

STUDIO ART AS MEANS OF EDUCATING, BASIS FOR REBRANDING AND NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

The underlying problem of underdevelopment, disunity and unfulfilment in any nation is not poverty, sickness or war but ignorance. Consequently, they uphold the unnecessary and downcast the need for development. Hence, this paper exhibited the naked truth about the hidden potentials in studio art as means of educating and basis for transforming the nation. Having realized that the future belongs to the artist who sees things not as they are but as they can be, and that the old notion that “seeing is believing” is not as “believing is seeing” makes the studio artist stands tall in the pursuit for national development. One school that trains the eyes to see is the art, being the foundation of inventiveness. If seeing is living, then the studio artists have a power of life and transformation. Knowledge without application is a reproach to any nation, therefore in the face of fast spreading unemployment; art is a sure means of empowerment and joyfulness, resulting from these potentials, recommendations are given that artist should be appointed to hold key positions bordering on branding and that government should create more awareness on art potentials.

Key words: Studio art, education, rebranding, national transformation, seeing, believing.

A thousand words will not leave as lasting an impression as one deed, this evidently so, if the deed is constantly visible with touch of aesthetic and functions that the studio art promotes. A studio artist has found something that consumes him; he knows you will only be remembered in life for your passion. While he keeps making his money, he is busy enjoying the work as well and he employs others to work with him wherever necessary.

Day in Day out, we strive to create something visible so as to satisfy our artistic curiosity. Most times, the products draw people closer from different parts of the world.

The admirers come around to catch fun, get acquainted with the historical messages the art may have portrayed and enliven their soul. This enhances national development – to a large extent.

The studio artists are visionaries, who add value to everything they do. They constantly look at things not as they but as they can be. According to John, (2003:122), “Believing is seeing, it is much more effective than the old notion that seeing is believing”. This artist expression of “abstract believability” allows for things to be believed even before it is seen. Only when Nigerians borrow from this strength of believing is seeing can they quickly be transformed of truth, their could be a dramatic national development when we see Nigeria not as she is, but as she can be.

It is often said “Water has no enemy”, beautiful objects equally have no enemy. For this reason nearly all men would rather marry beautiful women even with bad character over women that have good character but not beautiful. No body hates beautiful women, likewise beautify artworks irrespective of what it stands for or who the artists are.

The beauty in art is a unifying factor. It is loved by all, whether the artist is your enemy, from a different tribes, a drug addict or bad. Good work is a source of unity to a nation. It attracts diverse people from all works of life. As people come around to enjoy beautiful images or artworks, they eventually get united and get connected because of what they share in common.

Art Works as Means of Connecting People

They looked at each other and one said to the other, “what a wonderful world, this cloth is great on you “call it the art of fashion”, he replied. They got talking about each other’s honey mood. One did his by visiting Obudu Ranch and the other visited some art galleries in Lagos, Abuja and Abeokuta. With great joy on their faces they spoke on Beautiful Artworks, Painting, Sculpture, Textile and Glass works they admired and how they met several white men at the galleries with their wives and even children.

They also discussed on various painting and sculpture reflecting divers’ culture in Nigeria and beyond. So the discussion continued when text message came in that there would be a workshop on leather work and that many people across the nation have put in their entry. It was included there would be an exhibition shortly after the workshop, one in Abuja and another in kano.

The above extract (illustration) shows people are attracted to wherever beautiful things are found. Arts, being aesthetically oriented carrier has brought together diverse

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people from all walks of life to satisfy their curiosity, catch fun and broaden their quality of visual perception. If there is one thing that connects people, it is wherever beautiful things are found. No wonder, where beautiful things are found is a tourist centre – a place of solace, peace and means of revenue for national development.

Studio Art and Nation Building

There is power in joyfulness – joy, strengthens the mind, that is what studio art promotes. Honestly, a joyous heart is a peaceful and productive heart. A nation of highly productive people will stimulate a well developed nation. Suffice to say, the studio artist live the dream of Nigeria by being self employed, packaged and creative.

Studio art is like a special tree with many branches bearing different fruits. Fruits of joy and peace, fulfillment, youth empowerment, cultural preservation, international recognition, and unity. With these potentials in studio art, art is worth encouraging for peace and national development. But the question is, why do many artists not practice on their own despite these potentials in studio art? Probably lack of some needed flavour.

The Flavour of Studio Artist

Starting off studio art requires strength of character, will power, Courage, Determination, Honesty, Dedication, Passion, Loyalty and Consistency. The success of every artist in his career would mean success in other arrears of his life. How?, because all these same quality are also required to be successful in the entire career of life. Meaning a nation with much men of such character has no limit of greatness in whatever they have found to do. These days, a cross fertilization of knowledge is required to excel in any profession, hence, the artist stands a chance to fit in other specialization of life different from their discipline.

The flavor of loyalty to their work alone is a virtue to build a nation. The success of an artist if appointed to hold position in any sector is guarantee owing to these flavor. To function as studio artist involves the attitude of Reading and application; this way many flavors would come naturally.

Studio Art and Rebranding

Brand means an identifying mark or label on the products of a commodity. Branding therefore means a unique way of presenting a product. Some good ideas become great global business company like: Sony Nokia, Cocacola, Google, Adidas etc. they started with branding, today they are globally known. David, (2011:2) explained the modernity they applied to select some companies in the book titled “How they started Global Brands”, that:

Most importantly, every company we cover was started by one more individual who had idea. Every business we cover here is successful. They are all also a “household name” in many countries around the world.

Branding products are as a result of good idea, branded businesses are successful, and are a house name.

Nation branding therefore starts as a way of packaging the image (all activities) of a nation in a way that gets her noticed. America, China, Japan, Malaysia, and even Ghana are branded countries because they believe if products from their countries are branded, their country should be branded alongside too. To be a branded nation is to believe in new world through humble beginnings, new direction, global expansion, pursuit of passion, growing the product, expanding and perfecting, new leadership new vision, promoting global happiness, intelligent risk taking, spicing it up, going global, beating the competition, culture preservation, alternative method and trails and error etcetera. All these are possible through the power of seeing and creativity that the studio artist stand for.

Practical and theory makes art what it is, the two go hand in hand. The studio artist believes not only in knowledge, but it application. This brings changes and transformation. Acquiring countless of certificate without fruitfulness is a mockery for a nation. Herbat Spencer puts it better that; “the great aim of education is not knowledge but action”. A dream, a plan, and hard work were the ingredients all renowned studio artist applied to turn their dreams into reality. Through reading and practical application, the artists live their dreams. Knowledge with application is a transformation to any nation – a sure transformation that leads to branding.

Branding through the Eye of Graphics Artist

Branding is to develop a style that gets you noticed. Richard, (2003:33) opined “Don’t change your make up with the seasons or with what is in Vogue-be known for your look, be stylish recognizable, be stylish” most studio artist have branded life style. They are unique, modest and stylish. Any attempt to include artist as a member of a committee in the re-branding of Nigeria would mean a huge success.

Honestly, when we talk about branding, we mean “packaging”. This is simply presenting what you have in an attractive and unique way. Some of the products they import to Nigeria are not better than what you get in Nigeria but why do people prefer almost all the imported goods to indigenous goods? Because of its presentation. If you package “poison” as food in a beautiful manner and best of “ice cream” in a displeasing touch, nearly all would pick the poison. That is just the power of packaging. Borrowing from the idea of packaging as peculiar to graphics artist, Nigeria would be better perceived.

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John, 2003:130 says “you must be uncommon to be a champion” to be uncommon lies in branching. Only if Nigeria is branded in uncommon way can she be great as a nation. The team or the body in charge of branding should be headed by artist whose dream and passion day and Night is how things can be instead of how things are.

Creating beauty out of nothingness seems to be the Logo of studio artist, for an appropriate sector to fall into the hand of these people would mean a dramatic National development that is generational.

Generational Development

Most children of this generation believes in immediate gratification, they even want success without working for it and hence corruption and insecurity in the country. The present and future development of Nigeria is basically possible by means of self employment that could get kids of the street and make their life count. The children of some studio artist usually become a good artist before they grow to realize it. This way, development becomes hereditary.

Parents should first be engaged in meaningful works without depending on government, so that their children would grow old to inherit their father’s occupation. If otherwise, the future children when they take after their father’s laziness would bring more problems to Nigeria. Myles. (1996:93) puts it that,

God also ignores the children of those who ignore his knowledge. This is true because your children learn what you know, if you don’t know anything, they aren’t going to learn anything, and they will then make the same mistakes and have the same values and attitudes you have.

The first people children learn from is their parents. For a nation to develop, parents should be committed to worthwhile things so that their children can learn, master it and then transfer it to another generation. To do nothing (knowledge without application) is the way to be nothing. A good example of national generational development initiatives is universal art studio, Lagos.

Universal Studio of Art; an Effective Means for National Development

The act of discovering starts from seeing. The studio artist has been a platform for training people to see through drawing, painting, sculpture etc. this is made more effective through the association of the studio artists as a club to advance their carrier and to train student’s from different parts of the country. A good example of this association of studio artist is Universal Studios of Art in Nigeria.

The Universal Studio is Located at the National Arts theater, Iganmu, Lagos. This is made up of some notable artist in Nigeria and worldwide. They do not practice

to promote their personality but have decided that others (students from various higher institutions in Nigeria) come to learn new things in their area of discipline. It has been so beneficial to student on industrial attachment.

The team of “Arts and Artist” was on a visit to the Universal Studios of Art, in the Interview granted to one of the members; Mr. Edosa Oguigo he said “ the Universal Studio of Art Consist of a professional artist that has been in existence for the past 26 years old”. He added.

The studio has offered quality service to visual Art in Nigeria particularly in the areas of training and mentoring in the last ten years, there have been collective pursuits by the members of the Universal Studios to give back to posterity, some of their professional gains by training of young artists. The twelve artists that made up the studio are full – time practitioners, who have practiced extensively, whose experience have helped a flock of trainees, students on industrial attachment in the past 26 years. Most of them are now proud professional – Arts and Artists. (2011:61).

These trainees in return train students in other fields of study to master drawing and colouring in their respective course of study. With this, some course that would have been difficult being that they involve drawing is made easier of the students.

Indeed, art helps people to succeed in other school subjects. How? The more they can see the more their minds are more open to learning complex things for academic, business and political development. With seeing there can be hope for national transformation.

Seeing as Tool for Transformation

It takes those who can see to make a difference. Obviously, all that have eyes do not see, more population simply look. John, (2003:117) confirms that “only when you see the invisible can you do the impossible”. Studio artist are more trained “to see”, by this they function well in their studio work. This is why, they constantly look at things not as they are, but as they can be. What a positive attribute of transformation. When a leader sees his nation as an object to be transformed just as artist see how best they can make something out of nothing, then there will be hope for the nation.

Seeing has deeper strength of identifying a problem, drawing hypothesis, analyzing it and propounding answers to the existing problem. Seeing sharpens intelligence. Surly, only when you see seemingly invisible problem can you get solution. The under development of a nation is a result of underlying unsolved problem, only eyes that see can identify it. Without stretching this, those who see are world changers. No wonder Leonardo Da Vinci was known as universal man, an engineer,

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Doctor, Musician, Physicist, Architect, Sculpture, Painter etc he was 200 years ahead of his generation – Frederick, (1977:117) of all this achievement, what made him popular is “Mona Lisa” a portrait of woman. Suffice to day, fine Art – the means of seeing is the window through which great things are seen and explored. In today’s world, seeing is no longer sufficient for excellent achievement, you have to see differently.

Seeing Differently

Mo Abudu 2013 had this to say about hest the dreams to develop Nigeria. She believe that “for the new Africa to truly emerge, Nigeria, for one, must encourage people to dream and see things differently that what people see as the norm”. The studio artists are “radical” people who have being living their dreams by breaking the norms. They constantly frustrate tradition to express their artistic endeavors. The application of this virtue in other sectors of human endeavor would mean a drastic transformation and branding for Nigeria.

Conclusions

The foundation of inventiveness for national development starts with seeing. Seeing precedes creativity. Artists are highly creative people. With creativity they add value to whatever they have found to do. Adding value to our country would further develop our nation, which is where the role of artist comes in. You cannot run away from this basic truth.

Until our leader have a full knowledge of what art is, the role art needs to play for national development would be hindered. Most educated people think art is all about drawing and sculpting, it is much more to this. But only when leaders know the incredible potentials in studio art would then support, encourage and treasure it.

Studio art is a major and age long promoter of cultural heritage, without it, our culture would be lost – meaning a lost identity. Even when a culture is lost, its visual representation is there to educate generations.

Beauty as object of unity and uniqueness as a key word for national branding, are what the studio artists promote while they see things as they can be, instead of how things are. Hence, they believe, believing is seeing.

Recommendations

1. Artist should be appointed to hold key position bordering on banding.
2. Government should create more awareness on art potentials.
3. Building plan for house should be given to artist for screening before the building commences.

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