

EXPLORATION AND EXPOSITION OF YORUBA ARTISTIC LEGACIES

Art is all about creatively, but authentic art is all about originality. While the budding artist labours so hard to achieve a minute result, the master exerts little energy to achieve so much. There is usually a level of craft in any artist's work. It is a growing period when all an artist thinks about is working so hard to achieve what Dr. Okechukwu Odita of Ohio State University describes as SOYAN ART, a realistic representation of naturalistic tendencies. Art at that level is a mere glorification of skill and raw talent. Every artist with a chronological history of artistic development is expected to have gone through that process. After all, it is all about creativity and celebration of skill - not necessarily originality.

The modern trend has, however, suggested a new direction that has taken art beyond a state of mere craftsmanship. Now, there is a spiritual reawakening that tends to challenge our intellectual capability. Art at that level becomes a unique object of interactive discourse and subject of intellectual scrutiny. Not only does it challenge the viewer's mental uprightness, but the artist's spiritual and intellectual depth as well.

Kunle Adeyemi, no doubt, exemplifies an artist with a unique sense of history whose recent experiments have continued to challenge our authentic relevance in modern times. His determination to explore and expose Yoruba traditional artistic legacies in a fusionist's relation to the contemporary art of our time is a testimony to intellectual depth of a skilled artist. As expected his various audiences have been provoked to a state of compulsory appraisal and subsequently artistic acceptability. You either hate or like his temperament on canvas, you cannot but agree that he is like good wine took time to ferment and mature. His art is beneficial to his numerous students as well as patrons and collectors whose taste surpasses a mere celebration of craft.

How Kunle manages to shuttle between studio practice and administration is an awesome revelation of an artist endowed with extraordinary energy. And when he takes time to explain the Yoruba motifs in his paintings and prints, it reflects a master in possession of identity. We should all be grateful to an artist who, having paid his dues, is now committed to exploration and exposition of our traditional legacies at a time when there is an exodus to modern technology and globalization. A unit is a bona fide composite part of an entire entity. And unless that unit is preserved, the entity may suffer. This is where we find the efforts of artists like Kunle Adeyemi quite original and beneficial to our modern existence

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