



Art Work for Waste Reduction in Jos Metropolis: Prospects and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The idea of solid waste reduction which primarily involves reuse and recycling has been part of the global campaign for sustainable waste management, resource conservation and also slowing the tide of global warming. The study seeks to link the role of artwork in promoting this drive. It seeks to show how some selected waste materials like plastic and scrap metal and wood waste can be salvaged from the dumpsite, reprocessed into profitable art work and subsequently save the environment. It also seeks to identify the prospects and challenges of this drive. The study made use of primary and secondary data. A total of thirty (30) artists comprising of painters, sculptors and fine art teachers in primary and secondary schools within Jos and environs were sampled for interviews using purposive sampling. Secondary data include the review of relevant literature on waste management; reuse and recycling were sourced from journals, published and unpublished materials and the internet. The study found out that a significant number of the respondents use waste materials for their art work, even though the entire respondent artists confirm that they are aware that waste can be used for art work, both paintings and sculptors, some of them are not very familiar with it. The study recommended awareness creation on the possibility of using waste for art work and its implication on the environment and also extensive research on the subject.

Keywords: Waste reduction, artwork, reuse and recycling

INTRODUCTION

As the material conditions in which human beings live and interact, change in time, the feelings and inspirations which produced the art also shift focus and intention in the same manner. In other words, art, artist and the atmosphere in which artistic experiments take place continuously reform one another. With the change of artistic material and inspirational atmosphere, art can be re-conceptualized (Aykanat, 2014) The concept of waste reduction has received wide attention over the years as a strategy to effectively control and manage the ever growing waste stream. This has been supported by the idea of using waste material for artwork production both in paintings and sculpture. Some of these artist use waste materials for art out of environmental concern while others are purely out of their creative expressions and economic gains. Some researches have been conducted around this subject. Yeboah, Eric and Asare (2016) examined teaching Interactive Art Lessons with Recycled Waste Materials as Instructional Resources, while Ganotis (2017) studied the use of ocean plastic waste as art material. All these studies supported the idea of waste for art production, however, they were narrow and had limited depth in terms of methodology. This study shall examine the idea of waste reduction through the instrument of art work in Jos metropolis. It shall seek to provide answers to the following questions;

1. To what extent are the artists in Plateau State aware of the concept of waste reduction through art works?
2. What are the most commonly waste material used for artwork production in Jos?
3. What are the challenges and prospect of waste reduction through artwork?

Waste

The term 'waste' has a different meaning for different people. In general one can say that waste is 'unwanted' for the person who discards it; a product or material that does not have a value anymore for the first user and is therefore thrown away. But 'unwanted' is subjective and the waste could have value for another person in a different circumstance, or even in a different culture. There are many large industries that operate primarily or exclusively using waste materials – paper and metals are the commonest – as their industrial feed stocks.

Waste according to (Arnold and Justine, 2001) can also mean any garbage, refuse, sludge from a waste treatment plant, water supply treatment plant, or air pollution control facility and other discarded material, including solid, liquid, semisolid, or contained gaseous material resulting from industrial, commercial, mining, and agricultural operations, and from community activities.

In the context of Integrated Solid Waste Management, waste is regarded both as a negative and as a useful material providing a potential source of income.

The Need for Waste Reduction

Solid wastes arise from human activities includes domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, waste water treatment, etc. If the waste is not properly handled and treated, it will have negative impacts on the hygienic conditions in urban areas and pollute the air, surface and ground water, as well as the soil and crops (World Bank, 1999). Waste is considered to be a problem because its disposal can harm the environment and human health landfills are becoming scarce and the general cost of managing waste is increasing as population increases (Caulfield, 2009). Waste Disposal into the environment also blocks gutters and drainage paths which is responsible for flooding when it rains. Plastic bags are capable of retaining rain water for days, thereby providing breeding ground for mosquitoes. The prevalence of improperly disposed plastic bags has been linked to the spread of malaria in some developing countries (Mangizvo, 2012).

Solid Waste Reduction

Waste reduction can be achieved through reuse and recycling. Reuse is the practice of using a material more than once in its original form, preserving some or all qualities to use it again. In some societies reuse is practiced in an organized manner by the residents, waste pickers, and scavengers, who sell items again at a low price. The process of reusing starts with the assumption that the used materials that flow through our lives can be a re-source rather than refuse. Waste, after all, is in the eye of the beholder. One person's trash is another person's treasure. If we really look at things we are throwing away, we can learn to see them as materials that can be reused to solve everyday problems and satisfy everyday needs. The materials that still have useful life can be used a second time or multiple times and preventing it from being a waste. Reuse reduces waste generation, and saves energy and finance. The common reusable materials are bottles, plastic jars and bags, electronic tools and equipment, furniture, wooden packaging items (Bonderud, 2007). Recycling is processing used materials (waste) into new, useful products. This is done to reduce the use of raw materials that would have been used. Recycling also uses less energy and great way of controlling air, water and land pollution. Effective recycling starts with household (or the place where the waste was created).

Artwork Production

The production of artwork refers to the making of art objects, which includes artistic efforts that range from paintings to the work of sculpture. It is one of the four foundational fields of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), along with art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. The production of artwork

demands imaginative and critical thinking processes through which artists create images or objects using different materials. Artists creatively manipulate materials based on their personal ideas and feelings to make art objects. Artworks therefore have the capacity to demonstrate individual ideas, emotions, and values as well as cultural and social contexts.

The process of making art cultivates creativity; it is not just the replication of other works or the manipulation of art tools. It is a deliberate activity that integrates a variety of mental and physical skills, dispositions, technologies, and materials. According to Frederick Spratt, in *Art Production in Discipline-Based Art Education*, art production makes a primary contribution to the understanding of art because the direct experience of creating art uniquely leads to certain insights into many aspects of meaning conveyed in works of art, (Spratt,1987).

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary data was used for the study. The primary data was sought through personal interviews with artist and physical observation of artworks across the city. Secondary data was obtained from published and unpublished materials such as thesis, journals and the internet. A total of thirty artists comprising of painters, sculptors and fine art teacher in primary and secondary schools were sampled for interviews using purposive sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique. Data was analysed using simple descriptive statistics and were presented in the form of charts and tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Category of Artist

From the survey of artist conducted, most of them are painters (60.2%) while the remaining are sculptors (9.1%). Also, artist who teach art in primary and secondary schools constitute 30.7%. It can be said that there are very few sculptors in the city of Jos.

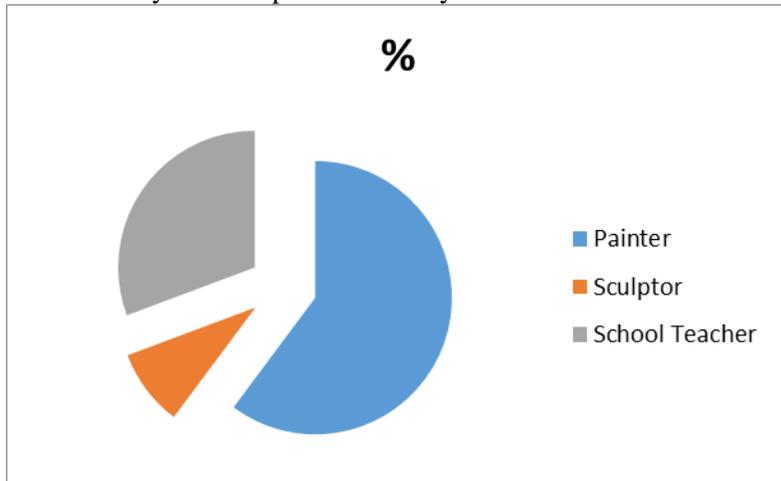


Fig 1: Categories of Artist in Jos
Source: Field survey (2018)

Level of Education

The study deems it fit to inquire into the educational status of the artists as it has implication on their level of awareness. From the survey conducted, 40% Of the artist have acquired education up to tertiary level, while 37.4% have secondary school. Furthermore, 22.6% of the artists in Jos have only primary school education. This implies that most of the respondents, especially the painters, acquired their artistic skills through apprenticeship and not by attending any high educational institution.

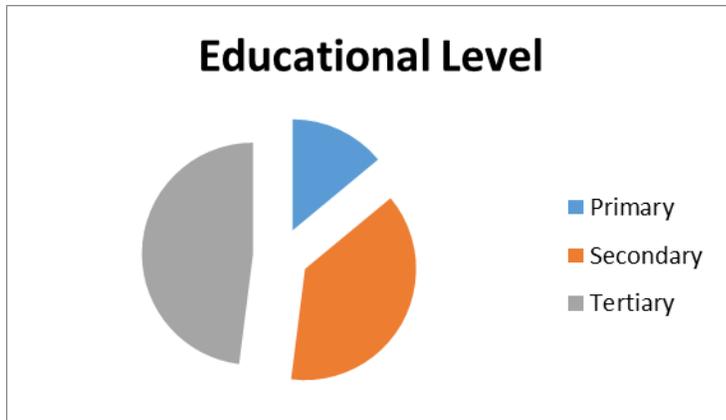


Fig 2: Education Level of Artist in Jos
Source: Field survey (2018)

Awareness on the Global Campaign on Waste Reduction

There is a global campaign on waste reduction through reuse and recycling. The survey inquired the extent to which the artists in Jos are aware of it. Only few of the artists (14.2%) are aware while the remaining 85.8% said they had no idea. The survey also observed that, most of those who were aware of the campaign have acquired education up to tertiary level, where they claimed to have acquired knowledge on the need for environmental consideration in artwork production.

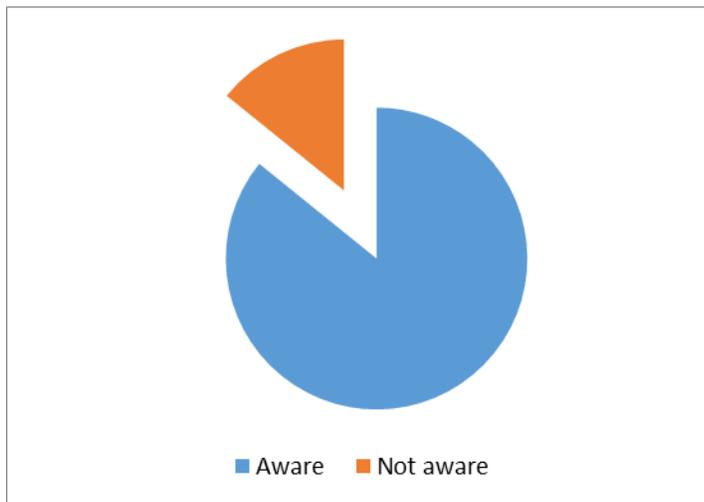


Fig 3: Level of Awareness on the Global Campaign on Waste Reduction
Source: Field survey (2018)

Use of Waste Material for Artwork

Even though, not all the artists in Jos are aware of the global campaign on waste reduction, a significant number of them affirmed that they frequently make use of waste materials for artwork. They constitute 53.1%, they pick up waste material of which they reprocess and fabricate to produce a work of art. However, 14.6% of the artists said they do not use waste material for their work completely while 32.3% said they use it but not frequently.



Fig 4: Use of Waste Materials
Source: Field survey (2018)

Type of Waste Material Used

There are various categories of waste material scattered across the dumpsites and also in households. With creativity, any waste can be converted into an art piece. From the responses gathered, wood, metal and paper wastes are the most used waste for art production constituting 29.4, 24.0 and 21.3% respectively, while plastic waste is the least used waste material for art production. Other waste materials that is used for art work include bottles, clothing material and tailor`s waste. The survey found out that some of these waste materials like metals have been assembled together, fabricated to produce sculpture with paintings on it. Likewise wood waste, they have been used to carve out images. Others such as plastic and paper waste have been used as instructional materials in Fine Art classes such as papier Mache.

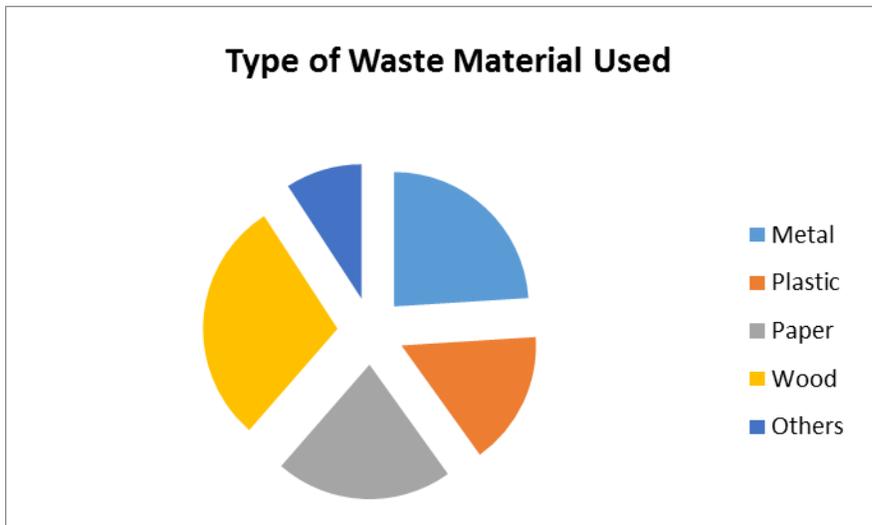


Fig 5: Types of Waste Material Used
Source: Field survey (2018)

Challenges of Using Waste for Artwork

The study sought to know what challenges artist face in terms of the usage of waste material for artwork production. This comprises of both those who of use the material often, those who don't use it completely and those who don't use it frequently. 24.5% of the artist said the major challenge is in the skills needed to transform this waste into artworks, they believe extra skills, time and effort is needed to achieve this. For some of the artists (28.6%) the feel it is not always economical, as the process of reprocessing and fabricating some of these wastes may not always be economical more so, they also have to buy some of these waste materials from the scavengers. Others feel it has social implication as their customers may not appreciate their work if they know it was brought out from waste material. This category of artist constitutes 20.3%. Finally, a significant 26.6% of the respondents affirmed that having access to waste material that will be suitable for the work they want to produce may not always be accessible.

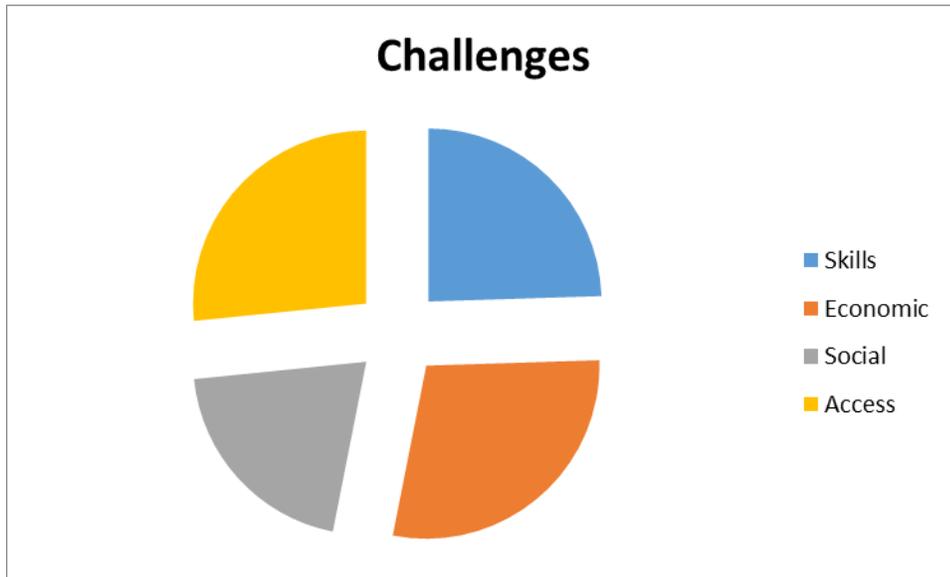


Fig 6: Types of Waste Material Used
Source: Field survey (2018)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings from the study, it was revealed that, most of the artists in Jos are not aware of the global drive for waste reduction even though some of them use waste material for artwork but most probably for economic and creative concerns. The study also revealed that, a significant number of the artist interviewed use waste material for their artworks while some seldom use it. Wood, metal and paper waste is the most reused for artwork production in Jos. From the data collected, top on the list of these challenges is the low level of awareness on the need for waste reduction and how artist can contribute to this drive. It was also observed that the artists are faced with other challenges when it comes to the use of waste materials for artwork production such as skills and the economic aspect of cleaning and preparing a waste material to be used for artwork production while still achieving profitability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainable solid waste management is very critical in achieving a clean environment for human habitation and also for resource conservation. It is to this end that this study agrees with earlier researches on the use of waste material for artwork. This study agrees that waste reduction can be achieved through artwork production. In view of the findings and challenges found in this study, the following recommendations were put forth;

1. Increase awareness on the possibility and subsequent benefit on the use of waste materials for artworks production. This can be championed by the artists who are already engaged in the practice, relevant government agencies such as the ministry of environment and the Plateau State Waste Management Board. Also, this course can further be champion by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and it can be achieved through various media. This awareness also cuts across the users of artwork to appreciate works that came out from waste materials and their importance in waste reduction.
2. To mitigate the challenges identified, the study recommends extensive researches into the use of waste material to achieve waste reduction. These researches will come out with techniques and methods that will support this drive and make attractive for artists to adopt. Artists and the general public will be trained and enlightened on the outcomes of these researches.
3. The use of waste for artwork should be incorporated into the school curriculum at basic levels of education i.e. primary and secondary levels. Children should be taught to see beautiful artworks from every waste. At the tertiary levels the subject of waste to art should be incorporated as courses in departments of Fine Arts.



Plate 1: Artwork using Wine-cork waste



Plate 2: Artwork using waste tyres

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