



Situating Pot Harcourt: A Multimedia Art in the Arts of Oil, a Cultural History of Port Harcourt

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ABSTRACT

Wearable waste sculptures are sometimes regarded as unimaginable and stretching it further as costumes for performance is another, considering the static nature of Sculpture. This elasticity was further stretched in introduction of Port Harcourt contemporary History in the multi-faceted creation called Pot Harcourt. Forging a relationship between various genres of Art and seamlessly doing so was an attempt in this study that has utilized wearable waste sculptures, oral commentary, Music, performance and History. Integration of these genre of arts were brought together to tell the origin of Port Harcourt, through to the contemporary history where the city is bemused with sooth wastes from industrial pollutions. The Arts of Oil, a Cultural History of Port Harcourt, was a collaborative Workshop of University of Port Harcourt, Institute of Niger Delta Studies and University of Oxford provided the platform at University of Port Harcourt Business School on 26th -27th July 2018. This workshop was funded by the Oxford Martin School. It was conceived in order to produce a 'state of the art' account of research on the arts of oil in Port Harcourt. Multidisciplinary papers, literature, photography, art, theatre, sociology, anthropology and history were harnessed within the various arts to bring to fore artists and scholars into creative dialogue about Port Harcourt contemporary History. This paper that has utilized qualitative mode of writing with methodical tools of observation and sculpture studio practices of dicing, piercing stringing and cumulating with movement and music rendition accompanied with descriptive narration in performance. A different vista for sculptures was projected to move away from the classical motionless characteristics of ancient Sculptures to that can be worn for mobile performances. That has situated Pot Harcourt which is like a bowl of salad that compromises various vegetables but delightfully blended by the salad cream to the delight of the consumer which in this case was the Port Harcourt art community as the audience.

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Introduction

This workshop was conceived to launch this collaborative research project, between the University of Oxford and University of Port Harcourt in order to produce a 'state of the art' account of research on the arts of oil in Port Harcourt. Established and emerging scholars came and worked together. The workshop programme therefore included various presentation of academic papers, performances, various kinds of exhibitions, including dance performances and poetry readings. Series of meetings and preparations were carried out to ensure the success of the Conference/workshop/Exhibitions and one of the minutes of such meetings is recorded bellow:

A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMME IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE INSTITUTE OF NIGER DELTA STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT AND THE AFRICAN STUDIES CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, UNITED KINGDOM, ON THE ARTS OF OIL: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF PORT HARCOURT, HELD ON MONDAY 7TH OF MAY, 2018, IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, INSTITUTE OF NIGER DELTA STUDIES, DELTA PARK, UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

A.	INDS (Institute of Niger Delta Studies)/AOOCHP/2018/01: MEMBERSHIP Attendance		Telephone numbers
1	Prof. Abi A. Derefaka	Chairman	08033422133
2	Dr. Steve Wordu	Department of Sociology	08033407132
3	Dr. Stanley I. Okoroafor	Department of History	08032287536
4	Dr. O. C. Asuk	Department of History	08036700447
5	Dr. Kiale Nyiayaana	Department of History	08037086532
6	Dr. Chioma D. Onyige	Department of Sociology	08033427372
7	Jackson Jack (Uni Otueke)	Department of Sociology	08037598165
8	Harold Orisa		08060750500
9	kujibi C		08064317522

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10 Justina Egeonu - Secretary 07035155448
 11 Agatha Aaron.- Wali 08024220873

INDS/AOOCHP/2018/02:- OPENING

It started with a prayer said by Dr. Kiale Niyayaana at 12:29 pm

The Director, Institute of Niger Delta Studies welcomed everyone in attendance, informed all about the collaborative workshop between the Institute of Niger Delta Studies and the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. He informed members that a grant has been obtained for the workshop and that the workshop is scheduled to hold on 26th and 27th of July, 2018. He also informed members the venue for the workshop would be the University of Port Harcourt Business School, Abacha Road, GRA Phase, and Port Harcourt. Members were also informed that the programme has been approved by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt.

INDS/AOOCHP/2018/03:- DIRECTOR'S BRIEF

The purpose of the meeting was to plan for the various aspects of the workshop which is expected to have academic presentations / exhibitions. The two day workshop will commence on Thursday, July 26th, 2018 at 10am. A draft copy of Panels for the collaborative workshop and workshop time table was given to members.

INDS/AOOCHP/2018/04:- REACTION TO THE DIRECTOR'S BRIEF

In the list of Panels for the collaborative workshop, few persons were added to include some persons who have had various social, cultural, business and political experiences in the early time in Port Harcourt. Also some artists were included. Below is a comprehensive list of participants for the workshop. Other business persons in Port Harcourt invited who talked about the business environment of Port Harcourt overtime were Seinye Lulu Briggs - Monipulo Kenneth .Worgu - Kenquip Chief Anthony Akarolo, Belema Oil, Bobo Brown. It was pointed out that due to time constraints, two sessions may be held simultaneously but preferable a single session at a time. The speakers for every * panel will be allotted a time and given what to speak on so that paper presenters can also have time to present their papers. One week Exhibition at Alliance Francaise is not ruled out. Five sub-committees were formed for the planning and organization of the programme. Below was a list of members for each sub-committee.

a. Exhibition

Dr. Stanley Okoroafor - Chairman other exhibitors
 He is to liaise with those exhibiting and ensure that everything to be exhibited goes with the theme of the workshop.

b. Publicity

Dr. Chioma Onyige - Chairman Jackson Jack Harold Orisa
 Theophilus Akujiobi

c. Editorial

Dr. Steve Wordu - Chairman

Dr. Charles Asuk

Dr. Kiale Niyayaana

d. Logistics

Harold Orisa - Chairman Jackson Jack Edward Imo
 Theophilus Akujiobi

e. Catering

Justina Egeonu - Chairman Agatha Aaron-Wali Jackson Jack Harold Orisa

Each sub-committee was given two weeks to meet and send in their reports.

It was pointed out that the University of Port Harcourt should provide cocktail for the two days and a dinner for the first day. This responsibility was given to the catering sub-committee to write to the Vice-Chancellor of the University, making these requests.

Onyoma Publications and Rainbow Book club exhibited books at the workshop.

INDS/AOOCHP/2018/05:- CLOSING

The meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer by Dr. Chioma Onyige at 2:10pm.

Chairman

Prof. Abi A. Derefaka

Secretary

Justina Egeonu

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The Arts of oil was like a bowl of salad with various contents and the workshop was structured as follows:

Day One July 26, 2018

Opening 11am – 12 noon.

Professor Ndowa E. S Lale, Vice Chancellor

HRM King Dandeson Jaja, Chairman Rivers State Traditional Rulers Council

HRM King Alfred Diette-Spiff

Professor Emeritus E. J Alagoa

Professor Otonti Nduka

Professor Robin Horton

Mrs. Judith Wonodi

Dr. Alfred Abam

Dr. Mrs. Seinye Lulu Briggs

Vice Chancellor's Cocktail-u 4 pm

First Round Table 12:30pm – 1:30pm

HRM King Alfred Diette-Spiff

Professor Emeritus E. J. Alagoa

Professor Otonti Nduka

Professor Robin Horton

Mrs. Judith Wonodi

Dr. Alfred Abam

Dr. Mrs. Seinye Lulu Briggs

Prince Ibanichuka

Mr. Kenneth Worgu

Lunch Break 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Second Round Table 2:30pm – 3:30pm

Professor David Prattern

Professor J. A. Ajienka

Professor Willie Ayakoroma: The Development of Modern Drama in Port Harcourt (1971-1996): a Historical Survey

Professor A. A. Derefaka

Professor Ken Anugweje

Professor B. B. B. Naanen

Paper Presentations 3:30pm – 6: 30pm

Papers were presented in various areas but with regards to the theme and there were as follows:

Okogwu Antonia, (PhD) City Sculptures: Attesting To the Contemporary Cultural History of Oil City, Port Harcourt

Mr. Timpere Eills Amah, Artisanal Refining as Civil Disobedience and Its' Impact in Niger Delta.

Margret Ajiginni, (PhD) Materiality and Memory: Appropriating the Manilla Motif in Textile Design.

Zibima, Tubedenyefa (PhD) & Jack, Jackson T.C. B. Instrumenting the Arts and the New Media: the Evolution of Environmental Activism in the Niger Delta.

Julius Nsirim Akani, (PhD) Port Harcourt in the Nigerian Novel

Margaret Fafa Nutsukpo, (PhD) The Poet as an Eco-Activist: an Exploration of Crude Realities in Ibiwari Ikitiko's Oily Tears of The Delta and Obari Gomba's Pearls of the Mangrove

Oyeh Oko Uti, Oil, Violence and Displacement of Endangered Communities in Selected Niger Delta Plays.

Obari Gomba, (PhD) Oil-Burden and Colonial Antecedents in the Writings Of Miesoinuma Minima and Ola Rotimi .

Wordu, Steven Afoma, Oloibiri Oil Museum: Metaphor of Arts

Stanley Okoroafor, (PhD) History of oil Petroleum in Nigerian: Its' Effect on the Life of the Ordinary Port Harcourt Cities.

Day two Friday July 27, 2018.

9:30- 10:30 am	Poetry
11am-12	Artist Roundtable
11am- 1pm	Paper Presentations Continued
1pm-2pm	Lunch Break
2pm- 4pm	Musical and other performance

For one to situate this multimedia ,Pot Harcourt in the Arts of Oil a contemporary History of Port Harcourt one would like to look at the various components that make up Pot Harcourt which were Kinetics in Sculpture ,Eco-aesthetics in Sculpture practice, Wearable Sculptures, Oral Commentary, Music and Performance.

Kinetics in Sculpture

Kinetics is the introduction of the fourth element in Sculpture practice which was basically three dimensional with motion. 'Just as one can compose colors, or forms, so one can compose motions' , are the words of Alexander Calder as stated in Art Story (2019) Kinetics in Sculpture is the introduction of movement which could be considered as the movement in sculptural forms of which Marcel Duchamp and Alexander Calder (Art Story foundation, 2019) were known for. Tiina Soot (2014) also explored in this area of Sculpture and performance. It is the introduction of a fourth dimension into the three dimensional work to add aesthetic physical movement to the sculpture in the case of Port Harcourt the human energy was imputed for the performance. The performers were Mike Chigbo , James John, Isiakpere Oghenenime Godschoice and the two ladies Nicolette Pius Ihedioha and Nwugo Chinem Gospel. from Ahouda, a twenty two years old student of Dept. of Fine Arts and Design, University of Port Harcourt accompanied the main character in this kinetic sculpture in Performance dubbed Pot Harcourt Nicolette Pius Ihedioha one of the ladies that is richly endowed with beauty and graceful movement was the Pot Harcourt while the other lady Nwugo Isiakpere came in as a support to the Pot Harcourt herself. The movement is the Owigiri wiggle that typifies the rich fish movement which contemporary dance steps that were interjected to add to the glamour of this performance called Pot Harcourt. The young male performers then came in with a movement typifying the train movement. This train movement with their hands touching the next person in the waist line, told a story of the origin of Port Harcourt as the train from Enugu arrived with coal towards the Port Harcourt Sea for an onward journey to the western world. This history of Port Harcourt cannot be complete without this coal story from Enugu.

Music in Pot Harcourt

Going back in History of which Pot Harcourt attempted to recreate in a performance certainly required contemporary highlife that is associated with Port Harcourt and the music of late Rex Lawson aptly played the role. A slow rhythm that allowed some slow swinging to practically bring in the story line which was the depiction of the origin of Port Harcourt that took the audience back in time.

Eco-aesthetics in Sculpture Practice

Eco-aesthetics is concerned with the study of art and the sensitivity to sustainable aesthetic propositions. Therefore,

Eco-Sculptures are Sculptures that combine the study of three-dimensional art with recourse to the sensitivity of the ecological system and its' preservation. Wastes that degrade the environment are therefore utilized to make sculptures. In the same vein, incorporation of wastes as materials in art creation and sensitization of the sensitivity to the environment, Jansen (2011) calls the term wastethetics. Others simply call it green sculptures.

Art, aesthetics and environment as they interrelate dominate the twenty first century discourse as it calls for urgent solution to the environmental space; hence art's attention is drawn to Environmental Art. In this way, the aesthetics of environment goes beyond appreciation of art but further into the aesthetic appreciation of both natural and human-made environments. (Rutledge, 2019) These aforementioned factors have broadened the scope of environmental aesthetics beyond that of 18th century aesthetics in the world at large, and the nature of art. These differences require that environmental aesthetics must begin with most basic questions, such as 'what' and 'how' to appreciate. How do we rehabilitate the environment which as nature, we are part of? What could be the nature or order in the environment to appreciate it fully? What input can the artist make to add to the general expectation of order in the environment? In this area of Sculpture Studies there are different types such as renewable energy sculpture, which produces power from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectric or tidal energy sources. Such Sculptors as Alexandre Dang (b.1973) () have developed and incorporated solar energy into kinetic artworks. Functional renewable energy generator () in his work hence utilitarian and aesthetic creations that is simple but also complex. These eco-sculptures are developed bearing in mind the safety challenges in the environment. The idea of renewable energy sculptures has been pioneered by Eco futurist visionaries such as Patrice Stellest (b.1953)(), Sarah Hall (b.1954), Julian H. Scaff (b.1970), Patrick Marold (b.1975) and architects such as Laurie Chetwood) and Nicholas Grimshaw (b.1984). The philosophy of the environmental art as a whole believes that the aesthetics and the artwork are inter related underpinning the functions in ecology. In Pot Harcourt the use of waste metals and waste plastics of flip flops are used. Within these the methods of dicing, piercing, stringing and cumulating were used to configure the wearable kinetic sculptures which could be said to meet the standard of what are wearable sculptures for kinetic purposes.

Wearable Sculptures for Pot Harcourt

The Wearable Sculptures were made of waste flip flops and waste tyre metals basically. These wastes are eco wastes that could be regarded as menace in the environment Therefore as an eco-artist one was poised to utilize these wastes for creations.. The Flip flops were ordered from the Waste dump sites and thoroughly soaked and cleaned and detoxified to avoid contamination .Then the process of dicing with pen knives commenced and there after the process of stringing and congregating ensued. The colours exposed through the dicing process added viva to the configuration and made it commendable to a colourful performance. Broad waist bands Hand bands and circular head gears were configured using AP Frank fishing lines. The Sculpture methods of Piercing, stringing and congregating were used in producing the wearable Sculptures.

Oral Commentary in Pot Harcourt

Pot Harcourt as multidisciplinary arts of Sculpture, Fashion since, the Sculptures were wearable, Music and Performance, required an introductory to the audience that

commentary was resorted to aid understanding. This was done by first introducing to the audience the Structure of the performance and the performance was first and foremost coming from exhibition of the wearable sculptures and structured to tell the origin of Port Harcourt and the pollution of Beautiful Port Harcourt with soot.

Performance in Pot Harcourt

Single file was movement was exploited as the cast made their entry into the open space as stage. And immediately they got in they spread out to occupy the stage fully and the ladies located in the middle with both owigiri which is the wiggle imitation of the fish movement associated with riverine communities in Niger Delta and contemporary dance steps. The males cycled round the female s in the train movement and the alternate gaze that is visible in Figure 4.



Figure 1. Pot Harcourt Cast, making an Entry into the Stage ,2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey.



Figure 2. The Audience and the Performers with the Wearable Sculptures, 2018, Photography: Godstime Uche Godfrey.



Figure 3. The Train Movement as performed in Pot Harcourt typifying the History of Port Harcourt as the Train arrives from Enugu with the Coal 2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey.



Figure 4. The Performers in alternate movement beholding Pot Harcourt, 2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey.



Pot Harcourt Cast Retreating, 2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey

Figure 5. Kinetic Sculpture on the Runway ,Dept of Music, University of Port Harcourt in Expressions by Antonia Okogwu, 2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey.



Figure 6. The First Kinetic Sculpture in the Runway in Port Harcourt ,Courtesy Expressions by Antonia Okogwu, 2018, Photograph: Godstime Uche Godfrey.

The Audience

The location of the workshop was the University of Port Harcourt Business School with a serene elistic ambience with royalities Academia Artists and some Port Harcourt art stake holders as can be seen in the photograph bellow :



Figure 7. The Elistic Audience that witnessed Pot Harcourt, 2018, Courtesy, Timi J. (2018).

Conclusion

It is not very common to associate with Sculptures as Stables, Kinetic since it was callasically concieved as stagnant works but there have been movent introduced in to sculpture as the fourth dimation in contemporary times and further movement is being advanced to situate sculpture in the fashion runway (Okogwu, 2018) and into performace .Sculpture cannot be said againg to be only static. Sculptures have been adapted to be worn as this study has aptly portrayed.

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