

Reassessing Indigenous Technique of Intuition as a Creative Drive in Traditional African Art Still Potent for Modern Development

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70382/hujissshr.v9i6.017>

Keywords: African artistic prowess, creativity, intuition, Sub-Sahara, Science and Technology

Abstract

In tandem with the urge to channel resources towards upholding, preserving, nurturing and aiming at further developmental growth, it is just pertinent that the direction to turn is to an existing store of knowledge which had, in itself, been an impetus for the present level needing the desirable progression and nourishment. With a focus on a search for Sub-Sahara sustainable development, this paper identifies a potent constituent of unique human capacity that is exceptional in Africa. The paper isolates intuition as a creative drive in the field of African sculptures as a basis of the ancient human development that has culminated into the present day attainments. With all its merits and being the spring board for all human growth from existence, the paper highlights the essence of intuition and creativity in the field of art as having a pervading influence in all human endeavors even leading to Science and Technology. With all the expediency of intuition and creativity, the paper detects that that aspect of human that was the basis for science and technology has been subdued. With a highlight of array of unequalled prowess resulting from ancient traditional Africa art practices, the paper surmises that intuition and creativity in the field of traditional African Sculpture is a potent force of human knowledge that is still relevant for sustainable development, the conclusion is the unique peculiarity of

intuition in art that is so much a unique concept of Africa that has continued to be denied. The recommendation is on the abeyance of the denial with propositions to make amend

Introduction

The urge for sustainable development is a continuous process, and once that process is to be upheld or sustained, it becomes imperative to draw from a prevailing store of knowledge that has been proven effective for that sustainability overtime, as is atypical to the concept of potential resources, whatever is subsisting is what is readily the stock of resources to be adopted for the future progression. In Africa, a peculiar mode of effectively progressive style of developmental trait is in the use intuition in the area of creative art, especially in making indigenous sculptures, since time immemorial. That that form of knowledge-adoption for sustaining life has continued to be the bedrock of an unflinching African contribution to the world development is a marvel that has not been unrivaled till date.

As a product of intuition, art has been the goose that laid the golden egg of sustenance for human existence from genesis of creation. Against all the debilitating conditions threatening human survival at the yolk of living then, art was the unlearned profession that came by instinct to readily diminish the threats to \survival. That art has continued, till date, to be an inseparable fabric of the society to solve human problems, it makes it relevant, therefore, to say that the essence of human artistic creativity has been the bedrock of all facet of modern development. Such modern development, be it Science or Technology, the essence of art as the basis of the growth is a fulcrum that cannot be eroded in history, Palacio-Pérez, (2010) avers that art was an all encompassing practice of the Pre-historic men's spiritual and mundane live, especially their struggle against threat to life.

In all, the indications of the prehistoric artistic discoveries were factual evidences of the growth of sustainable efforts to support life till date, from the records of the cave painting of their hunting scenes, to the all the rudimentary tools which were the basis of technology, and to their other creative practice which led to the emergence of professions like Agriculture, Medicine, Refinery and Science, the power of instinct which fires the passion of intuition was prime as the basis of human knowledge further developed to the state of present refinement.

If at the onset of creation little knowledge was said to have been acquired to surmount human's survival practices, the basis of living was tied to the concept of intuitive discovery which engendered creativity, the nexus between that and creativity became the hallmark of survival which grew into further human development, this was so for the prehistoric man because creativity in ancient art reflects the innovation and

imaginative solutions that artists employed to address aesthetic, functional, and cultural needs.

If the central force that propelled the world to its current level of development was an expansion of intuition as furthered into art, then that became a basis for the birth of science and technology, Godson (2024) states that intuition integrates various experiences and emotions, providing a comprehensive grasp of complex situations that may not be fully analyzable through logical reasoning alone. As a direct reference to the potency of that age-long creative art practice, and with reference to Africa, Palazuelos, Fonseca and Oliveira, (2018) states that intuition has played a significant role in artistic practices throughout history, serving as a bridge between the conscious and subconscious mind.

From the petroglyph of the Paleolithic men to the Hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians and finally to the new scientific and technological age of computer, engineering and internet, the ancient art of intuitive processes have been an integral of human creation allowing artists to express complex ideas and emotions beyond the confines of structured techniques. Having been so much an effective fabric of human development, it is not undesirable to posit that that aspect of practice be given the prominence it desires for sustainable development.

Indications of Ancient Artistic Intuition that has continued to shape the world

If what surrounds the elevation and sustainability of the standard of living of mankind since the period of the early men were all about what they were able to initiate without recourse to previous knowledge, then there is a potent power in such a practice that comes from a vacuum of the subconscious, Prehistoric art, dating back tens of thousands of years, provides that valuable insight into the intuitive and symbolic thinking. It was obvious in the evidences of their artifact that prehistoric art was shaped by collective and spiritual purposes believed to be fostered by creativity and intuition. The marvel is that they were able to navigate through the difficulty of their existence, often in ways that modern people can only hypothesize.

From the records of the cave paintings to the rudimentary stone-tool carvings of the Paleolithic hunters and farmers (Fig. 1), the status of their intuition inspired work became the backbone of their living which spurred the creative template that resulted in the developmental deluge of modern time. Distinctively culminating in the era of the ancient Egyptians when civilisation blossomed to an exceedingly refined maturity, the cradles of what the Egyptians were able to achieve became the turning point of the entire world itself. According to Garet Stevens Publishing (2024), the ancient Egypt truly left wonders for the world including the Pyramids of Giza (Fig. 2) and the all the

other wonders of inventions from hieroglyphics to papyrus sheets to makeup, toothpaste, breath mints, irrigation and Astronomy.

In the natural order of things and as ancient centers of civilizations changed from place to place, the transition took with it existing basis of knowledge already presented. In the furtherance of the transformation of knowledge, as the Egyptians edified what the Prehistoric men started, the majority of the new inventions were in the development that led to civilisation, emergence of cities, invention of writing and modern day technology. Others specifics include the development of agriculture, the art of medicine and the invention of the wheel. Viewing from the concept of the generation link, there were evidences of the spread to the subsequent civilization of Sumerians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantine and Christian era and to the Dark Ages. Culminating in the modern world, the Renaissance further heightened the development thus leading to modernity with refinement in Astronomy, the internet and other Technology, (Pahad 2023).



Fig. 1 Paleolithic sympathetic art

Source: <http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/prehistoricart/>



Fig 2: Pyramid of Giza

Source: <https://newatlas.com/science/pyramids-egyptians-nile-river-branch/>

Intuition and Creative Drive as an Artistic Tool Peculiar to Africa

The marvels of the ancient Egyptians were seen to have shored up the status of Africa in their contribution to the global development. That this has permeated the entire fabric of the continent from evidences of indigenous artifacts from the different African cultural settings makes it an all-encompassing phenomenon all over Africa. In traditional Nigeria setting, the various ethnic societies have also had great input to world development by the various unwavering artistic contributions.

As evidences abound in the way various indigenous Nigeria art have been nurtured by the instances of intuition, this thus propelled the culture on to the world stage. In the area of music for example, **the prowess of traditional Nigerian musician performances are unparalleled when compared to their Western counterpart,**

in their wide range of musical exploration, from *drumming* and *chanting* to *songs* and *dances*, their abilities are not only rooted in musical skills but also in the deep cultural, spiritual, and social functions that music serves in Nigerian communities.

The Nigerian indigenous musicians have contributed immensely to preserving the rich heritage and diverse traditions of Nigeria through their art. For example **improvisation** is a key element of Nigerian traditional music, where musicians engage in spontaneous composition, often during performances. As a product of intuition, this allows them to adapt to their audience's reactions or the specific context of a ceremony, whether in rituals and celebration. One other element of intuition inherent in Nigerian indigenous music totally different to the template or nature of Western culture's musical characteristics is the absence of different composers, songs writers and music controllers. In a nutshell, the Nigerian traditional musician is an all in one expert who is a totality of performer imbued in one person.

Instances of Subtle applaud and pronounced denial of the status of art

The world over, as intuition led to initial artistic creativity and further development led to science and technology, the role of art in the society became an inseparable fabric that is inevitably overbearing, but the accolade has been incommensurable with the merit that such creative practice has brought by power of indigenous intuition as witnessed. With specific reference to the Nigeria scenario, Late chief Aina Onabolu, was the first intuitive art Teacher in Nigeria who never had an academic training before his teaching escapades in the 1920s (Oni, 2024).

As the scope of indigenous personality, who have contributed immensely to Nigerian continue to widen, the works on one very intuitive guru that is yet to be accorded its rightful accolade till date readily comes to mind, in the local corner of Ifelodun Local Government of Kwara State, there once lived an "Ologbon-ori" in Igbaja, the one with self intuitive wisdom who was never apprenticed to anyone but grew up to repairing scarcely any mechanical machines from motorcycle, radio, grinding machine, water pump and to the disbelief of white expatriates, even the air craft (Abass, 2023).

"Ologbon-ori" in Yoruba simply translates as the one that is superficially talented and like the reminiscence of Leonardo Di Vinci, the Renaissance genius, "Ologbonori's" real name became obliterated by the accolade of his prowess in being able to tinker with anything. AS a household name that reverberates through the entire Igbaja, Yaru, Agunjin and through to Okeode communities of Ifelodun Local Government of Kwara State, "Ologbon-ori" was synonymous with a magical hand that brings any damaged article back to life. The power of indigenous prowess to deploy intuition is a glaring point to the feat that such a creative mind could perform.

In the same vein of an unsung story of the capacity of first class intuition in the field of creative practice, the instance of the personality of Nike Okundaye is a classical reference to behold in Nigeria, Nike stopped schooling at the level of Primary six but carried on with all the intuitive creative drive she acquired over the years to becoming a Lecturer of traditional “adire” tiedye at the prestigious Harvard University (African craft. Com (2023).

Before the aforementioned modern instances, the marvels of intuition of traditional Nigerian art practices have brought Nigeria to the limelight and fore-front of world class art status. For instance, the subconscious untrained faculty of the ancient Nok people of central Nigeria have brought to light the superlative terracotta pieces that are classified to be made about the 5,000BC. Without being excessive, Nok terracotta are said to be singular artistic production that edifies, advances, elevates and exemplifies the status of black race.

In the same class of profound indigenous intuitive creative exploration, the artistic spectacles of the ingenuity of the Igbo Ukwu and Ife bronzes (Fig 3 and 4) are two classical examples. Without recourse to the earlier derogatory hegemonic statements of the European archeologists that the works are too refined to have been made by Africans, the works continue to be perfect image makers for Africans as record of unequalled inventiveness spiraled from an obscured but pristine society with their peculiar of making spectacular art with intuition.



Fig. 3. Ife bronze head, so superlative it
taunted to be too good to have come from Africa



Fig. 4. IgboUkwu bronze pot so intricate
its is yet to be rivaled world over

For the IgboUkwu bronze pots, the intuition instinct that guided the hands of the makers of the several intricately embellished pieces is yet to be equaled till date. With all the identified contributory value of the concept of intuition as a basis of manufacture from the subconscious, there is glaring evidence that the instance of such human explorative drive is prevalent in Africa. This assertion is reliant on the fact the concept of self-taught which appears to stem from unschooled background has been made to flourish in Africa and to say that form of creative deluge is a prerogative of Africa is not out of place for sustainable development.

Indispensability of the adoption of intuition

Why references were often made to the marvel of artistic ingenuity of the past, the modern world appears to be enmeshed in an aura of a continued profound denial of that glorious indigenous African artistic past. While the current focus appears to be tilted more to the direction of Science and Technology ignoring the basis for which Science and Technology was anchored, there is the undisputed fact that the first person to invent fire did not do that by a scientific template but by intuition. One of the dark sides of Science, therefore, is that it is too conservative as a principle of knowledge search where intuition can be used to creates the open ended that sustains discovery. In a direct allusion to the weakness of Science over intuition, Godson (2024), reiterates that Science may struggle with areas that are difficult to quantify or measure, and that is where intuition will always provides valuable insights.

Findings

There is no doubt that intuition as a basis for unblemished subconscious action in the many of the world breakthrough points to Art as the sustainer of the world and what it is today, this is so because the genesis of the totality of the present global status, growth and progress was a development that arose from how the creative deluge of the past had progressed till now. However, using the Nigerian template as a measure, the advantages gained by intuition and its relevance with creative artistic skills is being under utilized, denied and suppressed within the system. For example, that artistic practice is an indispensable fabric of national development and a concept being held high by developing nations. As a practical oriented skill, the creative art industry has continued to witness a state of flippancy. In essence it is glaring that age-long cultural virtues and traditional values have come to be disrupted. For once, such lineage of cultural schemes become enormously eroded, Adepegba (2019) states that when such situations exist, there is always a problem of rejuvenation and sudden need for rival. Aside from the issue of lukewarm acceptance of all that is about the creative art in Nigeria, the sphere of skill acquisitions, job seeking and employability seems to be sought on the basis of certification and such practice has inadvertently led to a situation

of over certified system and it is a known fact that intuition does not thrive on certification. The erroneous notion of over reliant on the essence of Science also promotes a stereotype and too straight jacketed society needing a holistic approach.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that indigenous African prowess in creative art practice has been a beacon of development that has permeated the world, more than what is attainable with the under reportage of the essence of art the world over, the status of African art knowledge as element of human growth has been more under reported. At the beginning when humans struggled with the elements that threatened survival, it was not science that initially came to the rescue but rather it was art that sufficed. Something unique about the art of Africa is that it characterized by a preponderance of such pristine formidable structure that is so uniquely effective. Such uniqueness has culminated in the instance that African art abounds in European galleries, and again to mention that African art has a pervading influence on Western art especially in the area of abstraction cubism.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings above, the following are recommended, this recommendation is fueled by the need that national development needs sustainability and such sustainability is not attained by exterior factor excepts by home grown efforts and inherent ability.

1. Efforts should be geared towards reliant on areas where of comparative advantage for sustainable development like the areas of intuition exploration in art
2. The focus on certification rather than actual performance should be dissuaded.
3. More encouragement should be given to traditional artists

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