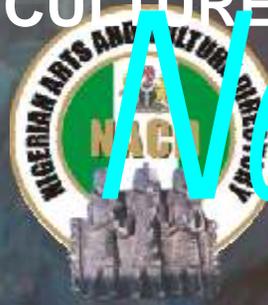


6th Edition: February 2008

NIGERIAN ARTS AND CULTURE DIRECTORY PROJECT



Newsletter

joemusa

recent works

The exhibition, the people
and the art.



**BENUE STATE HOUSE
OF ASSEMBLY HOSTS
NACD PROJECT TEAM**

THE VENUE

An annex of the National Theatre Iganmu, the Aina Onabolu Complex housing the National Gallery of Art (NGA) is a modern edifice built for the sole purpose of promoting Nigeria's art industry. Its spacious and calm environment provides a conducive atmosphere for talent to blossom.

Many upcoming and unknown artists had realised their dreams within the walls of one of the numerous studios, which is part of the complex. At any hour of the day, these studios are busy with artists painting, sculpting, drawing and perfecting their arts in different categories. These artists are both staff of the National Gallery of Art and independent artists who have not the opportunity of owning studios of their own.

Those in the last category apply for a two-year contract with the Gallery during which they do their best to meet its set standards. This will in turn qualify them for assistance from the



Aina Onabolu Complex

Gallery by way of grants and exhibitions. Empowerment of local artists is a mandate of the NGA. The dream of each artist is to make a mark, leaving an imprint in the art world for posterity. This synergy of purpose has produced many great artists in Nigeria, one of which is Joe Musa, Director-General, NGA and National Coordinator, Nigerian Arts and Culture Directory (NACD) Project.

Art studios within the complex include the sculpture, ceramic and painting studios, all equipped with modern appliances to enhance creativity. There is a beautiful gallery of culture within the complex where activities pertaining to Culture and performing arts take place; dance, drama, choral and musical entertainment are carried out within the culture gallery. It is an oblong thatch-roofed hall of wood, burnt bricks, bamboo and raffia, depicting the traditional

African architectural design, with decorated carved figurines giving it an old world charm and timelessness as of a previous generation.



THE EVENT

By 3:30pm on Saturday the 2nd of February, the premises of the Aina Onabolu Complex, venue of the 'joemusa recent works' exhibition was already swarming with guests. They ranged from fellow artists, Professors of art from different Nigerian Universities, including the D-G's almer mater, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Bankers, Connoisseurs, top government functionaries, the NACD Team led by the Project Director, Prince Chinedu Obi, colleagues and contemporaries as well as staff of NGA.

Also present were several press crews representing the media, on hand to ensure adequate coverage of the event.



THE EVENT (Continued)

The early arrivals converged within the culture gallery where they were treated to light refreshment and music prior to commencement time. The event was carried out in two major phases: the reception and the exhibition.



Joe Musa receiving guests



THE RECEPTION

This first phase of the event took place within the culture gallery where guests had already gathered. Chaired by Soni Irabor, veteran broadcaster and Chairman of the Central Working Committee, Nigerian Arts and Culture Directory (NACD) Project,

The exhibition was graced by some of Nigeria's most renowned artists and art collectors of all time. Being aware of this fact, the Chairman began by acknowledging the presence of certain eminent citizens whom he invited to join him in declaring the exhibition open. The great and notable painter, Bruce Onobrakpeya; the representative of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory- Chief Segun Awolowo; the CEO, Terra Culture, Bolanle Austen-Peters and Chief



Chief Segun Awolowo (right) and the French Ambassador to Nigeria, Jean-Michel Dunond

Rasheed Gbadamosi, famous art collector, were among those who piloted the event alongside the Chairman. They each gave a word of encouragement

to the artist Joe Musa after which they led the way to the main gallery where the exhibition was to take place.



The Guided tour led by Joe Musa

THE EXHIBITION

Within the main gallery, several paintings, twenty-five in all, adorned the walls. They fall into two distinct series; the women and the mask series.

The artist / D-G, Joe Musa, conducted a guided tour beginning with the women series. Pictures in this series were generally titled "Women In My Life".

representing all the women with whom the artist has been associated with from birth- his grand mother, wife, sisters, friends and associates. They depicted women in different poses, doing different things. Some of the labels read as follows: 'Chinyere', the artist's wife, 'From, The Market' (oil on canvas), 'the pot Seller' (acrylic on canvas), 'Hair Plating' (acrylic on canvas), Obirin'(oil on



canvas), 'The Nap' (oil on canvas) and 'She De Do Nyanga' (acrylic on canvas). Next came the Mask series generally titled 'The Deceitful Façade of Man'. The artist explained that he was inspired to do the series by his recent dealings with civil servants when he came to the realization that people are not always what they seem. In this series are the labels Mask I to V, all oil on canvas.

There was also an untitled portrait of the artist (oil on canvas), and that of ex-president Obasanjo. Critics were unanimous that the art works on display were of very high standard and that the artist was well on the way to becoming an icon in the world of art.

Some of the most prominent of these critics were Prof. Ben Ochigbo of the art department, University of Uyo, Engr. Yemisi Shyllon, a collector, Dr. Ahmed Yerima, the D.G, National Theatre / Troupe, Prof. Tunde Babawale, the Director, Center for Black Art and African Civilisation (CBAAC), President of the Society of Nigerian Artists, Kolade Oshinowo and Jean-Michel Dunond, the French Ambassador to Nigeria.



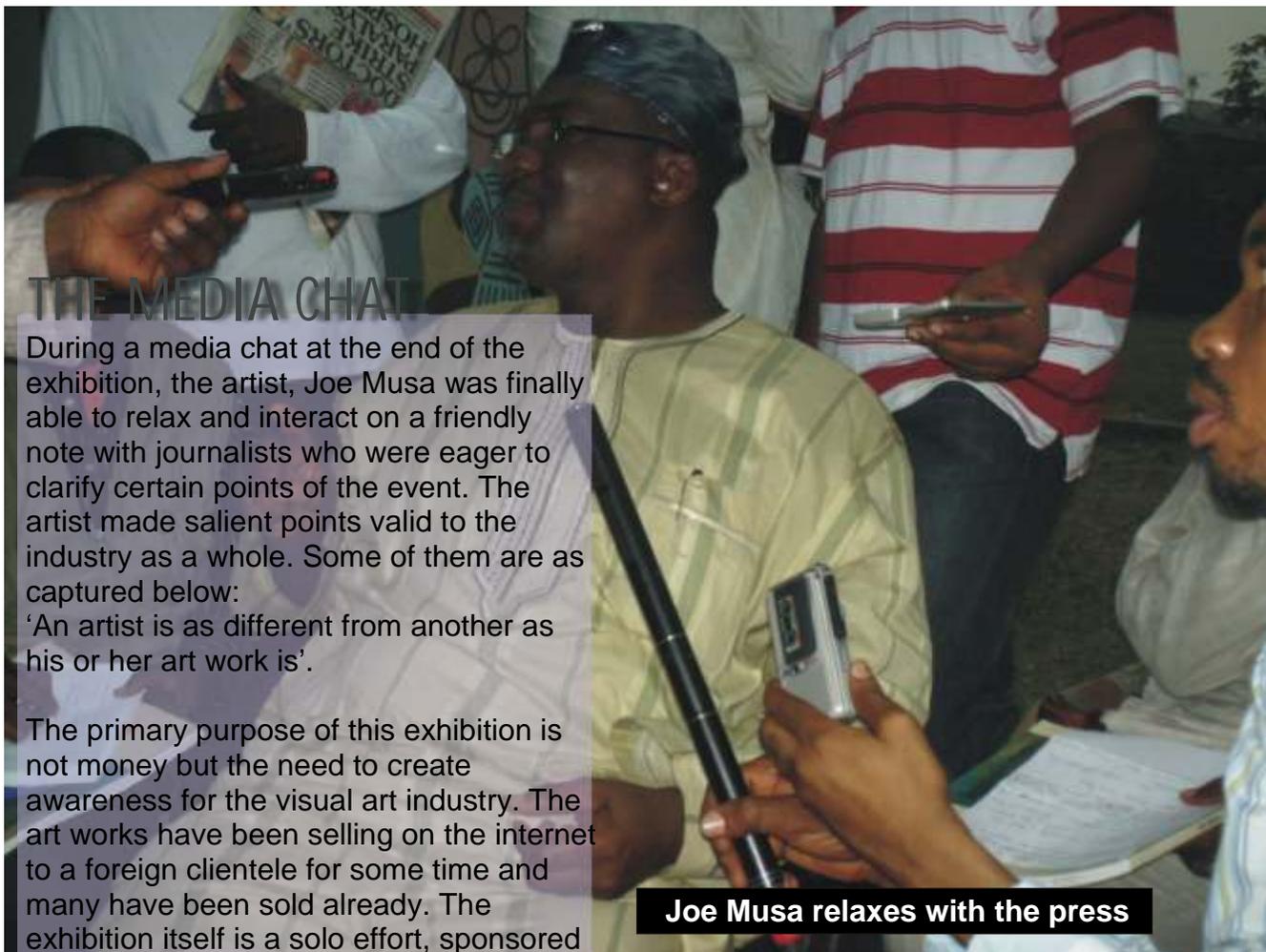
Soni Iabor with some dignitaries at the event



NATIONAL INSURANCE COMMISSION



NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE



THE MEDIA CHAT

During a media chat at the end of the exhibition, the artist, Joe Musa was finally able to relax and interact on a friendly note with journalists who were eager to clarify certain points of the event. The artist made salient points valid to the industry as a whole. Some of them are as captured below:

'An artist is as different from another as his or her art work is'.

The primary purpose of this exhibition is not money but the need to create awareness for the visual art industry. The art works have been selling on the internet to a foreign clientele for some time and many have been sold already. The exhibition itself is a solo effort, sponsored

Joe Musa relaxes with the press

by the artist with the support of some private sector collaborators. A new coffee-table hard-back brochure is to be published soon, documenting and publicizing Nigerian arts internationally. Ford Foundation, a donor agency is offering the sum of Two Hundred Thousand US dollars towards this project, being its major sponsors.

On the National Gallery itself, the D-G said that space is a limitation to the number of art works produced in its studios.

The fight is on for a great edifice to be built such as the Louvre in Italy which houses such famous works as the 'Monalisa' and receives an average of eighty thousand visitors daily.

Talks are on between the gallery and some Nigerian Banks about its funding. Continuing, the D-G said the Nigerian Art and culture sector has suffered many setbacks due to previous government's lack of adequate support. It has not been well packaged, like a jewel not yet given its true

value. That time is surely on the way. When questioned on how he combines his office as D-G with his creative work as an artist, Joe Musa answered that he had divorced himself from his gallery when he assumed his position as D-G, NGA to give priority to the new assignment, which is carrying out the mission and vision of the National Gallery of Art in Nigeria. To this end, he said the NGA offers yearly grants to artist associations for their running and sustenance.

Such associations include the Committee for National Art, Society of Nigerian Artists, Guild of Practicing Artists, etc. About the similarity of different works of art, Joe Musa explained that some art works are similar even from earliest times, but these are coincidences. "I personally paint at night when it is calm and I have nothing to distract me. Some other artists paint in the midst of noise which inspires them". He ended with the slogan – "Art is life".

BENUE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HOSTS NACD TEAM

On 24th January 2008, the Nigerian Arts and Culture Directory (NACD) Project team was hosted by the Benue State House of Assembly. The team was in the State to intimate the House on the activities of the Project which is to document the Arts, Culture and Tourism potentials of all States in Nigeria and to solicit for partnership between the State and the NACD Project. The NACD Project Team was led by the Project Director, Prince



Discussion session with Honourable members of the Benue State House of Assembly. (L-R. The P.D, NACD Project, the Speaker, Benue State house of Assembly, Director of Culture, Benue State Ministry of Information and Culture, and the NACD Liaison officer to Benue State, Angela Igyese.

Chinedu Obi, also in the delegation were the Head, Research and Documentation Isaac Omale, Senior Research Officer, Ben Oti, Monique Ilun and Angela Igyese, Project Liaison Officers in the State. While the members of the State House of Assembly was led by the Honourable Speaker of Benue State House of Assembly, Hon. Terseer Tumba, in attendance were Hon. Dennis Abutu, Chairman Committee on Information and Culture, Hon. Terkaa Mamwo, Chairman, Commerce, Industry and Tourism; Hon. Terhemen Tarzoor, Chairman Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources; Hon. Abua Chairman, Appropriation Committee; Hon. Bem Dzoho, Chief of Staff to the Speaker; Mr. John Wergba, Chief Press Secretary; Mr. Lyasum Aleuram Senior Special Assistance to the Speaker; Ms. Janet Jack

Secretary, House Committee on Tourism; Mr, Agera Solomon Uban, Director of Culture, Benue State Ministry of Information and Culture and members of the Press led by Mr. Harris Ogbole of Radio Benue.

In his opening address, the Chief of Staff to the Honourable Speaker welcomed members of the NACD Project team to Benue and thanked them for the visit which he said was a continuation of the unique relation between the NACD Project and Benue State. He further highlighted on the object of the visit which was aimed at briefing the leadership of the House on the activities of the Project and to discuss how the State can take the opportunity offered by the NACD Project to market her rich cultural and tourism potential to the rest of the world.

The Project Director in his address thanked the Honourable members for

the opportunity offered to the NACD Project team to enlighten them on the imperative of the much anticipated partnership between Benue State and the NACD Project. He congratulated the honourable members for the success recorded so far by Benue State in area of fulfilling the aspiration of the people through the various people oriented projects that are ongoing in the State. On the imperative of the visit, the Director recalled the long existing relationship between the State and the NACD Project which dates back to 2003 when the State became the first to host the Central Working Committee Meeting of the NACD, Project but regretted that over the years the State has not taken its proper place in spite of her rich diverse culture and tourism potentials.



He stated that the NACD Project an initiative of the Presidency in 2000 was aimed at diversification of the economy from its hitherto mono economy. And to do this he said, requires a medium of exposing these culture and tourism potentials of the country to attract global attention. To achieve this, it became imperative to evolve a multi-dimensional strategy, using public and private sector collaborative approach. The thinking of the government is that using this approach will lead to opening up the sector to attract the much desired investment and help open the Tourism and Culture sector of the country to the world. It was the idea of creating a tourism and Culture Directory compendium that led to the

establishment of the Nigerian Arts and Culture Directory (NACD) Project.

The Directory being the first of its kind is anticipated to be a repository of all Nigerian works of arts, artists; writers; musicians; art centres; tourist sites; museums and monuments; traditional institutions, festivals, films; indigenous games; fashion; languages; cuisines and culinary institutions; practitioners and stakeholders of arts, culture and tourism in Nigeria, which is to be documented in three, formats the Internet, Print and CD version. The Government realizing the importance of using Culture not only as a major tool of re-orientation, but also as a driving force to its much sought economic diversification through culture an tourism development, which over the years continues to rank as the highest revenue earner in the world. Considering the vast tourism and cultural potentials of the country it was expected that the States will use the opportunity presented by the NACD Project to document and showcase their tourism and cultural potentials to the global community to attract the much desired investment in the sector.



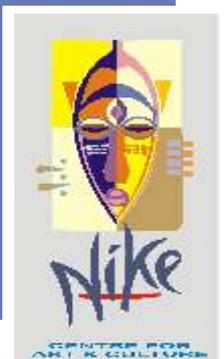
The session continues

In response, the Honourable Speaker thanked the NACD team for the visit and commended the NACD for the work it is doing for the arts, culture and tourism sector which in recent times has started attracting the desired attention it requires as an instrument of economic development unlike in the past years when attention was focused on oil to the detriment of this vital sector of the economy. He expressed the desire of the house to give her support for a mutual partnership between Benue State and the NACD in promoting and projecting the rich cultural potentials of the state to the world.

The Chairman Committee on Commerce, Industry and Tourism in his vote of thanks commended the NACD team for the visit and sought their assistance towards the promotion of the culture and tourism potentials of the State and promised to do all within the power of the house to see that Benue State is not left behind in the Directory Project.

VISIT TO THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION AND CULTURE

While in the State the, NACD Project Team paid a courtesy visit to Benue State Commissioner for Information and Culture, Chief (Mrs.) Ngol Unongo to intimate her on the NACD Project visit to the State. The Project Director used the occasion to brief the commissioner on the activities of the NACD and the need for the State to take advantage of the Project to market its culture and Tourism potentials to the world. He stated that it was as a result of the State's





NACD Project Director, Prince Chinedu Obi and the Benue State Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mrs. Ngol Unongo.

relationship with NACD Project that explained the Project's coverage of the last years NAFEST hosted by the State, and harped on the need to sustain this, through partnership with NACD Project.

The essence of this partnership according to the Director is in line with the need to diversify the nation's economy as envisioned in the vision 2020 of the federal government using culture and tourism sector as the arrow-head. And considering the rich diverse tourism potentials of the State it becomes important for her to take advantage of the NACD.

In her, response the honourable commissioner expressed her gratitude to the visit by the NACD team and asked the team not to relent in its effort at promoting and projecting the rich tourism

potentials of the country. And promised that Benue State desires the partnership to arrest the dangerous trend in which most of her cultural practices are on the verge of going extinct. In addition to this is the fact that cultural-tourism has become a major global income earner, and Benue State must not be left behind.

She appealed to the NACD Project to take the campaign further by highlighting the huge benefits that will accrue from the sector to communities and local governments who are still ignorant so that they can wake up from their slumber. She pledged her ministry's cooperation in this partnership drive to enable the State market her rich culture and tourism potentials to the global community.

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