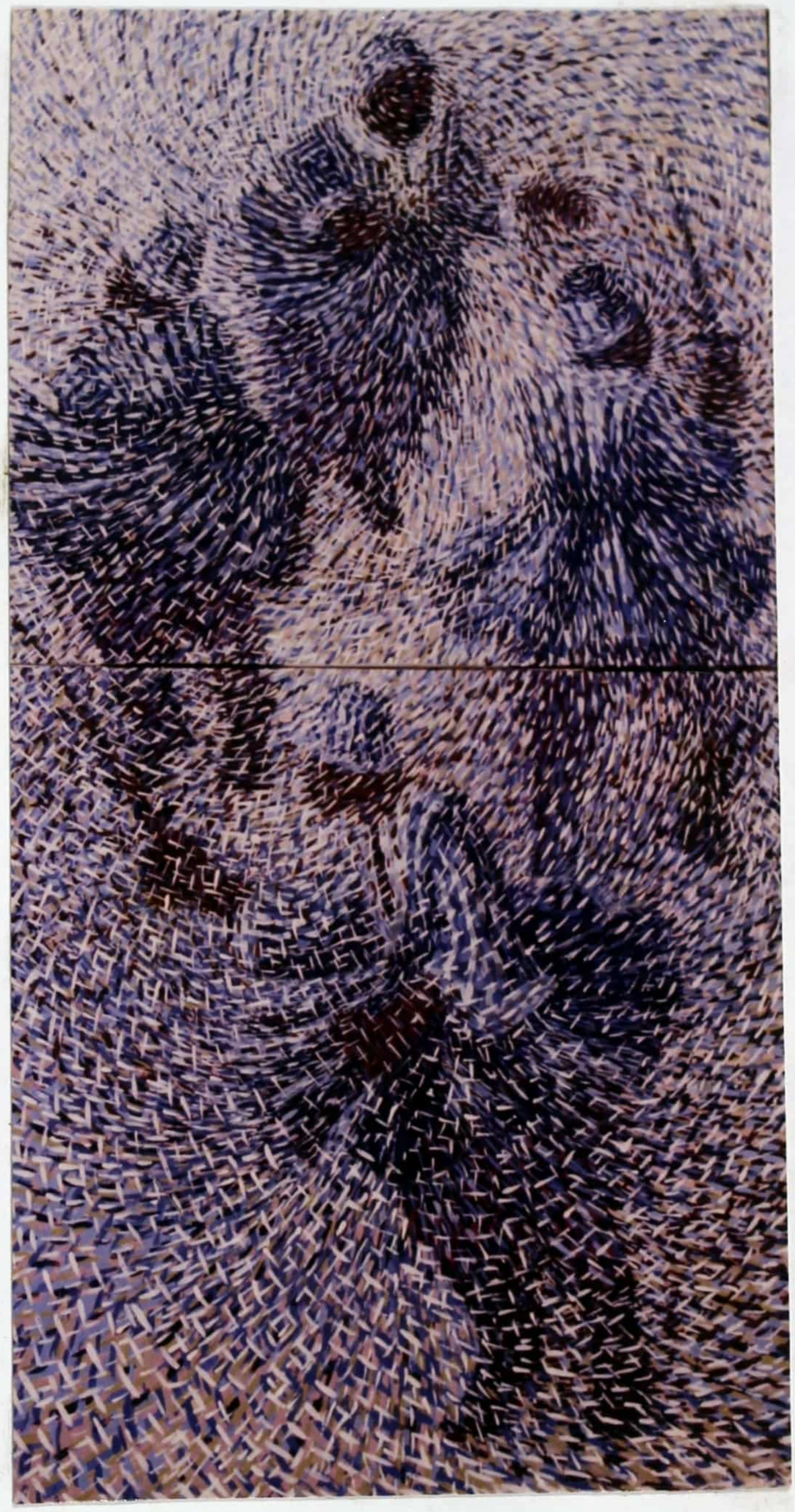


Plate 28- Title: "Damba Takai", 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 68"x 36"

PROJECT 9 (UPPER EAST REGION)-

"Bamaya"

History: Bamaya is performed among the Kasena Nankasi people of Upper East Region. It is performed solely by men. The costume consists of earrings, short skirt, and a belt with beads hanging down from it. Cowry shells are placed at the tip of each strip of beads to help make certain sounds when they shake their waists. "Jingles"(a name given to a string of tiny bell-like objects) are also worn around the legs to create sounds when the dancers stamp their feet on the ground. The dance consists of half and not full turns of the body. Each dancer holds a fan in one hand and a towel in the other.

Methods: Quick sketches of performers were developed into a composition on a cartridge sheet of 5"x 11" with a pencil (fig.33). It was then copied onto a canvas of 20"x 60" with a bristle brush. The figures were painted in browns and the background in ochres. : Brush sizes varied from 1 to 5. Colours used included, raw umber, burnt umber, burnt sienna, yellow ochre, cadmium red and titanium white. After the sketch had been painted with a medium sized brush on the primed canvas, both the background and the figures were painted simultaneously (plate 29). Bigger brushstrokes were used to lay down the mid-tones first, followed by the darker tones and then the lighter ones. (plate 30)

Analysis: Brushstrokes scattered in all directions portray a vigorous

dance. Earth colours are used symbolically to portray the arid climate from which the dance originated. Dark figures against the light toned background also created contrast.

Results: Using sharp contrasts of tones and bold strokes helped to portray the vigorous nature of the dance.

STAGE 1

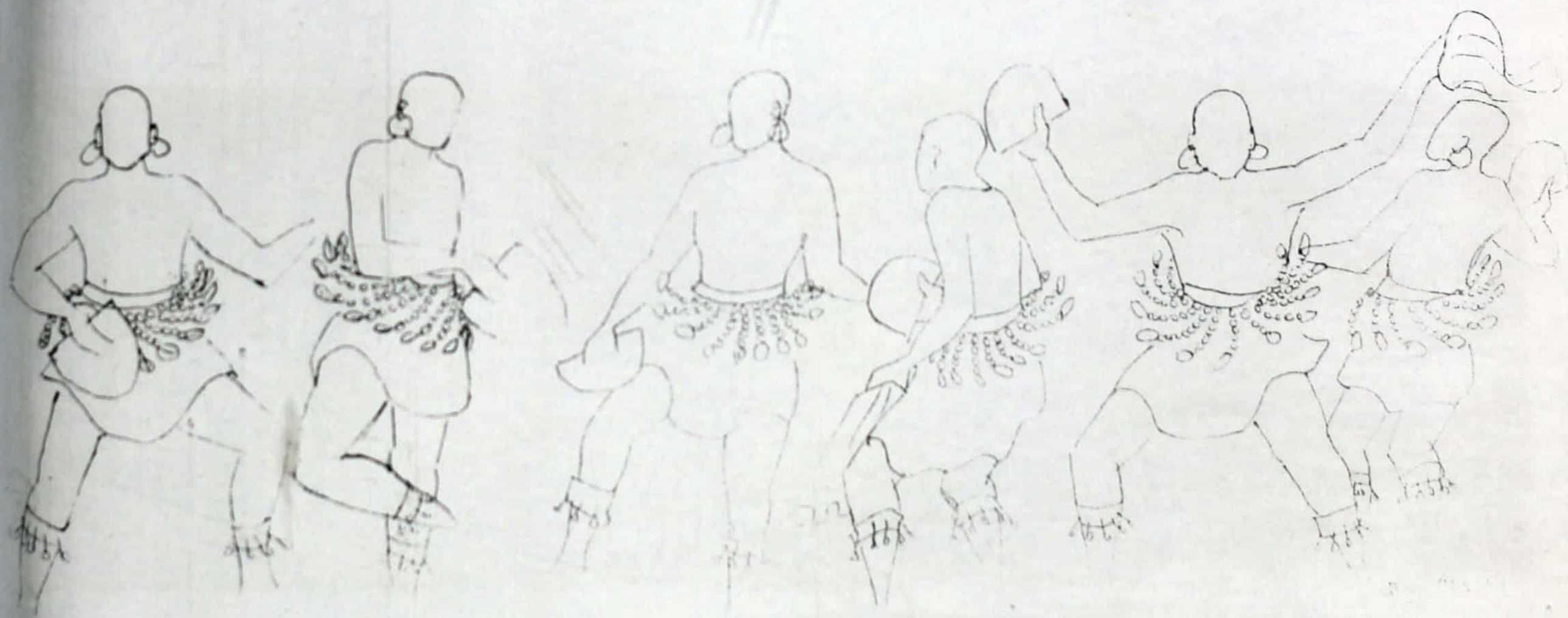


Fig.33- Title: Bamaya, 2001 Medium: Pencil Support: Cartridge paper Size: 5"x 11"

STAGE II

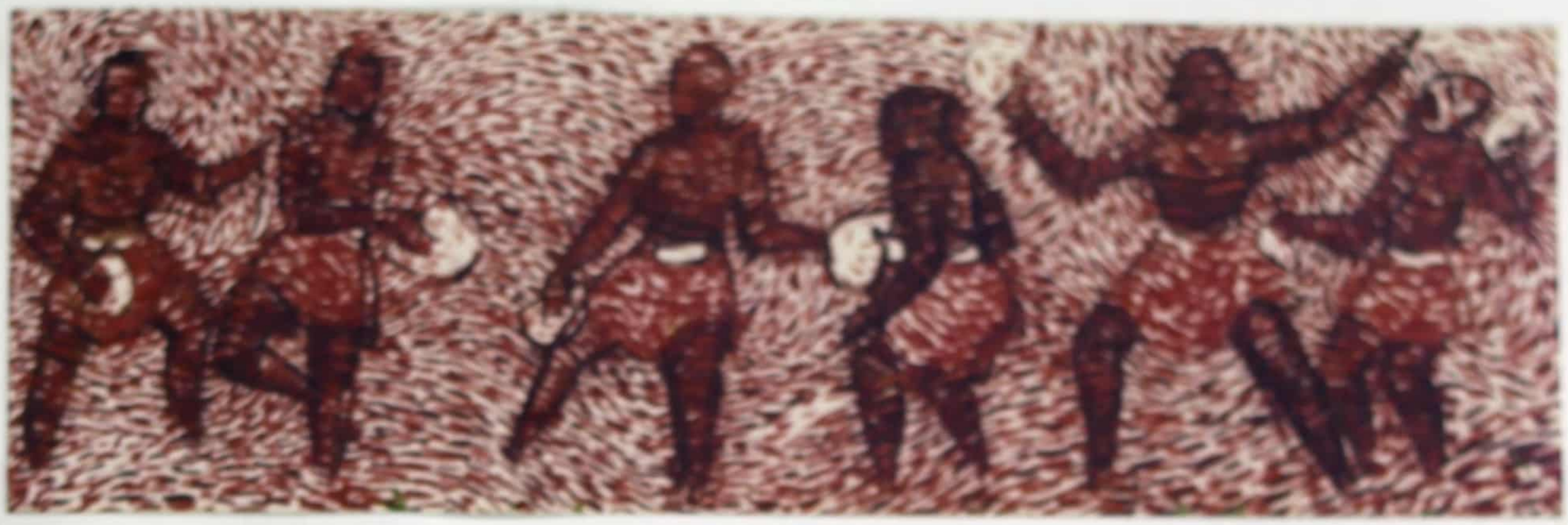


Plate 29- Title: Bamaya, 2001 Medium: Canvas Support: Canvas Size: 20" x 60"

STAGE III



Plate 30- Title: Bamaya, 2001 Medium: Canvas Support: Canvas Size: 20" x 60"

PROJECT 10 (UPPER WEST REGION)- "Bawa"

History: "Bawa" is recreational dance for the Dagartis in the Upper West Region. It is a harvest dance celebrated in expectation of a bumper harvest. Young men and women do this youthful and energetic dance, which is usually performed in a circle. Due to the vigorous nature of the dance, costume is scanty. The men wear short skirts with bangles around their legs to make sounds as they dance. They also wear talismans around their necks and chests. The women also wear short skirts and tops but no talisman. "Bawa" is also danced at funerals and on important occasions.

Methods: Two sketches were made from memory directly onto two separate canvases of 16"x 12" each. The canvas was given a wash of yellow ochre and brown. The figures were painted in browns and the background in ochres. Bristle brushes varying from 1 to 4 were used. Figures and background were painted simultaneously with broader strokes of colour (plates 31 and 32). Smaller brushes were used to fill tiny blank spaces as a final step. (plates 33 and 34)

Analysis: Bold brushstrokes at the second stage created a vigorous action (plates 31 and 32). However, smaller brushstrokes introduced in the final stage tempered it (plates33 and 34). Brushstrokes painted in all directions re-created an active picture, which is associated with the dance. Lighter tones against darker ones created contrast.

Results: Painting on a small sized canvas had the same effect as the larger canvases. Harmony was achieved through the use of an almost monochromatic scheme of browns.

STAGE I a



Plate 31- Title: "Bawa" (female), 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGE I b



Plate 32- Title: "Bawa" (male), 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGE II (a)



Plate 33- Title: "Bawa" (female), 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

STAGES II b



Plate 34- Title: "Bawa" (male)), 2001 Medium: Oil
Support: Canvas Size: 16"x 12"

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The subject of dance is a universal one. It is said that there is no known culture without some kind of dance form or other. The pointillist technique, even though originated in Europe, has been experimented by many painters in Ghana. True to Pissarro's prophetic statement, experiments made later by painters have shown remarkable diversions in the interpretation of the pointillist technique. Paintings made by the researcher differ from other paintings in the pointillist domain.

The tools and equipment used in this research were limited to bristle brushes, painting knives, palette, palette knife, table, stool and easel. The media used were, ink, pencil, acrylic and oil paints. Turpentine and linseed oil were used as vehicle, while supports included paper, chipboard and canvas.

Some observations made include the following:

i. Tiny dabs or strokes of colour could be used to create the illusion of movement by extending the colours in the figures into the background and vice-versa.

ii. That subjects looked less static when outlines were blurred.

iii. Details of objects became more and more unintelligible with successive layers of brushstrokes. This gave the impression that with more layers of brushstrokes, the figure could fuse into the background.

iv. The end product often looks grey despite the fact that dots or strokes of pure colour have been used in making a painting. This is caused by the fusion of all the colours in the spectator's eye from a distance.

v. Diptych pieces must be handled in such a way that the lines created by the joints form part of the composition otherwise they become more of nuisance.

There are several types of dances performed in Ghana ranging from dances for recreation, birth celebration, puberty rites, marriage, funerals, festivals, harvest, hunting, even war, religious and court dances as well. Dancing rouses in the minds of both performer and spectator, a sense of unity within the social group and enhances their social solidarity. A celebrated Ghanaian choreographer, Professor Mawere Opoku appropriately articulates it this way:

"We the people accept the dancer's special role as the centre of our life – in his subtle flexions of hands and figure, our prayers; in his

thrusting arms – our thanksgiving; in his stamp and pause – our indignation; in his leap and turns, our frivolity – our defiance; in his bow- our allegiance; his halting steps – our reverence. Thus he dances, not alone but with us and we with him. We are not spectators but co-creators and participants in the drama of the African way of life".1

Unfortunately, unless something is done, it is possible that future generations would have little or no knowledge of our present cherished dance forms due to the influx of new and foreign ones. It is therefore imperative that a record is made of these dance forms, since the dynamic qualities of culture cannot be arrested. This record can take place, not only in the literary, photography and film media, but also in the medium of paint, hence, the theme for this project.

The pointillist technique used in the execution of the project was found to be quite appropriate since it allowed both expressionistic and impressionistic interpretations of the theme. It must be noted however that many different approaches to painting can equally and adequately serve as contributions to the preservation of what we cherish as part of our culture. In conclusion, therefore, the challenge is thrown to all who would like to make further research in this direction. The key words to remember, however, are creativity and originality.

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1. Kwabena N. Bame, African Popular Culture. Clear Type Press Inc., New York, U. S. A. p. 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

Centuries after the "artists" of the Stone Age left their mark the walls of caves, we continue draw insight into the traditions of people of that period. This goes to prove the importance of artworks to posterity.

Due to the scope of this thesis it was virtually impossible to research into the entire dance forms performed in Ghana. It is therefore recommended that other painters embrace it as an opportunity to record other dances for posterity, and as their contribution to nation building.

Many people in Ghana the researcher spoke to had very little, or no idea why particular dances are performed in the society or how they came into existence. It is therefore recommended those in other professions such the literary arts delve deeper into the subject and record some of these information before they are totally lost. It is also recommended that those in the literary, performing and photography professions also make more extensive research into the Ghanaian traditional dances and record them for posterity. This would help them know their history even after the practice has faded. It is recommended again that painters use every possible means, theme, or style to achieve innovations of all kinds and as in the words of a friend and colleague, "Never stop creating". It is important to use materials that can stand the test of time so that they are visible even after years, decades and centuries.

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