

KNUST SETS FOUR WORLD RECORDS AT A PACE

Could you believe that the Kwame Nkrumah university of Science and technology, Kumasi (KNUST), Ghana, set four records at a pace in 2009, and has not as yet received any detailed publicity? Though a report was made by posting the pacesetting programme and thesis on the internet, the four pacesetting records were not mentioned. Well, better late than never, as goes the axiom. It is better to attend late or to start late than never attempting at all.

Jesus admonished humanity to let their light shine (Matthew 5:16). No matter how small the light is, it ought to be lit to shine, to brighten the corner where it is. The said four paces, though could not be said of as so enormous, but since it is a conglomerate pacesetter at the height of academic endeavour, it requires the attention of at least the global academia.

Because the pace was set in the field of academia, it would be better to briefly dilate on **academic research** as prelude. In all fields of academic endeavour, a conducted research should include reasonable review of **Related Literature** and **Fieldwork Research** before **data** is analysed and interpreted, expounding the underpinning concepts or philosophies. In some programmes, practical research ought to be conducted, for example, at the **Laboratory**. The processes and analyses as well as interpretations ought to be involved in the practical aspect to support the **Fieldwork**, as philosophic presence is to be felt in the various sections, especially the **Analyses** and the **Interpretations**.

One of the practical researches is the **Studio-Based Research**. This category of research involves extra amount of time for the production of the artworks, not mentioning the **conceptual analyses** of each of the artworks and the cost involved in the purchase of tools and materials. All add up to the difficulty and stress of the **Practice Led Research** or **Studio-Based Research**.

Furthermore, due to the stress of linking all aspects of the research with philosophy, some universities even do away with the inclusion of the philosophical aspects and simply award **Doctor of Art**, after the production and analyses of the artworks. Owing to that, few people register for the studio-based programmes for the award of PhD degree.

This has deterred most of the universities from setting up PhD programmes in Art, let alone combining programmes at the **Studio-Based Research**, unlike what is done with the other fields which could combine, mostly, two entirely different programmes.

By virtue of that, at the time KNUST rolled out the MPhil/PhD in Studio Practice on **August 6th, 2006**, there were only few universities running PhD programmes in Art due to the above reasons as well as the then global notion that MFA was the terminal degree for Studio-Based programmes.

In spite of that perception and the difficulty of that programme, **Professor Dr. R.T. Ackam**, who had, some years back, commenced the MFA programme, which has benefitted virtually all the lecturers at the **Department of Painting and Sculpture**, few other departments and other universities, did not rest on his oars. Prof. Ackam went a step further, with the assistance of the able-bodied **Professor kařĩ'kächä seid'ou**, as the Coordinator, to institute PhD programmes in **Painting, Sculpture, and Painting and Sculpture** at the department which propelled KNUST to the pace-setting arena. This therefore placed KNUST among the first global few who started the Studio-based programmes, but first in terms of the dual programme (**Painting and Sculpture**) as well as **transcription of the thesis to book** and to defend the two at the Oral Examination. Subsequently, as tabulated below, all graduates and candidates of the said PhD programmes are pacesetters.

(1). To commence with, KNUST has set several international records, and, as said earlier, is the first university globally to start a dual studio-based **PhD in Painting and Sculpture**.

(2). The first university to require that, before graduation, the candidate should transcribe the project report or theses to book, and then to defend both the **transcribed book** and the **thesis** at an **Oral Examination, before the award of PhD degree**.

(3). The manner in which the transcribed book was presented was carefully calculated and schemed to set a pace. Unlike the usual prosaic form of books, this transcribed book, written like Ananse Story, was sensually dramatized by four actors.

(4). The pace at which the said project was completed is quite unprecedented. One of the first to enrol on the dual programme was by name **Tiger Elias Oppong (E.T. Oppong)**. He however, became the first product who completed the project and the book transcription within two and half years, specifically from **August 6th, 2006 to February, 9th, 2009**.

As iterated above, KNUST has thus set a quadruple pace by producing the **first studio-based PhD graduate in a dual programme of Painting and Sculpture** as well as the only university whose candidate presented a **dissertation and its transcribed book and defended both at the oral examination**. The style of presenting the book in a dramatized Ananse storytelling technique is also the first of its kind. Furthermore, **the rate at which the MPhil/PhD programme was completed by Dr. Tiger is the shortest pace in terms of time. No PhD in studio-based programme had been completed in even three years, let alone completing a dual or combined programme and transcribing the thesis to book within a pace of two years and six months;** as said earlier, from **August 6th, 2006 to February, 9th, 2009**.

To prove to the world that KNUST had actually set the four records for Ghana, Africa and the world as a whole, the Administration posted the programme on the internet. To enable verification to dispel any doubt as to the quality of the research for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, as well as to provide reference material to researchers, the thesis report by **Dr. Tiger Elias Oppong**, was as well, posted alongside the web caption.

If anyone searches **PhD Painting and Sculpture**, with Google or any search engine, the said caption shall be displayed with the **KNUST emblem** and the caption, **Department of Painting and Sculpture**. After that, the thesis or project report submitted by **Dr. E.T. Oppong** could be seen juxtaposed with the caption, **"Asante Folklore and Kumasi Kiosk Architecture: A Visual Exploration Of Hybridity And Mythography,"** if the device is a mobile phone. If the device is a personal computer or laptop, just a click on the said caption, and the said thesis would be displayed.

The practical aspect of this global pacesetting research utilised a kiosk as a medium for the visual display of the culture and mythography of the **GREAT ASANTE KINGDOM**. It disseminates the folklores and mythologies of the Asantes. It was thus presented as a symbol of the famous **GOLDEN STOOL** of the Asantes. The life-size kiosk is a unique collapsible structure which serves as a **museum, a gallery, and as well, a conglomerate of indoor and outdoor art pieces**. It is consisted of eight panels which symbolically represent the eight clans or families that came together to compose the Asante Kingdom. Then emerged the Golden Stool, as a result of the unification of the eight families. The Golden Stool is thus the symbol of unity and power of the Asante Kingdom. The Kumasi Kiosk which represents the eight families of the Asantes is as such, a symbol of unity of the Asante State and thus symbolises the Golden Stool.

With such background, the Kumasi Kiosk, thus referred to as the **GOLDEN KIOSK**, has been the medium with which four world records have been set for KNUST and thus Ghana and Africa as a whole. By virtue of it being created to be so unique or original to meet PhD requirement, hardly could the like or similarity of such a **multipurpose art piece** be found elsewhere.

Some few years later, by virtue of the stress involved, some changes were made to do away with the requirement that the thesis should be transcribed to book, and both to be defended at the Oral Examination. It was replaced with a general requirement across board, that two articles from the thesis should be submitted and accepted for publication before the final thesis is accepted to be defended at the oral examination for the award of a PhD degree by the university. Nevertheless, the pace has already been set with the premier and subsequent ones. Because only one or two institutions have, of late, started such a programme which was commenced in August, 2006, that is the only result that will pop up by any search engine, displaying the completed project report or

thesis. After the **four pace-setting records by Dr. Tiger**, the other candidates, mostly lecturers that enrolled on the pacesetting PhD programmes, later completed to add up to the number of pacesetters for KNUST.

Even though others enrolled and completed the programme later, KNUST did not add the others to the first that had been posted, but rather, to the repository of the department. That means there are others that contributed to the pace-setting programme. Lecturers that benefitted from the programmes have also utilised their acquired knowledge and experience to impact on students of KNUST and other universities to the benefit of Ghana as a whole.

By the nature of the programme, as said earlier, one or two universities have, of late, started to emulate KNUST. The thesis has thus been posted here as reference material to help other researchers. The proposal and course content has also been generously posted to help other institutions to spread the knowledge in Art which contributes to all aspects of life including all academic courses or programmes.

For without Art, no course or academic programme could survive. Among others, even books that store and distribute knowledge are products of Artists. It will suffice to conclude that all forms of industries thrive on materials and equipment designed by the GRAPHICS ARTIST, moulded by the SCULPTOR or METAL ARTIST, and painted or sprayed by the PAINTER.

Bravo DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE;

Bravo, KNUST.