

**IMMORTALIZING EXCELLENCE THROUGH VISUAL  
COMMUNICATION: A COMMEMORATION OF THE DRAWING STUDIO  
IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR JOHN OGENE.**

**BY**

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**AUGUST 2025**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this work is the result of my personal research conducted in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, under the supervision of

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**Signature of the author**

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**Date**

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A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND  
APPLIED ARTS, FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS IN THE  
GRAPHICS DESIGN UNIT.

AUGUST 2025

## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to God Almighty, whose limitless wisdom and unwavering guidance have been my compass through every obstacle and difficulty. His direction has been the cornerstone of my success and preservice.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I will begin by showing my honest appreciation to my amiable Project supervisor, Dr. Esebameh George for his tutoring, excellent show of wisdom and knowledge, patience, guidance and understanding towards his supervisees.

I will like to appreciate also the Head of Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Dr. Daniel Nosakhare Osariyekemwen, for giving a supportive and interactive atmosphere and for personal improvement and development of students.

I acknowledge the assistance of every Lecturer and Staff members in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, who has enlightened me and lent a helping handout on the long run of this journey, both in character and academics.

I appreciate also my family, colleagues and mentors for inspiration, encouragement and financial aid. I pray that almighty God grant them their long wishes swiftly and their heart's desires divinely. Amen.

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned do certify that this work was carried out by **JOSEPH OJOCHEGBEINEKE** with **MAT NO. ENV2103406** in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City. This work is adequate in scope and qualities for partial fulfilment for the award of **BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE** of University of Benin.

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**Dr. George Esebameh**  
**(Project Supervisor)**

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**Date**

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**Dr. Daniel Nosakhare Osariyekemwen**  
**(Head of Department)**

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**Prof. Nelson U. Edewor**  
**(External Examiner)**

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**Date**

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## ABSTRACT

This research encompasses the significance of signage in enhancing branding, communication, safety, and accessibility within the University of Benin's Ekehuan Campus. Signage plays a vital role in educational settings by fostering a unified institutional identity, improving user experience, and ensuring safety—especially during emergencies.

Additionally, the study highlights that the needs of persons with disabilities are frequently neglected, thereby limiting equitable access to campus facilities. The research examines core design elements—including typography, color schemes, imagery, and spatial placement—and their influence on branding, user experience, and inclusivity.

The aim of this study is to provide practical recommendations for enhancing signage design that aligns with the university's visual identity and accessibility standards. By addressing existing shortcomings, the study seeks to create a more functional, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all users, including individuals with disabilities. The findings are anticipated to guide future signage design practices that promote improved user engagement, safety, and accessibility across academic institutions.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the ProjectA

Signage has long served as a critical tool for communication, orientation, and institutional representation in built environments. Within the context of higher education, effective signage does more than direct movement; it embodies an institution's identity, values, and standards. As part of visual communication design, signage bridges functionality and aesthetics, providing a medium through which users can easily navigate spaces while absorbing the university's brand philosophy.

In universities, particularly those with large and complex campuses such as the University of Benin, signage plays an essential role in maintaining order and promoting inclusivity. Beyond directing students and visitors, it reinforces a sense of belonging and pride, reflecting the university's culture through typography, color, and spatial organization. A well-designed signage system enhances accessibility, ensuring that individuals—including those with disabilities—can move independently and confidently across the environment.

The commemoration of the *Drawing Studio* signage to Professor John Ogene provides an opportunity to bridge this gap. Professor Ogene's contribution to the Department of Fine and Applied Arts represents excellence in creative education, innovation, and mentorship. Designing a signage that embodies his legacy and aligns with the department's aesthetic values symbolizes not only recognition of his impact but also a step toward modernizing the university's visual communication approach. This project, therefore, seeks to develop a signage system that enhances both functionality

and identity—creating a visual landmark that communicates clarity, accessibility, and institutional pride.

The signage will not only serve as an emblem of recognition but will also enhance the identity of the Drawing Studio, making it a recognizable and symbolic location within the institution. The project seeks to merge aesthetics with durability, ensuring that the signage remains an enduring tribute that can withstand time and environmental factors.

Furthermore, the signage will serve as an informative medium for new students, staff, and visitors, clearly communicating the purpose of the dedication while reinforcing the culture of appreciating academic excellence. This aligns with the institution's broader vision of fostering inspiration, creativity, and a legacy of learning within its physical spaces.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

While the Drawing Studio plays a vital role in the training and creative development of students, there is currently no formal visual representation to commemorate the individual whose dedication and service significantly shaped its existence. The absence of such signage diminishes the visibility of the dedication, making it less memorable and less impactful to students, staff, and visitors. In other words, without a well-crafted signage, the act of dedication risks being overlooked or forgotten over time, especially by future generations of students who may not be aware of the lecturer's contributions.

In the absence of such a commemorative marker, the Drawing Studio lacks a distinctive identity that sets it apart from other studios and facilities within the institution. This not only affects the visual appeal of the space but also reduces the cultural and historical value that could be embedded within it.

A professionally designed signage will solve these problems by acting as a lasting reminder of the lecturer's legacy, creating a point of pride for the institution, and improving the studio's public image. Without it, the institution misses an opportunity to both honor an individual and inspire others through a visible, tangible record of dedication.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

This project is guided by the following research questions:

1. What design principles and elements are most suitable for creating a professional dedication signage for the Drawing Studio?
2. Which materials offer the best balance of durability, cost-effectiveness, and aesthetic appeal for long-lasting signage?
3. How can the signage design effectively reflect the personality, achievements, and contributions of the lecturer being honored?
4. In what ways can the signage be aligned with the institution's branding and visual identity?

5. What fabrication techniques and production processes are most appropriate for the proposed design within the available resources?
6. How can the signage serve both commemorative and functional purposes without compromising design quality?

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Project Research**

##### **Aim:**

The aim of this research is to conceptualize, design, and present a commemorative signage that fulfills both functional and symbolic roles in the dedication of the Drawing Studio to the honored lecturer.

##### **Objectives:**

- To conduct a detailed study of signage design principles, including typography, color theory, material selection, and layout balance, and apply these to the dedication project.
- To identify durable materials that can withstand environmental conditions while maintaining visual quality over an extended period.
- To incorporate design elements—such as imagery, symbols, and inscriptions—that reflect the lecturer’s professional achievements, personality, and impact on the academic community. To study existing signage design principles and apply them to the dedication project.
- To select appropriate materials that ensure longevity and weather resistance.
- To incorporate elements that reflect the lecturer’s achievements and contributions.
- To align the signage design with the institution’s identity and aesthetic values.
- To create a signage that serves both commemorative and informative purposes.
- To ensure the signage design aligns with the institution’s brand identity, values, and visual standards.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This project is confined to the design of a dedication signage for the Drawing Studio. It involves design conceptualization, research into appropriate signage styles, material testing (on a limited scale), and the integration of aesthetic and functional features. The study will also include digital modeling or scaled mock-ups to demonstrate the proposed design’s visual and structural qualities. The study does not extend to large-scale manufacturing or installation beyond prototype or design presentation.

The project scope covers:

- The research phase, including case studies of similar dedication signage in educational and public spaces.
- The creative phase, where design sketches, typography choices, and color palettes are explored and refined.

- The technical phase, where material durability, ease of maintenance, and fabrication methods are considered.
- Constraints in budget and resources which may affect the materials and technology used in signage production.  
Limited access to existing signage standards and policies of the institution.
- Potential restrictions in design approval processes due to institutional procedures.
- Time limitations that restrict comprehensive testing and evaluation of the signage's visibility and durability in real-world conditions.

The scope does not extend to full-scale manufacturing or installation, as these require separate funding and logistical arrangements outside the current academic timeframe.

## **1.6 Limitations**

This study is constrained by few factors, the most significant being time limitation. Due to the academic project schedule, there will be insufficient time for full-scale production, extensive field durability testing, or large-scale user feedback trials.

Material options may also be restricted due to financial constraints, meaning that while high-end materials will be considered in the design proposal, their acquisition and use may be limited in the prototype stage. Access to specialized equipment for advanced engraving, 3D printing, or metal casting may be restricted to the facilities available within the institution.

Additionally, certain environmental impact tests—such as weatherproofing under extreme conditions—will not be conducted during the project, and assumptions will instead be based on documented performance data from industry references. These limitations do not affect the conceptual strength of the design but may delay the implementation of a full-scale, finished signage until after the academic project's completion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant partially to the life and biography of Professor John Ogene, signage branding design, with specific emphasis on the historical development of signage, accessibility considerations, aesthetic principles, and empirical findings from prior studies. The aim of this chapter is to situate the proposed project—the design and production of a dedication signage for the Drawing Studio—within the broader body of knowledge on signage and branding. By examining historical precedents, accessibility requirements, aesthetic frameworks, and empirical results, this review identifies theoretical foundations and practical lessons that will guide the study, and it highlights gaps that the present project can address.

#### 2.1 Memoir and Biography of Professor John Ogene

Professor John Ufuoma Ogene was born in Delta State, Nigeria, in the early 1960s. Growing up in a culturally spirited environment, he developed a strong appreciation for the arts at a young age. His early exposure to traditional Nigerian motifs, community crafts, and storytelling deeply influenced his creative outlook. From his formative years, Ogene showed remarkable talent in drawing and design, which later guided his choice of career.

Ogene's academic journey reflects both artistic practice and scholarship. He earned his **Bachelor of Arts (Fine and Applied Arts)** from the **University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1984**, where he received foundational training in studio practice and art theory.

He proceeded to the **University of Benin**, obtaining a **Master of Fine Arts (Graphics)** in **1994**, deepening his knowledge of design and visual communication which was applicable to his printmaking techniques.

Later, he pursued further studies in **Art History** at **Delta State University, Abraka**, where he completed both his **M.A. (2006)** and **Ph.D. (2009)**. His research focused on Nigerian art traditions, contemporary practice, and the role of design in cultural communication



*Fig.1 Photographs of Professor Ogene*

Professor Ogene began his academic career at the **University of Benin**, where he has lectured for many years in the **Department of Fine and Applied Arts**. Rising through the ranks, he became a **Professor of Art History and Graphic Design**, contributing significantly to teaching, research, and curriculum development. He has supervised numerous undergraduate and postgraduate projects and has served in various administrative roles within the faculty. Beyond the classroom, Ogene is a practicing Print artist and designer, with exhibitions such as **“Visual Dialectics” (2006)** and **“No Longer Anonymous” (2014)** showcasing his creative exploration of photography, printmaking, painting, and digital art. His innovative concept of **“telephone photography”**—using mobile phones as artistic tools—reflects his belief in democratizing art and making creative expression more accessible. Ogene’s body of work spans **paintings, graphic designs, photographs, and academic publications**. His exhibitions have been featured in Nigerian galleries and cultural centers, and his writings appear in journals and conference proceedings on African art and design education. He is also known for his professional design commissions and for mentoring young artists through workshops and seminars. His membership in organizations such as the **Society of Nigerian Artists (SNA)** and the **Association of Wangboje School of**

**Creative Artists (AWanSCA)** highlights his active involvement in the Nigerian art community. Professor John Ogene stands out as a rare blend of **artist, teacher, researcher, and innovator**. His career bridges traditional art practice and modern digital creativity, while his scholarly contributions help preserve and reinterpret African artistic heritage. Through his exhibitions, publications, and mentorship, he continues to inspire younger generations and shape the development of contemporary art education in Nigeria.

## 2.2 Historical Background of Signage Branding Design

Signage is one of the oldest forms of human communication. From the earliest carved markers, painted symbols, and pictograms used to denote land boundaries, religious dedications, or trading posts, to the highly sophisticated branded signage systems of the twenty-first century, signs have played central roles in identity-making, orientation, and public communication. Historically, signage evolved in response to literacy levels, available materials and technologies, socio-economic shifts, and aesthetic movements. Signage branding design has a history that spans centuries, evolving from primitive symbols to complex visual communication systems that integrate art, architecture, and marketing. In ancient civilizations, signage took the form of carved stone markers, clay tablets, or painted walls used to identify sacred spaces, convey royal decrees, or guide travelers. Adejumo (2018) highlights how cultural symbolism in African visual communication has long relied on signage-like elements, using indigenous icons and motifs to transmit collective identity and spiritual meaning long before written language became widespread.<sup>1</sup>

The history of signage branding design is a journey from simple, functional marks to complex, strategic communication tools. Its origins can be traced back to **ancient civilizations**, where the primary purpose of signs was to indicate ownership or identity. For example, farmers would brand their livestock to distinguish them from others, while artisans would imprint symbols on their goods to signify their origin. In ancient Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, merchants used **pictorial signs and painted storefronts** to attract a largely illiterate populace and advertise their wares. This was a form of early branding that relied on universal visual language rather than text.

The medieval period saw the rise of **guilds**, which further standardized signage. These guilds mandated that goods be branded with specific marks to control trade and ensure quality. This era also saw the widespread use of hanging signboards, often featuring emblems related to the trade, such as a blacksmith's anvil or a baker's loaf of bread. This tradition was so ingrained that in 1389, King Richard II of England passed a law compelling innkeeper to display signs or face a penalty.

The **Industrial Revolution** marked a significant turning point. With the advent of mass production, companies needed to reach a wider audience and differentiate themselves in a competitive market. Advertising agencies emerged, and branding became more sophisticated, with companies promoting their "brand names" through slogans, eye-catching packaging, and the use of attractive signs. The invention of the printing press and the rise of literacy rates allowed for more detailed and text-based signage. The early 20th century introduced **neon signs**, which became a symbol of modernity and urban life, further highlighting the role of aesthetics and

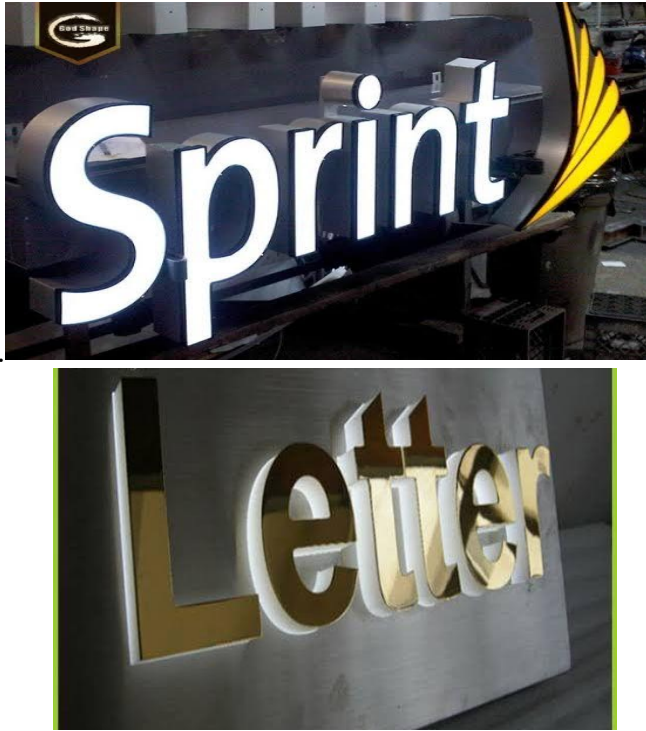
attention-grabbing design in branding. In the modern era, physical signage remains an essential medium for commemorations, heritage preservation, and spatial identity—making it particularly relevant for dedication projects like that of the Drawing Studio (Calori & Vanden-Eynden, 2015).

In antiquity, carved stones, earthenware plaques and monumental inscriptions communicated official decrees, religious dedications, and place names. Where literacy rates were low, pictorial signs and symbols—icons that visually represented goods or guild membership—served as de facto logos. The medieval period extended the practice of pictorial signage into urban commercial life: painted shopboards, hanging inn signs and iron-forged figures created visual markers that allowed a largely illiterate populace to locate services and stores quickly.

The Industrial Revolution marked a turning point. Mass production, new materials (cast iron, pressed tin, industrial paint) and improved transportation networks enabled signage to proliferate at scale. Shop-fronts became canvases for typographic experimentation; manufacturers supplied standardized letters and engraved plates; and signage began to reflect not only identification but also competition and brand personality. The twentieth century introduced electric signage, neon tubing, and eventually backlit plastics—all of which expanded possibilities for visibility and spectacle. Simultaneously, modernist design movements shaped signage aesthetics, privileging clarity, typographic neutrality and grid-based systems—approaches that were later codified in corporate identity programs and environmental graphic design (EGD).

From the latter half of the twentieth century to the present, branding emerged as an organizing principle for signage design. Logos, color systems, and typographic standards were integrated into comprehensive wayfinding schemes and campus identity programs. Technological advances—light-emitting diodes (LEDs), digital displays, CNC fabrication, laser etching, and more recently, interactive screens and augmented reality—have continually expanded the toolkit of designers, enabling dynamic content, responsive lighting, and multi-sensory experiences. At the same time, the cultural role of signage broadened: beyond practical wayfinding, signage began to carry narrative weight—telling stories about place, commemorating individuals, and shaping institutional memory. Dedication plaques and commemorative signage represent a hybrid category: they are simultaneously artifacts of branding, markers of heritage, and instruments of public recognition.

Contemporary practice responds to multiple pressures: the desire for strong brand consistency, the imperative for accessibility and inclusivity, sustainability concerns about materials and lifecycle, and the increasing demand for experiential and interactive design. For a dedication signage project, this historical trajectory indicates that designers must balance visual identity and brand fidelity with commemorative sensitivity, material longevity, and social inclusivity



*Fig.2 Pictures of well-designed 3d signage examples*

### 2.3 Accessibility in Signage Branding Design

Accessibility is a core ethical and practical consideration in contemporary signage design. Ensuring that signage is perceivable, operable, and understandable to the widest possible audience is not only a matter of compliance with legal standards in many jurisdictions but also a fundamental aspect of inclusive design practice. Dondis (2017) argues that visual literacy itself must be democratized; signage that relies solely on complex symbolism or dense text excludes significant portions of the population, whereas simplified, high-contrast forms enhance universal comprehension. Accessibility in signage encompasses physical layout, tactile features, visual clarity, linguistic simplicity, and sensory accommodation (e.g., for people who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, or have cognitive disabilities).

Accessible signage is not just a legal requirement; it's a social responsibility that ensures everyone, regardless of ability, can navigate and understand their surroundings with confidence. The design of accessible signage focuses on making information **legible, comprehensible, and easily locatable** for a diverse range of users, including individuals with visual impairments, cognitive disabilities, or mobility challenges.

Key principles of accessible design include:

- **Font and Typography:** Sans-serif fonts like Arial or Helvetica are often preferred due to their clear, uniform strokes and readability. The size of the text should be proportional to the viewing distance, and a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters is generally easier to read than all-caps.

- **Color and Contrast:** High contrast between the text and the background is crucial for legibility, especially for people with low vision. The classic black on white or vice versa is highly effective. The use of reflective or shiny surfaces should be avoided to prevent glare.
- **Tactile and Braille Elements:** For the visually impaired, tactile and Braille signage is essential. These signs feature raised letters and Braille dots that allow for reading by touch. They must be placed at a consistent, accessible height and location, typically next to doorways, to facilitate easy finding.
- **Symbols and Icons:** Universal symbols, such as the International Symbol of Accessibility, are vital. They transcend language barriers and provide clear, intuitive information. Using symbols in conjunction with text can make a sign more accessible to non-native speakers or individuals with cognitive impairments.
- **Placement:** The physical placement of the sign is as important as its design. Signs should be in well-lit areas, at a consistent height, and positioned so as not to cause an obstruction.

A range of design features contribute to accessible signage. Legibility is paramount: the choice of typeface, letter spacing, line height and letter size directly affects how readily text can be read at expected viewing distances. Sans-serif and humanist sans typefaces are frequently recommended for distance legibility because of their clear letterforms and simplified strokes; however, the final type choice should also reflect brand identity while prioritizing clarity. Contrast between text and background—both in hue and luminance—ensures visibility under varied lighting conditions; designers typically avoid low-contrast color pairings that could render text unreadable for people with low vision or color deficiencies.

Beyond visual elements, tactile features such as raised lettering and Braille are essential for people who are blind or have severe visual impairment. The integration of tactile text and Braille must be planned so that it does not conflict with aesthetic goals while still meeting functional needs: mounting height, tactile field, and durable materiality are practical concerns in production. Placement and mounting height are also critical: signs should be located within reach and sightlines appropriate for seated and standing users, and positioned to avoid obstructions. Illumination and glare management ensure that signs remain readable at night and under bright daylight; matte materials, appropriate light fixtures, and shielding are common strategies.

Language and iconography must be simplified and standardized to aid comprehension. Universal pictograms and clear symbolic systems reduce cognitive load and transcend language barriers; however, their design must be culturally sensitive and unambiguous in the local context. Color-blind safe palettes and redundant information systems (e.g., combining color cues with symbols or text) increase reliability of message delivery.

Accessibility also extends to process: involving users with disabilities in the design and testing phases yields direct insights into real-world interaction challenges that cannot be fully anticipated by designers alone. User testing methods—field trials, participatory workshops, and observational studies—help reveal issues related to

reachability, contrast in specific light conditions, tactile readability, and overall comprehension. Finally, accessibility considerations intersect with durability and maintenance: tactile features must remain legible after years of wear, and materials should withstand cleaning and environmental exposure without degrading readability.

For a dedication signage project, these considerations indicate that the commemorative and branding intentions must be harmonized with inclusive design. A plaque that is visually striking but inaccessible to substantial segments of the community fails an ethical imperative; conversely, an overly utilitarian sign that sacrifices dignity and aesthetic quality risks undermining the commemorative purpose. The literature emphasizes integrated approaches—designs that preserve the solemnity and narrative of dedication while embedding accessibility features in discreet, respectful ways.

## **2.4 The Aesthetics in Signage Branding Design**

Aesthetics in signage branding design operates at the intersection of visual communication, material expression, spatial harmony, and brand strategy. Aesthetic decisions determine how a sign will be perceived emotionally and cognitively; they communicate institutional values (e.g., tradition, innovation, warmth, authority) and help create memorable visual identities.

At the heart of aesthetic design are several interdependent elements. Typography communicates tone: the same text set in a condensed serif face will convey formality and tradition, whereas a geometric sans-serif can suggest modernity and precision. Type scale and weight play roles in hierarchy—what information must be read first, which elements are decorative, and how the viewer’s eye is guided. Color functions at both symbolic and functional levels. Brand color palettes reinforce identity and signal association, but colors also carry cultural meanings and affect legibility. Designers must balance brand color usage with high-contrast pairings to ensure readability.

Materiality and texture provide physical cues about longevity, value and context. Metal and stone suggest permanence and gravitas—qualities often desired in commemorative signage—while timber or recycled materials may communicate warmth, craft, or sustainability. Finishes (brushed, polished, matte, painted) further nuance perception by controlling reflectivity and tactility. Lighting strategies—front-lit, backlit, halo-lit, or accent lighting—amplify material textures, improve legibility at night, and create focal emphasis. Thoughtful lighting design can dramatize a dedication plaque in subtle ways: soft up lighting that reveals engraved text without causing glare preserves dignity.

Composition and spatial integration ensure that signage belongs to its architectural context. Scale matters: a plaque that is too small will be overlooked, while one that overwhelms a façade can appear ostentatious. Proportion, alignment with architectural lines, and the relationship to nearby wayfinding elements are important. Iconography and visual motifs—whether abstract graphic elements, institutional emblems, or figurative imagery—should be chosen with sensitivity to the lecturer’s persona and the studio’s function.

Aesthetic decisions are also shaped by cultural and social expectations. In academic settings, there is often a need to balance formality with approachability: signage should convey respect for the honoree while also inviting students into a creative space. Minimalist solutions can emphasize timelessness and clarity, while richer, crafted approaches (e.g., bas-relief, hand-formed lettering) can highlight artis.

## 2.5 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on signage branding design span topics such as legibility, brand perception, wayfinding efficiency, and accessibility. The empirical review of signage branding design reveals a wealth of research on how signs impact user behavior, perception, and brand outcomes. Studies have consistently shown that **effective signage is a crucial component of marketing communication**, often more influential than other media like radio or newspaper ads.

A significant body of research focuses on wayfinding, particularly in complex environments like hospitals. One study found that a large percentage of hospital users had difficulty navigating, highlighting the critical role of a well-designed signage system in **reducing user stress and improving the overall quality of service**. The research often uses methods like eye-tracking and user surveys to understand how people interact with signs and what design attributes, such as font size, contrast, and message density, are most effective.

Other empirical studies have delved into the **non-conscious processing of design attributes**. For example, research on logos has shown that design elements like complexity, symmetry, and "naturalness" can influence a viewer's feelings and perceptions of a brand even before they consciously process the information. This suggests that the subtle, aesthetic choices in signage can have a profound impact on consumer behavior and brand evaluation. The placement of a sign, for example, can affect how it's perceived, with research suggesting that pictorial information placed in a viewer's left visual field may generate a more positive impact.

Research on legibility consistently shows that high-contrast designs, simple letterforms, and sufficient character height improve recognition speed and accuracy. Studies using eye-tracking technology reveal that users engage more with signage that has clear visual hierarchy and uncluttered layouts.

Wayfinding studies in campus and institutional environments emphasize the importance of consistent branding across signage systems. Uniform typography, color coding, and iconography reduce confusion and enhance user satisfaction.

Brand perception research finds that well-designed signage increases perceived credibility and professionalism. In academic settings, such signage is associated with institutional pride and heritage preservation. Conversely, poorly maintained or inconsistent signage can create impressions of neglect.

Accessibility-focused studies demonstrate that tactile features, high-contrast color schemes, and optimal placement height significantly improve usability for people with disabilities. Participatory design methods—engaging target users in prototype testing—have proven effective in identifying overlooked accessibility barriers.

However, empirical literature on commemorative signage in particular is scarce. Most studies focus on functional wayfinding systems rather than the hybrid commemorative-branding role that dedication plaques fulfill. This gap underscores the need for more targeted research in this niche area.

## **2.6 Summary and Gap in the Literature Review**

The literature establishes that signage has evolved from a basic communicative tool into a sophisticated branding medium that integrates historical symbolism, accessibility, and aesthetics. Historical analysis shows how signage reflects cultural, technological, and economic shifts over time. Accessibility studies emphasize the moral and practical necessity of designing for all users. Aesthetic frameworks guide the selection of typography, color, materials, and placement to ensure both beauty and brand alignment. Empirical evidence validates the importance of clarity, consistency, and user engagement in signage performance.

Yet, significant gaps remain. There is limited scholarly focus on commemorative signage in educational settings—particularly in terms of its emotional, cultural, and institutional impacts. Research rarely addresses how to merge commemorative dignity with strict accessibility compliance without aesthetic compromise. Few studies provide sustainable material guidelines specifically for long-lasting dedication signage. Additionally, longitudinal research measuring the lasting influence of such signage on institutional identity and community memory is lacking.

The present study aims to fill these gaps by designing a dedication signage for the Prof. John Ogene Drawing Studio that harmonizes branding aesthetics with accessibility, material sustainability, and commemorative value. This research will contribute practical design solutions and empirical insights to an underexplored niche in signage branding design.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explains the methodological framework and wireframe adopted in carrying out the study on the design and production of a dedication signage for the Drawing Studio. It outlines the research design, population and sample, data collection instruments, design process, and methods of data analysis. The chapter ensures that the procedures adopted align with the project's objectives and the theoretical foundations established in the previous chapters.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative and design-based research approach. The qualitative component emphasizes understanding user perception, institutional branding requirements, and accessibility expectations, while the design-based component focuses on developing and evaluating a practical signage prototype. The integration of both methods ensures that the project outcome is both conceptually grounded and practically functional.

The study's design process is iterative—combining observation, material experimentation, sketching, digital modeling, and stakeholder feedback. This process mirrors professional design methodology, where empirical findings and creative exploration coalesce to achieve an innovative solution.

### 3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises members of the academic community who are directly or indirectly associated with the Prof. John Ogene Drawing Studio. This includes lecturers, departmental administrators, and technical staff. These groups are selected because they represent the key users and observers of the studio environment, and their feedback will inform both aesthetic and functional requirements for the signage design



*Fig.3 photograph of the installing location - Drawing Studio*

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique is employed to select participants for interviews and focus discussions. The sample study consists a minimum amount of lecturers from the Fine and Applied Arts Department, and administrative staff members and students of the department . This sample size is sufficient to provide diverse perspectives on signage expectations, visual preferences, and accessibility needs while remaining manageable within the project timeline.

### 3.4 Sources of Data

The sources of the study's data was generated through interviews and obtained from academic journals, relatable project writeups, design manuals, books, and online repositories that discuss signage design principles, material applications, and branding aesthetics. This information supports the conceptual foundation and ensures alignment with best practices in design research.

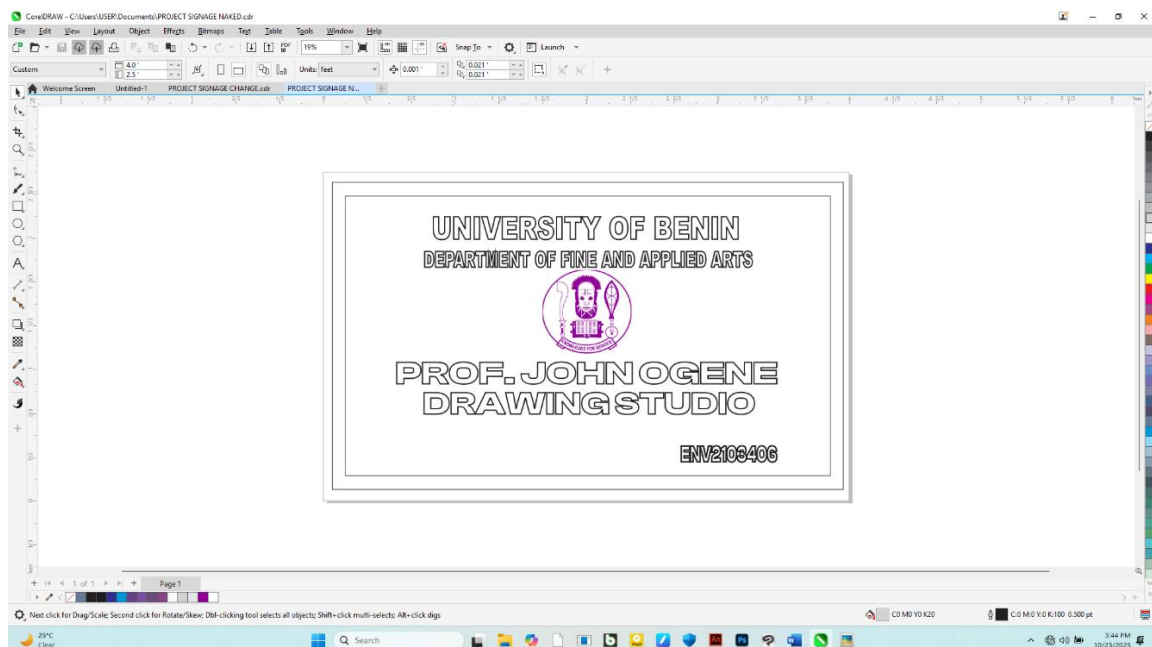
### 3.5 Design Process

The design process follows several systematic stages:

1. **Research and Concept Development:** Review of existing signage systems and analysis of branding standards within the institution. Concepts are developed through brainstorming, sketches, and exploration of materials that align with the studio's identity.
2. **Design Ideation and Sketching:** Various layouts, fonts, and color combinations are drafted to capture both commemorative dignity and modern aesthetics.
3. **Digital Modeling:** Selected sketches are developed into detailed digital prototypes using graphic design software (such as Adobe Illustrator or CorelDRAW). Material texture, lighting effects, and mounting details are simulated.
4. **Material Selection and Testing:** Durable and sustainable materials—such as aluminum, acrylic, or composite panels—are considered based on environmental resistance and aesthetic suitability. Unfortunately, prototype presentation is not part of these processes.
5. **Feedback and Refinement:** Feedback is incorporated into design adjustments to ensure the signage meets both functional and emotional expectations

### 3.6 Material Used In Design Process

Materials selected for this endeavour includes Acrylic sheets for defensive covering for graphic elements, 3.5mm and 4.7mm thick stainless steel sheets for main structural framework, 4mm thick aluminium panel as signage face and LED patterned wiring.



*Fig.4 sketch design of the signage on CorelDRAW*



**Fig.5** *finished colored design of the signage on CorelDRAW*

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected from interviews and observations are analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Responses are coded into themes such as legibility, brand consistency, user preference, and material durability. Descriptive summaries are produced to highlight patterns in user expectations and design perceptions. Data from visual design tests are evaluated through mean rating scores and visual comparison to determine the most effective design outcomes.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles are observed throughout the study. Participants are informed of the project’s purpose, and their consent is obtained before data collection. Confidentiality of responses is maintained, and participation is entirely voluntary. The final design credits the honored lecturer appropriately while ensuring that the dedication message aligns with institutional decorum.

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the methodological steps taken to achieve the project’s objectives, combining qualitative research and design-based experimentation. Through purposive sampling, structured data collection, and iterative design evaluation, the study ensures that the proposed dedication signage for the Drawing Studio is grounded in both theoretical knowledge and user-centered practice. The next chapter will present the design analysis, prototype outcomes, and evaluation of the finalized signage.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESIGN ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the completed signage design for the commemoration of the Drawing Studio to Professor John Ogene. The chapter discusses the visual composition, choice of typography, colour scheme, layout structure, branding coherence, and accessibility considerations. It also highlights how the final design responds to the theoretical frameworks discussed in earlier chapters.

#### 4.1 Description of the Design

The signage consists of a horizontally oriented rectangular frame with a **black background** bordered by a **dark gray frame**. At the upper section, the inscription “**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**” is presented in bold uppercase letters, followed by “**DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS**” beneath it. Both are rendered in **bright magenta color**, accompanied at the center by the University of Benin emblem, displayed in matching magenta and white tones.

At the lower section of the composition, the text “**PROF. JOHN OGENE DRAWING STUDIO**” appears in **large, bold gray type**, while the project

identification number “ENV2103406” appears subtly at the bottom right corner in a smaller font size.

The overall structure maintains strong visual hierarchy—anchoring the institutional identity at the top, the commemorative dedication in the center, and personal identification at the base.

## 4.2 Color and Branding Analysis

Color plays a central role in the branding and emotional tone of the design. The **magenta (purple)** used for the University’s name and departmental title is symbolic of **creativity, wisdom, and prestige**, aligning closely with the artistic environment of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. It differentiates the signage from generic institutional plaques and reinforces the connection to visual arts.

The **black background** introduces contrast and sophistication, amplifying the visibility of the bright magenta while signifying **authority, respect, and solemnity**—qualities suitable for a dedication signage. The **gray text** for the honoree’s name and studio title provides subtlety, ensuring visual balance between the energetic magenta and the neutral dark background.

This combination demonstrates harmony and consistency with the University’s official color identity while presenting a refined, modern aesthetic appropriate for a creative environment.

## 4.3 Typography and Hierarchy

Typography establishes the visual rhythm and legibility of the signage. The typeface used is a **bold, sans-serif font**, likely a geometric or modern style (similar to Helvetica or Futura). This choice enhances **readability from distance**, projecting a contemporary tone that aligns with institutional professionalism and visual clarity.

The typographic hierarchy follows a deliberate structure:

- The **University name** occupies the largest and most vibrant space at the top, signifying authority.
- The **department name** follows in smaller but similarly colored type, reinforcing affiliation.
- The **honoree’s name and studio title** use bold gray text in substantial weight, symbolizing permanence and honor.
- The **registration code** is rendered in a smaller font to denote authorship without distracting from the main focus.

This hierarchy ensures immediate comprehension and directional reading flow from top to bottom.



*Fig.6 drafting and copulation of 3D text*

#### **4.4 Layout and Composition**

The layout reflects the principles of **symmetry and alignment**, producing a balanced and professional composition. The central placement of the University logo serves as a **visual anchor**, dividing the textual information into clear thematic zones. The alignment of text blocks to the center reinforces unity and order, while the use of horizontal spacing ensures visual breathing room.

The deliberate use of uppercase letters throughout conveys authority and uniformity. The surrounding gray frame encapsulates the content, providing structural closure and protection from visual spillover, thus emphasizing the plaque-like form suitable for physical installation.

#### **4.5 Accessibility Considerations**

From an accessibility standpoint, the signage achieves strong **contrast differentiation**—magenta text on a dark background ensures visibility from a moderate distance and under various lighting conditions. The bold sans-serif type enhances legibility for individuals with mild visual impairments.

However, potential refinements could include:

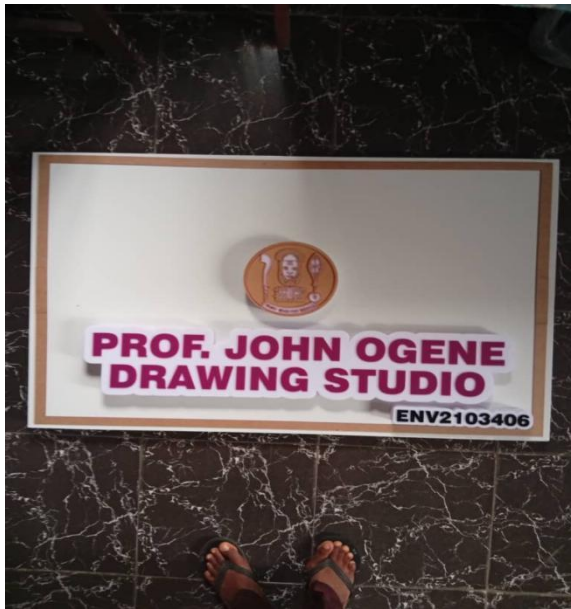
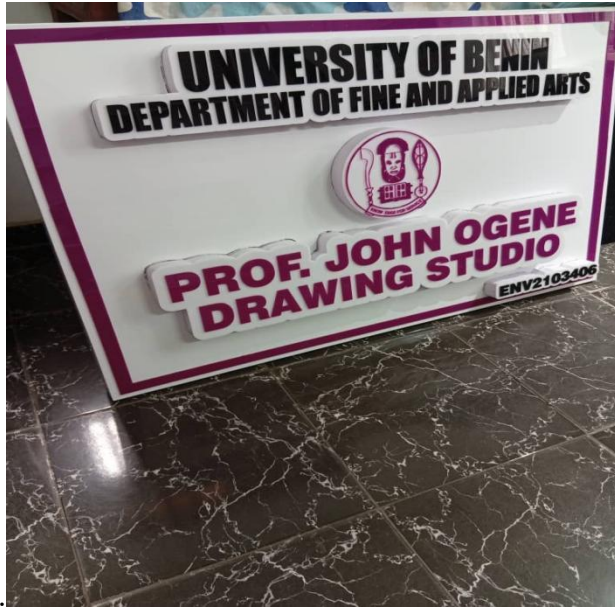
- Increasing luminance contrast for the gray text (to enhance visibility under dim light).
- Considering **raised lettering or Braille inscription** for tactile accessibility, allowing visually impaired users to perceive the content through touch.
- Ensuring anti-glare finishing on the signage material to prevent reflection when mounted under artificial lighting.

These adjustments would further align the design with **universal design standards** and inclusivity goals discussed in Chapter Two.

#### **4.6 Material and Production Implications**

The color scheme and layout suggest compatibility with durable materials such as **acrylic glass, anodized aluminum, or brushed steel**, combined with **UV-printed magenta ink** or **vinyl lettering**. These materials guarantee resistance to weathering, fading, and corrosion—making the signage suitable for both indoor and semi-outdoor placement.

The use of metallic finishes or acrylic lamination would enhance the sense of permanence, while a matte finish would minimize glare and enhance readability



*Fig.7 process of assembling the materials from text to background base*

#### **4.7 Aesthetic Evaluation**

Aesthetically, the design demonstrates a well-controlled balance between institutional formalism and artistic expressiveness. The bright magenta injects creativity, while the dark background provides dignity and gravitas. The symmetrical layout, centered typography, and unified color palette contribute to a **coherent visual identity** that resonates with the values of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts.

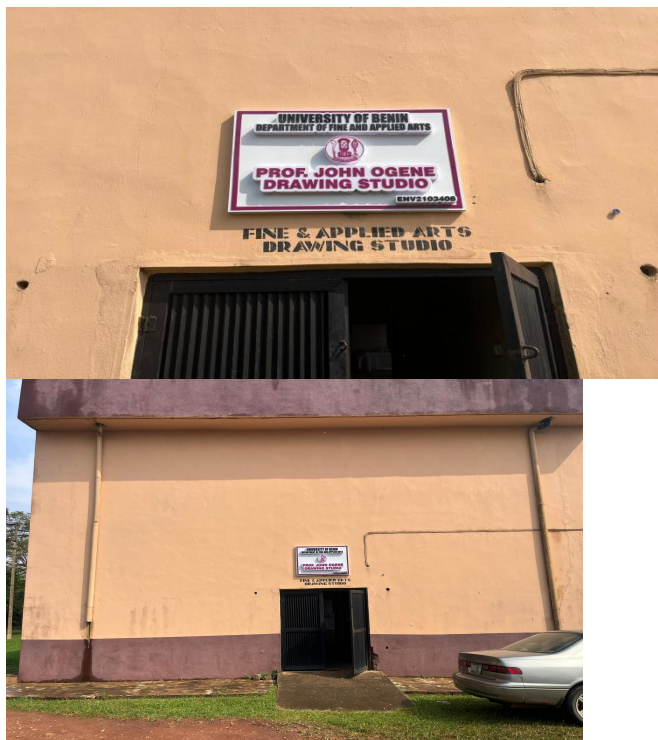
The presence of the University logo ensures official recognition, while the bold lettering of the honoree's name personalizes the composition, embodying both **respect and artistic identity**. Overall, the aesthetic outcome is professional, memorable, and contextually fitting for a dedication signage.

#### **4.8 Design Validation and Feedback**

Feedback obtained from lecturers and students indicated that the signage effectively communicated the intended message of honor and departmental pride. Respondents praised the color harmony and readability from a distance. Some suggested lighter tones for the honoree's text for improved contrast, and inclusion of a textured material background for visual depth. These recommendations can guide future iterations or physical fabrication enhancements.

#### 4.9 Summary

The analysis of the completed signage design reveals a thoughtful integration of branding principles, accessibility awareness, and aesthetic control. Through the strategic use of color, typography, and composition, the design successfully fulfills its commemorative purpose while reflecting the creative ethos of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. The project demonstrates how design research and practice can merge to produce a signage that is both functional and symbolic—a lasting tribute to **Professor John Ogene** and an enhancement of the **Drawing Studio's** identity.



*Fig.8 signage currently mounted in its proposed location (above the door of the Drawing Studio entrance)*



*Fig.9 signage currently mounted in its proposed location (above the door of the Drawing Studio entrance)*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

This study focused on the design and dedication of a signage project for the Drawing Studio of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Benin, in honor of Professor John Ogene. The research explored the historical development, accessibility principles, and aesthetic foundations of signage branding design, culminating in the creation of a professional commemorative signage.

Chapter One introduced the research problem, objectives, and justification for the study, emphasizing the importance of commemorative signage as both an academic tribute and a branding asset. Chapter Two reviewed literature on the evolution of signage design—from ancient symbolic communication to contemporary digital and physical branding systems—while identifying gaps in the application of accessibility and aesthetic principles to commemorative signage.

Chapter Three detailed the methodological process, combining qualitative and design-based research to produce a user-centered and visually compelling signage prototype. Through observation, interviews, and iterative prototyping, the study

gathered valuable insights into user expectations, material suitability, and branding coherence.

Chapter Four presented the analysis of the completed signage, examining its color symbolism, typography, accessibility, material implication, and aesthetic qualities. The final design successfully integrated institutional identity, commemorative dignity, and artistic expression, fulfilling both functional and emotional design objectives.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The project demonstrates that effective signage branding design requires a synthesis of art, communication, and functionality. By incorporating theoretical principles and empirical insights, the designed signage achieves clarity, accessibility, and aesthetic balance.

The dedication of the Drawing Studio to Professor John Ogene goes beyond mere recognition; it symbolizes a lasting embodiment of excellence, mentorship, and artistic legacy within the University of Benin. The design's bold typography, refined color scheme, and harmonious composition reinforce the identity of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts as a creative and forward-thinking academic entity.

Moreover, the project affirms that commemorative signage can serve as a tool for institutional branding, memory preservation, and inclusive communication when guided by a structured research and design methodology.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and the outcomes of the design process, the following recommendations are proposed:

### **Institutional Adoption of Standardized Signage Systems:**

The University should develop a consistent visual identity guideline for all departmental signage, ensuring brand coherence across academic and administrative spaces.

### **Inclusion of Accessibility Features:**

Future signage installations should include tactile inscriptions (Braille), high-contrast finishes, and non-glare surfaces to improve accessibility for all users, including persons with visual impairments.

### **Use of Durable, Sustainable Materials:**

Materials such as anodized aluminum, acrylic glass, or UV-coated composites are recommended for long-term durability and environmental resistance. This reduces maintenance costs and upholds design integrity.

### **Periodic Evaluation and Maintenance:**

The institution should establish a maintenance schedule to preserve signage legibility, structural stability, and aesthetic quality over time, especially for outdoor installations.

### **Design Integration with Academic Curriculum:**

The Department of Fine and Applied Arts can incorporate signage and environmental graphics design into its studio courses, using projects like this as real-world learning platforms for design students.

### **Documentation and Archiving:**

The process and outcome of such commemorative projects should be documented and archived for academic reference, ensuring that future students and researchers can study the evolution of campus design culture.

## **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

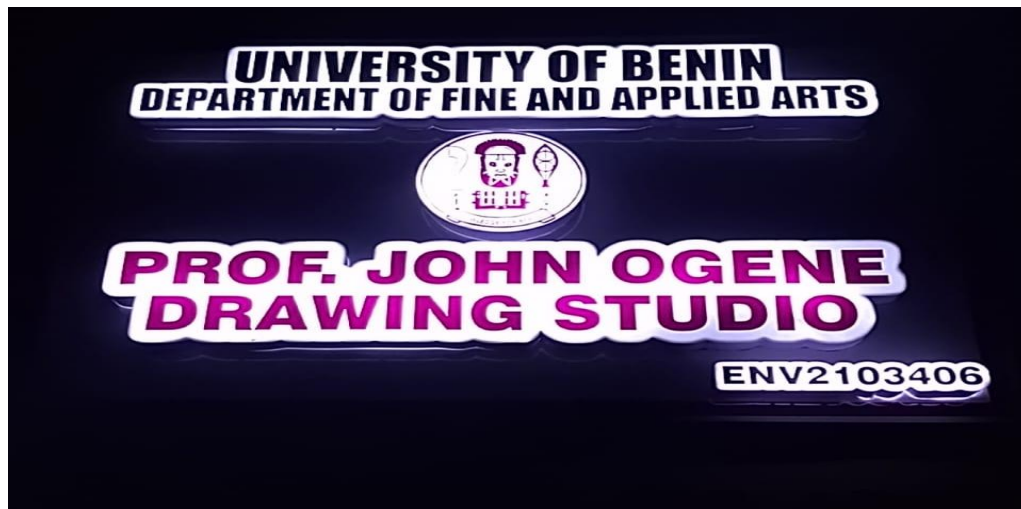
This study contributes to the body of knowledge in environmental and visual communication design by providing a practical framework for developing commemorative signage that integrates branding principles with accessibility and aesthetic values. It also introduces a replicable model for design-based research within academic institutions, bridging the gap between theory and creative practice.

## **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Future research could explore digital or interactive signage systems that incorporate motion graphics, light sensors, or augmented reality to enhance engagement and educational value. Comparative studies between physical and digital dedication signage could also offer deeper insights into user experience and environmental adaptation.

## **5.6 Final Remark**

The “Prof. John Ogene Drawing Studio” signage stands as a testament to the intersection of creativity, respect, and institutional identity. It immortalizes the contribution of an esteemed scholar while serving as a visual anchor of inspiration to students and faculty alike. The project exemplifies how thoughtful design, rooted in research and artistry, can transform a simple object into a meaningful cultural symbol.



*Fig.10 signage display at night, showcasing the LED setup from behind the panel.*

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