

RETHINKING PROFESSIONALISM IN THE VISUAL ARTS FOR ENHANCED CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Maria Akuejezi Mbelu

Department of Fine and Applied art
Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Rivers state

ABSTRACT

Creativity is an ongoing process and a vital element of artistry that allows artists the perfect medium for building their personal and cultural identities into their work for enhanced cultural, socioeconomic performance in the world of work. Therefore, there is the need to direct the effort of an artist's career issues by presenting realistic solutions that can take them to professional edge in the world of work. This can be applied at the beginning of art career by mapping out strategic solution, and rethinking professionalism, through three key areas of importance which include recognition, reputation and responsibility of the artist. Artists and students have missed out on being informed about vital information necessary for ensuring survival for the long haul of being a professional artist. Most artists, when considering their career options, most often, have no alternative strategy, no professional focus in view except from the tried and true fall back career of becoming a secondary school teacher without teaching qualification. Others retired to road street artist which in turn does not bring the artist to a professional edge in the world of work. Everything experienced in the school of art is made to expound the depth of the artist knowledge. The problem is the missing of clear instruction, understanding and dialog about the professional end of being an artist. However, most times, survival as a professional artist gets stuck, making the artist to navigate for alternative way of surviving, often when they retire, only to find that somewhere along the line they had lost or given away their creative knowledge and inspiration and finally when confronted with empty studio, they realized that they no longer have anything to say as an artist. The world of art is a creative multidisciplinary, therefore upgrading and training is needed in order to combine a variety of perspective in the field of art, to produce a well-considered outcome, to make an impact on the end user by bringing out the strength that lies within ideation of the artist to create new and innovative ideas. Through training, an artist combines strength of ideation and research through a free-flowing yet methodical mind set which allows a conceptualized, innovative and contextually solutions that respond to real world issues that are society's genuine needs. This allows for exploration and identification of current issues in the art world. They create a balance between moral, ethics and functionality which equally reflect and shape the lives of those who encounter the work of art both extrinsically and intrinsically. This study recommends strategic solutions that can help the artist to work as a professional in the art world.

KEYWORDS: Art, Artist, Creativity, Cultural, Career, Professional, Training, Work.

INTRODUCTION

The world of art is a creative multidisciplinary one. Thus, there is the need for review and upgrade of our artist training for the required professional edge in the world of work. Wood (2010) opines that creativity is a vital element of artistry; each project offers a finished piece if you follow its instructions steps by steps while you learn the skills and techniques. There are varieties of perspective in the field of art to produce a well-considered outcome to make an impact on the end user. This is done by bringing out the strength that lies within ideation of the artist in order to create new and innovative ideas. Omeke (2011) opines that, it is generally thought that “creativity” in Western culture was originally seen as a matter of divine inspiration. Dahlsen (2013) stated that creativity is an ongoing process that allows artists to build their personal and cultural identities into their works. Thus, there is need for continuous review and upgrade of our artists through training, in order to extract out the inert deposits of creative ability in the artist.

Dahlsen (2013) opines that everything experienced at school of art is designed to develop in-depth of the creator but what is generally missing is clear instruction and dialogue about the professional end of being an artist. Therefore, this paper is to address the need to review and upgrade of our artists’ training for professional edge in the world of work and this can be achieved through many ways – which will be discussed later in this paper. The study is out to achieve this goal by identifying gaps, to create new and innovative ideas, resulting in the professional end of the artist in the world of work of art that will bring a sustainable visual arts for enhanced cultural and economic performance.

According to Fletcher (2012), he stated that, art is perhaps the ultimate repository of human knowledge, skill and experience as well as an accurate recorder of the climate – moral artistic and social – of the time. When the value of performance is questioned and often rejected by a new generation of artists, the opportunity for future generations to study and enjoy their work is lost – therefore, there is need for continuous upgrading and training of our artists in order to meet the need of time that will bring them to the very level of professional edge. For example, as a textile technologist and designer, having knowledge of the course through training can lead the artist to become as a tactile textile technologist that specializes in smart textile artifacts for home care residents with dementia.

Artists and students have missed out on being informed about vital information necessary for ensuring survival for the long haul of being a professional artist. Most artists,

when considering their career options have no alternative strategy except from “falling back” career of becoming a teacher. This is not to say that teaching is a waste or that a career as a teacher is wasted either. Others retire to road street artists to compete with artisan, in turn taking away their eyes from the professional ideology that will bring them to professional world of work. Dahlsen (2013) stated that much of the instability which artists experience in their lives centers around money and the inability or the refusal of creative types to put the spotlight on their finances and making sure they have a positive cash flow. Thus, lack of a developed business sense is a major reason for so much instability with individuals in the creative industry, so much depression, confusion and abnormal patterns of behavior. Rethinking professionalism in the visual arts for enhanced cultural and economic performance is of great importance for an artist guide to a successful career; through strategies for financial and critical success. This can only be achieved through review and upgrade of our artists training for professional edge in the world of work.

The problem is the missing of the clear instruction and dialogue about the professional end of being an artist. This does not mean that the teaching standard is not excellent. There are lecturers in the field of painting, drawing, sculpture, textile, graphic, ceramics and art history all geared towards National Diploma, Higher National Diploma and Degree. However, most times, surviving as a professional, the artist gets stuck along the line making the artist to navigate for alternative way of surviving. When they retire, they find out that somewhere along the line they had lost or given away their creative knowledge and inspiration. Most times, these teachers say to themselves I will sculpt, paint or design again later, but when confronted with the empty studio, they realized they no longer have anything to say as an artist and act. All these are as a result of lack of students not being able to gain a deeper understanding of their craft and enhanced portfolio. Therefore, upgrading and training of artist is needed in order to combine a variety of perspective in the field of art, bringing out the strength that lives within ideation of the artist to create new and innovative ideas, resulting in practical and sustainable career that can stand the test of professional edge in the world of work. Upgrading and training will ensure a future focused experience of the artist which I believe is paramount for the success and sustainable socio-economy of the nation, thereby developing an in-depth exploration of making processes. Through training, an artist combines strength of ideation and research through a free-flowing yet methodical mind set which allows conceptualized innovative solutions that respond to real world issues and society’s genuine needs. Upgrading of artist will create a contextually and conceptual driven

user-centered design which allows for exploration and identification of current issues in the world of art. This creates a sense of individuality and unique art work, design and style which has the ability to change lives and the strength to change the world of art. It again creates a balance between morals, ethics and functionality which equally reflect and shape the lives of those who encounter the work of art both extrinsically and intrinsically.

Manser (2018) opines that the amazing generosity of artists, locally and nationally amazed us and we have learnt skill in communication, advertising and marketing. It shows what exciting opportunities there are to undertake within the university and is something that will support the artist in the professional life.

Background of the Study

Everything experienced in art schools is designed to develop the depth of the creator (Dahlsen, 2013). But there are basic fundamental issues in the art discipline in schools and colleges in Nigeria. This has indeed affected the development and growth of creative mind which in effect has eaten deep into deep understanding of art as a profession. There is no proper address of these artist's career issues that present realistic solutions that can be applied at the beginning of an art career so that those who want to make a living as an artist can and those whose calling is to teach have a reference tool for the business end of art.

Derived from Mbelu (2009), the creative mind is a workshop for development and growth and the engine that propels every endeavour of life. Catching them young is achieved through a leading by hand strategy. But this is hard to get in the education system of our nation. The young artists are not exposed to understand and appreciate visual art in all aspects of life's endeavour. Holt (2006) in Omeke (2011) defined creativity as the ability to bring something new into existence. This definition emphasizes the ability, not the activity of bringing something new into existence. Holt opines, that creativity involves the use of skill and the imagination to produce something new or a work of art

Every human being is endowed with a gift and art. This is a common gift which can only be exhibited through self-discovery, guidance and exposure. The children are not indoctrinated into the profession called art and design like in other aspects of profession, for instance, medicine, pharmacy, etc. These in turn impose negative influence in this area of study, which navigates the professional practice. Art is a compendium that guarantees to propel the creative ingenuity of the child to achieve the optimum at the end of career. From personal experience, I met a young girl who has the quest for creativity and wants to study art

in the university as a professional career but cannot realize her dream because it is not offered in the senior secondary school she attends. But, after a long persuasion by the girl, the school was forced to register the subject for her in West Africa Examination certificate. And now the girl is doing well in art and has a desire to take it up as a profession.

Art is involved in every endeavor of life. That is why its requirement as a field of study for all professions cannot be overemphasized. Art as a universal language is the first means of communication at kindergarten level. School children are taught using visual images and illustration. Thus, they quickly cultivate the interest in creativity and verbalizing their thought and ideas through drawing and colour symbol.

Adewunmi (2009) stated that, this creative intuition is soon lost as they progress to secondary school, because there are no adequate materials (books) and teachers to follow up on the creativity and art appreciation that is already acquired at primary school. Adewunmi opines that, this gap created is what is responsible for lack of art appreciation, a common contemporary phenomenon. Consequently, the basic requirement in the practice of various professions is lacking. This has affected our environments and our world of work in view

Art has the ability to change lives. With adequate training and upgrade, products created can transform people's lives with designs driven by intuitive usability. Thus, the narrative of the user centric focus is vital to art. This will ensure a future focused experience of the artist which is paramount for the success of a product or artwork. This goal can be achieved through research, exhibitions, conferences, seminars and ideation to create new and innovative ideas, thereby achieve a strong sustainable and embody work of art.

Griffin (2018) stated that through training, an artist combines strength of ideation and research through a free-flowing yet methodical mind set which allows a conceptualized innovative solutions that respond to real world issues and society's genuine needs, thus challenging our current preconception on how we live our lives.

Review and upgrade of our artists training will create a contextually and conceptual designs and artworks which allows for exploration and identification of current issues in art world, making the artist to be on a professional pedestal, thereby, creating a sense of individuality and unique design style which has the ability to change lives and the strength to change the world of art. Training makes the artist to adhere to design process that can bring him/her to professional level, inducing a balance between morals, ethics and functionality which equally reflect and shape the lives of those who encounter the work of art both extrinsically and intrinsically. This introduces creative approach towards the design process

with strength of ideation in the area of specialization. These ultimately enhance cultural and economic performance. Importance of training cannot be overemphasized, It promotes inspiration which comes during ideation process, consequently developing meaningful and effective solutions that can be withstood and accessed equally by everyone, thereby taking the artist to a professional edge in the world of art. Through design thinking approach, different elements are brought together for an overall process to a single appropriate whole by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to art and design solution.

Rethinking Professionalism in visual art

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, a professional is defined as a person with a high level of knowledge or skill in a field. And rethinking is to reconsider or consider an approach for improved action. Therefore, there is need to reconsiderup grading and training of artist for improved action. According to Dahlsen(2013), the earlier the artist identifies core concerns, the more successful and straight-foreword their career will be. He opines that there are certain questions an artist should ask in the early stages of career. He considers these questions very vital, for instance, why do I want to be an artist? Why do I want to create? What do I say with my art? Is my art expression any different from my life expression? What is it that needs expression so much? Where would I like to be in five years etc? The question is inexhaustible. Getting side tracked takes you away from being rooted in your course of study that will take you to professional level. The earlier the artist identifies core concerns, the more successful and straight forward their career will be.

Professionalism upgrades the artist through an overall process to a single appropriate whole by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach. All areas of visual art complement each other and have the potential to bring out the best ethos in individual artist through this approach of review and upgrading of artists training for professional edge in the world of work. Upgrading and training makes the artist to build on current skills and knowledge, promote diverse cultural knowledge and value, and thereby shape their practice, thus gives the artist a truly global outlook.

An international artist must be creative, practical, theoretical, philosophical, vocational and speculative. A contemporary artist must be a collaborator, sharing ideas and experiences, being open to inspiration and unfamiliar ideas and being responsible for all his creative works. And this can only be achieved through upgrading and training. Pink (2005) in

Omeje(2013) opines that, we are in a new age where creativity is becoming increasingly important. In this conceptual age, there is a need to foster and encourage creativity and emotion over direct thinking representing logical and analytical thought. He opines that these include approaches that have been developed by both academia and industry such like; establishing a purpose and intention, Building basic skills, Encouraging acquisition of domain-specific knowledge, Stimulating and rewarding curiosity and exploration, Encouraging confidence and a willingness to take risks (Omeje2011).

Upgrading through Training

There is an absolute need of review and upgrade of our artist training for professional edge in world of work of art. Learning by doing with hands on projects takes you through creativity and development all the way to manufacture. The study of history and theory of design influences the work of the artist day-by-day. Thus, it produces an artist/designer whose products take the world by storm.

Through training, a ceramist feels the world through hands, ready to develop new ideas and change perception of the material world, feel it, shape it, craft it and sculpt it – that is clay. The stuff of civilization of the past, present and future are acquired through training to bring the artist to a professional level.

Rogers Anna (2017) explains how the opportunity of training helped to kick-start her – I feel educationally, personally and professionally enriched by the experience and it has given me a huge wealth of knowledge, understanding and experience that is already aiding my future career development.

Moseley Olwen (2018) stated that review of highlights in research and innovation enables student to engage with cutting – edge technologies and ideas. Training builds relationship with professionals in your field, through work placement, seminar, exhibitions, and industry mentors and visiting speakers. Through upgrading and training, the artist gains the creative edge needed for a career to take off. Training refines your strategic thinking as well as technical skills through which a solid understanding of inclusive ethical and sustainable art work review and upgrading of artist training cannot be overemphasized.

Nicklin Ray (2018) at cardif.met.ac.uk opines that through training, a solid understanding of inclusive ethical and sustainable art and design are developed. How to shape words and images, colours, memorable messages and bring idea to life are learnt. Communication is

lifeblood; it connects, it evolves emotion and it can change the world. Through review and upgrading, these can be achievable.

Rethinking professionalism in the visual arts for enhanced cultural and economic performance can contribute to a fast moving and evolving industry that brings change and learning flexibility. It can equally bring travel opportunity that broadens the horizon and creative thinking. Review and upgrade of our artists training for professional edge in the world of art is very apt and can be examined from every angle, question it and feel it. It opens oneself to new experiences if the artist creativity is fed. Creativity is known by the ability to think divergently or differently. This involves the ability to generate new and lots of ideas. Omeje(2011) stated that, when creativity is deliberately planned for, new ideas begins to emerge; implementation of these new ideas would be taken through process of training and quality service would be ensured. As a matter of fact, the world of art could be changed through this review and upgrade.

Creativity is shaped by experiences; this gives opportunities to see things differently through exploration of disciplines and culture. This gives way to expansion of horizons and building of skills every single day. Through upgrading the artist is guided to attain a thorough deep understanding of a chosen area of specialization and venture beyond subject areas. Thus, collaborate with fellow students; explore the ideas and theory behind individual craft. Draw inspiration from everywhere and everyone and see where it takes you to professionalism.

Through training one's path is chosen by developing new skills through extensive workshops, create a business plan travel. Thus, get a taste of professional life with a placement with one or two industry partners. This helps to shape the future of the artist through practitioner practice, thus take studies further or set up own business, thereby ready to change the world. Through professionalism, teaching, research and innovation lifts the art world to a class by bringing art, design and science to the people. Training brings innovative and trans-disciplinary act into an artist. It allows for transformative opportunities with varied experiences that bring more connections that enable creativity across and beyond the global world of work. Upgrading prepares an artist for a changing world through creative and critical thinking thus provides experiences and opportunities that are future proof for success.

Conclusion

Since everything experienced in art schools is designed to develop the depth of the creator, there is need for review and upgrade of our artists training for professional edge in the world of work. There should be a crystal-clear instruction and dialogue about the business and of being an artist. Artists and students should be informed about vital information necessary for ensuring survival for the long move of being a professional artist.

Creativity is an ongoing process and a vital element of artistry that makes an artist a professional artist, and is characterized by the ability to think divergently or differently. It also involves the ability to generate new and lots of ideas and flexibility. To derive from Dahlsen (2013), the earlier the artist identifies core concerns, the more successful and straightforward their career will be. Therefore, review and upgrade of our artists training for professional edge in the world of art by rethinking professionalism in the visual arts cannot be over emphasized. Through training, an artist combines strength of ideation and research through a free-flowing yet methodical mind set which allows conceptualized innovative solutions. The young artist should be exposed to understanding and appreciation of art at early stage of education. Hence encourage the individual artist to be committed to their work. They should work hard in each of their respective areas and with time develop instinctive and intuitive qualities in their work thereby making them stand out as a professional artist. The young artist should be allowed in the early stages to fully explore all different types of styles, thus follow the process of professionalism.

For sustainability and professionally centered artists and designers, there is the need for training in various fields of art and designs, ranging from ceramic, textiles and graphic design, fine art and product design in order to combine a variety of perspective to produce a well-considered outcome. Review and upgrade of our artist training will help to birth the creation of the best possible objective of art and design, which is a co-operate work of art, crafts and design.

Upgrading and training of artists cannot be over emphasized. Through training practitioners, entrepreneur, leaders, employable and the employers of the future are made through creative and analytical thinking.

Recommendations

Review and upgrade of artists through training cannot be overemphasized. This study recommends a well-designed curriculum that will cater for students and artist to develop their

professional practice or knowledge within the discipline of fine art. This should be designed to respond to artists / students who already have a practice and who are able to readily determine where they are in relation to their field of study.

The curriculum should be set forth in such a way that the student should understand in the first year of their study that a career or an idea of professionalism is being developed or kick-started. They should be aware that a professional skill is being set forth. Hence, it makes them to become ably directed professionals that have a trajectory towards progression to a future professional doctorate.

The student's focus should be on their development of art practice relevant to their area of specialization in fine art, applied art, illustration, artist designer and so on. Dahlsen (2013) stated, the earlier the artist identifies core concerns, the more successful and straight forward their career will be. In the first year of career, student-artists should be made to identify core concerns. And the earlier the artist identifies core concerns the more successful and straight forward their career will be, leading the artist to a professional edge in the world of works.

In the course of the study, the artist should be taught to develop some certain amount of self-confidence. This will help the artist to have the required ability to put him/her out there in the world of work. This confidence is very important for both students and artist at the beginning of their career, apart from their ongoing practice in the studio, to study whatever processes they need to improve and gain mastery over that style of working.

The students/artists should be encouraged to go for masters in their area of specialization. Exhibition both international and local will definitely take the artist to a higher level of professionalism.

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