



## **Design Production of Various Art Works Using Found Materials**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper seeks to develop a research on found materials and how these materials can be used in various ways to produce work of art. It specifically seeks to use found materials to produce art works that speaks about societal issues in the environment and Nigeria as a country. The approach used in developing this paper was traced to the story line as available in the past, accessed in the present and obviously reprocessed for the future. Hence, the study was approached from the angle of design concept and sketches, researches and studio art work and a reporting structure. Amidst so many collections of materials, brainstorming and mind mapping effect was used to guide the thinking ability of the researcher on how to creatively use the found materials. Materials used for the study includes; PVA white adhesive, Evo-stik Multi-Purpose Contact Adhesive, Canvas at material, tissue paper, wood, cupcake cases, beads, pins etc. these materials are processed using tools such as staple gum, handsaw, electric fan, cutting blade, measuring tape, metric ruler amongst others. The study made use of experimental processes in testing of ideas. The outcomes of the research using found materials include; description of societal situation in Nigeria, different characters as available in society, creating an insect amongst others. The study concluded that the various research entities in the study are a clear representation of messages to humanity and the way we choose to relate globally. These messages are clear enough to add value to humanity.

**Keywords:** Art works, found materials

### **INTRODUCTION**

Found objects have been used in many different types of art, including painting, various forms of sculpture, including assemblage and installations. The Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) was one of the first to publicize the idea when he affixed a printed image of chair caning onto his picture titled *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912, Musee Picasso, Paris). In this era of heightened awareness of our environment, artists are increasingly turning to junk stores, trash bins and surplus outlets to satisfy their urge to create while still caring for our planet. Crazy quilts, pieced quilts, weathervanes made from scrap wood, and rag rugs are a treasured legacy of America's tradition of recycling. For the past one hundred years, artists have seen creative possibilities in cast-offs. Pablo Picasso, one of the foremost artists of the twentieth century, fashioned a bull's head from a discarded bicycle handlebar and seat, while Marcel Duchamp, a founder of the Dada movement, asked viewers to see sculpture in a urinal and snow shovel. During the 1930s and 1940s, Alexander Calder made whimsical animals from coffee cans, while Joseph Cornell created intimate, surrealist tableaux from found objects. Olbrantz, (2006).

This study gave consideration to how materials relate to happening past and present in Nigeria and the present environment of the researcher as at the time of carrying out this research which is Middleborough in England. In Nigeria, where so much is happening, such as religious crisis, political crisis, tribalism and bad governance with visible act of corruption. Corruption takes many forms and infiltrates all political institutions and economic sector. In view of all these, the research is mainly to make use of the materials found in the present society of the researcher, which can be used to produce work of art that contextually talks about the happenings. Life and Global situation are also among the reasons and part of the decision in using Art to express how people live their lives, what they go through and how the society and people relate in a way.

This study however, is on fabricating reprocessed entities for artful use. This project is focused on developing a research on found materials and how found materials can be used in various ways to produce work of art. In particular, the use of found materials to create art that speaks about societal issues in our present environment and my home country "Nigeria". It is important to note that after extensive survey of literature, the subject of using processing found materials for artwork is grossly lacking in literature. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no empirical studies on this subject focusing on using found materials in an advanced and developed country like England to explain issues in developing countries like Nigeria. It is this gap that this study intends to fill. The study shall seek to provide answers to the following questions;

1. What are the concept, origin and history of artwork using found materials?
2. To what extent can found materials be used to make artworks that communicate on issues in our Nigeria and also in relation to other countries?

### **Concept of Found Materials**

A found object can be defined as a natural or man-made object, or the fragment of an object, that is found (or sometimes bought) by an artist and kept because of some intrinsic interest the artist sees in it. In contemporary art, the "found object" which is a translation of the French phrase "objet trouvé" is used to describe any object, found by an artist, which with little modification is then presented as a work of art. The concept is that the artist believes that the found object possesses certain aesthetic quality that emanates from its appearance, social or personal history and therefore displays it to the admiration of the public. Some examples of typical "found objects" include natural materials like sand, earth, stones, shells, a human skull; or man-made items such as newspaper cuttings, photographs, pieces of glass, fragments of scrap metal, pieces of textile fabric, a bicycle handle bars, etc. <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/definitions/found-objects.htm>

Found objects derive their identity as art from the designation placed upon them by the artist and from the social history that comes with the object. The use of "found objects" has cut across different types of artworks, ranging from paintings to various forms of sculpture, including assemblage and installations. Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) was one of the pioneers publicize the idea when he affixed a printed image of chair caning onto his picture titled Still Life with Chair (Caning ,1912, Musee Picasso, Paris). The idea was fully developed by the experimental French artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), who coined the term "readymade" shortly after the famous Armory Show (Spring 1913), to describe his signature style of "found object", as exemplified by his work entitled Fountain (1917), a standard porcelain urinal inscribed "R. Mutt 1917", which Duchamp submitted to the New York Society of Independent Artists exhibition (1917).

### **Origins and History**

Despite the fact that the terms "found object" and "objet trouvé" were coined in the 20th century, there is some evidence to suggest that such objects were used in prehistoric art during the era of Paleolithic culture. According to the zoologist Desmond Morris (b.1928) the Makapansgat Pebble (University of Witwatersrand, South Africa), a famous skull-shaped stone which has been dated to 3 million BCE, was in fact a "found object", since it did not belong to the cave in which it was unearthed. Instead, it appears to have been discovered by Stone Age 'artists' at a geological site three miles away, and brought back to be displayed as a piece of ancient art. Three million years later, "found objects" were popularized by

Duchamp and the Dada movement, and then cultivated by Andre Breton and the Surrealism movement. <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/definitions/found-objects.htm>

### **Famous Found Objects in 20th Century Art**

#### **Historic work of Arte Povera**

Arte Povera is an Italian word. It simply means "poor art". (As in Arte- Art, Povera- to be poor/ a state of poverty.) The word was and is still used to identify an art movement or style that became popular in Italy between late 1960s and early 1970s. The artists of this period adopted the use of natural, commonly found materials /objects like stones, soils, rags, leaves, newspapers, woods and even ropes. The works were mostly sculptures, assemblages, and installations. The artists in the so called poor art movement used those materials in order to deviate from the conventional art style of their era that employed the use of industrial art materials. [www.theartstory.org/movement-arte-povera.htm](http://www.theartstory.org/movement-arte-povera.htm)



**Plate 1: Arte Povera Work**

#### **Historic work of Michelle Stitzlein**

Using recycled materials and found objects, Michelle's art work were made. Examples of these items are cables of Computer, keys of Piano or Musical Organ, caps of bottles, wires of electrical system etc. These were used to create imagery and abstractions as generated in her sense of imaginations. Identifying the individual context and identities of the numerous objects will require a mind with purposeful study. The expression unveiled as attached to a certain function or task usually find a new decorative incarnation within her work as colour, texture and pattern. With her purposeful designs and art works, the act of cutting, dismantling and placement of objects; Michelle entices the multiple, dissimilar objects into unusual relationships and odd entities to unite as a bold and visual whole.



**Plate 2: Michelle Stitzlein Art work**

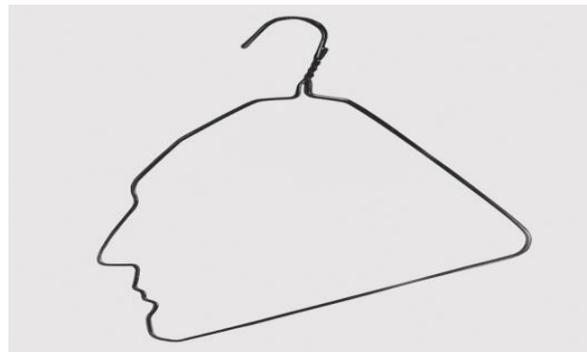
### **Historic work of Tony Cragg**

Tony Cragg is one of the world's foremost sculptors. Constantly pushing to find new relations between people and the material world, there is no limit to the materials he might use, as there are no limits to the ideas or forms he might conceive. His early, stacked works present a taxonomical understanding of the world, and he has said that he sees manmade objects as "fossilized keys to a past time which is our present". He has said, "I see a material or an object as having a balloon of information around it" (1992). For him form and meaning are interdependent, any change in form changes the "balloon of information" and vice versa, so that any change in materials also changes meaning and significance.

This is exemplified in the way in which Cragg has worked and reworked two broad bodies of work he calls Early Forms and Rational Beings. The Early Forms explore the possibilities of sculpturally reforming familiar objects such as containers into new and unfamiliar forms producing new emotional responses, relationships and meanings.

### **Historic Work of Marcel Duchamp**

Marcel Duchamp is French painter and sculptor associated with the dada, surrealist, cubist and futurist movements. Marcel Duchamp radically subverted conventional practices of art making and display, challenging such weighty notion as hand of the artist and sanctity of the object. The most famous series of "found objects" were Duchamp's "readymade", an early form of junk art, including works like: Bicycle Wheel(1913), Bottle-Rack (1914), and Fountain(1917, a urinal) both in the Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and In Advance of the Broken Arm (1915, Replica in Moderna Museet, Stockholm; a regular snow shovel on which Duchamp had painted its title, together with the words "from Marcel Duchamp (1915)).



**Plate 3: Marcel Duchamp Art work**

## **METHODOLOGY**

Approaches used in developing this project and report can be traced to the story lines as available in the past, accessed in the present and obviously re-processed for the future. The entire work is based on Design concept and sketches were different ideas were conceived and subjected to brainstorming approach. Brainstorming was adopted to help the researcher generate further ideas on how to creatively utilize the found materials and refocus to achieve the desired outcome. The materials that were considered during the brainstorming session included; Plastics, pin, adhesives, paint, sand, time, color, cost, fund, places, objects, expertise, deadline, studio, wood, metal, design, waste, focus, etc. the chart below illustrates the brainstorming activity.

### **Material List for the Project**

Materials used for the study include, PVA white Adhesive, Evo-stik Multi-Purpose Contact Adhesive, Canvas art material, Tissue paper, Wood, Straws, Cupcake cases, Beads, Pins, Wine cork, Plastic cups, Glass bottles, Oil paints, Sellotape etc.

### **Experimental Processes: Testing of Ideas**

The ideas require to be stated as a case by case concept. The ideas and concepts were tested to find out the various possibilities of establishing a physical arrangement of each of the ideas. As could be seen with the

various pictures below, they all represents the conception of ideas at the course of generating initial pictures meant for further development. Several concepts and works were carried out and as shown in the Figure below, these are part of the several initial designs as conceived.



**Plate 4: Testing of Designs using hangers**

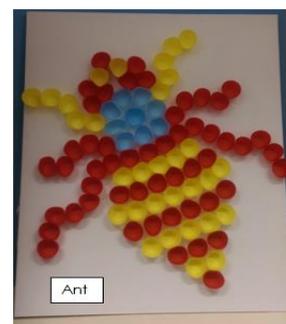
## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Designs Using the Cup-cake Cases:

Creating designs using cup-cake cases was a desire born out of the fact that any materials can be used to pass message in the world of art to the society. In this case, Canvas clothing material was used to cover the wooden frame. The canvas material was secured flatly to the surface of the wooden frame with the aid of staple gun and staple pins. After the making of this flat surface, a rough sketch of the Butterfly was drawn on the flat surface. After this, the cupcakes were then arranged on the sketched lines on the surface of the wooden frame using adhesive substance as shown in plate 5 below.



**Plate 5A: Artwork using cupcake cases**



**Plate 5B: Artwork using cupcake cases**

The use of materials such as cupcake cases is relevant to the fact that, it is easily reachable. This material has been used to produce insects. Insects are known to feed on food crumbs and perch on drinks. The use of food materials to produce insects was due to how insect feed and survive on food, plants, and crumbs. They are everywhere and are by far, the most common animals on our planet. Without insects, our lives would be vastly different. They pollinate many of our fruits, flowers, and vegetables. We would not have much of the produce that we enjoy and rely on without the pollinating impression of insects, not to mention honey, beeswax, silk, and other useful products that insects provide. The idea of using the colourful cupcake cases was to achieve a close resemblance to the real life insect.

Lampshade was used to produce a work of art in a tree form due to the fact that trees are seen as shelter on streets, houses, farm and are seen as a means for air and also planted for aesthetics in our environment the map shades serve as the leaves which are made in various form shows how different and unique this trees are.

### **Art Work Using Found Metals**

The study also made use of found metallic materials to create artwork. The process of making this design revolved around the use of a flat wooden material for the base. Typical of an expression of a solid family background it also includes the arrangement of a wooden base, varieties of metal comprising of metal rod of different sizes and flat metal. Also, it includes fusing and knitting of the varieties of the metals together using welding process. The whole item was installed on the base using fasteners. The picture below (Fig. 6) is the typical final design made with the found metals.



**Plate 6: Production work using found metals**

### **Art Work Using Glass Bottles and Plastic Cups Materials**

Found materials in the form of bottles and plastic cups were used for production also. The wooden material surface was primed using the appropriate wood priming chemical. The purpose of the primer is to sufficiently preserve and prepare the surface of the wooden material to ensure correct adhesion. It also increases the durability of paint. Sketch was made on the wooden surface as well using a pencil. With the use of adhesive, the Glass bottles and plastic cups were placed on the wooden surface as shown in the figure 7 below.



**Plate 7: Production work using Glass bottles & Plastic Cups**

The idea of having bottles and plastic cups fused together in this study is to show the similarities in life style of both societies. The high level of involvement in alcoholic drinks in Nigeria is also obtainable in “Middleborough England”. The bottles as used show variety of drinks consumed by individuals. The bottles are of different sizes and shapes with different colours representing different race. Plastic cups and bottles depicts the life style of the people from Nigeria and England, it shows how people are different and live their day to day life. Some people rely on others for survival, some independently stand on their own and some are moved by pressure. It also shows how some people in our society are rich while some are still struggling in abject poverty. The broken bottle and cups represent poverty and the lack of basic amenities.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study is a demonstration that has shown additional exposures to various aspect of art with a better understanding of how other artist have worked with found objects or related materials and ideas. These ideas inspired them to produce greater work of art. The drive to sustain the work of Art, creating a lasting history for the future is not just a thought but one of the best things that could ever happen to humanity and the global set up. The study illustrated how material can be used to talk about happenings and to express view about how things are happening. As part of expression of Art works in this study, colour was used also as a way of speaking volume which is also very prominent in this study work, Africa is usually a colorful place. Nigeria is also a country with different cultures, cultural attires, food and many more. In view of the study, the following recommendations on the use of found materials for artwork were made;

1. In view of the paucity of studies on found materials for artwork, there is need for researches in the field of fine art to commission more studies and encourage other art researchers to carry out more researches in this area.
2. The use of found materials has a very great potential in the promoting a waste free society. Therefore, this study recommends its promotion at all levels since most found materials are what people consider as waste and litter the streets especially in developing countries like Nigeria.
3. Frequent awareness through exhibition of artwork using found materials should be encouraged.

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