

CREATIVE ART AND DESIGN IN NATION BUILDING

By

FRANCIS O. AMADI

*Department of Art and Industrial Design,
Federal Polytechnic,
Nasarawa.*

Abstract

This paper looked at Creative Art and Design in nation building. It went a long way in wholly unearthing the importance of art in a nation like Nigeria where there have always been calls for technology breakthrough and advancement. This paper no doubt is educative and presents an in road into the salient issues and resources of art like creativity, skill, imagery, dexterity, aesthetics etc. These make art an important factor in technology development. Technology cannot be transferred. This paper stipulated that most advanced nations of the world developed through art because art is in everything and everything is in art and this makes it the basis for inventions and sinequanon for nation building.

In America in the 1860s and 1880s the justification for Art as a subject to be taught in schools was that it was necessary for the development and prosperity of American Industries. If America as an industrial nation was to compete with nations of Europe, she needed craftsmen and designers who would produce products that were attractive to people abroad as well as those in the country. Art was placed in the service of industry and competence in training was seen as an important industrial vocational skill. (Amadi 2006)

The above postulates that Art is an indispensable factor in the building and development of any nation. Countries like America, Britain, France, Germany e.t.c which fully embraced Art have greatly advanced technologically. Art evokes creativity. This is the more reason why the above mentioned nations and others have advanced so strongly industrially and economically.

Odesanmi (2000) posited that Art is an indispensable tool in nation building because Art and creativity are inseparable. The technologically advanced countries are creative countries. Creativity makes the difference between super-power countries and dependent nations.

If African nations and Nigeria in particular have to advance technologically the issue about art have to be wholly readdressed. The the nations that brought modern art are still relying on it for advancement, It therefore becomes pertinent and needful that it be made a factor in technology development.

Definition of Terms

Creative

- i. The international Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language (2010) explains the word creative as having the power to create.
- ii. It also says that to be creative is to be constructive and productive.

Art: According to the New Encyclopedia Britannica, (2010) Art is the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others.

In yet another vein, the word Art comes from Latin *ars*, or "Skill" and it still retains this original meaning, as in "the art of cooking". But it has come to have a wider significance. In the broadest sense, Art embraces all the creative disciplines: Literature, Poetry, Drama, Music, Dance and the Visual Arts. However, as most currently used, the term Art means the Visual Arts, those areas of Artistic creativity that communicate primarily through the eye. (Encyclopedia Americana vol.1, 2008)

Uzoagba (2002) emphasised that Art is a human conception made possible by the skilful use of a medium. It signifies a doing, making, a fashioning or putting together, and it usually implies that the thing is accomplished by human skill.

Design: To design is to make, draw, or prepare preliminary plans or sketches. (The New International Webster's comprehensive Dictionary of the English language 2010) More so, chambers compact Dictionary (2001) posits that design is to make a preparatory plan, drawing or model of something.

The ongoing postulates that creative Art and Design is all about bringing something new into existence via the power of imagination. Such new ideas could be pictorially represented and perfected with the employment of artistic skills. The three words creative, art and design are tied together. Creativity is an attribute of Art and design. To be a good artist and designer, one must be creative or think creatively.

Need For Creative Art and Design

Art is in Everything

Very few people may desire to be trained as Artists. The home truth is that everyone wants products that have beauty or aesthetics in them. In this present age every one would want to be associated with everything that is beautiful. Industrial products like cars, wrist watches, clothes, shoes, ceramic wares, Spectacles, suitcases television sets and several others have the touch of artists in their designs and production so as to attract buyers. In this regard, people be come drawn to beautiful or aesthetically made products without necessarily being inclined to the arts.

According to Ogbe (2000), Art serves physical needs on both a public and private level. Publicly, when aesthetics values are applied to community planning, high way development, urban renewal, housing development, civic centres, public buildings etc. Such personal used things like houses, automobiles and clothes are also a part of the public scenes. Art serves physical needs privately when aesthetic standards are applied to the tools and machine with which people work. The crafts man who produces originally designed items through ceramics, weaving or wood working is a peculiar contributor to private needs. Art works are used to serve personal needs when they apply the aesthetic standards they have leaned to homes, furniture, landscaping apparels and personnel appearance.

The ongoing brings to light the fact that art is needed in every human society.

Academics: Art has become a very pertinent area in every field. In architecture for instance, Artists have been instrumental in imparting drawing skills to student architects without which they may not be able to practice adequately. Artists have also played laudable roles in the area of architectural graphics. In this regard, Architectural pictorial representations with the use of colours and the use of other media have seen the Artist excelling. Amadi(2000), stipulated that the role of the Artist in building design like Architecture is also manifold and encompassing . This is in the areas of architectural graphics and drawing.

By 1874 a U.S Bureau of Education Bulletin stated: In addition to the increased competition arising from steam carriage, new and cheaper methods of manufacture, and increased productiveness, another element of value has rapidly pervaded all manufacturer, an element in which the United State has been and is woefully deficient - the art element. The element of beauty is found to have pecuniary as well as aesthetic value. The training of the hand and of the eye which is given by drawing is found to be of the greatest advantage to the worker in many occupations and is rapidly becoming indispensable.

This training is of value to all children and offers girls as well as boys opportunity for usefull and remunerative occupations, for drawing in the public schools is not to be taught as a mere “accomplishment” the end sought is not to enable the scholar to draw a pretty picture, but to so train the hand and eyes that he may be better fitted to become a bread winner. (Mbahi, 1999) By the above the United States in the Eighteenth century saw Art as an important factor in education. It means that they realized that art is all encompassing as well as a spring board for skill acquisition which was needed in developing a total child for national development. The present day America’s sporadic development in all facets of life may have been tied to this.

In Nigeria, Art has not been wholly embraced and made part and parcel of education. This can account for the slow pace in Nigerians Industrial and technology development. Mbahi (1997) posited that in most schools, English language and Mathematics are given most serious attention. They are studied throughout secondary education. Art is only compulsory in the junior secondary school. He also emphasised that majority of the Art teachers have great difficulty in acquiring materials and facilities to implement the art programme because it is not one of the priority areas. Education stake holders in Nigeria only need to know that Art is a facilitator of education. Without Art, education is not conceivable. Words that we speak daily are formed from letters of alphabets and these themselves are works of art. The study of Biology, Agriculture, Physics, and Chemistry and at the tertiary level, Medicine and surgery, Engineering, Architecture, e.t.c cannot be successfully done without Art. Suffice it to say that they embody it.

The importance of Art education to the realization of the physical growth and development of a scientific and technological knowledge must have been fully realized by the western world that had to make art the base of their learning process (Nwoko, 2006). If education stake holders and the larger Nigeria society would understand that Art is a carrier of all schools subjects and even technology, Art would definitely be given an enviable place in education for proper development as the advanced and first world countries have done.

Creative Art & Design in Nation Building

Every human being is an artist ... by artist, it does not just mean people who produce paintings and Sculptures or play piano, or are composers or writers. A nurse is also an artist, of course a doctor or a teacher. The essence of man is captured in the ‘artist’

By the above, everybody is an artist because the ability to create and beautify is already inherent in man. The western world knew this earlier and made Art part of their

lives knowing that Art is all about the totality and entirety of a people. Education, culture, science and technology of a people is embedded in their art. (Amadi , 2009)

By nature, man is creative. Man always has the apt to build and transform his environment. In this regard, man attaches or makes aesthetics (beauty) to be part and parcel of everything he does. This ranges from car manufacturing to the small appliance in the home. There are elements of Art in everything that is manufactured or made in order that they may attract wide acceptability by consumers.

In this dispensation, there is a clarion call for Nigerians technology development. Sequel to this is the issue of technology transfer from the west to third world countries like Nigeria. Amadi (2010) posited that

- (i) Technology is developed and not transferred or imported as many people think
- (ii) People develop technology when they improve their knowledge; skills and procedures of making and doing things
- (iii) One of the condition most favourable to invention is to accumulate knowledge and experience in Art and creativity
- (iv) Art is the basis of all disciplines and the foundation of discoveries
- (v) Technology is best achieved through projects and experiments conducted in a workshop atmosphere and
- (vi) There is need to provide knowledge in Art science and technology as integrated study .

As it is in the developed countries, there has to be a deliberate effort to bring Art Science and Engineering together if Nigeria has to develop technologically. Art conceives what science and technology produces and so without Art, technology development may be farfetched.

Nwoko (2006) proposed that the best thing that can happen to a people is to develop their own technology within their own cultural contest; that to achieve this, their artists have to get to work to create their own new technological culture by inventing their own reference design standards so that they can grow and develop a new world civilization that will blossom, attain golden age, and decay in its own time. That will be valid contribution to humanity.

Conclusion

Over the years, Nigeria has pursued desperately the issue of technology development. In this regard, there has always been emphasis on Science/Engineering while art is deemphasized. The 21st century therefore requires that this great missing link (Art) in the bid for our technology breakthrough be quickly infused without delay

as this was part of what placed the advanced nations in the threshold and echelon of economic, industrial and technological prowess. Nigeria can also excel if the same footsteps could be towed.

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