



YEMISI SHYLLON
MUSEUM OF ART
PAN-ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Artwork 31 Information Sheet

JIMOH BURAIMOH'S PEOPLE OF HOPE



The people of Hope, Beads on board, 120 x 76cm, Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Pan-Atlantic University.

INTRODUCTION

The rich history of Nigerian art will be incomplete without mention of Jimoh Buraimoh, a renowned artist who emerged from the Oshogbo Art School. He is popular for his compelling and unique beaded paintings. Over the years, Jimoh and some other artists explored unusual materials to create stunning artworks. His intriguing paintings are captivating and they express the compelling stories that the artist tells in his works. The astonishing, unique beaded piece on the first floor of the Yemisi Shyllon Museum, "People of Hope" shows the artist's mastery of the arts in his use of beads to create a vibrant painting.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Chief Jimoh Buraimoh was born into a Muslim family in Oshogbo, in 1943. His father was a silversmith while his mother was a seasoned mat weaver. It was through her craft that Buraimoh had his first contact with colours, watching his mother weave mats from dyed vegetable fibres. Jimoh also honed his creativity by watching his father craft silverware (Ijisakin, 2012).

After his Secondary school education in 1961, Jimoh trained as an electrician. Afterwards, he joined Duro Ladipo's theatre group as an actor, stage lighting technician and theatre manager from 1964 to 1968. He also worked as an electrician at the Mbari Mbayo Theatre Company. Subsequently, he worked at University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) for the Institute of African Studies and at the University's Museum. He later served as an Artist in residence at Ahmadu Bello University (1973-1974), University of Ife (1975), and Kunst Academy University, Berlin (1976) (Ubogu, 2017).

During Jimoh's time at Oshogbo School of Art, he experienced the workshops organised by two expatriates; Ulli and Georgina Beier. One interesting aspect of the workshop was the exhibition at the end of the sessions where the works of participants are displayed for the public to view and make purchases

(Ubogu, 2017). After his training in Oshogbo, he went to Ahmadu Bello University where he earned a certificate in Art and Design.

Buraimoh was exceptional in Batik, mixed media, and mosaic (Ubogu, 2017). He combines elements of Yoruba culture with western media, using beads to create intricate beadlike paintings. He was one of the first African artists to introduce beaded mixed media paintings to artworks. This was inspired by the Yoruba custom of using beading patterns on ceremonial cloths and crowns. In 1965, he diversified his beading technique by utilizing beads, fragments of shattered bottles, tiles, and seashells to cover cement base tabletops, but these pieces appeared too heavy for pictures (Ijisakin, 2012). These beaded mixed media paintings were largely unsuccessful until Jean Wolford introduced Buraimoh to the use of local beads on Japanese paper for "lamp shade" (Ijisakin, 2012).

"The idea, as observed by Picton (1985) caught the fancy of Buraimoh, and with the beauty of Yoruba beaded crowns in mind, Buraimoh thought of how to transfer such to his drawing board. He however succeeded in putting the beads together with Araldite" (Ijisakin, 2012). Jimoh's works are mainly based on mythology, folktales, traditional dance, rituals, masquerade festivals and local deities (Ubogu, 2017). He draws his themes from the rich culture of the Yoruba and Edo people of Nigeria. This style of creating art helped boost his prominence in Nigerian Contemporary Art circles and today this style, which began as experimentation, has become his trademark.

PEOPLE OF HOPE

"People of Hope" by Jimoh Buraimoh as shown in figure 1.1 below is a bead-painting mosaic of numerous colours. The work features different shapes, squares, rectangles, circles, triangles alongside other irregular shapes. While circles form the face, rectangles and ovals form the eyes,



Fig 1.1 *The people of Hope, Beads on board, 120 x 76cm*, © Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art.

triangles form the nose and some of the irregular shapes form animal looking figures. There are numerous patterns at the top part of the work, but towards the lower part of the work, it is easier to make out a cluster of faces or heads. To achieve vibrancy in this piece, the artist uses several bright colours like red, orange, yellow, green, blue, brown and black. The beads that Buraimoh uses are small, usually round, perforated objects that are often strung together to make jewellery like necklaces and bracelets, or attached to clothing, or other decorative and utilitarian items (Ijisakin, 2012). They are gotten from a variety of materials like; glass, plastic, gemstone, wood, shell, seed, coral, metal, ivory, amber, paper among others (Ijisakin, 2012). It is interesting to view Buraimoh's impressive, unique style and artistic dexterity in this piece.

He uses beads of the same colour in certain areas and builds upon them to create this imaginative picture. He puts the same colours in each shape until the shape is filled then he moves on to the next possible shape.

There are no fixed colours for the human figures or faces. While some faces are orange and green, others are red and blue and this applies to the eyes as well. We can see the eyes in Black, blue and orange. The black outline around each shape helps to highlight it and give the figures more visibility. The cluster of heads in the work is arranged in a variety of big and small sizes with an expressionless face. Since most of his works are based on mythology and life experiences, "People of hope" is said to express a time of difficulty and hardship among resilient people like the Yorubas who remain steadfast in hopes of the days of prosperity ahead.

CONCLUSION

The features of this art piece show Buraimoh's signature style of using a lot of patterns and decorations. He fills each space and figure with a motif, a face or a cluster of beads. Therefore, his works are busy and very colourful.

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