The Influence of Expressionist and Institutional Theories in the Production of Juliet Chinasa Vite "Fertility" Tie/Dye and Screen Printed Fabric with Cassava Leaves and Tubers from Mogho Community

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Abstract

The production of Juliet Chinasa Vite textile fabric works are usually influence by art theories. Vite as is she fondly called is a textile artist who has practice for over two decades. As a textile teacher in secondary school she has impacted her textile knowledge to many students who are privileged to be under her tutelage. She is a graduate of the University of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The evidence of theoretical influence on her textile fabric works are evident in most of her works, but as it relates to the context and discuss of this paper, the theoretical influence of her works focuses on her "Fertility" tie dye and screen printed work in which she express and communicate her emotions and feeling of how her people are declining from farming cassava crop and in a bit to encourage them she used cassava leaves and tubers from Mogho as motifs to produce fabrics that them can use for ceremonies and for cultural identification. To achieve producing the fabric she also was influenced and guided by expression and instructional theories. These theories influence the production of the fabric because they in express the emotional feelings of the artist and communication them in visual form on the fabric with the cassava leaves and tubers. The theories were also able to influence her to express the relevance of fertility to Mogho people. The paper, in a bit to achieve its aim, discussed expression and institutional theories as it relates the production Vite textile fabric, brief history of Mogho community, tie/dye and screen printing of "Fertility" fabric production technique, style and medium adopted. Descriptive analysis on her fertility fabric was discussed based on the

theoretical and philosophical implication. Finally, the paper concluded the study has contributed a lot in encouraging artist to use cultural or items that are significant to people as motifs to produce fabrics. It also recommends that artist should form the habit of adopting locally derived motifs to produce works that can promote the culture of the people.

Keywords: Expression and institutional theories, fertility, tie/dye and screen printing, Cassava.

Introduction

The idea of artist imbibing or adopting art theories to influence or guide the production of their artwork is becoming very popular and efficient in the production of artworks. The truth is most scholars like Vite produce their artworks with the guidance of art theories. The essence for which artists employs theories in the production of their artworks is because it helps in enabling them to carefully examine, explain and interpret the concept of art and distinguish them, accordingly Collins English Dictionary (2019) states theories is a formal idea or set of idea that is intended to explain something. Similarly, Webster's (2002) views it as the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another. Webster's adds that art is also an abstract thought, speculation and principles of a body of both theory and art has something in common they cannot be separated while producing an artwork because theory is an assumption, an intended idea or set of ideas, while art is also abstract thought operation and principles of a body of facts. The notable thing about the two is the abstract thought or speculations that are expressed artistically by artists are been guided by art theories because they help the artist to produce and interpret artworks.

Knowing the valuable benefits that can be derived by employing and been guided by art theories to produce artworks, Vite as a textile artist who has practiced for close to two decades produce all her textile fabric prints with the aid and guidance of art theories. Especially, in the production of her "Fertility" tie / dye and screen printing work which form part of the works

she produced and used for her master programme dissertation work at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. Vite's creative process in drawing, tie/dye and screen printing is eloquently manifested in her works. In most of her works she like to express her emotion and feeling of her culture and environment largely, which makes her to be an activist for cultural and environmental preservation and sustenance. This is what likely inspire her to produce the work "Fertility" which has to do with her people mode of farming occupation and the environmental degradation suffered by Mogho community which is caused by multi-national oil companies which are exploring oil in the area and spilling the oil on the environment that is making the land not to be fertile as it used to be in the past. She used the fabric as a medium to protest by saying that the environment should be protected from such gustily act as to enable her people to farm cassava without any hindrance.

In trying to express her view visually in printed textile fabric, she was influenced and been guided by expression and institutional theories. This is why this paper is discussing the theoretical influence of her fertility artworks and the discussing the theoretical influence of her fertility artworks and the discussion is based on the expression and institutional theories, cassava cultivation seem to be one of the major farming occupation of the people, but in recent times a let young people don't indulge in it because the land is polluted with oil spillages caused by multi-national companies operating in the area as well youth restiveness in the area. Most of the people believed that if they go and cultivate cassava, it will not produce good tubers thus, they don't go to farm and it is really because hardship in the land, there is food shortage. And the cultivation of cassava in the area is also eroding, thus, to salvage the situation Vite produce the fabric "Fertility" to encourage the people to make the land fertile for the cultivation of cassava by using cassava leave and tubers as motif on the fabric.

The artist Vite use expression and institutional theories to influence the production of the fabric because expression theory gives room for the artist to express and communicate emotional feelings, while institutional theory also portrays something is an art, is to imply that it is a thing of interest and of work. The production of the fabric is something of interest, therefore was influence by the institutional theory also.

The idea of using the tie-dye and screen printing techniques by the artist seen to be intentional because it was able to give the fabric good aesthetical finishing and appeal. Tie and dye according Omuaru (2002:179) is a popular method of ornamenting fabric by folding and tieing the fabric with fibre after which the fabric is dyed. While, screen printing is essentially method of stretching silk mesh over a wooden frame, blocking out chosen area by various methods and making a print by forcing ink through the unblocked area (Ogumor, 2007).

Overview of Expression and Institutional Theories as it Relates to Juliet Chinasa Vite Tie/Dye and Screen printing Textile Fabric Work.

This theory was popularized by Leo Tolstoy and Robin George Collingwood Matravers (2009:1) states that Leo Tolstoy was the best experience of expression theory. Matrivers adds that the term "expression theory" has a broad and a narrow usage. According to Noel (2002:61) Leo Tolstoy in this theory of expression thinks of expression as a form of commutation in art. While Collingwood in his view also sees art as the expression of emotion (Kemp, 2013:5). According to Khatchadourian (1965:336) while also viewing Leo Tolstoy expression theory' sees "a work of art as an expression of the artists feelings or emotions embodied in it by the artists, in the sense that it contest and transoms to the listener, spectator or viewers. The simplest interpretation one can give to the assertion given by the author concerning the theory is that when one expresses himself to another, the person has expressed an emotional feeling to the other. Very important to note is that the mode of communication from artistic

communication. Artistic communication deals with visual presentation as a firm of communication and this communication reflects emotions as it were in expression theory. Just as the mathematician uses number, so artist uses lines to communicate or express themself. As a musician communicates through notes and sounds, artists uses form, space and texture to express themselves.

Bruyn (2014:1) while viewing the definition of art by Tolstoy as it relates to his expression theory points out that Tolstoy defines art as an expression of a feeling or experience in such a way that the audience to whom the art is directed can share their feeling or experience. Bruyn adds that Tolstoy also claims that interpretation or criticism of art is irrelevant and unnecessary, because a good work of art is able to express thoughts and feelings which can be dearly understood by most people. Bruyn further explains that Tolstoy argues that an explanation of such thoughts and feelings is supper flows, because art ultimately communicates feelings and experiences in a way which cannot be expressed by any words. Deducing from the claims it is obvious that art deals with expression of emotion and the communication of feelings. And this is one reason why Vite adopts it as guide to produce her works. Another reason is that, as an art theory, which deals with expression of emotions and communicative feelings it gives room for visual expression and communication of the cassava leave and tuber to communicate the need for cassava cultivation in Moghe community.

Lowenfeld and Britain (2006.15) state that as an expression is possible without self-identification with the experiences expressed as well as with the art material by which it is explained that art materials or the materials use for expression is very important and it enhances art expression of an experience by an artist. Therefore, there is no doubt that the expression theory has to do with several things not just living it to expression of emotions, rather the media material and even the technique use for the expression is very important to note while creating nor producing an

artwork for expression. According to Russell (2000:67), all the visual art communicate some level of human experiences that can be expressed through a wide range of media materials and techniques. Russell further explains that the traditional distinctions among media materials and techniques are being eroded by many 20th century artists, who used several mixed media in one work. In the same vein, Noel (2002:60) submits that these new discoveries developed and deviated from the canon of imitation which was based on the outward aspect of things. The significant things is that new media, materials and techniques nowadays are been used by artist to express themselves about their emotions and feelings concerning different issues in the society. Interesting the works produced comes out of the fine and expressed the views of the artists, which is in consonance with the expression theory which gives opportunity to artists to express their feelings. Among other reasons this is one of the reason why this study adopted the expression theory to express the emotional feelings of the artist concerning the plight of the people, which is in terms of the neglect of cassava cultivation in the area.

The institutional theories also form one of the theoretical bases for the study. The major proponents of the theory are Arthur Coleman Danto and George Dickie. The theory is a widely accepted theoretical posture that emphasizes rational myths isomorphism, and legitimacy. Institutional theory focuses on the deeper and more resilient aspects of social structure (Scott 2008:18). Scott (2004:10) considers the processes of institutional theory as structures, including schemes, rules, norms, and routines, which are establish as authoritative guideline for social behaviour. Different components of institution theory' explain how these elements are created, diffused, adopted and adapted over space and time, and how they fall into decline and discuss.

Yanal (1998:1) also points out "to say that something is a work of art is to imply that it is a thing of interest and worth. However, it is not the purely

private taste of a single individual which homes" something sufficiently to make it art neither is it the decision of the general public, but rather the joint verdict of the republic of art, which has as "first - stage" members creators, performers. Spectators, and ultimately includes "anyone involved with the arts". Binkley (2015) opines that perhaps the most minimal institutional theory of art. "To be a piece of art, an item need only he indexed as an artwork by an artist. To make art is basically to isolate something (an object. an idea.) and say of it. "This is a work of art, thereby cataloguing it under Artworks. Deducing from the explanations and assertions made by the authors concerning the institutional theory" one can state something is art base on the conclusion of the artist. One can also state that something is art not by virtue of any properties of it but rather by virtue of a relation it bears to some large context. This theory is related to the production of work because it gives the artist opportunity to determine the kind of art which constitute the work. Deducing from the assertions from the cited above it is obvious that tie/dye and screen printing is a form textile fabric and it has to do with the production of fabrics.

Brief Historical Origin of Mogho Community

Mogho is geographically located at the centre of Gokana Kingdom, at the junction where Dere and Bomu road crosses the Kpopie and Bodo road. It is in the Panumuu District of Gokana Kingdom (People close to water/river) of Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

It is a large community where the people are predominantly farmers and fisher folks; they also engage themselves in other economic activities such as weaving, Carving etc. Vikoo (2003) noted that in ancient time, some youths of the community ventured into apprenticeship out of the coastal neighboring towns such as Bonny, the Kalabari and Okrika as hirelings in the fishing port where they were paid certain agreed amount of money at the end of the season, this payment was called Ziga in Gokana native

tongue; The vocation of the Mogho community is largely farming and their land tenure systems are done by three methods:

- By inheritance, where a piece of land owned by an ancestor is transferred within the family from generation to generation.
- By leasehold tenancy, where a piece of land of an individual or community is learned out on agreement with specified conditions for a period of time.
- Communal land system is when land is acquired and used as a common land. Some parcel of land and forest are jointly owned and controlled by certain kindred. Fubara (1987) stated that after the acquisition of land, then the cropping system is considered, there are two types of farming system in Mogho, Mono-cropping and mixed farming which is advantageous because it insures the farmer against crop failure either pathogens, pest or extremes of weather for it is unlikely that many different species of crops will be subjected to the same amount and types of damage in one year. The mix-farming (multiple cropping systems) makes for good use of the fertility of land, since in the great biodiversity of crops in multiple cropping systems, akin to the ecological mix in natural forest and bushes. The individual crop species exploit in different ways the soil micro-climate, Micro-climate is the general climate of the area modified by local conditions (Komolafe et al (1979).

It therefore makes a more economical use of land and the cultivated crops include yam ((Gia), maize (kpakira). Cowpea (Goo-maa), melon (Gbamabo). Cocoyam (Togosuyu) and finally cassava (Gbe baa) which are frequently inter cropping in multiple system in Mogho (Vikoo, 2003).

A Descriptive Analysis of Juliet Chinasa Vite "Fertility" Tie/Dye and screen printing textile fabric base on its theoretical and material procedure of production and Aesthetic value.

Juliet Chinasa Vite as an experimental textile artist does not believe in being static in terms exploring to produce fabric in the production of the fabric under review, in the production of the work Vite combine tie/dye and screen printing technique to produce the fabric. Nevertheless, it was believed that before producing any fabric Vite do put a lot of things into consideration before embarking on it. The first thing that comes to her mind is the theoretical implication, the materials, the aesthetic value the fabric will have, that will allure people to appreciate the fabric to possibly to buy and own it. Having this consideration before embarking on fabric production is really reflecting on the work under analysis because the fabric is endowed with attractive aesthetic values due to the colour of dye and ink use for the production of the fabric and also on the composition of the leaves and tubers of cassava on the fabric. Beyond being influenced by theories Vite is also being influenced by her mentors like Dr. Pamela Cyril – Egware, Prof. C.C. Chukueggu, and others who happens to be not just mentors but also her lecturers in the past and present.

The title of the work is very interesting and captioning. It represents how fertile the land of Mogho use to be. Green colour is associated with fertility this why the artist use green colour leave on the fabric to project and promote the value of fertility. The title fertility was also given to the fabric because of the bright colours, yellow and green colours which are dominant on the fabric and the flourishing light green coloured leaves on the fabric seem to promise growth which has to do with the people, because it is only when the land is fertile that growth is assured. Below is a picture of the fabric under analysis and discussion:



Plate 1:
Artist: Vite, Chinasa Juliet
Title: Fertility
Medium: Tie/Dye and screen printing
Size: 5 years
Year: 2018

The main thrust of this screen printing textile fabric work was the synthesis of different colours of textiles ink the researcher closely studied the two gourds understand the interplay of contrast of light and dark tone as Robson (2006) says that when making a realistic interpretation of objects set before him, understanding is gained by looking intensely, exploring their structures and studying the differences in their surface. This can be likening to the study and observation of the cassava leaves and tubers in colours and formation. More observations were made at how different surfaces react to light and how each object reflected on each other. The researcher adopted this approach. The dark green — colour was used for the cassava tubers

and the light green was used for the leaves while — yellow played the dominant background colour.

The material used for the production of this fabric were basically dye for the printing of the first yellow colour, textile ink of two different colours, use for the screen printing to achieve the separation of colours of the leaves and cassava tubers, and mesh was the equipment used for the printing among other material like the squeegee, dye basin, masking tape, glove etc. — The juxtaposing arrangement of the cassava leaves and tubers on the fabric is very unified arid attractive. The interest of juxtaposing and using dark green to project the cassava tuber on the fabric shows compliance with the principles of design which were dominance, harmony and unity. The dexterity employed in depicting the combination of colour and form.

The textile fabric prints generally is aesthetically alluring and appealing to the consciousness of people. The fabric is production well throughout idea by the artist because the fabric is meant to express and depict the emotional feeling and challenges confronting the fertility of Mogho community cassava cultivation. Thus, the production of the fabric has addressed, expressed and communicated the emotional feeling of the people of Mogho community and the artist. Therefore, expression and institutional theories were chosen to influence the work because it guides the artist to express herself effectively.

Conclusion

Juliet Chinasa Vite produced the textile fabric work titled "Fertility" to express and communicate the challenges of infertility suffered on the land of the people of Mogho community in Gokana Local Government Area, Rivers State. She uses the production of the fabric to encourage the people to engage in the cultivation of cassava despite all odds. She also used it to protest against the pollution and environment degradation suffered by our people on their land cause by multi-national oil companies who operate in

the community and spill crude oil on their farm lands. In a bit to achieve this fit, Vite was influence by expressionist and institutional theories which gave her the opportunity to express herself in visual form on fabric. Most importantly, the production of the fabric with the combination tie/dye and screen printing technique has help created more awareness on how fertile Mogho community land is and how cassava can be easily cultivated if not for the environmental challenges the land is suffering currently form oil exploration activities.

It is obvious that the production of the fabric was predicated on expression and institutional theories. Expression theory enables the artist to use the work as a medium to communicate her emotional feeling and aesthetic values of cassava leaves and tubers of Mogho community. Also, the institutional theory gave confidence to the artist that the work produce is indeed an art work. The work was produce as a textile work because Vite who produced the work is a textile artist and one who has practice and has taught it for about two decades.

Generally, the production of the fabric has contributed towards creating awareness on the benefit of cassava cultivation and combining of technique to achieve the production of a textile work that is aesthetically appealing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained the paper makes the following recommends:

1. Artist should be encourage to explore with more local plants and crops as motifs to produce artworks.
2. The paper also recommends that more innovative experimentation and exploration should regularly be carried out by textile artists in particular, in the studio as to broaden the knowledge of younger upcoming artists.

3. The paper further recommends that, more artistic documentation on people's culture should be carried out as it will help expose other people's culture and enable more people to have knowledge of such culture and traditions locally, nationally and globally.

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