THE VALUE OF CLAY AS A MEDIUM OF SELF-EXPRESSION IN ART

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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on clay as a medium of self-expression, in art and its value. A brief and simple explanation about clay is made, and also simple explanation about clay and its chemical contents and qualities as a medium in clay modeling, also breaking the benefits down to the artist, children and society as a whole making clay a very cheap and highly ceremonial for creative work medium of self-expression. The objective of this write up is to educate people generally on the importance of clay as a natural matter and substance for mankind in terms of creativity and other essential usages of clay as a natural material. Secondly, the types of clay available and special qualities attached to each, and most preferable typeof clay to work with. Another is given a clear historical understanding of clay to man and the background history and how we can use our natural clay given land. Through the federal government, fourthly telling the members of public and educating the society on how best to prepare and use clay for a good positive result. Lastly, making clear the health importance of clay as a medium in area of Arts and medicals. The research methodology that will be adopted is basically historical and theoretical descriptive in nature. And the theoretical frame work is also with some references and researches carried out from related ideas but with some uniqueness attached to the research. Research finding of some researchers will also be mentioned during this write up at a conclusive way of improving on our natural resources on clay will be specified. The significance of the write-up

research will prove and show that a lot could be achieved from things like clay from our natural environment which tells us that we already dwell and live in land full of milk and honey, and if possible producing bricks and exporting bricks to other countries of the world.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The word “Clay” should be made clear as what clay is all about, and knowing what clay can be like as a medium of self-expression in art and its value to the society. Clay is a type of soil, that is heavy and sticky that is mostly got from swampy areas and river banks. Wet clay is plastic malleable and sticky and hard if it is dry. George G. 2005 emphasized on how clay works and the application. The researcher as well made reference to some others who made some good points on relationship to the topic being written on, like Bergaya. F. Theng (2006), talking on clay science, Carretero, M.I. (2002) Jessie C. Obichita, Owolabi, Okafor C., Musa, David K. (2010), SheelaChamaria benefits of clay (2018) just to name few.

All these researchers talked about clay as medium of Art for self-expression, but never emphasized on how best to localize it, among our people, and health wise implication of clay as our art medium of expression and even the economical importance of clay from almost all areas of life.this often been neglected.

So this research will also show the existing gap of our people not fully knowing what clay is all about with the benefits attached to the use of clay as a medium of self-expression and its value or benefits attached to clay.

The objectives to be derived from this research are:-

Firstly, to educate the members of the society most especially in the third world century on the benefits of clay as a medium of self-expression. Secondly, to tell us about the chemical and scientific components of clay as a means of creativity.

Thirdly, clay as an accessible material naturally given to us to make full use of which has being neglected by people without making full use of its benefits.

Fourthly, what the good of our nation should do in order to improve on what we presently have as a natural clay given material to improve on the use and benefits of clay as second to oil spilling machine of the nation (oil boom) and lastly, the health benefits derived from the use of clay, by individuals who are not even artistically inclined towards the use of clay.

This research is intended to be explanatory, theoretical and historical in nature. Other researchers as earlier on emphasized will be talked about in relationship to the topic of the research.

Although, the researcher talked about clay as a medium but emphasizes on the special benefits derived, Artistically medically, educationally, economically and even religiously were not emphasize as to something easily got within our immediate environment that you don't really need to buy clay before you can start benefiting from the use. Other researchers idea will be discussed upon. Even Jesus Christ our Lord and God used clay to heal the blind man John 9:6.

From Data analysis made the researchers are still talking about the use of clay without talking about how to improve on it and continue making clay as an equivalent to gold, crude oil or of great relevant to the society and that is

why the researcher decided to go deeper as to make clay known and aware of the benefits that could be derived from the use. The findings of this research tells us that the superior heads have to be involved in assisting the members of the society. Children, Adults, will all benefit from the detail study of clay as a medium of self-expression.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ceramic and sculpture makes up three-dimensional work of arts most materials used are three dimensional art works/designs are wax, wood, stone, clay, cement, plaster of paris (P.O.P), paper mache, wire, like copper etc.

From definition, clay was defined to be a type of soil, that is heavy and sticky, that can be used for making pots bricks, etc. according to Jessie-C. Obicheta, Owolabi, Okafor C. Musa, David K. (2010) Clay is composed of alumina silica materials mixed with sediments of various type, like quartz, feldspar carbon kaolin and writes like sticks leaves etc.

The internet description of the clay says that clay is a naturally occurring sticky fine grained earth, it is essentially rock dust combined with water. It could be molded into different shapes. Clay is used to make bricks, patterns and ceramics. It is also used to make sculptures and decorative potteries shapes, and designs. Based on the soil content, clay may be seen in shades of white, grey, brown, yellow and orange-red. The general categories of clay are terracotta, stone wares, and porcelain.

Jessie-C. Obichetta, Owolabi, Okafor C. Musa, David K. in a book titled standard cultural and creative arts define clay as a type of soil that is heavy and sticky, that can be used for making pots, bricks, etc. If we look into the definition given by this five authors, we notice that clay has already being defined to be a working tool like medium of art for self expression.
A sculptor by name Andrea, Mulder Slater in his write up defined clay as a special kind of earth which is made by the decomposition of rocks through the action of weathering.

Clay can be found anywhere and basically known for making of ceramic Art and sculptural works of art. From the Dictionary definition of clay it says that clay is a natural earthly material that is plastic when wet consisting essentially of hydrated silicate of aluminum, and these clay have being used by contemporary artists in our present generation like George E. Ohr, Toshiko Takaezu, Jun Kanekoken Eastman but just to mention of few.

Clay as we all know it to be a very common medium of creativity which made it has its promotional creative value not only that it helps promote self-confidence encourages, self-expression and develops problem-solving skills. So one of the objective of the study is to educate members of the society of the importance or value attached to clay as a natural medium which is very common in our locality as a good medium of self-expression and creativity.

Secondly, telling us about the chemical combination and sustained contents of clay as a medium of self-expression in art.

In this study the other works done by other researchers on similar write up will be mentioned like Bergaya F. Theng (2006) Carretero M.I. (2002), MaziOmeje but just to mention very few.

The theoretical framework is purely based on the other researcher observations of the research methodology and theoretically.
Theoretical framework is also based on other researchers observation but the present researcher wants to put a greater input most especially on area of the society being more industrial and focused on what we have which is a natural gift of nature given to us of which we are to make ourselves, and the society more productive unlike previous period in our life's, this we can ask the federal government to come and assist student so that they can grow better. The researcher findings shows that clay can be used and easily got from our locality and for different purposes, must especially such clay can even be used to produce many things like China wares that is breakable eating utensils, toilet system materials, bricks from South Africa and even flower vases.

The researcher find out that the study can as well change the economy of the country if a good attention is given by the federal government asking the young boys and girls in the field of Art asking them to make good use of clay not only in sculptural forms but also the ceramic way which means the clay we have can even make us to start producing bricks instead of importing south African bricks into our country. In fact, we need to become exporters ourselves in other to boost our economy in fact the country as a whole will seriously benefit from this researchers write up.

Clay as we all know it to be a modeling materials since pre-historic times. It can be squeezed, pinched, coiled and moulded with hands, knives, or modeling tools into a limitless variety of shapes Jarehill.

Steve Ember, says that clay is one of the most universal materials if not even the best material known to humans throughout history and around the world, people have developed the art of forming clay to make ceramic objects or pottery. Clay is made of water and earth. It is formed into different shapes. Then high levels of heat hardened it to produce many kinds of ceramics. According to the researcher different kinds of clay contain different materials such as silicon or iron dioxide. The kinds of minerals contents in clay affect how soft or hard it is to work with. The mineral content of clay also affects the temperature level of which it makes it to harden.

The researcher (Steve Ember) says that ceramic development had an important effect on human history. Ceramic objects permitted early cultures to make containers that could hold water. This means they could cook food like vegetable and meat. Improving food production methods meant larger populations could survive. Pottery is an art form that grew out of the daily needs of life.

Ceramic/sculpture are also important for historians and archeologists. Pieces of ceramics found at archeological areas helps to tell about ancient cultures. These pieces can last for tens of thousands of years. They help answer questions about culture we know little about.

Shen-Li Lee made some listing about the benefits and why clay Art is great for us as individuals.

- Encourages creativity
- Improves corrections in the brain in the defaulted areas.
- Helps to develop visualization and interpretative skills.
- Allows children an avenue for self expression.
- Teach children that there is more than one right answer in art so children can feel pride in their artistic creations.
- Help develop hand-eye cordination and fine pscho- motor dormain skills, playing with play dolls is also recommended as a pre-cursor for hand writing.
- Trains concentration skills and help us have a good focus.
- It's therapeutic, it can reduce stress and anxiety and help us get over sadness.
- Promotes an upward spiral of flourishing.
- Helps us achieve the flow state the mental state of operation where we are fully immersed.

In an activity with energized focus, complete involvement and enjoyment in the process of the activity. Clay is one medium that promote creativity says Darla GrebMazariegos (2012), it is especially beneficial to young people. It helps promote self-confidence, encourages self-expression and develops problem-solving, skills. Noam Zimin, founder of clay Dance studio in Siskiyou country, states that I believe few art mediums kindle growth and skills in children the way clay does.

So, with this, from various researchers' opinion it is observed that clay has a lot role to play in the life of children and up to adult hood it helps us from various aspect of life even medically. And if this is inculcated into our primary, secondary schools which is the initial upbringing of any children in the society to become future leaders, a lot will be achieved in Nigeria system of education.

Clay is known to be rich in nutrients including calcium, magnesium, silica, sodium, copper, iron and potassium, bentonite clay benefits include helping to deliver essential vitamins and minerals to the body making a wonderfully detoxifying and powerfully absorbent ingredient in skin care as well as cleansing internal system.

Mineral are the main source of life on our planet, and are imperative to our survival. Minerals are necessary for all processes in the body, including the assimilation of vitamins, fat, proteins and carbs as well as biochemical functions that occur.

Minerals help with everything from muscle contractions to the production of hormones. A national source of all the minerals used and consumed by humans for a variety of purposes is clay.

Dating back to the prehistoric era, the earliest humans used clay to treat minor ailments such as food poison, aches and pains, infections, and mineral deficiencies. They even turned to clay for spa and beauty treatments. A common clay used for skin conditions as well as spa and beauty treatments is called Bentonite clay. Bentonite clay is formed after

vokanie ash has weathered and aged in the presence of water. Bentonite has a strong negative election magnetic charge and when activated by water, it acts like a magnate in and on our bodies.

Bontonite clay is now used in a variety of homemade skin care products. Some are made into product such as hair and face masks, toothpastes and tooth powders, deodorants, soaps and even make ups.

Some used of clay throughout ancient history include:

Pharmaceutical formulation oral applications

Topical applications

Gas/intestinal protectors

Cosmetics

Use as recipients

Influence on the liberation process of drugs

Influence in the drug's degradation

Sheelachamaria (12 July, 2018), made emphasis on the benefits of clay modeling for kids: clay modeling in small groups allow sun, communicating sharing and also improves social skills. It is an activity which nurtures child's creativity boosts imagination and reasoning.

Clay modeling and in 2 or 3 dimensional, it is versatile such that the sculptor can create unique objects using the material. Also clay provides chances where an artist can portray an idea before working on the final design from one object to the other in form of molds.

There are many uses of clay as it can sculptured into and endless number of forms.

Humans have been making objects out of clay for ages pots, plates, bowls, sculptures and so on, ability to create so many different objects out of clay shows that clay is a real medium and a means of self-expression in art.
Working with clay encourages:

1. Trial and error
2. Develops fine motor skills
3. Teachings creativity
4. Encourages work based learning

Clay modeling has many advantages to an artist one it is widely available, too, it is inexpensive and there it is versatile such that the sculptor can create unique objects using the material, also clay provides an avenue where an artist can portray an idea before working on the final design, it also allows people to transfer designs from one object to the other in the forms of molds.

Clay art has a lot of benefits it encourages creativity improves connections in the brain in the default mode network. Help to develop visualization and interpretative skills, allows children an avenue for self expression. Teaches children that there is more than one right answer multiple points of view.

Clay in its real sense is very easy to maintain and be used. Some sculptors use clay as permanent medium, firing their works in a kiln, others use it as an intermediary step, making a clay model from which a mold is taken. The mold can be used to make sculpture in plaster, concrete, bronze, or other materials.

Clay can be prepared in two methods:

Wet and dry methods, when preparing the clay using the wet method, the clay should be collected and soaked in a container of water for some days.

Clay being a medium for the sculptors and ceramist which goes under 3 or 2 dimensional work of art, the clay is specifically sieved most especially for the ceramist in order to remove and avoid particles in the clay which could be a problem during moulding or firing when the work of art gets to the finishing stage. And on the aspect of dry method of preparation the clay is collected and allowed to dry up completely and the clay is really crushed to fine powder and all impurities like leaves, sticks little pebbles are sieved out and finally the clay is soaked with water knead and stored properly with polythene to avoid evaporation of moisture.

After the preparation of clay the clay is kept in a moist state to make it workable. To work with clay, the psycho-motor domain skill is involved, using the hands makes work produced by an artist more easily accessible to more skill and creativity and knowledge ability.

Example if you are to mould a lion you have to bear in mind how a lion looks like if possible bringing the object/figure or design closer to you as to have a good and perfect visual perception and this entails watching the object occasionally until you get the desire result.

Clay modelling is a fun art activity that involves sculpting and moulding, modeling clay into a variety of shapes and objects. Clay art with modeling clay is a good precursor to ceramic art with clay. In the process of modeling the artists himself or herself as an individual determines, what is to be

created by conceptualizing the figure or image of what is to be done. This is the stage in which the artists now have the clay modeling ideas that should be executed in the cause of making a piece of clay work and not only that the modeling tools will have to be considered along with the type of clay to be used for the modeling.

Different, kinds of clay contains different minerals such as silicon or iron dioxide. The kinds of minerals in clay affect how soft or hard it is to work with. The mineral content of clay also affects the temperature level at which it hardens.

Earthen ware is one of the earliest kinds of clay used by humans. Earthenware hardens at a lower temperature than clay called stoneware. Porcelain is yet another kind of clay. The clay talked about are made very fine, and smooth. All these clays need to be fired at high temperatures. Early pottery was heated in the sun or by a fire, later potters developed heated devices called kilns to control the necessary firing condition.

Being that clay is one of the most universal materials known to humans. Throughout history and around the world, people have developed the art of forming clay to make ceramic objects, or pottery. Clay is made of water earth. High levels of heat hardened it to produce different kinds of ceramics.

The development of ceramics has had an important effect on human history. Ceramics objects, permitted early cultures to make containers that could hold water. This means they could cook foods like vegetable and

meat. Improving food production methods meant larger populations of people could survive. Ceramics and sculpture are art forms that grew out of the daily needs of life.

Ceramics and sculpture are also very important vital facts about art for historians and archeologists. Pieces of clay works found at archeologists area help tell about ancient cultures. These art works in clay can last for ten thousand of years. They are reflective answers to questions about cultures we know little about. People first began to fire clay in China and Japan about 14,000 BC, probably they started by lining baskets with clay so they would hold water better and they started leaving off the basket and just making clay containers. They may have used these early clay pots to cooked fish, or may be to make beer or both.

Similar pattern of use is also applicable to our. Africans, using clay for some functional purposes. In Igbo language clay pot is called udu. The udu drum originated drum the Igbo people of Nigerian. Unlike other percussion instruments, the udu drum was invented and developed by the women of the Igbo people from clay pots. If fact udu means pot in Igbo. Udu drum is also used in reggae bands of African pop music, percussion musicals, and acoustic performances.

In Nigerian societies we have our traditional art example are ones like Nok Art Igbo-Ukwu art Benin and Ife art and others and they generally in common made use of clay as strong medium of expression in one way or the other. The sculpture works or clay work in terracotta were dated back between 500BC and 300BC and mostly human heads and animal figures.

That of Ife art 11th to 15th century and Benin art between 1400AD so clay has been known as a very strong medium for our people up to this present time of our existence in life. We cannot do without the great use and importance of clay. So clay is a very good medium in art which can not be forgotten.

2.1 Empirical Review

From the write up the researcher made use of other researchers view just like St. George G. talking, about the science and applications of clay and like materials in health and beauty telling us that there is a lot for us not only as outing to derive from the wonderful benefits of clay. The same is also applicable to AndveaMuldor Slater (1997-2020) and kindrel Art.

Carretero M.I. (2002) also talked, about the health benefits attached to upon human health and development.

3.0 Analysis of Data

The objective of the study was carried out firstly to educate the members of the society most especially the third world country on the benefits of clay as a medium of self-expression.

Secondly, to tell us about the chemical and scientific components of clay as a means of creativity, thirdly, clay as art material naturally given to us by God to make full of use of which has being neglected by people without making full use of benefits.

Fourthly, what the government of our nation should do in order to improve on the use and benefits of clay a second to oil spilling machine of the nation (oil boom) but clay boom. Bricks for house decoration could be done and we could be exporters of bricks ceramic wares, flower vase fittings for electrical coatings with clay.

And lastly, the health benefits derived from clay as a medium also in medical terms clay can applied to facial treatment on the face and body as a whole. With all these, objectives we should continue arming at a good and more wealthy ways of improving on our uses of clay which ought to more done of master minded by the government of any nation that has the type of naturally gift of God like Nigeria.

4.0 Summary of Findings and Conclusion

From the observation made so far, from the objectives that ought to be derived a great awareness should be carried out and we Nigerians should look up to countries like China, Japanese, Germany, France and even America comparing ourselves with them will make us grow faster by going into exportation of our products to other countries that are not blessed with the way we are naturally bless with clay and other resources.

4.1 Summary of Findings

From the observation made from previous researchers the findings involve our self in not only on personal grounds but on governmental level too. We need more support by the Federal Government.

4.2 Conclusion

The researches carried out by other researchers shows that the write-up will really help our people to have a clearer few of what clay is all about but civilized countries see clay as a product that can yield more money into the economy as Agriculture is known as the key of our sustainability so also clay could as well be a good contributive factor because clay is a purely gift of nature and not every country owns it. In Art psychology, it has been noted that clay has being proved to improve on children's reasoning and visual perception in life up to Adulthood stage. Even in the Holy Bible clay was used by our Lord Jesus Christ to heal the blind man after putting saliva and clay out of the ground in order to heal. John 9:6 and the blind man was healed. Amen.

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