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## Of print and scholarship: deconstructing the literature on printmaking in contemporary Nigerian art

**Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin PhD**

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *Printmaking has long been in use, especially among indigenous art practitioners in Nigeria, it is also very popular among contemporary Nigerian artists who use it as a medium of aesthetic expression. The foundation for scholarship on printmaking was laid by notable scholars; however, writing from their cultural context, a sizable number of these scholars follow the perspectives that confined contemporary printmaking to the Western world and Asian countries. Considering the prolific production of printmaking in Nigeria, this study deconstructs the literature to understand the state of scholarship on printmaking, especially in contemporary Nigerian art. Data collected from published journal articles, books, exhibition catalogues, and Internet sources were subjected to critical analysis. The study concludes that printmaking in Nigeria is so unique that it would continue to attract the attention of art enthusiasts around the globe; hence, it deserves more attention from African art historical scholars.*

**KEYWORDS:** print, printmaking, Engraving, Intaglio, Literature, Nigerian art, Bruce Onobrakpeya

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## INTRODUCTION

Printmaking has been in use since the earliest period of world history, the footprints of man and the animals he hunted are perhaps the first prints to be realised by man, this probably informed the use of the different available mediums to produce prints. Urton (2014) observes the earliest efforts at making prints in which the prehistoric people placed their hands on the walls of caves and blew some powdered pigments around their hands to make prints. This apprises the probable way of making the print image (Fig. 1) found in El Castillo Cave, in Spain and dated 28,000 BCE (National Geographic News, 2012). This process of making prints has since become a practice prior to the time the printing press was invented. The primordial people also left impressive pictorial records of numerous engravings in caves and on rock surfaces such as the petroglyph of a grazing antelope in the South African Paleolithic rock art. Fig. 2 also

shows the Bronze Age schematic rock engravings of boats, found near Borge in Norway (*World Book Encyclopedia*, 2009).



Figure 1: "Print" El Castillo Cave, Spain

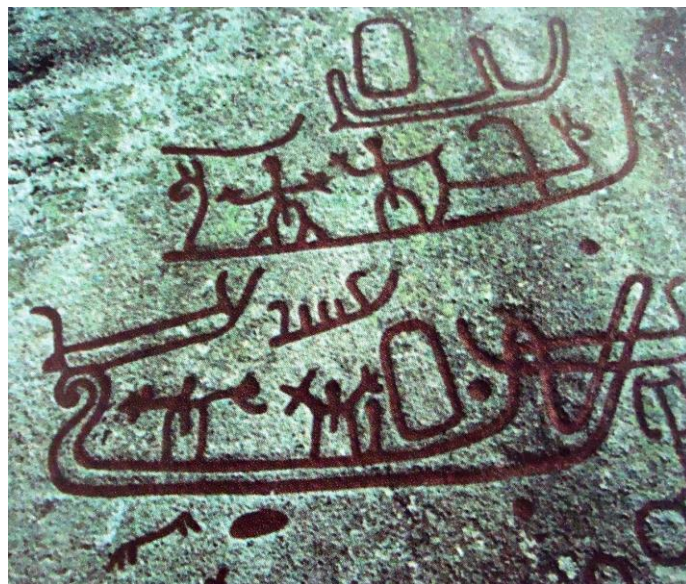


Figure 2: Bronze Age Rock Engraving of Boats, Norway

Symbol images or pictures have been extensively used to communicate ideas and concepts; cave drawings, the incised clay tablet, and illuminated manuscripts are characteristic examples of man's mode of communication. All were original works of art, none of which could be reproduced; the audience was therefore limited. The success of book illustration drew much impetus from the processes of woodcut which is the

most common and one of the oldest techniques of making prints; the printmaking techniques are broadly categorized into relief, intaglio, and serigraphic processes. While emphasizing the importance of print in the general history of human civilization, Pollard (1992) observes that print has been the principal vehicle for the conveyance of ideas during the past centuries and touched upon almost every sphere of human activity. It has also been an indispensable tool in the permanent retention of any piece of information or artistic work. This is to the extent that engravings (prints) communicated pictures of things to distant countries, and by reproducing paintings, it allowed many to enjoy what would otherwise have been the exclusive property of one man, (Clayton, 1997).

Consequent to the Industrial Revolution which brought about technological advances in all fields, there were radical improvements in presses, new methods of paper manufacture, and other processes of making prints (Ijisakin et al. 2019). As a genre of art, printmaking has long been in use in Nigeria, especially among indigenous artists; they use printmaking techniques in the embellishments of calabash carvings, woodcarvings, ivory carvings, blacksmithing, Adire Eleko fabrics and others that share affinities with various printmaking processes. However, printmaking became more popular when Rudolf Van Rossem taught some of its techniques at Mbari Mbayo art workshops at Ibadan in 1961, and Osogbo between 1962 and 1964. Printmaking has since become more popular with contemporary artists in Nigeria; the printmakers are not subjected to a particular technique as they often experiment with several techniques and improvisation of materials in their creative explorations (Sheba, 2004). Considering the prolific production of printmaking artists in Nigeria, this study seeks to understand the extent to which it has attracted the attention of art historical scholars; it thus examines critical issues in the literature on printmaking with a specific focus on Nigeria. Data obtained from published articles in journals, books, exhibition catalogues, and Internet sources were critically examined using content analysis as argued by Berelson (1952), Nachmias and Nachmias (1976), and Kerlinger (1986).

### **Critical issues in the literature on printmaking**

The foundation for scholarship on printmaking was laid by scholars such as Hind (1923), Hayter (1962), Woods (1965), and Godfrey (1978). Other scholars have also researched the history, techniques, and other processes of printmaking. As useful as these pioneering studies are, the authors, while writing from their cultural context, grounded contemporary printmaking in the Western world and Asian countries. In addition, since studies on Nigerian arts began more than a hundred years ago, the intellectual discourse has tilted more towards painting and sculpture, with very little mention of printmaking in the literature. The poor scholarly attention that printmaking has received is however not limited to Nigeria alone, Griffiths (1996) observes that very little is known about the prints of many world-renowned artists. Some of these prints as identified by Saff and Sacilotto (1978) are Martin Schongauer's *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1480-1490), and *Death of the Virgin* (1470-1475); Albrecht Dürer's the *Four*

*Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1497-1498), *Christ Bearing the Cross* (1498-1499), *the Last Supper* (1510), and the *Beautiful Virgin of Ratisbon* (1519); as well as Rembrandt Van Rijn's *Death of the Virgin* (1639). Other prints by great artists are Solomon Wangboje's *Romance of the Headload* series (1978); Bruce Onobrakpeya's *The Fourteen Stations of the Cross* (1967), and *Greater Nigeria* (2007); Eben Sheba's *Journey to Jerusalem* (2004); Kunle Adeyemi's *Treasures of Niger Delta* (2011), and the *Female Form* series (2010); as well as Eyitayo Ijisakin's *African Bride* (2007), and *Oju Ona* (2013). Much of the literature on Nigerian art (Abiodun et al. 1994, Adepegba 1995, Visona et al. 2001, Willet 2002, Drewal and Schildkrout 2009) dwells so much on traditional art forms. Further, the literature on contemporary art (Fosu 1986, Kennedy 1992, Magnin and Soulillou 1996, Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009, Oyelola 2010, and Castellote 2012) concentrate more on painters, sculptors, and their techniques, with little or no mention of printmaking.

Further, in "Nigerian Artists: a Who's Who and Bibliography" (Kelly and Stanley, 1993), only twenty-six (4.33%) of the six hundred artists listed are printmakers. Whereas, the first art exhibition by printmakers in Nigeria tagged "Just Prints" was held in Lagos in 2004. The exhibition reveals nineteen other printmakers who were not listed in the "Who's Who and Bibliography". Out of the nineteen other printmakers, Eben Sheba, Kunle Adeyemi, Olisa Nwadiogbu, and Bode Olaniran have been practising printmaking before the 1993 study of Kelly and Stanley. Another print exhibition titled: *First Rhythm*, held in 2017 in honour of Bruce Onobrakpeya, features works of other printmakers. This invariably implies that many other printmakers might have been excluded. More so, the creative endeavours of emerging printmakers since the publications (*Who's Who and Bibliography*, and, *Just Prints*) need to be critically investigated to extend the frontiers of scholarship in printmaking in Nigeria.

Many artists employ printmaking as a medium of expression in Nigeria; nevertheless, only Bruce Onobrakpeya is well-known for documenting his works (Onobrakpeya, 2003, 2009, 2014); however, these are autobiographical publications that open the subject for critical discourse. Further, the Hour Glass Gallery (2014) examines the trailblazing contributions of Aina Onobolu to art education in Nigeria. The study relies on master artists such as Erhabor Emokpae, Uche Okeke, Bruce Onobrakpeya, Abayomi Barber, Solomon Wangboje, and Lamidi Fakeye among others to trace the chronology of contemporary art in Nigeria. Ife, Zaria, Yaba and Nsukka art schools, as well as Mbari Mbayo art workshops, were also noted for their contributions to the development of contemporary art in Nigeria, whereas the study makes no significant reference to printmaking. While Adepegba (1995), Filani (1989 and 2004), Sheba (2004), and Adeyemi (2008) succinctly discuss the evolution of printmaking in Nigeria; Singletary (1999), Idiong (2003), Oyelola (2003), Picton (2004), and Ikpakronyi (2012) discuss the versatility and diverse impulses in printmaking within the context of general visual art practices of Bruce Onobrakpeya alone. With the foregoing, it becomes



imperative to examine the literature to understand the extent to which printmaking has attracted the attention of art historical scholars.

### **Literature and Printmaking in history**

There are relevant studies on the history of printmaking, its processes and innovations; for instance, Hind (1923) discusses artists' biographies and offers narrative histories and wide-range glossaries. The study of Sternberg (1962) recalls the earliest recorded history of man which reveals his need to communicate ideas and concepts. The early man in expressing his thought combines the use of symbols and images/pictures. The cave drawings, engraved clay tablets and illuminated manuscripts are examples of primitive man's skills of communication. Sternberg notes that all these works are original works of art, none of which can be reproduced and the audience is therefore limited. This no doubt informs the need for the development of the woodcut (hand-cut wood block) which made possible the multi-original. The success of book illustration drew much impetus from the processes of woodcut. This offers the advantage for artists to produce several duplicate originals possessing all the special qualities of the single original.

The Highpoint Center for Printmaking (2014) traces the history of Printmaking and argues that it started with Cave art in primordial times; it explains that the invention of paper set the stage for printmaking and mentioned the pioneering efforts of Francisco De Goya, Albrecht Durer, Rembrandt Van Rijn and Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai among others. The study asserts that the distinctive visual qualities of printmaking constitute a strong attraction to contemporary artists as they continue to work with the time-honoured processes, even in community-based printmaking workshops that spur collaboration and creative ingenuity. This study is however limited for its brevity, more so that the development and practice of printmaking as relates to contemporary Nigerian arts is conspicuously missing in the discussion.

In his study of etching and lithography, Woods (1965) asserts that *Intaglio* is an Italian word adapted as a collective term to describe those prints that are taken on paper from the inked incisions of a metal plate. Woods attempts a chronology of *Intaglio* printmaking history in Europe and draws a comparison of the quality of works produced by renowned printmakers in Germany, Italy and Spain. Woods further states that the drawings in the German *Intaglio* reflect the Gothic traditions, with a sensitive feeling for linear composition. Furthermore, Woods identifies the pioneering efforts of Martin Schongauer, Albrecht Durer, Guido Reni, Guercino as well as Rembrandt Van Rijn. In addition, Woods traces the discovery of Lithography to Aloysius Senefelder (6 November 1771-26 February 1834) who wrote a legendary list with greasy ink on a piece of stone in 1796. Given the principle of antipathy reaction of oil and water, Senefelder concluded that it was possible to damp the stone so that the printing ink dabbed over the stone, would only take on the greasy drawing. Woods describes Senefelder's work as revealing the differences between lithography, *Intaglio* and other relief processes of

printmaking. Though the study of Woods is a lofty contribution to scholarship, it did not discuss printmaking within the context of Nigerian art.

Peterdi (2014) gives a detailed description of the word print, with emphasis on the originality of this special genre of art, as well as a clear-cut distinction between what is popularly understood as print and the original creation of an artist who, rather than using the painters' brushes and canvass, or the carvers' chisel and mallet, has chosen the various tools of printmaking to express himself. The study emphasizes that the engraving process of printmaking is among the oldest art forms; it further gives detailed explanations of various processes of printmaking, while the history of printmaking through the ages is highlighted. However, no mention is made of the history or practice of printmaking within the African or Nigerian context. Urton (2014) claims that printmaking has long been in use before the invention of the printing press; it discusses the contributions of prehistoric man, the Sumerians, the Chinese, as well as the Japanese. The study further makes a distinction between the "Fine prints"/"Artists' Prints" and a photo-mechanical reproduction. It explores the various processes of printmaking and traces the history of such processes as well as notable printmakers that propagated the processes.

In Idiong's (2003) observation, the versatility of the processes is an interesting aspect of printmaking. The study offers a brief definition of prints, delineating the differences between print and reproduction. In the opinion of Taylor (1974), the various processes of printmaking have been developed as a result of the quest of the printmaker to obtain control over those areas which will print and those which will not. Thus, the effective transfer of ink from one surface to another acceptably and aesthetically forms the basis of the different processes in printmaking. While Urton (2014), Idiong (2003), and Taylor (1974) explore the processes of printmaking, none of the studies made particular reference to the development of such processes within the context of Nigerian art.

The studies of Gilmour (1978) and Rochfort (1999) centre on the traditional attributes of printmaking, this is with emphasis on the tension between the autographic (handmade) and the machine production of printmaking. While Gilmour argues that the means of making a print, whether manually or mechanically is of no significant importance as far as it follows the basic principles; Rochfort on the other hand argues that there is a marked difference between an "original print" (Fine prints) which is a work of art and a mechanical reproduction; even though the influx of the latter seems to be blurring the distinction. With this, it will be apt to argue that while mechanical reproduction mainly serves the purpose of information dissemination to a wide audience, the "original print" which is a work of art is judged mainly for its aesthetic purposes.

Griffiths (1996) and Riley (2012) discuss printmaking in its variety of processes. Griffiths provides a basic understanding of prints and printmaking; with woodcuts, line

engraving, etching, mezzotint, lithography and other processes, it gives detailed explanations of how different effects can be achieved. The significance of printmaking through the ages is explored, which makes the study an essential foundation for an intelligent appreciation of printmaker's art. Griffiths' discussions on the basic difference between printing and printmaking as one of mechanical versus manual, and the contextual meaning of "originality" in printmaking are quite interesting. Riley's study of practical mixed-media in printmaking used examples of his inspirational works and those of other contemporary printmakers to explain different affordable techniques such as simple stencil and screenprinting methods, pronto-plate lithography in which digital images are used as layers, collagraph, Plexi-plate drypoint, as well as mono-printing from plastic sheets. This study offers an inspirational guide to adapting and refining the basic techniques to suit different purposes. However, the studies of Griffiths, and, Riley concentrate mainly on the perspective of printmaking in Europe and Asia, while printmaking of contemporary art in Nigeria is out of their focus.

Brown (2006) and Brooks (2007) discuss etching and engraving as specific processes of printmaking. While Brown offers a broad understanding of the processes, it also examines artists' creativity using the works of contemporary printmakers to illustrate the technical possibilities of the etching process. Brooks (2007) describes different types of intaglio processes, with detailed instructions and illustrations on the use of specific tools. Although, the approach of the printmakers such as Anish Kapoor, Judy Pfaff, and Chuck Close whose works were used as illustrations does not follow the trend of contemporary Nigerian art, but rather, that of London's Central School of Art – their cultural background. Walker (2010) and Yeates (2011) provide information on the whole process of relief printmaking from generating ideas/inspirations for prints, to the selection of woods, appropriate tools, papers and inks, cutting techniques, mark-making and printing lino and wood blocks.

Hobbs and Rankin (1997) provide an introduction to the various processes of printmaking from the brawny black and white relief, and expressive screen prints, through the gleamy line or tonal contrast of etching and lithographs, to inventive multimedia and electronically generated prints. The study relies on contemporary South African artists to illustrate the expressive characters and rich potentials of the different techniques of printmaking. With a list of seven-hundred and eighty-five printmakers, and works of eighty-nine of them as illustrations, Hobbs and Rankin argue that printmaking played a very crucial role in the liberation struggle against apartheid in South Africa; it was a means of social commentary that provided information, not only about South African art but also on the nitty-gritty of the society. Ijisakin (2018) examines the art of life in South Africa and argues that with printmaking, South Africans saw possibilities in impossibilities during the apartheid, as printmaking was a means of self-expression and the ultimate self-realization within the experience of life.

Melot (1997) discusses the invention of the term “original print”, colour lithography, the influence of Japanese art, as well as new print technologies. The study expounds on the impact of the political, technological, and socio-economic conditions of 19th-century France on Impressionist printmaking. Melot opens up the world of printmaking by artists from the mid-19th century to Van Gogh, who are most often known as painters and who mostly can be categorized as “Impressionists.” Innovations by well-known artists such as Manet, Degas, Gauguin, Sisley, Manet, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pissaro, Rodin, and Pissarro are covered, as well as the contributions of some promising practitioners. Melot’s study though limited within the purview of selected impressionistic printmakers is a rich addition to the print scholarship, especially the discussion on the impact of technologies and socio-economic contributions of printmaking to society.

The prospect of printmaking as an art form is the focus of Dream Template (2014). The study affirms that the modern printing technology processes evolved from printmaking’s ancient ways of creating an impression. It describes the genre as an avenue for creative experimentation and claims that printmaking has survived many cultural and technological changes over many years because of its collaborative nature. The study asserts that printmaking contributed to the development of literature and that it was through printmaking that many other earlier art forms have been reproduced and preserved for the present-day generation. Corroborating this assertion, Clayton (1997) relates the importance of prints to the spread of taste and knowledge, it accentuates the fact that before photography became cheap enough, printmaking served as the chief conveyor of visual information. This was widely appreciated to the extent that it added mystique to an original painting or drawing that was distant, precious and inaccessible. The study surveys the principal print sellers and engravers in England between 1688 and 1730 and classified them according to the type and quality of the print they sold. It also evaluates the print trade in London between 1770 and 1802, a time when print sellers and engravers were so many. Clayton’s study which focuses on 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries England has opened up an avenue for further research, it is also relevant in discussing the development of printmaking in the history of contemporary Nigerian art.

Saunders and Miles (2006) emphasize the innovative and experimentative nature of printmaking; the printmakers discussed are cross-referenced to emphasize the intermingling of concepts and different approaches, although the printmakers discussed are chiefly from the purview of the author which is the Asia-Pacific region. Innovative and creative possibilities of the printmaking medium make the study of Saunders and Miles relevant to printmaking in Nigeria. Jule (1997) examines the works of printmakers in Thailand and Japan and argues that regional distinctions are key factors in the production of their visual images. Jule observes that both Thailand’s and Japanese printmakers promote their cultural values while the Japanese printmakers also emphasised the importance of image over the written word in their works. The study of



Jule, though revolves around Thailand and Japan, can be adapted in assessing the contributions of printmaking to the history of contemporary Nigerian art.

### **Literature and printmaking in contemporary Nigerian art**

Notable scholars that have contributed to the literature on printmaking in contemporary Nigerian art include Filani (1989 and 2004), Oloidi (1993), Adepegba (1995), Picton (2004), Oladumiye (2006), Adeyemi (2008), Hour Glass Gallery (2014), and, Ijisakin (2019 and 2021) among others. While tracing the printmaking history in Nigeria, Filani (2004) argues that indigenous crafts such as Yoruba Adire Eleko (starch resist fabric decoration), and carvings of wood, calabash, or ivory that require cutting or incisions share some technical processes with screenprinting, relief and intaglio techniques of printmaking. Filani further traces the emergence of printmaking in contemporary Nigerian art to the erstwhile Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; and that by the late 1950s, Zaria students such as Solomon Wangboje, Bruce Onorakpeya and others had been introduced to printmaking techniques, especially the relief printing methods. Filani (1989) discusses the role of Ru Van Rossem in organizing printmaking demonstration workshops known as Mbari Mbayo, at Ibadan in 1961; which also inspired the Mbari Mbayo art workshop at Osogbo in 1962 and 1964. Filani also identified Ulli Beier as being instrumental in the emergence of the Ori Olokun art workshop in 1973 at the former University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Ulli Beier was at the vanguard of the organization of these workshops, notable printmakers that emerged from these workshops include Taiwo Olaniyi (popularly known as Twins Seven-Seven), Jimoh Buraimoh, Ademola Williams, and Segun Adeku. Onyeonu (2002) and Ijisakin (2019) examine the contributions of the pioneers, art schools and art workshops to the development of printmaking in Nigeria. While Onyeonu laments the high cost of materials and ultramodern equipment as parts of the challenges to the development of printmaking in Nigeria; Ijisakin argues that art workshops provided inspiring and thought-provoking interactions that led to growth in ideas; and, that the printmakers' exploration of the diverse possibilities of printmaking resulted in the invention of new techniques that are uniquely Nigerian.

The studies of Hour Glass Gallery (2014) and Lawrence (1979) focus on creative experimentation in the works of Bruce Onorakpeya. While the Hour Glass Gallery argues that Onorakpeya is renowned for his deep etching technique of printmaking which he invented following a hydrochloric acid accident in 1963; the study of Lawrence analyses Onorakpeya's new printmaking technique of engraving based on epoxy resin; it also draws attention to its elevation as a new art form. The study also identifies daily life activities, religious and environmental impacts, and the mythology of the Urhobo as the sources of inspiration for his printmaking. Oyelola (2003), and Jegede (1982 and 1987) discuss the works of Onorakpeya in terms of subject matter, forms and sources of inspiration. These studies argue that Onorakpeya draws heavily

from Urhobo and Yoruba cultural motifs to create scintillating art forms, he is also a master printmaker with national and international recognitions.

Lawal (1976) observed Onobrakpeya's insatiable urge for novel means of creative expression which resulted in the invention of the bronze-lino technique of printmaking. Onobrakpeya is also one of the foremost successful artists of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century Africa with a commanding influence on the upcoming artists (Picton 2004 and Elebute 2005). The study of Elebute (2005) draws attention to the evolutionary ascent of deep etching and its unique characteristics as a printmaking technique, the study further observes that Onobrakpeya started deep etching with a stylisation that tends toward abstraction, while other deep etchers like David Dale oscillate between naturalism and abstraction.

The studies of Jegede (1982), Singletary (1999) and Ikpakronyi (2012) assert that printmaking is a dominant art form for Bruce Onobrakpeya who is an exemplar of Nigerian modernism that blends several strands of indigenous, cultural, transnational and modernistic impulses in his work. It is further observed that Onobrakpeya is very conscious of his cultural environment and the need for its promotion; this reflects in the subject matter of many of his prints which are titled in indigenous Nigerian languages, and also convey messages with profound meanings. These studies are very relevant as they explicate one of the key printmaking artists in contemporary Nigerian art. In addition, Onobrakpeya (2009, 2003, 1992, and 1985) has many reproductions of Onobrakpeya's works; these studies chronicle the creative enterprise of Onobrakpeya from the earliest in the 1950s up to 2009. Onobrakpeya's studies though relevant, are more or less autobiographical survey which only opens the subject for further discussion. Elebute and Dakyes (2016) examine the printmaking of Bruce Onobrakpeya so as to understand the impact of Uhrobo cultural visual symbols and contextual connotations of colours in information dissemination. The study argues that Onobrakpeya experimented with the iconographies of the Urhobo people which resulted in the production of a set of ideograms christened "IBIEBE" symbols. The study concluded that Onobrakpeya used these Uhrobo symbols in his prints, not only to communicate socio-cultural and political messages but to also encourage patriotism among Nigerian citizens.

Aig-Imoukhuede (1984) observes that Segun Adeku juxtaposes objects and symbols to create humour and pathos as the need requires in his printmaking and that Adeku's technique is a referent of that of Onabrakpeya. Elebute (2006) examines the similarities and differences in the works of printmakers vis-à-vis their themes, styles, forms, and use of colour to trace the development of the deep etching technique of printmaking in Nigeria. The study examines four techniques that can be used for deep etching: Plastography, Thermoplastography, Additive Plastography, and Collagraphy. The study is however limited to the works of a few selected printmakers such as Bruce Onobrakpeya, David Dale, Tayo Quaye, Joe Amenechi, and Kunle Adeyemi among others. Onakufe's (1999) study on Plasto-Viscosity method of printmaking expatiates

on how to achieve texture, colourful effects, play on light, and rhythm through the juxtaposition of colour using a roller on a relief plate. Onakufe highlights the challenges and prospects of the Plasto-Viscosity technique of printmaking and argues that the technique can give an exciting visual aesthetic experience. In the study of Oyelola (1976) and Bach (1981), David Dale is seen as an exponent of the deep etching technique of printmaking, the study observes the trademark of subtlety and elegance that distinguishes Dale's works, and that rural lives and landscapes constitute the main themes, these works are rendered with rich and dramatic colours. Oloidi (1993) describes David Dale's passion for hard work and commitment to printmaking as a medium of expression as overwhelming; Dale has also taught the intricacies of his printmaking techniques to upcoming artists.

Filani (1989) focuses on the contributions of Solomon Wangboje to printmaking in Nigeria. Filani observes that Wangboje is a pioneer graduand of the School of Arts, Science and Technology, Zaria; and that Wangboje, who also holds a Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking introduced printmaking into the course of study at the University of Benin in the late 1970s. Wangboje also successfully combines academic, professional practice, and administrative prowess. Some of Wangboje's students who propagated printmaking include Kunle Filani with the petropolystrene technique and Francis Arodu with his Evolay technique. Oladumiye (2006) traces the historical development of Wangboje as a printmaker and describes him as an exponent of varied media whose strength lies in the superimposition of backgrounds. Oyelola (1976) and Oladumiye (2006) argue that Wangboje is a leading figure in printmaking in Nigeria; their studies expatiate Wangboje's contribution to printmaking vis-à-vis the Orí Olókun art workshop at the University of Ife in the late 1960s to early 1970s, and at the University of Benin where printmaking is taught up to the postgraduate level. The artists that evolved from the Orí Olókun art workshop such as Ademola Williams, Yinka Adeyemi, and Rufus Orishayomi created prints in a striking, yet simplified style, with themes of social activities and environmental factors. These studies are limited as they are a biographical survey of only one of many printmaking artists in contemporary Nigerian art.

The book, *New Wine* by Adeyemi (2008) is a memoir which offers an overview of the processes, methods, and techniques of printmaking which is categorized into Relief, Intaglio, Planographic, Surface or Lithographic, as well as Screen-printing. While opening up the creative usage of printmaking, it also analyzes the prints of the author which lavishly adorned the pages of the book. Public opinions about the author as a printmaking artist are also documented. Focusing on Nigerian art's cultural and artistic heritage, Adepegba (1995) asserts that ancient Nigerian art traditions of rock paintings, metals, wood, stone, and crafts are germane to understanding the history of the new art forms. The study observed that the beginning of the new art inadvertently and simultaneously leads to the end of active practices of indigenous art and crafts consequent to a change in patronage, material and concept. The relevance of

Adepegba's study lies in the cultural and artistic heritage of Nigeria which serves as a source of inspiration for printmaking artists in contemporary Nigerian art. Ijisakin (2021) evaluates purposively selected works of printmakers in Nigeria to understand the socio-cultural impact of printmaking in Nigeria. The study argues that printmaking is a social fulcrum as traditional and contemporary cultural symbols and images of many societies are part of the visual elements in the works of the printmakers, these are creatively reinterpreted to show an in-depth understanding of Nigerian cultural heritage.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study discusses issues that previous scholars considered germane to the development of printmaking. Although the foundation for scholarship on printmaking was laid by scholars from the Western world and Asian countries who confined contemporary printmaking to their cultural context because the activities of printmakers from Africa, especially Nigeria, are out of their scope; nevertheless, their studies are useful contributions to scholarship. The findings of this study reveal that despite the fact that several scholars have written on the theory and practice of printmaking both in the historical context as well as on Nigerian printmakers yet there are gaps in the literature. The available studies show that many scholars dwell so much on the personalities of printmakers; whereas, the collection of prints of such printmakers is sparsely mentioned. Further, there is a need for more photographic evidence of the artists' prints, engaging such prints for critical analysis would have also enriched such studies.

Further, this study reveals the contributions of Bruce Onobrakpeya, Solomon Wangboje and David Dale as leading figures of printmaking in Nigeria. Onobrakpeya is an experimental artist who has invented several printmaking techniques that are uniquely Nigerian, Onobrakpeya has also documented a large number of his works as published in many of his books. Several scholars have also written on Bruce Onobrakpeya and argue that he has been persistent in his quest for new materials and techniques for creative expression in printmaking; this has yielded great success with aesthetic referents. In conclusion, printmaking is a unique means of expression, its fascinating visual qualities remain a strong attraction to contemporary artists. The diverse techniques that printmaking offers which range from the conventional to the ingenious ones that were developed from several creative experiments by Nigerian printmakers have been used to produce enthralling prints. The works of printmakers in Nigeria would continue to attract the attention of art enthusiasts not only in Nigeria but also globally, printmaking in contemporary Nigerian art, therefore, deserves more attention from African art historical scholars.



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