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Stylistic and Thematic Evolution in Landscape Paintings of Lagos State, Nigeria, from Pre - Independence to 2015

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Abstract:

Lagos State, the artistic capital of Nigeria is an inspirational source for many landscape paintings which are focused on the outdoor scenes of the State. These landscape paintings come in different styles traceable to Europe. Through a contextual and formal analysis (in addition to literature and personal communication), this paper studies the evolution of themes and styles in the landscape paintings of Lagos State which thematically revolved around the environment and human activities within the State. While naturalism has been constant, abstract expressionistic styles were gradually introduced into the styles of landscape paintings of Lagos while themes have commonly focused on the people, their activities and the built environment. Themes and styles will continue to evolve in the landscape paintings of Lagos State as long as the state continues to grow in different dimensions including population, commerce, industry and the built environment while the number of landscape painters continue to grow. The future is very bright for landscape painting in Lagos State.

Keywords: Lagos state, landscape painting, theme, styles

1. Introduction

A close observation of the art of landscape painting in Lagos State from the pre-independence to date shows an evolution of thematic focus and stylistic developments. It is important to state here that landscape painting came with the introduction of modern art into the then Lagos Colony by Aina Onabolu (1882-1963) who was the first recorded painter in Nigeria (Onabolu, 1963: 295; Babalola, 2004:17; Oloidi, 2011:20). Landscape painting which focused on different parts of the country exists in modern Nigerian art alongside landscape paintings from imagination. Landscape paintings sourced from imagination have been recreations of natural sites, human dwellings and human activities (examples of this can be found in the paintings of Akinola Lasekan [1916-1972], Ben Enwonwu (1921-1994) and Chuks Anyanwu [1937-1980]). However, some have dwelt on pure imagination and manipulation of reality resulting into surrealism. Examples of surrealism can be found in the paintings of Abayomi Barber and Kenny Adamson. In Nigeria, contemporary landscape paintings focus on different parts of the country. This paper is concerned with landscape paintings focused on the scenes from the rural and city dwellings in Lagos State.

Painters have commonly expressed their impressions of Lagos State through landscape painting that focused mostly on the built environment of the State. Generally, these landscape paintings come in different styles of expression: naturalism, expressionism, impressionism and abstraction. All the landscape paintings on Lagos State have two general characteristics; first, they are thematically focused on different aspects of living conditions and survival activities in Lagos State and second, they come in different styles. This paper studies the developments and sequences in the thematic foci and stylistic expressions of landscape paintings inspired by the scenes of Lagos State which are here referred to as 'landscape paintings of Lagos State'.

The landscape paintings of Lagos State cover the period before the official conception of Lagos State which was founded in 1967 (Tijani, 1999:7) to the year 2015. However, records of landscape paintings of Lagos State prior to the 1970s are not common although evidences of this are available. The oldest landscape painting of Lagos State available to this research is dated between 1946 and 1948. Landscape paintings of Lagos State however predates this time because Aina Onabolu (1882-1963) painted landscape scenes of Lagos in the early 1900s (Onabolu, 1963: 295; Babalola, 2004:17; Oloidi, 2011:20). These paintings are not readily available now. In the national collections found in the National Gallery of Nigeria, landscapes by Aina Onabolu were rarely displayed (personal communication, Josy Ajiboye, 2012; Abayomi Barber, 2016; J. R. O. Ojo, 2016).

More than two hundred and fifty landscape paintings of Lagos State were discovered in the course of this research and only eighty-four were purposively selected as representative of the available themes and styles for study and analysis. Twenty-one artists were interviewed for this research. Majority of them are well acknowledged landscape painters in

Nigeria based in Lagos State. The landscape paintings cited in this study are representative of the style and mannerism of the artists whose landscape paintings have been chosen for analysis.

The selected landscape paintings were studied using thematic and stylistic analysis. Thematic analysis simply refers to the analysis of the issues raised through the landscape paintings while the stylistic analysis refers to the study of the manners of expressions peculiar to each painter. The selected landscape paintings were also chronologically arranged and studied in historical context to determine the thematic and stylistic trends. Literature study and personal communication with artists provided historical information and data for corroboration and validation of analysis.

2. Development of Themes in Landscape Paintings of Lagos State

Prior to the 1970s, the theme of landscape painting in Lagos State seems to have given some attention to nature in their landscape paintings. One of such landscape paintings is Adeyemi Adenuga's "The Anglican Cathedral, Lagos State, Floodlit" (figure 1) painted in the late 1940s in which a balance of space and attention is achieved between the Cathedral and the nature surrounding it. The attention to nature in the landscape paintings of Lagos State can still be seen in the 1960s to early 1970s in the landscape paintings of Ben Enwonwu (1921 – 1994). Landscape paintings available to this study show that pure naturalist landscapes that focus on nature are almost non-existing in the landscape paintings of Lagos State except in the works of Ben Enwonwu. One clear character in the themes explored by early landscape painters who painted Lagos State is that their works are centred on man in his environment; that environment can be the natural or the built environment. Compared to the European origins where the Nigerian landscape tradition is copied and introduced through Aina Onabolu, the attention to nature is not as much.



Figure 1: Adeyemi Adenuga, *Anglican Cathedral, Lagos, Floodlit, Most Probably Done in the Late 1940s*
Source: *Nigeria Magazine*, 1950

Chronological study and arrangement of the landscape paintings identified and selected for this research shows that landscape paintings focused on the scenes of Lagos State gained more popularity in the 1970s with landscape painters like Joshua Akande, Emmanuel Bojerenu, Kolade Oshinowo, Dele Jegede and few others. They however have their forerunner in Adeyemi Adenuga's "The Anglican Cathedral, Lagos State, Floodlit" done in the late 1940s. The landscape paintings of Lagos State gradually became more environmentally focused on the built environment and human activities within it. Examples are "Waterside I" and "Idiaraba" by Bojerenu showing human survival activities in Ikorodu and Idi-Araba, both in Lagos State. Other examples are "Isheri Pond" by Akande showing the early state of the environment, transportation and dwellings in Isheri which has now transformed into an industrial environment and "Polo Ground, Lagos State" (figure 2) by Rauf Thompson showing that citizens in Lagos have been playing the elitist game as early as the 1970s. These examples show that from the 1970s, landscape paintings of Lagos State began to dwell on the activities of man within his built environment, especially his survival activities. This is comparable to what the impressionists did in the 19th century, although not with the same impressionistic philosophy and ideals.



Figure 2: Rauf Thompson, Polo Ground, Lagos, Oil On Board, 1974 Picture: Rasheed Amodu

The thematic focus set in the 1970s continued to grow through the 1980s to the 1990s with landscape paintings of Lagos State doing more than just reflecting man within his built environment and his survival activities, unlike the impressionists who were concerned with fleeting moments in the atmospheric nature. Landscape painting has now become issue-based; for instance on the issue of neglected environs and the general environmental and infrastructural decay in Lagos State. Kolade Oshinowo's exhibition titled "Rural Reflections" in 1989 is one of the first documented exhibitions of landscape paintings in Lagos State focused on environmental neglect by the government.

Issues of the environment continued into the 90s through Dele Jegede who added political dimensions. Dele Jegede became even more critical in the exhibition titled "Eko Re e - This is Lagos" in 1991 by directing public attention to poor environmental development in Lagos State. Describing the Lagos State Molue as "a mechanical contraption pretending to be motor vehicles", Jegede (1991:16) creatively depicted it as such in "Eko Ree" (figure 3). The artist impressionistically affirmed his opinion by showing the vehicles broken down in a flooded street. This is a painterly affirmation that landscape painting has become more than aesthetics; it has also become a medium for social criticism, awareness and discourse aimed at directing attention to bad governance and environmental neglect.



*Figure 3: Dele Jegede, Eko Re E, Acrylic on Board, 1991.
Source: Dele Jegede, Eko Re E Exhibition Catalogue, 1991.*

By the end of the 1990s, it has become undoubtedly clear that landscape paintings of Lagos State have come to dwell thematically on man in his built environment while addressing critical environmental issues such as flooding, waste management, shanty towns, poor drainage, general poor management of the environment etc. Under this broad theme are the landscape paintings focusing on the theme of man's day-to-day activities directed at earning a living in the Lagos City environment, the state of urban development and general planning and arrangement of the built environment in the State. By the 1990s, the landscape paintings of Lagos State by their subject matters which have become centred on man in his built environment can be classified under two broad thematic headings namely; Environment (issues like environmental problems and general urban development) and Human Activities (issues like survival activities, commercial life and transportation). Environmental criticism criss-crosses between these themes.

The 1990s also saw landscape paintings of Lagos State paying more attention to themes around urban living. The Art Department of the Yaba College of Technology popularly known as the "Yaba School" cannot be ignored when tracing the history of landscape paintings focused on urban development in Lagos State, having been credited as one of the schools that expanded the exploration of photographic and impressionistic naturalism in the history of modern Nigerian art in the 1980s (Filani, 2005:26). Filani (2005:26) observes that their naturalism was directed towards a historical recording of the city in Lagos State. Majority of the landscape paintings of Lagos State from this period began to focus on scenes of everyday living from the urban areas or cities and the shanty towns. Artists like Dele Jegede painted scenes from the demolished Maroko, Ajegunle and Yaba; while Kolade Oshinowo painted several scenes from many cities and rural areas of Lagos State; Alex Shyngle also painted many market scenes common in Lagos cities and Abiodun Olaku painted numerous scenes from Okobaba, Oyingbo, Central Lagos and many more.

By the turn of the year 2000, certain themes have become recurrent decimals in the landscape paintings of Lagos State. Such themes include shortage of vehicular transport, slum areas on land and water, busy market scenes and landscapes focused on living and survival in specific places in Lagos State. Places like Oyingbo, Okobaba, Oshodi, Yaba, Ojuelegba, Idumota, Lagos Island and many other densely populated areas of Lagos State have become common scenes in the landscape paintings of Lagos State. By the year 2010, certain specific places such as Okobaba and Oshodi have become almost a permanent symbol of slum and disorder in the landscape paintings of Lagos State. The Lagos State private commercial yellow buses and commercial motor-bikes popularly referred to as 'okada' have become a regular feature and a symbol of disorder in the transportation system of Lagos State.

By the year 2008, the new colour of the Lagos State BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) has made its appearance into landscape paintings of Lagos State – an evolution of yellow buses (Molue and Danfo) transforming into red and blue BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) Buses. This could be seen in Abiodun Gafaru's 'Easy Life BRT' and Femi Oyewole's 'New Testament, Oshodi' (figure 4). Oyewole's painting captures Lagos State government's response to the dirty and chaotic Oshodi which began to give way to a new clean and ordered urban environment. The environmental transformations in Lagos State are actually due to the new civilian government that brought a transformation programme to the State in the third republic. Paintings focusing on this new development in the Lagos municipal transportation are not as common or popular in display as much as the ones depicting the yellow buses. However, with the determination of successive governments in Lagos State to develop the face of the city and improve on transportation, the yellow colour and black stripes which have become common in landscape paintings of Lagos cities will begin to phase out.

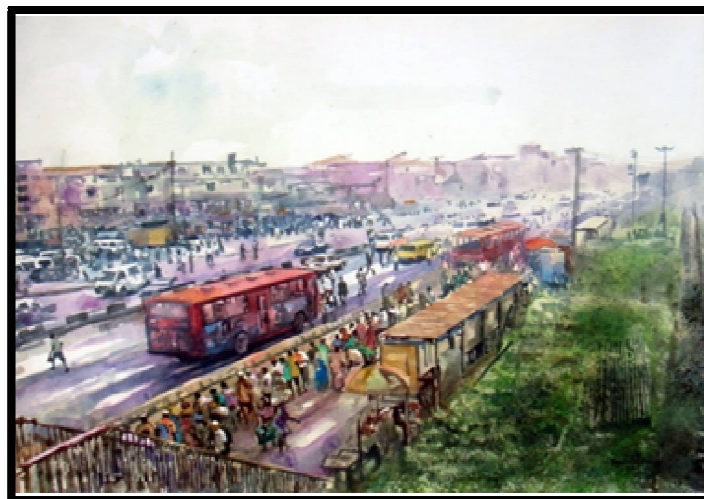


Figure 4: Femi Oyewole, *New Testament Oshodi*, Watercolour, 2013
Source: Femi Oyewole

It can be seen that generally, the landscape paintings of Lagos State are more favourable to themes surrounding man and his activities in the built environment. The reasons for this are easily traceable. This is traceable to the preferences inherited from the precursors whose art has been described as highly humanistic with man-centred subject matters such as market scenes, landscapes and portraiture (Adesanya, 2008: 7). This is also due to the fact that many of these landscape painters live in Lagos State and their paintings are simply a reflection of their daily experiences (Jegede, 1991:15-17). Another fundamental reason is that Nigerian art patrons who usually prefer thematically man-centred

paintings have strong influence on themes pursued by artists. Castelotte (2012:78) laments the neglect of artists in Nigeria by the government and public institutions, asserting that the survival force behind the arts and artists in Nigeria is constituted by the private collectors. The artists in Nigeria have had to rely on private collectors for their survival thereby making collectors powerfully influential in the artists' choice of themes. The impulse to create art pieces with the consideration of patronage in mind has been described as *econo-aesthetic* by Adesanya (2008:18); meaning artworks whose aesthetics are guided by the forces of patronage and not true creative impulses. It is therefore an expected occurrence that when patrons begin to like landscape paintings depicting Lagos transport and urban scenes, Lagos painters begin to dish out such canvases.

Mostly, the landscape paintings of Lagos State have been thematically and constantly moving around the themes of human survival and the state of urban development in Lagos State. There has not been any dramatic shift from the 1970s till the year 2014. However, stylistic evolution has been interesting as it began to witness an attempt to break from the strong arms of naturalism which has taken a strong hold of the art scene in Lagos State right from the days of Aina Onabolu, the progenitor of modern Nigerian art.

3. Development of Styles in Landscape Paintings of Lagos State

There are many styles of expression which can be observed in the landscape paintings of Lagos State. These manners of painting can be classified under some established styles of painting; realism, impressionism, expressionism, and abstraction. All these are traceable to European art history. This should be expected since the foundation of the Nigerian formal educational set-up is modelled after the British system. Though a lot of reformation has taken place, the contents of the art education in Nigeria still bears some semblances with Europe. Furthermore, the daily exposure of Nigerian artists to foreign art through intercultural and artistic relationships, travels, books and the internet is still influenced by Europe. The strong power of the West in publication and technology has made literature and the internet more effective in this aspect. The easel painting tradition in Nigeria is therefore generally reflective of the styles of European art, and the landscape paintings of Lagos State is a constituent of modern Nigerian painting. Hence, in Nigerian landscape painting (ditto the landscape paintings of Lagos State), many styles that are traceable to what can be described as the 'isms' of European art are highly present.

The first style that was obviously dominant in landscape painting in Nigeria was naturalism. This can be explained by the fact that Aina Onabolu unconsciously laid a foundation of measuring the standard of the African painter with European parameters by aiming to beat them in their game. A testimony from J. R. O. Ojo, a landscapist, watercolourist and a professor of art history in the Obafemi Awolowo University (now retired), supports the assertion that the naturalistic style dominated pre-independence landscape painting in Nigeria, noting that Aina Onabolu (1883 – 1963) and Akinola Lasekan (1916-1972) dwelt on naturalistic landscapes in their careers which blossomed from colonial to post-colonial times (Ojo, 2002:2).

It is factual to state that, naturalism took sway in the pre-independence landscape paintings in Nigeria. These first pioneers and adherents of naturalism instituted in modern Nigerian painting are referred to by Iriwieri (2010) as the 'Onabolu School'. Some reasons can be adduced for this love of naturalism among the precursors of modern Nigerian art. The first basic reason is the original aim of Aina Onabolu to prove wrong, the racial idea that the African cannot comprehend nor express art in the popular European visual perceptive manner. This formed the basic philosophy underlying the zeal of Aina Onabolu which he clearly and figuratively expressed,

"I believe that a woodpecker in England is the same as the woodpecker in Lagos State (Nigeria). Unless it is not a woodpecker, the Lagos State woodpecker can knock its peck on a tree (wood) with the same maximum efficiency and determination which is also expected of an English woodpecker. Both can create holes God has given them as natural habitats. All woodpeckers of the same biological endowment, whether in Nigeria or England, are the same. One wood pecker is not inferior to the other" (Oloidi, 2008: 166).

Therefore, to prove the enormity of wrong in the European misconception about the Africans meant doing art like the European and attaining their standard. This is with the aim of showing that the European have nothing special in representational skill and visual perception that the African does not have. It is no surprise therefore that, the early artists of this time led and inspired by Onabolu worked according to the precepts and standards of European art.

Another reason that can be adduced is the mode of training of the self-taught artists. Most of them got their art training through "inspiration got from pictures found in some European magazines, newspapers and some textbooks of the period" (Iriwieri, 2010: 42). Many Nigerian artists learnt how to draw by copying from these sources and continued to be inspired by them. The debate about stylistic identity natural synthesis which was to take the centre stage in modern Nigerian art discourse of the post-colonial times was yet to take root in the pre-independence era, thereby giving free ride to the European objective accuracy.

Furthermore, many of these early artists (many of whom were painters) got their formal training from European art institutions. British art schools particularly provided their training. This was because Nigeria in those days had no formal professional art training schools that could train them (Ikpakronyi, 2001:137). In the foreign lands, they were further exposed to European principles through the European school curriculums that were used to teach them. As at that time, Britain already has a legacy in world history of landscape painting as a strong landscape painting nation with a distinct naturalistic style (Osborne, 1970:639).

The above arguments go to show how and why naturalism has had, and is still having a strong hold on modern Nigerian art. A study of naturalism as an artistic style in Nigerian art by Iriwieri (2010) clearly shows that naturalism is very strong and prevalent not only in modern Nigerian art of the pre-independence period but up till present time. The

tendency towards naturalism has continued to be strong in landscape painting in modern Nigerian art till date. It is against this background that the landscape paintings of Lagos State are set and on this basis its stylistic evolution is fashioned. It is therefore not strange that naturalism has greatly influenced and indeed dominated the landscape paintings of Lagos State. Naturalism can be seen in the landscape paintings by Kolade Oshinowo (e.g. 'Road to Isheri'), Abiodun Olaku (e.g. 'Quietude'), Oluwafemi Otoki (e.g. 'Lagos Epe I'), Taiwo George-Taylor (e.g. 'Behind the Studio'), Jonahan Jefferson (e.g. 'Broad Street to C. M. S. '), Damola Adepoju (e.g. 'Ijora Bridge'), Olojo-Kosoko K. K. (e.g. 'Vision 2010'), Apooyin Mufutau (e.g. 'Sunset at Majidun'), Zino Orara (e.g. Lagos State Inside Out), Femi Oyewole (e.g. Onipan), Olajide Salako (e.g. 'Frozen Prints'), Wilson Okonyeh-Dickson (e.g. 'Just Like Yesterday') and Kehinde Olushola (e.g. 'Marine Supermarket').

The influence of naturalistic painters like Aina Onabolu and Akinola Lasekan cannot be totally divorced from Kolade Oshinowo's landscape paintings; while Oshinowo's influence in the 'Yaba School' has been great and well acknowledged especially in the landscape paintings of Abiodun Olaku (Irokanulo and Ndubuisi, 2008: 108). Olaku's style which is strongly based on the use of greys can be seen as furtherance and perfected extension of Oshinowo's early ochre and grey landscape paintings. What Olaku has added to it is the penchant for higher naturalism and romantic expression of light amidst night or evening scenes. Light effects have become a distinguishing character of Olaku's landscape paintings. Olaku confesses his love for such reflections, "I like the impact of artificial light especially where it is enhanced by a wet environment where it enjoys reflections" (Akpom, 2013:3). Okediji (2012:35) summarises Olaku's style as "a rhythmic choreography of orchestrated luminosity". Examples of his more recent works typical of his style are 'In Communion with Okobaba' and 'Grey Tunes'.

Abiodun Olaku, a Yaba College of Technology graduate who resigned from regular job to face professional studio practice in 1989 has been consistent and successful in his career. This has brought younger painters under his tutelage. His long residency at the Universal Studios of Art made him accessible to great numbers of students who have gained from him through industrial attachments. Many of the notable landscapists that were to surface later on the Lagos State art scene have been under his influence. Popular among such landscape painters are Olojo-Kosoko K. K. and Oluwafemi Otoki who have embraced photographic realism in their landscape paintings. Examples include "Vision 2010" by Olojo-Kosoko and "Ikorodu" (figure 5) by Otoki



Figure 5: Oluwafemi Otoki, Lagos Epe I, Oil on Canvas, 2013
Source: Oluwafemi Otoki Otoki

It is noteworthy to state that naturalism also became the identity of the Yaba College of Technology graduates in the 1980s as reflected in landscape paintings by graduates of the school. The exploit of the Yaba College of Technology graduates which bubbled in the 80s had their precursors in the earlier ABU (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) graduates like Joshua Akande, Dele Jegede, and Kolade Oshinowo. According to Filani (1998: 35), the Yaba Art School actually gained a lot from Zaria through mobility of artists from one school to another, either as students or teachers. Their efforts in the 1960s and 1970s (with fruitful results that lasted far beyond it into contemporary times) must have provided directions for the landscape painting of the Yaba School in the 1980s.

Another strong style in the landscape paintings of Lagos is impressionism which is exemplified in "The Creeks of Lagos State" by Ben Enwonwu and the landscapes of Joshua Akande, Emmanuel Bojerenu, Dele Jegede, Kehinde Sanwo, Olusegun Adejumo, Oyerinde Olotu, Abiodun Kafaru, Dotun Alabi and Gbenga Orimoloye. Their landscapes have reflected personal mannerisms but generally characterised by strokes of the brush or knife reminiscent of the brush techniques of Claude Monet and other impressionists. These landscape painters are mostly unconcerned with the obsession with light effects and scientific application of colours as with the original impressionists whose philosophy of painting was based on the phenomenon of light and its fleeting moments in atmospheric successions and the play of colours in capturing it. However, they have their individual manners as can be found among the original impressionists; this can be seen in their

works for example, 'The Molue' by Edosa Oguigo, 'Okobaba Dusk' by Olusegun Adejumo, 'Olaiya House' by Kehinde Sanwo, 'Man Standing on the Logs' by Gbenga Orimoloye and 'Patrol Boats III' by Dotun Alabi (figure 6). When these works are compared, they reveal certain stylistic characters which are common to other works by each painter and differentiate him from the rest. Oyerinde Olotu's strokes are obvious and controlled compared to Edosa Oguigo's strokes which are very vigorous and can sometimes be in wild flying motions that suggest an artist working with a flurry of short or long fast strokes. Olusegun Adejumo's strokes are very bold and marked with a characteristic colourful palette while those of Kehinde Sanwo stay close to reality in colour but laid thickly and wet-in-wet with the palette knife. Whereas, the palette knife strokes of Sanwo sometimes fuse into each other in form and in colours, those of Gbenga Orimoloye at all times maintain clear strokes and distinct colour tones, tints and shades that are laid in high impasto and clearly perceptible tactile appearances while Dotun Alabi's palette knife is mellowed in texture and application.



Figure 6: Dotunalabi, *Patrol Boats III*,
Oil on Canvas, 2007 Courtesy: Dotun Alabi.

Expressionism is not a common style in the landscape paintings of Lagos State but it is well represented in the works of some landscape painters. These are paintings which are not expressed just to achieve verisimilitude but to achieve the expression of the inner feelings and emotions of the artist about the colours, shape, lines and other elements of design. These elements are employed in exaggerations, abstractions, distortions and symbolisms (Osborne 1970: 396 – 397). Hence the works of Mike Omoighe are expressive for his use of lines, colours and forms that are out of reality e.g. 'Iganmu' and 'Ebute Ikorodu' likewise the works of Emenike Ogwo are classified as expressionism for his exaggerated use of impasto that sometimes takes his landscape paintings close to abstract e.g. 'Makoko Settlement' (figure 7). This is because his forms become unidentifiable carriers of colouristic mounds rather than perceived visual forms in the scenes of the landscapes depicted.

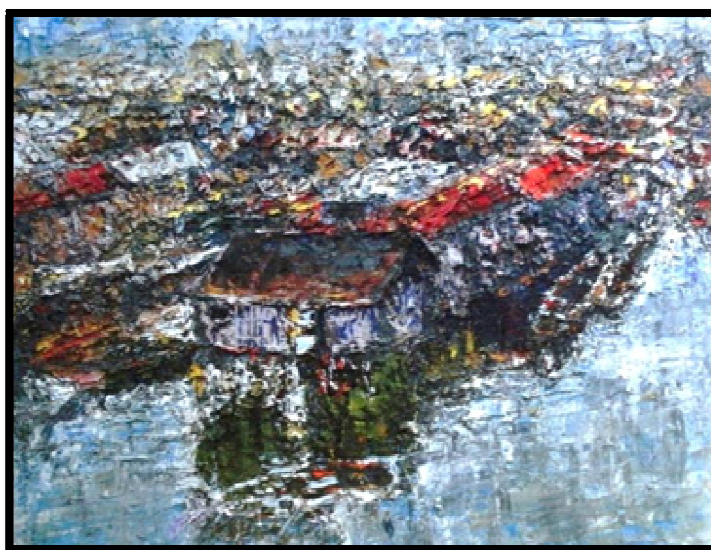


Figure 7: Emenike Ogwo, *Makoko Settlement*, Oil on Canvas, 2012
Source: Emenike Ogwo

Expressionism was not common in the 1970s and 1980s. Many landscapes of Mike Omoighe (e.g. 'Badia Ijora', 'Iganmu' and 'Ebute Ikorodu'); Emenike Ogwo (e.g. 'Ikorodu Seaside', 'Makoko Settlement' and 'Somewhere in Lagos'); John

Akintunde (e.g. 'Traffic' and 'Oshodi 2') and Ola Balogun (e.g. 'Maroko' and 'Behind Fadeyi') are expressionistic. The careers of these artists as painters did not start in the 1970s and only Omoighe's career out of the four artists identified started in the early 1980s. Clearly, literature reveals that the landscape painters of Lagos State in the 1970s identified in this research – Chucks Anyanwu, Joshua Akande, Rauf Thompson, Emmanuel Bojerenu and Kolade Oshinowo among others – were not painting expressionistic landscapes of Lagos State. It is therefore logical to suggest that expressionism in the landscape paintings of Lagos State was not common until after 1980. The case of expressionism in the landscape paintings of Lagos State is also similar to that of the different stylisations now found in the landscape paintings of Lagos State.

Stylisation is used to describe works that are based on the representation of natural objects but depart from exact representation "in favour of conventional schematisation, linear rhythm, simplification or stereotyped forms" (Osborne, 1970:1112; Egonwa, 2011: 169). The landscape paintings of Ola Balogun (figure 8), Olushegun Oduyele (figure 9) and Joe Nsek fall perfectly into this category. Ola Balogun reduces his forms to their basic states in shapes and colours welded together by dark thick and thin lines. His hues are usually close to their pure states with few tints. The paintings generally look very brightly coloured and clear.

Olushegun Oduyele plays with motifs, lines, shapes, wide strokes of knife or brush and minimal palette while his motifs are either derived from nature or Yoruba traditional textiles and sculpture. His colours are usually pure and clear in outlook while maintaining a minimal palette Joe Nsek divides his picture plane into colour shapes that lead into each other without destroying or distorting the forms. At times, his colour planes depict landscape forms and pictorial planes that move into each other through colour layers differentiated by tones and tints. This trend in the landscape paintings of Lagos State became known with these painters that could be regarded as new breeds – they are younger painters whose careers were launched between the last rung of the 20th century and the first decade of the new millennium. Stylistically, these are new stylistic ideas that are still subject to the test of time. This test can have positive results through consistency and creativity that retains the interest of the art public and critics.



Figure 8 : Ola Balogun, *Behind Fadeyi*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2008
Source: Ola Balogun



Figure 9: Olushegun Oduyele, *Yellow Buses (The Renovation)*, Acrylic, 2013
Source: Olushegun Oduyele

4. Conclusions

The thematic and stylistic analysis of the identified landscape paintings of Lagos State suggests certain conclusions concerning the evolution of themes and styles in the landscape paintings. Thematically, it can be concluded

that the landscape paintings of Lagos State is centred on man in his built environment. Stylistically, some conclusions can be made. First, the naturalistic style is strong and enduring in the landscape paintings of Lagos State. Second, impressionism is as strong as naturalism in the landscape paintings of Lagos State and it became common in the landscape paintings of Lagos State in the early 1970s. Third, expressionism became clearly obvious in the styles of landscape paintings of Lagos State in the 1980s and fourth, new stylisations in the landscape paintings of Lagos State became clearly evident in the new millennium (year 2000 onwards).

Stylistic studies of these landscape paintings of Lagos reveal time evolutions in stylistic developments in the history of landscape paintings of Lagos and landscape painting in modern Nigerian art. It also shows some personal distinguished styles which give historical information about the development of some painters in modern Nigerian art thereby putting them in proper classification and situating them in art history.

The thematic and stylistic developments in the landscape paintings of Lagos State are important historical indicators because they provide evidence to corroborate socio-political and economic evolutions of the State. Analysis of the landscape paintings has shown that apart from aesthetics, they are a recorder of the daily survival activities and general living conditions of the people living in the state. The socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental developments in Lagos State can be read from the landscape paintings.

Lagos State is a developing state with a lot of potentialities for growth which will bring changes in the built environment and more inspirations for landscape painting. As the dynamics of urban development evolves in the history of the state, the themes in the landscape paintings of Lagos State will continue to grow as they reflect these changes. As long as painters continue to be injected into the artistic scene in Lagos and they continue to express themselves by painting landscapes of the State, stylistic expressions will also continue to grow. It implies that the future of landscape painting in Lagos State and the landscape paintings depicting the outdoor scenes of survival and development in an ever evolving economy and state is very bright.

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