

This study is a documentation of the use of African traditional art symbols and motifs of Tola Wewe in his artistic expressions. It discusses and analyses the art symbols in some selected works of Tola Wewe. It also recognizes ona, an artistic movement that is commonly seen in the Yoruba and Igbo traditions. It also traces the origin and meaning and context of use. Today, Wewe is one of the few artists in Nigeria who not just employ the use of traditional art symbols and forms for the beauty alone but to preserve and protect the Nigerian culture and traditional believes. The photographs of Wewe's paintings reveals different kinds of motifs used and the motifs were analyzed for a clearer understanding of how they can be truly manipulated and creatively exploited to form masterpieces. This ceaseless, never-ending, persistent and relentless practice to art experimentations and production has made Wewe a man with an indelible landmark on the sands of time. Thus, the background of the artist and his immense contribution as an artist were also documented.



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The Use of African Traditional Art Symbols and Motifs

Study of some selected Paintings of
Tola Wewe



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PREFACE

This study is a documentation of the use of African traditional art symbols and motifs by Tola Wewe in his artistic expressions. It discusses and analyses the art symbols in some selected works of Tola. It also recognizes *ona*, and artistic movements that are commonly seen in the Yoruba and Igbo traditions. It also traces the origin and meaning and context of use. Today, Wewe is one of the few artists in Nigeria who not just employ the use of traditional art symbols and forms for the beauty alone but to preserve and protect the Nigerian culture and traditional believes. The photographs of Wewe's paintings revealing different kinds of motifs were also analyzed for a clearer understanding of how these motifs can be truly manipulated and creatively exploited to form masterpieces. This ceaseless, never-ending, persistent and relentless practice to art experimentations and production has made Wewe a man with an indelible landmark on the sands of time. Thus, the background of the artist and his immense contribution as an artist were also documented.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

All over Africa, visual images and ordinary objects are used symbolically to communicate knowledge, feelings and values. Symbols play an important role in the African conception of reality. Traditional symbols and motifs are those characters, figures or marks used to represent an idea, thought or believe. Traditional art symbols are an essential part of a long artistic tradition in Africa and they remain the visual form to retain and record significant information just as the traditional art motifs. Africans use symbols to indicate a sacred site, the location of a waterhole and the means to get there, a place where animals inhabit and as a way to illustrate moon time stories. To understand and appreciate traditional art symbols imagine how you would indicate, record and recall essential information or place names or events in a non material world.

Since Africans travelled vast distances across their continent, significant information was recorded using symbols in regular ceremony. Sand painting and body painting ceremonies kept the symbols alive and remembered. Later, these symbols were transformed into a more permanent form using acrylic on canvas but the meanings behind these symbols remained the same. Generally the symbols used by African artists are a variation of lines, circles or dot. Similar symbols can have multiple meanings and the elaborate combination of these can tell complex stories. Combining the stories the African artist tells about the painting with an understanding of the meaning behind the symbols can lead to a greater appreciation of the work.

Many more use of these traditional art symbols can be found on painted and carved wood, leather, jewelry, tattoos, textiles and pottery. African women play a vital role in the development of African traditional art symbols. They use these symbols on the walls of their homes and on their pottery. These traditional symbols are believed to represent magical protection against adversity and the evil eye and are also believed to possess healing capabilities.

Another reason for developing these art symbols was that Africa was ridden with different types of sicknesses and parasitic diseases that devastated the ability of the people to resist other diseases, the same diseases that were little or of no threat to the people of the developed countries and so they try as much as possible to relate with the spirit word through this medium. Spirits protect man, they ensure success in life and provide security to man. These art symbols and motifs were used to bring the spirits closer to mankind as they serve as intermediates and provide secular communication between them.

The origins of African art lie long before recorded history. African rock art in the Sahara in Niger preserves 6000 year old carvings. The earliest known sculptures are from the Nok culture of Nigeria, made around 500 BC. Along with sub Saharan Africa, the cultural arts of the western tribes, ancient Egyptian paintings and artifacts, and indigenous southern crafts also contributed greatly to African art. The art often depicted the surrounding of nature and was often more of abstract interpretation of animals, plant life, or natural designs and shapes.

In a country with more than one-seventh of the continents people and by far the most populated of Africa's continent, Nigeria is not just blessed with natural mineral resources but also rich in art. Nigeria is a country with diverse ethnic groups. These groups contribute greatly to the fact that Nigeria has a very rich culture and diverse art interests. In the traditional Igbo

society, *Uli* art forms, materials and ideas are often employed as some of the methods of objects the society used to motivate the people to prestige and class. *Uli* is a traditional and indigenous visual art forms, motifs and symbols that are used by the Igbo people of south eastern region of Nigeria to achieve the desired psychological and aesthetic satisfaction. Some argue that *Uli* is an expression of the people's capacity for creative design, which is firmly rooted in their experiences of life in the past, present and future. The design elements of *Uli* are cultural bound and deep rooted on the folklore of the Igbo cultural experiences. *Uli* is a style employed in a complex system of body painting and creation of wall mural using a vast catalogue of signs and symbols, and pattern to a distinctive representation of the Igbo Universe. Membership of certain in groups or age grades can also seek aesthetical satisfaction through the use of *Uli* designs and motifs.

The history of Nigerian art cannot be complete without making reference to *Uli* art forms and design. It is one of the major indigenous and rich cultural heritages that have transported a people's belief, values, communicative elements and creative ideologies into a unique and aesthetic art phenomenon. Many art forms have emerged during the years since Nigeria got her independence and even before her independence. Such art forms include textile, sculpture, ceramics, visual communication otherwise known as graphics and painting among others. Painting is that branch of the visual arts in which colour, derived from any of numerous organic or synthetic substances is applied to various surfaces to create a representational or abstract picture or design and so this research work analyses the use of these African Traditional Art symbols and motifs on some selected paintings from a contemporary and renowned Nigerian artist by name Tola Wewe.

1.2 Problem Identification

The essence of any research work is to intensively as well as extensively make proper enquires in order to find facts. Painting in our own traditional art symbols will go a long way to develop our culture and give us a sense of belonging but many art schools today lack that traditional art culture and prefer to associate themselves with realistic works forgetting that realism is a borrowed culture. This is indeed a threat to the growth and development of traditional art symbols and motifs in the country.

Another problem is that among the few artists who try to introduce these traditional art symbols and motifs in their paintings still fall victim of "chanciness usage of these forms". Therefore, this research endeavor will make an effort to encourage the use of these symbols in paintings and identify the problems that artists commonly encounter in representing traditional art symbols in their paintings. Traditional art symbols and motives cannot and should not be used indiscriminately or haphazardly on paintings or else they stand to lose their true meaning in respect to the entire work.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research will analyse the images that appear in the paintings of Tola Wewe and will try as much as possible to focus on the use of traditional art symbols and motifs on his works. It will also partially discuss *Uli*, Yoruba traditional symbols and onaism as a movement because there is a way one can discuss Tola Wewe without mentioning onaism. This is because he is a founding member of the Yoruba symbol (*Ona*) and most of his works reflects the use of the movement.

Furthermore, all the works to be analysed here were randomly selected from 1998 to 2010. Such works include "once upon a time" 2004, "family" 2003, "marriage" 2004, "heavenly

guest" 2001, "folktale" 2002, "polygamy" 2001, "in the beginning" and many others including some untitled works but really interesting paintings. This research will also focus on the themes of these works and how Tola has been able to achieve these themes using these traditional art symbols. Furthermore, the researcher will try to analyse the originality, simplicity, surface texture and mastery of colours of these paintings in view.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

This research work is aimed at achieving the following objectives.

1. To show to the world the real meanings of these symbols through Tola Wewe's paintings. Tola Wewe has shown mastery in the use of these symbols and signs combining them with *onaism*. Many artists today use these traditional symbols without really knowing the meanings of the signs. Take the famous comb symbol in the Yoruba culture for instance or the marriage symbol of the Igbo *nsibidi* culture. The marriage symbols means union, togetherness, oneness and other closely related themes can come along, but you discover that a painter can finish a work and feels the background needs more touch or is looking empty and needs to fill up the background with "stunts" what he does is browse through the symbols maybe from a book or an archive, looks for the one that is interesting to or that catches his eyes without necessarily checking up the real meaning of these symbols and use them. This is indeed a problem and this research is aimed at trashing out that injurious act in painting as it stands as a threat to not just the whole theme of the entire work but to the artist as he runs the risk of not being able to face intense criticism.
2. The research also tries to encourage the use of our traditional art symbols in painting and other forms of art. In Nigeria today, not many artists use these symbols in their paintings as means of expression or as a part of the painting. This is not encouraging as many art

institutions and colleges prefer to teach and encourage more of realism rather than abstractism in paintings, having in mind that abstractism encourages the use of these traditional art symbols. Painting in our own symbols and styles rather than copying the western people will go a long way to give us that sense of belonging and make us feel home and help preserve our culture than letting it go into gradual extinction. This research work will go a long way to encourage the use of traditional African art symbols as it clearly analyses its importance.

3. The final aim of this research is to emphasize the benefits of these traditional art symbols and signs on paintings and on the artist as a whole using Tola Wewe as a case study. It is significant to state here that Tola Wewe is well known today because he did his homework well. He has mastered the use of these traditional signs and symbols, mastered the right colour combinations and mastered abstractism in general. This has indeed favoured him as it is argued that what Chinua Achebe is to Nigerian literature is what Tola Wewe is to the visual arts of his country. Both are respected, have enjoyed international recognition and serve as an example to others. Both, too, go back to the traditional African culture. Wewe reverts his figures to elementary, colourful forms and symbols and makes them the main characters in the stories that he remembers from his childhood. Just as Achebe mirrors the Igbo culture, all kinds of symbols from the Yoruba culture can be found in the paintings of Tola.

1.5 Methodology

Here, the ways, means, approaches, systems and procedures exercised by the researcher to carry out this research work is analysed. Intensive library research, field investigation and questionnaire based on structured questions were carried out. Photographs and illustrations of the

artist's work in galleries, private and artist's personal collections were taken and used as an instrument of analysis to establish the indigenous sources of his forms and motifs. Journals, exhibition catalogues and newspaper publications were reviewed to establish facts about the artist's background, artistic creation and contribution to contemporary Nigerian art.

The internet was also used as a means of data collection to establish facts. For a better understanding of the origin and meaning of the motifs used by Wewe, Igbo wall paintings, Yoruba shrine paintings, calabash carvings, traditional wood carvings and body markings were studied. The researcher also deemed it fit to extract, identify and reproduce in detail these forms and motifs. Later they were put together to form the appendix.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study of the use of African traditional art symbols on some selected works from Tola Wewe's paintings will bring into lime light the real meaning of art symbols and motifs. People will also understand art from another perspective. Many people especially non-artists see art as just drawing or panting something beautiful, beautiful in the sense that it must appear real and have the natural colour. For instance they believe that if you want to paint a landscape then the sky must be blue, the foreground must have that sandy colour, the trees must be painted with the same as nature and the human forms if any must appear real. This notion must be changed and this research work is geared towards making sure that people would understand beauty not just from natural colours but from colours that are not physically present in what they are painting like the landscape for instance. They would also see beauty in abstractism and in the usage of these traditional symbols.

One can actually paint that same landscape using a different colour from the normal sky blue for the sky, using a different colour for the foreground and a different colour for the trees.

He can introduce some motifs and symbols in the scene maybe on the back of the trees or even in the skies. This does not mean he has not interpreted the landscape before him but he has done it in an extraordinary way and this time in the traditional way. If the two landscapes are placed side by side and an art critic is called upon to appreciate them, it would not be surprising that he would prefer the one with the symbols and motives applied to it rather than the other one that looked just exactly or close to nature.

Furthermore, this study will go a long way to encourage artists to use the right symbols and motifs for the right idea to be represented. Some artist have very good abstract paintings but still run into problems with their finishing and some have good abstract ideas and still have that problem of interpretation. These are indeed problems and this study is bent on providing solutions to the problems. However, this research will encourage teachings of abstract art in higher learning institutions, art schools and colleges. Many art schools today hardly practice their own native art and would rather prefer to teach realism to their students. Some of the schools already have the culture of traditional art but because they are not encouraged by the larger society they tend to derail from it.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Every research work must have a limitation. These are the restrictions, shortcomings or drawbacks that hinder the researcher from carrying out the research work as he or she would have wanted to. Tola Wewe is a very busy person and one of the major drawbacks of this study was his unavailability. Many art critics believe that most visual artists have little or no time for themselves, their families and not to mention interviews. If they are not in one exhibition or the other they are working on personal projects, contract works or they might just be working in their studios. This will really make it difficult for the researcher to get in touch with his target.

Another factor that stands as a stumbling block to this research work was his location and distance. Tola was formally based in Lagos state and has relocated to Ondo where he is presently the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism and so the researcher might find it uneasy to travel to Ogun state to visit him.

Another thing that stands as a setback for this research work is the time frame. The given time is short and this type of research requires a lot of time, time for the interview, time to collect the data and time to adequately study the data. Finally, the worst of all limitations is the money factor. The finance to travel, the finance to hire a good photographer who will take and print all the pictures involved for the research and the finance to book for a room in Ogun state because the researcher will not only be travelling to Ogun state but be prepared to find somewhere to stay or even rent a room around because he is not certain if the interview would last for only one day.

Despite all of the shortcomings mentioned above, the researcher has decided to take every prospective limitation very serious. He promises to go on the extra mile and makes sure that he arranges an interview with Tola regardless of his instability in movements. The researcher will make it known to Tola the importance of the research and the countless benefits people would stand to gain when the research work has attained full completion. The researcher has equally deemed it fit to carry the responsibilities of providing the finance by him. He would seek for financial assistance from friends and loved ones by making them see reasons with him and encourage him in carrying out this research work and in the absence of cooperation from these people he is willing to fall back to his life savings to carry out the research work. Indeed travelling to Ogun state could be stressful but the researcher has deemed it fit to carry upon his shoulders the inconveniences, stress and above all willing to take the risk.

These are the various measures that the researcher is willing to take to enable him overcome the setbacks that can make him unable to fulfill this research work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter appraises other related literatures written by other people. It is aimed at carrying out a critical review of literature as regards to the researcher's area of concentration. This was done by exploring deeply into the theoretical as well as the practical frame work of some noteworthy scholars that have conceptualized and contributed largely to this field of study. In other words, the whole essence of this chapter is to analyse African traditional art symbols, signs and motifs. Hence, attempts is directed towards the assertions of some art critics, scholars, researchers and authorities who have one way or the other discussed traditional art symbols and motifs in relation to the importance and characteristics of these symbols.

2.0 Traditional African Art

According to Chike Aniakor in (1997), he highlighted that; across Africa there is as much variation artistically as there is socio-politically, racially, linguistically, ecologically and geographically. He continued by saying that there are kingdoms with divine rulers and tribal groups governed by elders; the landscape varies from semi-arid land south of the Sahara to lush coastal forest and savannah. As a result of this wide variety of surroundings there is much variation between the regional art styles. The varying social and physical environmental influences on the artists cause great variation between regions in style.

Roy Sieber (1971) stressed that;

Traditional African Art cannot be discussed without mentioning the role that masks played in Africa. Masking was extremely common and of high quality in Africa. The masks were made of

wood, bronze, feathers and many other collected items. African Masks were large in size, often with huge eyes and other exaggerated facial features.

Wood and metal sculpture used in religious and cultural ceremonies were also common. Craftsmen and craftswomen are called upon to fashion objects to be worn as part of a costume at a New Year festival, a dance in hope of the first rains, or a harvest ceremony where the guardian spirits are thanked for providing food. Many of these objects were taken to Europe and North America where they became popular and influenced Western art. The bronze and terra-cotta sculptures of Ife and Benin City are the best known in Nigeria.

Painting is not left out as Thurstan Shaw (1978) recalls that Africans also painted on rock walls which are equal to any others from the prehistoric eras. The Neolithic rock paintings and engravings of the Africans are equally advanced in renderings of humans, animals and non-representational (supposedly symbolic patterns). One example of sensitive human, depiction is a dancing woman from Inaouanrhat, in the Tassili region. The figured varying delicately precise, multicoloured body decoration and is actively posed. The rocks dated 3000 BC -but this is only an estimate, as with many rock paintings.

The Yoruba were the most artistic in Africa producing: cult figures in wood, bronze, terra-cotta and iron; beaded objects and garments; and elaborate palace decorations. Masking was also popular in Yoruba communities to entertain senior women and the deities associated with witchcraft. One example is the door of the King's Palace at Ikerre, which was carved by Areogun. Areogun's personal style included elongated and expressionistic figure. In about the ninth century AD, Yoruba Africans had developed a sophisticated lost-wax casting techniques. By the twelfth century the area had begun to produce the most naturalistic African Art known and such example is the detailed 'Ife king figure'. The city of Ife was and is the spiritual capital

of the Yoruba people. It was located in western Nigeria. Although they have not survived, wood carvings were made at this time.

Adepega (1995) stated that African Art displays clear abstract qualities and African sculptures have barbaric power and a disregard for classical canons of beauty; these combine to create their abstract form, he also went ahead to mention that the line of African art is bold and simple, the shapes are also simplified, they are rarely coloured and when they are it is with a limited palette; these are characteristic of an abstraction. Faces are distorted to accentuate the dominant features, in a type of serious caricature, thus the essence of the subject is conveyed. Abstraction allowed the masks and sculptures to be immediately recognisable as who they depicted by their use of line and shape capturing the subject's personality in an inanimate object. Abstraction also allowed the clear depiction of stereotypes, especially in masks.

One of the reasons Africans developed Abstract qualities in their art was that they were attempting to depict their Gods and other spiritual beings. The only way the people could comprehend the metaphysical, was to extract the important part of each Gods character and symbolise it in the facial and other physical characteristics. Abstraction also provided the African artists with a method to capture their subject as they saw them, on the inside. Symbolism was also an important factor for creation of Abstract and distorted works. For example, rulers were given large heads in relation to their bodies to symbolise their power and intelligence. This was done because the head was considered the centre of being and the source of these qualities.

2.1 The Concept of *Onaism*

According to Moyo Okwudili (1990)

Ona started as a ripple of rhythms radiating from Ile-Ife as the mythic origin and center of the world, trying to reach the outer most part of the globe, spreading in a subtle, soothing and sonorous sweep, like the glowing and translucent tidings of the full moon. The warmth of lunar bathes and melts the frozen plumage of Nigerian art and Ona soars out in ripping myths of avian joy, carrying in its eloquent beak, a fresh twig, the promise of a new vision and the birth of a new world.

Onaism is coined from *Ona*; a Yoruba word that has a wide application. *Ona* is a genetic term which embraces decoration, pattern, ornament, embellishment, design, composition, form, plan and motif. All of the above can also be seen in the Yoruba traditional sculpture in wood and metal. *Ona* is crammed with the best ingredients of beauty; it literally and metaphorical means art, aesthetics and beauty. *Ona* as art means design, ornamentation, patterns, motifs, signs, symbols and all elements of design.

Adepega (1995) agrees that *Ona* summarily deals with the concept of beauty in its entire ramification therefore *Ona* becomes a descriptive philosophy of art as in "Gbenga-gbena" (carver and designer) a code for appreciation as in "oju ona" (critical eyes), and "onise-ona" (worker of pattern). Thus, *ona* becomes the key that unlocks the door to artistic intellect. Amodu Rasheed stated the values of *ona* as follows:

- i. The evolution of an identity for contemporary Nigerian art.
- ii. The adaptation of indigenous design resources to meet the needs and requirements of modern times.
- iii. A re-orientation in art education towards functionalism.

The result of all these principles is a mixture of traditional with postmodern ideas, which has giving birth to the movement and has in the long run positively affected the art circle both in Nigeria and in Diaspora.

2.2 *Uli* and the Contemporary Art Expressions

According to Aniakor (1998)

In almost every culture and time, there is evidence of human passion and quest for psychological and aesthetical satisfaction. The traditional African culture provides socially accepted methods and materials used to satisfy human's emotional and other passionate desires.

In the traditional Igbo society, *uli* art forms, materials and ideas are often employed as some of the methods or objects the society used to motivate people to prestige and class. Membership of certain in-groups and age grades can also seek aesthetical satisfaction through the use of *uli* designs and motifs. It is a fact that no art work is created from a vacuum, there is always an influence or inspiration drawn from natural or man-made art forms. This creative inspiration could come from existing contemporary or traditional art form.

The *Uli* traditional painting forms have found expressions in many contemporary creative and artistic endeavors. Many artists have been inspired by the linear aesthetic qualities of *Uli* to create great works of art in various media of artistic expressions. Okoye (2006) stated in one of his articles that *Uli* designs are used in other media such as textiles, and body art, in addition to traditional wall painting. In another article, he stated that one of the Nigerian contemporary *Uli* painters recently decorated the Njorowe Mask worn by the Makonda society in southern Tanzania. This account to the possibilities that *Uli* can be used in the contemporary global art expressions.

Also these *Uli* designs have found expressions in contemporary textile, ceramics, sculpture, graphics, prints and painted works.

Odita (1995) affirms that among the Fine Art courses of St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York, is "Abstract Drawing: *Uli* and other forms", which the principal objective of this course is to expose students to some abstract drawing traditions of the world and, through studio practice structured around these traditions, Here, *Uli* art forms, style and technique is being used to master the skill of drawing among the students of St. Lawrence University. It must be observed that these transformations in *Uli* have helped the people to maintain their link with their cultural past and their ever fading artistic aesthetic traditions.

2.3 *Nsibidi* and its Origin

Nsibidi is an ancient system of graphic communication indigenous to the Ejagham peoples of southeastern Nigeria and southwestern Cameroon in the Cross River region. It is also used by neighboring Ibibio, Efik and Igbo peoples. Aesthetically compelling and encoded, *nsibidi* does not correspond to any one spoken language. It is an ideographic script whose symbols refer to abstract concepts, actions or things and whose use facilitates communication among peoples speaking different languages. *Nsibidi* comprises nearly a thousand symbols that can be drawn in the air (as gestures), on the ground, on skin (as tattoos), on houses and on art forms, such as masks and textiles. Though it is enjoyed as an artistic practice by the general public, deeper knowledge of the *nsibidi* symbols is restricted to members of men's associations, which once controlled trade and maintained social and political order.

2.4 Motifs and its Classification

It has been observed recently that, the literatures by scholars afford a general insight into the nature of patterns and motifs especially in Africa and the reason is that there is hardly any

indigenous art and craft that is not decorated or adorned with patterns. These patterns bear various motifs depending on where they are made and these motives could be symbolic, but in most cases they are decorative. Apart from the urge to embellish these crafts and art, traditional Africans used motifs as signs and symbols and as a means of identity. Motifs are used to ornament utilitarian and non-utilitarian objects such as pottery, weaving, tie-die "adire", calabash carving, leather work, embroidery, body adornment, coiffure and beadwork among others. Other sources of indigenous motives include shrine wall paintings, carved wooden panels and sculptures.

African ornamental motives as depicted by Louise Jefferson and Margret Trowell were combined as samples from Africa. Maria Berns noted that the vital forces of the spirits and ancestors can be contained in art forms, and while in this form, the forces become accessible and potentially controllable. Also, their recurrent motifs like the bird sign, cat and rat among others which either identify various forces in the Yoruba context or allude to the power that certain individuals have in dealing with these forces. Motifs can be symbolic or mundane, and at times they can be sacred or religious in context. Motifs are used for different art works. In this case, they are usually specific, informative depending on the message they are meant to convey.

2.5 Contemporary Yoruba Art

William Fagg appeared to have studied Yoruba Art more than any other single person. Other expatriates of note who have opened vital understanding in Yoruba art with detailed reference to its archaeology, history, origins, style and function include: Frank Willet, Henry Drewal and Thurstan Shaw. It is noted that these scholars often times emphasized on issues relating purely to their sculptural heritage and traditional aspects without reference to the contemporary developments that have taken place over the years.

Modern Yoruba art can be described as a widely diverse art form. From the beadwork to the woodcarvings, the Yoruba people have crafted many works of art to reflect their life in Western Africa. Various aspects of Yoruba art have been studied by Nigerian scholars ranging from the ancient to the contemporary, thereby establishing a continuum in Yoruba art and history. Through the aesthetic analysis of Babatunde lawal, Roland Abiodun, Cornelius Adepegba, Ekpo Eyo and S.O Biobaku, an in-depth understanding of Yoruba verbal and perspective has become appreciable. The authors have made known the peculiar signs and symbols that are inherent in the forms and motifs of Yoruba art objects.

It is of noteworthy to state here that Nigerian art seems to have developed along ethnic lines having in mind that each ethnic group in Nigeria has a peculiar artistic tradition that is enduring. This can be ascertained by looking at the works of Chike Aniakor, Pat Oyelola and Krydz Ikwuemesi. Their works show the continuity of these ethnic similarities. They show the cosmology and diverse forms of Yoruba art and stressed the need to establish continuity, identity and changes that occur in the form and content of their art.

Moyo Okediji alluded to the concept of Yoruba art which ranges from high abstraction to realism. Traditional Yoruba art and craft works are distinctive in form, and are often embellished with creative patterns occasioned by the use of motifs, signs and symbols. However, their art is not stream lined to realism, but encompasses poetry, dance, and song among others.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Data Presentation

This is the type of research that many may regard as a cumbersome one but the researcher has deemed it fit to make it as simple as possible to enable easy understanding by any reader. It is a field based research because most the materials will be gotten outside the library. Here, the researcher randomly selected the works of Tola Weve dating from 1998 to 2010. This area explains the procedure adopted for the research. It could also be regarded as the methodology aspect of the research work. The purpose is to provide a foundation or base for choosing an appropriate research method within which to evaluate the selected paintings of Tola Weve.

The collection of adequate and useful data is a central operation in executing a good research. In this study primary data were collected. The primary data were the paintings appraised and collected by photographing the works by hand. They are listed below;

- “Heavenly Guest”, 2001. oil on canvas 3x4ft
- “Folktale”, 2002. oil on canvas 3x9ft
- “Polygamy”, 2001. oil on canvas 3x4ft
- “In the Beginning”, 1999. oil on canvas 4x3feet
- “Fortune of Creation” 1994
- “Silhouette at Dawn, 2003
- “Once Upon a Time” 2004. acrylic on canvas
- “Family”, 2003. Oil and acrylic on canvas 122x117cm
- “Marriage”, 2004. Oil on canvas 67x73cm
- “Tortoise Tale” oil on canvas
- “Tribute To Woman” oil on canvas

- “Wahala” oil on canvas
- “Separation” acrylic on canvas
- “Remembrance” oil on canvas
- “Mystery” acrylic on canvas
- “Man and Woman” oil on canvas
- “Life” oil on canvas
- “Sisters” oil on canvas
- “In Love” acrylic on canvas
- “Hunters Paradise” oil on canvas

Another means of data collection used to gather information is the interview method. The unstructured interview method was adopted. Here different questions was asked face to face as regarding the different art exhibition, how many awards collected and how art all started in his life. These and many other questions that are related to the research work were asked. The data gathered were clearly analysed in the third chapter of this research.

The internet and articles from magazines are also used in this research work. They are the secondary materials and are also be analysed under the third chapter. The pictures of the selected works was divided into three various categories. The first category discusses the works as regards to the contribution of these art symbols on the painting in respect of the subject matter. This will enable the reader understand how these symbols have helped Tola in achieving the themes of these works successfully and analyse the works thematically.

The second part analyses the sizes and positioning of these traditional art motifs and symbols on the selected works. The size of these symbols in proportion to the main character

was analysed together with their positioning. The positioning is simply the placement of these symbols on the painting and how it has helped Tola in achieving his finishing touches on his works.

Finally in the last category, the African traditional art symbols was analysed based on their colours and their number on each painting. It is believed that the variation of sizes of forms used on any design will either affect the work positively or totally ruin the beauty of the entire work. Here the researcher discusses why Tola uses a particular number of art motifs on a painting and the range of colours that he has used to depict these African traditional symbols.

3.1 Background of the Artist

November 19, 1959 gave rise to the birth of a rare gem. Born in Shabomi-Okitipupa in Ondo State, Tola Wewe graduated from the University of Ife in 1983 with a degree in Fine Art and a Masters degree in African visual Arts from the University of Ibadan in 1986. He taught at the Adeyemi College of Education for four years before moving to Lagos in 1991 where he worked as a graphic artist and illustrator. Tola became a full time studio artist since 1994 garnering a wide acclaim and an international reputation for his wealth of forms, mastery of colour and sensual sympathetic depiction of women.

Tola Wewe is one of the renowned artists in Nigeria known for his success as a mystical painter, revivalist, art critic, experimentalist and art administrator. Tola wewe started his voyage in art as a child. In fact, he said that the moment he started to write was the same moment he started art. His early experiences could be described as the keystone of his present ingenuity. At the beginning of his career, three major influences characterised Tola Wewe's works; the first was his basic academic training at Ife, the second his masters research programme in the Ijaw water spirit mask and thirdly the society particularly the Yoruba society. For Tola Wewe, art is

spiritual and nudity purity. To him, there is something chaste about nakedness. His art has a deep connection with 'the spirit': he sees himself like a vehicle being used by other forces. Wewe describes himself more as a witness than an author,

Communicating with the spirits of the ancestors, and drawing out the invisible spirits - the anjonnu, emere and the ebora - who make the art works...I am the vehicle, and they are the drivers. We go on these strange journeys to the most remote ends of imaginative experience.

His style draws from the Ona symbols of the Yoruba and his themes project traditional lores and myths of his native Yoruba culture.

3.2 HIS VOYAGE INTO ART

Tola had the talents from childhood and nature helped him to develop these talents even though nurture on the other hand and to an extent refused him. His parents would beat him for drawing instead of writing and his teachers would scold him for drawing in his books and deep inside of Tola, he wanted to do art but never knew that he would do art for a living.

Tola's Response:

I am a painter. I practice two-dimensional arts. It is structural on a flat surface; it could be painting, sculpture, etc. The story of my arts started early and it wasn't in an attempt to imitate or be like any traditional artist or a known one. In fact, as soon as I started writing, I started art. I started it with drama.

I remember, in those days when my father travelled to Lagos and bought sliced-bread, I would pierce the middle of my slice and turn it into a camera by imitating a cameraman using a tripod. I would gather my siblings and pretend to take their shots and immediately go back to draw them. I was able to take a psychological resemblance of my siblings so much so that people could identify each in the drawing. Another interesting thing is, I would use broomstick to draw images of prominent Nigerians on the ground

after it rains. Sometimes my father would beat me for distorting the ground. Later on, I would go into public toilets to draw with charcoal or chalk and most time, it was usually pornographic. But nobody knew I did it. I would often draw on my textbook; this usually attracted scolding from teachers. At that time I did not know I would leave on my art.

3.3 CONTEMPORARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The most recent contribution and achievement by Tola Wewe in this contemporary art world is to become the commissioner for Arts and Culture in Ondo state. He is trying as much as possible to encourage the practice of art from the mind and not just practicing art for art sake. He is a studio artist and being a commissioner does not stop him from doing his studio works. It only gives him more room to explore art within, outside the country and across the globe.

Tola's Response:

"Well, I am an artist and would remain an artist for life. The fact that I am Ondo State Commissioner for Culture and Tourism today does stop me from practicing art. As a commissioner, I am part and parcel of what is happening at executive meetings. I do not always want to miss any aspect of the meetings. The kind of 'ex-cos' we have in Ondo State is robust, kind where you have many vibrant contributors. I listen and make my own contributions. So, there is no time for arts during such meetings.

I still have my free time in which I try to squeeze in some colours and paint on canvass. I may not be producing as I used to in terms of quantity, but I think art every day. The ministry is a community of arts, and as the commissioner I still live among artists and art. My imagination is still at work and my contributions as an artist are still very relevant in the ministry. So, I have not totally disengaged from art."

Furthermore, just like we have the "Uli movement" of the Nsukka art school, the "Aka group" of Enugu and the "Eye Society" of Zaria, we also have the "Ona Movement" of the west and Tola

Wewe is a founding member of *ONA* group. The group is committed to the continuance of excellence in the creative arts and his creations originate from the *Ona* symbols of the Yoruba which invoke the native themes of traditional lores and myths of the Yoruba. This Tola achieved by adapting forms and designs exclusive to indigenous traditions for drawing and painting, and in the process he is able to highlight different African world views and philosophies.

He states that his works are geared towards perpetuating African futurism. They are not only a rebirth of ancient traditions but a re-appraisal of contemporary positions which will eventually pave way for the growth of forms and concepts with a stamp of African dynamism.

Nude paintings also gave him popularity as put in his own words;

"In fact, nude painting gave me a lot of popularity, especially between 1996 and 98. Nudity is purity. I remember in 2004 at a Guinness-sponsored exhibition in London, a woman traveled all the way from Nigeria just to buy my nude paintings. On how I get my models: people beg to model for me. It's a thing of joy to model for a known artist. However, I don't paint the faces of my models and my interpretation of nudity is deep and not actually an amorous sense."

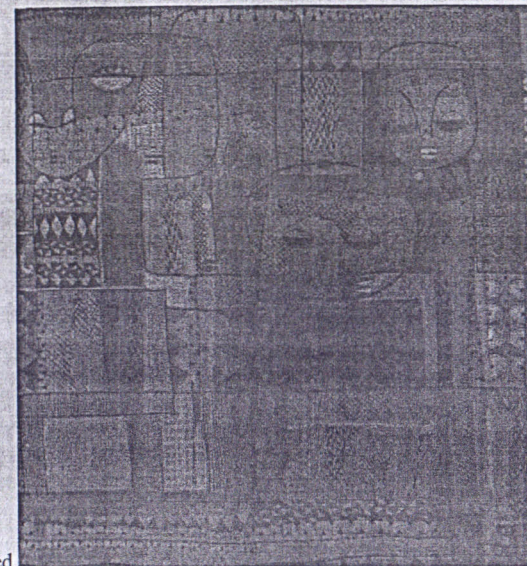
Tola Wewe exemplifies all the traits of genius- including the tendency to be imitated. He however stays ahead of his simulators by constantly adapting his style while inventing new means of creative expression on canvass. He is one of the most innovative and prolific artists of his generation and has been frequently described as one of the most talented minds from the African continent. He has followership that spans the entire African continent and parts of Europe.

He recently participated in a collaborating exhibition with Nike Okundaye at the New Nike Art gallery in Lekki. They worked on the same canvas, produced wonderful masterpieces

and signed together. When Tola was asked about how he felt about working with Nike especially when it had to do with who was the real artist of such works regardless of their joint efforts. Tola simply said that the author of the works is neither Nike nor Wewe but a third artist: “Nike and Wewe.”

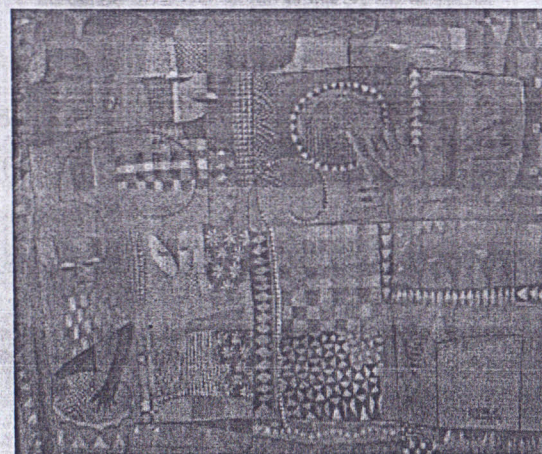
In the collaborative art practice of Tola Wewe and Nike Okundaye there is no much loss of personal identities. Another interesting aspect is that the joint works are produced through a process that does not involve shared research or preliminary discussions on the work, regular interaction between the artists during the production of the work. Tola Wewe leaves freedom to Nike to add, cover or fill-in whatever area of the canvass she decides. More than collaboration it could be called shared production, because they collaborate but, generally, they do not work together. This corresponds to the fact that Tola is not just a man of great art skills but a humble man of good character within and outside the field of art.

Some of the works produced by the third artist “Nike and Wewe” are shown below most of



which were untitled.

“Nike and Wewe”



"Nike and Wewe"



"Nike and Wewe"

3.4 Shows, Exhibitions and Workshops

Tola started exhibiting his paintings regularly since 1989 and many of his paintings are in public and private collections in different parts of the world. Moreover, two paintings were recently collected by the Denver Art Museum, U.S.A. Here are some of his recent exhibitions;

2006

Galerie des Beaux Arts, Heeze, Holland,
modernafricanart exhibition at BTJ, Lund, Sweden

Galerie Im Schlossgarten, Gauangelloch, Germany
modernafricanart exhibition at Mäklarhuset Hellborg and Partners, Lund, Sweden

2005

Coningsby Gallery, London
Neo Art Gallery, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A

2005

Nimbus Art Centre, Lagos, Nigeria

2004

Platteforum, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A
Galerie Im Schlossgarten, Gauangelloch, Germany
Espace Alberica, Paris, France
Nimbus Art Centre, Lagos, Nigeria
12th Pan African Film/Art Festival, Los Angeles, California, USA
Nicon Hilton Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria

2003

Kunst Forum Das Carre, Heidelberg, Germany
Galerie Im Schlossgarten, Gauangelloch, Germany
Elf Village, Port-Harcourt, Nigeria

2002

Galerie Im Schlossgarten, Gauangelloch, Germany

2001

Lola Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria
Parish Gallery, Georgetown, Washington DC, U.S.A

2000

Lola Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria
Centre Culturel Francais, Cotonou, Rep of Benin

3.5 OUTSTANDING AWARDS

June 2005

"Outstanding Alumnus Award" by the Dept. of Fine Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria

Nov. 2004

"Overall Winner" a certificate of merit awarded by GUINNESS Nigeria Plc to Tola Wewe, in a competitive exhibition titled "Working with communities to make life better"

March 2004

"Artist Honoree", an award presented by the County of Los Angeles, California, U.S.A

Aug. 2003

"Merit for Creativity", an award presented by the Culture and Creative Art Forum [CCAF], in recognition of outstanding contribution to creativity

3.6 Techniques and Materials

Wewe contrives within a variety of stylistic experiments. Simply put, his esoteric and mysterious artistic creation cannot be reconciled to a common rationale. He is a succinct draughtsman whose linear drawing is populated with intricate compartments. He explores new frontiers digressing to new styles and techniques without losing touch with the past. He is content with exposition of themes from traditional life. Nevertheless, his translation of reality takes liberties with the traditional rules of perspective in order to achieve a new plastic and religious transcendence.

Hilton Kramer says that

A constant reconsideration and revolution of the past is precisely what the master avant-garde were forcing on the official guardians of the taste, and doing so not out of any contrary, to rescue it from moribund conventions and redefine it in the most vital terms; terms that articulate to the sensibility of age.

Wewe has achieved this feat through his incessant adherence to artistic experimentation and production. His forms, at one point are graciously curvilinear and flowery and at another, rectilinear and uncompromising. They are endowed with a splendid ornamental vigor that is interestingly latent. The opulent repertoires of geometric and organic motifs that adorn his works attest to his *onaist* exploits.

He incubates his pictures with mesmerizing orchestration of colours. He opens vitals of colour application that enhances African hues which could be achieved through vigorous heuristic approach to erudition. He prevails where other artists travail. He poetizes his canvases using earthy colours with cohesive harmony contrary to western hues and tool blending peculiar to post-modern artists. Wewe's works document, religious and other cultural phenomena. It searches for the essential values that celebrate the possibility of evolution and of the transcendence of the African culture.

Over the years he has formulated his own motifs, patterns and decorative symbols, recently, he has been changing motives with alphabets, done in such a way as to converge as hidden words. Such lexicon of images could be traced to "Adire-Eleko" patterns. He consciously strive to make the formulated motifs typically African by exploring folkloric images such as lizards, fish, reptiles, moon, sun, star and many other signs and symbols. Despite Wewe's prolificacy, he hardly repeats the same theme using the same format. He believes that there is honour in diversity and that variety is a condiment to life. According to him, with deliberate effort, the mind will always bring up new ideas, new structures and perhaps new approach. He considers over-repetition or reproduction of a particular theme as an epitome of indolence and ineptitude.

Wewe sometimes uses both oil and acrylic colour in painting. He may use oil colour for the background and the forms and later use acrylic colour for the motifs and other intricacies.

Recently, in a dual exhibition that he did with Nike Okundaye on the 30th of November 2009, Wewe reveals his modest nature as he considers the works done by the both of them as works that were done by a third artist "Nike and Wewe" and neither by him nor by her alone. In as much as one could clearly see the domineering character and features of Wewe's input in some of the works, they were still categorized as their works and equal efforts. As a culture and enthusiast and a deft draughtsman, his works show high technical proficiency and creative experimentation. Wewe has refused to hide under the umbrella of academicism to produce elitist and obscure art. He speaks with his audience through different media of artistic expression. His works are visual metaphor that portrays the aesthetic value inherent in traditional Yoruba art.

Wewe's faithful adherence to exposition and exploration of our traditional legacies is commendable, even in the age of the avant-grade when most artists are treading the path of modern technology and globalization. He uses traditional subject matter, event and ideas and presents them with modern style and technique. His experimental and explorative inclinations made his work to stand the test of time despite the diverse artistic styles that have emerged in Nigeria contemporary art.

3.7 ORAL QUOTES ON TOLA WEWE

His work, defiant of classification, 'silently grows on viewers, blending with their moods, simultaneously taking their minds to strange and familiar colourful places full of false nostalgia. Often the attraction is mutual and instant: for those who can consume the spectacular banquet of colours, Wewe cooks up spicy visual rhythms, sometimes playful, sometimes serious, sometimes dense,

sometimes scattered, carefully orchestrated, although seemingly extravagant.'

(Moyo Okediji, University of Colorado).

What Chinua Achebe is to Nigerian literature is what Tola Wewe (1959) is to the visual arts of his country. Both are respected, have enjoyed international recognition and serve as an example to others. Both, too, go back to the traditional African narrative culture. Wewe reverts his figures to elementary, colourful forms and makes them the main characters in the stories that he remembers from his childhood. Trusted values play a significant role in these oral narratives - in 'The Family' from 2004, for example. Just as Achebe mirrors the Igbo culture, all kinds of symbols from the Yoruba culture can be found in the paintings of Wewe.

Rob Perrée (Amsterdam based Painter and Art Historian)

This statesmanlike bearded artist makes colourful paintings incorporating stories from his youth and symbols of the Yoruba culture. He won international acclaim with solo exhibitions in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States. The Denver Art Museum's curator of African and Oceanic Art hailed him as one of the greatest talents on the African continent. Wewe himself says fame in your own country is a precondition for an international breakthrough. So what are we talking about? Tola is simply wonderful...

Fenneken Veldkamp (Editor-in-chief to Museum Tijdschrift)

Promoting the work of women is my business and being like a mother to him our collaboration worked out. He is one of the most prolific artists in Nigeria and I am not saying this because he is close to me.

Nike Okundaye (Painter)

Wewe's non-conformist, highly intellectual approach to creativity no doubt places him in a class of his own. We are convinced that he has broken new grounds in the use of forms structure and patterns which fuse together to produce unique imagery and vocabulary for creative expressions.

Don Akatakpo (Painter and Historian)

What really baffles me about Tola is that there is a way he places his elementary and colourful figures next to each other on the

canvas without concerning himself about any factors such as perspective or the setting in time and space. However, the main characters in his stories are more abstractly depicted and surround themselves with fewer of the symbols that are so important to Tola Wewe. This abstraction tilts his paintings towards a more universal, but at the same time sometimes a more mysterious level. Indeed he is the master.

Gbolahan Ayoola (Painter)

Tola Wewe is easily recognized as Nigeria's most famous living artist not because he has won awards both nationally and internationally and has passionate followers among collectors in Nigeria or his works are on display in museums in Europe and the United States where he has also had numerous successful solo exhibitions but because he has proven to be on top in Nigeria. Just last year he won the top Prize for the Guinness Artists' Competition and represented Nigeria at a solo Exhibition at the Cornings by Gallery in London and also held solo exhibitions in Germany and The Netherlands. To me he is just the one the world has been looking for...Wao! Have you seen his recent works?

Adewole Ajala (Painter and Curator)

All I can say is that I like his works. Tola Wewe's works are known for their originality, simplicity, surface texture and inviting colours.

Akanimoh Umoh (Painter and Illustrator)

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Summary of Findings

Wewe's artistic career since over two decades has undergone diverse experimental approach to creativity. As one of the spiritual heirs of Ondo and a modern experimental artist, he articulates indigenous forms and philosophies by using them to explore new visual possibilities. Suffice it to say, his philosophy of art is to project African identity by adopting traditional art forms to suit present-day realities by using symbols, forms and motifs from Yoruba social and religious paradigms. The compilation of works analysed here were selected from Wewe's collection, especially the ones characterised with heavy use of indigenous motifs.



"Tribute to womanhood", 2001. acrylic on canvas 3x4ft

In the above painting "tribute to womanhood" there is an attempt to preserve the Yoruba culture as the theme connotes, it is the tribute to womanhood and looking closely at the work, one would

not help but notice that the artist tries to depict women in cultural dresses and the type of robes won by these women can be likened to the ones won the women in Nigeria specifically in the Yoruba land. The painting pays homage, respect and honour to the Nigerian women using the Yoruba culture as the tool of expression. Wewe tries to play around harmonious colours and in so doing he uses the ash, brown and yellow as his dominant colours. Above all, Wewe was able to achieve that traditional and cultural feature of this piece by exploring the use of motifs and symbols like the diamond shaped eye and the linear-crack motif that originated from the famous adire of the Yoruba people.



"Folk tale", 2002. oil on canvas 3x9ft

Here, one can clearly see the mastery use of motifs and symbols by the artist to portray his concept and idea. Just like the theme "tales by moon light" Wewe tries to depict his idea in two

boarder lines. The first which can be regarded as the frame of the painting and the other the moon in which the tales are been told. In the former, he used one colour to separate the frame from the tales. This is intended to avoid what he calls overcrowding of irrelevant forms and colours and tries to focus the viewer's eyes on the main subject of the painting. In the later, he uses several forms and motifs not just from the Yoruba culture but also from the *uli* and *nsibidi* popular to the Igbo culture. The motifs gotten from the *nsibidi* culture include the lizard, cutlass and the traveler symbol. Other symbols and motifs like the complex geometric shapes, owo iwa omo (money, character, child) the linear crack motif and the complex linear motives are all gotten from Yoruba geometric motifs.



"Polygamy", 2001. oil on canvas 3x4ft

On this beautiful piece where red is the dominant colour used, Wewe tries to explain the menace in a polygamous home. This is one work that is dominant of one colour but cannot be easily noticed. Other colours include green, blue, and purple among others. The red is used as the dominant colour because it reflects danger, risks, peril, threat and jeopardy. A closer look at this painting reveals abstract images grouped into two and the center image supposedly to be husband

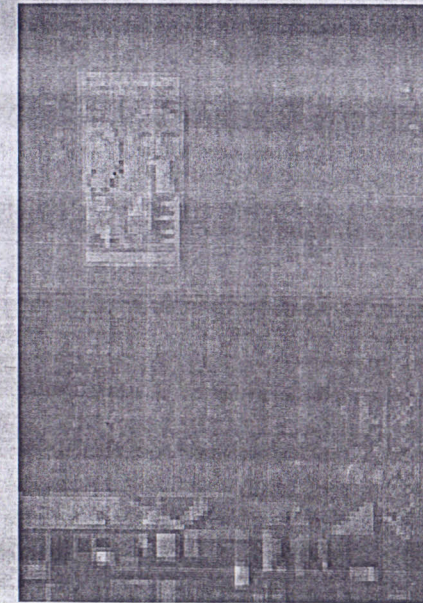
to the wives on both sides. The image in the outer front is supposedly to be the village priest who has come to settle the dispute among the wives and their children. On this work Wewe manages to use very limited motifs but one would think he used several of them. This is another prove of his mastery of these forms and motifs. The motifs used here are the chequered motif, the geometric balancing of space motif, the complex geometric shapes symbol and the triangular square chequered motif. All these motifs are used in uniformity in such a way that they appear similar.



"In the Beginning", 1999. oil on canvas 4x3feet

This work is typical of the monochromatic feature of Tola Wewe's works. It is dominant of two colours with only a touch of blue while the dominant colours are yellow ochre and brown. Like

the title "in the beginning", it reveals two images most likely to be Adam and Eve from the creation story where they ate the forbidden fruit and saw that were naked because they had known right from wrong. This is why they try to cover their nakedness with their own hands as shown above. Wewe uses only two images in this painting to create that sense of originality and also, he plays around the background of the work with motifs and symbols. The motifs too were limited as he uses the diamond - shaped eye motif, the owo, iwa omo also known as the money, character and child motif and the linear crack motif. These motifs were used in such a way that one would think the artist employed the use of too many motifs but a closer look at the painting will reveal the reverse.



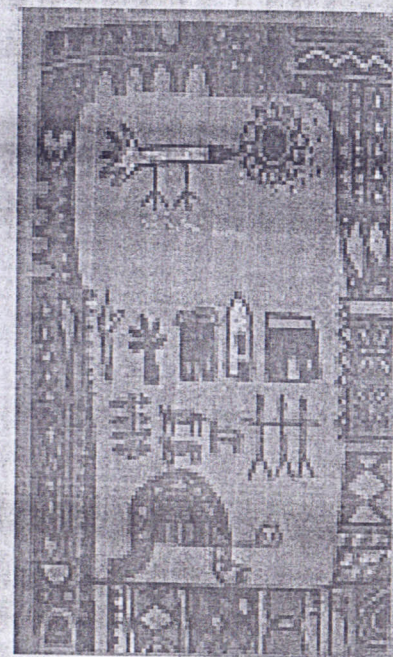
"Fortune of Creation" 1994

In the "Fortune of Creation", Wewe tries to explain how important the world is, what lies in it and the beautiful mystery behind the creation story. More than half of the entire painting was dedicated to the sky thereby where the main theme lies. Up in the sky which is painted blue, Wewe introduces a rectangular plate-like form that he describes as the fortune of God. The form is painted yellow ochre on the blue sky to create that distinctive contrast between the two. The whole idea is to make it very obvious. One will also notice the houses below even though they look typical of the artist's style but most importantly Wewe employed the use of traditional forms and motifs only on the sky to show the importance of the space above and to create that area of focus. The motifs used on this painting are also few. They include the spiral motif, owo, iwa omo (money, character, child) and the triangular public area motif. These motifs are gotten from the Yoruba culture.



"Silhouette at Dawn", 2003

In this piece, Wewe further shows his mastery in monochrome. The only colour used here is burnt umber and the other colours were gotten from the shading and tinting the original colour (burnt umber). Just like the name "silhouette at dawn" it shows the shades of standing images at the first light or day break. The medium of this work is smeared acrylic on canvas. Some of the images are deliberate while the rest are not but they all appear to be deliberate. No specific motif is used in this painting but the abstraction of the painting is a very importance characteristic to this research work.



"Once Upon a Time", 2004. acrylic on canvas

"Once upon a time" is one painting that reveals the artist's love for colours. One would easily notice the variety of colours employed by the artist to portray his idea. The colours include

yellow ochre, red, blue, burnt umber and deep blue. Symbols and motifs are not left out here as they play important role on this piece. Children motifs are employed here to create that sense of the very start and early beginning. Once upon a time talks about the early times when the naira had value and when the economy was good and tries to compare it to the present. This is another work of Wewe that reveals the use of the *uli* and *Nsibidi* motifs popularly from the Igbo traditional society. They include the male symbol, the duck symbol and the hut symbol while others like the geometric space balancing, the linear crack symbol, linear motifs and the sun surrounded by cowries symbol are typical of the Yoruba traditional symbols. It is important to state here that the later were used for the boarder while the former were used as the body of the painting.



"Family", 2003. Oil and acrylic on canvas 122x117cm

On this eight figured painting titled "family" Wewe tries to express his innermost feelings about a family. One cannot help but notice how these figures are stylishly merged together. The idea

behind the merging of these images is show oneness and shows how a true family should be. The blue figures represent the parents while the other colours represent the children. The blue image on the left side represents the male and the bread winner of the family while the other on the right hand side represents the wife. This is very typical of the Nigerian culture where it is hardly seen that a man is standing on the right side of his wife when standing side by side with his wife. As usual different motifs are used on this piece of work and they include most of the geometric and sculpture derived motifs.



"Marriage", 2004. Oil on canvas 67x73cm

"Marriage" is another interesting work from Tola's archive. It reveals a union of two people, the father and the mother and at a closer look, one would notice a third party in between the two images. This third image is formed by joining the father image and the mother image. It is the outcome of the union. Wewe tries to differentiate these images using colours that differ. The male image is represented using the darkest shade of brown most likely to be burnt umber, the

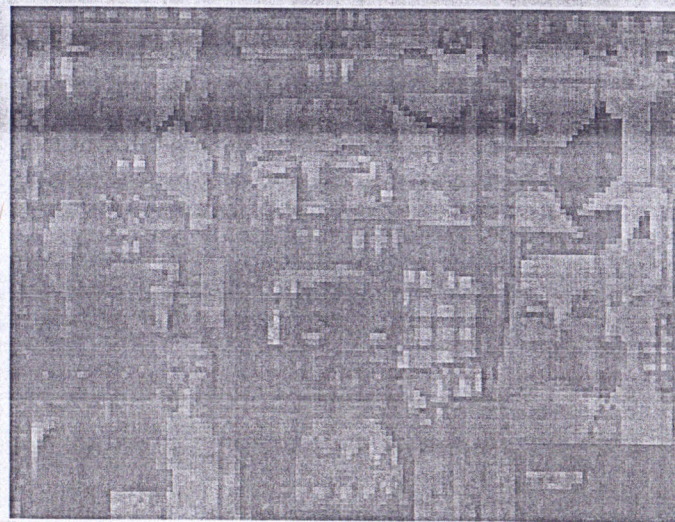
female image is represented using the light orange colour and in between them is the child who is represented using neither a very dark colour nor a very light colour but a shade of blue that can stand in between and complements the both colours. Another important thing worth noticing is how the faces of the parents come together and form the face of the child. Most importantly is how the motifs and symbols are stylishly used. The most frequent used motif is the spidery motifs among others like the linear zigzag, the linear crack motif and the ovals and invented triangles motifs. These motifs are used in such a way that they do not interfere with the main theme of the work.



"Tortoise Tale" oil on canvas

This is one work that makes one to wonder how Wewe gets his inspiration. Apart from the embossed quality that is easily noticed on this work, one would not help but notice the way this single art work is stylishly divided into segments in such a way that they link up together to tell a

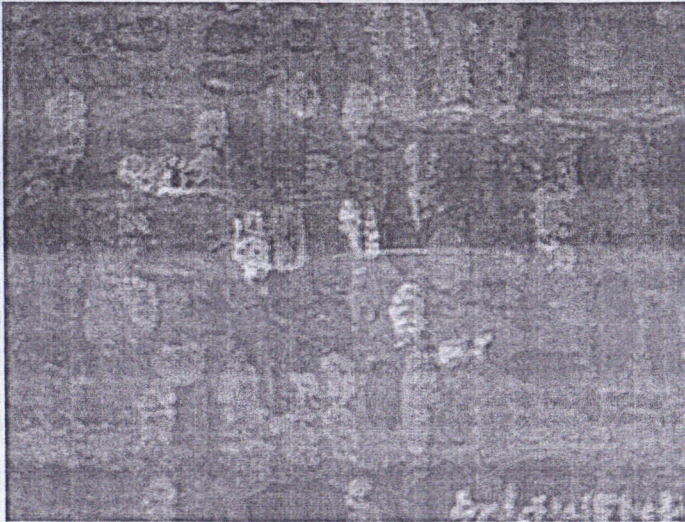
single story. The dominant colour used here is the shade of yellow used at the background. The tortoise is the protagonist of this piece and on the lower region it is seen walking majestically as a sign of bravery or gallantry. Wewe tries to suggest the main hero using a colour that stands out. The reddish brown is used only for the tortoise and its walkway. This is another work that is dominant of traditional symbols and motifs. They are the ovals and inverted triangles motif, the geometric balancing of space motif, geometric balancing motif, flora motif, leaves motif, spidery motif and the hut motifs. These motifs were not randomly selected and each and every one of them has a meaning related to telling tales. No wonder the artist uses them to express his idea.



"Tribute to Woman" oil on canvas

"Tribute to woman" is a feminine piece. Mere looking at this painting gives one that feeling of womanhood. Female images are seen all around adorned with their beads and necklaces. The dominant colour used here is the sap green showing that rich quality of the woman especially the African woman. The motifs seen here include the complex geometric shape motif, the crystal

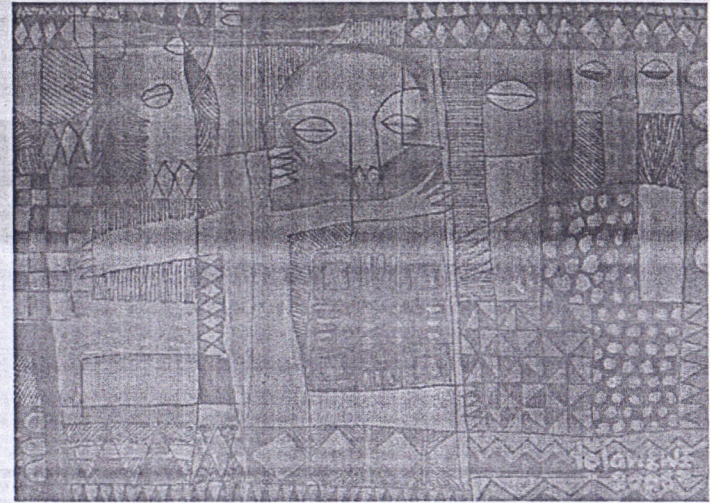
chains motif, the inverted v motif and many others. These motifs are used to honour the African woman.



“Wahala” oil on canvas

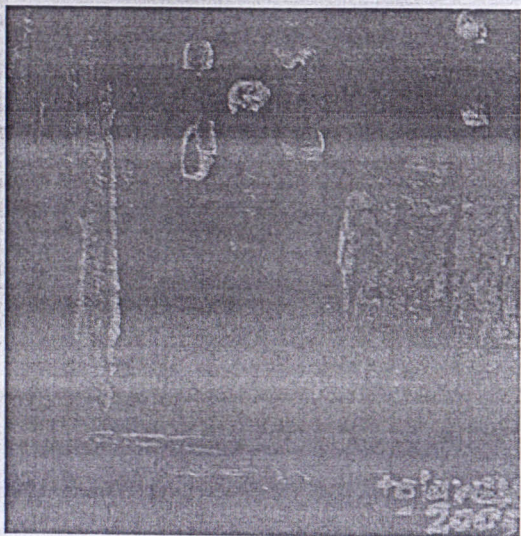
Sometimes a simple demonstration on a piece of work can really be creatively interesting and this piece is not left out in this maxim. Some brush strokes on a light blue background is what one might conclude at the sight of this painting but a closer look at the work will reveal a sense of revolution, plot, catastrophe, panic, unrest, disaster, violence, calamity, upheaval, tragedy and above all uneasiness. This is why we look deep into the African culture and emerges with that singular word that can mean the same as all of the words mentioned above. “Wahala” is vernacular and a colloquial speech used as an everyday language in Africa particularly in Nigeria. The arrangements of these strokes are random, unsystematic, without caution and may even be unintentional. Furthermore, a collection of some of these strokes may create a kind of

traditional symbol that could mean “wahala” like the grouping of the upper right part of the painting.



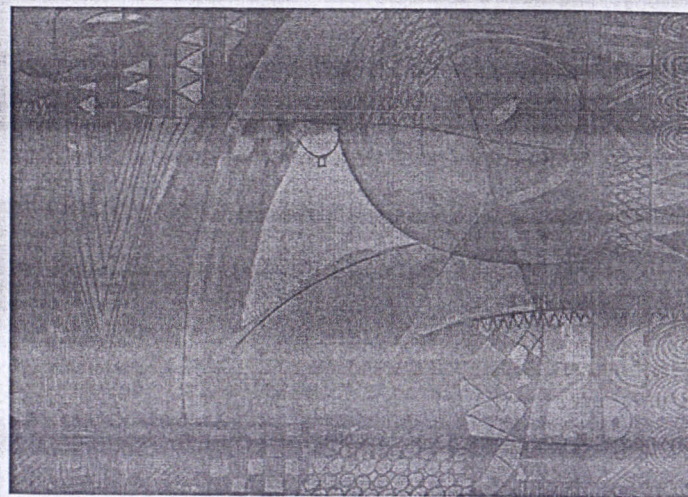
“Separation” acrylic on canvas

This is one painting that can be viewed from many sides without losing its quality. The dominant colour here is blue and the whole idea is detachment, division and disunion. Looking at the painting as a whole, one would observe the way the images are placed in isolation. The images can be likened to brothers of the same parents who because of one reason or the other hate each other and have decided to separate. The oneness of colour shows that unity before the separation. Meanwhile, in terms of traditional art symbols and motifs, this painting is not left out. There are very little motifs used in this painting and they include the linear crack motif, the chequered motif, the triangular- square motif, linear motif, geometric balancing motif among others.



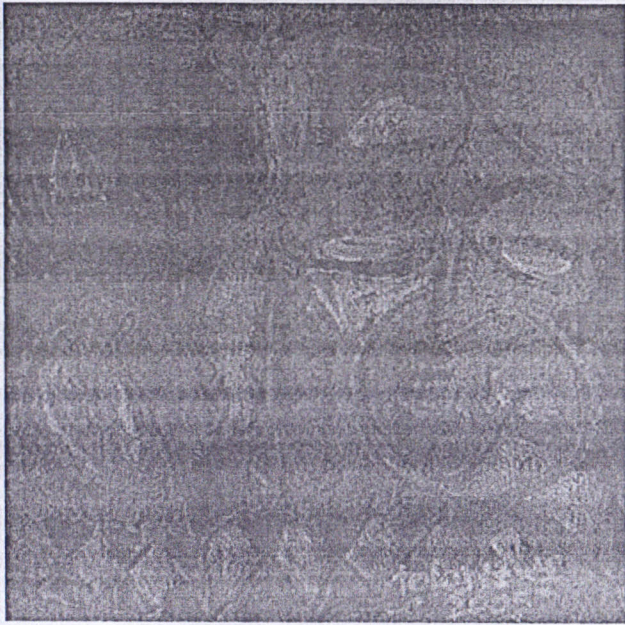
"Remembrance" oil on canvas

Remembrance is a painting that has to do with the dead. It is a painting done with more dark colours than light colours. The white patches reveal the deceased ones in white robes and the left part of the work show the mourners of the deceased. This is another painting that on a first glance, one would think there are no motifs employed by the artists but a closer look reveals the reverse. The *opon-ifa* symbol is one motif employed by the artist to d this work.



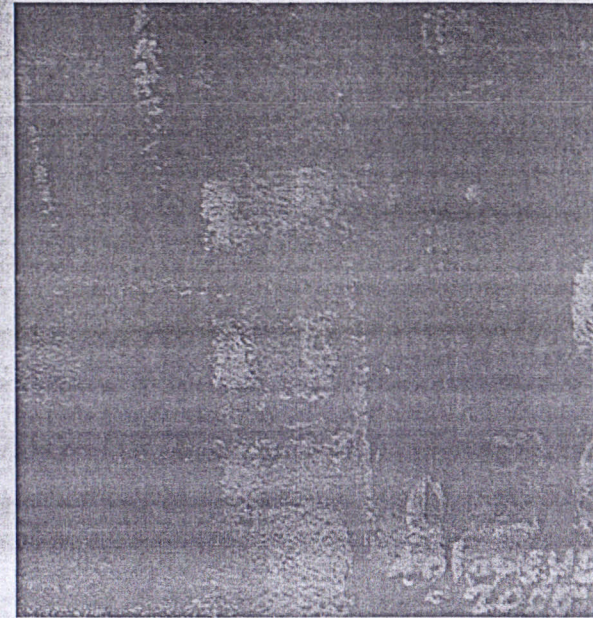
"Mystery" acrylic on canvas

In this work, Wewe has created a vocabulary of shapes improvised from circles, squares and triangles. The dominant colour here is a shade of yellow ochre and burnt umber mixed together. The motifs employed by the artist include the complex geometric shape motif, the linear crack motif, the chequered motif, the inverted Vs motif, the linear motif and many others. These motifs are used by the artist to enable him express "the unknown" as he terms it "Mystery".



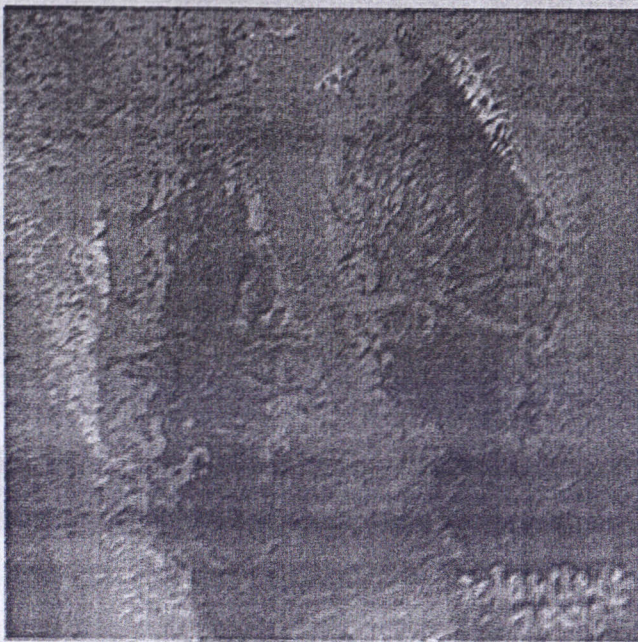
“Man and Woman” oil on canvas

This is a work that many may consider as too abstract. It reveals two images supposedly to be a male and a female. The images blend so well into the background that one can hardly tell the demarcation. The only motif used by the artist is the linear crack motif and it is seen on the lower part of the painting.



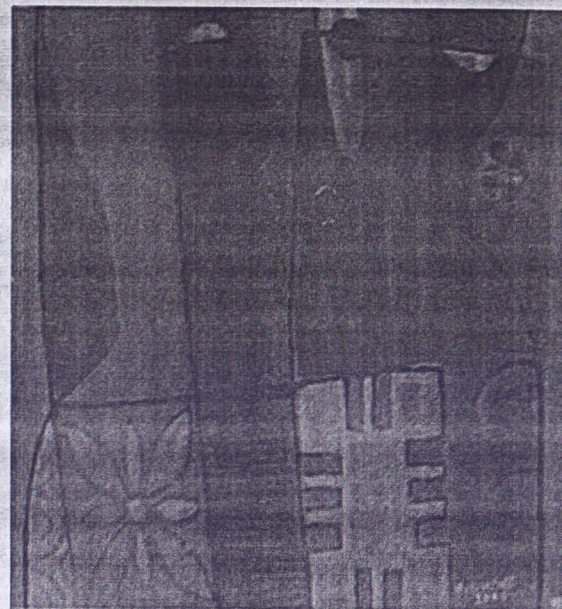
“Life” oil on canvas

“Life” is another painting that some may see as too abstract to interpret or understand. Weve tries to existence in a way that is mysterious, a way that few people would understand and so he chooses to paint this interesting piece of art. The whole painting is entirely in abstract form no doubt, but a study of the painting will reveal the deepest meaning of human existence. Life like we all know is full of ups and downs, ups may mean good fortune and tidings while downs on the other hand may signify miss fortune, catastrophe, disappointments, failure or even death. These signs are represented in colours. The good signs vary in degree so are the light colours on this painting and the bad signs too vary and are represented with dark colours close to black. A rough look at the painting will reveal the balance between these two phenomena. There are little or no motifs used in this painting but the source of the inspiration is highly commendable.



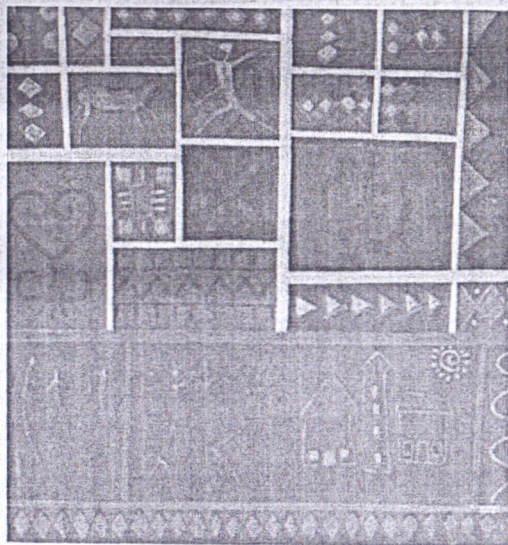
"Sisters" oil on canvas

Though this painting may be regarded as vague but the message is clear. "Sisters" is another painting that shows Wewe's prowess in controlling the brush. Take the background of this work for example where several dots are made in form of pointillism using the brush. Contrasting colours like the blue and oranges are used to create that sharp and distinctive quality. The sisters are painted in blue while orange and reddish orange are used for the background. The sharpest red is used on the lips of the sisters and the elongated heads suggest the typical woven hair style of the African women.



"In Love" acrylic on canvas

"In love" is one painting that reveals the artist love for passion and tenderness. Blue is a colour that depicts, affection, romance, friendship, amity, love and adoration, no wonder the artist choose to use the colour as the dominant colour in this painting. A glance at this painting creates a kind of amorous atmosphere. On this painting two images can be seen side by side, the one on the left is most likely to be the male and the one on the right the female. The male can be seen trying to kiss the female while she romantically turns her face to the side not as a sign of regret or unhappiness but telling the male to push on. The motifs used by the artist include the flora motif, the geometric balancing, the encircled crossed motif, the interlocking letter O motif and few others.



"Hunters Paradise" oil on canvas

On this painting, weve displays his mastery of using traditional symbols and motifs in a way that it does not affect the beauty of the entire work. Diverse motifs run across the figures from the top to the bottom of the canvas amalgamating into a rhythmic flow of patterns. One can comfortably say that Wewe was inspired by the African textile characteristics because mere looking at this piece one would think it was designed for a textile or any cloth manufacturing company in Africa. On another hand, "Hunters paradise" is one painting that reminds one of the early discoveries of cave paintings especially the one at Lascaux in France where the hunters have to evoke the spirits of the animals in the cave before they go hunting to ensure a successful hunt. On this painting, images of animals, humans and traditional symbols are all merged together to fit into twenty three portions. The dominant colours used here is red and the motifs employed by

the artist include the linear crack motif, the "owo iwa omo" motif, the sunflower radiance motif, the triangular square chequered motif, the hut motif and the hut symbols.

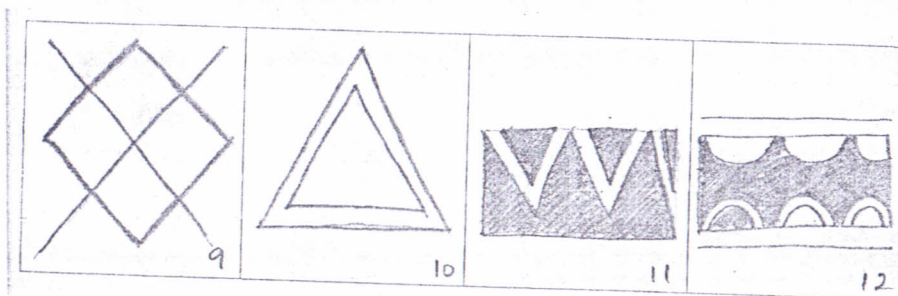
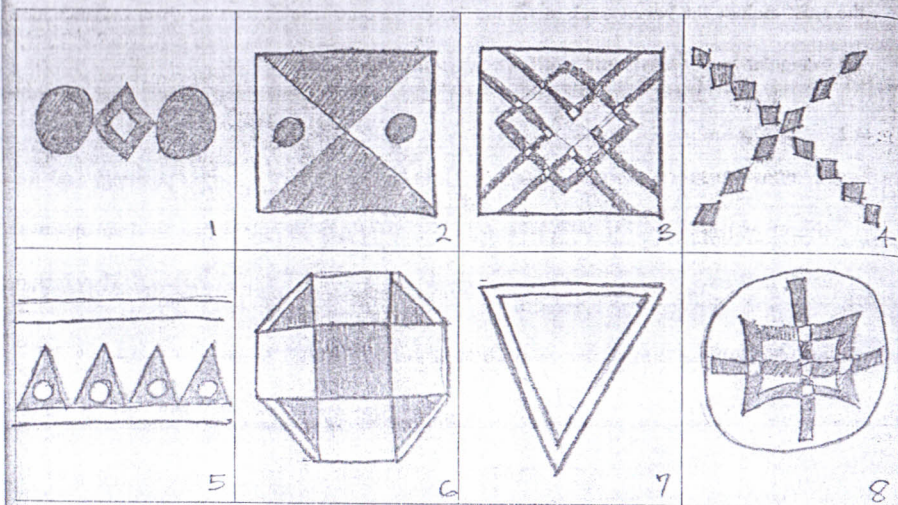
4.2 Motifs analysis Based on their Meaning and Usage

Wewe employed several traditional symbols and motifs to do his paintings and for a clearer understanding, these motifs were therefore grouped according to their origin and usage in Wewe's works. They were grouped into eight segments and analyzed. They include;

1. The Geometric Motifs
2. The Organic Motifs
3. The Techno Morph Motifs
4. The Animal Motifs
5. The Bird Motifs
6. The Nature Inspired Motifs
7. The Utilitarian Inspired Motifs And Symbols
8. The Lettering Motifs
9. The Motifs And Symbols Derived From Sculpture

4.2.1 The Geometric Motifs

This is one group of motifs that are very visible in Wewe's paintings. Such paintings include the 'Nike and Wewe I', 'Nike and Wewe II', 'Nike and Wewe III', 'tribute to womanhood' and 'folktale' among others. These are motifs that were gotten or inspired by geometric shapes like the circle, triangle, square, rectangle, polygon, hexagon, pentagon among others and sometimes more than one of these shapes are mixed to form a particular shape. In the illustration below, one can clearly see these geometric inspired motifs and how they were invented and initiated.

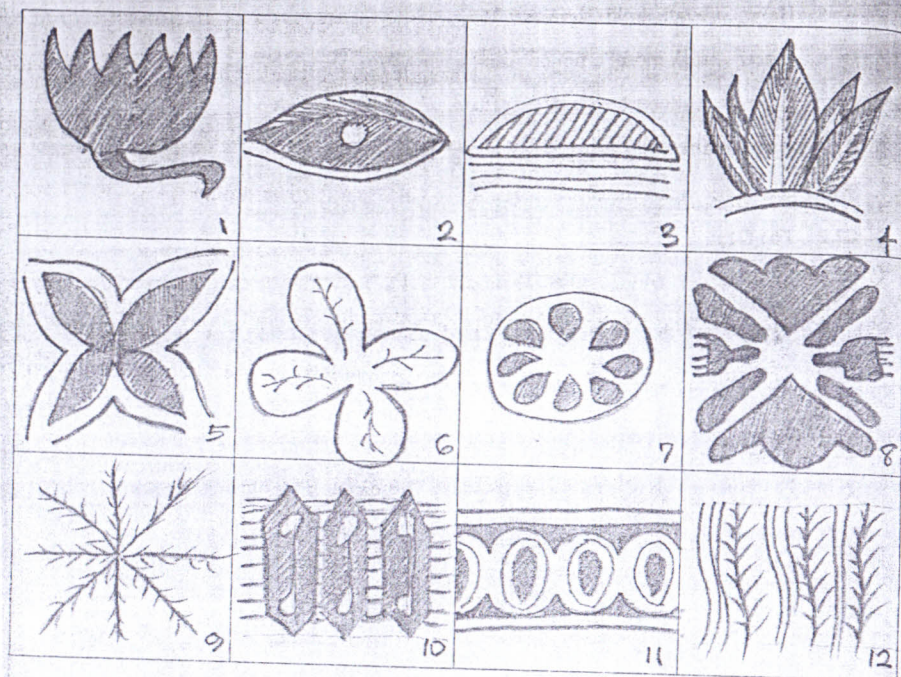


1. Ovals and invented triangles
2. Invented triangles in square shape
3. Complex linear motif: balancing of volume
4. Crystal chains: affluence (craft)
5. Complex geometric shapes (embroidery)
6. Complex geometric shapes (embroidery)
7. Triangle: public Area, great generative power (shrine/Craft)

8. Heart: Strength, bold (shrine/craft)
9. Linear - crack motif: eruption (calabash/adire)
10. Arrow - heads: straightway evil attack wood carving/craft
11. Geometric balancing of space: decorative (craft motif)
12. Geometric balancing II

4.2.2 The Organic Motifs

Just like the name implies, these are motifs gotten from organic materials. They are organic in the sense that they are unprocessed, unrefined, untreated, raw and green. One would notice that the motifs entails only plants and portray the green characteristic of plants. These symbols can be seen in some of Wewe's paintings like in the 'folktale', in 'once upon a time', in 'in love' and 'in the 'tortoise tale' among others. These motifs are illustrated below:

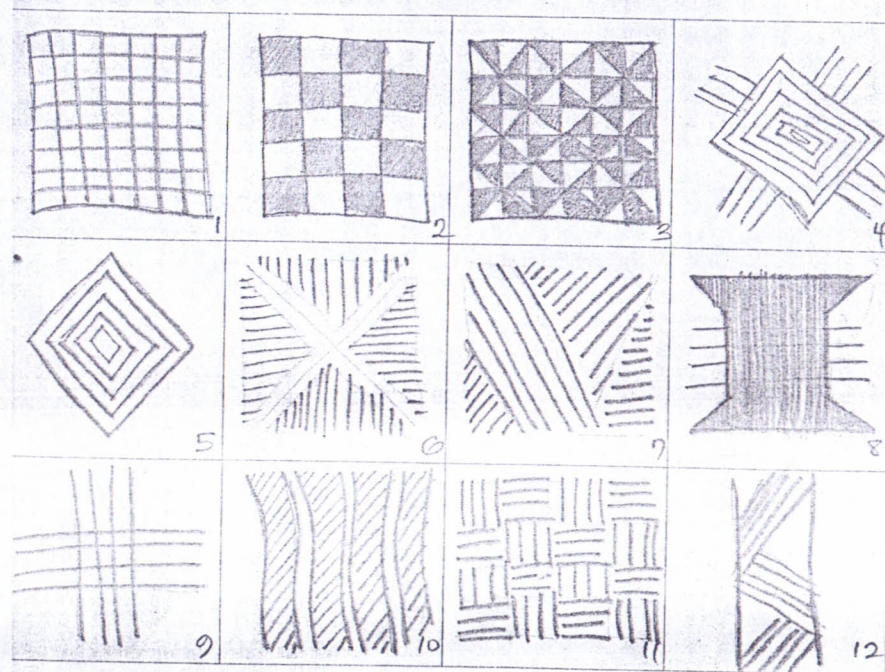


1. Stylized bird/flora motif
2. Eye motif; monitor (sculpture)
3. Turtle motif
4. Plant – life motif (growth)
5. Flora motif blossom (olokun adire design) I
6. Flora motif blossom (olokun adire design) II
7. Pod motif (seed; life)
8. Invented flowers and comb (stylized): Separation
9. Leaves. Chieftaincy (Adire)
10. Fruit/pod motif (adire an calabash) I
11. Fruit/pod motif (adire an calabash) II

12. Trees and leaves Chieftaincy (calabash/adire)

4.2.3 The Techno Morph Motifs

These types of motifs are the type that are gotten or inspired by repeating strokes and lines. This can be done in a vertical, horizontal, diagonal or mixed block way such that the repeated strokes are noticeable. The techno-morph motifs can also be referred to as the synthesized duplicated pattern and are evident in most of Wewe paintings like the 'tribute to womanhood', 'mystery', 'polygamy', 'separation', and 'tribute to woman' among others. These symbols are illustrated below.

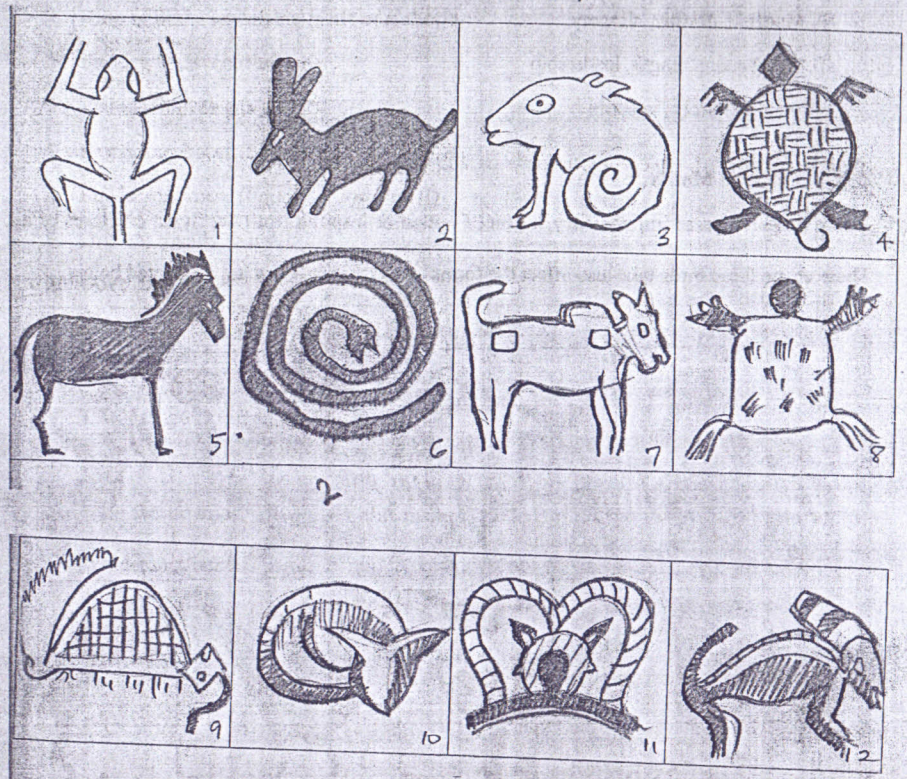


1. Square/box motif (linear)
2. Chequered motif (matting)

3. Triangular-square chequered motifs (weaving)
4. Spidery motifs: (threading I)
5. Spidery motifs: (threading II)
6. Linear motifs: (decorative I)
7. Linear motifs: (decorative II)
8. Aso- Ofi motif (weaving)
9. Embroidery- linear motif
10. Feather motif
11. Basket motif (weaving/matting)
12. Linear Zigzag motif (treading/weaving)

4.2.4 The Animal Motifs

These are symbols that are animal inspired. The form of the animal affects the form of the motifs. These are equally evident in some of Wewe's paintings and they include the 'folktale', 'once upon a time', 'tortoise tale' and 'hunter's paradise'. These motifs are illustrated below.



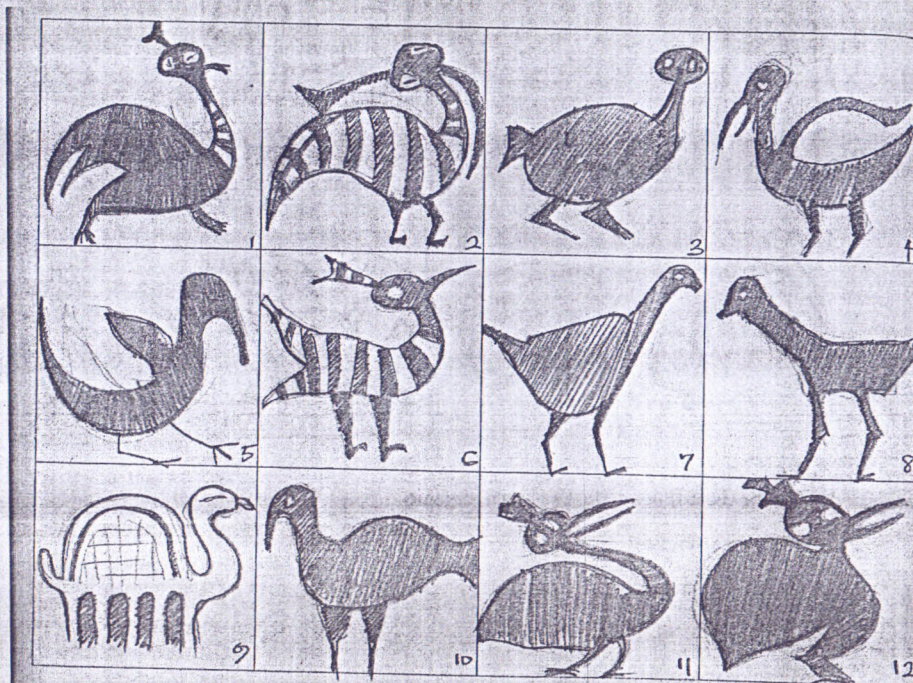
1. Reptile (lizard): long life, bad omen, organic
2. Hare: trickster, fast
3. Chameleon: transformative power
4. Turtle: swiftness, crafty, wisdom
5. Horse: grace, prestige, strength
6. Snakes: Yoruba universe, unending world (cynical), swift retributive powers
7. Goat: stubbornness
8. Tortoise: wisdom, perseverance, crafty
9. Crested reptile: destiny, life source

10. Mudfish: destiny, slippery
11. Ram head: strength, leadership
12. Monkey: tricks, wisdom

4.2.5 The Bird Motifs

Like the name implies, they are motif gotten or inspired from the flying creatures of air.

These shape these birds take also affect the forms of the motifs. They are illustrated below.

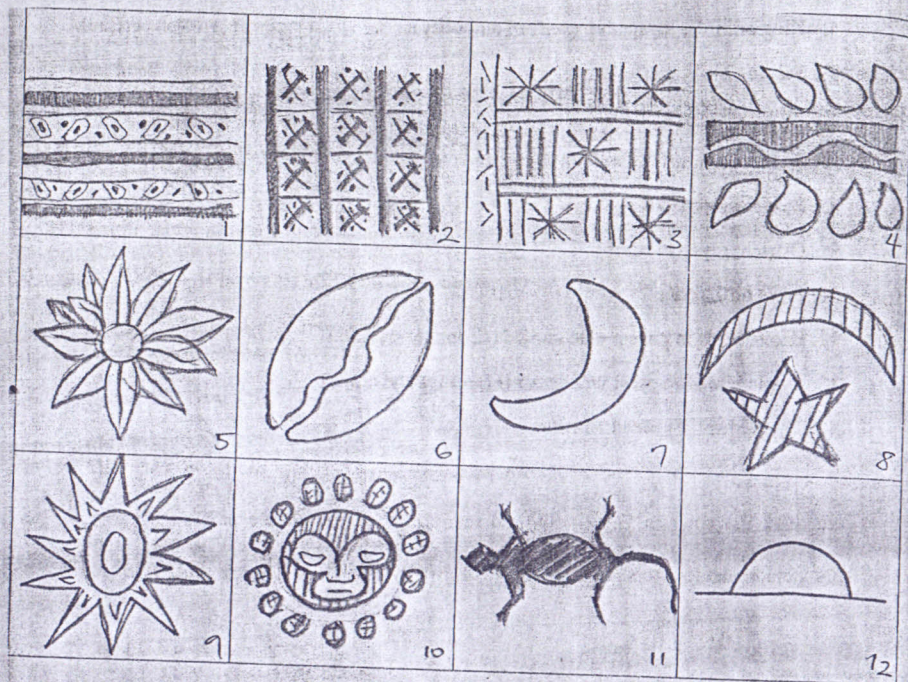


1. Exotic bird: elegance
2. Twisted bird: defiance
3. Bird with bold beak: strength

4. King of birds: leadership (staff of authority)
5. Surging birds: confusion
6. Flared wing: elegance
7. Fowls: meekness (Egungun Costume I)
8. Fowls: meekness (Egungun Costume II)
9. Ostrich: royalty (comb)
10. Dove bird, peace
11. Exotic birds in poses: witchcraft I (shrines and crafts)
12. Exotic birds in poses: witchcraft II (shrines and crafts)

4.2.6 The Nature Inspired Motifs

Wewe employed these motifs in few of his paintings. These are motifs gotten from everyday nature. Like the cowries, moon, sun and many others. Few of the paintings evident of such motifs include; the 'hunters paradise' and 'Nike and Wewe III'. They are illustrated below.

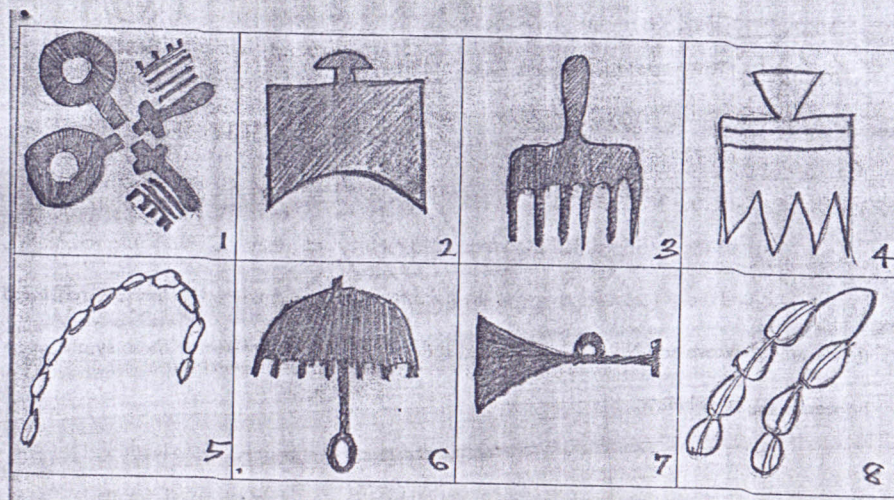


1. Pod motif: abundance
2. Forest motif (crafts)
3. Stars broken with vertical lines: destiny (crafts)
4. Trees (organic and geometric): Growth
5. Sunflower: radiance (crafts)
6. Cowry: affluence and sacrifice
7. Crescent moon: growth
8. Crescent moon and star: Islamic (foreign element)
9. Radiating sun motif: glory, honour
10. Sun surrounded by cowries motif: light, wealth
11. Lizard/gecko motif: fertility/omen

12. Rising sun: emergence, expectation

4.2.7 The Utilitarian Inspired Motifs and Symbols

These are the motifs that are gotten from everyday objects used by the traditional people. Wewe equally employed these symbols in few of his works to show that sense of continuity in the Yoruba traditional society. Such works that are evident of these motifs include the 'tribute to woman', 'nike and wewe II', 'folk tale', and 'once upon a time'.



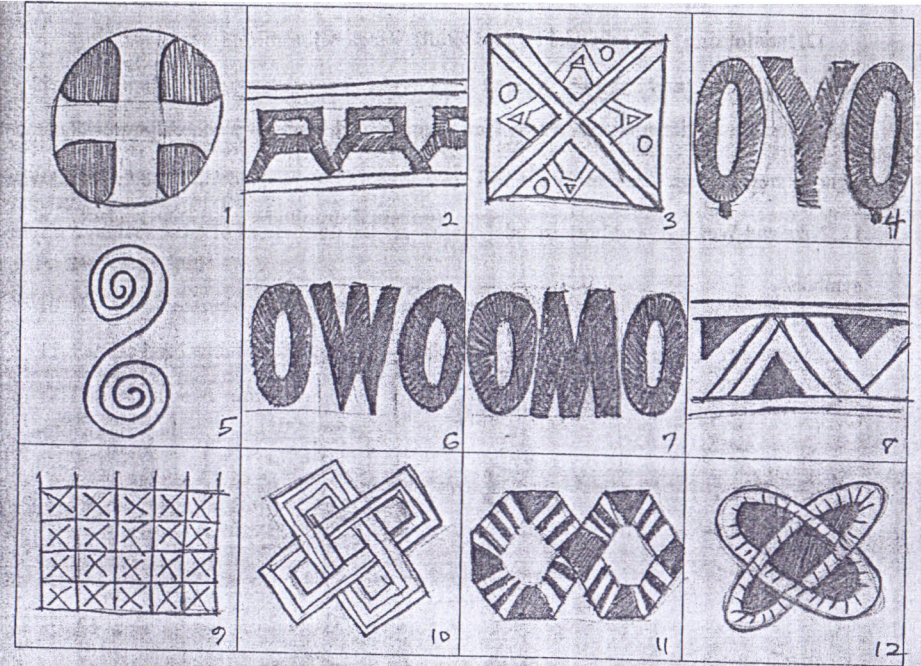
1. Keys and stars; doors of opportunity (modern adaptation)
2. Slate-Islamic plate, play dolls (foreign element)

4. Combs II: ooya (separation, divorce)
5. Diviners chain (opele): vision, foresight deep knowledge
6. Umbrella: shelter, prestige, affluence
7. Trumpet/Flute kakaki: information, news, merriment
8. Seeded chain (opele): wisdom, foresight, hindsight
9. Royal emblem: pendant: royalty grace (Ifa head)
10. Tie strap pendant: royalty grace (Ifa head)
11. Stylized bowl: support, love (art object)
12. Ground motif: harvest, happiness

4.2.8 The Lettering Motifs

These are the motifs coined from letters. In other words, they are letters inspired motifs.

We employed these symbols on few of the paintings that were analyzed by the researcher and they are; the 'Wewe and Nike III', 'folk tale' and fortune. The illustration of these symbols can be seen in the table below.



1. Encircled crossed/crucible (foreign adaptation)
2. Letter A,R (geometric)
3. Letter A as star motif: (embroidery)
4. Oyo (name of a Yoruba town)
5. Letter S as spiral motif (embroidery)
6. Owo, iwa, omo I (money, character, child)
7. Owo, iwa, omo II (money, character, child)
8. Inverted Vs (geometric)
9. Multiple boxed letter X
10. Letter X as motif: wire/net

11. Interlocking letter O: omo (craft)

12. Interlocking letter spherical O: omo (craft)

4.2.9 The Motifs and Symbols Derived from Sculpture

These are the motifs used by Wewe that were derived from African sculpture, monument, figurine and carvings. Very few works that are evident of these symbols are; the 'nike and wewe I', 'Nike and Wewe II' and 'tortoise tale'. Below are the illustrations of these sculpture inspired symbols.



1. Kneeling nude figure: humidity, fertility

2. Ose sango: ferociousness (sango-wand)

3. Opon- ifa : fore knowledge, wisdom (ifa divination tray)

4. Half-closed eye: soberness (sculpture)

5. Oval squinted eye: moody (sculpture)

6. Diamond-shaped eye: glittering (sculpture)

7. Eye with decorative brow, decorative motifs: abundance (carving)

8. Oval eye with hole: emotional (sculpture)

9. Nose (carving)

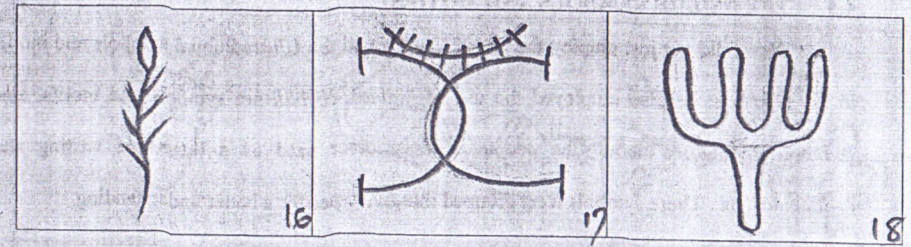
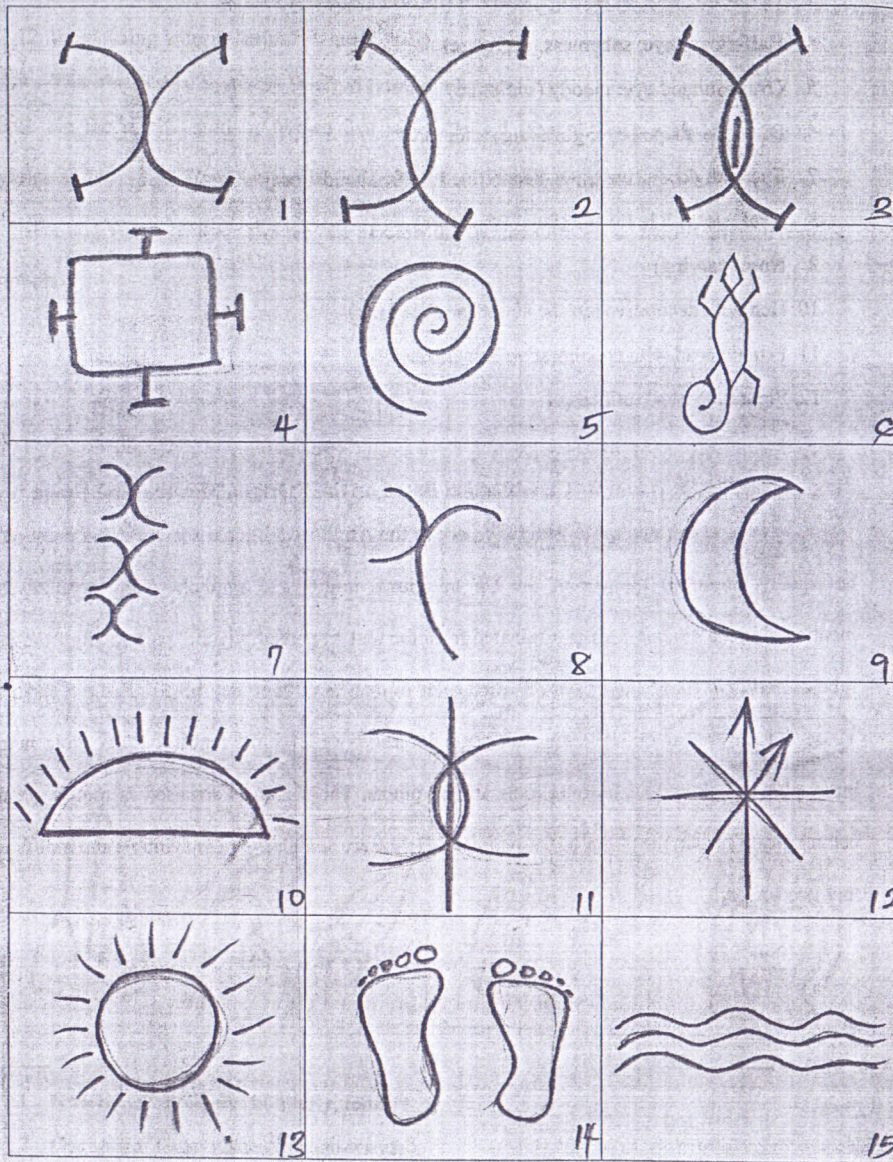
10. Hen with decorative motifs: abundance (carving)

11. Female head with collaborative hair-do destiny

12. Figurative bowl: utilitarian

4.3 The *Uli* Motifs and Its Classification Based on their Origin, Meaning and Usage

Wewe, in his attempt to generally portray the African traditional society in his paintings, he equally employed the use of the *Uli* traditional motifs and symbols. These symbols as mentioned in the second chapter originated from the eastern part of Nigeria, particularly from the Igbo society. *Uli* motifs and symbols often refer to images of everyday life of the Igbo society. These include the moon, the sun, wild and domesticated animals, reptiles, fruits (kola nuts) birds, plants cooking and farming tools among others. These images are used as motifs which communicate certain messages to the recipient. Below are some of the *Uli* symbols and motifs of the Igbo society.



1. Friendship
2. Marriage
3. Marriage with a child
4. Mirror image
5. Growth/Continuity
6. Co-existence
7. Isi-oji
8. Isi-oji
9. Half moon
10. Rising sun
11. Divorce
12. Compass
13. Sun
14. Foot print
15. Stream/river
16. Life
17. Marriage with many children
18. Comb

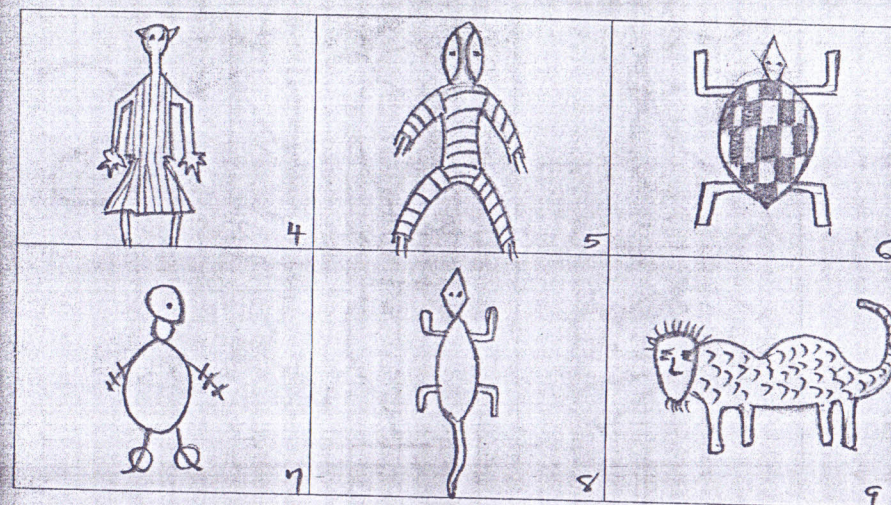
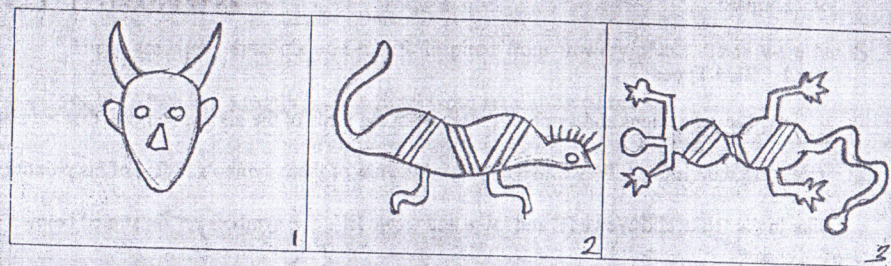
4.4 THE NSIBIDI SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS

We were did not just employ the use of Yoruba and the *Uli* traditional symbols and motifs in his paintings; he also employed the use of *Nsibidi*. *Nsibidi* are symbols and motifs, also common in Nigeria among the people of cross river used as a means of writing and communication. These symbols were grouped into five types for a better understanding.

1. Animal Types
2. Bird Types
3. Floral Types
4. Inorganic Types

4.4.1 ANIMAL TYPES

These are the symbols gotten from moving creatures in the bush or in the woods or crafts and masks that are related to these creatures. They could be bush animals or even spirits from the forests. These symbols are sometimes used to communicate certain misfortunes to another person especially when one is been bitten by a snake, wounded by a bush cow or killed by a leopard. These symbols are illustrated below in a tabular form.

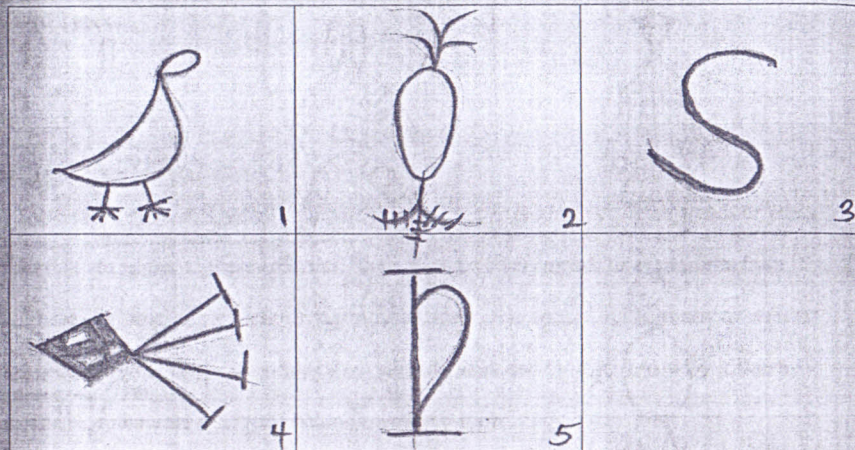


1. Bush cow
2. Bush rat
3. Crocodile
4. Bush spirit
5. Ekpe mask
6. Tortoise
7. Child of Ekpe
8. Lizard

9. Leopard

4.4.2 Bird Types

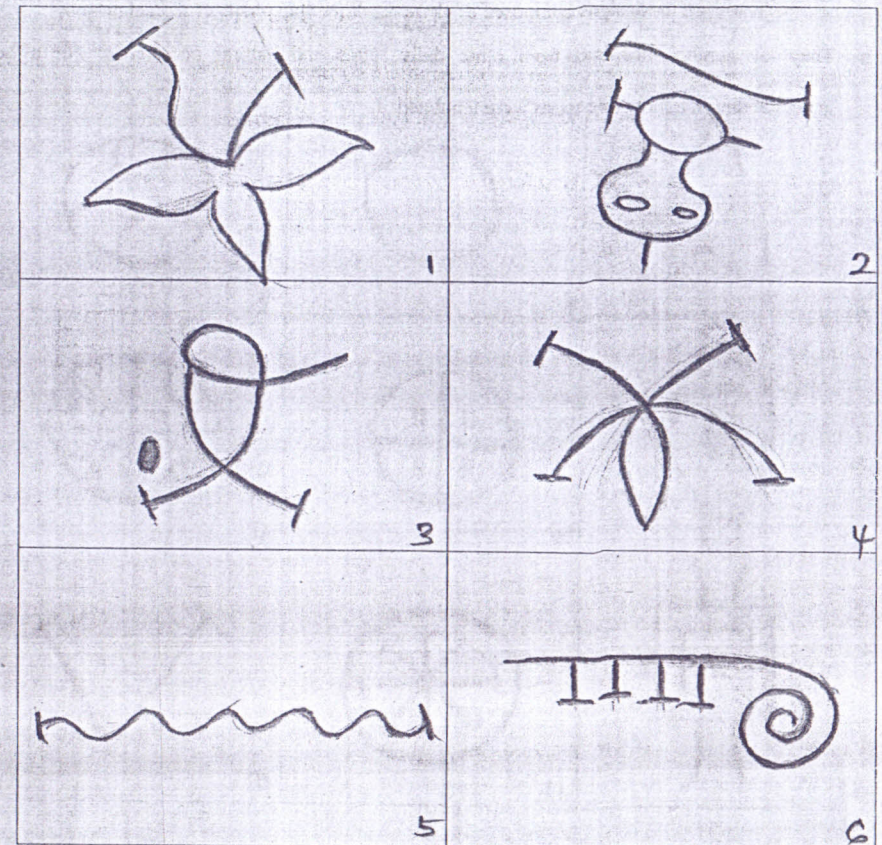
These are signs and symbols gotten from the birds of the air and subjects that are also related to the symbols. Wewe also employed the use of these symbols in few of his paintings like in the 'Nike and Wewe II' and 'nike and wewe III'. The symbols are illustrated below.



1. My own wife is with a child
2. The peacock
3. He has gone to town
4. New bird and its feathers
5. A woman with a child

4.4.3 FLORAL TYPES

These are signs, symbols and motifs inspired from flowery plants. They were hardly employed by Wewe in his paintings. The floral types are illustrated below.



1. Butterfly
2. Leopard spider
3. Spider

4. A man with his wrist tied

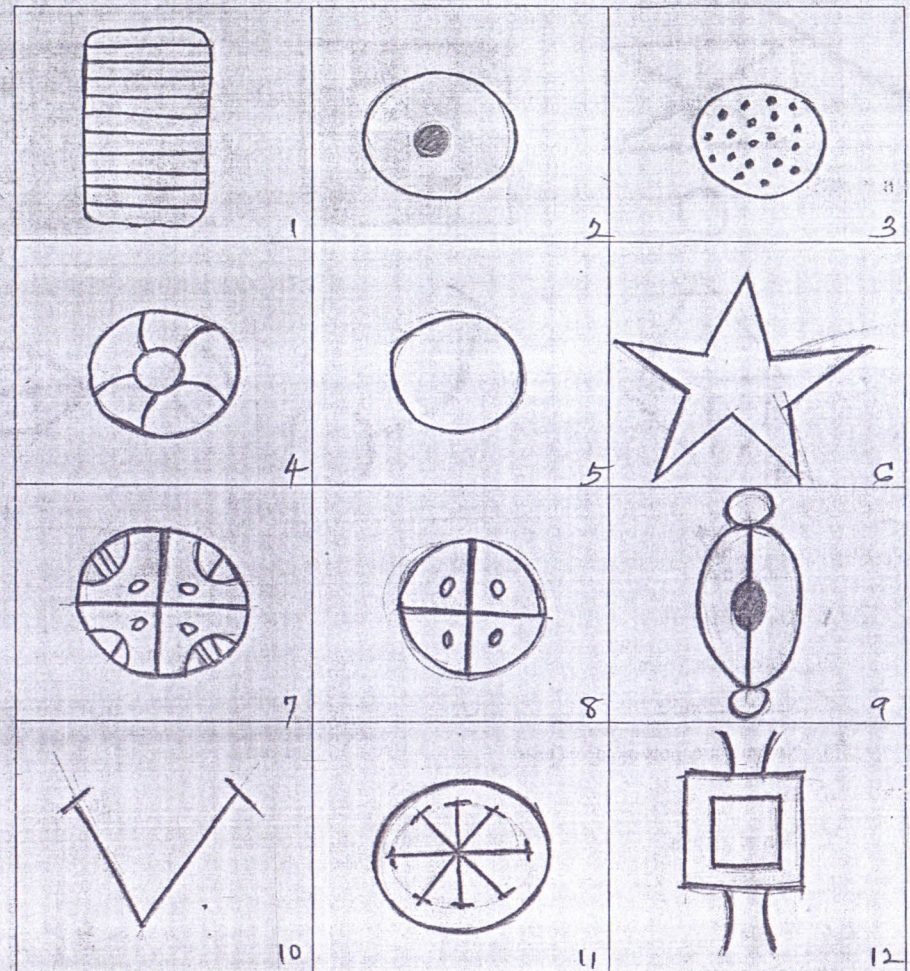
5. Snake

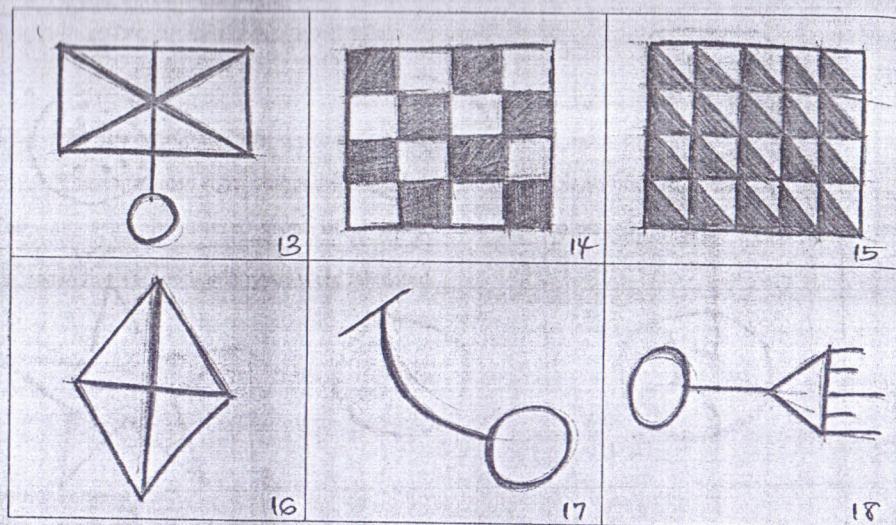
6. Water snake

4.4.4 INORGANIC TYPES

These are those signs composed of elements other than plants or animal origin.

They are symbols inspired from other daily items and natural occurrence. For a better understanding the inorganic types were tabulated.





1. Native mat
2. Toilet soap
3. Water in the basin
4. Native umbrella
5. Native plate, pots or cap of grass
6. Star
7. Skin of a drum
8. Brass bangle
9. Wound
10. Inconstant heart
11. Meeting
12. Mirror
13. Looking glass
14. Ancient symbol of the leopard

15. Leopard paw print
16. A bad man
17. Drinking cup-made of ground
18. Wooden comb

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

As far as Africa is concerned, abstraction is our tradition. It is who we are and what we are and there is no running from it. Traditional art symbols and motifs have really helped the African artist to express and portray his abstract ideas in such a way that it is appealing not just to the Africans but to the world at large. Research concurs to the fact that these motifs can be successfully used to express ones innermost feelings in painting as proven by Wewe. The countless experiences afforded by these traditional art forms and its manipulations by Tola Wewe does not stop him from making social, religious and political statements. Most of his works are entirely abstract where he employed the use of traditional motifs and little or no realistic images or forms can be seen on any of his works. He is a typical traditional artist to the core and tries as much as possible not to be mysterious in his paintings even though most of his paintings end up being mystifying. This is so because of his infinite quest of the unknown and in the spirit world.

Despite his academic status, Wewe has refused to hide under any academicism to produce any art that is void of good value and great aesthetics or one which will reveal nothing but mere artistic clichés. As a professional draughtsman and a genuine African traditional artist, he is caught up in a ceaseless struggle to recapture the meaningful past, to state the present and predict the future. He demonstrated this ideology in his works by employing both traditional and contemporary subject matters, events and ideas.

However, Wewe's exploration of indigenous forms and motifs is not in any way limited to the Yoruba cosmos, but also extends to the other African forms and symbols like the *Uli* and the *Nsibidi* of the Igbo political, social, religious, traditional and cultural life, *Adinkra* textile

patterns of the "Akan" in Ghana and hieroglyphic patterns from Egypt. He globalizes his pictures by freely using universal images and symbols adopted from floral patterns and natural motifs of the sun, moon, star, eyes, animal forms and motifs generated as techno morphs. It is very important to state here that Wewe has greatly studied these traditional art symbols and motifs and knows their distinctive meanings. This has really helped him to know when to use a particular motif and when not to.

This research has also shown the beauty in abstraction especially where traditional motifs and symbols are being used. Wewe has in a long way proven to the world that he is capable of doing any painting work especially the one that has to do with the abstract forms.

Furthermore, Wewe's adaptation of these traditional motifs has in the long run reinforces the historical and cultural business of the Yoruba, the Igbo and other concerned tribes as people who represents strong icon of aesthetic consciousness in Africa. It is however in no doubt that Tola Wewe will become one of the most widely discussed and appreciated artist of our time. As a painter, he has demonstrated a remarkable character of his immediate society. The most important lesson from this is that wewe expresses him-self in a language that cuts across various cultural spectrums and a language that is worth emulating.

5.1 Recommendation

There is an adage that says "the fall of a man is never the end of his life" and another that says that for every problem that befalls a man, he has been predestined to overcome it unless he refuses to" and so the researcher strongly believes that these there is no problem or difficult situation that is without a solution. The following are some recommendations that the researcher

believes if taking into proper consideration will go a long way to develop the practice of painting in abstract forms using traditional art symbols and motifs.

1. There should be a total revitalization of the African culture. Starting from the way we dress, the way we speak, the way we eat and even the way we walk. Many today tend to copy the westerners in all that they do and this has really eaten deep into our culture. In the arts too, it has affected the style with which African painters paint and instead of using our own traditional motifs and paint in abstract forms, they prefer to paint naturalism. This is a common phenomenon in art schools today but with the revival of the African culture, it will go a long way to correct all that we do especially in the area of painting.
2. There should be an introduction of the study of the traditional art symbols and motifs as a course of its own in higher institutions. Trained, skilled and willing lecturers should also be employed to impart these techniques, skills, method and modus operandi on the students. The students on the other hand should be encouraged to practice abstract art using these traditional art symbols and motifs. They should be ready to face the challenges and made to understand that there is "light at the end of the tunnel".
3. In a country like ours where art is generally undergoing a time of underdevelopment, where poverty has eaten deep into the lives of an average man and there is no middle class, where art is only appreciated in the heart and artist are left to their fate, where people are scared to practice art because they see it as a leisure and not a profession because they think it is not lucrative, where parents discourage their own children from embracing art as a career regardless of the great talent shown by their kids and where the

government is doing absolutely nothing about the whole thing, the researcher thinks that more and more art associations should be formed. Art association that are ready to stand and are proud to be artists, art associations that are founded on the basis of reviving the art situation in the country, associations that will stand the test of time and one that will encourage upcoming artists and give them hope and meaning to their lives.

5.2 Areas for Further Research

It is indeed a fact that any research endeavor of this nature, no matter how in-depth and thorough that it tries to be, cannot in any way be entirely exhaustive and since the act of writing thesis is always in a constant and perpetual state of continuum, the researcher has deemed it fit to encourage further research in the following related areas that would not only in the long run encourage the practice of painting in abstract forms using traditional art symbols and motifs but also shed more light on the possible solutions to the daily problems encountered by African artist who have taken it upon themselves to embrace the challenges of practicing traditional art.

First and foremost, subsequent researches should shed more light on other areas of art, like the sculpture, ceramics, textile and graphic communication among others in relation to the use of traditional art signs and symbols. This can be done by a proper documentation of the works done by such artists over time and analyzing each and every one of the motifs used by the artist.

Also, other researches can focus on the attitude and reaction of scholars, art critics, art students and authorities in relation to the use of African traditional art and symbols in paintings and any other area of art using any artist of choice as a case study.

Finally, one can decide to venture into a research that will expose the danger of a society that is void of its own art traditions, a society that does not have a sense of belonging and a society that centers all her interests on crude oil and other natural resources forgetting that traditional art itself is one of the most important natural recourses any society can have.

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