

Innovations

Appraisal of Ozioma Onuzulike's Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids at the March 29 - May 6, 2021 Kó Art Exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Ozioma Onuzulike's ceramic keloids exhibited in 2021 at the Ko art space, Lagos, Nigeria, is the swivel of this content analytical study. The original schedule being: Ngozi Omeje Ezema (Jan 28 - Feb 11), Eva Obodo (Feb 25 - March 11), and Ozioma Onuzulike (March 25-April 8), Onuzulike's phase later held from March 29-May 6, 2021. 2 genres were identified in Onuzulike's works: the ceramic palm kernel shells, and the yam seedlings. The specific objectives were to ascertain: (i) the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration, (ii) the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements, (iii) the significance of the genres with Nigerian public issues, (iv) the lucidity of the genres for documenting 'The way we are', and (v) the most consistent theme with plurality. The study instruments were the: Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Questionnaire (OSTCKM-Q), Preliminary Data Desk (OSTCKM -PDD), and Frequency Percentage Rating Desk (OSTCKM -FPRD). Findings revealed the Yam series as most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration; asymmetric balancing is dominant; both genres are significant with Nigerian public issues, and lucidly documents 'the way we are'. Political themes are the most consistent with plurality.*

Key words: *Ceramic keloids, space integration, content analysis, asymmetric balancing.*

Introduction

There comes a time when creative allies or commonplace ideologists bifurcate compulsorily, not always by the influence of external mechanisms, but by the inevitable quest for sub-sameness or entire otherness, as factorised by

members of the same college of inquiry. In stating that art is a way of thinking and doing, of which the brain and hands are involved to be able to translate intangibility into tangibility, the works of art, and that, it is also “when the hands and tools are set forth into artistic motion” Aniakor (2005) presents art from ideation to fruition, a fact whose elucidation is unveiled in the assertion by Alu et al (2024) that the artist is a very sensitive individual, whose talents enable him to perceive beyond his immediate environmental happenings, to create memories of the past and a dossier for the future; he sees and thinks for his community. Alu et al (2024) buttress that, in producing various art works to serve different purposes in public communication, the artist registers himself as a worthwhile social arbiter.

The experimental days that heralded the aftermaths of the call for the synthesis of traditional artistic ideologies with some of the foreign ones taught by white art lecturers at the Zaria Art School, opened a vista of opportunities for Nigerian artists to think inwards a lot more. In the words of Enekwachi (2021), in the early 1970s, the department turned to indigenous professionals to run its art program. Led by the polyvalent artist Uche Okeke, the resulting movement appropriated Uli, a traditional style of design used in body- and wall-painting by the Igbo women of South-Eastern Nigeria, as part of its contemporary art lexicon. As a student at the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology (now the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria), Okeke had already shown activist tendencies, and soon he started evolving his “natural synthesis” philosophy, coalescing local ideas with elements of Western art. He was a frontline ‘rebel’ in Zaria.

Professor Ozioma Onuzulike, of the Nsukka School, is a contemporary artist of radical uniqueness to very exponential levels. With a background in ceramic art and design, his understanding of clay behaviour has enamoured him to making off-the-edge experiments with stoneware and terracotta, such that produces eye-blinking investigations into the what, why and how of his philosophical tangibility in mixed media art. Alu et al (2024) affirmed that in Nsukka school art making is theoretically grounded, further engages the intellect a great deal, thereby interrogating the immediate environment and attacking the challenges of conventionalism and improvisation. In 2021 the Ko Art Gallery, in Lagos, Nigeria, organised a three-phase solo exhibition of art works by contemporary artists of the Nsukka school extraction. The three phases of solo art exhibitions targeted the announcement of a new generation of Nsukka-bred artists with the theme: ‘The New Nsukka Art School: Between Continuity and Change’. The artists on parade were: Ngozi Omeje Ezema (Jan 28 - Feb 11, 2021), Eva Obodo (Feb 25 - March 11, 2021), and Ozioma Onuzulike (March 25-April 8, 2021). The exhibition later had the date of its third phase adjusted to March 29-May 6, 2021. Onuzulike’s phase titled: The Way We Are was like letting off the cage a myriad of artistic radicalism that pronounced the Nsukka School even louder than expected.

This article is sequel to an earlier publication on the second phase of the 2021 Ko Art Gallery exhibition featuring Professor Eva Obodo, which was published on Innovations Journal, Issue 76, March, 2024. The publication titled: Social Narratives in Polychromatic Embroidery as Hallmarks of Eva Obodo's Works at the February 25-March 11, 2021 Ko Art Exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria, was the beginning in the series of publications covering the assessment of works at the 2021 Ko exhibition of Nsukka artists by the investigative Art Theorist and Art Educationist, Dr Nkem Fortynunes Alu and his fellow researchers. The current paper, therefore concentrates on Professor Ozioma Onuzulike at Ko 2021.

The Nsukka School in the Foreclosure Artistic Rigidity

Whereas the founding fathers of Ulistic indulgences in formal art learning at Nsukka have begotten more flag bearers over the years, some art enthusiasts have erroneously discussed the ideology as a facility or a code name for Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The name Nsukka School is much deeper than just an art department. It is perhaps important for art scholars to understand the Nsukka School as more ideological than just an art department. Banthel (1979) buttressed that art happens not only by some magical transubstantiation of materials but through the intelligent labour of the hand is very certain.

According to Rice (2024), the Nsukka School, which is named after the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, was a group of artists and faculty members associated with the use of uli-a form of body and mural decorative painting indigenous to the Igbo culture of Nigeria-in their work and are considered disciples of Uche Okeke's teachings and artistic influence. The Uli experiment sought to address Okeke's call for 'natural synthesis' in the visual arts of Nigeria and the formation of an art appropriate for the post-Independence age. Other members of the group who experimented with uli forms through painting and drawing were Chike Aniakor and Obiora Udechukwu, followed by their students Tayo Adenaike and Olu Oguibe.

Many theorists have made the mistake of writing, and even teaching, that the Nsukka art School is the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as a building or facility. This is wrong! The Nsukka Art School is a stylistic phenomenon, not the department of Fine and Applied Arts as a building. In philosophy, when we discuss a particular school of thought it does not mean an existing facility anywhere; it means a given thought-pattern and all the people that believe in it. Likewise, the Nsukka art scholarly philosophy is, in the main, ideological (Alu et al, 2024).

In 1958 some undergraduate art students in the Fine Arts Department at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, later re-named Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, started agitating against the British art curriculum and art learning orientations being imposed on them by the largely British art educators in the institution. Their guts came largely from the wave of

independence that dominated the country then, and also, the need to be allowed to create art the Nigerian and African way. There was, therefore, the cry for natural synthesis by the vibrant student-artists. Natural synthesis means the mixture of indigenous visual art forms with some of the western ones considered useful at the moment. The 'Zaria rebels', as they were also branded, was later to metamorphose into the 'Zaria Art Society' (Alu et al, 2024).

The art experimental trajectories unearthed by the Zaria art rebels' clarion call for traditional synthesis of art forms and media stood and towered like a tree with many useful branches. From Uli, an indigo-seed-and-pigment sourced by Igbo people for body and mural painting, and an Igbo art motif repertoire of a sort, to other forms of artistic liberalisations, Uche Okeke birthed an enduring art stylistic trajectory. When Uche Okeke and Chike Aniakor arrived at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, after the Nigeria-Biafra Civil war, little was it known that artistic experimentation was in the best offing (Alu et al, 2024). Among the early students of Uche Okeke and Chike Aniakor were: Obiora Udechukwu, Paul Igbanugo, Ray Obeta, Bons Nwabiani, Osita Njelita, and others. The students undertook many field research trips to some Igbo communities with their lecturers to see the Igbo women Uli painters on duty. The aftermaths of such trips were the incorporations of the styles and motifs of the original Uli painters into their works.

According to Okoro (2021), right from the 1970s to present the driving force of studio art production in Nsukka School has been exploration and experimentation with Uli motifs and common place materials. Alu et al (2024) affirmed that the art department at Nsukka was duly born into the waiting hands of freshly gotten Nigeria's independence. Regrettably, the art programmes of the Nsukka art school, like the Zaria art School, earlier on, were highly 'Europeanised'. By Europeanisation we mean that the European art lecturers in the institution flagged art teaching structures that showed much Euro-centric educational curriculum. In the wake of the upheavals leading to the Nigeria-Biafra civil war and its encumbrances, signs were high enough that schooling was going to be disturbed in the Eastern region, so, the expatriate art lecturers were driven away by the prevailing unsafe. After the war, when indigenous artists took over, artistic experimentation was combined with theoretical pedagogies to form the core bipod of the art learning structure in the institution. Ikwuemesi (2011) buttressed: this sparked off endless waves of experimentation in the studios at the University of Nigeria and also created a remarkable new departure in history of Nigerian art. According Alu et al (2024), in creating an art pattern oriented from Igbo culture, Uche Okeke in particular, had found a lace in Uli, for tying to the fore, traditional synthesis; the very slogan of the 'Zaria rebels'.

After the civil war, in the early 1970s the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka turned to native art specialists to resuscitate her academic programmes. Uche Okeke was projecting Uli, a traditional body and mural painting linearistic pattern practised by Igbo women of South-East

Nigeria, as an idiom and instrument of 'Nigerianness' in artistic conceptualisations. Alu et al (2024) buttressed; with Uche Okeke as captain of the ship, and later supported by Chike Aniakor, Obiora Udechukwu and El Anatsui, decades on, another generation of Nsukka art flag bearers emerged in the likes of Chijioke Onuora, Krydzlkwuemesi, Eva Obodo, Chika Okeke-Agulu, Sylvester Ogbegie, George Odoh, Chukwuemeka Okpara and many more.

Several Nsukka artists, like El Anatsui and Obiora Udechukwu, have achieved tremendous international acclaim. Chike Aniakor is widely recognized as an artist, art historian, and teacher. Succeeding generations of artists and scholars, including Tayo Adenaike, Olu Oguibe, Marcia Kure, and Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, have also emerged on the international art scene, demonstrating the ongoing influence of this school. In 1997 the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art became the first international museum to mount a major exhibition, *The Poetics of Line*, and publication dedicated to Nsukka's artists. The museum's collection contains a number of important artworks by prominent teachers and alumni of Nsukka (the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (2024)).

The Nsukka School or Nsukka Art School is a name used to classify the art cultural style associated with the department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Many theorists have made the mistake of writing, and even teaching, that the Nsukka art School is the department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as a building or facility. This is wrong! The Nsukka Art School is a stylistic phenomenon, not the department of Fine and Applied Arts as a building. In philosophy, when we discuss a particular school of thought it does not mean an existing facility anywhere; it means a given thought-pattern and all the people that believe in it. Likewise, the Nsukka art scholarly philosophy is, in the main, ideological (Alu et al, 2024).

According to The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (2024), the art school at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, has produced some of the leading figures in 20th- and 21st-century art. Uche Okeke (1933–2016), a formative modern artist in Nigeria, led the Nsukka School from December 1970. Keenly interested in his heritage, Okeke encouraged his colleagues and students to draw inspiration from Igbo arts and performances from the region surrounding the university. In the following decades, Nsukka has earned an international reputation for the quality of its faculty and students. Many-like Okeke-found inspiration in the fluid lines and symbols of uli, a mural and body painting art form practiced by Igbo women, and nsibidi, an ideographic writing system also found in Southeastern Nigeria.

Brief Profile of Ozioma Onuzulike

Born in 1972, Professor Ozioma Chinonyelum Onuzulike, Ceramic artist, Art historian and Poet, is a First Class Honours graduate from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He hails from Achi in Enugu State of Nigeria. He is a fellow of the Civitella Ranieri Centre, Umbertide, Perugia, Italy,

where he carried out an UNESCO-ASCHBERG Bursary for Artists residency. He is also an alumnus of the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine, USA. He is the current Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he has established a myriad of intellectual and administrative reforms to the up-building of the humanities. Known for exceeding overtures in mixed media art, Ozioma has carved a lot of niches for himself in the global art space, and still does.

In 2019 Onuzulike did a Solo exhibition titled: Seed Yams of our Land, at the Centre for Contemporary Art, CCA, Lagos, Nigeria, along with the presentation of his collection of poems, as published by CCA under the same title. The Seed Yam series, one of his major philosophical outreaches at 'thematizing' social contexts, was a huge success, and subsequently the beginning of a myriad of experiments with the metaphor of yam seedlings, otherwise termed seed yams. In 2021 Ozioma was featured in a tripartite exhibition of art works of three artists of the Nsukka Art school extraction, themed: The New Nsukka School, organised by Ko Art Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria, From 28th January to 8 April, 2021. Ozioma, being the third in the series, was originally billed to feature his works from March 25-April 8, 2021, but he later unleashed 'The Way We Are' from March 29-May 6, 2021. In 2022 Ozioma went to Chertlütde, Berlin, with Strings: The length of our palm's Seal, an art exhibition that announced him from closer range in Germany.

He was also included in an exhibition at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, arising from the: [Re:] Entanglements: Colonial Collections in De-colonial Times, research project, led by Professor Paul Basu. His work has been included in recent presentations at The Armory Show, 1-54 London, Artgenève and Zonamaco. Ozioma's works are in the permanent collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Archeology, University of Cambridge, Princeton University Art Museum, Hudson Valley Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and the Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Lagos. This article specifically represents a content survey of Professor Ozioma Onuzulike's works exhibited at the Ko art gallery in 2021.

Keloid Art Experiments as Ozioma Onuzulike's Signature Tune :

Keloids are thick bead-like skin tissues that grow upon healed injuries or scars. The fibrotic nature of keloids makes them dark, bulby and elevated above the normal skin level. Keloids can also form on the skin after injuries occurring from body scarification and tattooing. In art keloidal formations can occur in like manner, following scarification, burnishing, carving, assemblage or some other treatment of art media. The assemblage of bead-like stoneware and terracotta ornaments in 'keloidal' formations best describes what Ozioma Onuzulike does in shaping treated clay for art purposes. Manipulating clay to different shapes and tactile forms is second nature to Ozioma Onuzulike, bringing intricately assembled elements of sculpture and painting on board is yet another.

Uli, however, in its pivoting stance as signposting the Nsukka School, is not all there is to the Nsukka experimental and explorative manoeuvring of conventional and indigenous art media. Alu et al (2024) posited that artistic exploration, especially the organically metaphorized syntheses, simply summarise what has become known as the Nsukka art school ideology. However, some individual artists have begun to sieve out more trajectories from the Nsukka artistic idiom. In corroboration of individualism in artistic experimentations, Aniakor (1991), in reference to the post-civil war and end-of-the 20th-century art of Nsukka, submitted: “Two decades later, those Uli dance steps had attracted many to the wider circle of dance at Nsukka and quickly transformed our corporate primal visions into those of generations of students who have studied at Nsukka”. Much as the Uli patterns signpost what is today globally known as the Nsukka art school paradigm, there are artists like Ozioma Onuzulike who, in their Ulistic tendencies, ventured into hitherto un-foreknown paths, searching for individual trajectories in manipulating art media. Whether in the original Uli take-off craft or in the current post-modern Uli flight, artists of the Nsukka art breed have continued to throw up mettle beyond the ordinary.

In making wonders of stoneware and terracotta with assorted art media, Ozioma Onuzulike has etched his name in the annals of contemporary artistic explorations, one within and after which trails of critical thinking will continue to deodorise extreme conventionalism in the visual arts. Just like Eva Obodo, who was assessed in the previous publication, Ozioma Onuzulike personifies artistic explorations and compact assemblage of his philosophy via incredible mixed media. Suffice it to say that the generation of Ozioma Onuzulike, as early as the late 1990s, had begun to find new ways of doing old things, under the broad trajectory of artistic experimentation, yet in subtle non-subversive newness. Onuzulike mass-produces ceramic keloidal wonders with chirps and scarification on clay, binding them in very arduous tapestries of glazes, colour and panels, to address social issues. The intricately contrived art of Ozioma Onuzulike, and the juxtapositional masterfulness with which he takes ceramic art beyond mere earthenware vessels, is in the context of this study, and in alignment to visual reality, calibrated as stoneware and terracotta keloid art.

On the intricate wonders done by Onuzulike in his art, Uwaezuoke (2023) stated that upon closer inspection, the works’ astounding delicacies and suppleness proclaim from the rooftops the artist’s deft manipulation of a medium bordering on the intuitive—that few among his peers would dare to attempt. This is what obviously sets him apart in an art scene teeming with an overabundance of talents.

Two Genres of Ozioma Onuzulike’s Artistic Oeuvre :

On Onuzulike, Ko (2021) asserted that his recent work has been inspired by the aesthetic and conceptual force held by such natural resources as yam tubers, palm kernel shells and honeycombs which he mass-produces in terracotta

and weaves together in often laborious processes. He configures a multiplicity of the individual units in ways that call attention to burning socio-political and environmental.

The propensity, with which Ozioma Onuzulike churns out conceptual analyses of social issues with his art, he is sure to delve out in more circuitous dimensions in the near future. This paper concentrates itself, however, on two genres identified in his works at the Ko art exhibition in 2021. Although a new series, the honeycomb, has recently joined the genres, concentration is, for convenience, on the two genres identified in his philosophical terracotta keloid art at Ko 2021: (i) the ceramic palm kernel shells, and (ii) the yam series.

The Ceramic Palm Kernel Shell :

This concept forays into the deals and aftermaths of colonialism and slave trade in Africa. In those days of trans-Atlantic palm produce trade, Africa supplied palm oil, and indeed other palm produce, to Europe. The palm produce were in turn, used to make by-products that were sold back to Africa on exorbitant prices. The only product of the palm tree left at home after each sale was, mainly, the shell; its emptiness! Though even the shells were of great domestic and industrial use, the palm kernel shell, its usual leftover, reminds one of slavery in Africa and its encumbrances; economic and human slavery. On this Uwaezuoke (2023) posited that, of course, the wealth-generating potential of both palm fruits and palm kernels might as well be interpreted as a metaphor for Africa's economic exploitation, the aesthetic refrain of the artist's opinion that "Africa's natural resources have been at the base of its woes.

The Yam Seedlings:

On the yam, seed yam or yam seedling series, Onuzulike, in bringing the yam, known as the 'king of food' in Igbo land of Nigeria, to the centre stage, shows its use and abuse on different locations. Much as yam is respected and even has a popular ceremony known as New Yam Festival in Igbo land, there is an environment to which yam will be exposed, and it will not yield well. This is in addition to the possibility of being devastated by rodents and some domestic animals in the farms and barns if not well protected. Natural disasters like fire outbreaks or flood may also not favour the positioning of yam in the farm or in the barn after being harvested. Uwaezuoke (2023) submitted that, indeed, the series Seed Yams of Our Land, which was once the title of an exhibition he held two years ago at the Kó Gallery in Lagos, metaphorically alludes to Africa's youth population as its yam seedlings, which, to the Igbo people, are pointers to every family's hopes for sustenance and wealth. In clustering clay-made yam seedlings, which indeed, bear the true semblances of yam, in varied metaphors, Onuzulike showcases the harsh conditions of survival in Africa, from one economic sector to another.

The Kó Art Space: Flagging Kavita Chellaram's Noble Intent:

When Arthouse, the Lagos gallery and auctioneer, held its first sale in 2008, Kavita Chellaram, the managing director, had a simple goal. A long-time collector of Nigerian modern and contemporary art – the walls at her Lagos home hang heavy with works by some of the lions- she was eager to establish a market. “There was no transparency of price,” she says of the days before that first auction, which saw a painting by Bruce Onobrakpeya, one of Nigeria’s famed “Zaria rebels”, fetch more than \$80,000. Just four years on, the market Mrs Chellaram helped establish is booming and prices are soaring for the best works by Nigerian contemporary artists, the finest of which are now celebrated around the world (Donnan, 2012)

In the Yoruba language, kó translates as a verb “to gather” or “to build”. Our aim is to support the creativity of contemporary art in Africa by providing a platform to communicate, share and grow (Chellaram, 2020). The above statement by the founder of Kó art gallery, Kavita Chellaram succinctly presents a motive in whose capsule the promotion of African art is core focus. Indian-born Kavita Chellaram is a major force in developing the modern and contemporary art market in Nigeria; she is the founder of Lagos-based auctioneers Arthouse Contemporary Ltd, which concentrates on modern and contemporary art from West Africa. She has also established Arthouse Foundation to provoke discourse on contemporary art in Nigeria, through residencies for artists. According to art4areason.com (2018), most developed countries enjoy governments that are involved in the growth and development of its Arts sector. In Nigeria however, artists and art practitioners struggle independently to get things done as support from the government is almost non-existent.

I am excited to create Kó as a separate and unique gallery entity. This will allow us to create focused exhibitions on a regular basis, delve more deeply into artists and art historical topics, generate research and publications, and continue to promote Nigerian art on the global stage (Chellaram, 2020).

The ideo-manipulative sublimations and gentle stylistic variegations that have trailed the famed style (Nsukka School) have also been found to have seemingly broken forth, like tributaries from the bigger ocean of stylistic impudence piloted by the progenitor Uche Okeke. It is sufficient, therefore to say that the ‘venturesomeness’ of the Kó art gallery in parading the New Nsukka Art reality subtly traverses the dual carriage way of continuity and change (Alu et al, 2024). Perhaps the above assertion by Dr Nkem Fortunes Alu and his co-researchers aptly captures the intent of Chellaram’s investigation and marketing of contemporary African art, under whose umbrella The New Nsukka School: Between Continuity and Change tripartite solo art exhibitions were birthed in 2021.

Research Design:

For this polled exhibition review the Content Analysis research method was adopted. Content analysis technique is good for addressing contents in texts, relics, artistic images, audio and visual forms much the same way it addresses quantitative contents. Babbie (2001) posited that the content analysis method may be used in qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods studies with a multitude of research objectives and questions. The qualitative content analysis research technique is specifically adopted for this survey. Qualitative content analysis, according to Hsieh & Shannon (2005), is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. Mayring (2000) expatiated in defining qualitative content analysis as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification. However, Patton (2002) identifies with qualitative content analysis as any qualitative data and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings.

Objectives:

It was intended that by analysing the contents of Ozioma Onuzulike's works at the 2021 Ko exhibition salient features and interpretations would emerge. In examining the contents of the genres, the following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To ascertain the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration in Onuzulike's works at the Ko 2021 exhibition.
2. To find out the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements in Onuzulike's stoneware and terracotta keloids.
3. To discover the extent to which the stoneware and terracotta keloid genres are significant with Nigerian public issues.
4. To find out the extent to which the genres are lucid for documenting 'The way we are'.
5. To find out the theme that is most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society.

Participants and Sampling:

The reviewers were 130 randomly selected studio artists, comprising: lecturers and teachers of art, postgraduate students, art enthusiasts and collectors resident in the Eastern States of Nigeria. Each respondent was instructed not to duplicate the Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloid Map questionnaire (OSTCKM-Q). This meant that each respondent must not return more than a single copy. The controllable size of the participants meant that sampling was not necessary, as 115 copies of the OSTCKM-Q were returned via

electronic means, as sent, 7 were faulted for incomplete data or multiple answers in a row, data from 108 respondents were finally presented and analysed.

Scope:

Ozioma Onuzulike, being the third artist in the three-phase stretch of solo exhibitions, and his works exhibited from March 29-May 6, 2021 were foci in this study, with the genres: (i) the ceramic palm kernel shells, and (ii) the yam series. Though this discourse did not cover Onuzulike's honeycomb series, however, since Plate-26 Africa, our Africa was exhibited at Ko, 2021, despite being perceived by the reviewers as belonging to the honeycomb series, it was therefore the only work in the honeycomb series exhibited. The review was not opinionated, meaning that reviewers or respondents were not allowed to drag in personal opinions as yardsticks for assessment. Specifically, the manoeuvring of the elements of design and the explorative nuances of Onuzulike were subjected to assessment.

Exhibition Review Questions :

Streaming from the review objectives, the following questions guided the study:

1. What is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration in Onuzulike's works at the Ko 2021 exhibition?
2. What is the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements in Onuzulike's stoneware and terracotta keloids?
3. To what extent are the stoneware and terracotta keloid genres significant with Nigerian public issues?
4. To what extent are the genres lucid for documenting 'The way we are'?
5. What theme is the most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society?

Instruments for Data Collection:

The first instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed picturesque questionnaire tagged: the Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map questionnaire (OSTCKM -Q), used to poll responses from the artist-respondents. Apart from the first section which was dedicated for personal information, the second section contained the review questions and their answer options, while the third section showcased the 26 works of Onuzulike at the Ko 2021 exhibition (See Appendix 2).

The second instrument was the Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Preliminary Data Desk (OSTCKM -PDD) designed for collation of personal and bio data of respondents. Data elicited from this instrument was not meant to be randomised; instead, they were for documentation (See Appendix 3).

The third instrument was the Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Frequency Percentage Rating Desk (OSTCKM -FPRD) designed for

frequency and percentage conversion of responses. Data from this instrument determined rating of responses. There were 4 rows of answer options, each polled data had a subsidiary percentage conversion column, for final data distribution (See Table 2 and Appendix 4).

Data Distribution and Analysis Method:

The OSTCKM-FPRD data indices were classified as follows: 71-108 (HA- Highly accepted); 50-70 (A- accepted); 30-49 (R- rejected); 0-29 (R- Highly rejected). For each of the review questions, there were 4 answer options; the number of respondents ticking for any of the options determined whether it was an accepted or rejected option. The scores in the affirmative were calibrated just like the non-affirmative ones. Hence any option that polled 71-108 ticks was highly accepted; 50-70, accepted; 30-49, rejected; 0-29, highly rejected. Each poll was then converted to simple percentage rating, which was the final rating scale.

Findings: The study findings were derived from the data spread on the tables below:

Table 1:

The Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Preliminary Data Desk (OSTCKM-PDD)

Sex		Designation		State of residence		Familiarity with Onuzulike		Familiarity with his works		Description of his works	
Male	75	Studio artist-	25	Abia-	18	Yes-	96	Yes-	102	Boring-	8
Female-	33	Art lecturer-	45	Anambra-	15	No-	12	No-	6	Creative-	87
		PG std artist-	38	Enugu-	55					Too experimental-	13
				Ebonyi-	10						
				Imo-	10						

Source: Nkem Fortynes Alu et al: Research 2022

Data on the first section of the picturesque questionnaire, OSTCKM –PDD, shows that there were 75 male and 33 female respondents. 25 of the respondents were

studio artists, meaning art entrepreneurs, 45 were art lecturers and 38, Postgraduate student artists. On residence 18 respondents lived in Abia State, 15 in Anambra State, 55 in Enugu State, 10 in Ebonyi State and 10 in Imo State. 96 respondents were familiar with Ozioma Onuzulike while 12 were not. 102 were familiar with his works while 6 were not. On work description, 8 ticked 'boring', 87 saw them as creative while 13 saw his works as too experimental. Data translation: majority of the respondents were lecturers and postgraduate students of art. A great number lived in Enugu State, perhaps because the research was Enugu State based. Familiarity index with Onuzulike shows that he is popular, ditto his works. A great number among the respondents see Onuzulike's works as creative.

Table 2:
The Onuzu like Stone ware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Frequency Percentage Rating Desk (OSTCKM-FPRD) :

Frequency and percentage rating of data on: (i) the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration, (ii) the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements, (iii) extent to which stoneware and terracotta keloid genres are significant with Nigerian public issues, (iv) extent to which the genres are lucid for documenting 'The way we are' and (v) the theme that is the most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society. (n=108)

	Interrogations (n=108)	Answer options	Acceptance /rejection		Translation			
			F	%	HA	A	R	HR
1	What is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration in Onuzulike's works at the Ko 2021 exhibition?	Palm kernel shells	30	27.78			√	
		Honeycombs	6	5.56				√
		Yam series	72	66.67	√			
		All of them	-	-				√
2	What is the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements in Onuzulike's stoneware and terracotta keloids?	Symmetric balancing	11	10.19				√
		Asymmetric balancing	94	87.04	√			
		No balance at all	3	2.78				√
		Vertical balancing	-	-				√
3	To what extent are the stoneware and terracotta keloid genres significant	High extent	18	16.67				√
		Very high extent	90	83.33	√			
		Low extent	-	-				√

	with Nigerian public issues?	Very low extent	-	-				√
4	To what extent are the genres lucid for documenting 'The way we are'?	High extent	13	12.04				√
		Very high extent	95	87.96	√			
		Low extent	-	-				√
		Very low extent	-	-				√
5	What theme is the most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society?	Politics	68	62.96		√		
		Trade/economy	24	22.22				√
		Religion	10	9.26				√
		Recreation	6	5.56				√

Key:71-108(HA- Highly accepted);50-70 (A- accepted); 30-49 (R- rejected); 0-29 (R- Highly rejected)

Source: Nkem FortyunesAlu et al: Research 2022

Data on table 2 shows that Ozioma Onuzulike’s Yam series is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration, with 72 respondents (66.67%) in the Highly Accepted box. It was also revealed that asymmetric balancing held way in Onuzulike’s renditions, with a whopping 94 respondents (87.04%) in the foremost affirmative box, Highly Accepted. Data also showed that 90 respondents (83.33%) agree that, to a Very High Extent, the stoneware and terracotta ceramic keloid genres are significant with Nigerian public issues. On the lucidity of the genres for documenting ‘The way we are’ being Onuzulike’s theme for the solo exhibition, 95 (87.96%) accepted that to a Very High Extent all the genres are lucid. Between Politics, trade, religion and recreation as themes, politics, with 68 respondents (62.96)was the most accepted as the theme that is most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society.

Discussion:

In answering the first question, it was discovered that the Yam series is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration, the seed yams, in real-life shaping and colouration, present Onuzulike as a hyper-realist but at the same time, in using same to represent human beings or events in the society brings in elements of stylisation and symbolism. Examples are: Plate 19 - Yam bodies: Dry season 1, and Plate 20- Yam bodies: Dry season 2 (showing seed yams staked in a barn), We are like yam seedlings in a burnt barn (showing the little tubers charcoaled in a burnt barn), Plate 22- Yam Vessels 1, and Plate 23- Yam Vessels 2 (showing realistic cross sections of the seed yams as well as their utilitarian values as trinket, kola nut and piggy bank vessels). In both cases the

seed yam tubers look hyper realistically depicted, major tools being colouration and space integration. Stylisation, however, comes in as the tubers represent human imagery and humanity.

On the preponderance of asymmetric balancing of elements of design, we can deduce that Onuzulike was not mathematical in his approach, neither was he regimented in any way. The following works corroborate asymmetry in colour, shape, space and other elemental considerations: Plate 1- Treasure Islands (where a brownish band of keloids are assembled left top and right-down edges of the entire mass), and Plate 10- Lace 6 (with irregular dotting with keloids in colours and shapes). Others in the asymmetric balancing class are: Plate 12- August meeting, Plate 17- Relics of our treasure, Plate 18- Mended Armour for King Jaja, Plate 21- We are like yam seedlings burn in a barn, Plate 22- Yam Vessels 1, Plate 23- Yam vessels 2, Plate 26- Africa our Africa.

On the stoneware and terracotta ceramic keloids genres being significant with Nigerian public issues, this is evidenced in the thematic contents of such works as: Plate 1- Treasure Islands, Plate 2- Treasure Islands 2, Plate 6- Women's weave, Plate 7- Women's weave 2, Plate 12- August meeting, Plate 13- August meeting 2, Plate 14- Women's weave 2, Plate 16- Royal armour for the giant of Africa, Plate 17- Relics of our treasure, Plate 18- Mended armour for King Jaja, Plate 21- We are like yam seedlings burn in a barn, Plate 26- Africa our Africa.

On the lucidity of the genres for documenting 'The way we are' whereas the following works take the lead in buttressing this claim in their title and contents, others also symbolically align: Plate 1- Treasure Islands, Plate 2- Treasure Islands 2, Plate 16- Royal armour for the giant of Africa, Plate 17- Relics of our treasure, Plate 18- Mended armour for King Jaja, Plate 19 - Yam bodies: Dry season 1, Plate 20- Yam bodies: Dry season 2, Plate 21- We are like yam seedlings burn in a barn, Plate 26- Africa our Africa.

'Politics' polled the highest as the most popular theme with plurality as address doctrine, though all the titles address politics in a way. In judging 'the way we are' allusions are made to individuals, religious leaders, family heads and government leaders, for their actions and inactions across all the genres.

A meticulous investigation into the genres, being: the Ceramic palm kernel shells, and the Yam series, readily shows them as encapsulating food, in which: (i) the palm kernel and oil have been extracted while the shells are left behind, (ii) seed yams, meant for planting in the coming season have either been scorched by the sun, eaten by rodents or gutted by fire in the barns. 'The way we are' simply means, dissecting the bitter reality of our present conditions, facing the inevitable task of rebuilding and reclaiming our heritages - an arduous assignment that perhaps, will inform the creation of another series of the Treasure Islands by Onuzulike, one in which the lushness of life is very likely to be seen.

Author Contributions:

All the authors made contributions to the review from the beginning to conclusion. The author-designed instruments and review methods were agreed upon by all the contributors before implementation. The manuscript was read and approved by all the authors too.

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Conflict of Interests:

There was no conflict of interests confirmed by the authors at any stage whatsoever.

Ethical Considerations:

The artist Professor Ozioma Onuzulike was duly consulted before the review of his works commenced. The artists, art lecturers and postgraduate students of art that served as respondents and reviewers were also formally notified. There was no ethical breach whatsoever.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Department of Fine and Applied
Arts
University of Nigeria Nsukka,
Enugu State
.....

Dear Respondent,

Request for Completion of Picturesque Questionnaire

You are hereby requested to fill out the following questionnaire using the indices provided. Our research topic is: Appraisal of Ozioma Onuzulike's Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids at the March 29 - May 6, 2021 Kó Art Exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria.

We believe that as a formally trained artist you will not find the terminologies and investigation strange. You are therefore requested to follow the instructions carefully. Be assured that any response provided will be confidential and used for your anticipated maximum cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

.....

Dr. Nkem Fortyunes Alu
(For the group)

Appendix 2

The Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Questionnaire (OSTCKM-Q)

The Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Art Map Questionnaire (OSTCKM-Q)

Note:
 * Do not duplicate this pictographic interview before or after answering the questions.
 *Carefully mail it back to us using the e-mail address provided.

Section A: Preliminary Data

Instruction: Tick in the appropriate box per item.

1	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>			
2	Designation	Studio Art lecturer <input type="checkbox"/>	PG Student artist <input type="checkbox"/>			
3	State of residence in Eastern Nigeria	Abia <input type="checkbox"/>	Anambr a <input type="checkbox"/>	Ebonyi <input type="checkbox"/>	Enugu <input type="checkbox"/>	Imo <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Do you know Ozioma Onuzulike?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>			
5	Are you familiar with his works?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>			
6	Describe majority of his works	Boring <input type="checkbox"/>	Creative <input type="checkbox"/>	Too experimental <input type="checkbox"/>		

Section B: Ostckm Review Questions



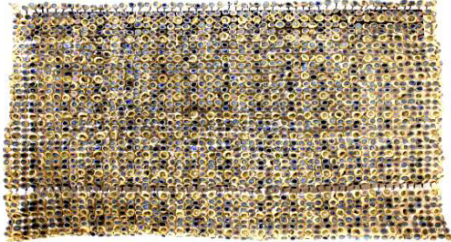
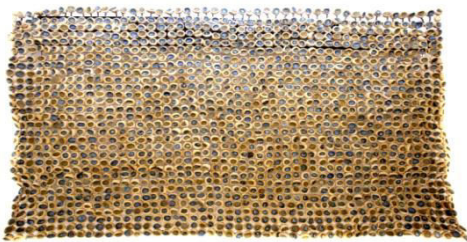
Instruction: Carefully study the images in section C, then return here to respond with .







You may zoom in on the images electronically for better understanding of the visual imports.


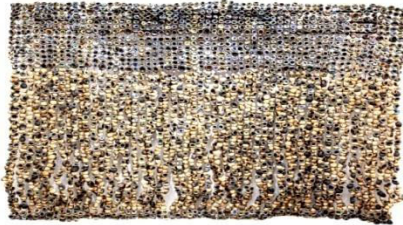



	Research questions	Answer options	Answer boxes
7	What is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration in Onuzulike's works at the Ko 2021 exhibition?	(i) Palm kernel shells	<input type="checkbox"/>
		(ii) Honeycombs	<input type="checkbox"/>
		(iii) Yam series	<input type="checkbox"/>
		(iv) All of them	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	What is the prevalent calibre of	(i) Symmetric	<input type="checkbox"/>







	balancing of art elements in Onuzulike's stoneware and terracotta keloids?	balancing	
		(ii) Asymmetric balancing	[]
		(iii) No balance at all	[]
		(iv) Vertical balancing	[]
9	To what extent are the stoneware and terracotta keloid genres significant with Nigerian public issues?	(i) High extent	[]
		(ii) Very high extent	[]
		(iii) Low extent	[]
		(iv) Very low extent	[]
10	To what extent are the genres lucid for documenting 'The way we are'?	(i) High extent	[]
		(ii) Very high extent	[]
		(iii) Low extent	[]
		(iv) Very low extent	[]
11	What are the theme calibrations most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society?	(i) Politics	[]
		(ii) Trade/economy	[]
		(iii) Religion	[]
		(iv) Recreation	[]





SECTION C: PICTURE SPREAD OF OSTCKM WORKS

	
Plate 1: Treasure Islands I	Plate 2: Treasure Islands II
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 47kg 6, 510- piece ceramic bead amour (triptych). 51 5/8 x 118 1/8 x 3 1/8 in 131 x 300 x 8 cm. 2021	Dimension: 28kg 4, 782- piece ceramic bead amour (triptych). 52 x 71 5/8 x 4 in 132 x 182 x 10 cm. 2021
	
Plate 3: Lace I	Plate 4: Lace II
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated

wire	aluminium wire
Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 18kg 2, 039-piece ceramic bead amour. 34 5/8 x 46 1/8 x 2 3/4 in 88 x 117 x 7 cm. 2021	Dimension: 18 kg 1, 602-piece ceramic bead amour. 32 1/4 x 45 1/4 x 2 3/8 in 82 x 115 x 6 cm. 2021
	
Plate 5: Lace III	Plate 6: Women's weavel
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 23kg 2, 600-piece ceramic bead amour. 41 3/4 x x53 1/2 x 2 in 106 x 136 x 5 cm. 2021	Dimension: 21kg 4 2, 870-piece ceramic bead amour. 40 1/2 x 55 1/2 x 2 in 103 x 141 x 5 cm.2021
	
Plate 7: Women's weave II	Plate 8: Lace IV
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: Ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 14 kg 1, 952-piece ceramic bead amour. 50 x 33 7/8 x 2 3/8 in 127 x 86 x 6 cm. 2021	Dimension: 23kg 2, 747-piece ceramic bead amour. 2021
	
Plate 9: Lace V	Plate 10: Lace VI
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated

wire	aluminium wire
Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 17 kg 2, 408-piece ceramic bead amour. 39 3/8 x 51 5/8 x 2 in 100 x 151 x 5 cm. 2021	Dimension: 24 kg 2, 820-piece ceramic bead amour. 50 x 43 1/4 x 3 1/8 in 127 x 110 x 8 cm. 2021
	
Plate 11: Women's weave III	Plate 12: August meeting I
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 17 kg 2, 452-piece ceramic bead amour. 2021	Dimension: 26 kg 3, 050-piece ceramic bead amour. 52 3/8 x 40 1/8 x 2 in 133 x 102 x 5 cm. 2021
	
Plate 13: August meeting II	Plate 14: Women's weave IV
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 30 kg 2, 950-piece ceramic bead amour. 53 1/8 x 51 1/8 x 2 3/8 in 135 x 130 x 6 cm. 2021.	Dimension: 17 kg 2, 435-piece ceramic bed amour. 39 3/8 x 52 x 2 in 100 x 132 x 5 cm. 2021.
	
Plate 15: Lace VII	Plate 16: Royal Amour for the giant of Africa
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated

wire	aluminium wire
Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 22 kg 2, 214-piece ceramic bead amour. 47 ¼ x 42 1/8 x 2 in 120 x 107 x 5 cm. 2021.	Dimension: 30 kg 4, 016-piece ceramic bead amour. 64 5/8 x 52 x 2 3/8 in 164 x 132 x 6 cm. 2021.
	
Plate 17: Relics of our treasure	Plate 18: Mended amour for King Jaja
Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire	Media: Earthenware & stoneware clays, glass & copper-coated aluminium wire
Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell	Genre: ceramic palm kernel shell
Dimension: 24.5 kg 2, 930-piece ceramic bead amour. 48 3/8 x 50 ¾ x 4 3/8 in 123 x 129 x 11 cm. 2021.	Dimension: 40 kg mixed media amour. 51 ¼ x 61 3/8 x 2 ¾ in 148 x 156 x 7 cm. 2021.
	
Plate 19: Yam bodies: Dry season I	Plate 20: Yam bodies: Dry season II
Media: Terracotta (iron-saturated stoneware, clay body) mild steel, copper-coated aluminium wire and wood.	Media: Terracotta (iron-saturated stoneware, clay body)
Genre: Yam seedlings	Genre: Yam seedlings
Dimension: 103 x 164 x 17 cm. Variable installation. 2019.	Dimension: 113 x 171 x 16 cm. Variable installation. 2019.
	
Plate 21: We are like yam seedlings in a burnt barn	Plate 22: Yam vessels I
Media: Carbonised terracotta, burnt wood and mild steel	Media: Glazed stoneware

Genre: Yam seedlings	Genre: Yam seedlings
Dimension: 6 1/8 x 90 1/2 x 4 3/4 in x 155 x 230 x 12 cm. 2019.	Dimension: Six pieces ensemble. Biggest: 36 x 12 x 10 cm. Smallest: 24 x 10 x 4 cm. 2019.
	
Plate 23: Yam vessels II	Plate 24: Yam bodies I
Media: Glazed stoneware	Media: Iron-saturated stoneware body
Genre: Yam seedlings	Genre: Yam seedlings
Dimension: Four pieces ensemble. Biggest: 36 x 13 x 10 cm. 2019.	Dimension: Three pieces ensemble-locked. 35 x 12 x 9 cm. Individual dimensions. 2019.
	
Plate 25: Yam bodies 2	Plate 26: Africa our Africa
Media: Selectively glazed stoneware	Media: Glaze and glass
Genre: Yam seedlings	Genre: Honeycomb
Dimension: three pieces ensemble + poetry. 35 x 12 x 9 cm. Individual dimensions. 2019.	Dimension: 48 7/8 x 49 1/4 x 15 in x 124x 125x 38 cm. 2019.

Source: Nkem Fortynes Alu et al: Research 2022

Appendix 3

The Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Preliminary Data Desk (OSTCKM-PDD)

Sex		Designation		State of residence		Familiarity with Onuzulike		Familiarity with his works		Description of his works	
Male		Studio		Abia		Yes		Yes		Boring	
Female		Lecturing		Anambra		No		No		Creative	
		PG student artist		Enugu						Too experimental	
				Ebonyi							
				Imo							

Source: Nkem Fortyunes Alu et al: Research 2022

Appendix 4

The Onuzulike Stoneware and Terracotta Ceramic Keloids Map Frequency Percentage Rating Desk (OSTCKM-FPRD)

	Interrogations (n=108)	Answer options	Acceptance /rejection rate		Translation			
			F	%	HA	A	R	HR
1	What is the genre most prevalent with colouration, stylisation and space integration in Onuzulike’s works at the Ko 2021 exhibition?	Palm kernel shells						
		Honeycombs						
		Yam series						
		All of them						
2	What is the prevalent calibre of balancing of art elements in Onuzulike’s terracotta keloids?	Symmetric balancing						
		Asymmetric balancing						
		No balance at all						
		Vertical balancing						
3	To what extent are the terracotta keloid genres significant with Nigerian public issues?	High extent						
		Very high extent						
		Low extent						
		Very low extent						
4	To what extent are the genres lucid for documenting ‘The way we are’?	High extent						
		Very high extent						
		Low extent						
		Very low extent						
5	What theme is the most consistent with plurality as a doctrine for addressing society?	Politics						
		Trade/economy						
		Religion						
		Recreation						

Key:71-108 (HA- Highly accepted); 50-70 (A- accepted); 30-49 (R- rejected); 0-29 (HR- Highly rejected)

Source: Nkem FortyunesAlu et al: Research 2022

Appendix 5

The Artist, Ozioma Onuzulike

