

MUSEUM AND TRADITIONAL METHOD OF PRESERVATION OF ARTIFACTS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

Art and religion emerged hand in hand from deep recesses of history. Art objects whether religious objects or artifacts became a means of communication of the past, present and future experiences when they are properly preserved and understood. The historical phenomenology method was adopted in the study. The study made use of primary and secondary sources of information to descriptively analyze data collected. The objective of the study was to critically examine the role of museum and traditional methods in preservation of artifacts and religious objects. The findings revealed that exotic and social influences have led to misinformation as to the importance of local artifacts.

Keywords: Artifacts, Museum, Preservation, Religious objects

Introduction

International Council of Museums' (ICOM's) defined museum as "a non-profit making permanent institution that is open to the public, collects, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for the purpose of the study, education and enjoyment of material evidence of mankind and his environment" (Afigbo & Okita, 1985, p.95). However, from the definition above, it was clear that a museum was an institution that cared for (conserved) a collection of artifacts and other objects of scientific, artistic, cultural, or historical importance and made them available for the public viewing through exhibits that may be permanent or temporary. It also explained that museum preservation role lack the necessary tools used in the traditional society in preserving artifacts and religious objects like the rituals, songs, dances, history and proper information on a particular object. Uyo museum was an embodiment of the historic relics of the state, contains cultural artifacts and administrators offices used by both the colonial and post- colonial administrators of the state. The Ikot Udo Essang museum in Onna had personal collections of cross ethnic work of arts, ethnographic, numismatic, traditional royal regalia of late Chief (Dr.) Clement Nyong Isong- first

Nigerian Central Bank Governor and Civilian Governor of Cross River State (www.aksgonline.com).

Traditionally, the people used traditional tools and equipment to revive skills, crafts, and technologies that had long been forgotten due to technological advances (O. Smart, Personal Communication, May 12, 2014). This clearly showed that indigenous artists were very creative, skillful and patient in the process of preserving art works. Dyes, paints, preservatives, and tanning technologies represented the collective knowledge of the people involved in the process of creation and preservation from the killing of animal/gathering of raw materials to the wearing of garment/mask and completion of a basket (Racette, 2008). Community members developed their own methods for preserving valuable objects while keeping them as active parts of their lives (Gregoire & Dubuc, 2008). It therefore proved that the skill of preserving was not limited to a particular individual but rather was open to all who became interested in keeping safe works of art. The use, purpose, and intention of an artwork must always be considered when choosing a treatment to suit an individual artifact (O. Smart, Personal Communication, May 12, 2014).

Traditional Nigerian art to a large extent had lost its relevance except as collector's item. People are no longer interested in traditionally preserving artifacts and religious objects in their society due to influences. This was one of the reasons why people frown at some artifacts and religious objects on seeing them. Others believed that they were just fetish objects and so the need for their preservation became a mirage, this accounts for the many reasons why most of the religious objects and artifacts in Akwa Ibom State had been damaged rather than being preserved for purposes of expression of the rich and diverse culture of the people for future generations. This clearly shows a tilt towards the museum as the best modern method of preservation without the proper understanding of the role played by each preservation method.

The objective of the research is to highlight the positive role of the museum and traditional method of preservation of artifacts. Examine the demerits of museums as modern method of preservation. The study focused on museum and traditional method of preservation of artifacts and religious objects in Nigeria, with particular reference to Akwa Ibom State and the three major ethnic groups namely; Ibibio, Annang and Oron nations constituting Uyo, Ikot Ekpene and Eket senatorial districts respectively. Consequently, the view of these areas represented and reflected that of the state as a society.

The significance of the study rested on its effort in helping to enrich the understanding of the people of Akwa Ibom State and the larger society of Nigeria on African arts.

Data generation is the science and art of acquiring information about the select properties of units (Leege & Francis, 1974). This study was based

on the qualitative data generation technique. Therefore, qualitative method is used to obtain in-depth information and concept clarification so as to facilitate instrument designs (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006). Data was collected by the researcher through official visits to respondents selected, traditional community and museum in order to get first-hand information and knowledge of artifacts and religious objects found in the museum.

Theoretical Framework

The functionalist theory was used in this study and according to Anele (1999, p.45) “in general terms, functionalism sees human society as a social system comprising sub-units or interdependent parts and these sub-units are interdependent on each other and are functionally interrelated”. What this means is that every phenomenon found in the society performs useful functions towards the survival of the entire system or society. This does not also mean that there are no external forces that could alter the system, but that the way the sub-units are structured and complementary to one another, makes the system balance itself.

Emerging from this therefore, the relevance of this theory to the study is that extant artifacts and religious objects were produced and made to function in the society and not merely making them redundant and static. This is because each had specific functions to carry out in a bid to contributing to the common good of the people in performing their daily chores, and also making or holding the society in its complete whole.

Historical Background of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Akwa Ibom State is called the “*Land of Promise*” and occupies a total landmass of 8,412 square kilometres of Nigeria’s wealth basin, the South-South Zone or the Delta Region, and a coastline of 129 k m long, lying between latitudes 4⁰ 33¹ and 5⁰ 33¹ N and longitudes 7⁰ 35¹ and 8⁰ 25¹ E (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2008). Akwa Ibom State was created on 23rd September, 1987 out of Cross River State, one of the pioneer 12 States created by Gowon’s military administration in 1967, following the military intervention of January, 1966 (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2008).

The people of Akwa Ibom are culturally homogenous with a common identity and linguistic heritage and this homogeneity are considered a set of potentially unifying factor (Akpabot, 1994). The three major intra-ethnic groups are Ibibio, Annang and Oron, and the main language Ibibio is widely understood throughout the State, despite some slight dialectical variations (K. Ekpo, Personal Communication, September 17, 2013). The physical relief of the State is basically flat. However, there are places in Itu and Ibiono Ibom Local Government Areas where the topography is undulating with some areas as high as 200 feet above sea level. There are in some areas, valleys, creeks and swamps due to the influence of the Atlantic Ocean, the

Qua Iboe and the Cross Rivers which traverse the length and breadth of the State. The State has basically two distinct seasons: the rainy season which lasts from May to October, with a slight break in August, usually called “August break” while the duration of the dry season is November to April (Udoh, 1970). However, in the coastal areas, rain falls almost all year round. The harmattan, accompanied by the North- East Winds, occurs in December and early January.

Akwa Ibom people are as industrious and resourceful as they are hospitable. A majority of the rural populace engage in farming. Akwa Ibom falls within the tropical zone with a dominant vegetation of green foliage trees, shrubs and oil- palm tree belt which holds the highest density of the cash crops in the world including rubber, cocoa and rice (Ministry of Information and Culture, 1995). Other dominant crops are coconut, citrus, cassava, yam, maize, cowpeas, plantain, banana, pineapple and kolanut. The State is also endowed with rich deposits of limestone, gravel, sand, salt, silver nitrate, silica sand and kaolin that can be commercially exploited. Other traditional occupation of the people are fishing, trading, wood-carving, raffia works, blacksmithing, pottery, iron works, tailoring, arts and craft creations (Ministry of Information and Culture, 1995). Farm tools like climbing ropes (*Ikpo*), wood carving like masks (*Iso Ekpo*) for interior decoration as shown in **figure 1** below, and crafts like bamboo chairs (*Mkpo Itie Ikuk*) were produced locally and sold to people in other parts of the society (E. Emmanuel, Personal Communication, December, 12, 2013).



Fig. 1: *Ekpo* mask for interior decoration

Source: Raffia and Traders' Association market, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. 18th September, 2013.

Akwa Ibom is often described as a uni-cultural State where norms, taboos, customs and traditions are the same. Folkways may vary from one ethnic grouping to another, but the operational norms of the culture are basically the same all over the State. This cultural commonality is epitomized in the similarities in cuisines, dressing, dances, songs, rituals, folklores, beliefs and myth (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2008). Almost all aspects of its culture have potentials to provide fascinating experiences for tourists and for investment opportunities. The social unit consists of the *Ufok* (family), *Irib Ete* (household/ patrilineal relatives), *Ekpuk* (groups of patrilineal relatives tracing their genealogy to a common ancestor or fore-father), *Awio* (village), *Imaan* (clan) (Meek, 1937 & Ekanem, 2006).

Like other Africans, religion cuts through the whole life of the people of Akwa Ibom State. Thus, the people believe in a Supreme Deity called *Awasi*, *Nnem* (intermediary deities and spirits), Ancestors (*Mme Ete-Ete*), *Aruru* (invisible and unidentifiable force) (Parrinder, 1969; Idowu, 1973; Enang, 1975; Enang, 1979). Therefore, social and religious concern is seen in a single oneness in Akwa Ibom State.

Akwa Ibom State has more than 42 hospitals and allied health institutions like "Immanuel Hospital, Eket; Psychiatric Hospital, Eket; Mercy Hospital, Abak; General Hospital, Ukpom- Abak; St. Luke's Hospital, Anua-Uyo; Dental Care, Ikot Ekpene; Infectious Disease Hospital, Ikot Ekpene; Leprosy Hospital, Ekpene Obom; Vaginal- Vesico Fistula (VVF), Mbribrit Itam" (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2008).

Tertiary educational institutions include: University of Uyo, Uyo; Maritime Academy, Oron; College of Education, Afaha Nsit; Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua, Ikot Ekpene. A total of about 229 Secondary Institutions are found in the State like: Methodist Boys' High School, Oron (1905); Etinan Institute, Etinan (1915); Holy Family College, Abak (1942); Cornelia Connelly College, Afaha Oku- Uyo (1944); Union Secondary School, Ibiaku- Itu (1948) (Ukpe, 2012, p.4). At present, there are no fewer than 1,110 (One thousand, one hundred and ten) public primary schools in the State (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2008).

Artifacts and Religious Objects

An artifact may be an object that had been intentionally made or produced for a certain purpose and often the word 'artifact' was used in a more restricted sense to refer to simple, hand-made objects which represent a particular culture (Hilpinen, 2013). It could also be defined as a simple object (such as a tool or weapon) that was made by people in the past or belonging to

an earlier time (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2009). Abanuka (1999, p.27) noted that “an artifact is a work of art that is an individual enterprise which is done in the background of the culture of the community of which the artist is a member”. Therefore, though the work may be an individual effort, it reflected the common belief of the people. Hence, the finished work of the artist became recognized by members of the community. Uzoagba (1991) found that “work of arts is a means of self-expression through the skillful use of a medium and it is human conception made manifest by the skillful use of a medium” (p.1). This explains that before such works were produced it involved deep thinking and ideas. Wood carving and raffia weaving are among the major crafts of Akwa Ibom people produced by local artisans and are widely renowned in its production which shows they are found in Ikot Ekpene and Abak divisions of the colonial administration (Messenger, 1973).

Commenting on carved doors and furniture Fagg (1997, p.10) observed that “the people of Akwa Ibom State are great art lovers and front doors to the main building in most compounds are often embellished with carved motifs”. This craft had lingered and was prospering, and in fact, it was a common sight to behold some of the beautifully carved doors on display in many parts of the State. Motifs on such doors ranged from religious themes to animals and abstract geometric patterns. Also, visual and performing arts in Africa provided unique opportunities not just for the reinforcement of gender differences but also for the subversion or transcendence of those differences to ensure societal harmony (Hackett, 1998). Hackett (1998, pp.363-364) further stated that “the men maintain control over the sculpting, iron working, and masking traditions (the ‘hard’ arts), while the decorative arts, pottery and wall painting remain the preserve of women (the ‘soft’ arts).

On the other hand, religious objects and places were those things set apart as sacred, connected with the worship practices of a people such as: clay pots, small huts, pieces of cloth...big trees, forests, large reptiles as man-made and natural occurrences respectively (Etuk, 2004). Such forests (*Akai*) are found in Akwa Ibom State religiously set aside for worship and other ritual practices. To buttress this point Goldberg (2003) writing about religious objects and artifacts in the classroom explained that “religious artifacts are things made by human beings including religious images such as statues and objects like prayer beads, even items of clothing and greeting cards were readily available from Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Traditional Religious and grocery stores” (p.1). However, Goldberg did not offer explanation that the objects are connected to the ritual worship of the people. This also shows that religious objects and artifacts cut across every other religious tradition.

The Role of Museum

Monim and Okpoko (1990, p.157) noted museum as “institutions (publicly or privately owned) which collect, preserve and display objects (both

natural and cultural) with the basic aim of entertaining, educating and providing materials for research on aspects of man's heritage and development". Museums have varying aims, and types ranging from serving researchers and specialists to serving the general public such as children's, archaeology, art, biographical, encyclopedic, historic house, history, maritime, military and war, mobile, pop-up, science, and music museums (Alexander & Alexander, 2008, p.16). Most large museums are located in major cities throughout the world and more local ones exist in smaller cities, towns and even the countryside.

In Nigeria, the first museums at Esie (1945), Jos (1952), Ife (1954), Lagos (1957), Oron (1959), Benin and Kano (1960) displayed local art treasures/traditions as a means of promoting nationalistic pride and providing outlets for intellectually stimulating recreation enlightenment (Ekpo, 2004, p.236). Uyo museum was an embodiment of the historic relics of the state, contains cultural artifacts and administrators offices used by both the colonial and post- colonial administrators of the state. The Ikot Udo Essang museum in Onna had personal collections of cross ethnic work of arts, ethnographic, numismatic, traditional royal regalia of late Chief (Dr.) Clement Nyong Isong-first Nigerian Central Bank Governor and Civilian Governor of Cross River State (www.aksgonline.com). Therefore, museums are located in parts of the State.

Therefore, a museum is not only a place where old things are kept but also a storage house for artifacts that reflect the culture and history of a place. For many visitors to a new place, a museum is a magnet, a 'must do' that hits the wish list long before even arriving in the destination. Seen as a promise of an experience of creativity and insight, museums are valued by such travelers for all that they have always been meant to be, that is, a window to a new world.

The Role of Traditional Methods of Preservation

Agbontaen-Eghafona (2001, pp.199-201) cited in Okpoko (2011) commented on the "Alternative Conservation Methods: The Benin Example", where he enumerated the effectiveness of the use of traditional substances for conservation of cultural objects thus:

- (i) Bone objects washed with black soap and water and sundried kept them dust free and the treatment applied improved the shine;
- (ii) the traditional cleaning agent on brass/bronze objects acted as a scouring powder and made them shine, the palm kernel oil served as anti-rust and lubricant, thus preventing corrosion;
- (iii) cleaning clay/terracotta objects with white kaolin clay and water served as a sealant, and seal the cracks and breakages;
- (iv) fibres that were sundried and brushed got laundering, scoured and bleached;

- (v) cleaning of iron with palm kernel oil prevented oxidation by air thus preventing rusting and as such served as anti-oxidant;
- (vi) the washing of ivory with black soap and water, and at times sand papered resulted to scouring and shine;
- (vii) cleaning of the mud shrines with charcoal and adding more mud served as sealant and added more coating. The cow dung applied occasionally was for its offensive smell to drive away termites attacking objects placed on the mud structure;
- (viii) objects fashioned out of shells were also washed with black soap and water which gave it shine and water;
- (ix) objects carved out of stone and washed in black soap and water gained a certain polish;
- (x) wood when dusted and cleaned got polish and shine to it. (p.330).

This goes to show that objects were well preserved by those that were directly involved in their custody and the result of such exercise was not to be over-emphasized. This further explains the role played by individuals in maintaining the artifacts as traditional methods of preservation.

The cleaning substances and materials were derived from natural environment, at the time it was used provided the result the users required, the objects were cleaned seasonally within a period of three to six months after which the process was repeated (Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2001). Hence, items used to care for the objects were available locally and did not require special training in conservation prior to their usage. Agbontaen-Eghafona (2001, p.331) also noted that “the knowledge of their usage was not only known to custodians of the cultural objects but also to the general populace interested in caring for the objects in their care”.

Traditional Method of Preservation

In an interview E. Emmanuel confirms the activeness and use of artifacts and religious objects by commenting that “farm tools like climbing ropes (*Ikpo*), wood carving like masks (*Iso Ekpo*) for interior decoration as shown in **figure 1** and crafts like bamboo chairs (*Mkpo Itie Ikuk*) were produced locally and sold to people in other parts of the society (Personal Communication, December, 12, 2013).

The result showed that for Africans, objects were part of their living culture. “The objects embody the songs, dances, history, and spiritual values of the people who created them and they were made to be used” (Hill, 2008, p.236). Preserving physical integrity of an object had been assumed to coincide with the preservation of the overall meaning and purpose of the object. O. Smart noted in an interview that “the use, purpose, and intention of an artwork must always be considered when choosing a treatment to suit an

individual artifact (Personal Communication, May 12, 2014). Therefore, understanding the cultural use and significance of objects was as central as understanding their materials and agents of deterioration. This is because many objects and ancestral cultural materials from traditional communities held sacred or religious meaning and must be treated with respect. In fact, “the object become meaningless if they were not used in daily life and ceremonies, and even though they were put in display cases in the museums, they were living and breathing items” (Hill, 2008, p.236). “Community members developed their own methods for preserving valuable objects while keeping them as active parts of their lives” (Gregoire & Dubuc, 2008, p.230).

Wotogbe-Weneka (1997, p.92) noted that “myth is a collective term which denotes a kind of communication, specifically a symbolic narrative in religion and symbolic places or objects, and presents itself as an authoritative, factual account, no matter how they are at variance with ordinary experience”. Hence, “cultural heritage in the form of history was expressed and preserved through myths, proverbs, riddles, folklore, and stories about past heroes” (Ifeanacho, 1998, p.79). Therefore, “indigenous music is composed and performed by the people with traditional musical instruments, style, and in vernacular” (Nwonyeh, 2007, p.272). In other words, it dealt with local experiences of man and was orally handed down from one generation to another. However, indigenous Nigerian music was an oral tradition handed down from generation to generation, and jealously preserved by those who had come to be known as ‘master musicians’. Therefore, indigenous music was the traditional music to generation more directly associated with tradition, religion and political system.

The relationship between the artist and his work was an organic aspect of the work’s relationship to its creator as expressed by the African. For many artifacts and religious objects, function was more important than the material qualities of the object, and safeguarding the intangible qualities of these objects required more than just preserving their material appearance. The object became meaningless if they were not used in daily life and ceremonies. **Figure 2** shown below described and showed elaborate use of artifacts and religious objects by *Nnabo* drummers like slit drums (*Abodom*), horns (*Nnuk*) and the full regalia of *Nnabo* masquerade. The drums were used in daily performance of socio-cultural plays very relevant to the people and not to be put in display cases in the museum. The objects that were unused were kept by the people and put to use when the time was due. To buttress this fact, I. Udotong in an interview noted that “traditional method of preservation still becomes the best for its artifacts and religious objects as compared to the museums” (Personal Communication, December 16, 2013).



Fig. 2: *Nnabo* drummers, Midim- Waterside

Source: Christmas celebration in Abak Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. 23rd December, 2013.

Museum

E. Ukoh in an interview notes that “Concerning the museums with their peculiar ways of display, museums give new identities to the works by focusing on their immanent and aesthetic qualities at the expense of the original purposes that they served in traditional communities” (Personal Communication, May 5, 2014). This means that some deeper identities of an object may defy the knowledge of museum curators who may decide to give new identities to the objects. Some of the artifacts found in the museum as medium of exchange in pre- colonial period is shown in **figure 3 & 4** below.



Fig. 3: A group of five manilas (*Akpoho*) of various types.



Source: National Museum, Oron, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Fig. 4: Other media of exchange during pre- colonial period.

Source: National Museum, Oron, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Many museums and archives are recognizing that it was impossible to separate their collections from living cultures, and in fact, it was the intangible attributes of the artifacts that made them worthy of preservation. S. Casmir also in an interview notes that “art is like a thought, the ancestor to all creativity, it was functional and people could construct their lives through art that defined them” (Personal Communication, February 8, 2014). This clearly explains that art is functional and not merely what the museum renders it inactive at most instances. Therefore, “a piece of sculpture for him was ‘good’ not because of any aesthetic consideration but because it fulfilled the role for which it had been produced being also effective in a particular ritual” (Segy, 1975, p.120).

Discussion

Postmodernism is a late 20th century movement in the arts, architecture, and criticism that was a departure from modernism. The term postmodernism has been applied to a host of movements, mainly in arts, music, and literature that reacted against tendencies in modernism, and are typically marked by revival of historical elements and techniques. The concern of this with regards to the museum through the findings of the study showed that the natural environment whereby artifacts are used portray a whole lot and gives an insight into the culture of the people that produced them.

The role of the museum as a modern method of preservation cannot be ignored in terms of educating its visitors but on the other hand, it clearly becomes one of the greatest evil by the removal of artifacts and religious objects from their natural and functional environment. Therefore, hardly was

any work of art designed for a museum. Many artifacts and religious objects are seen in the museum in different parts of the State on panels and shelves kept unused, unattended to and with no history of the art works themselves. In support of this point Horne (1986) found that ethnographic museums are no more immune to criticism than any other institutions responsible for spending public funds. This goes to show that museums had since evolved to becoming publicly-owned centers of showcase, proudly hosting exhibitions for locals and visitors alike to explore. The possessions and items may be owned by the people, or better still, they may be those of interest from destinations abroad, borrowed from other museums for a period of show.

However, for some travelers the appeal for museum had faded. In view of this Eco (1987) found that museums have always been able to arouse the curiosity of visitors, but it is sometimes argued that in contemporary times, they offer doubt rather than knowledge. This means that their value was determined by the perceived return on a visitor's payment on arrival before permission is given to take a look at artifacts and religious objects. Therefore, in the touch-starved world a place full of old possessions may not be enough to attract new interest. Working against museums was simply their image particularly for younger generations of travelers drawn to experiences that 'museum' conjure up dusty images of old buildings full of old stuff.

So, if enough was not known about the museum and all that could be gained by a visit, the experience could cause the desirability of visitors in a bid to discovering something new but in the end, the museum loses a visitor and the visitor loses out. This being so Hiller (1991) found that recent study discovers that visitors have a robust interest in traditional museum (diorama) cases and recommends using such in conjunction with other forms of communication, rather than abandoning them as old-fashioned.

In the traditional society, preservation of artifacts and religious objects was central to understanding the importance and usefulness of the objects thriving in its natural environment. Corroborating this fact, I. Udotong (Personal Communication, December 16, 2013) noted that "traditional method of preservation still becomes the best for its artifacts and religious objects as compared to the museums" because those objects are made and preserved in an environment that is natural.

There were many avenues of preserving the objects such as in dance, songs, proverbs, myths, shrines, palaces, and when desired for a particular festival or ceremony would be taken for use. Prestigious objects associated with royalty like wood carving, metal casts, royal costumes/ allusions of power and authority were stored in palaces, some are not necessarily items/ objects of worship but symbols/ allusions of power and authority that bestow respect and prestige on royal personages. This means that it was common to find in royal palaces valued and preserved materials of cultural heritage that could be seen by members of the society and visitors.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that the work examined that art for Africans and the people of Akwa Ibom State had always been rooted in their beliefs in the supernatural and supremacy of god and the gods that had control over nature and natural incidents. Owing to their production and use in social and religious contexts, art works from Akwa Ibom State are ostensibly functional rather than static as it is believed by some art critics. Therefore, cultures like those of Akwa Ibom State produced art- like sculptures as objects that extended their belief systems and worship rather than as things to be mounted on rostrums of museums and admired by detached spectators. Sequel to this, museums had lost its focus and reduced objects to being in an incapacitated, caged and isolated state.

Furthermore, the ultimate goal of drama/ theatre or performing arts had always been that of amplifying and inculcating traditional norms and values in members of the society and also celebrating, worshipping and affirming the community's wholeness, aspirations and sensibility. For the people of Akwa Ibom State, drama/theater and the performing arts is an affirmative celebration of the union of earth and cosmos, and the different existential planes of the traditional universe, created to provide community education, encourage and promote socio- communal interaction and cultural transaction of members. Sculptured objects and other art forms namely; textile, paintings, performing, folklore, literature, communication, arts and crafts were used in all aspects of daily life since traditional religiosity of the people was not a simple adherence to set dogmas or practiced in special ceremonies but was a way of life.

For this reason, works of art must not be viewed as a mere expression of religious culture nor as a mere tool of religious institutions, but also as an agent of reflection, critique, and transformation in its own right. This reflection could be historical, political, psychological and religious. Some of the areas of this art may include: music, literature, film, painting, sculpture and architecture. Therefore, works of art are said to be a manifestation of external ideas which revealed truths and pointed the way to higher values. In other words, human beings created their worlds by visual means and by virtue of the pictures they fashion, revere, display, purchase or exchange.

The limitations of the study encountered by the researcher was in the area of subjection to certain rituals before the researcher could be allowed to have access to some of the artifacts and religious objects as a member of the traditional society. This had in some way hindered the actual witness to some of the festivals and ceremonies that could have been useful in the course of the research. Again, lack of proper knowledge on the subject matter by some members of the society affected the outcome of the work because some of them were not well-vested with knowledge on the subject matter.

Therefore, in studying artifacts and religious objects by itself and being as comprehensive as possible in describing them the way they are provided an insight into the customs, preferences, styles, special occasions, work and play of the culture in which they were created. In fact, by using artifacts and religious objects as primary sources would further make it easier or describe in simple terms the understanding of what material culture is all about.

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Appendix A List of Interviewees

S/N	NAME	AGE	STATUS	PLACE	MODE	VALUE	DATE
1.	O. Smart	43	Youth Leader	Ukanafun	Direct	Reliable	12/05/2014
2.	K. Ekpo	46	Traditionalist	Abak	Direct	Reliable	17/09/2013
3.	E. Emmanuel	34	Lay Preacher	Abak	Direct	Reliable	12/12/2013
4.	S. Casmir	43	Artist	Abak	Direct	Reliable	08/02/2014
5.	E. Ukoh	24	Museum Curator	Oron	Direct	Reliable	05/05/2014
6.	I. Udotong	32	Traditionalist	Abak	Direct	Reliable	16/12/2014

Appendix B

Interview Questions and Answers

¹ Did indigenous artists have any means of preserving artifacts and religious objects?

Answer: Traditionally, the people used traditional tools and equipment to revive skills, crafts, and technologies that had long been forgotten due to technological advances

Were the objects preserved at random?

Answer: The use, purpose, and intention of an artwork must always be considered when choosing a treatment to suit an individual artifact

² What are the three major ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State?

Answer: The three major intra- ethnic groups are Ibibio, Annang and Oron, and the main language Ibibio is widely understood throughout the State, despite some slight dialectical variations

³ Mention some of the works of art produced by the people of Akwa Ibom State?

Answer: Farm tools like climbing ropes (*Ikpo*), wood carving like masks (*Iso Ekpo*) for interior decoration and crafts like bamboo chairs (*Mkpo Itie Ikuk*) were produced locally and sold to people in other parts of the society

⁴ Does the museum preserve artifacts and religious objects in totality?

Answer: Museums with their peculiar ways of display, give new identities to the works by focusing on their immanent and aesthetic qualities at the expense of the original purposes that they served in traditional communities

⁵ What do you understand by arts?

Answer: Art is like a thought, the ancestor to all creativity, it is functional and people could construct their lives through art that defines them

⁶ In your own opinion, between the museum and traditional method of preservation, which one is the best or preferred?

Answer: Traditional method of preservation still becomes the best for its artifacts and religious objects as compared to the museums".