AN ADAPTIVE STUDY OF EMOHUA ROYAL SYMBOLS WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON APPLIQUE TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

Africa is a great continent endowed with so many great things, such as human and material resources, good vegetation, serene environment, good cultural heritages, well-structured traditional political institutions to mention but few. In each traditional institution there are many cultural royal symbols used in the palace by the traditional rulers which is reverenced and respected by the people of that particular society. Emohua as a clan in Rivers State is not excluded from this great cultural practices. The study focused on royal symbols found in the palace in Emohua clan using applique technique to create art works. The study is anchored on creativity theory while data were collected through interview from traditional rulers and elderly people in Emohua community. The study revealed that royal symbols and objects are more valued and have spiritual and physical connotations and denotations, metaphoric and symbolic meanings. The study revealed that applique techniques can be used to capture royal objects for decoration within and outside the king's palace, which clearly represents the people's cultural heritage and its royal symbols. Consequently, the survey recommended for thorough examination and documentation of all royal objects in Emohua royal palace.

Keywords: Royal, Symbols, Applique and Technique

Introduction

Royal objects are symbols of authority given to a king during his coronation while some of them are kept in the palace for decoration and proper preservation. Some are used on specific occasions and celebrations. These objects are very important to Emohua kingdom because, they signify divine authority and power which is transferred from one generation to the other as part of their cultural heritage. During traditional ceremonies like wrestling context, traditional marriages, new yam festival and coronations of a king, these objects are used to add colors to the ceremonies, authentication, and to appease the gods of the land. Burke (1981) states that, royal object's origin can be traced to the creation of works for primitive magical and religious purposes. The objects, since they have been handed over from one generation to the other have

been of great help to the royalty and the entire kingdom. Emohua as a community in Emohua local government area of rivers state is rich in culture. The tradition is never complete without using the royal object as part of their cultural heritage. According to Onyima.(2013), Heritage are cherished characteristics features of a society passed down from One generation to the other through conscious preservation. Egonwa.(2005), States that Ikwerre belongs to the world of creativity and a visual image belongs to creative world with its laws according to man's desire. Abah.(2019),In his oral interview explains that Emohua people are brought up under a social and cultural life which is also part of their heritage. The objects that are used among the royal class during ceremonies in Emohua land are Eji-Cola Nut, NfuOnuohia-Animal Horn, Olah – Bangle, Owhor-Sceptre, Nkpara-Royal staff, Igele-Metal Gung, OkpuEze-Crown, Nkalari-beeds, Nkonwo – marchet, UsehEji-Aligetor pepper. These objects plays important roles in Emohua culture and they are part of the organizational structure of Emohua people, The objects are not just simple by product of organization, but elements that structure people's active construction of sense., knowledge, and behavior.

Objects as regards this research are the utilitarian instruments used by the royalties within and outside the palace. The people's love for beauty is seen in aesthetically designed landscapes which adorn their environment. The rich cultural heritage justifies the choice of Emohua as an area of study.Amigbogu & Onyima. (2013),Asserts that considering the benefits that could be derived from our cultural heritage, there is need for a clarion call to consciously preserve the cultural heritage as a significant aspect of their culture.

Emohua chieftaincy tittle is called Eze. Eze is classified according to their levels and grades. The Nnewe-Eli, Nne-Ohna, and Nnneru-Urie Esezi. (Bronner. 2000), explained that traditionin this study is discussed as a way of thinking, behaving or doing something that has been done by other people. (Lo-Bamijoko. 2009), states that the essence of culture is for preservation, promotion, presentation and to establish an administrative structure. The Eze seats in council with his Elders, all clothed in Ikwerre traditional apparel on appointed days to preside on the cases that concern the wellbeing of the communities, such as land disputes, family matters, as well as the swearing-in ceremonies of a new paramount ruler. The mode of adjudication of cases reveals the beauty of democracy where every participating chief or elder is given the opportunity to express his opinion. The final decision is announced by the king after the council had arrived at a consensus. The judicial system is replicated in the divisions, towns, and villages. Emohua people speak the Iwheruohna dialect, with a great desire to preserve their culture, including the Emohua symbols which are remarkably depicted on a special Oroh gbaka (Native building), Ruwhu- agbara (shrine) and Oviri-Ohna (paramount ruler's chamber) or Oviri-Eze (palace hall). The kings are parts and parcel of the numerous ceremonies and festivals in Emohua land. Their arts and craft includeswood carving, body painting, weaving and wall painting. The aforementioned arts and craft tradition of Emohua people are highly represented with motifs, symbols or patterns gotten from plants, animals, aquatic and geometric shapes. The symbols reflect the people's cultural heritage and value. Among the various art of Emohua people, sculpture is predominant and all

the motif and symbols are used to enrich other art and craft in their inherent sculpture. The study therefore, seeks to create art works for wall hanging, using Applique technique.

In every area of art, there must be certain innovation at one time or the other which is considered as design. Design is the underlying process by which the world was formed. According to Hoffma (2021) it is the intermediary between information and understanding. Design is involved in all aspects of arts inclusive of applique. Applique is the ornamental needlework in which pieces of fabric in different shapes and patterns are stitched or stocked onto a larger piece to form a picture or pattern. Lin (2005) described applique as a French technique that involves cutting of different coloured fabrics and sewing them onto another fabric as a base. Primarily, it has involved a needle work where little fabrics, mirror, stones, beads and embroidery are stitched onto a lager surface to create patterns. Applique is commonly used as decoration, especially on garments. Cyril-Egware (2015) explained that, Applique is a technique used to conjure individual concepts and, historical occurrences by attaching cut-out pictures that represents them onto a fabric surface using stitching method. Lucinda (1996) states the, applique technique was introduced at a time when woven fabrics were scarce. The unwoven parts of the garment would be salvaged and used to repair clothing or furniture. Lucinder (1996), further explains that, applique technique was a logical progression for the applied fabric to be cut out in an interesting shapes to form a few design. Based on the analysis on scholarly perspective about applique technique, It is believed that applique is the act of attaching fabric pieces to another fabric through the use of hand stitching, machine stitching or embroidery stitching. This technique will be used to create designs for wall hangings to decorate interiors.

The last sentence is born out of the fact that, where other art forms have thrived, textile art have been dominant in the preservative efforts of the Emohua royal symbols. Other art works have been used to represent royal symbols such as painting, graphics, and sculptural pieces as status. None was sighted and as well with applique technique. The study focused on the use of applique technique to create art work of esteemed values in the society. The traditional royal objects are not depicted as two dimensional art pieces but are kept away as functional objects for utilitarian purposes. Adaptation of the royal objects of Emohua artistically, will help to preserve Emohua tradition and culture for posterity.

This study is aimed at adapting the Emohua royal objects on fabrics using applique technique for the interior decoration.

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the Emohua royal objects and their usage.
2. Provide literature on the royal objects of Emohua.
3. Increase creativity by using royal objects to produce designs for wall hangings.
4. Document applique processes for future researchers.

The importance of the study cannot be overemphasized as it will help to put Emohua cultural heritage in practical documentation. It will add to existing literature on the history and culture of Emohua people. It will promote skill acquisition; create job opportunity for the unemployed youths in the society.

Royal objects according to Chinnah (2024) has been used across ages to give history of the past, dignity and credence to the traditional institution that exist in geographical bounded territory with government. Etymologically royal object covers and connote all instrument symbols, and objects seen and used which represent authority, power, honor, dignity, respect and serves as symbol of authority in the society. It is important to note that the archaeologist depends much on the use of art works such as left behind by our past generations for their source of information. Burk (1981) had earlier on this indicated that on painting; royal object's origin can be traced to the creation of works for primitive magical and for religious purposes. It is believed that man worshipped the royal objects before they embarked on any hunting expedition. Laurie, (1999) adds that the development of royal object started through religious and magical practice among the prehistoric people.

Just as the name implies they are seen and found within the palace of traditional institution or stool. Royal objects are any objects or symbols that has link with King, Queen, Newe- Elie, Eze and Oha These objects and symbols are respected and reverence within that particular society. They have both spiritual and physical symbolic meaning and they are used to perform so many functions in the society.

Theoretical Explication

The paper is rooted on activity theory propounded by Vygotsky (1978), He translated the work from French to English language in other to elucidate the essential aspects of human consciousness and reasoning as integral components of human action within the society. The human activity is intentional and executed via a series of activity using physical or psychological instruments , with language serving as a cruucial tool for communication and connection with others. Leontiev (1981), in the same vein asserts that activity theory is seen as a comprehensive approach that encompasses many activities , often including collaboration, such as working on a project or teaching a course.kaptelin (1981) made his own explanation through figure shown here. These are : Activity ----------Mtive----------Actions----------Goals---------- Operation----------Tasks. The significance of this theory as regards to this paper, according to Engestrom (1987) is based on the principles which are very important. This will entail a comprehensive instruments including the use of analysis to get the desired conclusion. Bornnie (1997) in his own opinion states that human beings lives in a reality that is objective in a broad way, activity theory emphasized that, human activity is mediated by tools in a broad sense. Tools are created and transformed during the development of the activity itself and put in them a particular rule and culture.

The basic link of this theory to Emohua culture and the use of applique to document the royal objects is that activity theory are associated with systematic application which involve's the subject which is the royalty. Object as the symbols. Activity represents the action, the application of the rules attached to the symbols. Then come the outcome which is the end product of the process practically and in theory. The problem of creativity artistically, is a deeper problem which is related to the act of the artist . Przybylek (2022) posited that theory of creativity is a concept, ideas, or models attributed to inventing new values. This theory simply implies the process by which new things are created through the artist. It could be objects, processes, system, and solutions to problems, or even relationships. According to Darwish (2018), plato believes that the creativity of process is related to the mystical inspiration.

These goes beyond doctoring, copying and pasting to pure originality and creativity of personal ideas. For instance artist, like painters, sculptors, dancers have the power of been original in coming up with novelty ideas and innovations. It has to do with prerogative of the artist creative and professional intelligence in creating new things. Expression goes with creativity as its manifestation of the new ideas to better humanities Imaginations .The relevance of this theory is that the artist used her creative professional intelligence and skills to create art works or pictures. from the already existing thing in the environment.

Appliqué Technique

Applique is a French technique that basically cuts up various coloured fabrics which are then sewn to the surface of another foundation fabric. But essentially it has now developed into a needlework technique in which smaller pieces of fabric materials like small mirrors and other forms of embroidery are sewn onto a bigger piece of the object to create designs (Lin, 2005).

Appliqué as an art is a process of cutting colored cloth into shapes of animals, birds, flowers leaves gods, goddesses and other decorative motifs and stitching them on a piece of cloth. Barikpe & Cyril-Egware (2018), defined applique technique as a surface embellishment of fabric using cut out fabrics to enhance the existing one. Cyril Egware (2016) on the same vein defined applique as a way to evoke people, ideas, and historic events through cut-out representational images that are stitched on to a cloth surface. Applique is therefore, defined as the application of pieces of clothes on fabric through hand stitching, machine stitching and embroidery.

The traditional appliqué items are mainly used during processions of the deities in various ritual outings. Items like umbrella, Tarrasa – a heart-shaped wooden piece covered by appliqué cloth and supported by a long wooden pole and Chandua – an umbrella shaped canopy are usually seen during some processions in some kingdoms (Hsu, 2007). Another popular item is a sort of frill which is used as a border to canopies and also independently as a decorative piece. In applique work motifs used consist of stylized representations of flora and fauna as well as a few mythical figures. The most common of these motifs are the elephant, parrot, peacock, ducks, creepers, trees, flowers like lotus, jasmine, half-moon, the Sun and Rahu (a mythical demon who

devours the sun). Flat design are first cut from cloth and then superposed on the base cloth in a predetermined layout and se¬quence. The edges of the motifs are turned in and skillfully stitched onto the base cloth or stitched by embroidery or without turning as necessary. Craftsmen use straight stitch, blind stitch, satin stitch, or buttonhole stitch for attaching the pieces of cloth

Applique Types and Uses.

Machine Applique. This is a quick and easy way to apply shapes to a background fabric for a smooth and packaged finishing. The fabric shape must be fixed in shapes before sewing. The easiest is with a fusible bonding web which will give a neat fixed shape without pin or needle marks. Machine applique can be worked with a presser foot in place of free machine stitching.

Baltimore quilts. The best applique work that those who ran into it was because it wasn't as hand wearing as patch work quilt. The finest quilt made by woman in the Baltimore the beautiful wreaths garlands and baskets of flowers that adorned these quilt have become standard applique designs .These are built up in stages because pieces of clothes overlap and are generally complex.

Broderie perse is a technique of cutting motif and from one fabric to another, rearranging them and stitching unto a new background of fabric. These techniques was developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century as a means of making beautiful and precious fragments of fabrics that last longer printed from India. These designs were originally made using the brightest coloured fabrics. The English government imposed a ban on these fabrics to protect its own textile industry. The techniques increased in popularity where 19 American special fabrics were printed with suitable motifs for Broderie perse

Shadow applique is simple to work with. The bright colors are sandwiched between a sheer to layer and a base fabric. The sheer top and base are traditionally white and subtle and has original effects which can be achieved by using different colors instead. The applique designs needs have bold and strong colors based on the way it appears dull when the sheer to layer is placed over the top. Hawaii Applique. This type is colorful and has intricate designs, which forms the applique design. This has been practiced by the people of Hawaii since the early nineteen century.

Applique Making Process

The exquisite craft is usually practice on red, purple, black, yellow, green and white fabric. The craft man prepares the basic materials in shape of square, rectangle, or circle which forms the background for the piece of art. The patch and materials are created through embroidery, design is made using needle and different colour threads and marrow. Murphy, (2012). The actual beauty of applique craft lies on its intricate stitches namely, bukhia,guntha, turpa ,chikan, and turpa, chikan and other very delicate and esoteric embroidery techniques. Small mirrors and bright metal piece are used to enhance it's beauty. After the material is embroidered with a traditional design, the borders are then stitched and the stitches serves as the finishing of the

applique .The applique technique for this study depends on some royal symbols found in Emohua royal palace. These symbols are the meanings of the objects used in the palace for to fulfill the tradition and cultural right of the people.

Methodology

The research made use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data include observations, interview and photography while secondary data are sourced from textbooks, peer review journals, periodic publications, newspapers, and other relevant documented literature, both soft and hard copies. Data were analyzed through descriptive approach and the information gathered was presented in the study. Visual observations were grouped systematically according to the specific headings.

Data presentation



Title: Ngaga .
Medium; Poster Colour
Artist: Chinnah Charity
Photographer :Edward Isaac
Year; (2023)



Title : Royal Chemba
Medium : Poster Colour
Photographer ; Edward, Isaac
Artist ; Charity Chinnah



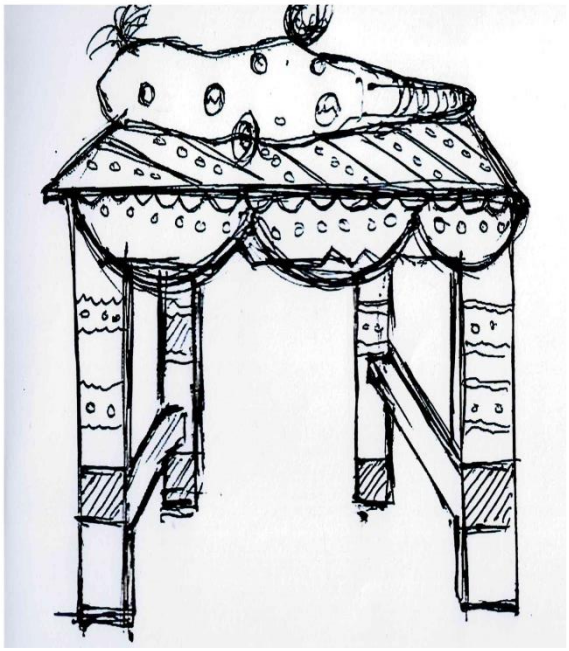
Titile : Sacred (Ugwugu)

Medium: PenonPaper
Photographer : Edward , Isaac
Artist: CharityChinnah (2019)



Title : Sacrad (Ugwugu)
Medium:Fabric

Photographer : Edward Isaac
Artist: CharityChinnah (2019).



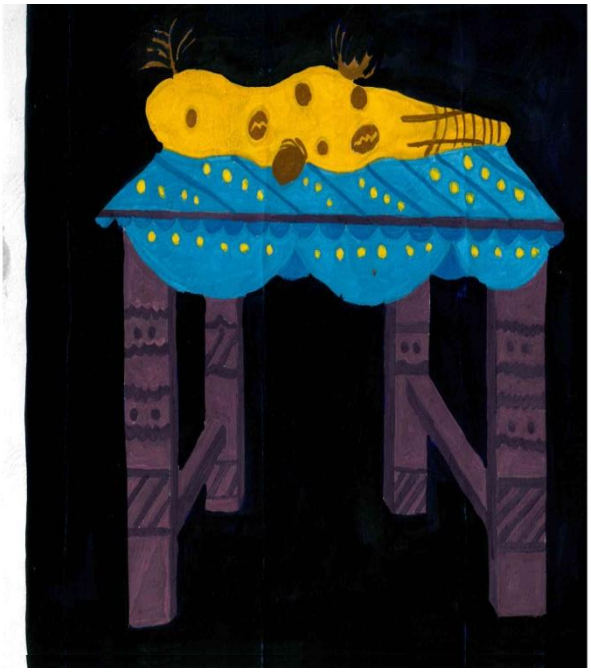
Title : Dembele

Medium: Pen on Paper

Artist: Charity Chinnah

Photographer : Edward, Isaac

Year : 2019



Title : Dembele

Medium: Fabric

Artist: Charity Chinnah

Photographer : Edward, Isaac

Year : 2019

Discussion

The most interesting part of this phenomenon is using indigenous royal objects to produce beautiful artworks for wall hangings as promotion, identification, and transmission of culture for posterity.

This study as titled " The practical study of Emohua royal objects symbols focusing on applique technique', however, is influenced by the conventional motion as utilitarian instruments by the

royalties, despite the psychological meaning, Chinnah, (2024). cultural significance and the benefits embodied in the objects. They are mostly used as regalia, and for celebration and as seen on the object are not represented as two dimensional arts and more so, hardly could the object be seen in an appliqués forms as wall hangings in Emohua royal palace.

Thus, the quest to project the Emohua cultural heritage, the study addressed the importance to adapt royal objects for interior decoration of the King's palace using appliqué technique. According to Eze (2016) adapting the symbol on a surface is a complete reflection and representation of endowment in Ibo land as same is acceoted in Emohua land, Nbofa (1994), states that , symbols as they are, represents the continuity and the role that guides the tradition.The research adapted Emohua royal objects on fabrics through appliqué technique which was used to decorate the Kings palace. The researchers objectives involved using pieces of fabrics cut with different shapes of objects,, vat dye and chemicals to produce designs for wall hangings, window blinds, royal throne and the accessories as well as dress wears for outing.

In an attempt to generate motifs from the existing objects, some selected objects were put together, while some areas were recomposed and few details added to create textures and aesthetics. The motifs were transferred into fabrics through pinning. Before this stage, the plain which fabric was dyed through marbling and tie and dye. However, the designed fabrics and other pieces of clothes were stenciled out and placed on another fabric based on the motifs. Fibre was added under the motifs to raise it from the background, but prior to that, several samples were made for analysis and discussion as innovation through the original royal objects. This processes and procedures helped the researcher to achieve designs that could withstand modern day royal palace. Tools, equipment's and material aided the entire production process. These are cotton fabric, cutting succors, measuring tapes, synthetic dyes, paraffin wax, worked table, drawing aids, sewing machine, fibre, sewing threads and stones.

A total number of four wall hangings were mutually sketch but four and a set of royal throne was finally used at the end of the research. The production pattern with specific figures and their measurement played an important role in the production of the wall hangings. The study was subjected to systematic procedure to produce wall hangings as designed with royal objects have been analyzed by putting in consideration, the uses of the physical royal objects as for utilitarian objects. The fabrics (tie and dye, piece of cloth and batik) for wall hanging were tested through washing with house soap and the result good and no undesirable effects detected. This proves that royal object as adapted into wall hangings can be composed into different interior wall hangings. The adaptation of indigenous objects and modern technology have created a synagy for textiles, fashion and decoration

Conclusion

Textile design has been a vital discipline that plays a major role in people's lives right from ages till date. It's products are worn as clothes for beautification, adornment and for protection

against harmful insects attack. Hard weather conditions. More so, textile design helps for cultural transmission and transformation.

In the world of palace designs or arts, every countries or tribes have different style and designs to identify their citizens. The designs that are cherished more by people, mainly collectors and museums are those designed with indigenous motifs. Mohammed V. of Morrocco palace design which has the map round the palace and the map is produced or designed with red and gold colour, the Dubai royal palace which was designed with fabrics and settings. The colours and dark brown, gold and touches of white color. The oni of Ife palace which is designed with white colour fabric as the furniture cover, and animal skin on it and a tiger as their symbol.

Isiokpo palace design which is designed with a throne and the sets and a clay plate with money inside as their own symbol while in Emohua Royal Palace there is no specific symbols or objects used to design the royal palace. The sample produced proved that using objects as patterns to proactive pictures in the royal palace will go a long way to showcase the culture and tradition of Emohua people as their heritage on wall hangings, the royal throne, and the accessories were chosen to display, the motifs due to the general acceptance mostly by the council of chiefs. The study concludes that, accepting the indigenous symbols to be used as wall hangings will help in documenting the culture mostly in a contemporary world where adulteration is on the increase. Many royal palace in their different kingdom are mostly flops with pictures and the flags as designs (decoration) and thus, cannot be suitable to the modern day royal palace. This research has tested and proven that, it is possible to use adapted wall hanging for the decoration of the royal palace through appliqué techniques.

Recommendations

There is a need to create awareness and to encourage locally made designs with indigenous symbols or objects. This is as a result of people's interest in foreign pictures captured with camera than locally made pictures. The wall hangings produce will have higher quality and high regards than the ordinary picture. There should be policy to regulate the designs (wall hangings) that are brought into the palace for decoration. In effect, it will help the artist to have good patronage. There should be collaboration between the interior decorators and the textile artist designers. This will help the two parties bring up their talents and by so doing their attention will be needed whenever there is need for king's palace decoration.

There should be an association of textile and fashion designers which will involve organizing seminars and workshops to improve the skills of their members in the arrears of modern appliqué techniques and another method of textile designs like printing, dye application interior decorations and fashion. The government should assist the textile designers to provide advance equipment and tools to increase creativity on the innovations through the use of appliqué technique to design the palace hall. This study recommends further research on the use of royal

objects for chieftaincy wears. An alternative decoration with appliqué technique for traditional chieftaincy installation.

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