

**WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES IN MARKET PLACES IN BENIN CITY
AS INSPIRATION FOR STYLE AND CULTURAL DOCUMENTATION**

BY

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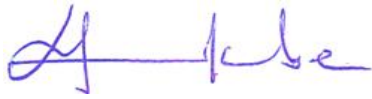
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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my father, Apostle (Dr.) S. Y. Ogbebor (1932-2021), who first called me ‘Professor’ and my uncle, Professor Vincent I. Iyawe (1953-2024) who stood firmly for my cause—may their souls rest in perfect peace. And to the women of the world, who like me, struggle in the market places of life to make our voices heard and contribute our ‘artistic strokes’ to building the economy, we will always win for our families and for ourselves.

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ABSTRACT

Market places are visually dynamic spaces that offer a rich tapestry of colour, movement, and cultural interactions that have long inspired artists, especially painters. However, within the sub-genre of market scene painting, a field largely dominated by male artists, the portrayal of women has been problematic. Women have been frequently depicted according to prevailing artistic norms and objectified roles, while their economic agency and diverse market-related occupations have also been portrayed from a male-centered perspective. This study therefore, aimed to draw from the framework of Feminist Visual Culture interrogated the traditional ways of ‘seeing’ and challenged the male-dominated gaze that has historically shaped visual representation of women in market scene paintings.

This study employed an exploratory design guided by critical theory and the Mulvey-Hooks visual culture framework, which examined how women are represented in visual culture and how they can resist objectification. Combining visual analysis with contextual critique, the research examined stylistic paintings of women’s activities in market places in order to explore how gender roles and economic labour should be depicted and understood in the imagery of Benin City’s market places.

The study revealed that it is possible to produce paintings that foreground women’s economic agency and depict them in dignified roles as human beings whose contributions cannot be trivialized. It also showed that the textured effects achieved through the palette knife technique can enhance the meaning and context of the artwork. The research advocates for more gender-balanced paintings that highlight women’s vital contributions to the economic and social development of the nation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Since the dawn of the human race, artists have been preoccupied with depicting various themes and scenes that represent their experiences in their environment and culture; and painters like other artists have done this for thousands of years. The earliest painters in human history are known to have depicted in their works scenes related to the early mans' interest in hunting and ritual. As painting further evolved, religious and mythical themes as well as scenes of court life took centre stage until around the Middle Ages (Cole and Gealt, 1989; Van Dyke, 1919). By the inception of the modern era, painters gained more freedom to explore themes and scenes not only related to court life and religion, but also scenes of love, family life, workplace, everyday life, and more. Historically, market themes, as a sub-theme of Genre Art started featuring prominently in paintings from around the late Renaissance era to the early Baroque period especially among the Dutch and Flemish painters of the era, which for them represented strongly their social and economic identity (National Gallery of Art Washington, 2007). This trend in painting everyday activities around market places later influenced many modern and contemporary painters to take some serious interest in market scene paintings.

Market places have become sources of inspiration to many painters obviously because they bring together buyers and sellers and their products. Market places draw the attention of modern artists largely because of the juxtaposition of commercial activities with the social interaction of people and their products, which makes them

colourful and dramatic. Market places support such general activities like production, advertising, transportation and exchange of goods and services, as well as, such particular activities like displaying, hawking, and retailing of wares in addition to the “dramatic experience” of haggling prices and exchanging of pleasantries among sellers and customers. These activities and interactions may be more intense or more scenic and colourful from day to day, and from market to market. No wonder artists find them inspirational and try to document this aspect of human experience in their works and paintings.

However, such paintings produced in this aspect of human experiences by the foremost Nigerian painters were usually stereotypical rather than dynamic. The European painters such as Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer made use of focus on aspects that represented women in ways they desired. This focus seem to portray women in such light that the feminists will question, making this study appropriate in experimentation and exploration of style and technique in portraying women as valuable to the society rather than vulnerable as tools for objectification.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In painting, artists freely choose the subjects of their paintings or themes of their work to reflect their beliefs, experiences and desires et cetera. Since the evolution of painting and the development of art traditions and styles, painters have reflected in their paintings themes from “grand” to common-place subjects. The activities of people in market places have held painters spell-bound with their “colourfulness” and “interestingness,” such that in painting market scenes painters inadvertently participate in recording their own versions of history for posterity.

Hence, many scenes so chosen and painted by artists may end up being overly exaggerated, misrepresented, and/or underrepresented.

Sadly as much as market scene themes have captured the imagination of painters across different eras and cultures, many painters have not so successfully captured the roles and activities of women in market places as much as they should. Women in market scene paintings have often been stereotypically depicted and their roles in market places underrepresented. The under-representation and stereotypical depiction of women in European and Nigerian market scene paintings can lead to several negative consequences such as perpetuating gender inequality, limiting women's economic opportunities and reinforcing stereotypes about women's roles and contributions to the economic development of society.

In terms of painting style, renaissance and modern European painters mainly favoured realism and impressionism in painting market scenes, on one hand. On the other hand, the status-quo among modern and contemporary Nigerian painters has been mainly focused on the exploration of expressionism as the more convenient painting style for portraying market scenes. The consequence of this status quo therefore, is that it has created the false impression that successful market scene paintings are better executed in expressionism. In addition, many women portrayed in these modern and contemporary Nigerian market scene paintings are commonly presented in stereotypical poses and limited occupational roles. This, in reality, contrasts with the multitudes of poses and occupational roles that women display daily in different market spaces. Hence there's a need to explore other painting styles for executing market scenes as well as in capturing other aspects of the multitudes of poses and occupational as well as economic roles that women fulfill daily in different market places in Nigeria, particularly in Benin City.

1.3 Research Questions

The following Research Questions have been raised to guide the study.

1. What market spaces in Benin City can be rendered for cultural documentation in painting?
2. What activity poses of women in market spaces in Benin City can be executed to create style in painting?
3. How can occupational roles of women in market spaces in Benin City be rendered in palette knife technique in painting?
4. In what ways can palette knife painting technique be used to execute paintings of the activities of women in market spaces in Benin City?
5. How can different colour schemes be used to create style in paintings of women's activities in market spaces in Benin City?

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to challenge existing portrayals of market women by creating artworks that present market women with dignity, agency, and authenticity. It sought to offer an alternative narrative to the dominant perspectives found in Nigerian market scene paintings.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. identify market spaces in Benin City that can be suitably rendered in style with palette knife for cultural documentation in Painting;
2. find out activity poses of women in market spaces in Benin City that can be executed to create a style in painting;

3. investigate how occupational roles of women in market spaces in Benin City can be rendered in palette knife technique in painting;
4. determine ways palette- knife painting technique can be used to execute paintings of the activities of women in market spaces in Benin City;
5. explore how different colour schemes can be used to create a style in painting of women's activities in market spaces in Benin City.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are many market scene paintings available today that represents a variety of cultural and economic spaces around the world, and many of these paintings have explored various media in executing these works. While there are paintings of Nigerian and Benin City market scenes, this study is significant because it is developing a new series of market scene paintings that represent and document the range of socio-economic experiences of women in the commercial spaces of Benin City. In addition, the study is significant because it will benefit from the contributions of European and modern African art traditions by exploring impressionism as a suitable technique and style, while using palette knife through the medium of oil on canvas for rendering market scene paintings.

Furthermore, this study is significant because it will help to fill the gap in the historical and artistic documentation of the lives of women and their interactions with others in a modern African society as Benin City. This goes a long way in throwing more light on the activities of women for the general public who are opportune to view the exhibit in order to relate with the burden women face in our society and in similar African societies and learn to appreciate them. In the same vein, this study is

also significant for artists and painters in taking a cue from the painting theme and style as well as a keen look at the woman in general and the African woman in particular which is often a common subject in contemporary painting practice. Apart from the stakeholders aforementioned, the market women involved in this study will be opportune to take a closer look at themselves in visuals, resonating with their daily activity as a means of encouragement for the appreciation shown through display of the subject.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The following variables formed the scope of the study: selecting market scenes in Benin City that will be suitable to be rendered in impressionism; significantly portraying the activity poses of women in market spaces in Benin City in suitably rendered impressionistic paintings.

The scope also includes examining how the market scenes which can be rendered in appropriate colour schemes for executing impressionistic paintings and determining how the use of palette knife painting technique can be employed in rendering impressionistic paintings of women's activities in market spaces around Benin City.

The study is delimited to Benin City in Edo State, Nigeria.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

1. **Activity Pose:** Activity pose is a posture assumed by a subject or model in the performance of an activity or some designated task.
2. **Costermonger:** Costermonger is a person who hawks fruits and vegetables from a barrow; a barrow boy or barrow woman.
3. **Critical Theory:** Critical theory is a philosophical approach to culture, literature, and society that seeks to critique and change society by examining power structures, ideologies and social injustices, often drawing from Marxist thought. Other schools of thought under critical theory includes Frankfurt School, Postmodern Critical Theory, Postcolonial Theory, Critical Race Theory, Feminist Critical Theory (which is our interest), and Queer Theory.
4. **Feminism:** Feminism is the movement aimed at equal rights for women. It is the belief in and advocacy for the political, economic and social equality of all genders, particularly focusing and challenging the inequality faced by women. There are focus areas which includes the following; Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Marxist/Socialist feminism, Cultural feminism, Eco-Feminism, Intersectional Feminism and Postmodern/Poststructuralist feminism.
5. **Cultural Feminism:** Cultural feminism is the aspect of feminism that pertains to this research which emphasizes the value of women's experiences, traits, and contributions from the roles they play through the duties they perform, sometimes advocating a celebration of femininity.

6. **Market:** A market is a public place where a market is held. In this research it is also used as a synonym for market place. (Merriam Webster).
7. **Market Place:** Market place is a designated or approved location where buying and selling takes place. It can also be regarded as a legal location for commercial activities or a legal space where goods and services are bought and sold. Examples in Benin City include; traditional markets like Oliha and New Benin markets and modern shopping malls.
8. **Market Scene:** Market scene is a painting, drawing or picture that depicts people and activities that take place in a market or market place.
9. **Market Scene Painting:** Market scene painting is a painting that depicts people and activities that take place in a market or market place.
10. **Market Space:** Market space is any location whether approved or unapproved, where buying and selling takes place. It can also be regarded as a legal location for commercial activities or a non-legal space where goods and services are bought and sold. Market spaces like shops at Oliha and New Benin markets are approved, while spaces like walkways, the trunk of a car, street hawking in traffic and street trading are examples of unapproved spaces.
11. **Occupational Role:** Occupational role is the socio-economic position or economic duty that a person performs based on his/her social or economic interest at any point in time. These include such roles as butcher, meat seller, hair stylist, boutique operator, yam seller, snail seller, garri processor etc.

12. **Plein-air:** Plein-air is an art terminology derived from the French phrase “en plein air,” which refers to the practice of painting outdoors or in the daylight; en plein-air painting. It can also refer to the branch of impressionism that attempts to represent outdoor light and air.
13. **Palette Knife Technique:** Palette knife technique is the use of light, sweeping motion, or medium pressure to apply paint, or drag paint over a surface like canvas.
14. **Technique:** Technique is a particular method or skill applied to some particular task, derived from practice.
15. **Technique of Chiaroscuro:** Technique of Chiaroscuro is a technique where high contrasts between light and shadow is created by an artist in a painting.
16. **Rule of Thirds:** The rule of thirds is a rule of thumb where the subject is placed in the left or right two-thirds of a canvas as guideline in composition. It creates room for a well composed painting with compelling features.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the review of relevant literature, works and practices supported by documented evidences to help position the study on a sound conceptual and theoretical framework. The review was carried out under the following subheadings:

- Conceptual Framework
 - Feminist Visual Culture Theory
 - Development of Market Scene Painting
 - Impressionism and ‘Plein Air’ Painting
 - Innovations, Style and Technique of the Impressionists
 - Market Scenes Paintings in Contemporary Nigeria
 - Palette-knife Technique in Painting
- Empirical Studies.
 - Pieter Aertsen
 - Claude Monet
 - Mary Cassat
 - Edosa Ogiugo
 - Bayo Iriuwogbe
 - Marcellina Akpojotor
- Summary of Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the Feminist Visual Culture Theory propounded by Fiona Carson and Claire Pajaczkowska (2001), which draws insights from the following key concepts in Feminism:

- i. Male Gaze and Gendered Representation,
- ii. Power in Visual Culture,
- iii. Feminist Interventions in Visual Culture,
- iv. Viewer Subjectivity: the Role of the Viewer and Interpretation,
- v. Everyday Politics and Visual Representations

Having a clear theoretical base for this study and working with the awareness of the implications of the theory in this study is a clear precondition for serious study in painting practice. In this research the theory provides a critical lens for exploring the portrayal of women in marketplaces in Benin City as subjects of power, labour, and social interaction.

2.1.2 Feminist Visual Culture Theory

As a major offshoot of feminist theory, critical visual culture emphasizes how gender is represented in visual culture and how individuals navigate and resist these representations. Put simply, the theory deals with the different ways in which visual representations shape or reinforce or challenge gender norms. In engaging with the concept of feminist visual culture or what may be described as feminist art theory Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001) set out by analyzing how art, media, and everyday visual experiences construct and reinforce societal norms, particularly around gender. The theory hence critiques the traditional ways of ‘seeing’ and challenges the male-dominated or ‘male-gaze’ that has historically shaped visual representation in society.

The main goal of feminist visual culture is not only to determine the ways and means of visual representation in society but also to challenge the status quo of how women are represented in the visual culture. The theory seeks to answer questions like: (i) how do the images and visual representations we see everyday shape our understanding of gender? (ii) how have women been historically marginalized or misrepresented in the images and visual representations we see every day?

For Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001), feminist visual culture focuses on the quotidian engagement of disrupting the male gaze and re-centering women as active subjects rather than passive objects in everyday life. The marketplace in Benin City is a space where women are central to daily economic activity yet their roles are often under-represented or stereotypically framed in the dominant cultural narratives, which is generally slanted towards the male gaze.

1. **Male Gaze and Gendered Representation**

The concept of the male gaze was first articulated by the feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey in her essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). Mulvey's concept of the male gaze is central to feminist film theory. This refers to the way in which the cinema like other aspects of visual culture is structured from a male perspective, positioning women as objects of male desire and spectatorship. In Mulvey's (1975) view, the male view is constructed by society as follows: (i) male gaze as a power dynamic, (ii) male gaze as central to the objectification of women, (iii) male gaze considered as the active gaze in contrast to a the female's passive gaze, and (iv) male gaze derives pleasure from male dominance and from the objectification of woman.

(a) Male gaze as a power dynamic

Mulvey (1975) argued that in classical Hollywood cinema, the camera often adopts a male perspective, both literally and metaphorically. This male perspective aligns with the dominant patriarchal social structure, where women are seen primarily as objects for male desire and pleasure. In this structure, the viewer is invited to take on the male gaze, which objectifies the female characters.

(b) Male gaze and objectification of women

Women in film are frequently depicted as passive subjects whose value is defined by their appearance, sexual appeal, or capacity to serve male characters' desires. Mulvey (1975) suggested that women are positioned as "the object" for the male protagonist's (and the audience's) visual pleasure. This objectification is reinforced through visual cues such as framing, camera angles, and lighting that focus on women's bodies, particularly sexualized aspects of women's life.

(c) Male gaze as active versus female gaze as passive

Mulvey (1975) distinguished between two types of gazes: the "active" male gaze and the "passive" female object of that gaze. The male character (and the male viewer, as implied by the film's structure, is given the power to look, while the woman is denied agency and instead becomes an object of desire or fantasy. This power dynamic is an inherent feature of the narrative structure in many classical films, which tend to focus on male protagonists and their desires.

(d) Male gaze derives pleasure from the dominance and objectification of woman

According to Mulvey (1975), cinema traditionally aligns the audience with the male characters' point of view, allowing viewers to identify with male protagonists who look at women in a way that emphasizes control and dominance. The audience is encouraged to derive pleasure from both the objectification of women and the dominance of the male gaze.

Mulvey's theory in general has been pivotal in critiquing how traditional cinema enforces gendered power structures, objectifying women and positioning them in passive roles. Feminist film scholars have since expanded upon Mulvey's work, analyzing not just film but broader visual cultures, including advertising, art, and everyday media, which similarly reflect these gendered power relations as in this study, exploring the gendered power relations in contemporary paintings of women's activities in market spaces in Benin City.

2. Power in Visual Culture

Visual culture is deeply connected to the construction of power relations, especially in the context of gender, race, and class. Feminists advocate that visual culture should not just be seen as a tool for the aesthetic pleasure of men but should be seen as a site where power is enacted and contested by men and women. Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001) noted that the power in visual culture resides in exploring how images such as in advertising, film or the traditional arts are used to reinforce such dominant power structures as patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism.

Similarly, in Allen's (2022) view, feminist power in visual culture refers to the ways in which feminist theory and practices engage with, critique, and subvert the dominant power structures embedded in visual media. Feminists examine how power

is represented, reproduced, and challenged in the realm of visual culture, often focusing on how visual texts (such as films, advertisements, art, photography, and digital media) reinforce or resist gendered, racial, and class-based hierarchies. Feminist power, therefore, involves both the critique of the oppressive representations of women and marginalized groups and the creation of alternative, empowering representations that challenge patriarchal, hetero-normative, and capitalist ideologies.

For Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001), feminist visual culture interrogates how images construct power dynamics by controlling the representation of marginalized groups. In addition, it emphasizes how visual culture can either reinforce or subvert traditional power structures. To this end, a feminist perspective should ask questions about who controls the production of images and who gets to be represented in the visual culture. In this context, it translates to who controls the images in a painting and who gets to be represented in the visual culture of painting.

3. Feminist Interventions in Visual Culture

Feminist visual culture theory argues that visual culture can be transformed through intentional, critical interventions that challenge stereotypes and offer new, nuanced representations of women. Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001) focused on how feminist art, literature, and media can reshape the ways women are seen, both in the art world and in everyday life.

Feminist interventions can also impact viewer subjectivity, by seeking to address the ways in which traditional visual media have often been constructed to reinforce gendered, racial, and class-based inequalities. These interventions work to disrupt the passive consumption of images and to encourage an active, critical

approach to viewing. Feminists urge the viewer to recognize that the act of seeing is never neutral and is always influenced by various social, cultural, and political factors.

Through interventions that subvert dominant representations, feminist theory provides viewers with tools to resist objectifying or stereotypical depictions of women, challenging them to reflect critically on their own interpretive practices. The concept of viewer subjectivity in feminist visual culture emphasizes the active role of the viewer in interpreting visual media and highlights how power dynamics, shaped by gender, race, and identity, influence this interpretation. Feminist scholars also advocate for the creation of new representations that reflect more diverse and inclusive understandings of identity, power, and agency.

One of the key feminist interventions in viewer subjectivity is the call to reclaim the gaze(Hays 2019). For example, an artist can produce work that challenges traditional representations of gender and sexuality, allowing viewers to engage with the images in ways that both disrupt and reconstruct their meanings. These interventions encourage viewers to understand their own positionality and challenge normative, often oppressive, ways of seeing.

Feminist scholars such as Laura Mulvey, Judith Butler, Bell Hooks, Griselda Pollock, and Sophie Day have all contributed to the understanding of how viewer subjectivity can both reinforce and challenge dominant cultural narratives. Feminist interventions aim to empower the viewer to engage critically with visual texts, resist patriarchal norms, and foster more inclusive, equitable representations. Through these interventions, viewers are encouraged to become agents of change in the interpretation and construction of visual culture. Feminist visual culture does not just

critique existing representations of women but also works to create new ones. It engages with the production of images that challenge stereotypical representations and offer alternative, often radical, viewpoints. By doing so, it creates a 'counter-visibility', where women are portrayed as complex, multi-dimensional subjects rather than one-dimensional stereotypes (Carson & Pajackowska, 2001).

4. Viewer Subjectivity: the Role of the Viewer and Interpretation

Carson and Pajackowska (2001) suggested that visual culture is not simply about creating or consuming images but about how images are interpreted by their viewers. The viewer's subjectivity, social position, and historical context all influence how an image is perceived. Thus, feminist visual culture also calls for a more reflexive, critical approach to viewing, where individuals are encouraged to question the meanings and power dynamics embedded in visual representations.

Viewer subjectivity refers to the active role that an individual viewer plays in interpreting and making meaning of visual media, shaped by their social, cultural, and personal identity. In feminist visual culture, this concept is central to understanding how gender, race, class, and other identities influence the viewer's interaction with and interpretation of images. Feminist interventions into visual culture aim to challenge traditional, patriarchal and heteronormative frameworks by promoting alternative readings and offering a more inclusive understanding of visual media. These interventions assert that visual texts are not passive objects of consumption but active sites where power dynamics and identity politics are negotiated.

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (1990) offers an important contribution to understanding viewer subjectivity in feminist visual culture. Butler argues that gender is not an inherent quality but a performative act that is constructed

through repetition and social norms. For the viewer, this means that their interpretation of visual texts is shaped by deeply ingrained cultural scripts about gender. The viewer's gendered subjectivity impacts how they perceive and interpret gendered representations in media. Butler's work encourages an understanding of the viewer not as a passive recipient but as an active participant in the construction of gender meanings through their engagement with visual culture. Feminist interventions, informed by Butler, seek to subvert traditional representations of gender by challenging the expectations of what it means to perform or embody masculinity and femininity, inviting viewers to reconsider their own roles in perpetuating these norms.

Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001) argued that understanding visual culture requires acknowledging this subjectivity and questioning how our identities and social positions affect how we see and interpret images. Feminist visual culture encourages viewers to critically engage with images, asking questions about the hidden power relations behind them.

5. Everyday Politics and Visual Representations

Visual culture extends beyond fine art, focusing on the political dimensions of everyday visual representations. Visual culture theory, from a feminist perspective, is concerned with the everyday nature of visual experience. It argues that visual culture is not confined to art galleries or museums but is part of daily life—advertisements, television, social media, public spaces, like marketplaces and more. Feminist visual culture challenges the idea that only "high art" is worthy of analysis and encourages the study of everyday images as powerful political tools. According to Carson and Pajaczkowska (2001), everyday visual experiences are imbued with political significance. Whether it is an advertisement or a social media post, images shape the

way we understand our roles in society. Feminist visual culture calls for an awareness of the ways in which everyday visuals contribute to the construction of gendered identities and power relations.

Similarly Bell Hooks' work on representation in visual culture challenges dominant, often white, Eurocentric, and patriarchal portrayals of black womanhood. In her book, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992), she explores how black women have been historically objectified and marginalized in visual media, often depicted through stereotypes that dehumanize them. Her analysis critiques the ways in which mainstream culture constructs identities based on race, class, and gender and emphasizes the importance of subverting dominant visual representations to create spaces for new narratives of empowerment and resistance.

Furthermore, Hooks (1992) critiqued the racial and gendered stereotypes that dominate visual culture, especially those that negatively impact black women. She argues that mainstream media often marginalizes and objectifies black women, presenting them through dehumanizing stereotypes. However, hooks also emphasizes that viewers are not merely passive recipients of these images. Rather, they have the agency to critically engage with, resist, and subvert these dominant representations. Through a feminist interventionist approach, hooks advocates for creating new representations that empower marginalized groups and encourage viewers to challenge oppressive visual culture.

Figure 1

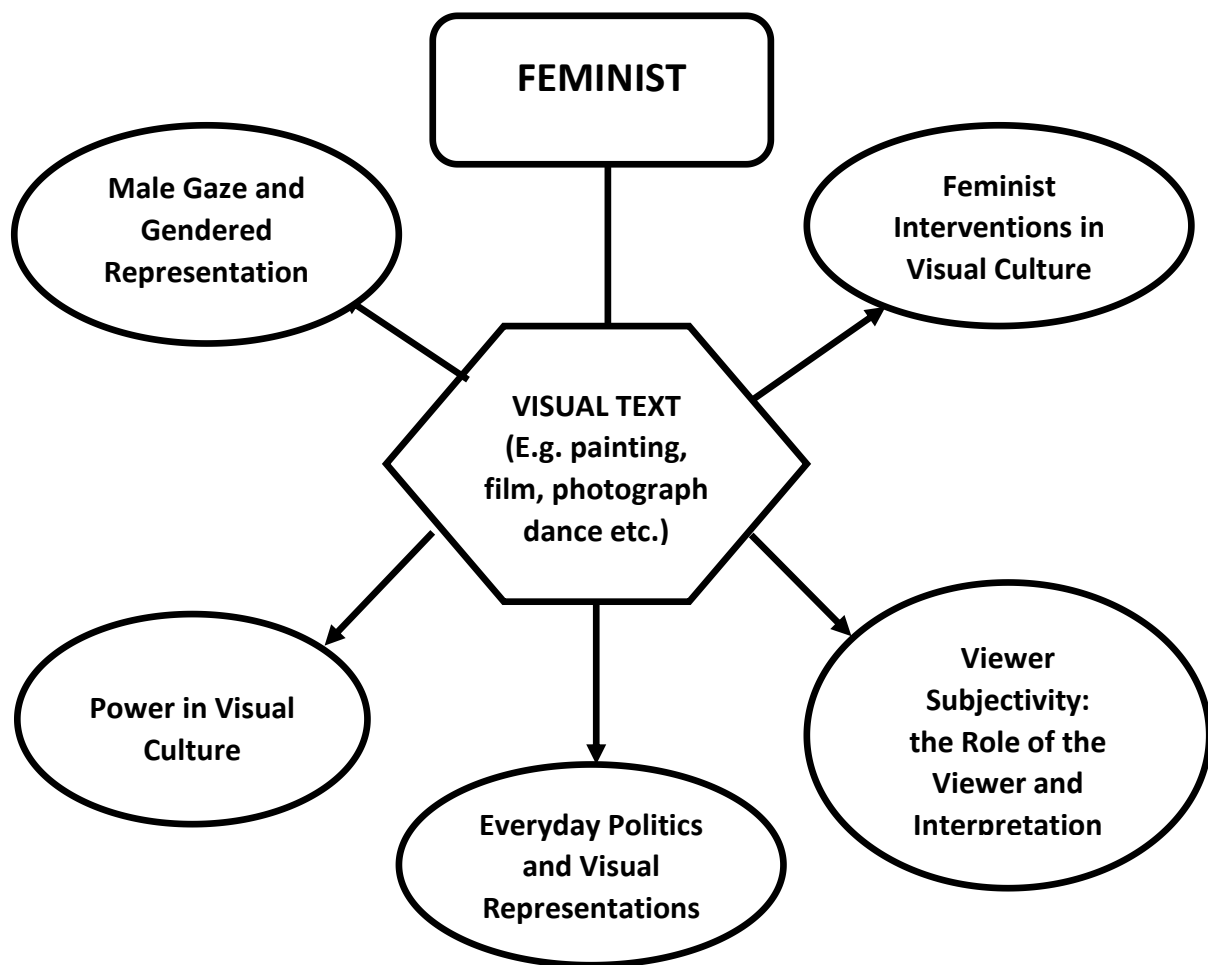


Diagram of Feminist Visual Culture (Source: the researcher)

2.2 Development of Market Scene Painting

Painting, like other visual arts, is visual text that is influenced by the social and cultural context of the painter, and to some extent the painter's audience. In the course of the evolution of painting, painters have been inspired by themes and experiences in their environment or cultural context. By painting themes related to the human figure, animals and nature, environment and landscapes, festivals and ceremonies, common objects, market places, work places and scenes from everyday life, painters inadvertently document history. Interestingly, market scenes have been one of such themes that have inspired and continue to inspire painters.

In the development of the modern tradition of painting, market themes became prominent as part of the genre art movement of capturing everyday life and the life of ordinary 'unidentifiable' people in the 16th and 17th Century Europe (Lloyd, 2014). Before this time, it was more common for artists to represent nature, landscapes, royalty and court life as well as historical and religious subjects. According to Hoekstra (1994), some of the earliest recorded modernist tradition of painting market themes in the genre art tradition was carried out by Dutch painters, especially in the city of Antwerp, notable among whom were Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575), and Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1528/30-1569) to mention a few.

Genre painting according to Britannica.com (2018) is a terminology that evolved in 18th century France, which was used to describe paintings that were focused on representing specific type of images, usually scenes from everyday life, and ordinary people at work, and these everyday scenes were depicted in a realistic manner. This terminology in art history is also used to describe the works of the Dutch painters of Antwerp, like Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575) who made series of

paintings depicting everyday life, and ordinary people at work in a realistic manner long before the terminology gained currency.

In the low countries of Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg in the Northwestern region of Europe, the tradition of Flemish Baroque painting grew to prominence. Between the 1500s and the 1800s, numerous painters developed specialty in painting genre scenes like peasants at work, farming, harvesting, trading, dancing, smoking, bathing, and scenes from family life. These were part of a pattern of mannerist movement. Among the painters in Antwerp who developed a specialty for painting market scenes with so many details were Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575) and Joachim Beuckelaer (1533-1574) as noted by Cartwright (2007).

The works of these two painters made an impact in Europe and influenced painters in France such as Louise Moillon (1610-1696) and to a large extent, painters of the impressionist tradition. What the impressionists borrowed from the Dutch Antwerp painters was the tradition of painting everyday scenes rather than grand subjects. Instead of painting realistically like genre painters, the impressionists such as Claude Monet (1840-1926), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), and Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) painted stylistically the way they saw things as light fell on them.

Figure 2



Title: Market Scene (1560-1565)

Artist: Pieter Aertsen

Medium: Oil on oak wood

Size: 91 cm x 112 cm

Source: Wikipedia.org

Figure 3

Title: Market Scene (1569)
 Artist: Pieter Aertsen
 Medium: Oil on Panel
 Size: 169.5 cm x 83.5 cm
 Source: Google Arts & Culture

Figure 4

Title: Woman with Fish, Vegetables and Poultry (1564)
 Artist: Joachim Beuckelaer
 Medium: Oil on Wood
 Size: 128.6 cm × 174.9 cm
 Source: Wikipedia Commons

Figure 5

Title: Fish Market (1568)
 Artist: Joachim Beuckelaer
 Medium: Oil on Wood
 Dimension: 128.6 cm × 174.9 cm
 Source: Wikipedia.org

Figure 6

Title: At the Market Stall (1607)
 Artist: Louise Moillon
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: 123 cm x 169 cm
 Source: Wikipedia Commons

Figure 7

Title: The Fruit and Vegetable
 Costermonger (1631)
 Artist: Louise Moillon
 Medium: Oil on Panel
 Dimension: 48 cm x 65 cm
 Source: Wikinedia Commons

2.3 Overview of Impressionism and Plein Air Painting

The tradition of impressionism has been around for a while. It evolved in the late 19th century, and it is a concept and style that many contemporary artists worldwide including Nigeria have come to embrace. According to the Oxford Advanced American Dictionary online, impressionism is a style in painting that “uses colour to show the effects of light on things and to suggest atmosphere rather than showing exact details”.

Similarly, the Oxford Reference defined impressionism as a movement, “characterized by a concern with depicting the visual impression of the moment, especially in terms of the shifting effects of light and colour.”

Thus, the concept behind impressionism is the desire of the impressionists to represent reality in a style that depicts the pictured object in a rather hazy nature by using a juxtaposition of bright colours to reflect the moment or a natural atmosphere in which light falls on objects.

Impressionism, according to Brodskaya (2014) and Samu (2000), started in the 1860s in France. At that time Napoleon III, the Emperor of France rebuilt Paris, fought several wars and oversaw economic and social reforms. In that era, French art was controlled by the *Academie des Beaux-Arts*, which was in charge of preserving the arts, and setting the standards, in terms of their themes and style. The academy preferred paintings with historical figures and events, religious themes, and portraits of royalty. They also favoured a realistic style with carefully detailed brushstrokes and colours were often restrained, toned-down and varnished with gold.

Because of the strict requirements by the *Academie des Beaux-Arts*, many other artists who made good quality artworks with themes of landscapes, still-life and those whose brushstrokes showed visibly on their canvases, which gave it an unfinished look, were not able to enter into exhibitions and competitions sponsored by the *Academie des Beaux-Art*. It was on this ground that a group of artists collaborated to establish a new style that became known as impressionism. (Metmuseum.org, n.d.).

White and White (1993) pointed out that the first group of artists to collaborate along the path of impressionism was Claude Monet (1840-1926), Alfred Sisley (1839-1899), Frederic Bazille (1841-1870), and Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) who at that time were training under their academic master, Charles Gleyre (1806-1874). They found a common interest in painting themes like landscapes, everyday life, rather than themes preferred by the Academy-favoured painters.

According to Greenspan (2005), the movement was further empowered when this first group of artists, and other artists began to collaborate as they met regularly at their favourite *Café Guerbois* located at Avenue de Clichy, in Paris. There, under the leadership of Edouard Manet (1832-1883), other artists like Camille Pissarro (1880-1903), Armand Guillaumin (1841-1927), and Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) made plans to further their common course of what was later termed impressionism.

Furthermore, Seiberling (2003) argued that these meetings by these progressive artists strengthened their resolve, even when their works were rejected by the Salon, they went on to establish a cooperative, and to exhibit at venues across France (Bomford, 1990).

Their first exhibition was held from the 15th of April to the 15th of May 1874 at the studio of an artist, caricaturist, and balloonist, Gaspard-Felix Tournachon (1820-1910) popularly known as “Nadar”, in Paris. Thirty (30) of these progressive artists had about 165 works exhibited at this exhibition, which was visited by 4000 people (Artchive.com, 2023).

Rewald (1973) explained that the exhibition was attended by a lot of enthusiastic people as well as those who came to mock and criticize. Famous amongst the critic was Louise Leroy (1812-1885). Commenting on the works at the exhibition, especially that of Claude Monet’s ‘Impression Sunrise’, Leroy wrote in a newspaper review;

Impression – I was certain of it. I was just telling myself that, since I was impressed, there had to be some impression in it...and what freedom, what ease of workmanship! Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape (Rewald, 1973: 323).

Stokstad (2007) informed that their maiden exhibition was followed by seven (7) more exhibitions until 1886. The exhibitions came to entrench Impressionism as both movement and style of painting that influenced modern and contemporary art (Stokstad, 2007).

Amongst the notable impressionists of this movement were: Claude Monet (1840-1926), Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Berthe Morisot (1841-1895), Pierre Auguste-Renoir (1841-1919), Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), and a host of others. Impressionism later influenced painters in America, Europe and in contemporary Africa (Richman-Abdou, 2019).

2.4 Innovations, Style and Technique of the Impressionists

The impressionists were great innovators. Each of the major impressionists brought his own innovation to bear on their paintings. The following is a review of the innovations and style of some of the major impressionists. Among the impressionists whose life, style, innovations and skills helped to set the defining standard for the movement and art style known as impressionism were, Claude Monet (1840-1926), Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Berthe Morisot (1841-1895), Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919).

Principally, the impressionists developed a modernist style of painting that:

- a) uses colour to show the effect of light on things or objects.
- b) uses the juxtaposition of bright colours to create a feeling of atmosphere
- c) depicts the play of light on objects as they appear at the moment, rather than their form or precise details.

The focus of many impressionist paintings was subjects of everyday life and outdoor scenes. Unlike the realism of genre painting, impressionism painted an alternate realism of the subjects they depicted. The impressionists did not focus as much on market scenes as it were, but they painted other peasant subjects. However, in the works of Camille Pissarro we find some distinct focus on the subject of market scene.

Figure 8



Title: Woman With A Parasol (1875)

Artist: Claude Monet

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 100 cm × 81 cm

Source: Wikipedia.org

Figure 9



Title: The Poultry Market at Gisors (1895)

Artist: Camille Pissarro

Medium: Tempera on Board

Dimension: 81.0 x 81.0 cm

Source: ngv.vic.gov.au

Figure 10:

Title: Five O'clock Tea (1880)
 Artist: Mary Cassatt
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: 106.68 cm x 91.44 cm
 Source: Artsy.net edia.org

Figure 11:

Title: The Fish Market in Dieppe, Grey Weather, Morning (1902)
 Artist: Camille Pissarro
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: 65.4 cm x 80.9 cm
 Source: Wiki Art

2.5 Market Scenes Painting in Contemporary Nigeria

The rich pre-colonial art practice in Nigeria dates back to ancient times. Art in ancient times was tied to cultural and ritual practices. Adebowale (2018) informs that in pre-colonial Nigeria, cultural (traditional) art gained prominence when it attracted the attention of the Western world in the 19th Century. Artworks from the Nok, Benin, Igbo Ukwu, Owo, Esie, and Ife have since found their way to museums and private collections in Europe and America. Today contemporary artists and painters are referencing the style and character of those ancient artworks in their modern art pieces (Adebowale, 2018).

Ajiboye and Fajuyigbe (2015) opined that the story of painting in Nigeria cannot be complete without looking at “the history of modern Nigerian art, which is traceable to the European influence on Nigerian visual expression.” Modern painting developed in Nigeria during the colonial era. One of the key figures of the development of painting in Nigeria is Aina Onabolu (1882-1963) whose efforts from the early 1900s to well into the 1960s led to the establishment of the painting genre in modern Nigerian Art practice (Ikoro, 2015). Another foremost figure that helped to define the growing art education needs of the country was Kenneth Murray (1902-1972) who on Aina Onabolu’s request was invited by the British to reform the art curriculum in the then newly established Nigerian Art School. Upon discovering that the people had a rich appetite for traditionalism in Nigerian art, Kenneth Murray then encouraged the use of indigenous forms and elements in Nigerian painting (Oloidi, 2008, and Ikoro, 2015).

The combined efforts of Onabolu’s art teaching and Murray’s art curriculum helped to raise a great generation of artists and painters in Nigeria. Amongst these artists are: Akinola Lasekan (1916-1972), Ben Enwonwu (1917-1994), and a host of

other artists who followed in their footsteps; the likes of Felix Idubor (1928-1991), Demas Nwoko (b. 1935), Simon Okeke (1937-1969), Yusuf Grillo (1934-2021), Festus Idehen (b. 1928-no record of death), Bruce Onobrakpeya (b. 1932), Afi Ekong (1930-2007), Clara Ugbodaga-Ngu (1921-1996), Jimoh Akolo (b. 1934), Erhabor Emokpae (1934-1984), Timothy Adebajo Fasuyi (b. 1935), J. Nkobi (n.d), and Michael Adebayo Ajayi (1936).

Today, painting is firmly rooted in Nigeria and the painting of market scenes is a subject that quite a number of reputable Nigerian painters have undertaken and continue to undertake with different levels of success. Amongst the earliest painters of market scenes in Nigeria were Akinola Lasekan (1916-1972) who painted a local market titled, “Hausa Traders (at Lagos market)” in 1944, and Aina Onabolu (1882-1963) who painted a fruit seller titled “Hope” in 1947. Their examples have since been followed by the works of numerous Nigerian artists and painters, including Bayo Iribhogbe (n.d), who painted “market scenes in 1996 and 2000; Dele Jegede’s (b.1945) “Samaru” (painted in 2009); Edosa Oguigo’s (b. 1961) “The Waterside” (painted in 2011) and Umeh Bede’s (2000) “Onikpanu” (painted in 2016), amongst a host of others.

In all of these paintings, the artists have been able to render market scenes with a variety of features depicting markets with both male and female subjects while using a variety of styles like realism, stylized realism, abstraction, and expressionism using either smooth or rough brush strokes, rendered in monochromatic or polychromatic colour schemes.

In documenting the styles commonly featured in contemporary Nigerian paintings, Abodunrin (2017) categorized Nigerian painting styles into the following eight style groups: expressionism, naturalization, abstraction, symbolism, stylization,

cubism, realism, and impressionism. Abodunrin's (2017) research indicated that expressionism is the most common style practiced by as much as 34.3 percent of painters, and impressionism is one of the least popular style practiced by a small group of about 5.7 percent of painters in Nigeria.

Figure 12

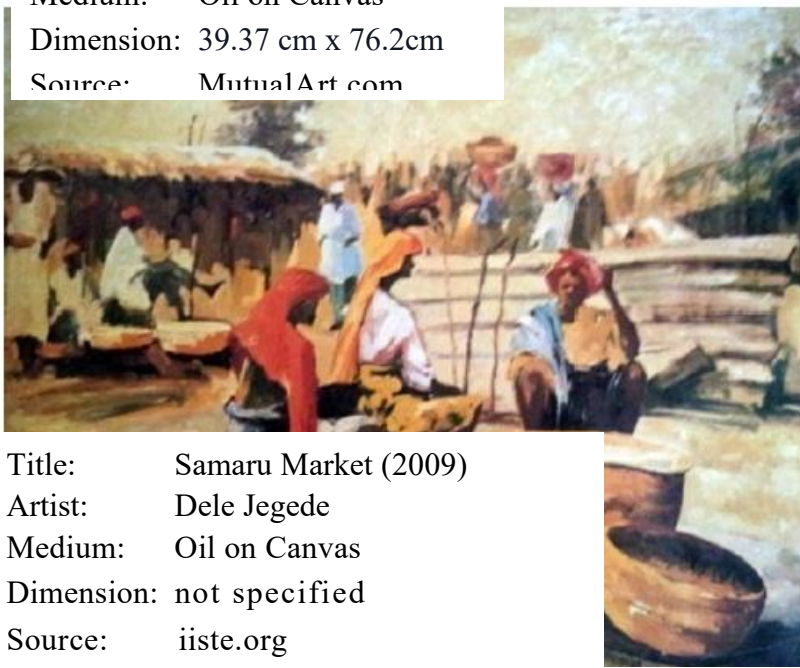
Title: Market Scene
(1940-1950)
Artist: Akinola Lasekan
Medium: Oil on Board
Dimension: Not specified

Figure 13

Title: Hausa traders at Lagos Market (1944)
Artist: Akinola Lasekan
Medium: Watercolour
Dimension: 41.3 x 55.9 cm

Figure 14

Title: Market Scene (2000)
 Artist: Bayo Iribhogbe
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: 39.37 cm x 76.2cm
 Source: MutualArt.com



Title: Samaru Market (2009)
 Artist: Dele Jegede
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: not specified
 Source: iiste.org

Figure 15

Figure 16

Title: Orange Seller (2010)
 Artist: Umeh Bede
 Medium: Oil on Canvas
 Dimension: 76.2 cm x 106.68cm
 Source: Art635.Gallerv

2.6 Palette Knives and Palette-knife Technique in Painting

Palette knife is a tool commonly used by painters. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Art (2004), a palette knife is “a thin and flexible dull-edged blade, set in

a handle, used for mixing paint, scraping it off the palette or canvas.” As an instrument used by painters, palette knife comes in different shapes and sizes and can be used in scraping wet, semi-wet or dried paint off any material or canvas. In painting it can be used to pick up paint from the paint tube, mix the paint, and apply it on the canvas. The instrument has been used by painters since the 17th century, and it became very popular in the 18th century (Palette knife, 2004).

Palette knives come in different shapes and sizes to create different effects and textures. Black (2023) in his blog lists the different types of palette knives and their uses, namely: spatula shape palette knife, trowel shape palette knife, fan shape palette knife, curved blade palette knife, forked tip palette knife, comb shape palette knife, offset shape palette knife, serrated edge palette knife, wave shape palette knife, scraper shape, and canvas scraper palette knife.

- a. Spatula shape palette knife – this palette knife has a straight edge and it is used for mixing paint, its flat shape helps to spread paint on wide background and making smooth layers of paint on canvas.
- b. Trowel shape palette knife – this palette knife has a wide and flat blade which is good for applying thick paint on canvas. It helps to create the effect of texture in impasto painting.
- c. Fan shape palette knife – this knife is dynamic and can be used to create a vast technique from smoothing to blending paints, it can create brushstroke effects or texture effects, and it can be used to detail images in fine lines, as well as sweep through wide areas.
- d. Curved blade palette knife – just as its name implies, it is used to create curve lines and shapes, as well as the effect of texture and blending paint on canvas.

- e. Forked tip palette knife – this knife is good for creating wide or sweeping brushstrokes, or detailing in fine lines.
- f. Comb shape palette knife – with its comb shape, this knife can create the effect of texture as well as remove paint from canvas.
- g. Offset shape palette knife – is also known as angle shape palette knife. The curved handle makes it easy to manipulate and control to create any desired effect while painting.
- h. Serrated edge palette knife – this knife helps to create the effect of texture while painting and it is also good for removing paint from the canvas.
- i. Wave shape palette knife – the wave shape is versatile for creating unique effects in blending and textures.
- j. Scraper shape – this palette knife has the ability to create fine lines and details due to its pointed tip. Details of animal fur, human hair and other fine lines enjoy the textured effects created by this palette knife on canvas.
- k. Canvas scraper palette knife – this knife is used for removing paint by lifting or scraping it from the canvas.

Because palette knife is primarily used to create texture in painting or textured painting, scholars and painters have developed different techniques for using palette knife in painting. Robertson (2021) in her YouTube video titled, *Palette knife 101* discussed four basic techniques of using palette knife in painting, namely: scumbling, line work, impasto, and colour gradient.

- a. Scumbling – this is a technique where the painter applies paint on the canvas using the base of the palette knife and then smoothening it out lightly onto the

canvas or paper such that it has a broken texture which allows the background or paint underneath to shine through.

- b. Line work – this is a technique where the painter uses the tip of the palette knife to pick paint and then apply it on the canvas using the edge of the palette knife to create thick or thin lines, or uses the palette knife to create grooves in thick layer of paint.
- c. Impasto – impasto is a technique where the artist uses the palette knife to apply blobs or thick layers of paint to create a bold textured image on the canvas.
- d. Colour gradient – this is a technique where the artist uses the palette knife to apply two or more gradients of colours in the same motion on the canvas so as to create shades, tones, values or gradient that the artist seeks to achieve.

The use of palette knife first became popular amongst painters like Titian or Tiziano Vecellio (1485-1576), and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) who made limited use of this painters' knife. It was not until the time of Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) that palette knife became very popular as a painting tool. Among the impressionist who adopted the palette knife as a major tool in their paintings were Claude Monet (1840-1926), and Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) (Sugarstreetstudios.com, 2020).

Other impressionists who followed in their example are Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Marc Chagali (1887-1985), Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), and Henri Matisse (1869-1954) who were also famous for their use of palette knife (Skillshare blog, 2021).

Modern and contemporary Nigerian painters have also adopted the use of palette knives in their paintings. Painters like Titus Agbara in Manchester, Timi Kakandar (b. 1973) and Toni Okujeni are all celebrated contemporary painters who use palette knife and palette knife techniques in their works (trumpetmediagroup.com, 2018; Ogirikan.com, 2023; Atelier55design.com, 2023).

Figure 17



A set of painter's palette knives. (Source: [https://stationerie.co.in/ product/painting-knives-of-various-size-and-shapes-set-of-5/](https://stationerie.co.in/product/painting-knives-of-various-size-and-shapes-set-of-5/))

2.7 Empirical Studies

The empirical studies for this thesis are drawn from the market scene (and *en plein air*) painting practice of some renowned European artists from the genre painting era through the impressionist years to the contemporary painting practice of notable Nigerian painters in Nigeria and the diaspora, painters whose works engage with the complexities of gender, identity, and representation. These artists and their works are examined through the lens of feminist visual culture theory, as informed by the conceptual framework of this study, and by critiquing the ways in which women have historically been represented in the visual art of market scene paintings, advocating for more agency and visibility in these portrayals. The following artists and their works were reviewed under this section:

- Pieter Aertsen
- Joachim Beuckelaer
- Claude Monet
- Camille Pissarro
- Mary Cassatt
- Bayo Iribhogbe
- Edosa Ogiugo
- Marcellina Akpojotor

(a) Pieter Aertsen's "Market Scene" (1560–1565)(Figure 2)

Pieter Aertsen's "Market Scene" (1560–1565) exemplifies the 16th-century European genre painting tradition. It frames a busy marketplace filled with food and

vendors. The painting foregrounds a female vendor seemingly engaged in food preparation and sales, reinforcing the association of women with domestic work and market labour. Such depictions, according to Pollock (1988) naturalize women's roles as caretakers and economic actors within a patriarchal framework that confines women to socially sanctioned spaces—markets and kitchens, which mirrors gender norms of the period (Honig, 1998).

The painting also depicts a hierarchy of labour, with lower-class women at the background, probably gossiping, while the wealthier male figure seems to oversee the transactions and selling livestock to a housewife with a basket of food. This highlights intersections of gender and class. Feminist visual theory critiques how such imagery as it perpetuates social stratification by exhibiting working women and marginalizing their economic struggles. (Nevola, 2020)

(b) Joachim Beuckelaer, 'Fish Market' (1568)(Figure 5)

Joachim Beuckelaer's 'Fish Market' (1568) is another notable example of 16th-century Flemish genre painting that depicts a bustling market scene with an abundance of fish and female vendors. Through the lens of feminist visual theory, we can observe how Beuckelaer's depiction of women reflects and reinforces contemporary patriarchal norms of that era in Europe. We can see that the painting perpetuates gender hierarchies, while marginalizing and objectifying women standing in stereotypical poses waiting to be attended to by the all-important male fish butcher.

Art historians have interpreted the abundance of seafood in 'Fish Market' as symbolic of fertility and temptation (Sullivan, 2001). From a feminist perspective, such symbolism reinforces essentialist notions of women as inherently tied to nature

and sustenance, reinforcing patriarchal binaries of male (culture) versus female (nature) (Ortner, 1974).

(c) **Claude Monet, ‘Woman with a Parasol’ (1875) (Figure 8)**

Claude Monet’s ‘Woman with a Parasol’ (1875) is an iconic Impressionist painting that depicts his wife, Camille Monet, and their son Jean in a windswept landscape. While the work is celebrated for its loose brushwork and play of light, a feminist visual culture analysis reveals deeper implications regarding gender, representation, and the male gaze. Feminist visual culture theory critiques the ways in which women are portrayed in art, often objectified or framed within patriarchal ideals (Mulvey, 1975; Pollock, 1988). This case study examines how Monet’s painting reinforces or subverts traditional gender roles.

Monet’s depiction of Camille presents her as an elegant, almost ephemeral figure, bathed in sunlight and gazing downward. Her flowing dress and parasol suggest delicacy and grace, reinforcing 19th-century bourgeois ideals of femininity (Chadwick, 2012). While Monet’s brushstrokes convey movement, Camille’s pose is passive, aligning with Mulvey’s (1975) concept of the female subject as an object of aesthetic pleasure rather than an active agent.

Pollock (1988) critiques Impressionist works for often portraying women in leisure settings without acknowledging their labor or individuality. Camille’s identity is subsumed under Monet’s artistic vision, raising questions about her own voice in the representation.

The painting situates Camille in an open field, yet her presence remains decorative rather than assertive. Unlike male figures in Impressionist works who engage with the modern city (e.g., Manet’s *flâneurs*), Camille is framed within nature,

reinforcing the gendered divide between public (male) and private/domestic (female) spaces (Nochlin, 1971).

(d) Camille Pissarro's *The Poultry Market at Gisors* (1895)(Figure 9)

Camille Pissarro's *The Poultry Market at Gisors* (1895) depicts a rural marketplace in Normandy, France, where women are prominently engaged in laborious economic activities. While Pissarro is often associated with Impressionism and his depictions of rural life, a feminist visual culture analysis reveals the gendered dynamics of labour, space, and representation in his work. This case study examines how *The Poultry Market at Gisors* reflects and challenges traditional gender roles of the late 19th century, analyzing its composition, subject matter, and reception through feminist theory.

Pissarro's painting depicts peasant women actively participating in market exchanges, handling poultry, and engaging in commerce. Unlike idealized female figures in academic art, these women are shown as workers, emphasizing their economic contribution (Broude, 1991). However, feminist critics might argue that their labor, though visible, remains confined to traditional female roles, food production and domestic economy, rather than more empowered public positions (Nochlin, 1971).

Pissarro's work presents women as active participants in their own economic sphere. Their postures suggest self-possession rather than decorativeness, a subtle resistance to the era's dominant femininity norms. However, their lack of direct eye contact with the viewer may still reflect societal constraints on female visibility (Pollock, 1988). Pissarro's choice to center women in this setting contrasts with urban

Impressionist scenes, where women were often relegated to leisure spaces (Garb, 1986). Yet, the rural setting also reinforces the association of women with nature and domesticity, a recurring style in Western art (Parker & Pollock, 1981). The absence of women in more authoritative roles (e.g., merchants rather than sellers) suggests limitations in his feminist consciousness, despite his sympathetic portrayal.

(e) Mary Cassatt's 'Five O'Clock Tea (1880) (Figure 10)

Mary Cassatt is one of the few prominent female impressionists who depicted women's domestic and social life, offering insight into bourgeois femininity while subtly critiquing its constraints. The painting captures two women engaged in the ritual of afternoon tea, a social custom common among the wealthy women of that era. As a female artist working within the male-dominated impressionist circle, Cassatt's focus on women's interior lives offers a feminist counterpoint to the era's gendered artistic conventions. This case study applies feminist visual culture concept of the "female gaze" to counter the popular paintings that celebrate "male gaze" in that era.

Cassatt's composition centers women as both subjects and viewers. Unlike male contemporaries who often eroticized or sentimentalized female figures, Cassatt portrays her subjects with psychological depth and mutual engagement. The direct eye contact between the two women suggests a shared, self-contained world, resisting the male spectator's intrusion (Pollock, 1988). The absence of men in the scene reinforces female autonomy, a radical choice for the period.

(f) Bayo Iribhogbe's 'Market Scene' (2000) (Figure 14)

Bayo Iribhogbe's 'Market Scene' (2000) is a vibrant depiction of a Nigerian marketplace, capturing the dynamism of women traders amidst a bustling economic and social hub. The painting foregrounds women as central figures in informal economies, a recurring theme in African feminist art (Ogundipe, 1994). The composition highlights women's active participation in trade, countering Western art historical traditions that marginalize female labour. Iribhogbe's use of bold colors and fluid brushstrokes emphasizes their vigor, resisting passive depictions of African women. Feminist visual culture theory argues that such representation reclaims women's economic contributions as sites of empowerment (Hooks, 1992).

The crowded marketplace in *Market Scene* can be read as a gendered space where women navigate public and domestic spheres. Unlike colonial portrayals of African markets as chaotic, Iribhogbe's work frames the market as an organized, communal domain. Feminist scholars like Nkiru Nzegwu (2006) argue that African markets are arenas of female autonomy, and the painting's layered composition mirrors the complexity of women's social networks.

While feminist visual culture often critiques the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975), *Market Scene* presents an alternative: the female collective gaze. The women's direct engagement with each other and the viewer disrupts objectification, aligning with African feminist thought that prioritizes communal identity over individual victimhood (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

(g) Edosa Ogiugo's 'Waterside Market' (2011)(Figure 19)

Edosa Ogiugo's 'Waterside Market' (2011) is a striking photographic work that captures the vibrant yet often overlooked labour of women in African market

spaces. Ogiugo's waterside painting centers women as the primary economic actors in a bustling waterside market. Unlike traditional or Western art that often relegates women to domestic or ornamental roles, 'Waterside Market' presents them as dynamic, skilled traders. This aligns with feminist critiques of labor visibility, where women's contributions to informal economies are frequently marginalized (Mohanty, 2003).

'Waterside Market' focuses on their industriousness rather than their physicality. The women's direct engagement with their work subverts the male gaze, positioning them as subjects rather than objects (Mulvey, 1975). The image also highlights the intersection of gender and class. Many African market women belong to lower socio-economic groups, yet their economic resilience is rarely acknowledged in dominant narratives. Ogiugo's lens validates their labour, reinforcing feminist arguments about the necessity of inclusive visual storytelling (Hooks, 1992).

(h) **Marcellina Akpojotor's "Songs of Home" (2021) (Figure20)**

Marcellina Akpojotor, a Nigerian contemporary artist, explores themes of gender, identity, and transformation through mixed-media textile art. Her 2019 work, 'New Generation,' exemplifies feminist visual culture by subverting traditional representations of Black women, reclaiming domestic materials, and challenging patriarchal narratives.

Akpojotor's use of Ankara fabric—a material historically tied to women's domestic labor—transforms it into a medium of empowerment. By stitching and layering fabric, she reclaims a traditionally "feminine" craft as a tool for artistic and political expression (hooks, 1995). Akpojotor's choice of Ankara fabric signifies a

feminist reclamation of women's labor. As feminist scholars argue, textiles have been marginalized as "women's work" (Parker, 2010). By elevating these materials in fine art, Akpojotor challenges the devaluation of Black women's contributions.

"Songs of Home" depicts a Black woman in a composed, assertive stance, countering stereotypical portrayals of African women as passive or exotic (Mercer, 1994). The figure's gaze is direct, invoking the feminist concept of the "oppositional gaze" (hooks, 1992), where Black women assert visual autonomy. The title suggests continuity and evolution, aligning with African feminist discourses that emphasize communal and intergenerational solidarity (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). The layered fabric echoes ancestral traditions while asserting contemporary relevance.



Figure 18

Figure 19

Title: Waterside Market (2011)
Artist: Edosa Ogiugo
Medium: Oil on Canvas
Dimension: 121 x 152cm
Source: Africartmarket.today

Figure 20

2.8 Summary Review

In critiquing the ways in which the visual culture of traditional market scene painting perpetuates gender hierarchies, this study sought not only to determine the ways and means of visual representation in society but also to challenge the status quo of how women are represented, by seeking answers to a question like, how do the images and visual representations we see in everyday paintings shape our understanding of gender?

This study critically engages with feminist visual culture by highlighting how market scene paintings, particularly based on the activities of women in market places in Benin City, can subvert the traditional male gaze. This is expected to reframe the visual narratives of market scene paintings to honour the value of women's labour, which has often been overlooked or misrepresented in historical and contemporary artworks. In the market scene paintings of Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer, both painters of the Antwerp school genre art, women's roles in domestic and market spaces were depicted as vital yet marginalized in both societal and in the artists' perceptions. Beuckelaer's central female figure, for example, in the 'Fish Market' (Figure 5) is positioned in a potentially voyeuristic manner, with her bodice slightly exposed. This subtle eroticization underscores how women's bodies were commodified even in scenes of labour at that time.

Similarly the impressionists in many of their "plein air" painting scenes presented women in sensual poses that ranked them inferior to men. Claude Monet's 'Woman with the Parasol' objectifies the female subject as an object of beauty to be looked upon and admired, as a passive ornamental object of male gaze on a grassy landscape. But unlike many male painters of the impressionist era, Mary Cassatt in 'Five O'Clock Tea'(c. 1880) presents her female subjects not as passive objects of

the male gaze but as autonomous individuals engaged in a quiet moment of social interaction. The women are absorbed in their own world, not performing for the viewer. This reclaiming of female subjectivity is a key strength of the feminist visual culture perspective advocated in this study. This perspective challenges patriarchal visual norms and advocates for a more inclusive and truthful representation of women's contributions to daily life and economy. The researcher's market scene paintings are expected to reverse the male gaze to female gaze and show the value of women and their economic activities, in respectable poses around marketplaces in Benin City that elevate women and not in sensual poses that objectify them.

In conclusion, by exploring the use of the palette knife painting technique to create visually textured impressions of the activities of women in market places around Benin City this study contributes to the representation of women, power, and agency in the visual field in contrast the use of brush strokes to create realism or expressionistic paintings. The rawness of the knife work in this study is designed to resist aesthetic polish and portray the gritty reality of women's thankless labour in the economic development of society. In Marcellina Akpojotor's "Songs of Home" her primary medium is fabric collage and mixed media, rather than palette knife oil painting. However, her method of layering textured fabric can be critically compared to palette knife technique in terms of form, depth, and feminist intent. Similarly, Edosa Ogiugo's bold expressionist brush stroke in "Waterside Market" is similar to palette knife painting in presenting women in a bustling, communal market setting—visibly active, working, and engaged. This disrupts the historical visual trope of women as passive, domestic figures and instead affirms and foregrounds their economic agency in everyday life.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the Design of the Study, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Instrument for Data Collection, Method of Data Collection, Description of Materials, Procedure (Studio Production Process), and Method of Visual Analysis and Detailed Description of the Studio Production Process.

3.1 Design of the Study

The design of this study was an exploratory research design, which, as noted by Babbie (2021), is defined by its flexibility and open-ended approach. This design was selected to effectively investigate and interpret the theoretical depth and contextual realities of market women's labour in Benin City. Their activities and roles were visually documented to contribute to the cultural pool of women's marketplace work, serving as inspiration for palette-knife impressionistic paintings that capture the texture, vibrancy, and significance of market life.

This study employed the exploratory research design which is flexible and unstructured in order to investigate and interpret the theoretical depth of impressionism with the contextual realities of the African woman's gendered labour where the richness of market women and their activities are visually rich and possibly under researched within the contemporary discourse. A feminist visual culture methodology is used in combination in analyzing existing market scene paintings thereby creating new impressionistic representations of women's activities in marketplaces in Benin City. By integrating art historical analysis, feminist visual

culture theory and ethnographic fieldwork, the research aims to explore how gender and economic labour are represented in the imagery Benin City's marketplaces.

The study adopted a qualitative, practice-based research (PBR) approach, combining visual analysis, artistic production, and contextual critique (Barrett & Bolt, 2014). The methodology consists of three phases:

- (a) Critical Visual Analysis of existing market/plein airscene paintings,
- (b) Ethnographic fieldwork and visual documentation, and
- (c) Artistic production: impressionistic paintings of women's activities in marketplaces in Benin City.

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3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study is all the markets in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Market women activities were drawn from a random selection from many of the major and minor market places and market spaces in and around Benin Metropolis.

3.3 Samples and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling of existing market scenes on Benin City was carried out. Market women activities were drawn from the simple random selection of markets from the major and minor market places and market spaces in and around Benin Metropolis.

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

The Instrument of data collection for this study includes the following:

- (a) Ethnographic fieldwork & visual documentation
 - Participant Observation
 - Fieldwork was conducted in key marketplaces around Benin City, including Oba Market, Ogba Market, Lagos Street, Airport Road, ADP Junction, and Benin Market etc to observe women's economic activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).
 - Field notes, sketches, and photographic documentation were used to capture spatial dynamics and social interactions (Pink, 2013).

3.5 Procedure (Studio Production Process)

The studio production process was carried out in two stages as follows:

Stage 1

The first stage involved a general survey of the major markets in Benin City, Edo State (Nigeria).

Step I - Visits to Selected Markets in Benin City.

Step II - Selection of Desired Market Scenes Around the Selected Markets.

Step III - Making Sketches and Composing the Pictures.

Stage 2

Step I – Stretching and Priming of Twenty Five (25) Canvases.

Step II – Sketching Themes for the Paintings (See Figures 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37)

Step III – Transferring Sketches unto Prepared Canvases (See Figure 55)

Step IV – Executing the Paintings into Market Scene Compositions.

Step V – Detailing

Step VI – Finishing

Twenty (20) and One (1) paintings were produced at the end of the study.

3.6 Method of Visual Analysis

The method of visual analysis for this study was undertaken using a two-pronged approach of formal analysis and comparative analysis.

3.6.1 Formal Analysis:

Firstly, we took a look at formal analysis and how it is employed in analyzing artworks. This study adopted the four aspects of visual analysis identified by Sachant *et al.*, (2021), which include: description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The study also involved the use of comparative analysis. In the aspect of description, we identified the dimensionality of the work, medium, production process, size, lines used, shape, volume or mass, space, texture, and the use of colour.

With regard to analysis, having identified the elements in the artwork, we analyzed or examined how the elements are arranged, how the principles of designs are employed, what elements are used to create unity, what is the scale of the work? Is it symmetrically or asymmetrically balanced? What is used in the artwork to create balance? In addition, we analyzed how the shapes and colours are repeated in the artwork.

Interpretation is the process of looking at what an object symbolizes to the artist and what it means to the viewer. At this point, the researcher was concerned about the meanings that could be derived from the artwork, and what elements in the artwork support the interpretation of the meaning of that artwork.

Evaluation is the sum total of the description, interpretation and analysis. It includes what the researcher discovered about the artwork when it was examined. Evaluation is also what the researcher learned about him/herself in relation to others in the process. It includes how the researcher feels when he/she views the artwork. The questions that arose at that point for the researcher, was therefore (a) is the artwork emotionally engaging or disturbing? (b) Does the artwork exemplify the thinking or the culture, and the age in which it was produced?

3.7.2 Comparative Analysis:

The comparative analysis method of analyzing paintings in this study was undertaken in line with Scheer's (n.d) steps of comparative analysis.

- Comparing the cultural context of the selected pieces.
- Comparing the formal qualities of the selected pieces.
- Comparing the function and purpose of the selected pieces.

- Comparing the material, conceptual and cultural significance of the selected pieces.

Therefore Formal qualities are:

- Function and purpose
- Material, conceptual and cultural significance.

The aforementioned became the yardstick with which the selected artworks/paintings were analyzed in order to come up with a method of painting market scenes, using oil on canvas in impressionistic style, and palette knife technique to execute each piece.

3.8 Detailed Description of the Studio Production Process

This segment deals with the detailed description of the studio production process. It involves the description of materials used in the execution of the paintings. The production process entails the following features:

- i) Conceptualization of market scene (content and context)
- ii) Interpretation of market scene
- iii) Description of materials, technique and style
- iv) Visual realization of market scenes

3.8.1 Conceptualization of Market Scene (Content and Context)

The conceptualization of market scenes refers to the images and visuals that come to mind when making a composition based on key insights developed from the research questions. These include, in order of the research questions:

1. The range of market spaces around Benin City where women undertake different economic activities in a dignified manner, which are symbolic of female power, strength and backbone of the economy —rendered via balanced composition and use of light.
2. The dynamic poses and postures that women take as active participants in various economic activities from the perspective of the ‘female gaze’ that challenges the passive ‘male gaze’ that objectify women as objects to be gazed upon for pleasure or sexual gratification.
3. The range of women’s occupational roles that dignify labour as butcher, sales consultant, food processor, fish hawkers, food vendors, etc.
4. Palette Knife as a tool used to create strong texture and help in abstraction of the images of women as complex, energetic, resilient personalities and serve as a refocus of the ‘male gaze’ to the economic value of the posture of the woman as a dynamic force of sustenance in the economy.
5. The range of colours and schemes that deepen the symbolic narrative of the economic strength of a woman in growing her home as well as the economy of her community or country.

3.8.2 Interpretation of the Conceptualized Market Scenes

In conceptualizing what to consider for making market scene paintings, there are four categories that are worth listing as guide to developing the sketches for the market scene paintings. These four categories include: the physical space, the participants, the products sold, and the socio-cultural relation. When analyzing the

interpretation of impressionist paintings depicting women's activities in marketplaces in Benin City through the Feminist Visual Culture Theory, the categories of physical space, participants, products, and socio-cultural relations play crucial roles in shaping meaning. Below is a breakdown of their influence:

1. Physical Space(Conventional and Improvised)

The marketplace as a physical space is significant in feminist visual culture because it is traditionally a female-dominated sphere. The marketplace varies from traditional settings to improvised settings on busy traffic, behind the boot or roof of a car, on the side-walk and others. Impressionist depictions may emphasize the vibrancy, movement, and communal nature of the market, reinforcing women's agency within this space (Pollock, 1988). The choice of composition, light, and brushstrokes can either romanticize women's labour or critique their socio-economic conditions (Nochlin, 1971).

Market scenes are often bustling with activity, showcasing interactions among vendors themselves, buyers, and customers. This reflects the social and communal aspects of Benin markets, which in turn are reflected in the paintings.

2. Participants (Women Interacting with Women and Men in the Marketplace)

Feminist visual culture brings to fore how women are represented—whether as active agents or passive subjects. Impressionist techniques (loose brushwork, palette-knife stroke, and focus on light) may either highlight their dynamism or obscure their labor under aesthetic beauty (Mulvey, 1989). The depiction of women's interactions (bargaining, socializing) can challenge patriarchal narratives of domesticity (Parker & Pollock, 1981).

3. Products (Goods Exchanged)

The goods sold in the market (food, livestock, textiles, crafts) reflect gendered labor divisions. Feminist theory interrogates whether these products are portrayed as extensions of women's domestic roles or as economic contributions (Mohanty, 1988). The portrayal of produce—whether vibrant or mundane—can influence perceptions of women's work as either valuable or trivialized. The paintings of food may feature an array of items, including fruits, tubers, garri, nuts, melon, pepper, tomatoes, meat, fish, snails, and even cooked food of a variety of fried potato, yam with beans and sauce, which highlights the richness of the trade in Benin City and its dynamic human relationships

4. Socio-Cultural Relations

Marketplaces are sites of cultural exchange, class dynamics, and resistance. Feminist visual culture critiques whether impressionist paintings reinforce stereotypes or expose power relations (hooks, 1992). For example, interactions between female traders and male customers may reveal hierarchies, while communal solidarity among women could signify resistance (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Through Feminist Visual Culture Theory, impressionist depictions of Benin City's marketplaces can be interpreted as either reinforcing or subverting traditional gender roles. The interplay of space, participants, products, and socio-cultural relations shapes whether these representations empower or marginalize women.

Market places do not only harbour socio-cultural relation but they also represent culture of those who use the market. So the painter is obliged to depict in some form, cultural clothing, hairstyles, and accessories unique to specific trends,

emphasizing cultural identity with modern developing tastes. These are reflected in the paintings showing the current style in clothing among boys' sagging trousers, women with fixed nails, lashes and foundations in facial make-up which emphasizes the current popular vogue of the society.

3.8.3 Description of Materials

A. The following materials were used in this study:

- Some wooden chassis
- Yards of canvas material
- Gun tacker
- Priming brush
- Oil, acrylic and poster colours of different hues
- Charcoal pencils and charcoal sticks,
- Sketchpad
- Drawing pencils
- White glue
- Palette knife
- Kneaded rubber

B. The following materials were carefully selected to execute the works;

1. Pencils, 3B, 4B
2. Pen
3. Canvas, 2 bundles
4. Colours – Oil Paint – Winsor & Newton
 - a) Ultramarine Violet (340) 170ml series 2
 - b) Burnt Umber (530) 170ml series 1

- c) Yellow Ochre (500) 170ml series 1
- d) Viridian Hue (470) 170ml series 2
- e) Medium Yellow (120) 170ml series 2
- f) Crimson (250) 170ml series 2
- g) Zinc White (720) 170ml series 2

Colour – Oil Paint – Maries

- h) Scarlet – big red – (302) 170ml
- 5. Diluent – kerosene
- 6. Brushes – wide, bristle brush for background
- 7. Palette knives
- 8. Gun Tacker
- 9. A pair of Scissors
- 10. Canvas support (Chases) 3 x 4 feet dimension
- 11. Fixative (PVA)
- 12. References

Technique

Palette Knife

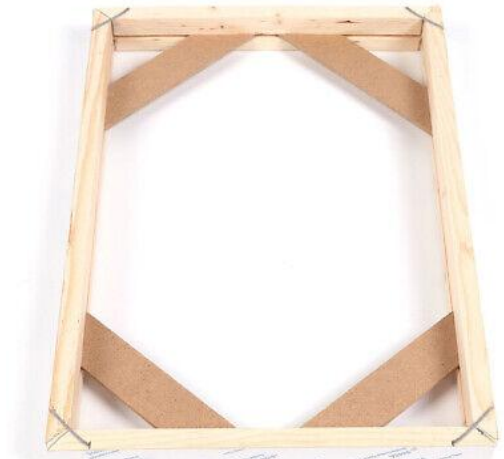
- Impasto
- Scumbling

Figure 21

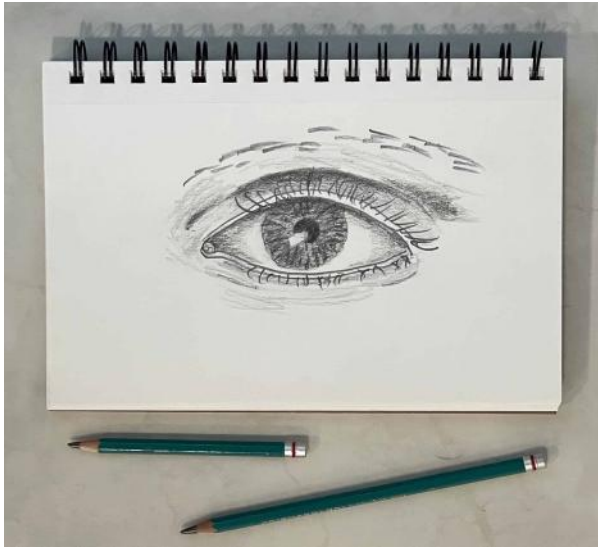
Figure 22



Bundles of Canvas



Stretched Canvas over Chasis

Figure 23

Black pen (Biro)

Figure 24**Figure 25**

A pair of scissors

Figure 26

Figure 27**Figure 28**

3.8.4 Visual Realization of Market Scenes

3.8.4 Visual Realization of Market Scenes

In the studio production process, a four step activity was developed in undertaking the paintings. Step one dealt with making sketches for composition on a sketchpad. Step two dealt with transferring the choice sketches unto the well stretched and primed canvas measuring 76cm x 107cm in dimension. Step three involves the painting process. Step four is detailing and finishing.

Painting Number One: Case Study: “Ogualigho” (Working-Class Hustler)

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Case Study: “Ogualigho” (Working-Class Hustler)

The sketch for ‘Case Study: “**Ogualigho**” was made on a vertical axis of the canvas using the rule of thirds. The sketch describes the subject against its busy environment. The subject is more emphasized than the objects related to the background.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was transferred on the canvas. Other objects such as buses were introduced in order to create a sense of bustling market environ, in accordance with the hoarding tradition of taking turns in picking up passengers into vehicles.

Figure 29



“Ogualigho” Sketch (Case Study (2025)

Medium: Pen on Canvas

Source: The Researcher

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done by using a light shade of wax pastels to make the base paint then palette knife was introduced to cover the pastel mapping with the actual colours.

The painting was rendered with knife and sustained throughout to apply shades of blue, purple, red and yellow, with tints of white on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The painting was scrutinized and needed to have more interestingness, thereby having to have more objects introduced. The background was however added to create an absolute location of high-rise buildings around the left side of the canvas. It was composed to give the impression of the outside street along Mission road market where buses line up to pick up passengers going to New Benin Market in Benin City.

Figure 30

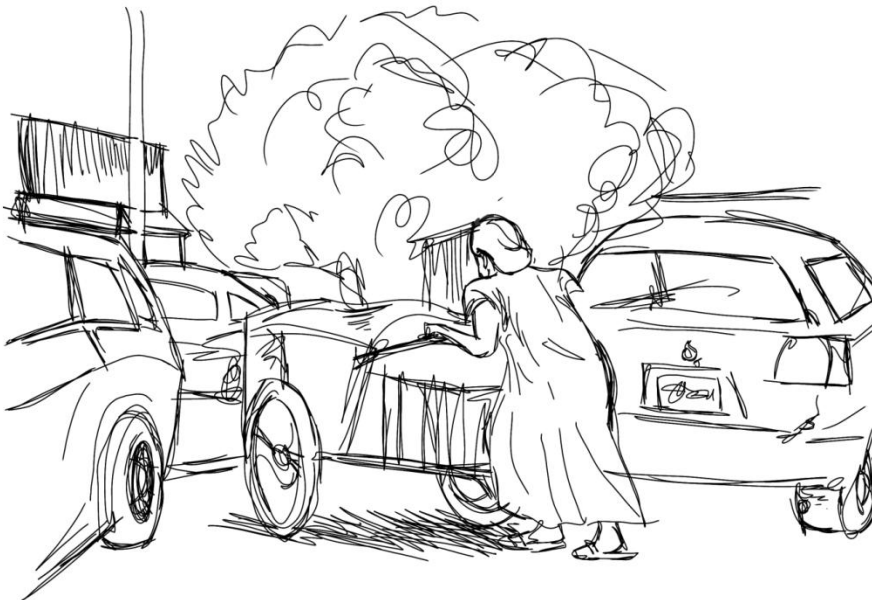


Painting Number Two: Case Study Food Vendor (Iye Osadebamwen)

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Case Study: Iye Osadebamwen

The sketch for 'Case Study: Iye Osadebamwen' was made with lines, shapes and curves on the horizontal axis of the canvas. There was one figure placed in lines to mark the best position using the rule of thirds. This was done to express balance for perspective in the general composition.

Figure 31:



Study, 2025)

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was transferred to canvas by using brush to plot the different lines in their respective positions. This was done as a careful arrangement to create an illusion of a busy foreground on the canvas. The background was made busy with indistinct

buildings, cars and trees to depict a space focusing on a mechanics' work area where the food vendor pushes her cart to sell to her customers while they are at work.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the initial use of a light wash with a wide bristle brush for the initial layering, outline and plotting of the selected figure and broken down vehicles in their allotted positions. The same technique of palette knife was then maintained throughout to apply the shades of the different colours on the canvas. Three cars and two houses were introduced to depict a mechanics work station but with a focus on the food vendor to make her the subject in the painting.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The painting was further detailed to depict the highlight from the reflection of the sun on the figure and around the environment.

Figure 32



Painting Number Three: Case Study: Corn Seller

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Case Study: Corn Seller

The sketch for 'Case Study: Corn Seller' was made with lines and shapes. There are no surrounding objects at the background but the barrow on which her corn is transported to display the focus on the female figure that trades in boiled corn.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was transferred on canvas with oil pastel colour. This is in order to have the sketch repeated with colour on canvas. As soon as the figure and the wares were

Title: Food Vendor: Iye Osadebamwen (Case Study: 2025)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Source: The Researcher



Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was tackled by starting with the use of a palette knife and the selected colours of blue, green and yellow initially represented in oil pastel, where the background was covered with the same colours which application made it look like a wall separating her from the background. The corn seller was represented in shades of red for her clothing.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

Much attention was given to the trader, depicting her confident and modern look with the bag slung across her shoulders to express where the money is safely stowed away. This painting was made to focus on the trader, her product and service.

Figure 34

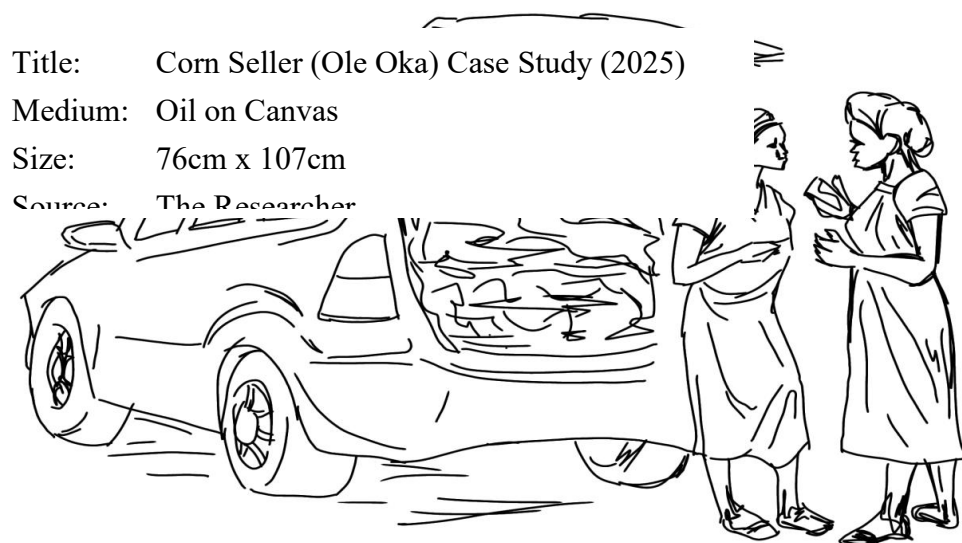


Painting Number Four: Case Study: Iyeke Imoto (Trunk of a Car)

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Case Study: Iyeke Imoto (Trunk of a Car)

The sketch for 'Case Study: Iyeke Imoto' was made by careful drawing in measured lengths. There was a car in the center of the composition and figures made to keep the picture busy, which displays a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Figure 35



Title: Corn Seller (Ole Oka) Case Study (2025)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

Title: Iyeke Imoto (Trunk of a Car) sketch Case Study (2025)

Medium: Pen on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The sketch was made directly on the canvas as a careful arrangement following the rule of thirds, creating an illusion of distance on a parking lot on an expanse of land on the canvas.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done by layering bright colours of sky blue and cream for the sky, tones of green in different shades on the shrubs and foreground as well as tones of red and yellow ochre to depict a grey scale. Other colours were introduced to the clothing of the two women who were added to make the composition a trader-customer bargain.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The figures were well situated so that they gave complimentary stance to the car in the center of the canvas for a more robust and interactive composition.



Figure 36

Painting Number Five: Case Study: Mango Seller (Ole Imongo)

Step 1: Preparing the Ground for Case Study: Mango Seller

The canvas for 'Case Study: Mango Seller' was stretched, primed and an experimental background was made by dropping spots of different colours of poster paint unto the canvas. A sturdy ruler was used to slide the colours from the top of the canvas down to the bottom in order to spread them into vertical stripes of colours to display their obvious difference.

Step 2: Making the Sketch for Case Study: Mango Seller

The sketch of the researcher was made as the profile of the artist with lemon yellow coloured chalk pastel directly on the already prepared canvas with poster paint smudged in different colours.

Figure 37



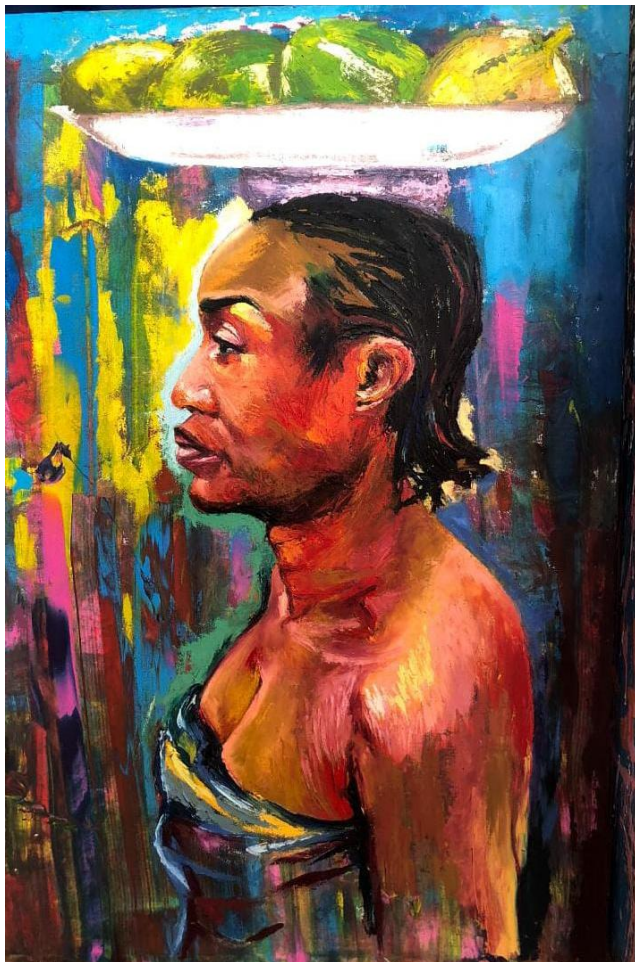
Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was made with impasto style by using the palette knife technique to apply thick layers of oil colours in shades of flesh tints and brown on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect the poster paint and keep it locked in as well as giving the final painting a glossy finish.

Figure 38



Title: Mango Seller (2022)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Six: Colour Scheme: Blue Monochrome

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Colour Scheme: Blue Monochrome

The sketch for 'Colour Scheme: Blue Monochrome' was made with palette knife with a mixture of light and dark tones of blue oil paint colour. There was no sketch but a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Step 2: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the use of the palette knife and oil colour mix of light blue, middle tone blue, and dark blue shades for the initial layering, outline and finally, mapping to shape in a female figure that seem to wander in the bush, possibly in search of snails at the wee hours of the morning. The same technique of palette knife painting was maintained to apply the different shades of colour throughout the entire work on the canvas.

Step 3: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect it with a glossy finish.

Figure 39

Colour Scheme: Blue Monochrome
(2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

Source: The Researcher

Figure 39: Colour Scheme:
Blue Monochrome (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

Source: The researcher

Painting Number Seven: Colour Scheme: Green Monochrome

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Colour Scheme: Green Monochrome

The sketch for 'Colour Scheme: Green Monochrome' was made with lines, and shapes. There were no figures but geometry, which displays a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was made in shapes by mapping. This is done as a careful arrangement to create an illusion of a busy background on the canvas.

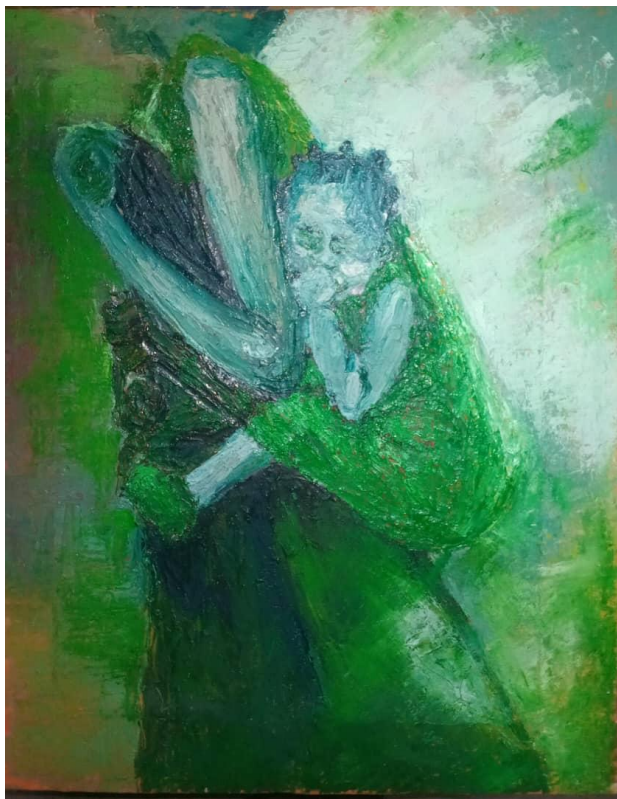
Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the use of a light wash with a wide bristle brush as well as a size '8' sable brush for the initial layering, outline and mapping. The same technique of palette knife painting was maintained to apply the shades of colour work on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect and give it a glossy finish.

Figure 40:



Colour Scheme: Green Monochrome (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Eight: Colour Scheme: Red Monochrome**Step 1: Making the Sketch for Colour Scheme: Red Monochrome**

The sketch for 'Colour Scheme: Red Monochrome' was made with lines, curves. There were no figures but geometry, which displays a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was made in shapes by mapping. This is done as a careful arrangement to create an illusion of a busy background on the canvas.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the use of a light wash with a wide bristle brush as well as a size 8 sable brush for the initial layering, outline and mapping. The same technique of palette knife painting was maintained to apply the shades of colour work on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect and give it a glossy finish.

Figure 41



Colour Scheme: Red Monochrome (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Nine: Colour Scheme: Purple Monochrome

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Colour Scheme: Purple Monochrome

The sketch for 'Colour Scheme: Purple Monochrome' was made with lines, curves.

There were no figures but geometry, which displays a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was made in shapes by mapping. This is done as a careful arrangement to create an illusion of a busy background on the canvas.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the use of a light wash with a wide bristle brush as well as a size- 8 sable brush for the initial layering, outline and mapping. The same technique of palette knife painting was maintained to apply the shades of colour work on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect and give it a glossy finish.

Figure 42



Colour Scheme: Purple Monochrome (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Ten: Colour Scheme: Orange Monochrome**Step 1: Making the Sketch for Colour Scheme: Orange Monochrome**

The sketch for 'Colour Scheme: Orange Monochrome' was made with lines, curves. There were no figures but geometry, which displays a layout for colour gradation. It was implied to show structure of balance for colour arrangement.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing was made in shapes by mapping. This is done as a careful arrangement to create an illusion of a busy background on the canvas.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The painting was done with the use of a light wash with a wide bristle brush as well as a size '8' sable brush for the initial layering, outline and mapping. The same technique of palette knife painting was maintained to apply the shades of colour work on the canvas.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

The work was fixed with pva to protect and give it a glossy finish.

Figure 43

Colour Scheme: Orange Monochrome (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 40cm x 50cm

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Painting Number Eleven: Processing Cassava by the Riverside a Few Meters from Ogba Market



Figure 44

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Woman Processing Cassava by the Riverside a Few Meters from Ogba Market

A sketch of the figure was made on a sketch pad with black pen. Adjustments were made to place the figure in the correct position for a composition that will be suitable

to relay her situation in relation to the space she is working, while determining the proportion against her environment.

Step 2:Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

Quite unlike the previous sketch, the drawing of the figure was transferred with careful planning by drawing lines to form a type of grid to ensure accuracy in proportion for a good composition. The drawing was transferred on the well stretched and primed canvas (3x4). When the sketch was seen to be correct, it was ready for colour application.

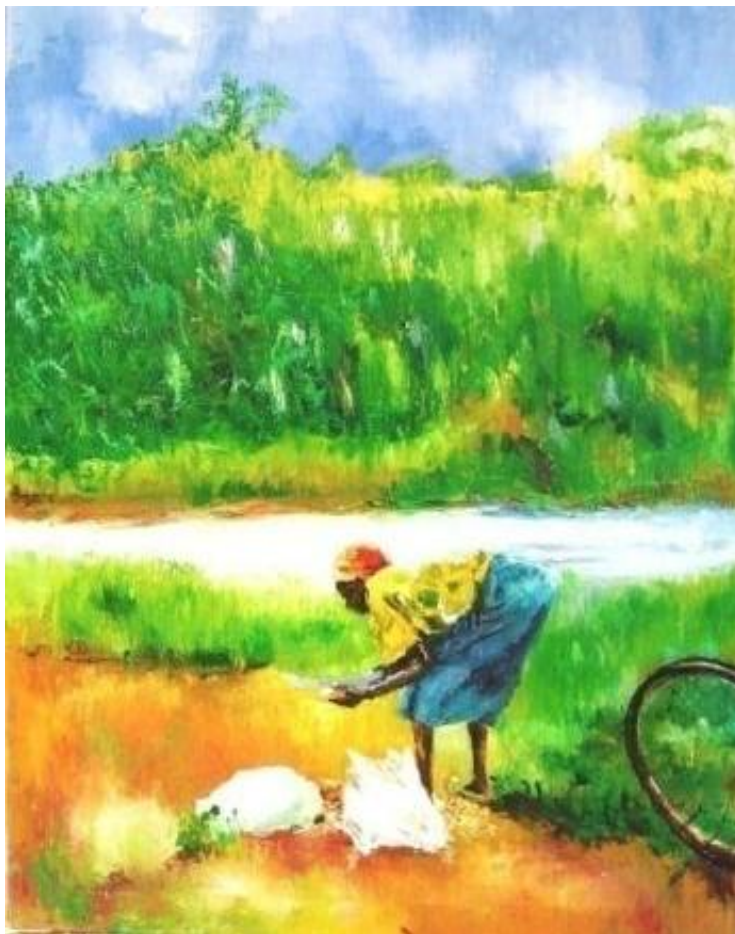
Step 3:The Painting Process

The work was first outlined using a brush to lay a light wash on the background and block out some portions in order to set the layout for palette knife rendition. Palette knife was then used to apply thick colours, related colours of greens and yellows mixed into lemons and olives, with red and oranges to create different values and tones, and then these colours were cooked and applied to create a bush at the background and foreground, and the same palette knife was used to smudge the colours, merging each colour with the next by the side. This technique of applying paint by smudging with palette knife is a method of using a thin application of paint and rubbing it against the surface to scumble the colours together is called scumbling.

Step 4:Detailing and Finishing

Details of the figures' clothing as well as the bicycle wheel, was treated in earnest to properly situate the location and her means of transportation.

Figure 45



Title: Processing Cassava by the Riverside a Few Meters
from Ogba Market (2022)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Twelve: Teenage Fish Hawkers Conference at ADP Junction

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Teenage Fish Hawkers Confer at ADP Junction

The sketch for 'teenage fish hawkers' was made with lines and forms. The area behind the figures mapped out as the background, occupy details of the environment where the teenagers are sitting.

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing of the figures was transferred with careful planning by adjusting the figures to sit in a centralized position at the foreground while considering the proportion of each figure against the other, to make up the composition. The drawing was transferred to a well stretched and primed canvas with the dimension of 3 feet by 4 feet (3x4). When the sketch was seen to be correct, it was ready for colour application.

Figure 46



Sketch for Teenage Fish Hawkers' Conference at ADP Junction

Step 3: The Painting Process

The work was tackled with the use of a palette knife to apply related colours from yellows, cream, red, blue and green in different values and tones to create a background and foreground, the values of cream and brown was smudged at the foreground to create the effect of a cement/ concrete floor. The same technique of applying paint by smudging with palette knife called scumbling was also used in this case.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

Details of the figures' clothing, fish and trays was paid much attention to give the painting the effect of realism while putting into cognizance the light of day which is a regular feature of impressionism

Figure 47



Title: Teenage Fish Hawkers Conference at ADP Junction (2023)
Medium: Oil on Canvas
Size: 76cm x 107cm
Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Thirteen: A Groundnut Monger on Her Way Home from Lagos Street

Step 1: Making the Sketch for A Groundnut Monger on Her Way Home from Lagos Street

The sketch for 'groundnut monger' was made with lines, form and shading. Figures were introduced behind the main character to give the background details of a seemingly busy street.

Figure 48



Sketch for A Groundnut Monger on Her
Way Home from Lagos Street

Step 2:Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing of the figures was transferred with careful planning by making alternative lines to grid on the canvas, and by adjusting the figures slightly to centralize their position in order to lay emphasis on them as the focal point of the composition, but with care not to distort the general layout of the composition. This drawing was transferred to a well stretched and primed canvas with the dimension of 3 feet by 4 feet (3x4). When the sketch was seen to be correct, it was ready for colour application.

Step 3:The Painting Process

The palette knife technique was used to apply related colours of blue, pink, cream and brown, to render the figures and yellow was adopted to represent the evening sky. All the colours were applied in different values and tones to create a background and foreground. The same technique of scumbling, applying paint by smudging with palette knife was also used mostly at the foreground to treat the ground as a tarred road.

Step 4:Detailing and Finishing

Details of the figures' clothing and the sack on her head were paid much attention to give the painting the effect of realism using impasto technique while paying attention to texture which is a feature of impressionism.

Figure 49



Title: A Groundnut Monger on Her Way Home
from Lagos Street (2023)

Medium: Oil on canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The researcher

Painting Number Fourteen: Female Costermonger Buying Meat from a Male Hawker

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Female Costermonger Buying Meat from a Male Hawker

The sketch for this painting was made with lines, spirals, shade and forms. The area behind the figures was mapped out as the background to occupy some detail of an environment.

Figure 50:



Female Costermonger Buying Meat from a Male Hawker (2023)

Medium: Pen on Paper

Size: A4

Source: The Researcher

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing of the figures was transferred with careful planning by adjusting the figures to pose on a section of the canvas bearing in mind the rule of thirds, with a

consideration on the proportion of each figure against the other, to make a good composition. The drawing was transferred on a well stretched and primed canvas with the dimension of 3 feet by 4 feet (3x4). When the sketch was seen to be good, it was ready for the painting process.

Step 3: The Painting Process

The work was treated with the technique of a palette knife. This was to apply related colours from yellows, blue, cream, green, and shades of red, orange and browns (burnt umber) in different values and tones to create a background and foreground, the values of cream and brown was smudged at the foreground to create the effect of a slopes and concrete flooring.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

Details of the figures' conventional sagging jeans clothing, meat that he is selling, and the ground on which he stands, as well as the woman's peeled oranges on the wheel barrow was paid much attention to give the painting the effect of realism while paying attention to the dull sky which gives us the misty feel of the weather which is a feature of impressionist style.

Figure 51

Title: Female Costermonger Buying Meat from a Male Hawker (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

Painting Number Fifteen: Woman Selling Egusi and Pepper on the Walkway

Behind Oba Market

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Woman Selling Egusi and Pepper On The Walkway Behind Oba Market

The sketch for 'woman selling Egusi' was made with lines, form and shading. Foot wears were introduced on the walkway by the main character to give the details of a busy market place with her wares inconveniencing passers-by. Her seeming look of adamancy reflects on her position of backing traffic, thereby posing a danger to herself and others.

Figure 52



Sketch for Woman Selling Egusi and Pepper on the Walkway behind Oba Market

Source: The Researcher

Step 2:Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing of the figures was transferred with careful planning by adjusting the figures at the foreground and reducing the wide gap at the background but with care not to distort the general idea of proper use of proportion in the composition. The drawing was transferred to a well stretched and primed canvas with the same dimension of 3 feet by 4 feet (3x4). When the sketch seemed to be correct, it was ready for colour application.

Step 3:The Painting Process

The painting was produced by first applying the brush strokes before the use of palette knife technique in expressionist style. The colours were chosen from the range of blue/green, cream, purple, pink as well as orange played up into yellow and brown. All the colours were applied in pastel colours with red and white featuring vividly representing the pepper and the egusi in her bowls placed on the walk way. The same technique of scumbling with scratches of the palette knife was used all over the canvas.

Step 4:Detailing and Finishing

The finishing was done with the introduction of feet on the walk way to reflect the disturbance caused by the woman selling egusi and pepper on the walkway.

Figure 53



Title: Woman Selling Egusi and Pepper on the Walkway Behind Oba Market (2023)

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Size: 76cm x 107cm

Source: The Researcher

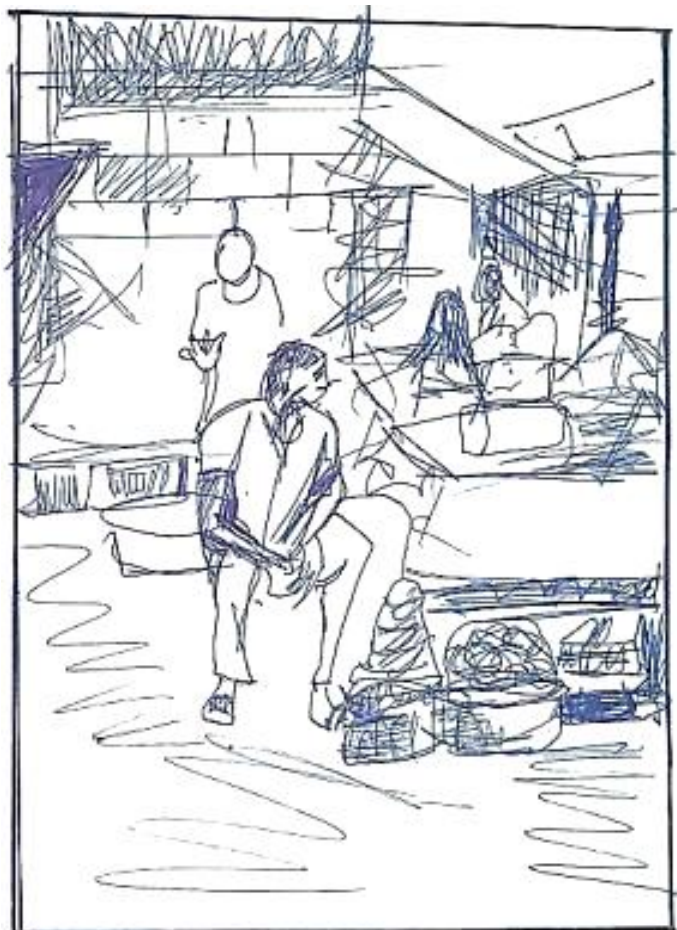
Painting Number Sixteen: Women Selling Snail, Salt and Garri at Oka Market

Step 1: Making the Sketch for Women Selling Snail, Salt and Garri at Oka

Market

The sketch for 'women selling' was made with lines, form and shading. The figures were placed in a line to form a small letter 't' before an old building in the market area. This gives an impression of market spaces on a busy street with a focus on the immediate environment and the litter of items that is used in their trade.

Figure 54



Sketch for Women Selling Snail, Salt and Garri at Oka Market

Step 2: Transferring the Sketch on Canvas

The drawing of the figures was transferred following the sketch and the layout on a well stretched and primed canvas with the dimension of 3 feet by 4 feet (3x4). When the sketch was seen to be correct, it was ready for colour application.

Figure 55



Transfer of sketch to canvas: Women Selling Snail, Salt and Garri at Oka Market

Step 3: The Painting Process

Palette knife technique was used to apply related colours of ocean blue, magenta, cream, green, spectrum yellow, tangerine orange and shades of red brown, yellow ochre, raw umber, and burnt umber with details of warm grey, to render the figures and objects and a light blue was adopted to represent the morning sky. All the colours were applied to reflect the colours found in a typical market area with different hues, values, and tones to create the background and foreground. The same technique of scumbling, applying paint by smudging with palette knife was also used.

Step 4: Detailing and Finishing

Details of the figures' clothing, objects and items, as well as the sack beside her were paid much attention to give the painting the effect of realism while paying attention to texture which is a feature of impressionism.

Figure 56



alt and Garri at Oka Market

**Painting Number Seventeen: Woman Under an *Ekhara* Selling Fried Yam,
Potato and Sauce Along Wire Road**

Step 1: Making the Sketch for ‘Woman Under an *Ekhara*’

The sketch for ‘woman under a parasol’ was made with lines, form and shading.

Figures of buyers were introduced beside the main character to give the background details of a busy street corner where imagined activity takes place.

Figure 57

