

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING DESIGN ART AND TECHNOLOGY
MARGARET TROWEL SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL AND FINE ARTS**

**APPLICATION OF ANKOLE TRADITIONS, MOTIFS AND ARTEFACTS IN
TEXTILE ART IN UGANDA.**

Compiled by

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**A MAJOR WORK PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF
ENGINEERING, DESIGN, ART & TECHNOLOGY IN PARTIAL
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MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Kukundakwe Joan, do declare that this dissertation is my original work except where otherwise acknowledged. It has not been presented for publication anywhere, or for any other awards in any University, college or institution.

Signed:.....

Date: ..12/06/23.....

Kukundakwe Joan

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for approval for an examination with approval from the supervisor.

Signed: 

Date: ...12/06/2023.....

Name of Supervisor: DR. KABITO RICHARD.....

ABSTRACT

This major work project is composed of chapters that is Introduction, Methodology, Results, Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

The research topic for this project was, 'The application of Ankole traditional artifacts and motifs in textile art in Uganda'.

The project aimed at studying Ankole traditions, motifs and artefacts as an inspiration for design, exploring the materials, tools and to produce a textile product , inspired by the above traditional artefacts and motifs.

Data was collected for Mbarara district in western Uganda and these districts were purposively selected for the research. The tools used for collecting data were interviews, internet and library search. The data collected was interpreted into meaningful ideas suitable for production in weaving. Studio work was divided into three sessions namely; preparation, experimentation and execution.

The artefacts according to this study were divided into five categories namely basketry, pottery, wooden items, textiles, and architecture.

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SECTION I: PROJECT BRIEF

1.0 Overview

The study was intended to explore possibility to use motifs from Ankole cultural icons to decorate textiles. It was manual-led by unfamiliar terms, that the people held sacred to them which called for further explanation. This section begins by identifying and providing a detailed description of a selection of keywords below.

1.1 Background.

I had to determine what my “culture” is. My origin does not have as much data and information in my daily understanding of my surroundings. My culture therefore brings me into spaces. I later on continued to create symbols to express what I wanted to discuss on about my culture.

The people of Ankole are called Banyankore, and are identified by two main groups, the Bairu (cultivators), their main economic occupation is farming. The second group is the Bahima, pastoralists.

The Bairu, although the Bahima made fumigators (ebicunga) to fumigate milk pots and guards (ebishabo n'ebirere).

Ankole is composed of ten districts (Mbarara, Buhweju, Bushenyi, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kiriatura, Mitooma, Ntungamo, and Sheema), whose inhabitants are called the Banyankole, speaking a Bantu language – Runyankole. Traditionally, the Banyankole were very skilled craftsmen creating lots of artefacts such as huts, baskets, mats, gourds and pots which were in most cases designed with motifs; a motif refers to a decorative design or pattern which can be seen as an image, sound, action or other figures that have symbolic significance and contributes toward the development of theme.

Traditionally the Banyankore were skilled craftsmen who made items mainly for domestic use and the surplus for sale. These items included pots, mats, baskets, gourds, and musical instruments. These items were also decorated with colourful and symbolic patterns, which added an aesthetic value to the products. The techniques of production used were mainly the coiling technique for both pottery and basketry, twining, plaiting and weaving for mats and baskets, knitting and crocheting in textile production, and incising of patterns in gourds.

The results of this study will sensitize crafts people on how to produce a wide range of products through design inspiration.

The type of artwork produced by the Banyankore was purely utilities and were to aid in economic activities. Although the two communities existed with one another, this study looks at their artefacts separately because of their unique qualities. Studying the artefacts has enabled the researcher to generate a variety of designs, for product

development that will in the long run contribute towards the preservation of the Banyankore culture through documentation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The belief that as a result of lack of creativity and innovativeness of the weavers, which has resulted into flooding of similar products in the market. In this study, the researcher views the Ankole traditional artefacts and motifs as a potential source of inspiration for design and shows that these motifs and artefacts can successfully be used for textiles product development. Designs were generated and used to enhance the selected woven items for the creative project. The results of this creative project will hopefully in the long run inspire the above craftspeople into new product development in their small scale weaving industries. The outcome will be probably be for event decorations and will aid in the creative thinking too. The problem will be resolved by use of the outcome at events as a way of creating awareness. But majorly also be used as a decoration for these events.

1.3 Objectives of the Study.

- To study the existing traditional artefacts and motifs.
- To explore possibilities of using Ankole traditional motifs and artefacts to derive designs suitable for producing rugs or wall hangings.
- To produce rugs, wall hangings and soft furnishing items inspired by Ankole traditional motifs and artefacts.

To identify icons that could be used as inspiration for textile decoration.

1.4 Significance

- The findings will be a useful reference to hand weavers, textiles students, artists and craftspeople.
- Documentation of the traditional artefacts will contribute to the preservation of the Ankole cultural heritage.

1.5 Research questions

1. Which Ankole cultural icons can be used as inspiration for textile decoration?
2. How can motifs for textile decoration be derived from the traditional artefacts?

1.5 Scope of the Study.

- Mbarara district was selected for the study because the two sub-cultures are concentrated in the district.

- Designs from traditional artefacts and motifs for product development. The research was limited to Ankole region because of the limited time for the research and only hand woven products were produced for the creative project. These include rugs, wall hangings. This is because these products do not require expensive equipment or materials to be produced.
- Rug weaving is generally a slow process, especially on a frame loom. Due to this limitation, the researcher produced prototype designs, which can be reproduced in case of any need.

1.6 Definition of Terms

- Bahima The former royals of the Ankole Kingdom
- Bairu These were formally subjects of the Bahima.
- Carpet A large woven floor covering or piece of upholstery meant to cover a larger area of the floor.
- Innovation The process of making improvements by introducing something new.
- Pile A rug weaving technique which is created by building up rows of knots, tied on to the foundation of warps and wefts.
- Product Development The improvement of an existing product or developing new kinds of products.
- Rug A small carpet such as a door rug.
- Prototype An original full-scale and usually working model of a new product or new version of an existing product from which others are developed.
- Tapestry A plain weaving with two interlacing yarns of unequal in character and strength, the warps are coarse and widely spaced while the wefts are heavy, finer and colored.

SECTION II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

2.0 Ankole and its Culture

The society comprises two cultures, the Bairu and the Bahima.

The type of artwork produced by the Banyankore was to aid in their economic activities. It was from these activities that implements such as hoes, spears, arrows and milk pots were obtained. Studying the artefacts of the two sub-cultures has enabled the researcher to generate a variety of designs.

2.1 Studies on Culture

There's studies that believe that a source like Crafts can provide one with motifs and planes which can be composed as individual multicolour facets to create a painting. The field research revealed that the Banyankole have several motifs generally referred to as the white and black patterns. Many of these patterns were used to decorate the artefacts such as baskets, gourds, mats, pots and also commonly used to decorate their huts.

Studying individual cultures realizes that artefacts of a particular culture justifies why the researcher decided to study the material culture of the Ankole because it is one through which the culture can be preserved.

2.2 Inspiration

Design is highly influenced by source of inspiration. Realizing new shapes, forms, structure, and figure, among others needs a high degree of observation, imagination, analysis and recollecting power. What we see, feel, hear greatly influences our creativity and expression.s

Kaguru successfully studied traditional jewellery and general ornaments to stimulate the development of design for jewellery production in his creative project.> This study, generated designs for weaving while considering the limitations of the weaving techniques and materials in which the designs would be woven.

2.3 Design

This creative project allowed the researcher to explore materials and techniques of production to create visually impressive products. This project is to satisfy the requirements of the academic program pursued, and will therefore end at the prototype level of the products suggested.

2.4 Cultural icons

These used to develop motifs for textile decoration Textile decoration since its inception to the present day around the world has largely been inspired by or oriented towards communicating cultural identity which compounds values, tradition, norms, and practices among others and this more evidenced in African and Asian textiles.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research is based on Ankole artifacts. Interviews catered for the underlying features of those artifacts. The researcher brings out a clear distinction between various crafts produced by these people.

3.2 Site of the Study

The research was carried out as a case study in Mbarara. The district was chosen because it has the Bairu and Bahima sub-cultures whose artifacts, despite of belonging to the same cultural group. It is important to note at this point that the type of crafts and artifacts traditionally produced were mainly utilitarian and greatly depended on the society's way of life. The process used for selecting items in each category depended upon the desired characteristic such as uniqueness of the pattern, shape, materials used, color, texture and size.

3.3 Research

A research was carried out to obtain information relating to rug weaving techniques, materials and tools and on Ankole material culture.

The libraries visited were the Fine Art Department. Additional data was collected from Journals, Magazines, Newspapers. The Internet was also used, which enabled finding information on the history of design and techniques used in rug weaving globally.

3.4 Practical Work

The purpose of this research was to study the traditional artifacts to generate designs that can be used in the project. The project practical work was sub-divided into three phases, which were the preparation, experimentation and execution phases.

3.5 Preparation

This is a direct visual presentation of the data collected in the form of sketches and photographs. The aim is to determine what features of the artefact would inspire final designs. The features were decorations, natural textures, colors, shapes, forms; and sizes among others.

- Drawings/ sketches from the attained artefacts were developed.
- Designs.
- Yarn calculations
- Tools and materials

- Experimentation with materials, tools and techniques to interpret their effects on the final product.
- Testing of the designs.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of traditional artefacts

The results collected about the traditional artefacts in this chapter. The data collected was analysed according to the categories made by the researcher.

Basketry

Basketry was a dominant craft in Ankole. Many baskets were produced to serve different purposes, the common being papyrus reed. The techniques used in basketry were weaving and coiling. The various baskets were produced was for harvesting, storing and serving food.

Pottery

Pots were in many shapes and for different purposes in Ankole. The pots made were hand made and, produced and fired traditionally fired to a brown, grey and black range of colors. The purpose from cooking, and serving food, brewing and fetching and storing.

Furnishings

The items include gourds, milk pots, stools. Each of the above items comprised unique characters that were put together in the form of a design for reproduction in weaving. Bahima items served as drinking vessels, containers, drawing water, churning milk and storing milk for children, stools were seats for elders while the staff was used as a support for chiefs and elders.

Textiles

Woven items were found among the Bahima and were produced in sisal. These items were used for cleaning cows and tying cow's legs during milking. These products can be a definite source of inspiration for design.

Buildings

These were from both the Bahima and Bairu societies. The Hima Hut and the granary were graphically redesigned to produce wall hangings. Bahima huts were used as Shelter. The granary was used for storing grains such as millet, sorghum, groundnuts and maize.



Mugabe Palace

The Ankole king's palace located on Kamukuzi hill in Mbarara city.



The architecture of the old structure, constructed in the 1930s is maintained plus — the symbols of his power and majesty. Gosiyonga II, the last king of Ankole, hosted the rival kings of Buganda and Toro kingdoms

The rebuilding of the Ankole kingdom palace is a great step at restoration of the monarchy.

5. SUMMARY

This research was aimed at identifying and use of traditional artefacts. The objective was to study the existing traditional artefacts and to come up with designs suitable for rugs and wall hangings. The research led to the production of a collection of creative rugs and wall hangings, inspired by traditional motifs and artefacts, exploration of textile materials and weaving techniques.

In relation to the objectives, traditional artefacts and generated designs, which were woven in tapestry and pile techniques for the project. In most of the designs and finished work, the shapes, simplicity were maintained but in some instances the roundness of the forms of the artefacts was compromised due to the limitations of the weaving techniques used. The colours used were independent of the original colours of the artefacts and were determined by the end product rather than the source of inspiration. The researcher, following the purpose of this study and process undergone, made the conclusion below.

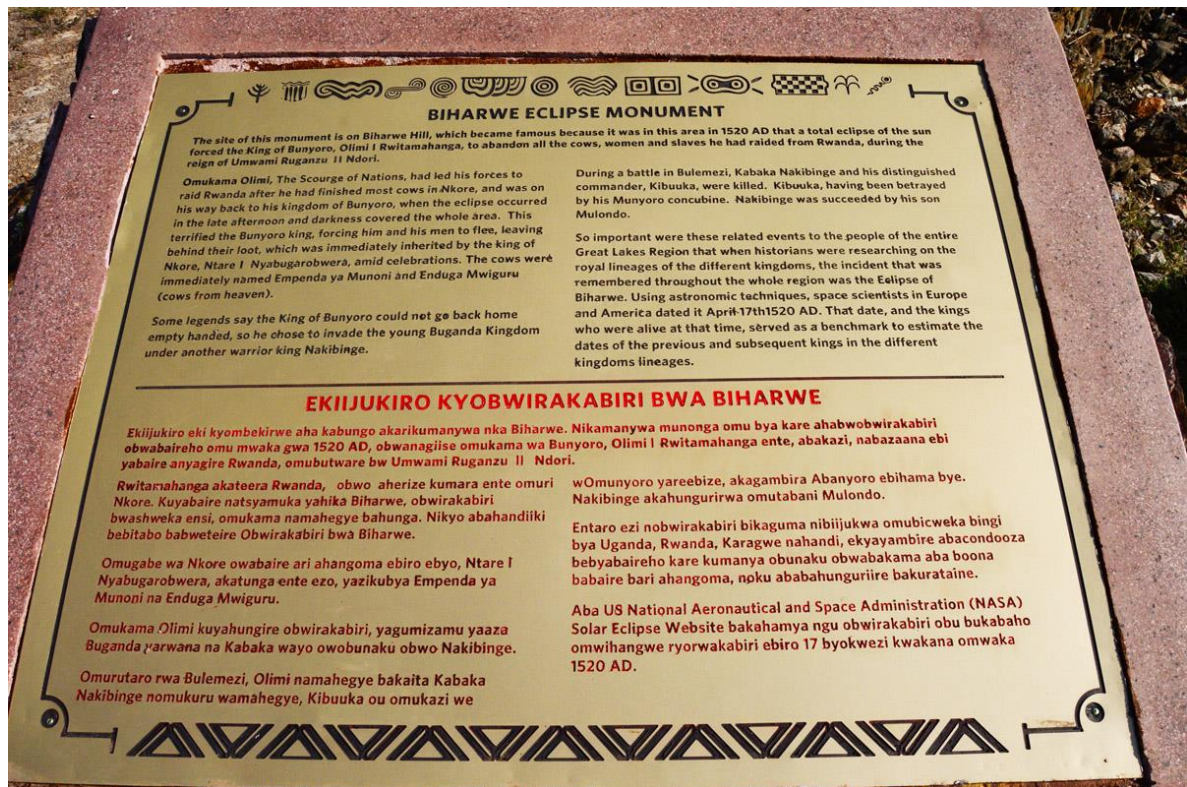
3.1 Conclusion

This research demonstrates that material culture can successfully be used to generate designs for public awareness and income generation as well as aesthetics. Material culture remains a rich source of inspiration for design generation, the various shapes and forms of artefacts, pattern, textures, and colours are a great source of inspiration to a contemporary weaver.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is believed to have aided in the promotion of the preservation of cultural heritage of the Ankole society. It is however recommended that more research should be done on how to preserve indigenous materials. The researcher also recommends that regional museums and more art collection centres be established to preserve traditional artworks of the origin. Literature in the form of books, journals and magazines should be written about different material culture of different societies. The written material would be useful to future researchers and craftspeople in gaining knowledge.

THE ECLIPSE MONUMENT



The eclipse monument at the Igongo cultural centre contains all the ankole motifs that represent and identify with the culture. The story of this monument goes way back to the battle or fight between the kings. It is believed to have happened between the king of Bunyoro, the king of Buganda and that of Nkore. The war was therefore termed as the battle of Biharwe having been ended on the Biharwe hill.

APPENDICES

EKISINGOKY'ENSHONI

This represents a veil of strands of beads which was a veil of shame meant to cover the woman's face.

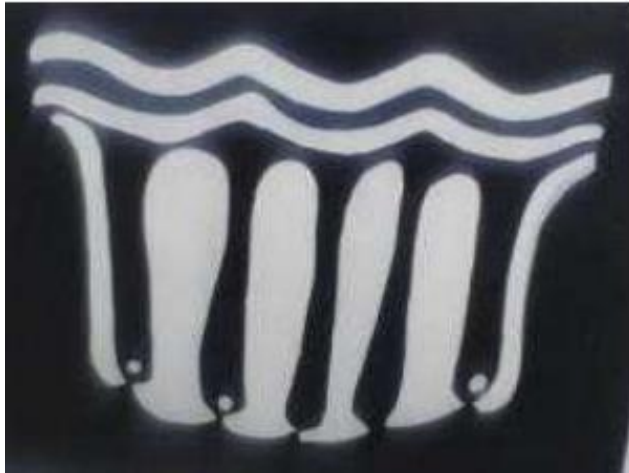


Plate no.1

Among the Banyankole of the ancient times, all women and girls were supposed to walk with veiled faces as a sign of respect. But in the current era, beads (obutiti) are greatly being used to replace this.

EMBAZIZ'ENJU

This represents the rings of a roof of a hut. They built their huts using mud, wood and grass; Strong poles held the walls together and reinforced the mud. The huts had conical roofs that revealed circular forms.



Plate no.2

ENSHUNJUZ'AKAKANGA

This represents the hair styles of Hima women. The Hima women would plait their hair in a style.



Plate no.3

ENTEKOY'ABATABAZI

This represents a crowd of warriors. The patterns of this motif were placed on the upper arm of a man to represent the formation of men on a military expedition finding new homes.



Plate no.4

ENGABO

The engabo motif represents the shield which the Banyankole men would use in wars to protect themselves from their enemies.

SECTION III

Project Schedule

I intend to start with the idea generation of the items that will be used based on the wall hanging and rug designs that I'm to use. The materials and tools that I will use are the punch needle, threads(yarn), scissors, canvas, wooden frame.

These will aid in the generation of the final work, the final major work will include symbols, motifs based on the culture and this will be used as a communicative idea about the culture as well as awareness.

Week 1-2	Idea generation	Proposal
Week 3-4	Material collection and sample generation	Canvas, yarn, needle, scissors
Week 5-6	Different material samples made and tested before final work generation	Canvas, yarn
Week 7-8	Project start	Canvas, yarn
Week 9-10	Continuation of the major work project	Canvas, yarn
Week 11-15	Final project continuation and finishings	Canvas

The research development process

The internet was mainly used as a source and basis of idea generation for the final project work. The images attained will therefore be manipulated into one in order to come up with an aesthetic design.

Challenges

Time. Basing on the remaining time and compilation of the materials, and idea generation of the final work.

Materials to be used. Slight delay in acquisition of the necessary materials due to probably funding and last minute decision making.

Working area. Insufficient space to work on the desired size of work and probably insecurity about the safety of the work in the workspace.

ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
PENS			2000
PENCILS			2000
PRINTING	20000		20000
SKETCHBOOK	25000	1	25000
CANVAS	30000	2	40000
YARN	5000	20	100000
NEEDLE			450000
CARPET	20000	1	20000
GLUE	5000	1	5000
CARPET GLUE	30000	1	30000
			694, 000

ABOUT THE DESIGN



The project is about the use and application of the motifs and artefacts to design and to also identify the culture as heritage.

The symbols used tell of the ankole cattle represented by the long cow horns on each side, their staple food which is millet, and the kiibo (basket) represented in the centre and the black “z” lines represent the motif for basket weaving and also their battle and protection weapon which is the spear. The drums have also been a symbol through their cultural dances, ekitagururo and activities which has been symbolized behind the basket.