

A Critical Appraisal of Selected Afrofuturism Drawings of Steve Joseph Aimanesi

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ABSTRACT

Drawing is a visual art that engages any number of outlines on a surface. The act of drawing is an act which involves the making of marks on a surface so as to create an image, form or shape. Steve Joseph Aimanesi, a contemporary Nigerian master draughtsman and a painter, evolved extraordinary evanescent effects that conjured up the perception of colour and light emanating from the views he draws. A precious sensation of light, transfused through the particles or dust in the atmosphere fills the landscape Steve has drawn. Steve works entirely in Afrofuturism, a style of drawing initiated by Mark Dery, that deals with the mind, technology and strength. This paper examines the Afrofuturism drawings of Steve Aimanesi, a new style of drawing, and its contribution toward the development contemporary African art. The study mainly relied on interview for data collection, articles, journals and presentations with the artist.

Keywords: Drawing, Painting, Water Colour, Afrofuturism, Contemporary Drawing, Shading

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Art has been defined and redefined over the centuries. Art can now be defined as the conscious use of skill, taste, and creative imagination in the production of objects that exalt the mind or spirit. We can go further and say that art demonstrate some profound, if not divine, motivation or inspiration. Such a definition can explain how some art has affected people and endured for thousands of years. Morton (1929) describes art as something that is energized with conceptual direction, sometimes from religion, or science or psychology, or critical theory, sometimes with all of these, art is specific and object bound. The artistic experience, the exalting of the mood and spirit, is what enables us to return to great drama, poetry, music, dance or visual art over and over again. Though, all artists have their different approaches to making visual images. Shyllon (2003), added that art is a veritable medium of promoting the richness in the culture of society and for relating and interpreting the history of nations to present and future generations. One of the most common aspect of art which has widely been practiced by artist and people is drawing.

Drawing is said to be the citadel of all area of specialization because everything begins with and everything ends with drawing. Drawing is a universal language in the realm of artistic representation, this is so because of the relative ease of access to basic drawing instrument. It is also a means of self-expression or skill disposition in handily drawing instrument so as to mark or register an impression on a given surface

(Adeyanju, personal Communication, December 8, 2011). Furthermore, drawing could be said to be an essential art, activity or practices of linear or pictorial expressions using any instrument of artistic expression or otherwise.

There exist many variations of drawing for instance, linear social commentary or composition, known as cartooning and animation, which primarily involves, the manipulation of quick sketches or conventional organization of lines. Michael (2003), observes, that the act of drawing involves utilization of a small quantity in materials to make a visible mark for further manipulation on given surfaces like of artistic expression has been fundamental and popular throughout human history. The soul of creativity in drawing involves sensitivity to application of tension composition and application of emotional drive to the visual work.

Artists throughout history have given much preliminary thought to content and devoted a great deal of time to studying methods by which their ideas communicate powerfully. That is the procedure understudied in this paper. Thus the impetus for this study arouse out of the uniqueness of the style and technique a young contemporary Nigerian artist, Steve Aimanesi, uses in rendering his subject matters.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem: Over the years in the Nigerian Contemporary art scene, an influx of attention and notice has been enjoyed by only some selected or privileged contemporary Nigerian artists, their works and styles. This trend looks redundant and unprogressive, and of course, we have almost forgotten that art itself is a movement which is the basis of all art movements. This only means the progressive nature and trend of art should not end or rather stop with the fame of selected few contemporary artists, but rather should continue with the emergence of new and younger generations.

Meanwhile, an innumerable number of new contemporary artists graduating from various art institutions are in existence with their works and their various artistic practices. Along with the odds of producing Artworks, they also fight the odds of recognition in the contemporary art space, as they create a work without being noticed.

However, only a handful of researches have been done on the artistic practices, and the influences and styles of these rising artist to put them in the limelight and forefront of the art scene. Hence, the need for the study to juxtapose artistic practices and styles of the emerging artists with thriving ones, thereby situate these young talents in their rightful place of the contemporary art scene.

1.3 Aim and Objectives: This study aims at appraising some selected drawings of Steve Joseph Aimanesi, a young rising artist. This includes only the drawings which displays the Afro-Futurism style, with the set objectives to;

1. To discuss and analyse Afro-Futurism as an emerging art style in the contemporary art scene.
2. To highlight the influences of this newly emerged art style.
3. To analyse as a way of showcasing some selected drawings of Steve Joseph Aimanesi.
4. To rightfully situate the young rising artist's creative practices in the cadre of the contemporary Nigerian Art scene.

1.4 Significance of the Study: This study will serve as an eye opener to all agents of contemporary Nigerian art, to shift their focus and see such an amazing talent we have in the younger generations of the rising artists, yet treading in the creative paths of the fathers. This study will also be significant as it will serve as a written record of the emergence of a new style of art 'Afro-futurism'. It will enlighten the art public of its features, characteristics and goals.

1.5 Scope: The scope of this paper will only encompass the Analysis of the drawings of Steve Joseph

Aimanesi which displays the Afro-futurism art style.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Drawing

Art has over grown its historic limitations and the definition of drawing has expanded along with it (Drewal, 1980). Drawing now shares its once dominant position as the medium of expression with other forms, like sculpture, video, sound, photography, installation and performance art, but its horizons have never been more exciting.

Drawing is fundamental to painting, sculpture, printmaking. The mystery of drawing enables you to look at an object and understand in visual terms the relationships of its part and its relationships to the things around it (Filani, 2001). Drawing makes a unified artistic statement and is an end in itself. It is a graphic impression of something seen or imagined. Drawing is divided into five different categories which are; still life drawing, figure drawing, nature drawing, landscape drawing and imaginative drawing.

2.2 Afrofuturism

In 1993, Afrofuturism was initiated by American actor, cultural critic and lecturer, Mark Dery, who explored in the late 1990's through conversations led by Alondra Nelson. Afrofuturism is generally believed to be a cultural aesthetic, and philosophy of science and history that explores the intersection of the African diaspora culture with science and technology.

2.3. Significance/ contribution of Afrofuturism

Afrofuturism gives us a platform to thrive in our own culture, where we imagine ourselves achieving greatness without external influence. This was a tool used several years ago and is still valuable today imagining a better future in the contemporary era. Afrofuturism also serves as a symbol of hope.

Nigerian art in the modern day is said to be contemporary, which is to say that conventional materials are used to express a few things peculiar to us in terms of language, culture, norms, beliefs, religion, backgrounds, politics and economic. Afrofuturism basically is also known as black sci-fi, where the African culture is correlated with science and technology. Its emphasis is made to allow Africans and Africans in diaspora to stand out and make their identity pronounced.

METHODOLOGY

This section gives information about the methodology employed in research and writing this paper.

The method of data used for this paper includes both the primary sources and the secondary sources.

The primary sources entail the various interview sessions with the artist and the other forms of direct information provided by the artist.

The secondary sources of data encompass all the second-hand information, documents and online resources contacted for the purpose of this paper.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF STYLE

3.1 Analysis of Content and style of Joseph Steve's Works

All artists have different approaches to making visual images. Some begin work with no preconceived idea at all; as the work evolves it seems to take on a life of its own. At some point during the process, the artist must compose the visual language to reinforce the statement if the picture is to be effective.

This discussion, is a description of Steve's work "as a reasonable signature of futurism, a movement that depicts, noise, instability, movement and basically represents the future. The style and works carry a significant representation of the African/Black culture in terms of dressing, cultural story, colours and art generally. The subjects are given brightly coloured eyes that depicts technology. More so, colourful or monochromatic loops of lines are fixed over and around the subjects in the drawings to express noise, movement and science".

As a draughtsman, Steve's subjects are both enduring and monumental strictly speaking, however, the true subject of his drawing is not landscape itself, but his experience of it. Although the technical approach to his picture making is high idiosyncratic, Steve continues to learn from the work of past Nigerian artists, where he frequently looks at the works of Ibe Ananabe and Austin Uzor, whom he greatly admires the realism quality of their drawing process. Steve tends to examine small area of Ananabe and Austin's drawings under a magnifying glass, or invert reproductions in order to reveal their abstract and clinical construction more clearly.

He has explored with the use of colours over time, he has found himself to rest around vibrant colours. By closely observing the ways in which colour is transformed by reflection and ambient light, Steve was able to take apart the rigidity of solid form and to reconstruct it in terms of the pen stroke.

Steve has a particular feeling he gets and gives in his watercolor paintings. He particularly loves using vibrant and raging colours to express noise and attraction. He uses bold stroke of colours as it reveals his confidence in the medium and how he relates on colour to the other on the surface to portray his painterly skill as well as the significance of his works.

3.2 Concept of his Drawings

Drawing may help to resolve particular problems in the painting, but more often it is used to preserve the close contact between the artist and subject (Myers, 1958). Great drawing always looks as if it is made now. That sense of timelessness is what his drawing are about. The types of marks used by Steve reinforce his intention to locate his drawings within a sense of the timeless present. The self-evident energy of the marks he makes together with their lack of self-consciousness communicates a real sense of urgency and authenticity. So tactile is the actual record of the physical construction of his work, that we may feel that we are sharing in the making process.

Steve combines electronics gadget (technology lines) techniques to his drawings and mixed medias. The combination evokes shifting emotional tensions and moods, as we try to resolve the provocative juxtapositions. When looking at one of his drawings, The sense of time that we may perceive is the second or two it took Steve to make a particular mark on the paper. However, a more sustained sense of time is communicated by the collected marks that cover the entire surface of the paper. Clearly we recognize that the drawing evolved over a number of days or weeks, yet the consisted urgency of the mark making may convince us that the drawing represents the single coherent response of the artist at some unspecified time.

A factor to bear in mind is that Steve is concerned with the mark both as pictorial representation and as an autonomous presence on the paper. Its physical existence as an object in its own right is essentially no

different to the presence of other material objects in the world around us. Therefore, it is common with all material objects, it shares the same time and space as the viewer. That time is, of course, the present moment, the here and now in which we are consciously perceiving the world. His works are executed on folding boxboard which is basically used for packing and constructions.

3.3 Developing his Drawing

Steve uses a black pen on white paper. Although while making line drawings, the mid-tone of the paper allows him to use white pencil to make the first tentative indications of where the light falls. At this stage, light and shade are important elements in establishing a coherent space and balance within the composition.

Despite the care put into the line drawing, it was inevitable that certain adjustments would have to be made once the pencil image starts to take shape on the paper: the form of objects and the relationships between them often appear different on a larger scale. In the final stages, Steve continues to redress the details, the balance between colour relationships and the nuances of light and shadow. However, no dramatic revisions were undertaken at this late stage.

Towards the end of this initial drawing stage Steve experimented with combining individual images and forms. Although they were small sketches, they are used to form the basis for the composition of the final drawing. Occasionally, he moves directly from these sketches to the paper proper, working out the final detail of the composition on the larger scale.

Steve's mode of representing his subjective works are from reference photographs where he alters a lot in the photographs. He basically makes the plans of his works through rough sketches in a mini sketch pad that he calls a "morgue file". A morgue file is a book in which ideas are written or sketch for future sake. Steve doesn't create his works using live models, instead he takes pictures of his models just the way he wants and he makes his plans and begins his creative process.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED WORKS

Plate 1: The Great Tribulation 1, Ball point pens and poster colour on FBB (Folding Boxboard), 18by22inches, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.



Photograph by: Oluwabukunmi Agbaje, 2020

4.1. The Great Tribulation

The quiet modest figure of the young woman emerges with aristocratic entanglement with dried tree branches coming off her shoulders depicted sketchily with rapid pens strokes. By lingering on the details of the garments and look, Steve brought forth the character of the young woman and even suggested her state of mind. The apparently rapid pen strokes against the water colour producing patches of colour aptly expresses the spectator's emotions and simultaneously suggest the artist's disillusionment with progress which he had previously welcomed with the enthusiasm typical of aficionados of the enlighten. The work suggests a complexity of perceptible sensations with his strokes which deepens or creates the density of the branches, her hair sparse trees, which project out as a shadow of the woman.

Tribulation, according to the Christian eschatology, is a period of great suffering, persecution before the "Second Coming", lasting seven years (The holy bible, King James Version, 2022). This is a futurist view whereby Christians and the whole world will experience hardships, disasters, famine, war, pain, and suffering, which will purify and strengthen them. The curved lines in the artwork is as a futuristic approach that symbolizes noises, movement flow, speed and instability. The use of vibrant colours are significantly portrayed to denote the richness of the personality and identity of the subject as an African lady.

The female subject used symbolizes fertility whereas the sunset and dead leafless tree is a sign of the end of time where all living things die out and cease to exist and a woman ceases to be productive as in childbearing. The model is seen looking towards the left where her expression denotes fear for the unknown. She is looking out and preparing herself against tribulation, the end time to come as stated in revelation. The birds harrowing around her head represent ravens and buzzard. They are birds known to circle around dead bodies and they symbolize bad omen and mystery. The female figure is portrayed to be putting on a cross earring, gave us the idea that she is a Christian, and also depicting her to be preparing for the great beyond which is eternity with her God.

The yellow colour around her head symbolizes life, it means that if you have Christ you have life. Light vibrant colours surrounds the head of the model likewise can be seen on reflecting on her face which depict life, the colours express the life of God reflecting in nature even humans have the choice either to do good or bad. Earring on the ear of the model keeps telling her are place in Christ and looking outside in the drawing also shows she keeping outside holy not wanting to be contaminated by worldly desires and distraction. The red colours depicts the great tribulations because according to the bible the skies is going to be filled with blood. The blood moon is like a sign giving to us that the end time is drawing near. Her hairdo is typically called "doughnut" in Nigeria which is made on those who don't have long hair. According to Steve in his discuss, the hairdo is represented in a tomb stone which depicts her past sins the people she has lured into their early graves because she has engaged in immoralities in her past life. Women can be seen as a portal of life where mankind comes into the system nowadays we see women as a portal to the grave.

The work simply passes a message that we should make our ways straight, the Christians should rightly communicate good things to the unbeliever at large. The fact that we are Christians shouldn't mean we should be judgemental, nor make ourselves gods judging other people, though we are representatives of God and should show Christ-like to people through our ways and characters. This basically depicts her past and present story, a lady who had a huge past and her present story incorporated together.

Plate 2: Excogitation, Mixed media FBB (Charcoal, Acrylic, Poster colour, coloured pencils), 18by24inches, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.



Photograph by: Steve Aimanesi, 2020

Excogitation: This piece titled excogitation has some poetic lines linked to it which explains the meaning of the piece thus:

“I don’t have all that it takes to face L.I.F.E.

But I dare to dream of all it takes to scale through life’s obstacles and distractions.

Why does it really matter that we please everyone?

Why do we try to build coated impressions?

Why do fake and shallow things seem to matter more than life itself?

Why is there so much pressure in the world?

So many whys!!

Sometimes it matters a lot to shut out the world.

I need that wisdom!

To know how to regulate between matters of life.

I need the light!

I need the spirit of God to fix my thoughts about accepting my truest self.

I need that atmosphere of solitude.

Where I’m alone with my thoughts but never lonely.

Where I envisage a future while I’m sited in the Himalayas

Where my body, soul and spirit is united with nature in its fullness.

And peace sheds herself over me

And she will be my new skin.

Meditate!!! Amidst the chaos!!”

The intent of this work is aimed at educating people to learn the discipline of focus, meditation, self-healing, their application and their powers. The lines on the face and around the neck of the figure are futuristic and the figure is a male and an African. This expresses the pressure on the average African man based on how to survive, thrive and prosper within his environment and the odds.

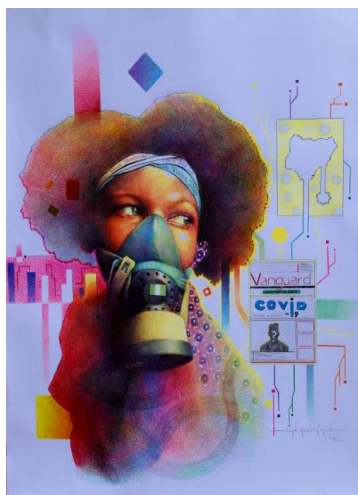
The close perspective accentuates the image of the young man, closing his two eyes, set against a background powered with different three pairs of eyes, one resting on his forehead. Each of the eyes have different colours, with different colours of lines dripping from the eyes as one who is crying. There also seems to be the presence of tiny images of birds hovering around the head. The eyes above the figure's head tells a part of the regular human characteristics of anxiety and the fear for the unknown which makes them irrelevant ignoring the brighter side of life. The dripping colours (Primary colours) from the eyes expresses tears and stress that humans go through to meet and keep up with their primary needs and goals. Primary colour is basically used to depict the flows of tears meaning we pass through a lot to meet up with our primary needs. The coloured eyes is basically to express technology as seen in movies.

The lines in form of facial scarification (also known as technology Lines) on the subject's face is a depiction of technology and the age we are currently in (jet age). The work serves as a movement that expresses flow, speed and instability. The Afrofuturism movement and the concept of Black sci-fi. Although this hasn't blown up yet but this movement serves as an identity appraisal of the Black culture and its contribution to the worlds civilization. The big circle on the fore head is known as the third eye symbolizing wisdom, the spiritual nature of man which we have seem to ignore.

It's an awareness for mankind that there is a place of wisdom which we use to interact with God and other spiritual beings or the spiritual realm. The forehead is one of the pressure point. It helps to focus well during meditation. When one spots birds flying in the air in most cases they fly uncoordinated. The birds on the forehead and head of the figure depicts how uncoordinated our minds are when we think about so many things. They depict different thoughts coming into someone's head, which is why the subject is trying to meditate to settle his mind and have a coordinated life. Youths are highly on the internet these days and it has huge influence on them positively and otherwise. The internet is a façade and we allow some things to affect our mind and our life general, this is how depression set in.

Hence, meditation is a lifestyle of achieving peace through pains, letting go of our burdens and dissolving into a new dimension of subtlety, purity and focus of energy (Read, 1964).

Plate 3: The Covid-19 theory, Mixed media FBB (Ball point pen and Acrylic on paper), 20by24inches, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.



Photograph by: Steve Aimanesi, 2020.

The Covid-19 theory

In the Covid-19 theory, Steve brings to life scenes taken from Covid-19 Pandemic saga, as well as the negative effects it had on in the world population with a visionary imagination that successfully combined contemplations on the past, the aesthetics of the sublime, and intelligent irony. The artist interpreted the emotional impact with surprising intensity, creating a scene balanced seamlessly between the figure and the real world only the touching pose of the figure suggests what is expected of everyone.

Covid-19 is a virus that is airborne said to have originated from china, which can also be contracted by touching an infected party. It is also considered to be airborne which can spread within a split second if not properly curtailed. Its symptoms are running nose, high temperature, sore throat, coughing etc. it broke out in the 2019 and covid in full name is “Corona Virus Diseases”. It affected the world not only in Nigeria and a lot of activities were grounded and this led to the fall of the world economy at large. Organizations where shutdown, schools, market places were all shut down making life unbearable for people.

It was prophesied by humanity that the creation of their hands will be a “germ warfare. The world will lose its balance and the people will be in the utmost state of melee”. The advent of technology has caused humanity to tamper with reality, putting tears in their own eyes, and fear in the hearts of their children.

Steve discussing his work said, “This artwork expresses pressing issues that I personally experienced during the pandemic lockdown. Closing of schools, churches and other relevant organizations that are involved in the assembling of people. Although a lot of Nigerians had the belief that the Covid-19 pandemic was a script that was acted in Nigeria, even if it was real, the government over exaggerated its spread and how it killed people making it as a means of extortion and exploit”.

The shapes by the left side of the figure depicts the help and support we received from international countries. The nose mask is tied firmly to the head of the subject which suggest a rule of survival during the lockdown, meaning everyone must go everywhere with their nose mask for protection against the spread of virus. The lady wearing the nose mask tells us how dangerous the virus is and why we must fully protect ourselves. The newspaper at the background with the name bearing the “Vanguard” which is one of the popular newspaper in Nigeria. The newspaper represents one of the channels of communicating information both news and entertainment. There is also the picture of Nigeria Map at the background even though the initial colour is green white green. The map also has a line as of its dripping out of the map with it end like a spike. The spike there represent the covid-19 virus diseases. The map is depicted with yellow colour to connote how life was unbearable during the lockdown.

Though one would have expected the artist to use a signboard or a poster to pass his knowledge about the virus but he basically expresses his love for technology as seen in the news and sci-fi movies also to let viewers know the Afrofuturism movement. Technology was used to communicate the influence of the virus, its effect on people, the death and recovery counts. From his works, one could conclude that Steve create his works based on feelings and awareness.

There is also the presence of motifs like a standing figure in geometric shapes at the back of the model. According to Steve in his discuss, “they are technical motif that was achieved by experimenting with the medium which is a ballpoint pen. I basically pushed this medium beyond its regular use by trying achieving certain techniques as well as effects”.

Plate 4: Gifts and Burdens (The Centre of an Artist’s Mind), Ball point pen on FBB, 20by30inches, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.



Photograph by: Steve Aimanesi, 2020

Gifts and Burden (The Centre of an Artist's Mind)

Muse: Austin Uzor

Augustine Uzor, a North Texas based Nigerian Contemporary artist, who is known to be “an artist of two worlds”. His personality is a mystery a hidden work deeply expresses, the seen, unseen and the unusual parts of life; metaphysics. Augustine is documented for being an inexplicable part of the artists growth as well as his altitude for finding ways through life itself.

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to Success-Pablo Picasso. The philosophies of life are actually just simple and understanding, yet it is complex with so many loopholes and the directions at the existence of mankind. Inspiration exists, but it has to find you Working-Pablo Picasso

This is a true and acceptable philosophy but even young and old artists tend to experience “artist block” sometimes. They fade out in our own minds based on “what to produce”, “how to produce”, “when to produce?”, “For whom to produce?”. And those questions pop up in our thoughts and we breakdown, get discouraged and take a pause, waiting for our redemption to be revealed.

An artist's mind is a combination of thoughts, memories, moods, atmospheres and dreams (Fleming, 1974). A phantom zone that really doesn't fully know and cannot hold completely. It is said that everything one can imagine is real. It is a miracle. It is a miracle that we don't dissolve in our bath like a lump of sugar. This means no matter how great our limits are; mentally, physically, emotionally, or even socially, we will breakthrough, and Itis not even a matter of the right time. “For God has created everything beautiful in His own time”.

Describing the work “Gifts and Burdens”, the red silhouette is seen as pensive, the black figure is seen as confused, that's one of the phases an artist experience, we experience the good and the bad times, sometimes we are faced with who to produce for, how to produce, the gallery to help one market his work. The white silhouette figure is the positive one. The lines that encompasses figure is the Afrofuturism style, which deals with speed, stability and energy. The hairdo called Afro is detailed at the lower side while left with aurora of colours and shadings at the top most meaning the human mind is vast and while, sometimes it can be coordinated and not been coordinated. The human mind is ecognistic meaning it cannot be read making. The use of colours is a signature for Steve which he used to connect viewers to himself and his works.

Plate 5: Qi-gong, Ball point pen on FBB, 18by24inches, 2020

Photograph by: Steve Aimanesi, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.

Qi-gong

Qi-gong is a Chinese system of breathing control, physical exercise and meditation. It is said to be a “life-energy cultivation”. It is a very old system of coordinated body-posture and movement, breathing, and meditation. It is used for the purpose of health, spirituality, and martial-arts training. According to the Chinese medicine, philosophy, and martial arts, Qi-gong is traditionally viewed by the Chinese and throughout Asia as a practice to cultivate and balance qi. The mental and physical well-being.

Qi-gong practice typically involves moving meditation, coordinating slow-flowing movement, deep rhythmic breathing, and a calm meditative state of mind. People practice Qi-gong throughout China and worldwide for recreation, exercise, relaxation, preventive medicine, self-healing, alternative medicine, meditation, self-cultivation, and training for martial arts.

While carefully observing the figure, a male figure with both of his eyes closed encompassed around different spiral, semi- circular and circular lines with different colours. One could also see the presence of three silhouette at the background depicting the popular martial art style of fighting. There is also the presence of the technology line which connect to one’s minds.

Steve’s method of preserving a sense of light surrounding colour is reminiscent of watercolour effects with pen strokes. He uses no masks or tape but handles the straight edges of each drawings form with the same curve that is lavished on crafting the immaculate support he uses. Steve was an edge conscious artist. And he would define the edges of his objects and figures composition without mask taping even when working on the floor. But the carefully calculated movement of the skins of drawing extending off a pictures edges a back onto the paper creates a sense of constant flux.

Plate 6: Persistence of Memories, Mixed Media on FBB, 28by38inches, 2020, Steve Aimanesi.



Photograph by: Steve Aimanesi, 2020

Persistence of Memories

The gnarled, contorted braches of the age old tree created, as the sun shines brightly, nervous arabesques against the pale early morning sky. The mood of mysterious holiness pervading the scene emanates more from the dawn light that enshrouds the desolate winter landscape, frozen in time, than from the ruined Gothic abbey surrounded by bare oak trees. With a vibrant silhouetted effect, the sun also illuminates the arbor and fence of a clustered horn that is relentlessly on the head of the figure. The drawing is an enchanting, poetic meditation on time, inspired by nature and man.

Time is relative. It's a factor that checks us. It makes us and allows us to grow based on our thinking, our disciplines and consciousness. According to Dali's theory of "softness" and "hardness", time is relative to space and matter; the collapse of our notions of a fixed cosmic order. Humans are complex creatures who have learnt over hundreds of years to adapt, evolve and survive time, but definitely not to overcome it. Our experience plays a huge role in the people we become. Our lives are the sum of our choices, dreams, memories, thoughts, ambitions and responsibilities. The past plays its own part in the present as well as the future, if we let it.

Things happen to us in certain times for different reasons, i.e. the people that come into our lives and the ones that leave. But with a high level of maturity and wisdom, we can always clearly state the differences between the good and bad people in our lives, that makes a lot of sacrifices in making our dreams come true. Truth be told, odd things will keep happening and sometimes it gets better or worse. Now it depends on how proficient we can be. I believe we were all created for certain reasons and not which we only must gain from. We were partly made for others, for one another as we must keep spreading the good energy that is within us. We should embrace one another and learn to coexist. According to Steve "every man should be given the chance to be free from himself".

The tree branch on the head of the female figure expresses the nature of the human mind, vast in its dimension and the memories it holds. The colourful flying bird represents the good values in the figure's life in form of friendship and relationship while the other bird sitting on the branch represents emptiness, vanity and suffering. The sun over her head represents energy and hope and it's a source of life to earth and everything that's in it. The picture frames represent memories in time past and the present. Birds are attracted to tree branch because by nature that's their habitat. The tree branch represents ideas, intelligence, emotions and the essence of humanity and the birds are the good and bad influences that surrounds us.

CONCLUSION

An artist must negotiate the sharing of his territory between a plane shape within the picture plane and the picture plane itself (Ademakinwa, 2007). The portraiture drawings of Steve show extraordinary talents of the young contemporary artist. In addition to capturing the physical likeness of the subjects and rendering their forms in meticulous detail, Steve was able to suggest the personality, and the content behind each figures. Though Steve has spent decades developing a precise practice to make drawings that look as if they grew spontaneously. Yet preparatory sketches reveal that his is a meticulously planned effort. He pays attention to the viscosity of the shading flow knowing that this effects the flow rate of the colour on the paper as it is raised. Steve stance allows a dialogue between apparent realism and naturalism. His drawings depict a sense of sensitivity for light effects blended with the works immediately and simplicity.

These drawings of Steve depict perfection and detailed understanding of human forms, elements and principles of art. his knowledge and experience in the art field puts him in the forefront, and ahead of developing artists. Steve Joseph Aimanesi will not be the first artist to create mysteries, content and deep meaning with drawing but, he is surely the first to conceptualize a highly developed style called Afro-futurism in the contemporary Nigerian art space. His style of drawing which is not just a way or rather a

pattern of arrangement of strokes, forms, and elements but highly ideological and influenced by critical thinking mind of the artist. If well managed and consistently in use, this style is promising of developing into a widely accepted art movement in the Nigerian contemporary art field. Before the emergence of Steve's Afro-futurism style of drawing, drawing was not more than drawing, drawing was not beyond the ability and mannerism of capturing objects and forms in space and it was most often seen as proof of artistic vigor.

The drawings of Steve have proven his artistic prowess. He should be ranked as a true offspring of the forerunners of the Nigerian contemporary art field like Mufu Onifade, Kule Filani, Peju Alatise, Dotun Popoola and the likes, not for the fame and traffic drawn to themselves,

but for the artistic ability to create change.

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