

## Memorialisation in Cloth, the *Christendom Narratives*

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### *Abstract*

*Memorialisation interrogates the works of Y.C.A. Grillo and F. Ugiomoh, artists engaged in the creation of artworks for the post Vatican II evangelisation. In fact, the study directs the discourse of the artistic engagement of endogenous metaphors, storytelling mechanisms, and the employment of imageries, graphic marks and colour, the distinctive features and prime organising elements in fabric arts and performance arts; to affect a trans-substantiation of the Christos Story in readily readable pictures. Grillo and Ugiomoh take the guided language of simulated commonplace iconographies, colour schemes; and even symbolic gestures, taken directly from Cloth and architectural mechanisms. Both artists simulate post antiquity illusionary means and the techniques for achieving ecstatic states on the congregations and persons that engage in commerce within the epiphanic panoramas that their paintings conjure. This study shows how allegory, legendary myths, traditions of folk storytelling sharpened in commonplace imageries; make visible and legible the Christos story, Church teachings and traditions. Michael Foucault (1990) notes how the Good News amply "reaches into the very grains of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" . It is, therefore, possible to show how this chiasm affects an experiencing*

*of the truths of the Christendom narratives. Engaging imageries taken from cloth design and folklore, biblical stories and the redemption of Calvary was made visible, making the truths of the faith universal!*

**Key Words:** *interrogation, evangelisation, iconographical simulation, trans-substantiation, commonplace imageries, post antiquity, visible and legible, universal.*

### **Introduction**

Fortunately the Western artistic partiality for patriarchal figural sculpture and less importance for the pre-eminently matriarchal arts in the shaping of home-grown identity has been debunked by scholars. Christopher Okwudile Ogbechie (2011) dubs it as misdirected and un-informed. Olu Oguibe (1995) directs a polemical critique of African modernity and the tricky nature of the **fictiveness** of 'Africanity', implanting instead a plurality of 'modernisms' in Africa. Leo Steinberg (1972), adumbrating the discourse draws attention to the Hegelian historicity of the artistic polemic on the dislodgment of sculpture and its substitution with painting in the discourse of the historiography of art and its histories! Nonetheless, in language evocative of Robert Hughes' *The Shock of the New*, Chris Spring (2012) echoes the contemporary sculptor El Anatsui's assertion that the vestigial textiles pictorial imageries of Africa, employing textiles and clothing metaphors, reveal the indispensability of cloth to the lives of African people (2012). Fascinatingly recognising cloth as a purveyor of culture, post Vatican II epistemology, directed at the entrenchment of a "home grown identity" in her 1960s evangelisation keys into the reality of the artistic polemic with the implantation of textiles in the discourse of the historiography of evangelisation! Emblematic of Church artistry with textile traditions grounded as means towards discussing the connectedness of the Christos Story reflecting the Christological

consistency in Church teaching in the *paradigm shift* is at the heart of the discourses of this **paper**.

Particular iconographical imageries depicted on popular fabrics and fashionable yardages are adaptable as cynosures of commemorations, even celebrations of passages in Church history. Commonplace in Modern museums is the recreation of history in linear chronological order in which each artifact represents particular moments in time. The Catholic Church, however, offers a protean look *via* African storytelling traditions, explicit in the mythical cerebral African metaphor of the "python's eye" ...*anya diali bu anye eke*". This translated, aptly inflects that the keen observer's talent resides in the capacity to patiently look and read. Conveniently engaging that endogenous metaphor, and the keying in of Pat Oyelola's (2003) Igbo proverb: "*nku din a mba na eghelu mba nni*" ,implies that " a people's wood is their source of cooking fire"; E.J. Alagoa notes history is perceived as a cyclical phenomenon, in which the past, present and future are inextricably intertwined (1997).

In this paper, I intend to (i) pursue the view that the matriarchal arts are the *de facto* signifier's of culture and valuable source of inspiration to visual artists in Nigeria, albeit all Africa; and (ii) attempt a selective synopsis of the artworks of Yusuf Grillo and the Frank Ugiomoh. While engaged in the transmutation of the evangelisation paradigm Grillo and Ugiomoh made their discourses of the paradigm shift visible and legible in their paintings. These works are all informed and inspired by the textile traditions of each artist's particular locales. Fascinatingly it is on the avowed themes of the "*miraculousness of the commonplace*" (Arthur C. Danto, 1963) and subversion that the artists delivered their messages with ease and the "*playfulness of art*" (George Hans-Gadamer, 1986). Hence, in a hermeneutic and empirical analysis of these prime works I dare assert the explicit visibility of the matriarchal arts: textiles and decorative arts, in the constitution of the evangelisation epistemology's identity.

Given the preceding, “*Christendom’s Narrative in Cloth*” interrogates the artworks”: *Commemoration Jubilee 2000 and Celebration* (Figs. 1 & 2). The paper’s focuses on how these contemporary paintings draw attention to the historicity of the matriarchal arts in the affirmative registration of memory in distinctive African indigenous ethnographies plumed in its artistry, the simulation of structures, and the techniques of the making and productions of textiles. Hence, the paper deconstructs the artworks to reveal that the artists’ particular negotiations of plural locales and temporalities bear witness to a genesis in the metamorphosis of a new art world

### ***Commemoration Jubilee 2000***

Engaging fabric design symbolisms and heraldic yardage colours, the autography and *distinctive feature and prime organising element in fabric arts* taken directly from the *Ikwere* and *Ndoki* people alongside imageries taken from Nigerian cryptic folklore, oral histories, myths and legends, in sync with the evangelisation paradigm shift; Frank Ugiomoh delivered this monumental twenty-four panel Plexiglas picture in the ambulatory of the Saint Jude’s Catholic Church, Port Harcourt (Fig. 1).

Reminiscent of the biblical places of real encounter: Mount Tabor, Mt. Sinai, Mt. Calvary *et al*; *COMMEMORATION* strikes viewers to wonder and stutter in awesome speechlessness. This is reminiscent of Grillo’s reaction: “*words alone cannot express the feeling*” that persons engaged in commerce in the atmosphere this art form creates. (Yusuf Grillo, 2012). Tapestry fashion, rich and colourful; the painting is resplendent and eloquent! At first encounter, the artwork effects an illusionary immersion of the viewer, commonplace in the techniques of post antiquity civil architecture paintings especially in Papal palaces but exemplary in Jesuit Baroque architecture (Oliver Grau, 2003). In fact, this technique of affective “total immersion and illusion” is resourceful of film and landscape panoramas. However, in gradual revelation the viewer

recognises the silhouettes of five pigeons in perpetual cyclic flight but wrapped in the Eucharistic panorama *Jesus Today Yesterday Forever*.

In a montage of *Acha* yardage drapery *ephemera* awash in the decorative repertoire of *Ikwere* art world is revealed afloat on the geometricised ground that projects it. *Jubilee 2000* in its movie-like stills creates the illusion of a mobile picture reminiscent of still-life paintings. However, in *grilloesque* fashion Ugiomoh steals in the Eucharistic euphemism *Jesus Christ Today Yesterday and Forever* re-echoing the glory of the Eucharistic faith. Replete in its declamation of iconographic repeats of motifs, however, Ugiomoh engages colour schemes taken from a simulation of George fabric colours; in a choreographic replay of alternate patterns with motifs drawn from Nigerian architectural decoration and traditions. With its melee of peculiar iconography, *COMMEMORATION* forces a presence that yields genuflection, Benediction and fervent prayer!

How does this speechlessness address us in spite of its mute eloquence, engaging only emblematic Church, *Ikwere* and *Ndoki* art gestures? With Compositional freedom, no mimesis, an evanescent relay of the sole *Acha* Fabric; and the Eucharistic euphemism *Christ Today and Forever*, seemly soaked in George fabric colours, the artist made up his palette, with Red and shades of Crimson, all derived from that same primary ground. Red is a reminder of the traditional symbolism of blood from sacrifices of old! Indeed it re-echoes the logic of Golgotha; reflecting Divinity and humanity brought together for cleansing (Jeremiah 41:31). In significant self-representation, an engagement with *Acha*, the ultimate symbol of “transience and impermanence”, plucked from *Ikwere*land funerals, in concert with the euphemism that affirms a “constant”, stokes the fires of memorialisation. Affecting an all-over pattern this central motif is repeated in the entire picture, capturing mortality, evanescence and transience within that plane. However, the Eucharistic affirmation invokes the purposes of *Commemoration*! In spite of the absence of mimesis

and other characteristics of canonic compositions, a rich decorative and colourful panorama tapestry-like is achieved in this montage. In convocation, the viewers and community are called to a Eucharistic meal in a dramatic sharing on the altar below. Here divinity and humanity are reconciled.

### **George, *Acha* Cloth**

*Acha* Cloth is a significant cultural and prestige item in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. At the Final Obsequies and Burial rites of the “strong and mighty” in the land cloth, expensive George material specifically, is hoisted as a marker of the status and prestige of the deceased. In fact, rites of passages of high society are distinguished by hoisted *Acha* cloth and significant accompaniment of blasts of canon shots. This spectacle is eclectically transferred as a spectral in the Church Liturgy. Ugiomoh’s iconography demands that the viewers, Parishioners and locales implant a mirror, traditionally symbolic of the mystical third eye; image digested in the imagery, *Acha* cloth. Thus the reflexivity of the sensible, to borrow a phrase from M. Merleau-Ponty (1993) indeed is inflected. Hence, the mirror imagery is an instrumentality that signifies the presence of this grand celebration grounded on the imagery of a celebration of a passing. *Acha*[ *George cloth*, indispensable expressive metaphor of the peoples’ **body** maybe perceived as Ugiomoh’s perception of the transformation of a painterly vehicle, the lending of that body to affect a change of the visible, and the commemoration fiesta. It is an imaginative expression of the mute meanings and richness of the pre-reflective speechless world.

In transcendent display of power, Ugiomoh engages significant iconographies culled from the matriarchal and decorative arts as distinctive memorabilia directly taken from the *locale*. These imageries in Foucaultian terms are the peculiar signifiers that shake up and ignite the ethos of power that propels man’s “recognition of place” in sovereign society and real politics (Foucault 1990, 31). These symbols incarnate the

force that propels the ingrained spirit that binds all to that society. Thus with sobriety traditions of festival, elements of the theatre and entertainment in modern fashion, embedded in the George cloth symbol are engaged as platforms to drive home notions of celebration in the ecclesial commemoration. Drawing attention to the familiar in culture the artist makes visible the essence of *CELEBRATION*. A gaze, ephemerally not just a hymn to the social world in a civilised enjoyment, remains a recognition offering a pictorial code that is decipherable in the locale language. That *simulacrum* of a fleeting memorial of *Acha* yardage stuck out, forcing an above eye-level gaze in its vitality; is a living reminder of the occasion. Metaphorically death and resurrection are reflected in a swell of decorative and festive colours with symbolisms that add a touch of heraldry to the event. This is mythical and emblematic of the popular notions of duality in African thought systems: life and death; as the *Ikwere* would say *ofuife kula nkozo a kuo so nya*. In spite of the rhomboid composition and its geometricised format, the illusion of giant “cut-outs strips” as distinctive silhouettes embedded on a water-mark dreamily persist. These graphic formulations embed the gestures and devices for the discourse of the picture. Poised as sacramental and in sync with the agency of African iconography, the biblical messages reach the hearts and minds of the people in their everyday lives.

### **Other Gestures**

Far from overwhelming the viewer, the encounter invokes a meditation and the revelation of a child-like fantasy world. In a contemplation of the paradox of Life and Death, the artist employs the commonplace in its transformed state, film-like ephemerality as a *leitmotif* that re-interrogates the mythical concept of *lumen de luminae*, Light from Light. Engaging the commonplace, borrowing from the peoples’ ontology and cosmology, the artist affects the metaphysics of presence. Ugiomoh makes visible the legible Christian truths in the biblical stories and the Liturgy (Patrick C. Chibuko, 2006). Hence, with the finest tradition of heraldic emblems and

devices of the locale, he tells the story. It is a fascination, indeed, to note how graphic features of two different events, life and death, are utilised as common ground for the artistic analogy. Hans-George Gadamer (1986, 82) alludes to artistic artifices as stage mechanisms in which the viewers recognise the reality of their worlds, in spite of its seemed indecipherability. These are the ciphers that aid the transmutation from unfamiliarity to full understanding of the Theology of the new evangelisation.

*JUBILEE 2000* has a lot to say to us, both as a religious artifact and as a censure of modernism. The symbol of the hoisted fabric facilitates recognition, the essence of all symbolic language, and all art always **recourses** a language of recognition (George-Gadamer, 1998). In spite of a palpable indecipherability at first encounter, a calm reading of the montage of imageries reveals a picture full of familiar commonplace iconographies unfolding in colours and figurations from the common ground of the yardage. This enigmatic image offers a sign language that presents a dynamic interplay between the final rites obsequies ceremonial use of iconographies and the *Christian feat* while invoking the mythical world of the locale. The Catholic Church in its art consuming rituals and Liturgy addresses the society *via* the sacramental. This outward sign of inward graces inflects the evolution of context as the grounding for aesthetic and political encounter with contemporary art. Thusly, the church emphatically celebrates the ways in which institutional habits and frames determine meaning in encounters with artworks. Ugiomoh unsettles these habits to invoke critical power beyond the reach of so-called "political art". *COMMEMORATION's* choice metaphors and accompanying iconography in synergy with the euphemism, *Jesus Christ Today, Yesterday and Forever* choreographed in the silent swaying silhouettes of doves in perpetual flight; transforms the picture into a permanent source of mythical poetry and song. The choice use of visual metaphors drawn entirely from the locale is the anchor that makes the

faithful and ordinary viewers “more at home” with its message. This enigmatic encounter makes plain the common humanity of mankind.

### **RED**

Shimmering red puts *Acha* “at the “center of things” like a Sergeant-major to a new Recruit: death deemed as passage from the existential life here and now as a reality; while intuiting the Paschal mystery of Calvary. The fascinating implication of the artistic vision, therefore, challenges the viewers to see themselves firstly in their culture symbolised by the fabric; but with that eye grounded in their culture’s language (like the mythical python’s eye, *anya diali bu anya eke*) same viewers are caught mesmerised in the midst of a new vision (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1993: 49). This reversibility is an aesthetic rather than a logical phenomenon. It is the doctrinaire Catholic intuition at play: the viewers have been “touched” through the mystique of the transcendental agile “transubstantiation” takes effect. That priestly metaphor transcendently captures the metamorphosis of subject into object, with a synergy that bonds cultural *realia* with the subject. With lines, colour, shadow *et al*, the synergy of the imaginary and the real, bonds the symbolism of the *Acha* cloth with the artwork making them one flesh. In an incarnate principle flesh should be perceived in synergy with the other elements: water, earth, air and fire. In fact, this painting stands as an experience, exaltation and recreation of the visible new world that speaks of a fleshly immediacy for **transversal** ecstasy in the magnetism of the new world. It is this deepening of cultural expression that intensifies the fascination and wonder in the new Christian ethos. This is the desire within the difference from the trans-luminance of the *Acha* cloth, as the flesh of the new dispensation.

That trans-luminance draws attention to the colour red, the dominant expression in this speechless image, symbolic of the events of death and sacrifice. What, for example, does *the rich, colourful and resplendent eloquence* to use Hans-George Gadamer (1986) reminiscent of Grillo’s reaction: “*words alone cannot express the feeling*” (above) that persons

engaged in commerce in the atmosphere this artwork creates; so how do we account for the speechlessness which addresses us so forcibly with its unique mute eloquence?

Declaiming the grand narratives of the masters of prime stained glass paintings in Nigeria, Yusuf Grillo and David Dale; Ugiomoh, former seminarian and college trained artist (Nelson Graves, 2014) sought **elicitation** of the universal eidos from the symbolic gestures *Ikwereland ontology*. Reminiscent of the ethos of the Still-life in Dutch bourgeois society (E.H. Gombrich, 1995) the highly visible mobile *Acha* still-life object prominently hoisted on giant posts during funeral ceremonies in *Ikwereland*, is his prime exemplar of that artistry. This mantle is the magnet that draws attention and the consequent gathering of the people to it. In spite of its sensuous richness it expresses its own transience. In that forlorn self-representation, it is the true iconography of transition and sacrifice. *Acha* in its matted coffee red texture *rite large* on the pane of this grand picture is the distinctive element liable to unambiguous symbolic interpretation.

With allegorical "Red", definite attribute of traditional Igbo art world, Ugiomoh underscores "*natural synthesis*"; drawing attention to the advocacy of culturalism as the essence of the art of the new evangelisation. Characteristic of Igbo derived art, it emphasises the folkloric, culled from legends, bardic stories and fables; and stories taken from the myths of the land of the living and the dead. These stories by the moonlight as they are usually called in Igbo land are the source of limitless inspiration for textile artists (Ifedioramma Dike, 2011). However, iconographical ethno-centricism, as a conceptual attribute draws attention to the use of cultural symbols of the Igbo world. For example, Ugiomoh's use of symbols derived from traditional body and wall paintings, and even wood carving as source of design ideas and motifs. Elemental sources such as thunder and lightning; the moon and sun are sources of iconography. Engaging the lyricisms of Igbo folklore like Uche Okeke ( ) this work evokes abstract expressionism. Abounding symbolism and

artistry derived from the Nsukka School and inspiration from Okeke's *Onwuelo Depart*, Presidential Lounge, Murtala Mohammed, International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos; is obvious.

Overwhelming "Red", almost transcendental, mentally holds together, enclosing the picture within; tacitly lures the viewers gaze seemed into the depth of this gestalt. This is the awesome power that eliminates the formal gilded frame for the picture. The audience, thusly, experiences a diminishing critical distance from the picture itself; but is emotionally immersed in the panorama. The vista holds the gaze of the communicants, blurring attention between real space and image space. Like the frescoes of old, utilising motifs that address the viewers from all sides in a unity of time and place (Oliver Grau, 2003:25); the dominant *Acha* motif, in its coloration binds the gaze hermetically. *COMMEMORATION* spectacular painting on Plexiglas entirely fills the viewers' field of vision. With illusionary ploys, the overall effect entwines the viewers and what is happening in the painting.

### **Architectural Mechanisms**

Site specific, *JUBILLE 2000* commandeers" the attention of persons, who encounter it while affecting a spell bind; spontaneously draws attention to the celebration of the Redemptive ethos of Calvary. In fact, Baroque style arches and somberly painted walls in theatrical mannerism lead the eye to the Tabernacle. These architectural deterministic ploys are the mechanisms that lead the "encounter effect" within that illusionary space the otherwise, seamless geometricised picture finds its en-framing mechanism. The artistic vocabulary centers on geometric abstraction with a grid system as the key format weaving together the entire picture. That archetypal African device (John Simms, 2004) transforms this seemed obtrusive artwork into a system of coordinates. On the plane the units evolve following a precise algorithm effecting rhythmic variations of patterns in the composition. Hence, the colours shift and crawl readily into the mathematical logic of the grid as it mesmerises the viewers while

deepening the virtual reality camera affect. In spite of yielding a simultaneous creation of a lit up interior, Plexiglas, a modern architectural fabrication material, does not yield a generous glass effect. It, however, exudes a peculiar calm ambience on the interior spaces that it envelopes.

### *Celebration*

A deliberate afro-centricism inspired by the iconography of *Creole* Lagos grounds Grillo's twin paintings in the All Saints ambulatory lancets (Fig. 2). The paintings speak to the awakened consciousness of the ordinary man in the pews. Two caricatures spitting metaphors choreograph the story. With *Adire eleko* colour schemes in concert with representational simulacra of the transfiguration of commonplace imageries, never seen even on Neon sign advert tableau, Grillo affects the feel of the Good News. Inspired by the power of an indigenous thought system, not colonial, a rigorous afro-centricism informs distinct *creoleness* in his works. Keying-in the imagery of the "drum" reminiscent of Chinua Achebe's "Ilo", *Arrow of God* (1964); and Gabriel Okara's poetic use of the same imagery in "Piano and Drums" (1985). Grillo insinuates traditional instrumentality for the transmission of significant messages: palace edicts, death of important parsonages and the call to community to "come together", while implicating notions of mystic rhythms as African drums speaking. However, the prominent *Drummer and Kaftan* clad figure, in a lavishly embroidered dress signifying the special occasion, heralds the seriousness of the Paschal celebration.

Grillo met the *pictorial turn* with a sortie of theatre, storytelling ploys and folklore; while engaging imageries to affect an intimacy with the faithful and the public at large. The "drummer" and the "kaftan" caricatures in print-maker style repeats are swarmed in a peculiar mix of *Adire Eleko* derived colours in *Celebration* (Fig. 2). With these motifs, Grillo achieved a brilliant indeginisation of the Good News in both traditional glass and Persplex. Folks able to identify these familiar imageries become

participant observers in the event. This is the hermeneutic identity employed to meet the exegetes of the *ecclesia in Africa* paradigm. With monochromatic silhouette repeats in an intricate interplay of showing and concealment, Print-maker style; the picture elements collage-like are playfully relayed. *Grilloesque* geometrics and sensuous *Adire Eleko* derived colour schemes are the epiphanies of beauty that affect the image turn in *the paradigm shift*. In concert with effective lighting, the accompaniment of Music, and Choral singing in Liturgical engagements *Celebration* in its ambulatory space draws the faithful and viewers to dwell upon the celestial.

Capturing the celestial in a spectacle alit in cultural symbolic capital projects the authority and symbolism of the new **ecclesiology**. Emphasising artistic means of hoisting her strategic tomes of progressivism, Christendom engaged commonplace imageries, transfigured in the pictures, to canonise an artistry that derived its peculiar idioms from home-grown themes, motifs and symbolisms. The legacy and identity of Nigerian glass as ecclesiastical art finds its provenance and authenticity in this episteme. Church art, however, remained a prototype inspired by Christendom's foundations of knowledge; scripted in liturgical documents such as the Catholic Church's *Ecclesia in Africa: The Nigerian Response* (J.O. Ogujiafor & I. Enweh, (1966).

**Capturing** modernist synthesis through the artistic ethos of culture in *CELEBRATION* with politics hoisted on creative bias appropriated from *Creole* identity as its focus; the appreciation of Grillo's response to the challenges of modernity is graspable. Evocative of European masters of choice, Grillo's work reflects a formidable inter-textuality reflecting synthesis with genres in Western art. Distinctive among these is Dutch Still-Life; and the subtle impressionisms of favorite Bauhaus painters, such as the American Lyonel Feininger (E.H Gombrich, 2012).

Simulating colour metaphors from the Bauhaus and *Adire Eleke* schemes,

all coordinated in his peculiar math, Grillo deploys all as shifting transparent parchments laced one upon another. Modulated in harmonies from the transparencies of each cool cord; he creates resonant symphonies in secondary and tertiary colours. Framed in strong bold lines, each colour is a distinct disk in roulette, affecting Matisse-like cloves against a subdued ground. However, the peculiar *silhouette* figures with elongated necks carrying oblong heads positioned center-stage on defined spaces are aligned as images in a story series. These unique shapes robustly swarmed in somber cool colours together in a humanistic and serenely spiritualising aura play out the transcendence of the immortal. This is the essence of *Celebration*, 1962.

The conceptual themes of this discourse and the experiences of Yoruba celebration, fuse the concepts of play and visual imageries to *Nigerianise* the paintings. Playfully adapting real life imageries, Yusuf deployed cartoons to reflect both myth and the enactment of the paean of “*thanks-giving and gratitude for life’s favors*” in the Yoruba every day. Stylish and urbane, the Yoruba are noteworthy in their partiality for feasting, *Igbadun*, the imperative for enjoyment of life and its events. Simulating Yoruba notions of Praise, he affects the theological dimensions of a “coming together” of the faithful under the aegis of the spectral.

Reinstating the architectural metaphor of the archetype Baroque window, Grillo the trained architectural draughtsman (Graves, 2014); conceived *CELEBRATION* as a window opening onto another window, insinuating an imminent reality. Evocating visual techniques adopted from Math art, Yusuf translated the picture in uniquely African shapes and colours entirely derived from that art world. In the typical existentialism of the Lagos every day, celebration, *ijo ifajji*, literally emphasises a moment free from the grim and grind of the everyday! In typical fashion, the Yoruba distinguish “occasions” of celebration with colorful attires, agog with drumming, choral music, fanfare; and gathering together of the folks.

Grillo brings the distinctiveness of African notions of “gathering together” to affect Christian *ecclesia* while simulating *Creole* imageries onto the hallowed representation of Christendom’s theological truths. Reticent, *CELEBRATION* plays down memory lane in the spirit of a Mnemosyne. The spiritual reflection of the Christos story is perceived as a re-enactment of the European stained glass in the phantom of an African renaissance. The creative artist with the prime epiphany of God finds a flowering of beauty drawn from the sap of *Africanite*, precisely from the mystery of the Incarnation. John Paul II (1999) alluding to that wonder and fascination, asserted that the mystery of the Christ has inspired mankind’s creativity to unveil the fullness of the Christos story in varied images and colours. Thusly, *ecclesia* presents fresh representations that incorporate the art of the past along with traditions drawn from the places of the new evangelisation.

Grillo engaged real life experiences, “the lived-through-world” as Merleau-Ponty (1964:71) puts it, the celebration of the events of regular real time announcements and feasting in *Abule-Egba-Lagos* as his choice art world. With imageries and colours as fillers perceived by the communicants and other persons doing commerce in the space, they “connect” the pictures before them in the ambulatory space and the flow of the everyday. Perceiving the world through direct experiences by way of visuals, sounds and the sheer feel of the everyday, all constituting the “touch” that connects the pictures in the Holy of Holies by tying them together as real life experience. People are, thusly, able to feel the senses that overlap and transgress the interface of “pictures” to “real life situations”. Dominant colour schemes, for example “blue” in *Celebration* and the cartoon characters serve same reminiscences. All the senses in concert give a touch to memory and imagination. So in share playfulness, the folks at church get optimal immersions while contemplating and experiencing the gestalt in the windows.

### **Conclusion**

The style, imagery and format of the paintings in *Memorialisation* and the prestige of their creators endow the works with emblematic significance to their audience and history. This corresponds to what Stephen Greenblatt (2010) alludes to as “resonance”, evoking the “*complex dynamic cultural forces from which they emerged*”. That reverberation occurs with the viewers by dint of complex interactions between artwork, its context of display and the audiences’ knowledge and feelings”. While affecting “presentness” in time and place, these artworks engender meaning through their presence as objects.

Taking imageries from their art worlds for the “gathering together” of the faithful, the artists affirmed that the values enshrined in the liberal tenets of faith inspired their works. However, the 1960’s paradigm establishes a sure dialectics of space and time, the synchronic and diachronic. The synchronic draws attention to the rhetoric’s of the coexistence of the past images in the life of the present ones. Imaginatively this is visualised as a vertical line that expresses the axis of time along which the changes are ordered in a successive reenactment of the biblical Story in a series of images never attained before in the constellation. In fact, taking its life from the here and now, the diachronic dimension is achieved *via* a novel African modernist paradigm. Reducing the subject matter of biblical stories to the threshold of “emotion” as the immediate manifestation of “being -in-the-world”, the artists embraced the shapes of the visible and concrete world. Articulating the most intimate gestures, the expressions of emotion, by re-representation, the artists retraced their steps to the events in the outside world from which their emotions originate. Grillo and Ugiomoh speak to us of a past that we all belong to, a cultural context where self renewal is the norm by taking a bit from another. The success of such cultural dialogues that inflect the traditions of the past and the experiences of Africa is a symbolic halo, friezing the experiences of the 1960’s into a symbol

The rhetoric of the ready adaptation of African imagery culled from Cloth artistry opens our eyes to the historicity of textiles in the discourse of the historiography of art histories! Underscoring the Hegelian historicity of the artistic polemic on the displacement of sculpture, Grillo and Ugiomoh affirm EL Anatsui's assertion (2012). Post Vatican II epistemology directed at the entrenchment of a home grown identity in *the paradigm shift* keys into the reality of that polemic. That expansion of the constellation of Church artistry on a global stage with textile traditions as enabling mechanisms in discussing the connectedness of the Christological Faith, and the paradigm of the 1960s reverberates the visibility of cloth in the fleshing of home-grown identity! Christendom offers a protean look at history *via* African storytelling traditions, explicit in the mythical cerebral African metaphor of the "python's eye"...*anya diali bu anye eke*". Conveniently engaging that endogenous metaphor, and keying in of the incisive proverb: "*nku din a mba na eghelu mba nni*", Church history is perceived as a cyclical phenomenon, in which the past, present and future are inextricably entwined.

*Memorialisations* opens our eyes to the reality of the imagination and the "depths of the imaginary world". Reflecting the dialogue between "things traditional" and the synthesis that the artists have engaged enable the commemoration of the Paschal scenarios, while picking from the tough of their art worlds synergise with Christological truths. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1993) notes "*these are the visible through which appear the invisible*". The new evangelisation mythically touches lives; and makes the Christos story "at home with the people" of the world irrespective of race, tongue and clime, reminiscent of Foucaultian power (1990, 31). In ephemerals, reflective of the "normal every day" that ordinary folks readily capture, the artist's awe-inspiring lines embodied the essences of the biblical story of Redemption and the Paschal mystery, all in a universal but particular language. Reveling, therefore, in the provision of an aesthetic insight that reveals the hidden things in iconography, these artists have drawn

attention to the imperative of having eyes that really see and minds that authentically think. *Celebration* and *Commemoration* affected a rhetorical emplacement of the Paschal story, while making possible a way of speaking (Galen A. Johnson, 1993). The artists' choices of specific dominant colours remain a problem to engage future discourse.

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Fig. 1: *Commemoration Jubilee2000*, Frank Ugiomoh, Plexiglass & pigment, 2002. © Nelson Graves.

Fig 1: COMMEMORATION  
Frank Ugiomoh, Plexiglas and Pigment,  
© Nelson Graves.

Fig. 2: *CELEBRATION*,  
Yusuf Grillo, Glass and pigment, 214 x 334cm, 1962.  
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