

# The Place of Traditional Artists in the Preservation of Nigerian Art

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## **Abstract**

*Human beings have always left signs of their activities behind them. These signs take both tangible and intangible forms, including buildings, sites, sculptural works, antiquities, rock art paintings, belief systems, and traditions. The people of this millennium have recognized the remains of our fore-bears namely archaeological, architectural monuments, sites, and cultural works as an integral part of the cultural heritage of all humanity. They also recognized the fact that heritage is an invaluable source of information about the lives and activities of human beings and their artistic and technical capabilities over the centuries. The Nigerian Ancient Art Tradition which spans eight thousand years is a product of diverse artists from Dufuna, Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife, Owo, Benin, Tada, etc. Also remarkable are the sculptural works created by late Susanne Wenger (an Austrian) and her New Sacred Art Movement in Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, which gave meaning to open spaces within the grove. This paper examines the role played by these artworks to project Nigeria to the global art world. The benefits to Nigeria and the global art traditions and recommendations on how to revive this dwindling economic resource will also be examined. The approach used was to study the artworks produced by some of these artists. Some of the findings were that the works were carefully done with suitable materials that have withstood climate change.*

**Keywords:** Traditional artists, Preservation and Nigerian art

## **Introduction**

Nigeria's art occupies a unique place among the artistic traditions of the world. The discovery of the Nok culture in 1944 brought to light evidence of an ancient cultural tradition in terracotta and iron working in Nigeria. These discoveries were followed by the Igbo-Ukwu bronzes dated 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> C, Ife bronzes and Terracotta 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> C, Benin Court Art 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> C, Owo 15<sup>th</sup> C, Tsoede bronzes and the Essie soapstones. The Dufuna canoe which is 8000 years is the oldest Nigerian art and was discovered in 1998. Other Nigerian creative works include rock paintings some of which were declared as national monuments in the 1960s and indigenous building technology etc. Also, there was peace in the cultural areas these works were produced.

Nigeria is the most populous Black country in the world with an estimated population of one hundred and seventy three million, six hundred thousand people (National Population Commission, 2013) and occupies an area of 923,764.4 kilometers. It is made up of over four hundred and fifty ethnolinguistic groups. There are two clearly marked seasons - the rainy season that runs from April to October and the dry season which runs from November to March. Nigeria operates a mixed economic system, but oil

provides about 90% of her total revenue. Nigeria has rich collections of monuments, cultural and natural landscapes enlivened by vibrant intangible heritage. Among the many cultural resources of Nigeria, Adedayo (2014 pg.3), states are 'the various forms of arts, the artists and the cultural institutions established all over the country.'

### **Nigerian Arts**

Adedayo (2014) sees traditional artists as those skilled in the indigenous technology of using indigo dye (ELU) and blacksmithing. He notes that there are traditional artists who use their knowledge and skills of art to decorate shrines, temples, sacred groves, and religious places. There are also those who use their knowledge of arts to propagate traditional knowledge religion, worship and spiritualism. Others are dramatic and musical artists. This paper will emphasize the works of those who produced the prestigious Nigerian sculptural arts referred to as the "Thousand Years of Nigerian Art." The contents of these arts were first published by National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) in 1977 and revised in 1990. Among them are the Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ife, Owo, Tsoede, Essie arts, and the Dufuna canoe. Also rock art paintings and traditional belief systems will also be discussed. The contributions of these artists in the preservation of Nigerian arts become more meaningful if we realize that if they had not put their thoughts down in such media as stone, wood and metal, Nigeria and indeed the global art world would not have had in their collections these masterpieces. Since the people that made these works are long gone, this paper places more emphasis on the cultural institutions, that is, National Commission for Museums and Monuments put in place to protect, promote and preserve their works.

### **The History of National Commission for Museums and Monuments**

The history of Nigerian museums started in 1945 when the first museum was established in Essie, Kwara State to house an extensive collection of stone figures that was discovered in the area. In 1953, the Antiquities Ordinance, which gave birth to the Federal Department of Antiquity, was promulgated leading to the establishment of Museums in Jos, Ife, Lagos, Owo, Benin and Oron. After the Nigerian Civil War, the Federal Government in quest of lasting Unity, Peace, and Integration, conceived the policy of establishing a Museum of National Unity in each of the then twelve States of the Federation to serve as instruments of cultural education through which peace and understanding among Nigerians would be achieved.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments was established by Decree 77 of 1979 and in its present status by NCMM Act 242 Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000.

The objectives of the Commission are as follows:

- i To establish and maintain a stable museum system in Nigeria, which will ensure the preservation of the nation's tangible and intangible heritage.
- ii To ensure the proper conservation, protection, and preservation of Nigerian natural and cultural heritage.
- iii To establish and promote the development of museum practices for the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of the Nigerian cultural and natural properties, suitable for the local environment and by established internationally acceptable professional standards.

### **Activities**

The functions of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) include the collection, documentation, conservation, preservation, and management of antiquities and national monuments. It also provides for the presentation of such objects and monuments/sites to the general public for purposes of education, enlightenment, and entertainment. The Museum is a compendium of the ingenuity of our forefathers, which must be preserved for present/future generation of Nigerians who will need to know their root.

According to the law that established the Commission (NCMM Act 242 of 2000) the National Commission for Museums and Monuments exist among others to: (a) Administer National Museums, Antiquities, and Monuments, (b) Establish and maintain National Museums and other outlets in connection with, but not restricted only to the following: i) Antiquities ii) Science and Technology iii) Warfare iv) African, Black, and other Antiquities v) Arts and Crafts vi) Architecture vii) Natural History viii) Educational Services; and (c) Make recommendations to any State Government or other persons or authority concerning the establishment and management of museums. (NCMM Annual Report, 2010)

### **The Role Played by Traditional Artists and Their Artworks to Project Nigeria to Global Art World**

The various sculptural artworks of Nigeria which are either in the custody of museums, individuals or galleries are the creative ingenuity of our traditional artists. The skills exhibited and the works produced by these

artists are a great testimony of the technical and artistic capabilities of this select group of people over the centuries. Therefore, whatever achievements recorded in the global art world by Nigeria should be seen in the context of the legacy of the works left behind by these traditional artists. The artworks attract thousands of domestic and foreign visitors who come to know and appreciate the skills displayed by the artists.

The National Commission for Museums and Monuments or NCMM has through travelling exhibitions to different parts of the world been able to project Nigeria to the global art world. In 1983, for instance, an exhibition titled: "2000 Years of Nigerian Art" made up of some of the above sculptural works travelled to seven cities in Europe and the United States of America. This exhibition helped a great deal to destroy the myth that Black Africa had no worthy civilization before its contact with Europe. It also changed the image of Africa from the so-called Dark Continent to a continent of beauty, splendor, creativity, and innovation.

Numerous exhibitions have also been held in different parts of the world attracting art lovers who came and appreciated the rich sculptural works from Nigeria. Worthy of mention, is the "Dynasty and Divinity, Ife Art in Ancient Nigeria exhibition" which was the product of an international collaboration between the NCMM, Marcelino Botin Foundation, the British Museum and the Museum of African Arts New York in 2010. The exhibition which held at Europe (Madrid, Santander, and London) and USA (Houston, Dallas, Indiana, and Virginia) attracted commendations from international diplomats, top government functionaries and traditional rulers worldwide who visited the exhibition.

Apart from the travelling exhibitions, Nigerian classical objects are also on display in some foreign museums. Queen Idia ivory mask (FESTAC mask) has been in the British Museum for many years. The Louvre museum in France also has some Nigerian arts in its collection. Though there is a strong argument for the repatriation of stolen objects in foreign museums, it should be noted that their presence in these places, for now, is in my perspective also instrumental to Nigerian art being known worldwide. The annual Osun-Osogbo festival attracts hundreds of tourists from Cuba, Brazil, North America, Britain, Trinidad and Tobago, some of whom are Ifa devotees, a Yoruba traditional knowledge system that rekindles their beliefs. Their visits help to project the Nigerian arts to the world as they purchase souvenirs, books and other resource materials made out of some artworks. Also, their visits assist to debunk the erroneous view that Nigeria is not safe to visit as held by some foreign countries.

The production of a music video CD by the cultural troupe of National Museum, Osogbo on "deities in Yorubaland" also contributes in

promoting the intangible elements of Osun-Osogbo sacred grove and Osogbo arts. The CD which is sold at the museum craft shop and other outlets is an excellent tool to project Yoruba art to the global art world and protect the outstanding universal value of the heritage property. Furthermore, the promotion of Nigerian artworks by television stations such as the Nigerian Television Authority, African Independent Television, Channels through advertisements/ documentaries assist in projecting them to a wider audience which could include international viewership.

The production of promotional materials such as brochures, postcards, posters, calendars, t-shirts, bags with the logo of some of the classical arts that are sold and also used as conference materials has been instrumental in the projection of our crafts to the world. The Nigerian government also uses replicated artworks and art books as gifts to visiting heads of states and diplomats to improve on the image of the nation and assist in projecting these works to the world.

The Commission made Nigeria and the black world proud in South Africa during the 2010 FIFA World Cup with a classy international exhibition titled "Artistic Similarities in our Cultural Differences" which held at the Nigerian Village and the FIFA Welcome Centre Ekhruleni respectively. This event showcased the rich cultural heritage of our people to the world as many tourists visited the Nigerian stand.

The Abuja annual carnival and the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) organized by the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture which attracts visitors from within and outside Nigeria also offer an opportunity for different arts to be displayed by participants from the thirty-six states of the federation. Also, people get to know and to appreciate these various arts and their provenance further. The use of these arts as motifs and designs on door panels, house posts, and musical instruments assist in projecting Nigerian arts beyond the country as these products can be found within and outside Nigeria in museums, homes, offices, hotels and galleries.

The Museum of Traditional Architecture (MOTNA) located in Jos, Plateau State has in its complex, prototypes of Nigerian traditional/ Architectural buildings from different parts of the country. The preservation of these buildings has helped to project the achievements of traditional Nigerian builders and their contribution to human Civilization. Also, the Centre for Earth Construction Technology in Jos, (CECTech) produces compressed earth bricks, used for the construction of low-cost houses by specialized craftsmen, which is an adaption of traditional building technology as practiced centuries ago. This type of block has been found to be durable and environmentally friendly and has helped to reduce housing

challenges in the country and further preserve indigenous building technology.

### **Benefits to Nigeria and Global Art Traditions**

According to Shyllon (2007), "the absence of a museum in Nigeria must have led to many priceless objects like the Ife bronze heads unearthed in 1938 leaving the country". He then praised Kenneth Murray and E.H. Duckworth who worked tirelessly for the establishment of museums in Nigeria that led to the opening of a National Museum in Essie in 1945 now under the management of NCMM. Presently, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments manages and oversees forty-nine museums and outlets spread across the country. These museums have in their storage ethnographic, archaeological and historical collections which constitute part of the masterpieces of our traditional artists.

There are sixty-five declared national monuments and sites across the country, eight of which are rock art painting sites in Jigawa and Bauchi states that have helped to preserve the memories of pre-historic Nigerian societies. These rock art paintings which also showcase stories of past events and beliefs have also placed Nigeria on the world cultural map in this special art. Furthermore, one hundred proposed national monuments to be declared as national monuments were prepared by NCMM to mark Nigeria's centenary celebration that held in 2014, some of these cultural properties which are centuries old, are masterpieces in architecture that portray the ingenuity of our traditional artists.

Several research works are being carried out on Nigerian's diverse cultural heritage by individuals and museum professionals that result in local/international publications. They include "An Introduction to Nigerian Traditional Architecture (3 volumes)" by Professor Dmochowski, "2000 Years of Nigerian Art" by Ekpo Eyo, "Nok Terracottas by Bernard Fagg, 'Nigerian Images by Bernard Fagg and Yoruba Pottery by A.K. Fatunsin. Other NCMM publications are NCMM Monthly News bulletin, NCMM Museum Digest, the annual journal "Nigerian Heritage: Journal of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments," of which eighteen (18) volumes have so far been published. The publications have helped to increase awareness on numerous Nigerian artworks and their locations. Also, NCMM staff engage in cultural and historical researches in fields such as Ethnography, Archaeology, and Heritage. The results are publications which are acclaimed to be of international standard. Some of these publications are produced in collaboration with foreign institutions.

Two of Nigeria's heritage sites namely, Sukur Cultural Landscape in Adamawa state and Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun state have been

listed as World Heritage Sites, further adding value to the art collections of the world. In addition, this new status has enhanced the promotion of domestic and international tourism as more visitors come to these places on an annual basis. It is important to note that it was the traditional artists of the New Sacred Arts Movement founded by Late Suzanne Wenger (an Austrian) who demarcated sacred places within the Osun-Osogbo Grove by the erection of huge and impressive sculptures that added value to the site and enabled its enlistment as a world heritage site. (Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove Nomination Dossier, 2004/15). Traditional artists comprising carpenters, smiths, and masons are presently using their skills to restore and decorate many shrines, palaces and temples in Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove which has continued to enhance the authenticity of this world heritage site.

Sukur cultural landscape on the other hand, is replete with vernacular dry stone architecture which depicts the ingenuity of the local people over the centuries and places the art on the world cultural map. In addition, traditional artists have continued to maintain the dry stone structures that give the site its unique feature as Africa's first cultural landscape on the world heritage list.

Another benefit is that in Nigeria, the sources of the primary museum collections are Essie, Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Benin, Owo and Ife towns. Much earlier than other places, these locations had connections with museum authority primarily because of the objects (collections) they host, all of which are the products of their traditional artists and have continued to make waves in the global art world.

In the field of research, people who research museum collections have in some cases taken further steps by going to the source usually referred to as provenance for more information about the objects of their case studies. Hence, the wealth of cultural knowledge of the host community/country has been enhanced because of research on these museum collections. These visits have also encouraged researchers to appreciate the skills of the artists and further project the locality through interaction with the communities. Also, some copies of their works are deposited in museum libraries for consultation by other researchers hence enabling more people to be aware of these classic arts. Tourists equally visit Ile-Ife, Benin, Igbo-Ukwu, Nok and other places based on published works on museum collections from these places with their attendant benefits to the communities. Igbo-Ukwu community produced the first head of the department of archaeology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1981, Dr. Anozie, who may have been encouraged to study Archaeology because of the discovery of Igbo-Ukwu traditional arts from his father's compound.

Images of some classical arts are used as cover page photographs in NCMM publications which are circulated worldwide. In addition, institutions and organizations also use pictures of classic museum objects for annual calendars. For example, University Press Plc. Nigeria tagged its 2014 calendar thus; "2014 Celebrating Nigerian Art." This theme lends credence to the fact that art is essential to people. This calendar may have been distributed to embassies, corporate organizations, and individuals which must have contributed to more people appreciating Nigerian classical arts.

Several global cultural organizations link member countries to which Nigeria belongs. These include International Council of Museums (ICOM), Paris, International Centre for the Study of the Restoration and Preservation of Cultural Property, Rome (ICCROM), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Paris, and International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM). The commission represents Nigeria in these organizations due to its role as the custodian of the nation's cultural property, the products of our traditional artists. Furthermore, as a State Party to UNESCO, she joins other countries to work together on issues of conservation, management, security, funding, and training, etc., all geared towards improved management of museum collections and monuments.

NCMM as the implementing agency of the UNESCO World Heritage Programme for Nigeria has held key positions in the organization. In 2003, Nigeria was appointed Vice- Chairman at the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for two years. This may not have been possible if there are no cultural properties in her custody. The NCMM has skilled and specialized professionals namely; Archaeologists Ethnographers, Monument/Heritage Officers, Curators and Conservators. These professionals might not have been in Nigeria's employment scheme if the NCMM had not been established for the protection and preservation of Nigerian arts in various locations across the country.

The discovery of the 8000 years old Dufuna canoe which was excavated by museum archaeologists in partnership with University of Maiduguri and Frankfurt University, Germany has helped to stretch Nigeria's pre-history and civilization beyond the 2000 A.D. (*Dufuna Canoe – NCMM Handbook, Pg 20*). Also, the 8000 years old canoe which is the oldest watercraft in Africa and third dug-out in the world has placed Nigeria in the world cultural map. This is yet another masterpiece of the traditional artists' ingenuity. The discovery of this watercraft has also led to a professional connection between the NCMM and Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany (GUN) for the conservation of the canoe, one of the numerous benefits of Nigerian arts to the country. Bakari (2011: 2) states that "a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in 2011 for GUN to carry out excavations

at Nok town in Kaduna state". The MoU included training exchanges for NCMM staff of which four has benefitted from it; assist museums in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, and Nok; promote the cultural and historical richness of Nok artworks to the German and Nigerian public.

Other benefits to Nigeria include institution to institution connections which have led to links being established for professional services. One of the outcomes of such relationships was that in 2010 Ford Foundation in partnership with British Museum, granted support for the upgrading of Lagos museum, with state of the art facilities installed to give it a modern museum outlook.

Historically, economically, socially and culturally, museum collections provide the basis for linking the past to the present in various dimensions. Objects of past generations produced by traditional artists are kept in museums for coming generations. These collections, Ozomah Josiah (2014) notes "bring the local communities to the limelight and often attract development to the site", for example, Nok has enjoyed several collaborations due to the discovery of Nok terracotta in 1944.

The NCMM projects the image of Nigeria through temporary and permanent exhibitions that showcase the ingenuity of our forebearers in twenty-seven states of the federation. Foreign tourists who visit our museums for research, education, relaxation and entertainment purposes also come in contact with these arts and are better informed about the country and her people. Also, through the international travelling exhibitions, Nigeria makes money out of loaned objects which contributes to the economic base of the country. Furthermore, Nigerian curators and exhibition officers who usually accompany the objects to the foreign countries as couriers understudy their counterparts and on return upgrade their exhibition/ curatorial skills. Also, these couriers ensure that our objects are returned in a good state.

The NCMM has a unique training institute, the Institute of Archaeology and Museums Studies, (IAMS), located in Jos that specializes in the training of museum professionals from within and outside the country which has produced skilled professionals on various fields that have been instrumental to museum development and proper handling of museum collections that include masterpieces of our traditional artists.

## **Recommendations**

We wish to recommend that:

1. **Conflict Resolution:** Nigerian arts be used in resolving conflicts, reducing inequality, injustice and promoting national integration

through the exhibition of museum collections of diverse cultural background within a given location. For example, since objects communicate, some have been used to preach peace especially through temporary/ permanent exhibitions on specific national issues with themes like; "A greater Nigeria, culture our hope," "similarities in Nigerian art: A unifying factor". However, more should be mounted on specific national issues in different parts of Nigeria. Furthermore, cultural practitioners should at every given opportunity, such as International Museum/Monuments Day celebrations, symposia, conferences etc. emphasize the role Nigerian arts do and can still play to resolve conflict, inequality, injustice and other vices.

- ✓ It is a known fact that in centralized emirates of Hausa-Fulani and the kingdoms of the Yoruba, Nupe and the Edo, their palaces contain assemblages of the highest artistic taste and traditions being products of early artists. Given this, it will be more beneficial to the citizenry if these palace collections could be turned into palace museums with the expert advice from NCMM so that the public may have access to them and appreciate the works. Also, some revenue could be made through tourists' visitations part of which should be used for the management of the said palace museums.
  - ✓ NCMM should intensify her efforts in the documentation of cultural objects in private/ public collections in line with ICOM object ID standards. This will not only enable the NCMM to update its database and know the number of objects in private or public custody but also to project the achievements of our traditional artists in various fields.
- 2. Publicity and Media:** Nigerian foreign embassies should be encouraged to have mini-exhibitions showcasing Nigerian arts mainly in pictorial form to project our cultural wealth to their host countries. This exhibition will encourage some people to visit Nigeria to see the original works of art from Benin, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Owo, Nok, etc.
- ✓ Federal Ministry of Information and Culture should liaise with local and international airlines in Nigeria to project these classic arts through special features in their in-flight traveler's magazines. In addition, documentaries on them could be aired during their flights as part of their entertainment programmes.
  - ✓ Literary artists of Nigerian extraction could use classic Nigerian arts as a theme for their works. These pieces of works could become

bestsellers and where possible, turned into films as with Late Chinua Achebe's, "Things Fall Apart" which was aired in the 1980s by Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).

- ✓ Classical Nigerian arts should be put on postage stamps. This should be done in collaboration with the Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) to commemorate special events in the history of Nigeria. Though some people may argue that digital communication has almost taken over NIPOST activities in Nigeria, this approach will augment the efforts of the new technologies.
- ✓ Museum professionals should frequently write reviews for newspapers and articles for magazines on the contributions of traditional artists in the preservation of Nigerian arts which will no doubt cause a deeper appreciation of their works and invariably promote unity, and reward for hard work.
- ✓ State and local governments should establish museums to be approved by NCMM to harness the works of traditional artists from their areas and also attract tourists to their localities. This will further enhance their employment profile as staff will be recruited to manage the museums, thereby reducing unemployment in the country. Presently, only a few states such as Bauchi, Rivers, Anambra and Sokoto can boast of their museums and individuals like Mr. Newton Jibunoh of Didi Museum, Lagos, which is a far cry considering the abundant cultural resources of the nation.
- ✓ NCMM should encourage the formation of artist's guilds from communities with globally recognized artistic heritage to produce replicas which can be sold in museum craft shops across the country, galleries, hotels and airports thereby increasing the economic base of these artists and empowering their communities.
- ✓ Late Suzanne Wenger through sculptural works created by her New Sacred Art Movement in Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove gave meaning to open spaces within the grove that led to its being a world heritage site in 2005. To appreciate her interventions, she became a staff of NCMM in 1970 as caretaker of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove. This opportunity was also given to some of her workers who became permanent staff of the NCMM. This is a good policy that had not been implemented for a long while due to the paucity of funds. There is, therefore, the need to revive this good policy of recruitment of family members of traditional artists by NCMM and other cultural organizations to encourage and empower them.
- ✓ Security /Law enforcement agencies such as the Nigerian Police, Nigerian Immigration Service, and Nigerian Customs Service should

be continually educated through seminars, workshops (NCMM is doing this but more needed). This is to be able to identify genuine artworks/artifacts and what to do if found in possession of illicit traffickers at the border posts, airports, bus stations, and craft markets. This will ensure that artists get value for their works, in addition to ensuring that they do not leave Nigeria illegally thereby protecting traditional artists.

- ✓ Telecommunication companies in Nigeria (MTN, GLO, AIRTEL) should be encouraged to brand their recharge cards with classical Nigerian arts to project, promote them and also enable the families of traditional artists to earn a royalty.
  - ✓ NCMM should brand all her official vehicles with photographs of classical Nigerian arts to project and promote their diversity and by this act showcasing what traditional artists bequeathed to the nation.
  - ✓ Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) should collaborate with NCMM to package and promote classical Nigerian arts through her publication such as "Nigeria, A Tourist Delight" and other services.
  - ✓ The Nigerian Movie Industry (Nollywood) should shift emphasis from fetish practices such as witchcraft, occultism to portraying the numerous achievements of our traditional artists and their contributions to nation building through these arts. Example to this new perspective is the film, "Invasion 1897" directed and produced by Lancelot Imasuen, which reenacts the story of the Benin massacre and looting of precious Benin artworks of inestimable value in 1897.
3. **Government Policy:** In the global art market, there is strong demand for Nigerian arts with high prices being offered for them. It is also a known fact that huge gains are made from auction sales by auction houses that deal in Nigerian artifacts. Since artifacts represent the soul of our nation, the pages of our history and the source of inspiration to our country, the need to redefine and implement public policy and laws governing cultural heritage to stem constant stealing of antiquities, is increasingly apparent even though NCMM has started doing something in this regard. There should also be a collaboration with the media and academia to speak against this economic loss as the original owners do not gain from the proceeds of the auction sales.
4. **Endowment Fund:** There should be an art endowment fund to assist in the development of communities (Nok, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Essie etc.)

from where these classic objects were produced. This will be a token in memory of the traditional artists who have placed Nigeria on the global art map. This fund could also be drawn from by certified traditional artists in these communities to revive this economically viable profession. Also, the federation government should encourage these artists to produce unique works to be used as gifts to visiting heads of states, diplomats, envoys, and other international guests and they should be properly rewarded for their jobs.

### **Conclusion**

The traditional artists from Nigeria were very generous by putting their thoughts down in wood, stone, and metal that have become legacy for the present and future generations. Interestingly, most of these works are presently housed in Nigerian museums, concurring to my earlier submissions that without their arts Nigerian museums may not have been established in 1945. Also, if these artists have not crafted their works, Nigerian arts would also not have been world famous today. The establishment of museums in Nigeria, therefore, no doubt has contributed to thousands of artifacts being protected, projected and preserved. This agrees with NCMM's motto, which states thus; "GREAT HERITAGE FOR A GREATER FUTURE."

It is gratifying to note that the global art world/traditions are blessed with numerous works of traditional artists of Nigerian origin. It is my candid opinion that individuals, private and public organizations should ensure that the labours of our heroes past are protected, preserved and projected for present/ future generations through moral and financial encouragement to NCMM. I believe the people of this millennium will continue to show gratitude to our forebearers for their immeasurable contributions to the global art world/art traditions and their unique arts.

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