

Reminiscing the Contributions of Six Scholars of the Nigerian Art History

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Abstract

Issue of inadequate documentation of African contemporary art has been a major concern to the profession. Majority of tangible books that we have today on our art were masterminded by European and American ethnographers, archaeologists and anthropologists namely: Bernard and Williams Fagg, John Pemberton III, Leo Frobenius, Williams Bascom, Ulli Beier, Frank Willett, Henry Drewal, Robin Poynor, John Picton, Paula Ben-Amos, among others. These personalities and a few Nigerian art historians have made indelible imprints on the history of Nigerian art despite the fact that most of them were not core art historians. In order to project and properly document these great personalities, this paper takes a cursory look at the lives and times of only six of them, including two Nigerians, who have passed on to the great beyond with the view to reviewing their scholarly contributions to Nigerian Art history while they were alive. The six selected personalities for this reminiscing are: Leo Viktor FROBENIUS (29, June, 1873 - 9 August, 1938); Bennard FAGG (8 December, 1915 - 14 August, 1987); William Buller FAGG (28 April, 1914 - 10 July 1992); Cornelius Oyeleke ADEPEGBA (23 March, 1941 - 1 October, 2002); Frank WILLETT (18 August, 1925 - 15 June, 2006) and Ekpo Okpo EYO (28 July 1931 - 28 May, 2011). Data were collected from secondary sources and analysed using historical and biographical methods. The paper reveals the identities of the personalities for readers to have a glimpse of their art historical contributions.

Introduction

Art in traditional societies in Nigeria started many centuries ago. Since our art practices then lacked adequate documentation coupled with problems of preservation from adverse climatic condition, rot and incessant tribal wars among others, the dates and provenances of the arts were altered (Adepegba, 2007:14-15). These alterations led to historical gaps some of which were filled by the unsolicited efforts of some Americans and Europeans.

As a result, our traditional became art forms became constructed, reconstructed and deconstructed overtime by these foreign researchers who were essentially Ethnographers, Ethnologists, Archeologists and Anthropologists through dint of hard work and selfless labour. While some of them with the help of colonial masters, were culpable for transporting out antiquities from their natural contextual states to overseas where they are not pertinent, it was essential to remember those who had given us a history as arts practising people.

Arguably, the contributions they have made to our art history before and after independence cannot be quantified nor overemphasised. Even now that our contemporary art is one hundred and one years old (1920 - 2021), we have always relied on their past scholarly works. These foreigners, whose influx was unprecedented especially after the discovery made by Leo Frobenius in 1910, have written virtually on all areas of art and culture.

Despite these achievements, these great 'historians' which include Bernard and Williams Fagg, John Pemberton III, Leo Frobenius, Williams Bascom, Frank Willett, Henry Drewal, Robin Poynor, John Picton, Paula Ben-Amos, Marshal Mount, etc. appeared not to have been appreciated, celebrated or revered by those of us for which they have labored and dropped books worthy of being read.

In the light of this problem, this paper is focusing on these selected scholars in order to project and to properly document their personalities. Therefore, this paper will take a cursory look at the lives and times of only six of them (including two Nigerians), all of whom have passed on to the great beyond with the aim of reviewing one each of their scholarly contributions to Nigerian Art history while they were alive. The six personalities selected for these scholarly reminiscences are: Leo Viktor FROBENIUS (29, June, 1873 - 9 August, 1938); Bennard FAGG (8 December, 1915 - 14 August, 1987); William Buller FAGG (28 April, 1914 - 10 July 1992); Cornelius Oyeleke ADEPEGBA (23 March, 1941 - 1 October, 2002); Frank WILLETT (18 August, 1925 - 15 June, 2006) and Ekpo Okpo EYO (28 July 1931 - 28 May, 2011). Data were collected from secondary sources and analysed using historical and critical review methods.

The Scholars and Their Contributions to Nigerian Art History

1) *Leo Viktor FROBENIUS* (29 June, 1873 – 9 August, 1938)



Plate 1: Leo Viktor FROBENIUS. Source: sciencephoto.com (2011)

Leo Frobenius (Plate 1), was born in Berlin as the son of a Prussian officer. Leo was a renowned ethnologist and archaeologist and later became an important figure in the German Ethnography. Leo Frobenius was referred to as an archaeologist and anthropologist¹, who became an authority on pre-historic art and culture, especially of Africa. Encyclopedia Britannica Online (2004), however described him as a German explorer, ethnologist and one of the originators of the culture-historical approach to ethnology.

Leo Frobenius was self-educated as a social scientist and became known as a wide traveler. However, his first expedition to Africa was in 1904 to Kasai District of Congo. During his trajectories in Africa, his journey covered Western and Central Sudan, Northern and North-Eastern Africa. In all, he led twelve expeditions to Africa between 1904 and 1935 and also explored centres of historic art in Alpo, Norway, Spain and others.

In one of his explorations of Africa, he discovered Ori-Olokun in 1910 at Ile-Ife. Then, Leo Frobenius was actually and particularly interested in Olokun, the Yoruba Goddess of wealth and ocean. (Eyo 1974:96, Gillon 1991:186). He was actually the one that made the Ife Art to become world acclaimed. The proclamation he made about the Ife artworks in his publications after his expedition, as possibly the products of the lost Atlantis colony led to sudden influx of foreign researchers into Nigeria. Though, he was known for making unsavory statement that the Ife naturalistic art was probably by non - Ife artists and that the classic nature of the art is beyond African expertise, nevertheless his contributions to African traditional art is remarkable. As one of his contribution to the material culture, he founded the Institute of Cultural Morphology in Munich.

In furtherance to his love for African Art, he widely researched on living African cultures and their folklores. One of his publications is *Voice of Africa* (1913). He also co-authored the following books among others: *Pre-historic Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa*

¹ Yahoo Encyclopedia Reference (2004)

(1937) *African Genesis: Folktales and Myths of Africa*. His writings with Douglas Fox were a channel through which some African traditional story telling and epics became part and parcel of European literature. At the age of 65, he died in Biganzolo Lego, Maggiore, Piedmont Italy.

One of Leo Frobenius' books is:

Title: *The voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the year 1910 – 1912.*

Year of Publication: 1913 (First edition)

No of Pages: xxxiii - 349; viii, 353 – 682 (2 Quarto Volumes- Hard Cover)

Publisher: Hutchinson and Co, London.

The book translated into English and published in 1913, is an account of the explorative expeditions made by Frobenius of Africa between 1910-1912. The contents of the book is what led to the influx of many European ethnographers into Africa especially Nigeria. His stories in the book are sweeping and unbelievable especially his assumptions about Ife art. He claimed that the works found in Ife could not have been produced there. The book associated the civilization and sophistication of the Ife works to that of the lost Atlantis continent. The book has over seventy plates including two colour front pieces. In the books there are two hundred illustrations (photograph and drawings), four maps and tables. (www.worldcat.org). In general, the book reveals the perceptions of the author about the art of places he visited. The book is out of print and old copies are always on auction on the web.

2) **Bernard FAGG** (8 December,1915 – 14 August, 1987)

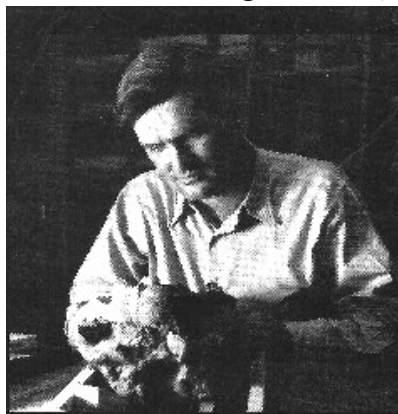


Plate 2: Bernard Fagg. Source: Bernard Fagg's *Nok Terracottas* (1990), London: Ethnographica

Bernard Fagg (Plate 2) was born on 8th December 1915. Fagg, who studied at Dulwich and Downing College, Cambridge was awarded a degree in anthropology and archaeology. But Bernard later enrolled into the Colonial Service and this led to his being posted to Nigeria in 1939. During the wars, Fagg enlisted with the Royal West African Engineers and served in East Africa. In spite of this engagement, he used his leave time to work on the excavations

of Louis and Mary Leakey. He later got married to Catherine Davidson in 1942. (Povey and Willett, 1988:10)

In 1943 Bernard Fagg was recalled to Nigeria to serve on the governor's staff roll and was posted to Jos where he took charge of resettling Nigerian troops returning from the war and also to expedite tin extraction from the Central Plateau of the country. The new call to duty allowed him to engage in archaeological and ethnographic research in the region. Between 1943-1944 he discovered Nok terracottas², which he rescued and published in his first book on Nok. This book, *Nok Terracottas*, is an authoritative description of this art and has established the Nok culture as among the very earliest evidence of the early iron age art of the sub-Saharan Africa.

After the war³, up to 1947, Fagg, who remained in Nigeria, was seconded to work in the new Antiquity Service with the position of Government Archaeologist, which is more directly connected with his scholarly interests being the first trained Archaeologist to work in Nigeria. He was immediately concerned with housing, supplying research facilities and displaying Nigeria's traditional material culture and prehistoric remains. According to Povey and Willett (1988) Fagg became Director of Antiquities in 1957, a post that provided him with the vantage position for his remarkable and long-lasting achievements. They authors say further that he was able to concentrate on furnishing the urgently needed museums and research facilities that would provide for the study and protection of the treasures of Nigerian art.

Bernard Fagg served for sixteen years in close relationship with Kenneth Murray, who happened to be a legendary figure in Nigerian archaeological and art studies. Kenneth Murray founded the Antiquities Department and recruited the best technical and professional service available into the Department.

Bernard Fagg was instrumental to the founding of following museums: Jos (1952), the first public museum in British West Africa, Argungu (June 1958), Oron (1959-60), Kaduna (1959-60), and Kano (1960-61). He also supervised the transfer of the Benin Museum from the old lock-up to the post office (1960-61), expansion of the Lagos Museum and also the acquisition of sites for both Esie and Owo the museums (Fagg, 1990).

Other efforts of Bernard Fagg were summarised by Povey and Willett (1988) as follows:

He also saw to it that Nigerians were trained to manage them. Through him UNESCO and the Nigerian Government combined to establish the first bilingual African training center for museum technicians, which was intended to serve the entire continent. His knowledge of Hausa assisted his plan to acquire a major collection of Islamic manuscripts as part of his determination to preserve Nigeria's Islamic heritage. During this period it seemed that every significant development aimed toward the study

² Nok art is dated back to between the third and sixth centuries B.C.

³ II World War

and retention of the culture of Nigeria showed evidence of his guiding hand.

In 1963, Fagg retired from Nigeria and became the curator of Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Though, he suffered a severe stroke in 1968, his wife Catherine and his daughter Angela assisted and Angela eventually became an archaeologist and had also worked in northern parts Nigeria. Apart from influencing the likes of Frank Willettt, Thurstan Shaw, Graham Connah, Robert Soper, Tim Chappel, John Picton, David Bivar, and Ekpo Eyo to work on Nigeria art, he also facilitated the early field experience of his renowned brother, William Fagg. He died in Oxford in August 14, 1987 at the age of 71.

One of Bernard Fagg's books is:

Title: *Nok Terracottas*

Year of Publication: 1990

No of Pages: 157

Publisher: Ethnographica, London in Association with National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Nigeria

Nok Terracottas is the first authoritative work on the finds of Nok. It is an account and interpretation by an eyewitness who experienced and took part in the process of excavating some of the finds. Bernard Fagg in his narratives in the book, tries to relate the works to the culture of the area so as to further establish the authenticity of the finds.

His descriptions are deep, systematic and entangling. The purposes of the works, formal analysis of the characteristics of the works and their classifications are provided in the book. The book, which has over 158 photographs (black and white/colour), has been a major reference to those interested in Nok art and it has stimulated other researches by other local and international scholars on the subject matter. For easy usage, the author provided figure index and word index at the end of the book.

3) William Buller FAGG (28 April, 1914 - 10 July, 1992)



Plate 3: William Buller Fagg. Source: *African Arts* (1994) Vol xxvii, No 3

William Buller Fagg (Plate 3) popularly called 'Bill' was born on April 28, 1914. After his elementary school he read classic at Magdalene College, Cambridge in the year 1936 winning prizes in for Latin hexameters and epigrams. Williams later progressed and graduated in Archaeology and Anthropology.

In 1938, he became an Assistant Keeper of Ethnography in British Museum and was among those that made the field of African Art a legitimate concern for Historians and anthropologists. It was when he returned to the museum, between 1942-1945 having been seconded to Board of Trade.

Buller whose visual art and material culture knowledge was said to be encyclopedic, was spectacularly interested in the art of Nigeria where his younger brother Bernard Fagg was for a time a Director of Antiquities. According to Picton (1994), William was the one, who took Africa Art out of myth and primitivism and placed it within the context of Africa social history. He was later appointed as assistant keeper of Department of Ethnography of British Museum where he was later given a curatorial responsibility for Africa.

In 1958 - 1959, he was in Nigeria and he acted on behalf of Nigeria by buying back antiquities at Sotheby, works of Art from Benin for the proposed National Museum in Lagos. In his research and studies of African Art, he visited Cameroon, Mali, Algeria and Niger between 1966-1982. Sieber (1994) notes that when Williams was in Nigeria he identified large number of Yoruba and other artists that were hitherto unknown. Christi's (1994), corroborates this fact as follows:

In the Kasai in 1949/1950 he found the carvers Pierre Piaga and Nyamandele among the Kuba, and in Nigeria he recorded the two main carving houses of Akinyode and Adugbologe in Abeokuta. But the artist he admired above all others was Olowo of Ise.

He was an editor of MAN periodical from 1947 - 1965. Williams Fagg had over 230 writing about the sculptures of Africa. He was the author of *Nigeria Images* (1963), *Africa and the Renaissance* (1988) and co-author of *Yoruba Sculptures of West Africa* (1982). William was the one who insisted and changed the caption given to African art as 'Primitive Art' to 'Tribal Art' and now called 'Traditional Art'. His classifications of Benin Art and other Nigerian Art have stood the test of time and have become major points of reference. He was a devout Catholic.

One of Williams Fagg's books is:

Title: *Nigerian Images*

Year of Publication: 1963

No of Pages: 142

Publisher: National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Lagos Nigeria

This book, *Nigerian Images*, is a panoramic chronicle of Nigeria art in both text and pictures. Since there were enough discoveries of works that helped the British to understand African art and to trace history of what they used to call 'tribal art' for a period covering over 2000 years, there was the need for a publication. *Nigerian Images* is a rich and classic compilation

of some of these images and their interpretation. In the interpretation, William Fagg was able to present a superb penetrating historical analysis such that the socio-cultural, philosophical and political influences of the creations are discussed.

The well-illustrated book, with photograph by Herbert List is divided into two segments, the 'Ancient Art' and the 'Recent period'. 77 Plates and 68 plates are used respectively. He discussed both the old traditions of Nok, Ife, Benin to the remarkable beauty of Yoruba woodcarving, the Ibibio marks and works of other ethnic groups. William in this book rejected the fact that the works of Nigerian tradition has shown any decline on vitality, power or conceptual originality (Fagg,1963).

4) *Colenius Oyeleke ADEPEGBA* (23 March, 1941 - 1 October, 2002)



Plate 4: Colenius Oyeleke Adepegba. Source: *Exhibition Catalogue in Honour of Late Prof. C. O Adepegba* (2002)

Colenius Oyeleke Adepegba (Plate 4) was born on 23rd March 1941 into the royal Ojongbodu lineage of Oyo. He attended Ede Baptist Teacher Training College in 1961 - 1963 for his Teacher's Grade III certificate. He later got into Ahmadu Bello University as one of the art undergraduates of the school in 1967. He graduated in 1971 with a First Class Honour, B.A. degree in Fine Arts specialising in Sculpture.

According to Amodu (2003), since he chose to be heard rather than pursue sculpture as a discipline so that he could correct the misconception and misunderstanding about his race, he pursued African Art History. He got a Federal Government Scholarship that took him to Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana, USA where he trained as an African Art Historian under Roy Sieber, the first American PhD holder in African Art, who also trained Babatunde Lawal, Chike Aniakor, Rowland Abiodun, Dele Jegede among others. By 1976 he obtained his PhD, writing his thesis on *The significance of Body markings, and their relationship to art in Nigeria*.

Adepegba joined and worked since 1976 until his death as a teacher in the institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan where he grew to become a professor in 1987. He had been a Director of the Institute on two occasions, 1992 - 1995 and 1998 - 2001. Adepegba was a hardworking, an astute scholar and erudite speaker summing him up to be an authority on African History of Art.

He was a lone-ranger, who pioneered the teaching of African Art when the Postgraduate Programme commenced in 1980 - 1981, where he taught students from all over

Nigeria, Africa and other parts of the world. He wrote over forty papers on Nok, Yoruba concept of Art and contemporary Nigerian Art. Some of his published, works are *Decorative arts of Fulani Normads'* (1986), *Yoruba Metal Sculpture* (1991) and *Nigerian Art: its Tradition and Modern Tendencies* (1995).

His major achievement was his pioneering efforts in the field of Art history and criticism, contribution to visual art knowledge in Africa. He promoted art historical scholarship by training fifty (50) M.A degree students and seventeen (19) Doctorate degree students (Azeez, 2003) as at the time of his death. He received several fellowships at Smithsonian museum of African Art (2002 - 2003), Fullbright Fellowship, Dickinson College Carlisle, Pennsylvania USA and Getty Collaborative Grant (2002 - 2003). He died on 1st October, 2002. He was survived by his wife Titilola Aduke and children. At an exhibition held in his honour, Pogson (2002) says the display showed him as a hardworking academic with unrivaled record.

One of Cornelius Adepegba's books is:

Title: *Nigerian Art: Its Tradition and Modern Tendencies*
Year of Publication: 1995
No of Pages: 167
Publisher: Jodad Publisher, Ibadan

This is one of Adepegba's best books. It is one of the very few books written by a Nigerian art historian resident in Nigeria. It is an account of a Nigerian about Nigerian art and it was written to broaden the scope of African art by emphasizing forms, craft tradition, and contemporary painting and sculpture.

Therefore the book puts into perspective the links and differentiations, historical connections of African art through Nigerian visual art. The book, no doubt establishes the chronology of Nigeria art. The book is also popular for his categorization of Nigerian art forms into: i) Discernible Images of Experiences and Ideas; ii) Naive Visions Encouraged and Fossilized; iii) Abstractions Beyond Common Understanding and iv) Revisitation and Adaptation of Traditional Art form. The vigour and energy of Adepegba as a pragmatic researcher is revealed in the writing. The book has 89 plates and a word index at the end of it for easy use.

5) *Frank WILLETTT* (18, August 1925 - 15, June 2006)



Plate 5: Frank willet. Source: timeonline.co.uk. Retrieved on 7th August 2011

Frank Willett (Plate 5) was born in Bolton Lancashire in 1925 and was educated at Bolton Municipal Secondary School and later at University College Oxford. After his graduation, he also took a Diploma in Anthropology. He was later appointed, after some years of working, as Professor and Keeper of the Department of Ethnology and General Archaeology at Manchester Museum.

As a pioneering scholar of African art archaeology, Frank Willett's contributions to Africa studies was monumental. And as an African Art Historian, he had played important and significant role in gathering and publishing of scholarly materials for the study of African Art. Though a successful researcher, Frank owed a lot to William Fagg his friend, who taught him to deepen his enjoyment of Africa Art by increasing his understanding of it.

He became more and more reputable as an archaeologist and as recorded by *The Telegraph* (2006), he made several visits to Nigeria representing Manchester Museum and was later appointed as the honorary Surveyor of Antiquities for Nigerian Federal Government from 1956 to 1957. His appointment further promoted his expertise in curatorial and archaeological activities. As such, he was appointed as Nigerian Archaeologist and the head of the Ife Museum of South-western Nigeria. Since Ife was one of his earliest and most important sites in West Africa, he focused so much on the archaeology and culture of Ife, which formed the crux of most of his later publications.

Frank had collaborated with many African Art scholars to promote important discourses on the African Art. For instance he worked with John Picton on identifying individual carvers from Owo. He travelled widely all over Africa undertaking diverse researches in African Art. His book *African Art: An Introduction* (1976) has been a catalyst for African Scholarship and a reference material to those learning the history of African Art.

In 1963, he returned to Oxford as a research fellow at Nuffield College and in 1966 was appointed as Professor of Art History, African Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies at Northwestern University. He inspired his students with the highest standards of scholarship. He also became a honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Hunterian Museum where he served as Director from 1976 - 1990. And as at 1994, he was a professor Emeritus of the University of Glasgow.

He had been noted to be very objective in his assessment of African Art. He showed particular interest in Ife Art going by the number of his publications on Ife Art. Some of them include are: *Ife in history of West Africa Sculptures* (1967), *Ife in Nigerian Art* (1967) 'African Art Journal' vol 1, No 1, *Ife and its archaeology* (1960) *Journal of African History* 1, 2 and *Ife* (1967) McGraw Hill.

His pioneering work: *Ife in History of West Africa Sculptures* was published based on his excavation and study of Ife finds in both private and public collections. He facilitated a lot of exhibition on Nigeria Art despite his pressures on running a museum and art gallery. He was appointed CBE in 1985 in Scotland and elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1979 and also served as its curator from 1992 - 1997. In 2004, he published a descriptive catalogue of all the known art and artefacts of Ife and this won him Amoury Talbot prize (www.timeonline.co.uk)

He died a devout Roman Catholic in June 15 2006 and Conne his wife of 55 years and a son, and three daughters survived him.

One of Frank Willett's books:

Title: *African Art, An introduction*

Year of Publication: 1971

No of Pages: 287

Publisher: Thames and Hudson, London.

African Art is one of the early books that records the study and development of African historical art. The book simply captures the traditional art practices of the sub-Saharan Africa. It navigates across the entire African space exploring the rock art, sculptures and terracottas of the region. The vigour and aesthetic impact and use of geometric shapes, form etc. are exposed to the admiration of the readers. The author used the book to review the astonishing variety and expressive power of the art of these distinct peoples and cultures.

The book also provides the overall view, which is needed to dispel false notions, and offers a fascinating introduction to a field so rich that it presents objects for study, ranging from the Stone Age to the 1960s (Willett, 1971). It has a word index at the end of the book.

6) *Ekpo Okpo EYO* (28 July, 1931 - 28 May, 2011)



Plate 6: Ekpo Eyo. Source: www.beallfuneral.com Retrieved on 20th Aug 2011

Ekpo Eyo (Plate 6), as popularly called hailed from Adak-Uko in Creek Town, Western Calabar on 28th July 1931. Ekpo Eyo had his primary education at a Presbyterian Elementary School in Creek Town, before enrolling for secondary education at Duke Town Secondary School both in Calabar (Archibong, 2011). He later proceeded to His sojourn in the world of Museum started in the 1950s when he joined the Department of Antiquities as Museum Assistant. According to Picton as recorded by Ozolua (2011), he was sent to the Institute of Archaeology in London for a one-year diploma and then to Cambridge to read for his degree in Archaeology and Anthropology. He returned to Nigeria in the summer of 1963, and worked with Bernard Fagg in Jos in his final months as Director of Antiquities before leaving to become Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

In 1968- 1979, Ekpo served as the first Nigerian Director of Federal Department of Antiquities, first Director General National Commission for Museum and Monuments (1979-1986) and professor of African Arts and Archaeology, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA (1986-2006). As reported by Ozolua (2011), Deborah Stokes, the Curator for Education, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, has described Eyo as a beloved teacher, colleague, cultural ambassador, and scholar who she had the privilege of meeting at the National Museum in Lagos in the late 70s and early 80s. She said Eyo left behind a great legacy of advocacy for the preservation of Nigerian cultural heritage and the history of antiquity in Africa.

Eyo is a specialist on African art. As a professor of art history and archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park, he directed archaeological field work at three important Nigerian sites, *Ile-Ife*, *Owo*, and *Ikom*. His findings of those expeditions and his further research were reported in *UNESCO Courier*, *The West African Journal of Archaeology*, *Africa Heute*, *Insight: The Quarterly of World Affairs*, *African Arts* and other journals.

His books include *Two Thousand Years of Nigerian Art* (Imprimerie Marsens, Laussane) and, with co-author Frank Willett, *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria: A Legacy of Two Thousand Years* (Alfred Knopf, New York). The Federal Ministry of Information and Communication, Abuja published his latest work: *From Shrines to Showcases: Masterpieces of Nigerian Art* in 2010.

In 1980, Eyo was honored with Officer of Federal Republic (OFR) by the Nigerian Government, named Smithsonian Regency Fellow in 1984 and ACASA Leadership Award in 2004. His work involved on-site study of the monoliths of the Cross River region of eastern Nigeria, a project funded by the French Dapper Foundation, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and the University's Graduate School. He was also a consultant to a major exhibition of African art that opened in 1995 at the Royal Academy of Art, London. Eyo was a participant in an international symposium, *The Part of Archaeology in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue between North and South*, held in Switzerland under the sponsorship of the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research and the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (www.arthistory-archaeology.umd.edu).

Before his death at the age of 80, he was a professor of art and archaeology at University of Maryland and Nigerian most renowned archaeologist and anthropologist. His

wife Augusta, two sons, Eric and Etim, daughter-in-law and grandchildren survived him.

One of Ekpo Eyo's books is:

Title: ***From Shrines to Showcases: Masterpieces of Nigerian Art***
Year of Publication: 2008
No of Pages: 255
Publisher: Federal Ministry of Information and Communication, Abuja

The book is a follow up to the first one *Two Thousand Years of Nigerian Art* by the same author. Unlike the first book, which is more like a photo album, this is characterized by more textual information. It provides newer classifications of Nigerian Art viz-a-viz: *Archeological art, Ethnohistorical Art, Historical art* and *Living art*. The book is a humble offering of a museum expert and administrator who had the opportunity of interacting physically with the artworks. Specifically, the issues that bother on primitivism, tribality and universality are laid to rest in the first part of the book. The second part of the book is the catalogue of 200 ancient masterpieces of Nigerian art with their titles, sizes, medium, provenances, etc. It is a complete panorama of Nigerian classical works of art.

Conclusion

The paper has presented the six scholars of Nigerian Art history. It is obvious that their contributions have raised people's understanding of Nigerian Art and have taken the art out of the dark thereby creating appreciation and understanding for it. It has also achieved the purpose of revealing the identity and personality of each of the scholars. One each of their publications was reviewed for the purpose of allowing readers to have a glimpse of their literary contributions. This is one of the ways to document those who had also document our art.

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