

From Apprenticeship to Freedom: An Analysis of Art Workshop Trends in Africa

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the dynamic trends in the establishment and operation of art workshops in Africa. Workshop here does not refer to the space in which an artist produces their work; rather, it connotes a collaborative and interactive platform on which artists come together as peers, regardless of age, gender, social status and professional qualification, to share ideas and/or produce art. Thus, several artists have, through such platforms, fostered professional relationships, pushed their creative boundaries, as well as encountered and explored new materials, techniques and contexts. However, fundamental changes have occurred over the years in the operational methodologies of these art workshops, from the colonial era to the contemporary period. Adopting the postcolonial approach, this paper examines the shift in the operational aim and approach of these art workshops. The paper also considers the creative implications of such shifts in trends.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, freedom, analysis, trends, art, workshops

Introduction

The advent of creative persons, gathering to share resources and ideas over drinks, as a notion of academy was first introduced by Aristotle as a way of fostering friendships, in order to influence individual avenues of expression.¹ In this paper, such gatherings, which are considered suitable platforms for the fostering of professional friendships and collaborations, are referred to as workshops².

My first taste of a workshop experience was during the Scapes and Forms Drawing Workshop in 2010. The group was taken outside the premises of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, adjacent to the main market of the Samaru metropolis³. Interesting drawings were made of the market scenery from diverse perspectives and using different materials. Some artists interpreted the activities they encountered using experimental materials, such as coffee on paper. Regardless of the differences in age and professional status, student artists and art teachers interacted and shared ideas and materials as peers; interrogating the dynamic manifestations of the Northern market context with which we were confronted.

During and after the drawing sessions, drinks and snacks, such as peanuts, garden-eggs, boiled/roasted corn and some other local delicacies, which were hawked by the “Samaru girls”⁴ in their flowing *hijabs*, also enhanced the collaborative process. Actually, the workshop process and experience would have been incomplete without the presence of the likes of the ‘Samaru girls’, who in their boldness and curiosity stood as our audience and critics, in addition to their quite important role as our snack vendors. The whole experience gave a refreshing perspective on the significance of such platforms for artists’ creative development.

¹ (Okpe 2005: 126).

² Also referred to as Symposia.

³ The Samaru Metropolis is in Sabongari Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

⁴ “Samaru girls” is a coinage used in referring to teenage girls who hawk on the streets of the Samaru metropolis.

Basically, the word “workshop” in itself could connote different things within different contexts. Though the Cambridge University Online Dictionary (2019) sees a workshop as “a meeting of people to discuss and, or perform practical work in a subject”; the term, however, has other connotations such as being a space where things are made or repaired, using machines or tools. Thus, the connotative essence of the term “workshop”, is fundamentally dependent on the context of usage. As such, workshop here, does not refer to the space in which an artist produces their work; rather, it connotes a collaborative and interactive platform, on which artists come together as peers, regardless of age, gender, social status and professional qualifications, to share ideas and/or produce art. Thus, several artists have, through such platforms, fostered professional relationships, pushed their creative boundaries, as well as encountered and explored new materials, techniques and contexts. However, fundamental changes have occurred over the years in the operational methodologies of these art workshops from the colonial era to this contemporary period. Adopting the postcolonial perspective, this paper examines the shift in the operational aim and approach of these art workshops.

Art Workshops in the Postcolonial Framework

The conception and usage of the terms “precolonial”, “colonial”, and “postcolonial” eras in referring to specific periods in the history of Africa is in itself one of several manifestations of the colonial aftermath in contemporary Africa. McClintock (1994: 293), in agreement, says “...the world’s multitudinous cultures are marked, not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time”. In response to such an idea, Kasfir (1992: 43) holds that:

...Africa is a part of the world and has a long history. There are innumerable before and afters in this history, and to select the eve of European colonialism as the unbridgeable chasm between traditional, authentic art and an aftermath polluted by foreign contact is arbitrary in the extreme. While it is very true that both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries were periods of “fast happening,”...it would be naive to assume that no other such periods existed in African art history.⁵

Likewise, the appellation “African Art” is also considered a colonial manifestation, as prior to the colonial incursion, the arts which were produced in Africa for Africans and by Africans were produced for specific reasons, and there was no need for a nomenclature to further stress and convince anyone of the “Africanness” of these arts. The foregoing and many more multifaceted issues relating to the aftermath of colonialism in post-colonial societies are the concerns of the postcolonial theorists. As such, postcolonial discourse, according to Duniya (2009: 15), “reveals the extent to which the historical condition of colonisation led to a kind of political, intellectual and creative dynamism within the postcolonial societies”. Many postcolonial theorists have written and proffered different opinions and assertions on the colonial strategies of the coloniser to the colonised. For instance, Hall (1994: 393) is of the opinion that “colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people and distorts, disfigures and destroys it”. Quite passionately, Cabral (1994: 53) tenders that:

History teaches us that, in certain circumstances, it is very easy for the foreigner to impose his domination on a people. But it also teaches us that, whatever may be the material aspects of this domination, it can be maintained only by the permanent, organised repression of the cultural life of the people concerned...In fact, to take up arms to dominate a people is, above all, to take up arms to destroy, or at least to neutralise, to paralyse, its cultural life. For, with a strong indigenous cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure of its perpetuation.

⁵ Kasfir writing on the issue of authenticity of African art under the context of “The West and The Rest” in her seminal paper titled “African Art and Authenticity: A Text with a Shadow”.

Cabral further explains that the experience of colonial domination shows that, in the effort to perpetuate exploitation, the coloniser not only created a system to repress the cultural life of the colonised people; he also provoked and developed cultural alienation of a part of the population by so-called assimilation of indigenous people. Deductively, both Hall and Cabral hint at the colonisers' recognition of culture as the pivotal pillar on which the stability and resistance of the colonised rested. As such, the colonisers sought to "liquidate" the cultural manifestations (art) of the dominated population (Africa). Art, being the very thread with which the cultural fabric of pre-colonial Africans was woven, suffered an ill fate at the hands of the colonisers. Several masks and other forms of art, which were significant to the different parts of Africa from which they emanated, also found their ways onto the walls and pedestals of western museums as curios from Africa; as specimens and evidence of a "discovered race".

Having dealt such a heavy cultural blow on colonised Africa by the distortion, disfiguration and destruction of her indigenous art, the colonisers, in a sort of "perverted logic", as described by Hall, re-presented art as a means of connecting with the cultural and religious sentiments of Africa. It was this "perverted logic" which gave rise to most of the art workshops that were established in different parts of Africa, starting from the 1940s. In congruence with the foregoing notion, Oloidi (2011: 14-15), referring to the events which led to the establishment of the Oye-Ekiti Workshop in Nigeria, postulates that:

Towards the end of the 1940s, some Catholic Reverend Fathers realized the damage which colonialism and Christian evangelism had done to the creative tradition of wood carving, particularly, in Ekiti Division of the old Ondo Province...The church finally realized that not all the Ekiti, and therefore Yoruba, wood images were idols; that many of these figures served only political, social and aesthetic functions. The Catholic Church was therefore determined to make some Yoruba carvings part of its liturgy...This new position of the Catholic Church made the Provincial Supervisor, Father Patrick Kelly, conceive the idea in 1946, of starting an art workshop or informal art school where the Yoruba traditional carvers would be able to practise their trade. The idea became concrete in 1947 when Kelly located the school at Oye-Ekiti with Father Kevin Carroll in charge as its moving spirit.

Contrary to the foregoing account by Oloidi, which paints a picture of creative and cultural guilt and sympathy by the Catholic missionaries for the wood carving tradition of the Yoruba, which the colonial incursion had done damage to, Egonwa (2011:138) holds that "the Oye-Ekiti workshop was set up by a group of Society of African Mission (SMA) priests in the 1940s to produce instructional materials for the advancement of their missionary activities in Nigeria". Egonwa further explains that the artists involved in the Oye-Ekiti project had been trained traditionally and were allowed to use this style to produce art forms used in Christian worship. The Reverend Father even created ceremonies in which carved images of biblical figures were carried in a procession around the town. The "perverted logic" adopted by the missionaries in propagating their religious agenda in Africa was the establishment of art workshops in Africa under the guise of cultural rejuvenation; whereas in an actual sense, the members of the workshop setup were carving visual aids for the new religion they preached.

Such "perverted logic" was also revealed in Zilberg's proposition that the idea of the Shona sculptures from the Frank McEwen's art workshop centre in Zimbabwe were invented. In the words of Zilberg (2010: 47):

Pomar sent me this photograph of a sculpture which McEwen had given to Guedes and said that he had made, as indicated by the signature FME carved into the base.

It turns out that McEwen himself carved Shona sculpture as in this piece titled *Bird Man* given to Guedes in Mozambique after the International Conference of African Art and Culture (ICAC). In this way, data continues to emerge that even exceeds the most speculative, critical and suspicious mind. However, much people are put off by this research and the odious idea that Shona sculpture was invented by a Whiteman.⁶

Even after many African countries had attained liberation from the colonisers, the establishment of art workshop centres in different parts of postcolonial Africa still persisted. Though the colonial conception and establishment of art workshops in Africa have somewhat fast-tracked the movement of African art towards modernism, the idea of art workshops in Africa was initially a mechanism installed in different parts of Africa by the colonisers to serve their distinctive personalised agendas, as well as to gradually re-orient the colonised towards an absolute Eurocentric artistic culture.

Though the colonisers have physically vacated these colonies, this gradual re-orientation is still effectively in motion, subtly but constantly changing, dictating, evolving and transforming the social, political, cultural, economic, intellectual and creative structures of postcolonial Africa. In the same vein, Mishra and Hodge (1994: 285) point out that “we use the term ‘post-colonial’, however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression”. More specifically, Duniya (2009: 15) holds that “postcolonial discourse involves the diverse practices found within postcolonial societies, during and after colonialism. Hence, it is a measure for individuals, groups, races and nations to reassert themselves”.

In this context, to reassert the trends of art workshops in Africa is to re-examine, reconsider, reassess, review, rationalise and re-think the aims and methodologies adopted in the establishment and operation of art workshops in Africa from the colonial to the postcolonial era.

Operational Trends in Art Workshops in Africa

The activities of art workshops in both the colonial and the postcolonial periods have been observed to be tailored towards two major operational models: (a) the apprenticeship model and (b) the triangle model. Thus, this paper proceeds by offering clarifications on these models, in line with their attendant creative implications.

The Apprenticeship Model: In the pre-colonial and colonial eras in Africa, one of the major methods through which creative skills and knowledge were transferred from one person to another was the apprenticeship system. The method of apprenticeship, according to Adepegba (2007: 26), “involves the recruitment of young boys to learn the craft from a master for a certain number of years. Such apprentices sometimes live with their masters who also cater for them. During this time, whatever work an apprentice does belong to his master”. Though Africa has since been launched into modernism and there are presently diverse ways through which knowledge can be transferred, in addition to the advent of formal education, the apprenticeship system is still being practiced in different parts of Africa, both in rural and urban areas. In traditional Africa, however, art was taught and learned mainly through the apprenticeship system. Lamidi Fakeye, a renowned carver, who came from a family of carvers, is a typical example of such practice.

⁶ Zilberg backs up his notion on the invention of the Shona sculptures by Frank McEwen with a photograph he received from Pomar.

Art workshops are often regarded as platforms where artworks are collectively produced. However, the idea of collective art production in the colonial era did not necessarily connote peer-collaboration. Just as in the apprenticeship method, the act of passing down knowledge or ideas from a master to an apprentice is quite apparent in most of the art workshops established in the colonial era. Corroboratively, the practice of the apprenticeship method in the art workshops of the colonial era is pointed at in Fosu's (1986: 47) statement:

The earliest experimental workshop centres in Africa began in the 1940s. Established mostly by European expatriates, the centres sought what Ulli Beier refers to as a 'short cut' to creating a new synthesis of African modern art. Carefully selecting their students from among less educated youths to train as artists, the centres nurtured particular styles which characterized each as a 'school' of expression.

As hinted by Fosu, the earlier experimental workshops in Africa, operated more on an apprenticeship system; even though Ulli Beier in Deliss (1995: 17) says that "these workshops were not academies, and that he did not impose models on his students, but sought to discover and criticise together with them". The fact that these earlier experimental art workshops' operations was close to the apprenticeship system is also pointed at in a statement made by Filani (1999: 53). According to him, "twentieth century artists in Nigeria comprise both those who are trained formally and non-formally. By formal training, we mean instruction in academic institutions. By non-formal training, we refer to workshops and at times the apprenticeship system under a master-artist". One would do well to note the author's categorisation of "workshops" and "the apprenticeship system" under the same umbrella.

It is, however, imperative to state that this is not to negate the apprenticeship system. In fact, Adepegba (2007: 24) says "since the likes of Bisi Fakeye learnt the art (of carving) through apprenticeship, it is right to say that apprenticeship has helped in the transfer of wood carving knowledge from past generations to ours". The apprenticeship system has no doubt been a sure informal means of transferring knowledge; it however, limits individuality in creativity. Therein lies the contention. Individuality in this case provides room for the display of personalised ideologies, stylistic tendencies, as well as the freedom to creatively explore different materials and techniques. All these put together are responsible for the novelty and multiplicity of artistic styles and ideas, as is presently seen in contemporary artistic creations from Africa. Lack of individuality, on the other hand, robs the artist of the opportunity to truly discover themselves in the world of art, as they are regimented to following their master's dictates and thoughts strictly, with little or no alteration.

In agreement, Adepegba (2007: 26) also opines that the apprentice is only allowed to produce works according to their master's dictates. As such, at the end of the training term, the apprentice at best would have learned how to use his master's skills in his family trade. Though his personal creative tendencies might surface, these usually perform an auxiliary role to the learned skills. Even in the case of Emeji (2001: 103), after advocating for the apprenticeship system as a viable methodology in the transfer of knowledge in Africa, he could not help but admit the imitative tendencies which accompany the apprentice upon graduation. In his words, "...the so-called imitative action associated with the work of the apprentice was a requirement which acculturation or societal norms had imposed on him".

Consequently, the absence of individuality in the art workshops of the colonial era resulted in the presentation of sculptures from a single ideological source, usually that of the superior member of the workshops (the colonisers). For instance, in the Oye-Ekiti workshop, according to Jari (2008: 19), the carvers who must have been told a biblical story by the

priests, were expected to produce wooden sculptures depicting their understanding of this story. The same practice is tenable at the Serima workshop in Zimbabwe. Although some of the carvers at the Oye-Ekiti workshops had learned carving before joining the workshop, the ideas on which the sculptures produced in the workshop were based were entirely the priests'. Figure 1 is an example of one such depiction, portraying a biblical account.



Figure 1: Stations of the Cross: Station 8 (Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem); Lamidi Fakeye.

Courtesy of Jones (2014)

The wooden sculpture here (Figure 1) represents Lamidi Fakeye's interpretation of the *Stations of the Cross*. Specifically presented here is his understanding and re-presentation of the *Station 8*. In this rendition, according to Jones, "Christ is unmistakably African, as are the women he meets along his way to the cross". Vivid in this sculptural presentation of *Station 8* are some African socio-cultural traits such as dress and childcare cultures, which have been incorporated into the composition as a result of the carver's cultural affiliations.



Figure 2: Carved Door of St. Mary's Church, Serima Mission, Zimbabwe; Cornelius Manguma.

Courtesy of revolvy.com (n.d.)

Some of the carvers were also instructed to produce carvings which were adapted as utilitarian and aesthetic additions to the missionaries' churches. The carved door at the St. Mary's Church, Serima Mission in Zimbabwe, is an example of such work. As part of the tenets of the apprenticeship model, all works produced by the apprentices belonged to the master. Though some of the carvers of these workshops had acquired the carving skill before joining the missions, they were still considered as ideological apprentices, as they had virtually no personal bearing on the works they produced at the workshops.

In a way, one could regard the Africanised nature of the sculptures as a function of the carvers' individualities. However, when one critically re-thinks this idea, as prescribed by

Duniya (2009), one will understand that the Africanised depiction of the sculptures is also part of the missionaries' intentions. That way, it makes the task of convincing and religiously connecting with indigenous Africans less difficult, as the visual aids to their propaganda (the Africanised carvings) possess familiar characteristics, such as the Virgin Mary dressed in the traditional Yoruba's *buba* (blouse) and *iro* (wrapper), backing the baby Jesus while pounding yam. She is sometimes portrayed with facial marks and plaited hair. All these were intended to psychologically bridge the cultural gap, as well as make the new religion seem less alien. Just as in pre-colonial Africa, where the political and religious leaders of the African societies dictated the form and content of the traditional carvers' productions, so also was it in the colonial era where the missionaries dictated what the carvers produced.

In rationalising and re-thinking the aims and methodologies adopted in the establishment and operation of apprenticeship modelled art workshops in Africa, it becomes clear that perhaps if individuality had been encouraged in the colonial era, the worldview and the development of African art would have been better than it is presently. To wrap up, the apprenticeship model workshops bring artists and non-artists together to learn artistic skills and/or produce artworks according to the dictates of a superior member of the workshop, usually the master artist, for a relatively long period of one or two years. This period could be shorter or longer, depending on the learning pace of the apprentice and the particular skill being taught.

The Triangle Model: Perhaps in response to the consequential lack of individuality that accompanied the apprenticeship model workshops, which seems more of an extension of the colonisers' oppression and subjugation of the colonised, the triangle model workshops have the sharing of ideas as peers and equals and experimentation and collaboration as their main operational ideologies. In this context, the triangle model workshops are those which share similar operational methodology with the Triangle Network's methodology. Established in 1982 in New York by Sir Anthony Caro and Robert Loder, the Triangle Network stands as the major force which enacted the re-orientation and re-strategizing of the activities and productivities of art workshops in post-colonial Africa.

The key idea espoused by this crop of workshops is "freedom of expression". Participants are free to express themselves through whatever media they desire, without fear of evaluation or condemnation. Being the current trend in art workshops, participants come together to produce art works and/or share ideas as peers and equals, regardless of age, gender, class or professional qualification. In line with this thought, Sani (2007: 99) says with enthusiasm that:

Art workshops play a very vital role in boosting the confidence of artists towards their profession because they provide a neutral learning ground where there is neither professional nor amateur. Here, everyone is equal. A budding artist will feel very important if he works hand in hand with those he holds in high esteem. This will definitely give him the confidence to forge ahead.

The triangle modelled workshop experiences are more relaxed and semi-formal. They are purely an avenue to produce art away from the worries of evaluation and patronage. Such platforms, free of evaluative tendencies and premised majorly on exploration, have the propensities of freeing the mind of the artist, thereby stimulating a sense of creative freedom. As creativity comes from the mind, Aniakor (2005: 67) avers that "since the artist has a mind like others of his kind, he certainly partakes, to a large extent, of the significant attributes of the mind, namely: its capacity to be soul, distil the essence of things, reflect, intuit, think, construct, mythicise or even fictionalise through metaphors, and also invents symbols..." However, the artist's mind can do all of those things only if it is free of all forms of creative restrictions and subjugations which are characteristic of the apprenticeship

modelled workshops of the colonial era in Africa. Renowned contemporary African artists, such as David Koloane (South Africa), Tonie Okpe (Nigeria), Atta Kwami (Ghana), Jacob Jari (Nigeria), El Anatsui (Ghana and Nigeria) amongst others, have constantly found the triangle modelled workshop experience to be a sure means of interacting, discussing and keeping themselves relevant and abreast with new trends in the world of art as a whole. Resultantly, several kinds of creative expression have been evolved over the years.

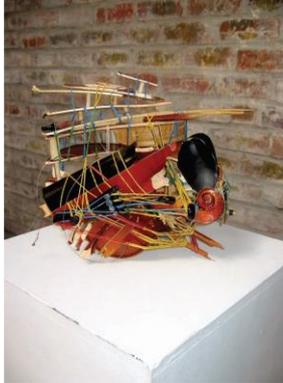


Figure 3: *Chaotic Process of Deconstruction*; Lynette Bester. Violin and Rubber bands. Thupelo Workshop, South Africa. Photograph by Namubiru Kirumira.
Courtesy of Okeke-Agulu (2013: 183)

Geared towards the exploration of forms, materials, ideas, themes and tools, art workshops in the last few decades have been characterised by experimental forms such as the image in Figure 3. According to Okeke-Agulu (2013: 183), “This construction was made during the Thupelo workshop by a South African artist, Lynette Bester, who mashed a very beautiful violin, in what she referred to as a ‘chaotic process of deconstruction’ and put it back together using coloured rubber bands”. Unlike in the apprenticeship model workshops, where the materials of experimentation are specified and mostly limited, the triangle model workshops are open to invention and innovation in materials and techniques. Postmodernity in art, and the workshop artists’ production of works in line with freedom of expression, which is characteristic of triangle model workshops, are the factors which are mostly responsible for rare and dynamic creations such as Bester’s.

In line with the ideology of the triangle model and contrary to the apprenticeship model, Bester’s individuality is distinctively displayed in this piece. Even though the artist produced this piece within the Thupelo Workshop context, she was still able to freely explore the environment, choose her material, and vent her personal ideas through the materials she had chosen. With such freedom, Bester was able to achieve such an interestingly erratic piece, without fear and the restrictive tendencies of evaluation.

Some interesting ideas are presented in Figure 4. This photograph was taken at the 1995 Pamoja Workshop in the UK. Firstly, the picture presents the type of collaborative effort put into the production of artworks at triangle model art workshops. Secondly, the idea that gender is not a barrier to participation is also encapsulated in this picture. Thirdly, the racial difference between the two figures in this composition is considered the most interesting part of this photograph.



Figure 4: Artists Carving Wood Collaboratively, Pamoja 95 Workshop, UK, 1995.
 Courtesy of trianglennetwork.org (2019)

Going by Duniya's (2009) idea, which prescribes that individuals, groups, races and nations should reassert, rethink and reassess themselves in this postcolonial period, if this picture were taken in the colonial era or at one of the apprenticeship model workshops, perhaps the "whiteman" would be fully dressed, giving instructions, directing and supervising, and making sure the "black" novice got it right. Or if it were at the Oye-Ekiti workshop, would it be realistic to imagine that Father Kevin Carroll would dress this way, working alongside Bandlele or Lamidi? However, at the Pamoja workshop, which is also an affiliate of the Triangle Network, the "whiteman" wears just his trousers and his work boots, sweating it out in the sun with a black female in a bid to achieve a common goal – art. Although this photograph is not of an art workshop in Africa, it not only reiterates, but also reinforces the idea that triangle model workshops are collaborative and interactive platforms where artists come together as peers, regardless of race, age, gender, social status and professional qualification, to share ideas and/or produce art.

Another example of the creative freedom which the triangle modelled workshops offer is observed in an untitled installation by Jerry Buhari (Figure 5). Produced at the 2003 Aftershave Workshop in Nigeria, this piece exemplifies an environment-influenced creative expression by the artist. Jerry creates a linear procession of black pods, depicting ants, filing into an opening on the wall which forms a backdrop for the composition. Jari (2003: 13) says "it was a very simple arrangement of big and black pods. He arranged them in files along the base of the building...disappearing into a hole, giving the impression as if the pods suddenly came alive like giant ants, gaining access into the room behind".

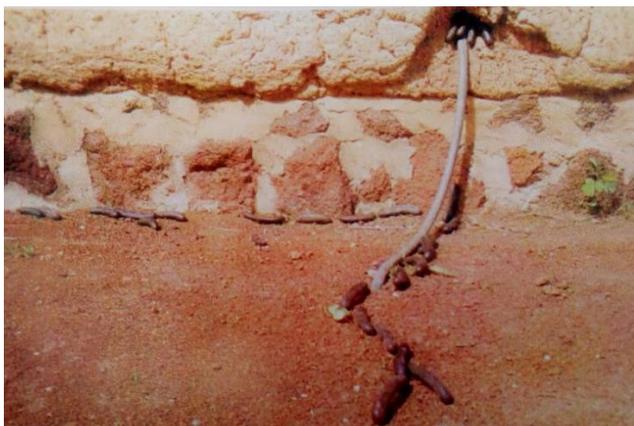


Fig. 5: Untitled Installation; Jerry Buhari, 2003. Aftershave International Workshop, Maraban-Jos, Nigeria.
 Courtesy of Jari (2003: 13)

In the operations of the triangle modelled workshops, the exploratory ideas of the participating artists are considered important. Rather than restricting them to a certain idea, although some workshops are organised with a particular specificity such as materials, the forms and ideas such materials are used in producing is left entirely to the creative discretion of the artist.

Conclusion

Adopting Duniya's (2009) prescription to rethink and reassert the changing trends in the postcolonial era in Africa, this paper finds that the operational trends in art workshops from the colonial era to the post-colonial era can be categorised into two major groups – the apprenticeship model workshops and the triangle model workshops. Mainly characteristic of the colonial era in Africa, apprenticeship model workshops have been observed to have artists produce artworks in line with the "superior" idea of the master or convener of the workshop. Consequently, the individual ideas, styles and creativity of the artists are lost in the process.

On the other hand, the triangle model, after which most contemporary art workshops are modelled encourages this crucial individuality; considering that individuality in art is responsible for the multifaceted artistic creations which have been invented in post-colonial Africa. As such, this writer advocates for the establishment of more triangle model workshops, because they serve as platforms for creating a solution to Sir Anthony Caro's concern that, when artists leave school, they are deprived of stimulus and connections. For artists generally, they also serve as a means of keeping in touch with dynamic global trends in art. Loder (1995:29) submits that "possibly, the most significant contribution has been to facilitate the meeting of artists from different countries in Africa itself". He further adds that these exchanges have made a major impact in lessening the isolation of communities of artists in more remote places, such as Botswana and Namibia; thereby giving artists the confidence to develop their own voices and in ultimately raising the standard of art making in the countries concerned.

Specifically, trends in art workshops in Africa have moved from the apprenticeship model, which mainly featured an era of creative colonisation and marginalisation of African artists, to the postcolonial era of the 1980s, when the triangle model, which is majorly characterised by "freedom of expression and interaction", redefined the operations of most art workshops in Africa. As there are no restrictions to the inspirational sources in the triangle model workshops, artists often derive inspiration from the physical contexts of the workshops, socio-cultural peculiarities of the workshop contexts, conversations and interactions with fellow artists, and sometimes residents of the contexts, as well as the materials they are confronted with.

It is however essential to add that, there are other art workshops, such as Bruce Onobrakpeya's Harmattan Workshop in Nigeria, which combine mixture of the apprenticeship model and the triangle model in running their affairs. The Harmattan Workshop has programmes for artists to come together to share ideas and make art, which is in line with the triangle model. The workshop also has instructors and facilitators who teach some artistic skills to youngsters and indigenes of Agbarha-Otor, in Delta State Nigeria, where the workshop is situated.

In sum, art workshops have in recent years served as an avenue for professional artists to collaborate and reassert their ideas amongst peers. For up and coming artists, art workshops serve as platforms for nurturing and broadening their creative capacities. By working alongside more established artists and tapping their experiences and ideas, the creative confidence of young artists is thereby boosted.

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