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Re-theorising and Envisioning Text as Image

A Concept in Practice-based Research in Painting

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Re-theorising and Envisioning Text as Image: A Concept in Practice-based Research in Painting

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Abstract: This study examines texts and images along with the poetic connection between the two, by explicating how text gives life to image and how image subsequently informs and inspires text. Furthermore, it also sets out to examine how art practice creates knowledge and induces philosophy. The study is inspired by Paul Gauguin's theory on the inclusion of shadow in painting. He occupies a prominent place within the history of painting and particularly in the history of Fauvism and Symbolism. Shadow (a metaphysical subject in Igbo mythology called "Onyinyo") before Gauguin put forward his theory and even after, had remained and still remains an appendage to figure and objects in the painting. Is it possible to separate a shadow from its subject material that casts it for the purpose of painting? This examines the possibilities of the artist in the academia as a scholar that contextualises both the images and text as one body of transmitting knowledge as a scholar in the university community. The research accesses the bond between image and text, which means that the practice of painting and knowledge are inseparable. Painting is a visual narrative that could be read through careful contemplation, and painting could lead to a critical argument for the topicality of the visual arts.

Keywords: History, Phenomenological Perception, Shadow, Practice and New Conceptualisation in Painting

Introduction and Background to the Study

Why have aesthetic theories of art, which were propounded after modernism, failed to affect and compel a large followership in the new direction (among the visual artists themselves) set by its priest Clement Greenberg? This may be because artists lack understanding of the theories of Greenberg; they, over time, concentrate more on their practice than anything written in a book (a letter from Cezanne to his friend Emile Bernard in 1888; cited in Chipp, Peter, and Joshua 1968). This makes the assimilation of theories into art practice difficult to understand. The problem with an artist in academia is not essentially their practice or their ability to democratise their art into contemporary issues, but, rather, the ability to integrate their practice with textual matters, which is much needed to sustain a definition of a scholar in the university environment.

Why has the MFA degree in Nigeria continuously produced artists who neither understand the importance of Kantian and other theories nor their place in the theorisation of forms and images? Perhaps because the MFA degree essentially is designed to concentrate on individual understanding and development of art practice based on the personal conviction on what art is, its true interpretation, and understanding of the artistic context.

Artists have been left with endless questions regarding themselves and their practice. Society has become engrossed with the notion of individuality that strives to express authenticity or originality. The contemporary idea of painting has continued to show that art, particularly painting, is "a thinking space." In this light, painting creates ideas that materialise into colours and narrative content for dialogue with tangible matter or dematerialised objects, and then, as a consequence, theory becomes necessary in contemporary dialogue with paint or painting as a medium of "thought."

The clear understanding of theory does not ultimately help in any way in the creation of artworks. These theories, however, position the artists' creations as objects of authorisation. Artists should, therefore, strive to understand the meaning of theory and how it affects their creation. The theories of Clement Greenberg (1909–1994), who was probably the most

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influential modern and postmodernist theorist of the twentieth-century European art discourse, imbibe the formalist theories of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). The understanding of their principles is key to artists who must live and work within the academic space. In this context, a PhD becomes necessary for the making of “a visual scholar.”

Even though the over-beaten argument about whether or not it is appropriate for research degrees to be extended to the discipline of fine Arts has not yet been put to rest, the main issue is to understand the logic behind engaging doctoral studies in the studio. Irokanulo and Chinyere (2013) have argued that the basis of a doctoral degree in the studio is intended to produce an artist in academia who has the ability to create through theoretical frameworks. The authors think that that would indeed be the future of the visual artists in the academia. On the one hand, one knows that the Langerian School states that art is not definable by rational discourse (Langer 1979). Art, according to her, is a form of symbolic discourse, and its elements are not linguistic but sensual perception and understanding. On the other hand, one believes that basic awareness of theories would help the relationship between text and image.

What this paper, therefore, aims to sustain is the understanding that art practice is “image-text” and “image-text” is an art practice. (The image-text refers to images that are readable within one’s consciousness; the viewer or the beholder of such artwork could easily understand it from one’s sociological and psychological makeup, taking the content of the image from the aesthetic view that the image presents to the post-aesthetic that is embedded with cognitive sense). This idea is realised when we come to terms with the fact that “art,” especially painting is a medium of thought that dematerialises and at some other times materialises a given idea in a space. It is a process of existence in a contemplative space that connects us with the social and political ideals in a materialised and dematerialised world and realises these ideas or thoughts with colours in a tactile space. In this vein, Descartes, quoted in Leonard Webster and Mertova (2007, 28), once infers, how do we know that we exist, “I think, therefore I am.”

Painting makes us thinkers, which realises its elements within a space, lines, and colours in this context, philosophical matters are realised within the body of a painting or the framed. The idea for the artist to come to terms with this has met strong opposition by some scholars. One of the antagonists in this context, Elkins (2006, 241), cannot see how this concept of Leonardo (meaning a scholar that processes the ability to create, write, and theorise ideas) would work, rather, he thought that it is better that the “visual artist should not be bothered with serious theoretical matters like the doctor of philosophy as that would distract them from creating art,” but sadly enough he has not been able to advance a new idea in this context. In the same vein, a humanist, Ugiomoh (2012), in his Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Port Harcourt titled “On African Art and Identity Blogging: Historical Perspective,” inferred that when one goes to an art school, one is expected to see images, not text, that an artist should not bother with intensive reading and writing that is required in the doctor of philosophy degree, and that the thinking of the doctorate degree in the studio should not be encouraged as the MFA degree is sufficient to equip the artists in academia. Even in the face of this debate, these two antagonists of the research degree in the visual arts seem to disagree with one another at some points. Elkins (2012), in his book *What Do Artists Know?*, disagreed that an MFA degree is sufficient to equip the artist scholar in the university. For him, the degree lacks basis and foundation of basic theory. Neither does he think that the degree can be compared to other degrees in the humanities, like sociology or perhaps classical studies. However, paintings among other visual art works exhibit unity and logic and present systematic thought. Hence, philosophy and art can present ideas fashioned as text or colours on canvas or even on stone. An idea is an idea.

Language is constructed based upon the perception of an object or image in space. In justifying this thinking, it is important to note that a generic way of understanding language is to look at the history and the evolution of writing itself; therefore, text and image work hand in hand depending on what one is looking or thinking. Before the invention of alphabets, objects like the “Inca quipu,” or drawings, have been accepted as speech (Quinn 2009). Mitchell (1986),

an American theorist, insists that the distinction between art and language is entwined and that interesting artworks are image-texts. In a clearer voice, Paul Carter (2004) insists that art is a material thinking of a language that is made visible by colour, clay, or stone.

What, then, is philosophy apart of its ethical nature or principles? “Philo” is quest for or research for, while “sophy” means “truth” (actually, “love of wisdom,” but somehow translates to truth). “Philosophy” is the embodiment of truth that springs forth from all subjects from science to art and religion. How does a painting, or any form of visual art, represent truth, which is sublime and a product of the essence of time? According to Derrida (cited in Bernstein 1992), the truth in painting focuses on the logic of the content as a way of interrogating the idea that art has an essence and integrity in virtue. He further sheds light on the argument of the duality of things, that there exists a rigid and unalterable line (frame) marking off what is forever inside art as operative language (an aesthetic language, meaning the space, lines, and colours) from what is outside of it, which is the secular language. In the movement between Odutokun’s paintings and the philosophical account of them, we already have before us an example of the kind of crossing between inside and outside, regulated without stop, which Derrida implies. Gani Odutokun (1946–1995) was a foremost exponent of the Zaria Art School who propounded and expanded upon the “Accident and Design” principle in painting. He allowed his paintings to follow the dictates of accidental design before seeking the imagery within the colour flow. His art is characterised by broad brush strokes, colourful composition, and daunting imagery, most times quite aesthetically pleasing to the senses. Odutokun paintings engage the theories of Kant within the context of liquidise paintings.



Figure 1: Untitled, Odutokun 1993
 Source: Odutokun’s family collection 2001

Art will always occupy the duality of properties of expression and philosophical hermeneutics, both in one body. In this context, painting continues to show these principles of art. Take, for instance, the work of Heidegger on the paintings of Van Gogh (Thomson 2011) and the possible theory embedded in the drawings of Duke Asidere that attempt to encapsulate the social and religious lives of Isoko people of south-south Nigeria. The poetic imageries of Asidere

drawings are windows of possibilities for understanding the classic situations that visualise modern Nigerian social life (Irokanulo and Blaise 2015). Here, simple drawings transport us to the realisation of imagination. Artists continue to interpret situations around them through drawings.

If philosophy is the study of truth, then, of course, visual arts interpret that truth. Let us carefully retheorise the meaning of truth by some twenty-first century philosophers. According to Bernstein (1992, 137), “aesthetic truth is a transcendent dimension of illusion in which illusion transcends itself,” when art responds to itself rather than the reflecting of the society where it dwells. The truth of works of art is neither their meaning nor the intention behind them, but “the truth we gain through the medium of art” (1992, 137). The truth of art is what occurs through the medium of art. Truth is not an element or component of works: art moves toward truth; it is not identical with truth in a work. To suppose the contrary view would entail letting illusion, which is substantial in art, be true. This would make all art work affirmative.

The medium of art where “truth” is expressed through action using the body to reveal the concealed elements in the medium of art and the medium of illusion are united in art and the cognitive element of works cannot be directly or immediately integral to them, but through demonstrative performance, these ideas could be realised. This is true when Odun Orimalade, a visual and performance artist, did a performance at the Lagos City Hall in 2016 entitled “Drawing as a Medium of Performance.” Usually, she (Orimalade) told the author in a discussion that “[she] is interested in the structure of ideas in drawing and the democratisation of lines and space as the animate new contemporary issue within the minds of the audience to redefine the meaning of drawing as an instrument of thinking.” What she simply means is to give freedom to lines to be seen not only in a linear form but in three dimensions using her body to reveal such. In that performance, her body becomes the animated lines that construe the element of art, such drawing.



Figure 2: Engaging the space as drawing, Orimolade 2016
Source: Orimolade's collection 2017

“Truth” is the un-concealment of the elements that ordinarily we cannot see. It is a progressive and a realised understanding of an idea at a given time. That is to say, that it deals with attention and understanding among many other things around the subject. In the author’s understanding of Orimolade’s work, within their discussion, shows that she does not want to project an idea alone, but she wants to get into the idea and become the medium of expressing the idea in a given space and time using performances. The performance and the idea become a process of art, and the two unite in the illusion of images within the context Orimolade seeks to recreate. She seeks to actualise the quantum theory in the space that exists in the void of the City Hall quadrangle, which seems empty but energised by invisible elements. Thus, she consciously invites her body to occupy the space of the quadrangle with the marks of drawings and create art within the minds of the observers.

She told the author in an oral conversation in 2017, that she thinks that the flow of her body and movement of the drawing would eventually connect these invisible elements and make them visible during the process of drawing, questioning the nature of art is fundamentally part of her practice. Through this constant questioning, we seem to realise the Kantian thought, which infers that understanding and imagination are interwoven in thinking and action; they are one indivisible process. Orimolade simply points to the fact that there is no fixed meaning or “ultimate truth” as the lines on the floor seek to visualise the artist’s imagination of truth within the given space and time.

The key concept of her performance act could, of course, relate to Derrida’s philosophical understanding of difference or that of suspension, that language is a network of breaks and delays, that meaning is endlessly deferred as a meaning becomes yet another new idea, giving room to a new creative process of capturing lived experience (Bernstein 1992). It is the essential opposition at work in each text that leads to it deconstructing itself by taking the surface signification and breaking it down into several simultaneous layers of meaning. There are immeasurable readings of any one text as postmodernism has shifted the focus away from the object itself to its cultural meaning.

The postmodern condition has fragmented the nature of the signifier, and so deconstruction has become an objective, involuntary process that accompanies our aesthetics. Orimolade, therefore, allows her body to create such unique understanding, allowing the audience to participate in locating the truth about drawing as her body and drawing engage the courtyard of the Lagos city hall and reduce the entire space to illusion of visible ideas as liberalisation of geometric of space in our minds.

The idea of a doctorate degree in the studio is to bring together thinking, making, and writing as a single body of creative arts. This writing disagrees with such thinking, that artists only create images, not text and point to the fact that images in themselves influence text and can be read with careful contemplation. It is, therefore, the position of this paper that understanding these two processes for an artist-scholar is important for progress in the visual artists within the university context. Merleau-Ponty posits that philosophy is not an act of reflection of preexisting truth, but like painting, the process of bringing truth into being (Quinn 2009). This paper cites Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, and some paintings from Irokanulo’s (2014) doctoral programme to contextualise this argument, how painting creates text and text influences the creations of ideas in paintings: these two aesthetic elements are one.

What is an image and what is a text? These two elements involve imagination of some sort in reaching a certain understanding. According to Langer (1979), for an object to qualify as an image, it must appear as a pure form to the viewer. According to Mitchell (1968), “image” is an imagination of an essence of a thing. Image is a Greek verb “to see” and frequently linked with the notion of the eidolon, the visible image that is fundamental to ancient optics and theories of perception. Merleau-Ponty argues (quoted in Quinn 2009, 19):

That the form of expression of meaning found in pictorial art and writing are not reducible one to the other. In contrast to prose and traditional philosophy, he writes the voices of paintings are the voice of silence. Paintings are the voice of silence. Painting returns its viewer to a pre-linguistic silent realm, the source of silence and solitary experience on culture and the exchange of ideas have been built in order to take to cognizance of it.

This kind of poetic and allusive language prefigures what will be seen in Merleau-Ponty's "eyes and mind." This idea is capable of engaging the life of one's time and of expressing knowledge or truth about the world.

Statement of the Research Problem

The challenge for this paper is to critically explore Gauguin's idea of shadow as cited by Chipp, Selz, and Joshua (1968, 60), who in his letter to Emile Bernard observed that "instead of a figure you put the shadow only of a person; you have found an original starting point." Shadows, before this assertion and even after, had remained appendages to figures and objects in painting. Is it possible to separate a shadow from its subject material that casts it for the purpose of painting? This is to examine if text and image are both the same thing and have the same influence on creative people. The text the author reads evokes the metaphysical influence of a "shadow" among the Igbo; subsequently, paintings were created from such reading and understanding. This paper tries to see if theory and practice could relate at any point and create or simulate critical discourse.

The objectives of the study are:

- Study and reflect on the influence of text in creating a painting and how painting reflects and modify text.
- Assess if text and image are products of imagination that expresses the strength of the artist scholar at university.

Methodology

This study has proven that painting or art practice can be contemplated theoretically and realised in practice using triangulated methodology as adopted in this research procedure. It justifies the process of painting as a source of knowledge, which gives a better understanding of an experience (Sullivan 2010; Arnheim 1997), particularly using the imagery derived from shadows as a form of research in the visual arts, particularly painting. One important factor in the understanding of the motivation of the study is this issue of critical theory, which animates basic thought processes. This is the platform on which the researcher emphasises three philosophical issues, which include the theory of image which, according to Mitchell (1968), is that image imposed as the site of special power that must either be contained or exploited. These three factors are the criticality and intentionality of visual perception; the mental process of images and the function of the mind that can be found in the thesis of a perceptual nature of being by Heidegger (2006) and the deconstructive position of the author.

Clearly, the focus of this paper is to assess how text and creation of visual arts, especially painting, can work together as one indivisible process. Phenomenological perception influences the process of thinking and creating a painting. In this paper, the study employed the Merleau-Ponty viewpoint in the theory and practice of phenomenology and painting practice. Merleau-Ponty maintains that phenomenology is intimately engaged with artistic practice such as painting (Quinn 2009). In his famous 1952 essay titled "Indirect Language and Voice of Silence" (cited in

Quinn 2009), Merleau-Ponty commented that perception is the origin of the act of making art mentally, and its end product becomes the translation and extension of perception in the physical process of art making. The phenomenological content of images brings about poetic influences on whoever has the sensibilities to understand, read, and interpret them. A practice-based research technique promotes the sensibilities of a researcher just as reliability would in a humanity research process.

Discussion

It is the belief of the author, sometimes referred to in this paper as the artist, that in order to contextualise development of image and text, the product of the artist studio inquiry becomes the subject, which draws discussion and leads to theoretical formation. The discussion of the works that emanate from derivation from the painting of shadow, which leads to critical textual exploration and aesthetic imageries, in order to capture the essence of the work of art and reposition text and image as a foundation of this dialogue. However, before we forget, the whole essence of the article is to see how and why the artist at the university assumes the context of a scholar by creating and writing. This would clearly show that text inspires image and image brings about text. The artist creates images or forms and has the theoretical power to explain in text what the object represents, but not interfering with the art historian's original work of critique and documentation. Some of the conceptual imagery is poetically driven by the phenomenological imagination of poetry of images as they appeared to the perception of the author. These imageries unlocked the metaphysical theories of "Onyinyo," the cultural perception of imageries and images. A shadow has a deep-seated theory of metaphysics among the Igbo and could invoke spiritual contexts of the Igbo culture. It is the understanding of this paper that the idea of a doctorate in painting is a development to encourage artists within the four walls of the tertiary institution to develop a synthesis of text and image as one process of a thinker in fine arts. It is this context that George Smith (2009) refers to the artist as an artist-philosopher who has the ability to conceive both in text and images or forms; in this space, the artist in the tertiary institution can clearly adopt the context of a scholar. This is what the paper, at the beginning refers, to as "Leonard da Vinci."

Cezanne for instance, did not limit himself to modifying traditional artistic ways of representing perspective, but drew attention to the process of subjective meaning construction so that in his paintings' human figuring appears strange, as if the drawing or the human observation is faulty. Merleau-Ponty believes that the artist was attempting to render the process by which perception constructs meanings from objects or other people Gilmore observes.

Cezanne makes thematic the content of that phenomenological description of what he sees, raising it to a level of perspicuity such that his painting is both the product of vision and about vision, both exemplifies the way in which we perceive our environment and pictorially describes or reflects on the way in which we perceive. Gilmore (quoted in Quinn 2009, 14)

In practice-based research, the outcome that emerges from the alternative logic of practice is not easy to articulate and can be difficult to discuss objectively, given the emotional and subjective dimension of the artistic process. The ability of the author is key to the study; the ability clearly involves a scholarly understanding of images through practice and theorising by text to shift away from just aesthetic consideration to post-aesthetic dialogue in which some form of knowing is created for the benefit of the experience one gains through the practice of painting. Emphasis is laid on a critical dialogue of studio inquiry as a product of knowledge, not art criticism. An art object is composed of basic elements, which include aesthetic qualities, intentions and persuasiveness, narration or historical relationship with the art object in question. This is also the basic principle that guides the explanations of the paintings in this study.

Philosophical hermeneutics stand for the assumption that art addresses humans, and, if this is so, it addresses humans about something. Their experience and engagement with art are fundamentally dialogical. This is not a matter of reducing art to the spoken word, but of recognising that the event of art is in many ways analogous to the event of conversation: both are occasions in which something happens or is brought to mind. The root of the term “dialogue” is the Greek term *logos* meaning the living word. Art creates a conversational effect in our daily lives. Each time we engage an art object in dialogue new knowledge emerges, or rather, new insight is recognised. Each person draws an object in a conversation in accordance with one’s understanding of the subject matter and the interpretive ability of one’s position.

The word “sache,” a Greek word meaning “the matter at hand,” is an artist’s approach to subject matter needs that are not dependent on previous experiences of the artist, but supporting the current experience of the sensuous perception of the object. Different works can share the same subject matter, and each can address different aspects of their content and context. The *sache* is always more than any individual expression. It follows that if, like concepts, the subject matter of an artwork is always more than it seems to offer, an artwork can in this respect never be finished: all encounters with the language of art is an encounter with an unfinished event.

Picasso (quoted in Malevich 2003, 508) affirms that:

A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one’s thought changes. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it. A picture lives a life like a living creature, undergoing the changes imposed on us by our life from day to day. This is natural enough, as the picture lives only through the man who is looking at it.

One aspect of structuralist theory and criticism has been concerned with questioning notions of the author or painter as the originator of meaning within a given work. Bakhtin (cited in Irokanulo 2014) considers the subtle relationship between the authorial word, which directly embodies semantic and axiological intention of the creator. He emphasises dialogue as an inevitable and necessary aspect of art. Art objects are developed from the outset in tandem with textual research and there is an inevitable and necessary interplay between the activities of thinking, reading, writing and making.

The emphasis of the author is to realise the objectives of the paper through the creation of imagery of shadow that answers the fundamental questions of the study. The idea is to clearly demonstrate how the chosen artistic methodology has enhanced and quickened the creation of these paintings as a body of theory that answered the objectives of the research, without having a single viewpoint of discussing the realised works. The researcher instead, allows the works to assume a position where everybody participates in the discourse, since image appeals to people differently, and it means different things to different individuals.

Findings of the Research

Therefore, the understanding of the structure of painting is that a shadow is always shown by the material evidence of what created the shadow. This study explicates shadow as a material of phenomenological philosophical realisation in which the shadow becomes the protagonist in an imaginary landscape of the imagination of the author. It has been able to sustain shadow alone in painting without its material evidence and still creates a poetic narrative in painting and thinking and a critical theory that began to question certain understanding of the images that we had known over time. This understanding started slowly and developed into a phenomenological process of reason, which could be seen in Figure 3 and 4. This is in line with the earlier mentioned three basic factors that constitute an art object. These are intention, persuasiveness, and narrative or historical significance of an art object. These three factors produced effects of spontaneity in the process of creation of these artworks, in essence consciously introduced

narratives that the text takes care of. Essentially, what happened here is the application of the Langerian theory of derivation of form from the original source in order to create an image, which would appear to our senses as a pure thing, or the beginning of the basic understanding of a form or image as they appear to the viewer, the composition or construction of the images is somewhat difficult to understand. This is a basic thought of the Heideggerian school and the Langerian thought.



Figure 3: *The Delinquent*, Irokanulo 2010
 Source: Irokanulo 2014

The study has been able to use shadow to create emotions in painting, which text reacted to it as a source of theoretical inquiry. Painting and writing seem to engage here as a basis of a doctoral thesis in the visual arts where the combination of image and text become the focus of discussion and advance learning in painting as this study advances into philosophical abstraction in the form of images derived from shadow, which is the contemplative point of the study. This thought construes the synthesis of a human form, a shadow in a composition and textual expression. The idea is to create a balance between the human form and the shadow to assess how these two components create dialogue in painting. Figure 4 shows shadows cast on a concrete wall and also on the floor to create the effect of a feeling of people standing before a wall in anticipation of something. The vigorous effect of brush strokes on the surface of the canvas creates a feeling of anxiety over a nation in which her people worry over shelter, food, and security. Theoretically, the brush work and its effect become resonant of the Heideggerian philosophy of the “earth and the world.” “The earth,” meaning the material and technical effect, while “the world” means the coming forth and the emerging, reconstructing, and engaging new meaning out of the ordinal thing in the context of the earth revealing the concealment of the earth

(Bernstein 1992). In this context, the revealing of shadow seems to recreate the “Greek temple.” The Greek temple symbolises hidden ancient or previously held knowledge that is now revealing itself to the present to create a new understanding by carefully revealing the unseen to seen using shadow as a natural design element to reconstruct the past and confront the future.

The paper has continued to insist that image constructs text and text influences the creation of an image. In this view, one comes to understand the Heideggerian theory and the meaning of creation, being created, and to create something. The “artist-scholar” also used shadow in creating a visual motif in painting that has the capacity to generate text from various points of view of the observers. Like we agreed earlier on this paper, objects in space simulate the use of text or drawing and painting, evening sculptural modelling, in explaining one’s experience with the object. It can be seen in Figure 4 that the imageries derived from the shadows of a reflected light source become a motif in the painting. They can be compared to the images of Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and Aaron Douglas (1899–1979). The derivation of the imagery is in fulfilment of one of the objectives of the paper that the image becomes the site of theories, which show the image-text context.

The study has been able to access that the claim of Gauguin (1888, cited in Peter and Taylor 1968) in his letter to Emile Bernard is true and can be achieved in painting as portrayed in Figure 4 in this paper. Perhaps the context of shadow has shown some level of attempt to reveal the meaning of concealed and the un-concealment in the aesthetic theory of Heidegger. One important factor of the study is in the context of this painting, where most of the text emanates from emphasising the view of image and text for the development as a scholar in the visual arts. Most of the image is embedded with heavy brush strokes to create a feeling of restlessness of a country like Nigeria where there is uneasy economic hardship. It is in line with the study, which is an interpretation of images and text as one unique process of a thinker. Generally, the palette of the artist constitutes warm hues that construct the thought of the author. The brush strokes are spontaneously realised, creating a feeling of agitation that runs through the research process.



Figure 4: *Corridor of Power*. Irokanulo, 2010
Source: Irokanulo 2014

These creations constitute critical thinking as a process of conceiving an idea from text to images. If philosophy generates logic in text and visual arts—generating knowing through contemplation and observation—then we can accept that painting, which is a component of visual arts, has reached the zenith to be ranked among disciplines like philosophy, mathematics, theology, and the sciences.



Figure 5: *The Conference*, Irokanulo 2010
 Source: *Irokanulo 2014*

Finally, we have seen that the practice of art and text intertwines to create a good scholarly understanding, which the artist at university should involve in creating a better image of the artist as a scholar of some sort.

Conclusion

The paper demonstrates how the derived imageries from shadow have become the “being” in a complete imaginative landscape in a universe where imagination and understanding rule supreme. These imageries are symbols of liberalisation and perhaps democratisation of a gestalt psychological point where images are derivative from a shadow and allow it to assume its own course. The artist or the author theorises the meaning through a careful study and understanding of philosophical text and realising them in imageries in painting composition. This links us back to the beginning, where the artist or the author interprets the theory of Gauguin into painting and is the beginning of the author’s or the artist’s creative development of shadow as a concept of revealing and concealing of Heideggerian thought. The author’s phenomenological approach to the subject matter has shown that “being and time” is a concept of development of how one sees things around oneself in the world. This can relate to artistic practice, which the Heideggerian

and Kantian philosophical theses cleared the doubt that the purity of image that appears to our sensual perception is the clear new order with which the images came forth from the artist's imagination, which is created either in image or text to harmonise these elements as a process of scholarship and practice in the visual arts. It has perhaps put doubts to rest and created support for the contemplative mind of Herbert Read's (1992, 176) "forms of things unknown." It is evidently clear that the forms appear to us according to our various contemplative minds toward the subject matter.

This thought process connects the audience to the thought of Arnheim's (1969, 208) topic "thinking with a pure shape," which insists that an object of thought changes as the contemplative position and mind deepens on the same subject matter, but despite the changes that might occur on the subject matter, the primordial idea continues to hold sway on the subject matter. It also demonstrates the Heideggerian "dasein," which means the thing in itself, is that inquiry essence, that dwells in the context of the inquiry which produces text and knowledge. In this sense, the canvas of the contemporary artist continues to hold a space for thought that sometimes materialises or perhaps again dematerialises psychedelic imageries that paint and place a hold on our contemplative mind. The canvas gives body to Onyinyo (the shadow image), which is a fine example of this process. Onyinyo has assumed its own body in the purity of perception by the author or perhaps the artist. If indeed true, that an artist is a mere processor of ideas in Read's gestalt concept in "forms of things unknown," then the phenomenological assumption of Onyinyo as a new way of thinking, which here, arguably, contextualises dasein (the essence or the spirit) in painting space and body by both as "the artist and the author" and Paul Gauguin's assumption of context of a shadow is questionable. On the other hand, if the "Kantian theories" on forms without antecedent or perhaps the dasein in the thesis of Heidegger is the purest of form to perceive, then this exploration is a beginning of new ideas to come. Text and language are abstract understandings of reality, which image sought to bring into contextual reality in the visual arts.

It takes images in imagination to fully grasp what a text is and for a text to become a clear understanding of an image or language symbols (Arnheim 1969). The thinking that art schools should only be concerned with images should be rethought; the artist operates from a realm of perception and imagination. Translating images into text or text into an image is also the exclusive reserve of an artist-scholar. The phenomenological image of shadow often brings to bear a poetic understanding of subjective reality and philosophy without thinking of the ethical context of the subject of philosophy that the author tries to actualise in painting using colours and space to bring about this understanding. The paper, therefore, seeks to access the understanding that the study of painting or any other form of visual arts could bring to bear a critical theoretical discourse like any other theoretical discipline, and the understanding of text can be an added value to this understanding. The practices of painting and text are inseparable. Painting is a visual knowledge that can be read through careful contemplation. The philosophical object of shadow is very rich and could still be taken up by other artist-scholars that might want to look into the possibilities of its metaphysical nature or even its social and cultural context, since various ethnic groups see a shadow as a spiritual object (De Chirico cited in Irokanulo 2014).

This study has shown that painting is a text and image to contemplate, just like the paintings of Cezanne hold a salient inference to philosophy. It is important to know that a painting holds enough text to contemplate just like a work of literature. A truly enlightening theory of art, according to Langer (1979), should rise upon important artistic insights and evolve naturally from phase to phase as the great edifices of thought such as mathematics, logic, the sciences, theology, law, and history. Why is there no such systematic theory of art?

The study posits that the central issues in the appreciation and understanding of art practice and its academic position is to entrench art practice into the structure of academic discipline. However clear art practice may be in practice, without philosophical content, it may not be recognised for what the artists stand for in the structure of things in academia. A systematic

discipline according to Langer (1979) becomes organised only as its key problems are formulated, the solution of which would require and beget a powerful terminology and principle of operation of obvious questions proposed by common sense and regarded as “basic” because of their obviousness. Such questions include: What are the materials of art? Which is more important, form or content? What is the principle of composition? And what does image bring to bear in our psyche? How the text interprets the art objects and sustain scholarship should be the concern of the visual art scholars in the university. Gradually, the author has come to agree with George Smith (2018), the founder of the Institute for Doctoral Studies in Visual Arts, that new philosophers are emerging within the visual arts who have the capacity to interpret the abstractness of philosophical text into tangible aesthetic form and images that have cognitive sense and create a shift in the context of philosophical theories. The author believes the time is now.

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