

# PARADIGM SHIFT IN KUNLE ADEYEMI'S ARTISTIC CREATIONS

By

KUNLE ADEWALE

"Without change, something inside us sleeps, and never awakens"

- Duke Leo Astrides

*Change is focal in the history of evolution. The dynamics of society is the result of change which has developed man's experiences, having realised this, man has the ability to explore and invent. In other words, the primary indices of change is time. However, man has been the brain behind change innovation. It is within his capability and capacity to harness variables of his natural environment, symbols, motifs, space and time.*

- Kunle Adeyemi 2010

Bruce Onabrakpeya's view on the development of Nigerian contemporary art since 1960 unveils the events that ensued between the last five decades in the contemporary Nigerian arts which continues to grow irrespective of economic recession, the artists unquenchable zeal to be more relevant to the people has become a potential instrument of change . The Nigerian government, the elites and the lover of art now appreciate it as a means of passion for folklore, the culture and values; creating identity, effective cultural diplomacy; art has become a reliable source of renewable wealth, a potent tool for creating awareness and community development.

Kunle Adeyemi in his quest for change and search for personal identity in the Nigerian art landscape has explored materials, mediums and new techniques. Consequently standing like other giants in the field of visual art on whose shoulder the upcoming artists can stand and gaze into the future without fear of failure. The artist's belief in change and dynamism serves as a catalyst in his artistic creations. In an interview, Kunle Adeyemi highlighted factors that necessitated the timely changes in his work which explored printmaking, mixed

media and easel painting genre.

The factors he identifies include the necessity for artistic maturity, having been in the artistic jungle for about three decades. The maturity he viewed in studio practice and academics coupled with a desire to carve a niche and identity becomes imperative. This change is seen in his personal research in studio practice and change in academic status. As a visual art teacher that produces future artists, the urgency of laying a solid foundation in his discipline cannot be compromised as this will have a positive effect on his students both formal or informal.

Adeyemi, a PhD researcher in studio practice (Delta state University, Abraka, Nigeria) is presently looking into material exploration, inventing fresh techniques through a nexus and exploration of printmaking and easel painting.

According to Rembrandt Van Rijn

*"Practise what you know, and it will help to make clear what now you do not know"*

Similarly Steve Child corroborates the creative thoughts of Rembrandt by saying:

*"Don't be complacent with your work, push yourself everyday, Don't just find what works without change. "*

Kunle Adeyemi's curiosity for change and personal demand for self development in his chosen field is a pointer to the fact that life is dynamic and anyone who will not embrace positive change will soon become a history. He is stylistically, simultaneously, significantly and systematically creating an identity amongst the majority that practice visual arts in Nigerian artscape.

In subject matter, celebration of Yoruba culture through iconographic representations in motifs and symbols is a common theme in his works but the artist now draws from the deep well of African culture by taking specific subject within the same culture. His recent mixed media and printworks reveal thematic changes that celebrate womanhood, feminism and the beauty of African women. This is evident in the nude figures titled female figure I,II,III,IV, V, VI, etc.

Change in techniques and materials exploration include combination of printmaking and other painting genre while relief process, intaglio and planography give birth to a compedium in artistic representation for researchers, art critics and scholars. The artist as a social commentator and a cultural ambassador unveils his international exposure in Sweden, Germany, Ireland, United States of America and some other parts of Europe as part factors for his aesthetic growth. This exposure serves as an eye opener to what is obtainable in the art circle nationally and internationally. His further contacts with international Art Galleries such as Gallery Ashley in Sweeden, Art Expo 2009 at the Art academy in Stockholm, the Swedish grafik triennale etc. Interactions with the students in international arena through workshops, seminars and conferences in printmaking in art schools and exhibitions coupled with the urge to make his art local in content but global in contexts has placed him on the pedestal.

The influence of international artists like Steve Lawlaw, an Irish painter from Ireland, Mitch Ward from United States of America, a visual communicator and a sculptor and other contemporary Nigerian artists like Bruce Onabrakpeya, late Prof. Irein Solomon Wangboje, Dan Ikhu Omobude, Kolade Oshinowo, Dele Jegede, Kunle Filani, and Yusuf Grillo among many others are ladder to where Kunle finds himself today.

The unflinching support of the artist's Phd supervisor Prof. Osa Egonwa (Delta state University, Abaraka, Nigeria) through whose constant critique of his studio work on a regular basis and Dr. Nelson Edewor whose studio is been used for the research work are also part of the puzzle that makes the picture.

Conclusively, Kunle Filani notes that:

*"Kunle Adeyemis venture and landmark in the practise, academics, administration and industry of visual arts is a typical example of conscious and subconscious subjection of the spirit towards attaining a stature in the creative field. Having followed keenly the career growth of Adeyemi, one cannot but acknowledge the dynamic interplay of endurance, perspiration and spirited talent".*

Kunle Adeyemi's passion for change in visual art, penchant for culture and a

purpose driven life will continue to be placed on the pedestal of nobility and self identity both locally and internationally. His art is a new episode which is gradually unfolding, unfading, unveiling and unfailing in the history of who is who in contemporary Nigerian art.

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Notable quotes on Artist and Arts.