

Article

Hybridity of Uli and Nsibidi African Motifs and Ideas in Contemporary Video Art

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Abstract

Recently, video art concepts in Africa have been haunted by tentacles of universalism, transculturation, and acculturation that somewhat threaten their socio-cultural thresholds prospectively. The implication of this includes a muted indigenous voice and the possibility of the genre not being indigenously personalized by African artists in the course of its development. This paper attempted to address this. Methodologically, it is strictly but flexibly constrained to selected video art footages that is sometimes depicted in the form of animated drawings. Nsibidi and uli motifs have been chosen for this purpose because of their aesthetic and functional qualities. The strategic approach adopted in the organisation of the study is the researchers' attempt to justify and contain the vast nature of its subject matter.

Keywords: Hybridity, Uli, Nsibidi, video art, African art, indigenous motif

Introduction

African art has been in contention with the growing challenges and influences imposed on it by Western perspectives on modern art over the years. Among other factors, these challenges are sometimes associated with the ideal indigenous creative communication pattern and its adaptation to this burgeoning global art phenomenon without characterising a compromised cultural inflexion. There is a salient need for newer ways of expressing the African traditional ideologies and worldviews in a relevant and updated contemporary language to preserve, institute, and empathically communicate the continent's cultural identity and ideals. It is also necessary for this ideological approach to be adapted to the evolving twenty-first-century art world. So far, this syndrome, what could also be referred to as an "Afro-centric renaissance in modern art", has affected areas in the visual arts such as sculpture and painting. On the contrary, however, there is an obvious conceptual dearth when it comes to the aspect of employing multimedia and, more specifically, video art as a medium for expressing and projecting this concept. The works of prominent African video artists like William Kentridge (South Africa) exhibit a kind of universality that was not created to be interpreted from that cultural angle. More so, they are not intended to do that. Perhaps this is because Video art, which is an art that combines music, dance, performance, and computer graphics, shown on video, is not only a relatively new genre in art but is quite an alien concept in Africa unlike the other aspects of arts that have definitive historical roots in the continent.

One cannot ostracize the fundamental role culture plays in a society. It is a vital aspect of a people's very humanity and identity (Onwuegbuna, 2012; Teaero, 2001). In Africa, however, art is wholly integrated into the socio-cultural norms of ethnic groups in nations across the continent; in fact, culture is a holistic part of art and



vice versa. Teaero further stresses the threats haunting this pattern, this shrewd manifestation and dictation of what he dubbed 'Eurocentrism' in the African artistic expression when he states that:

As an important part of culture, art has always been traditionally conceived, produced, used, distributed, and critiqued by islanders from their ethnocentric perspectives. Over the centuries alternative perspectives—especially from a Eurocentric viewpoint—were introduced, used and perpetuated through the school system (Teaero, 2001).

Arguably, very few video art footages in existence truly project the African ideologies and motifs conceptually. In addition, it was Uche Okeke's 1961 letter to the then president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, which stoked the embers that later flared up the radical development of the natural synthesis philosophy in Nsukka years later. The content of the letter reads:

I believe that it is only through the acceptance of 'natural synthesis' that the conflicts of the contemporary African mind must be resolved...the African artist must live in his culture and express or interpret the yearnings of his society. He must not live in an ivory tower (Okeke, 1961).

The paper is an investigation and creative exploration of the bridge that connects the possibilities this new form of art offers with the integral creative tenets of indigenous concepts to initiate a new artistic trans-cultural paradigm. The videos involve interpreting selected proverbs in staged and animated footages, and also exhibit a sort of aesthetic visual conundrum that is both poetic and surrealistic. The motifs and sketches are animated and sometimes interfaced with the abstract motion backgrounds in most of these videos. All of these relate to the general idea of the respective concepts. The visual effects are not entirely constrained to software manipulation alone; other creative strategies and mediums are employed as are appropriate in ensuring a creative expression of the video art. The project is intentionally streamlined to accommodate motifs and ideas that are indigenous to the Igbo ethnicity (that is the *Uli* and *Nsibidi* motif), because of the patterns and symbols inherent in them that are somewhat unanimous and relatively easier to access.

Socio-cultural Significance of Indigenous Motifs

African indigenous motifs have, for the past decades, intrigued scholars, especially after the startling discovery that their earlier orientation of any form of intelligence from the continent as virtually impossible was grossly erroneous. It is important at this point to contextually discuss two relevant definitions of motifs. One of such definitions states that a motif is a repeated architectural design, a "repeated design, shape, or pattern" (Getty, 2008). Another definition describes it as a handcrafted design that is sewn or printed, or a "repetitive decorative design sewn into or printed on something such as a piece of clothing, or a single example of pattern" (Getty, 2008). Both definitions agree on these words: repetition, pattern and design. These terms have features that incline towards aesthetics, and situate motifs in terms of their aesthetic relevance alone. However, the importance of indigenous Nigerian motifs transcends this description; based on the significant roles they

perform in the communities where they are used, they can also be justifiably examined in light of their iconographic functions. Motifs, based on their iconographic function and somewhat calligraphic features, equally exhibit their potency as a means of visual communication. This attribute is also very important since the awareness of the potency of iconography in communication has been in existence as far back as the earliest civilizations of humankind. During that era, the means through which type was produced was by scratching marks on flat surfaces with sharp objects. Discovered records in the twentieth century reveal that these types have been developed in different ways, from Mesopotamian cuneiform, Chinese calligraphy, Egyptian hieroglyphics and Phoenician alphabet (Dragatakis, 2021).

The iconographic features of indigenous motifs from diverse cultures in the continent are a visual testament to Africa's profound contribution to the art of communication. In some of these countries, these motifs are considered sacred and symbolic, although scholars usually project them in the light of their aesthetic functions. This is one reason why contemporary iconography plays a very significant role it draws attention to the high level of intellectualism these motifs possess. In fact, to some degree, its adoption by the modern artist in recent times has been innovative and explorative. It also reveals the interesting transmogrifications that occur when motifs are portrayed as an intermingling of iconography and sacred symbols in their respective concepts.

In the course of integrating indigenous motifs into their artworks, many artists, especially those in art schools that propagate the natural synthesis theory, have been compelled to embark on research into the ones practised by most countries in different parts of Africa. Apart from the *uli* and *nsibidi* motifs from Nigeria, there are also others like the *adinkra* motifs from Ghana and the *Vai* and *Bamum* syllables practised by the Jondu and Bamum ethnic groups of West Africa.

A Review of the Adaptation of *Uli* and *Nsibidi* motifs in visual arts by selected Nsukka Artists

Some prominent artists and most of the pioneers of the Zaria art society have created outstanding works through the integration of *uli* and *nsibidi* motifs in their concepts, although the latter appears to be gaining more popularity than the former because of its stronger emphasis on social relationships. Some of these artists are not necessarily from the region, which originally owned and practised these design motifs, but hail from different parts of the country, and even from outside the country like El Anatsui, for example, who is a Ghanaian. Many have adapted these motifs to different aspects of the visual arts like painting, drawing, sculpture, fashion, and graphics. However, while some of them employ a variety of media, others prefer one or two.

In the area of painting, artists like Obiora Udechukwu are notable for the experimental, philosophical and contemporary way in which they adopt *uli* motifs into their works. Udechukwu's research into *uli* at Agulu, which he later extended into his undergraduate thesis at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, became fully developed by 1975, after the civil war. He was also greatly influenced by Uche Okeke and Chike Aniakor, who were both his teachers. Based on his desire to

return to his artistic roots, he resolved to be committed to his Igbo roots and *uli* became his choice. Udechukwu also prefers to describe *uli* as lyrical because he believes that it is a significant feature in the motif because of its rhythmic, flowing features and its balanced qualities of negative and positive space. Some of the motifs that could be seen regularly in his works include the kola nut head (*isi nwaaji*) and the spiral, *agwolagwo*, which he modifies and sometimes extends as he wishes. He also introduced the *nsibidi* motif to the Nsukka group, and by drawing images from Igbo culture, he has been able to make insightful commentaries through his paintings on social, economic and political issues in the country. Some of them include the lack of clean water, poverty, and mismanagement of the nation's resources by corrupt leadership.



Fig.1: Obiora Udechukwu, acrylic on canvas, *Our Journey So Far*, 200 x 640cm © Simon Ottenberg

The painting, *Our Journey So Far*, is Udechukwu's largest painting. There are four panels placed side by side in this painting composition, each measuring 200 x 640cm in dimension. The yellow band that meanders across them is an allusion to the sacred python as well as the road of life. The band begins as a spiral in the right panel that unfurls and assumes a wavy pattern as it approaches the left. Udechukwu infuses the *uli* and *nsibidi* motifs in this painting in subtle brilliant colours. There are *nsibidi* mirrors on the right and a few indigenous designs from the southeastern part of the country. This portion of the panel, however, is empty, as though metaphorically depicting the birthing of the journey of the Nigerian and Igbo people. There are indigenous elements in the band of the second panel, like combs, a mask, mirrors, a couple, and an image of a Benin bronze head of antiquity. The next band on the other hand reflects on the Biafra war theme of patience, a chameleon, refugees, images of lack of water, and other *uli* motifs like the crescent moon, the lizard, and the elephant's claw. The leftmost band is also suffused with a lot of metaphorical imagery; people sitting, a woman with a mirror, a military man pointing a gun, a minstrel with an Igbo instrument, a lady with long breasts, destitute people with skulls and bones. According to Ottenberg (1997:148): "this panel represents recent times. motifs and images in the four panels are found in Udechukwu's earlier work as if *Our Journey* is a summation of his life so far."

In his unpublished PhD thesis, *Two Decades of Pyrography by Nsukka Artists: 1985-2006*, Onuorah (2012) examines the *Uli* motifs used in one of El Anatsui's sculptural pieces titled *When I last wrote to you about Africa I used a letter-headed parchment Paper*.

There were many blank slots in the letter...I can now fill some of these slots because...I have grown older (Onuorah 2012, p.237). His analysis provides some useful insight into one of the remarkable ways in which these masters used these ancient pictorial designs to produce startling masterpieces. According to him, there are about thirty different motifs extracted from three different cultures: *uli*, *nsibidi* and *adinkra* positioned in rectangular segments in this linear sculptural piece, which represents a wooden scroll.



Fig.2: El Anatsui. *When I last wrote to you about Africa I used a letter headed parchment Paper. There were many blank slots in the letter...I can now fill some of these slots because...I have grown older.* © October Gallery, London

Ada Udechukwu's fashion designs represent another way in which motifs have been integrated into fashion. The artist worked in hand-painted cotton cloth, batik and appliqué. She depicted motifs, creatively manipulating their linear qualities, in her fabric designs. Having done so many drawings with *Uli*, based on her knowledge of the motif, which she acquired from her husband and other artistic friends, it was relatively easier for her to translate her concepts into fabrics. In some of her later designs she experimented and modified the *uli* designs she incorporated. She has exhibited these fabrics in some exhibitions, one of which includes the joint exhibition with Elizabeth Ohene at the Zodiac Hotel, Enugu in 1990. The fabrics she exhibited during the exhibition were hand-painted works that included men's and women's trousers, shirts, and other clothing.



Fig.3: Ada Udechukwu, the artist displaying a unisex dress she designed, 1993 © Simon Ottenberg

Chris Echeta, the Managing Director of Century Ceramics, situated at Oji River in Anambra State, Nigeria, is another versatile visual artist who incorporates *uli* and *nsibidi* motifs in his ceramic concepts. His works are not just appraised for their sculptural fluid and dynamic forms, but also for the interesting patterns, many of them sourced from *uli* and *nsibidi*, incised on their glazed surfaces. He has participated in several solo and group exhibitions and his works are in private collections and galleries at home and beyond.



Fig.4: Chris Echeta, *Truth is Patient*, acrylic on canvas, 38cm © Chris Echeta

Review of Video Art in Africa: Conceptual Developments since 1980

The video art projects and concepts that will be reviewed will include works produced by artists from different parts of the continent. Video art in this context includes video installations, performances, and related multimedia works. The review will also be done according to periods, each spanning a decade, except for the last. Based on the large number of videos, as well as their styles and concepts, only significant works exhibited in notable biennales, art exhibitions, and workshops, by selected prominent artists will be reviewed.

The Period 1980 to 1989

This period did not witness much video art from the continent. Perhaps it is because much of the concentration was on the other aspects of visual arts like sculpture, painting, and creative photography, there was also a high degree of experimentation and exploration in these areas. The world was beginning to brace itself for the stunning concepts coming out from a country once deemed incapable of producing works with high philosophical and intellectual content.

However, it was William Kentridge who first began to delve into video art during the latter part of this period. At first, the public was captivated by his silkscreen concepts, and then later his drawings. William Kentridge is a South African artist (born April 28, 1955). He gained popularity for his prints, drawings, and most especially his animated films, which were animated sketches. The process of creating these sketches is a meticulous procedure, whereby the artist films a drawing, makes erasures and changes, and films it again. In other to give it a

cinematic jerky effect, he gives each change to the drawing a quarter of a second to two seconds' screen time. He also continues this process of altering a single drawing while be altered and filmed until the end of a scene. His animation series, *Drawings for Projection*, was released around 1989, and one of the popular videos in the series is titled *Johannesburg: The Second Greatest City after Paris*, with a duration of about 8 hours.

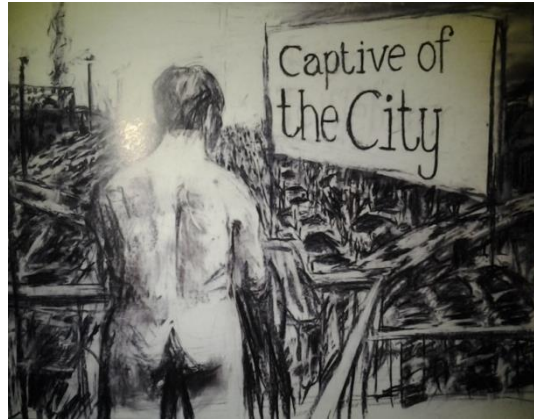


Fig. 5: William Kentridge, *Johannesburg The Second Greatest City after Paris*, 1989, 16mm animated film transferred to video, 8:2 mins.

The Period 1990 to 1999

More video artists propped up within this period; names like Bili Bidjocka, Antonio Ole, Oladele Bamgboye, Zineb Sedira, Tracy Rose and Kendell Geers exploded in the scene. Their works were phenomenal and provocative in terms of the themes and the expressive, and sometimes threatical nature of their concepts. Most of them exhibited video installations like Anytonio Ole and Tracy Rose, although Tracy Rose's approach was more of performances whereby the artist used herself as part of the installation. The video installation series, titled *Span II*, exhibited around 1997, is one such examples. In this video, which is a performance, the artist, nude, sits upon a TV set in a glass casing. The television monitor relays a detailed view of her actions. This performance, which was done during the Graft, 2nd Johannesburg Biennale Vitrine, depicted the thrust of the concepts that video artists around this period practised. It seemed that the very type of radicalism, in terms of experimentation and artistic expression, that dogged the other aspects of visual art was now influencing this area of the arts.

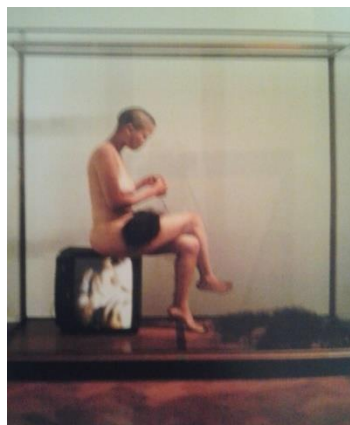


Fig. 6: Tracy Rose, *Span I*, 1997, Performance installation at Graft, 2nd Johannesburg Biennale Vitrine, Television monitor, human hair, body, dimensions invariable© Tracy Rose

In Jane Alexander's video installation titled *Integration Video: Man with TV*, which was released around 1995, a man sits in his Sunday clothes staring into a television monitor. The footage in the monitor reveals another man, also dressed in a suit and repeatedly adjusting his tie in a shop front mirror, smoothens his hair, and then readjusts his tie, as though in preparation for someone he will never meet. As in her other sculptures and installations, the human forms all seem to appear still, motionless and expressionless, as though in a permanent state of mutation.



Fig. 7: *Integration Programme: Man with TV*, 1995. Plaster, oil paint, clothing, found objects and video recording. 138 x 100 x 220cm© Collection of the South African National Gallery, Cape Town.

The Period 2000 to Present

By the turn of the century, especially around this period, video art had already found its ground, no thanks to the motivating attention given to the works of the African artists involved in it. The focus shifted around this period from its earlier emphasis on video installations to diverse experimental ways of expressing ideas in video arts. New techniques, as well as technology, enabled the artists to stretch their imaginations beyond conceptual boundaries that had initially limited them. The computer age along with software, as well as smartphones with advanced multimedia features, have now made anything in the artist's imagination virtually possible to depict.

Furthermore, many new names came into the scene, apart from the familiar ones like William Kentridge. Visual artists like Pascal Marthine Taxon, and his multimedia installation, *Game Station* (2002), Grace Ndirity and her seven minutes video titled *The Nightingale* (2003), and Wael Shawky and his two-channel video, *Dodge Ram* (2004), among others were quite outstanding around this period. However, there are some artists whose works will be briefly discussed within this period due to their significant themes and unusual but unique techniques.

William Kentridge's animations had evolved dramatically into animated video installations. He executed two fascinating projects midway into the decade titled *Black Box* (2005) and *The Magic Flute* (2005). In the former, which was installed in the artist's studio, complete with projectors and mechanical prototypes, Kentridge was investigating three notions associated with the Blackbox. The first was related to its association with the theatre, and the installations consist of a model of a theatre, which houses projections and characters. The second black box, or the central

chamber noir, is an allusion to the central chamber of a camera, into which metaphoric light enters the 'camera' and meaning is revealed. The third is a reference to the Blackbox of a plane, which records the last moments before a plane disasters. The disaster the artist was referring to was the tragic historical incident of the German massacre of the Herero people in South Africa.



Fig. 8: William Kentridge. *Blackbox*. Video installation, 2005. © William Kentridge.

Between the years 2006 and 2007, an artist couple, who called their collaboration 'installing' their surnames produced some very interesting video art footages that captured the attention of art lovers around the world. Kenyan Ingrid Mwangi and her German husband, Robert Hutter formed the artist collaborative team, MwangiHutter. Using their bodies as canvases and sounding boards, they produced video and sound installations that address issues of identity, race and self-image. Their interest in identity is not surprising, but ironical, because of their relationship, and Mwangi whose father is Kenyan while her mother is German, characterizes this. Their footage was usually mixed with wit, poetry, humour and pathos as can be seen in some of their video art like *Mzungu* (2006), *In My House* (2006), and *Being Bamako* (2007). In *Mzungu*, Robert is kilted out in local costumes by indigenes who think the white man looked ridiculously hilarious in them. However, Robert, the *Mzungu* (another Kiswahili word for 'white man') is not so happy with their reaction. The reason for this comes in the form of a rhetorical question, Will the Europeans think these Maasai men funny when they wear Western clothes? (Fig. 11).

The second video footage, *In My House* (2006), was presented as the premonition of an individual anticipating strings of natural disasters, like a flood and fire in the living room, an earthquake that rocked the house and fires that stung her eyes, all happening in her house. These incidents are metaphoric and allude to the consequences of identity issues, and how they rip a 'house' (a nation or individual) apart.

The third video, *Being Bamako* (2007), a single-channel video, is a call for empathy in relating to people who are different from themselves whether by sex, gender, culture, or religious creed.

Discussion/Review of Works

The video artworks discussed have themes that cut across a wide range of issues—relationships, identity, ecology and socio-cultural experiences. These footages are interpreted with a fusion of indigenous motifs to enhance their aesthetic content and define their thematic construct, especially from a socio-cultural point of view. In others, however, the synthesis is implied; that is, the narratives allude to indigenous socio-cultural contexts.

The Lost African Tale of a Raped Vista (Hawkeye)



Fig. 9: *The Lost African Tale of a Raped Vista: Hawk eye*, Video, 2011. © William-West, K.I.

This video art is an animated abstract sketch. The footage consists of an eye peering through a mask that is part of it. It is a queer-looking mask, with modified *uli* and *nsibidi* motifs fluidly incorporated into its design composition. The eye blinks occasionally and creatively transits into other animated forms like a flying globe, a prancing horse, or a blindfolded lad blowing a flute. Each of these flows in sequence. *Nsibidi* and *uli* motifs that have been creatively modified, fuse in and out of the areas surrounding the eyes, as though punctuating the transitions taking place in the narrative.

The Lost Tale of a Raped Vista: Hawk Eye depicts the current identity situation taking place within the country as a result of colonialisation. Compared to other countries like China and Japan that have somehow retained their cultural heritage to a large extent, Africa is being threatened as the new generation is experiencing a new type of virtual colonization. The introduction of communication gadgets and social media through the easily-accessed internet, among others, has further increased this threat. Somewhere along the line the lessons of the past have been either lost or forgotten as history is slowly repeating itself.

The Stirrings of a Cradled Dream

In a simple animated drawing, the abstract figure appears to be at rest for a while. The eyelid beneath her seems to be also at rest since its lids are shut. Suddenly they swiftly open triggering sequences of changes in all the elements of the composition. The head nods restlessly, the waves ripple at the foot of the bed, and the motifs incorporated in the bosom of the once-sleeping figure change intermittently in

aesthetic distortions. The figure stirs from time to time but never wakes up completely.



Fig.10: William-West, *The Stirrings of Fig. 15: Cradled Dream*, Video, 2011. © William-West, K.I.

When a dream is cradled for too long, without any attempt by the owner of the dream to bring it into reality, there is a sort of restlessness that occurs within that individual. That conflict within will continue to induce that restlessness until the dreamer either kills the dream or sensitizes himself or herself to forget it entirely. Or the dreamer could also do something about the dream.

Burning Ice



Fig. 11: William-West, K.I. *Burning Ice*, Video, 2006. © William-West, K.I

The first few seconds in the footage reveals a close-up shot of two blocks of ice submerged in a dark pool with drifting leaves and twigs. Then, as the camera retreats to a wide-angle shot in the next frame, wild dancing flames begin to crackle and burn on the top of the ice. Different camera angles and colour tones of this view are displayed on the screen in the next few shots until the camera zooms on the flame in the fifty-sixth second of the footage. The final frame is a transition to a wide-angle view of the pool, this time replaced with a drifting dark soiled greasy patch on its surface, accompanied by a gurgling sound in the background, before changing back to the initial state of the two submerged blocks of ice. The blending mode approach in the footage is employed extensively, whereby another shot of radically bordered close-up shot of fishes frantically wriggling in the pool placed next to the burning ice shots as an inset. A dark vignette of motion background graphics defines the backdrop of the footage.

In this video art, the researchers explore the unpredictability of some of the elements in nature, water and fire, and the different moods inherent in their raw expressions. There is a sort of appealing paradox that is expected when these two extremely divergent elements are together and creatively fused with some footage of roaring waves in the backdrop. The sound waves are projected in their raw forms, although with some slight editing. The result of a fascinating rhythmic series of scenes that reveal the uncertainties and mystery that form the composition of reality's naturalistic canvas is the desired result. The elements in this video cry out to humanity every day, prompting us to listen, trying to arrest our attention.



Fig. 12: Ekene Anikpe., *Roadway*, Video, 2010.© Ekene Anikpe

In the first five seconds of the *Roadway* footage, the camera gradually zooms down the footage of a sloping hill until it eventually rests on the figure of a standing boy in a reflective poise. The next sequence of scenes depict the boy gradually trudging along a rocky pathway until the frame transits to that of a girl, also poised like she too wants to begin a journey. From then on both frames, that of the trudging boy and the girl, are interchanged on the screen until they both finally meet at a crossroads. The final footage is a scene of the two of them walking hand in hand towards an unspecified destination. The footage is masked with a frame with brushstroke edges and placed in an abstracted motion background.

The theme of the *Roadway* describes life as a journey. It reveals the diversity and challenges individuals encounter in that journey whilst searching for a destination, with the promised reward of fulfilment that comes with persistence.

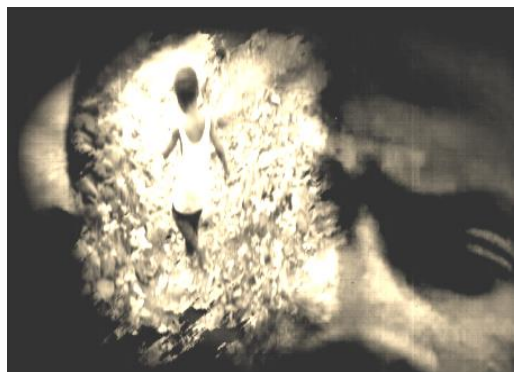


Fig. 13: William-West, K.I, *The Eye*, Video, 2011.© William-West, K.I

In the eye, a close-up shot of a pair of eyes fills the screen and is sustained for some seconds. Part of the eye, which is smeared with green paste, is displaced through chroma keying, with randomly changing colourful designs made with *uli* designs. The scene is eventually cut to a final frame that depicts a shirtless figure in a very dark space so that a subtle light softly reveals aspects of his silhouetted head and torso in grey tones staring at the viewer. This figure slowly bows his head as the video fades out.

The theme of *The Eye* is based on the unvoiced yearning by the present generation for the restoration of their socio-cultural identity, their traditional roots that are silently eroding in the face of technological, transcultural invasion in the world.

Conclusion

The fact that there is a techno-cultural revolution in this twenty-first century is undisputed. However, this trend has democratized cultural and artistic practice through everyday access to new media. Furthermore, the pervasive feature of this technology has challenged the preconceived perception of privacy, surveillance and ownership, the dominance of Western media in globalization, as well as the privilege of access in the developed world. For some unexplained reasons, modern African art has been for a while relegated to genres in the visual arts like painting, sculpture and, in some rare cases, ceramics or fashion by art scholars and academicians. Although many would point out that this is probably because it is still a virgin area and must be offered a somewhat probative scholarly approach while it develops, the implication of this perspective is a threat to its prospective preservation and the systematic record of its progress. Consequently, the potential of Africans to express themselves through this media is yet to be adequately accounted for in relative terms. Even though several bodies and organizations within the country and continent at large have been attempting to encourage its development and propagation, much remains to be done in adequately researching the creative energy in Africa, especially within the last decade.

In light of the globalization syndrome steering the new drift of contemporary art, the thrust of this thesis, which is focused on integrating indigenous motifs into the concept of this genre may seem somewhat backdated and conceptually marginalized. But if the issues of *identity* as a process, a rite of passage, towards developing that attitude of embracing *universality*, is anything to go by, then this study may demand some degree of scholarly relevance and justification in this regard. Besides, before any individual can embrace and accept others, there is the necessity of self-acceptance and recognition. It is the African socio-cultural identity that forms the adhesive that intensifies the bonding with other alien cultures in the spirit of globalization.

This research was strategically undertaken. The related literature reviewed revealed lapses that further supported the significance of adopting this approach in video art. Thus, it was necessary to understand the nature of the motifs under study, their sociocultural significance and areas in the visual arts where they have been explored. An examination of the selected significant contributions of visual artists from the continent, in progressive periods was necessary to deduce the possible

direction the art is taking and what needs to be done to either encourage or change it.

Overall, from the findings of the research, as well as in the course of executing the studio practice, the need for a structure for this new form of art that would properly initiate its development was re-affirmed. The conceptual possibilities are endless and significant. This is not just for aesthetic reasons alone but to direct attention to the ignored idiosyncratic readings of African video art in a socio-cultural context and its thematic concerns by not just the general viewing public, but also by scholars and academicians alike.

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