

Week 11 LESSON

CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN ART AND ARTISTS

Contemporary Nigerian Art refer to Nigerian art works of modern or recent times which usually combine features of traditional art and that of Western art. The persons who have created Contemporary Nigerian art are referred to as Contemporary Nigerian artists. This makes the art appealing nationally and internationally. Late Aina Onabolu, Ben Enwonwu, Bruce Onabrakpeya, Ladi Kwali, among others are examples of contemporary Nigerian artists who have played significant roles in pioneering and promoting contemporary Nigerian arts. Further, we shall look at the Contemporary Nigerian artists and the contributions they made:

Aina Onabolu

He was born on 13th September 1882 in Ijebu-ode, Ogun state to Jacob Onabolu. He attended St. Saviour Primary school, Ijebu-ode. After encountering some “illustrations in European magazines and books”, he developed interest in art. He drew many illustrations from textbook and newspaper of which some of them were useful for his school teachers as teaching aids. He moved to London where he attended St. John’s Word college and later Academie Julian (Julian Academy) I Paris. **He is the first Nigerian to study Art.** He made efforts to ensure that art is included as a subject in public schools. **He is regarded as the father of modern/contemporary Nigerian art.**

His works include:

1. Portrait of Sis Nurse
2. Portrait of Mrs Spencer Savage
3. Portrait of Dr. Sapara
4. Portrait of Rt. Rev. I. Oluwole
5. Portrait of Bishop Melville-Jones.

Ben Enwonwu

He was born on 14th July 1917 in Onitsha, Anambra state. He represented Africa at the International Exhibition of modern Arts held in Paris in 1946. He was commissioned to make a bronze portrait of Her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II in 1956.

His works include

1. Anyanwu (situated at the headquarters of the United Nations)
2. Sango (situated at Power Holdings Company of Nigeria, PHCN)
3. The drummers (situated at the Nigerian telecommunications headquarters (NITEL), Lagos)
4. The Risen Christ
5. Bronze Sculpture of Nnamdi Azikiwe.
6. Sculpture of Queen Elizabeth II

Paintings

1. Agbogho mmuo
2. African dancers

Madam Ladi Kwali

She is the image can be found at the back of 20 naira note as a woman moulding pot. She is a famous Abuja potter.

She is an officer of the Order of the Niger (OON). Abuja pottery Training Centre was renamed Ladi Kwali Centre. She died in 1984.

Uche Okeke

He was born in Kafanchan, Kaduna state in 1933. He was one of those who studied under Mrs. Etsu Ngbodaga-Ngu at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (formerly Nigerian College of Arts,

Sciences and Technology). He is the initiator of Uli Art tradition in Nsukka. He loves African culture and African Art a lot. His works include:

1. Nza, the seal drawing
2. Risen Christ
3. Cover illustrations for *Things Fall Apart*, a novel by Chinua Achebe
4. Match of the Masquerades
5. Maiden Cry
6. Unity etc.

Demas Nwoko

He was born in 1935 at Idumuye Ugboko, in Aniocha Local Government Area, Delta state. He studied art at Ibadan and later at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (formerly Nigerian College of Arts, Sciences and Technology). He also studied Art in Paris, France.

His works include:

1. Adam and Eve
2. Mother and Child
3. Soja
4. Philosopher
5. The Bathing Women

Bruce Onabrakpeya

He was born in Agbara-Otor in 1932. He is very good at graphic design, painting, and print making. He has done a lot of art exhibitions within and beyond the country. He is the founder of Bruce Onabrakpeya Foundation (BOF). This organization organizes an annual Art workshop in Agbara-Otor.

His musical works include

1. Cover illustration on the novel, No longer at Ease by Chinua Achebe.
2. Cover illustration on the novel. An African Night Entertainment by Cyprian Ekwensi
(*confirm author)
3. Olorunsogo (a painting)
4. Kurmin Rukiki (a painting)

6. Dele Jegede

He was born in 1945 in Ondo state. He studied at institutions such as Yaba College of Technology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Indiana University Bloomington, America. He is a renowned cartoonist, painter and art historian. He did cartoons for Sunday Times and Daily Times. He has done several exhibitions within and outside the country.

His works include:

1. Market scene
2. Samaru
3. Drummer
4. Palm Seller

5. Masquerade
6. Palm wine tapper etc.

7. Mrs. Etsu Ngbodaga-Ngu

She was born in 1921 in Kano. She is the first female arts educator and the first Nigerian to teach at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria.

Her works include:

1. Mother Earth
2. Turning point
3. Ona

Other notable Nigerian Artists include:

Lamidi Fakeye

Abiodun Olaku

Yusuf Grillo

Obiora Udechukwu,

Dele Jegede

El Anatsui

Ali Ekongfelix Ekeada

Tayo Adenaike.

S. I. Wangboje

Ogbonnaya Nwagbara

Jimo Bola Akolo

Ola Oloidi

Ben Ekanem

Chike Aniakor

Taiwo Olaniyi (Twin Seven Seven)

Mike Omoighe

Prominent Nigerian Arts and their locations

	Art works	Artists	Locations
1.	Caravan	Ben Enwonwu	PHCN, Lagos
2.	Sculptured Decoration	Demas Nwoko	National Arts theatre
3.	Etching	Bruce Onabrakpeya	Agbara-Otor, Delta state
4.	Statue of Nnamdi Azikiwe	Ben Enwonwu	Enugu
5.	Risen Christ	Ben Enwonwu	The Chapel of Resurrection, University of Ibadan.
6.	Queen Amina	Ben Ekanem	National Theatre, Lagos
7.	Sango	Ben Enwonwu	NEPA headquarters, Lagos.
8.	Anyanwu	Ben Enwonwu	National Museum, Lagos
9.	Soccer	Rowland Amadi	Dan Anyiam Stadium, Imo state

Importance/uses of contemporary Nigerian art

1. It helps to preserve the national cultural heritage.

2. It is a means of generating income.
3. It provides aesthetics for our environment.
4. They can serve as a means of disseminating information to the public.
5. It serves as a form of entertainment

Ways of generating income through contemporary art

1. One can generate income through exhibition of art works.
2. One can generate income through sales of Art works
3. Artists can be commissioned with price attached to produce works for government or individuals.
4. One can generate money by offering public services such as printing, painting, graphic designs, drawings, etc.