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Public Art Projects In Communities: Creating Sculptural Forms Inspired by COVID – 19 Pandemic

Ephraim Ugochukwu, Ph.D

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Science, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi, State. Nigeria.

E-mail: ephraimugochukwu@yahoo.com

Abstract

Coronavirus, popularly known as COVID-19 is a pandemic that has claimed so many lives all over the world. The World Health Organization, described corona viruses as a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness, and recover without requiring special treatment, older people are the vulnerable ones, and those with underlying medical problems, like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer, are more likely to develop severe illness. WHO in 2019, declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. There is the need to create in three dimension, and commemorate our dearly beloved ones, who lost their lives to this dreaded pandemic. The research seeks to create a handy, miniature study illustration of the COVID-19, in sculptural form. This will be represented in four different panels, of some selected experiences around the world, and encounter with this virus, the research documents the experiences, and out-come of the studio exploration. This will also create business and job opportunities for entrepreneurs and for self-employability.

Keywords

Covid-19, Modern Time, Sculptural Representation, Practice Based, Research Enquiry, Awareness

Introduction

Talk about COVID-19 experiences, its ravaging effects and impacts in the modern time COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China, and subsequently spread worldwide. The coronavirus was officially named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses

based on phylogenetic analysis. SARS-CoV-2 is believed to be a spillover of an animal coronavirus and later adapted the ability of human-to-human transmission. Because the virus is highly contagious, it rapidly spreads and continuously evolves in the human population (Liu et al, 2020). Scholars like Zimmermann, Curtis, Bchetina, Girard and Lactose among other scholars in (2020) attest that the respiratory

syndrome-CoV (MERS-CoV) and the novel virus that first appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and rapidly spread to 213 countries... It was officially named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by the international committee on taxonomy of viruses (ICTV) and the disease's name is COVID-19 for coronavirus disease 2019. SARS-CoV-2 is very contagious and is capable of spreading from human to human. Infection routes include droplet and contact, and aerosol transmission is currently under investigation. It is associated with a respiratory illness that may cause severe pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). SARS-CoV-2 became an emergency of international concern... the virus has been responsible for 12,698,995 confirmed cases and 564,924 deaths worldwide and the number is still increasing (Al-Sehail, 2017).

Owing to the above facts, it is imperative to create and document the ravaging effect of COVID-19 in sculptural form, rendered in realistic three dimensionality, and discussed for proper evaluation. The studio research was thus inspired, and it borrows from existing pictorial images of the COVID-19.

In visual arts, the individual (the artist) uses various elements or material to express his or her feelings, emotions and differing perceptions of the world that surrounds him or her. The result of this is judged mainly by the sense of sight. Visual artists have very many different motivations for producing creative products, these motivations could be cultural, religious, social, self-expression or earning-related, among others. One of the early used medium is sculpture, which have served human beings till date (WIPO, 2019).Sculpture has long been noted for its importance as a veritable means of recording people and events in a two- or three-dimensional form. This function has also not diminished in today's importance of sculpture, and even in the other spheres of artistic expression in human evolution. The singular effect of modern technology and the unprecedented adventure into inventions have made the human race more concerned with the

environment, positively or otherwise, and consciously or unconsciously (Oladugbagbe, 2016).

Sculptural form is created by an artist who is interested in exploring aesthetic and formal possibilities in three dimensions. Sculpture can be essentially identifiable as intention of an artist, the invention is known as a means of expression. Sculptural form can be figurative, or represent some other form. Other sculptures look random, with only the slightest sign that the form was made by an artist. A common characteristics in sculptural form is that it is meant to be an aesthetic work, and also functional structure most at times. It is three dimensional, and stable and strong enough to carry its own weight (Al-Sehail, 2017). In the word of Frasier (2018) "In my beliefs about sculpture I am very conscious that it has to do with physicality. I don't think it is possible to divorce sculpture from the making of objects..."

Sculpture is distinctively related to the space in which it lies, that it interacts with that space. Thus for Hegel: a sculpture remain essentially connected with its surroundings. Neither a statue nor a group, still less a relief, can be fashioned without considering the place where the work of art is to be put.

Statement of Problem

There are sculptural expressions of COVID-19 since early 2020. However, one cannot account the possibility of when the actual documentation started especially in the health sector. This forms the basis for this studio attempt.

Review of two dimensional COVID-19 inspired drawings

The four sketches bellow are works produced by two foreign artists and two Nigerian artists. They were not rendered in sculptural form and not in three dimensionality, these sketches are rendered in coloured pencils, pen and inks. The research

evaluate them, describing their presentation and also interpreted by the artist, even though some of the artists are unknown.



Plate 1:COVID-19 inspiration
Artist: MJHBLENART
Year: 2019
Medium: Pen on paper
Source: Facebook



Plate 2:COVID-19 inspiration
Artist: Unknown
Year: 2019
Medium: Pen on paper
Source: Facebook

Plate 1. COVID-19 inspired sketch, by MJHBLENART, the artists message was straight to the point. There is a sort of confrontation between the large round image with human face that looks like a monster and very fierce. Evident is the bulgy eyeballs, growth like mushrooms all over the head with blood all over it. Observe the doctor was very calm, the artist obviously talked about the brave hearted doctors that stood their ground to help save people's lives especially when the COVID-19 virus was severe. It was obvious that those at the health sectors were badly hit by the pandemic, most medical doctors died while saving people.

Plate 2. By unknown artist, reminds us of the period when people were told to stay in door and not to come out nor go to any place because of the fear that people may contact the virus and probably die. In the illustration one sees a woman hiding, trying to check if someone was outside before advancing, she was making sure the enemy was not at sight. One also sees that the virus hides behind a door, sets a trap for her in other to catch the woman. Observe the blue, red and lemon green arrows. Inscribed above is 'Monday 14 of May... beware'. This inscription would have meant that that day was a day one would never forget. Something remarkable would have happened on the day inscribed above.



Plate 3: COVID-19 inspiration
Artist: Stephen Ezike
Year: 2019
Medium: Pen on paper
Source: Facebook



Plate 4: COVID-19 inspiration
Artist: New Bulama's Cartoon
Year: 2020
Medium: Pen on paper
Source: Facebook

Plate 3. By Stephen Ezike. The artist was able to depict this by illustrating a footballer in action, who in motion have already kicked the virus away. His message is also very clear, He illustrates that when we all cooperate by observing all the necessary rules on how to avoid the spread of COVID-19, we would win the war against the deadly virus and kick out COVID-19 in our lives, community and indeed our country.

Plate 4. Is political in nature. The drawing shows the COVID-19 virus with a whip in hand, ready to flog Nigerian politicians for not fixing our health sector. The inscription reads; *'we are sorry sir; we promise to fix it!* One need not ask fix what? For the answer is obvious. The artist New Bulama tells us of how careless our politicians are. The Nigeria nation is in a bad state, nothing seems to be working. Our health sector is in a very bad shape, no proper education, light, water, road, among others are dilapidated. It is sad that our leaders travel out for health care and other facilities, when they would have put all these things in place so as to make life better for the poor masses.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical Framework guiding the studio creation, looks at Plato's philosophy of mimetic (mimicry/imitation) imitation or reproduction of the supposed words of another, as in order to represent his or her character. imitation of the real world, as by re-creating instances of human action and events or portraying objects found in nature and the theory of Lisa Feldman Barrett's philosophy of facial expression which states that 'facial expressions are not emotional displays, but tools for social influence'.

One of the richest and most powerful tools in social communication is the face, from which observers can quickly and easily make a number of conclusion about identity, gender, sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical health, attractiveness, emotional state, personality traits, pain or physical pleasure, deception, and even social status (Jack et al. 2015).

Methodology

The method for data collection is more of secondary sources. Secondary data includes books, personal sources, journals, newspapers, website, government record among others because they are readily available, and would be qualitative in nature. This research creates sculptures that are inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic, even though it is a miniature sculpture that can be used for indoor as suggested by some scholars, which has its own rigor, especially its material exploration, for documentation purposes this research work can be presented and approved for a larger scale to be produced for public view and environmental beautification, this is known as a robust studio oriented practice as suggested by Graeme Sullivan (2005), and (2010), other scholars like Christiana Thompson (2006), Charles R. Garoian (2006), and EzeNgene (2012), among other, borrowed from Sullivan. Though the whole idea and summary is that artists should emphasize the role of the imaginative intellect in creating, criticizing, and constructing knowledge that is not only new but also has the capacity to transform human understanding.

Ngene's opinion summarizes that, art practice as a research recognizes the independent intellectual and imaginative inquiry by visual artists. The studio serves as the site for critical inquiry. The images and how the artist goes about to make them are regarded as sources of critical inquiry which transform human understanding from simple to complex, known to unknown in order to make sense from the everyday world we know. Art practice as a research explains the significant role which the artist performs in research community where the wide use of visual images is helping to restructure methodological scope in art based educational research. Art practice generates new insight, knowledge and understanding that broaden the scope to see, reason, and appreciate things in a new meaningful perspective.

This methodology adopts the two classifications of sculpture mentioned and explained above (two and three dimensional sculptures), this further

explains the how and why the practice based research enquiry.

With these in mind, the researcher gradual builds up, starting first by mentally contemplating, deciding what type of form? What would the created form take? What would be the possible outcome? This was as well followed by drawing:

Fig.1; drawing helps the sculptor to decide how, and what shape the creative work would look like, in other words, what pictorial image the creative work takes its shape.

Fig 2; shows the construction of amature with flexible mild steel rod.

Fig 3; Application of clay on the constructed amature

Fig 4; Systematic and gradual buildup of clay

Fig 5; finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study A

Fig 6; finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study B

Fig 7; finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study C

Fig 8; finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study D

Fig 9; prepared detergent with water ready to be used to aid the application of silicon on the finished clay model.

Fig 10; Silicon ready to be applied to the finished clay model

Fig 11; Application of silicon gel on the finished clay model, with the aid of the detergent for ease of manipulation.

Fig 12; Sim-line is created on silicon gel, already dried and ready for mother-mold making.

Fig 13; Sim-line is created on silicon gel, already dried and ready for mother-mold making.

Fig 14; Plaster of Paris is applied on the second part of the mother mold, with the aid of the spoon

Fig 15; Removing the clay used for sim-line separation on the Plaster of Paris, in readiness to apply the second part of the plaster of Paris mold for mother mold.

Fig 16; Creating a lock on the sim-line separation, on the Plaster of Paris, in readiness the second part of the plaster of Paris application for mother mold

Fig 17; removing the chipped -off particles of the Plaster of Paris for ease of lubricant application in ready for mother mold making

Fig 18; Application of lubricant on the Plaster of Paris for ease of separating the mother mold.

Fig 19; separating the mother mold with a bread knife.

Fig 20; The Plaster of Paris, mother mold is separated and ready for the liberation of the trapped clay.

Fig 21; Silicon is cut at the sim-line with a sharp knife to enable it separated from the cast.

Fig 22; the clay is reveled inside the silicon, with the mother mold holding intact the flexible silicon

Fig 23; silicon is properly washed with clean water, in preparation for casting.

Fig 24; silicon is properly positioned inside the mother mold, properly tied in preparation for casting.

Fig 25; Polyester resin is mixed and poured inside the silicon, which was properly guided and secured inside the mother mold.

Fig 26; the polyester is revealed inside the silicon and ready to be liberated from it.

Fig 27; finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part A view.

Fig 28; finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part B view.

Fig 29; finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part C view

Fig 30; finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part D view



Fig 1. Conceptual drawing of the COVID-19 inspired three dimensional sculpture creation.



Fig 2. Construction of amature with flexible mild steel rod.



Fig 3. Application of clay on the constructed amature



Fig 4. Systematic and gradual buildup of clay



Fig 5. Finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study A



Fig 6. Finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study B



Fig 7. Finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study C



Fig 8. Finished clay detail of the upper and lower part of study D



Fig 9. Prepared detergent ready to be used to aid the application of silicon on the finished clay model.



Fig 10. Silicon ready to be applied to the finished clay model



Fig 11. Application of silicon gel on the finished clay model, with the aid of the detergent for ease of manipulation.



Fig 12. Sim-line is created on silicon gel, already dried and ready for mother-mold making.



Fig13. Sim-line is created on silicon gel, already dried and ready for mother-mold making.



Fig14. Plaster of Paris is applied on the second part of the mother mold, with the aid of the spoon

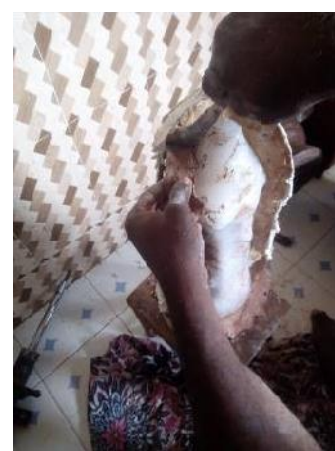


Fig 15. Removing the clay used for sim-line separation on the Plaster of Paris, in readiness to apply the second part of the plaster of Paris mold for mother mold.



Fig 16. Creating a lock on the sim-line separation, on the Plaster of Paris, in readiness the second part of the plaster of Paris application for mother mold.



Fig 17. Removing the chipped-off particles of the Plaster of Paris for ease of lubricant application in ready for mother mold making.



Fig 18. Applying lubricant on the Plaster of Paris for ease of separating the mother mold.



Fig 19. Separating the mother mold with a bread knife.



Fig 20. The Plaster of Paris, mother mold is separated and ready for the liberation of the trapped clay.



Fig 21. Silicon is cut at the sim-line with a sharp knife to enable it separated from the cast.



Fig 22. The clay is revealed inside the silicon, with the mother mold holding intact the flexible silicon.



Fig 23. The silicon is properly washed with clean water, in preparation for sting.



Fig 24. The silicon is properly positioned inside the mother mold, properly tied in preparation for casting.



Fig 25. polyester resin is mixed and poured inside the silicon, which properly guided by the mother mold.



Fig 26. The polyester is revealed inside the silicon and ready to be liberated from it.



Fig 27: Finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part A view.
Year: 2020
Size: 41cm x 15cm x 49cm
Medium: Polyester and Stone
Source: Artist collection



Fig 28: Finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part B view.
Year: 2020
Size: 41cm x 15cm x 49cm
Medium: polyester and stone
Source: Artist collection



Fig. 29: Finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part C
Year: 2020
Size: 41cm x 15cm x 49cm
Medium: polyester and stone
Source: Artist collection



Fig.30: Finished filled cast of COVID-19 inspired sculpture. Part D view.
Year: 2020
Size: 41cm x 15cm x 49cm
Medium: polyester and stone
Source: Artist collection

Findings / Recommendations

Sculptures should be found in hospitals, since art is therapeutic, it sensitizes the masses, one doesn't have to be there to do the teaching.

Sculptures should be erected in strategic places to sensitize/ educate the public both in urban and rural areas.

Sculptural pieces that are not properly executed should be pulled down and professionals should be engaged in making sure that the right thing should be done.

Sculptural pieces that are found to be decaying should be revived.

The role of the craft and visual arts sectors can prove to be pivotal for sustainable development, and poverty reduction. For policy-makers in government, business and civil society in these countries, defending the interests of artisans, craft entrepreneurs and visual artists against unfair competition is becoming critical in order to underpin their commercial success and their contribution to individual and collective wealth creation, as well as to preserve cultural identity and diversity (WIPO, 2019).

Conclusion

The present day sculpture enables a physically engaged encounter with the remains of the human past experiences, bringing vibrancy and active experience with the viewer to make independent contributions and interpretations. Sculpture inspires an active response that leads to an enhanced idea of the past, present and the future. One need not be told, there would be light after a very long, dark turned, this was why Babs Ademueye stated "... this 'dark period' of Corona wahala will give birth to series of breakthrough" this research is one of the breakthrough.

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