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GATHONI (NONI) GECAGA

M.A. THESIS

1975

T H E R O L E O F A R T

I N T H E B U I L T E N V I R O N M E N T

A THESIS IN APPRECIATION OF THE
PERCEPTION OF ART AS CONCERNS
BUILT FORMS IN EAST AND WEST
AFRICA.

GATHONI (NONI) GECAGA.

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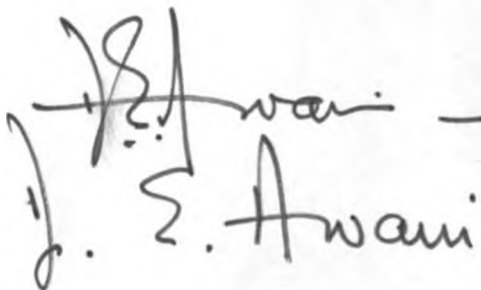
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DECLARATION


This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.


GATHONI (NONI) GECAGA.

 J. S. Awani - recommended.

This Thesis is submitted for the degree in Master of Arts, in the University of Nairobi. 1975.

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors.

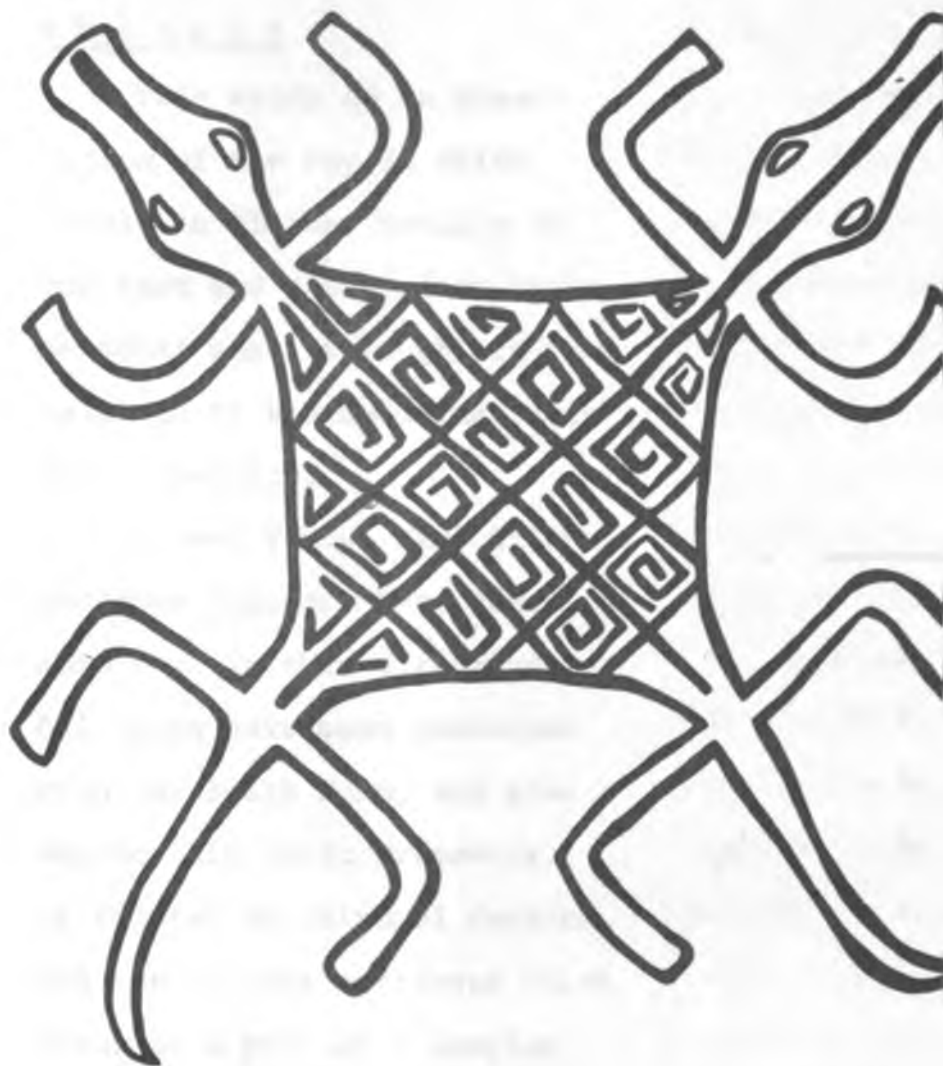
  
PROFESSOR H. WOOD. MR. B.H. CREAGER. MR. K.B. ANDERSEN.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I would like to mention the following people, who in one form or another were helpful to me during the course of my research for this thesis and to whom, I am grateful.

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Symbol for a need for unity,
particularly where there is one destiny.

A B S T R A C T

Populations in Africa, are migrating in diverse ways. People move from an area which they have dwelled in since the days of their ancestors; they take their customs and habits with them, but the move causes a change in their previous pattern of behaviour, as they adopt other methods of doing things in the new environment in which they now live.

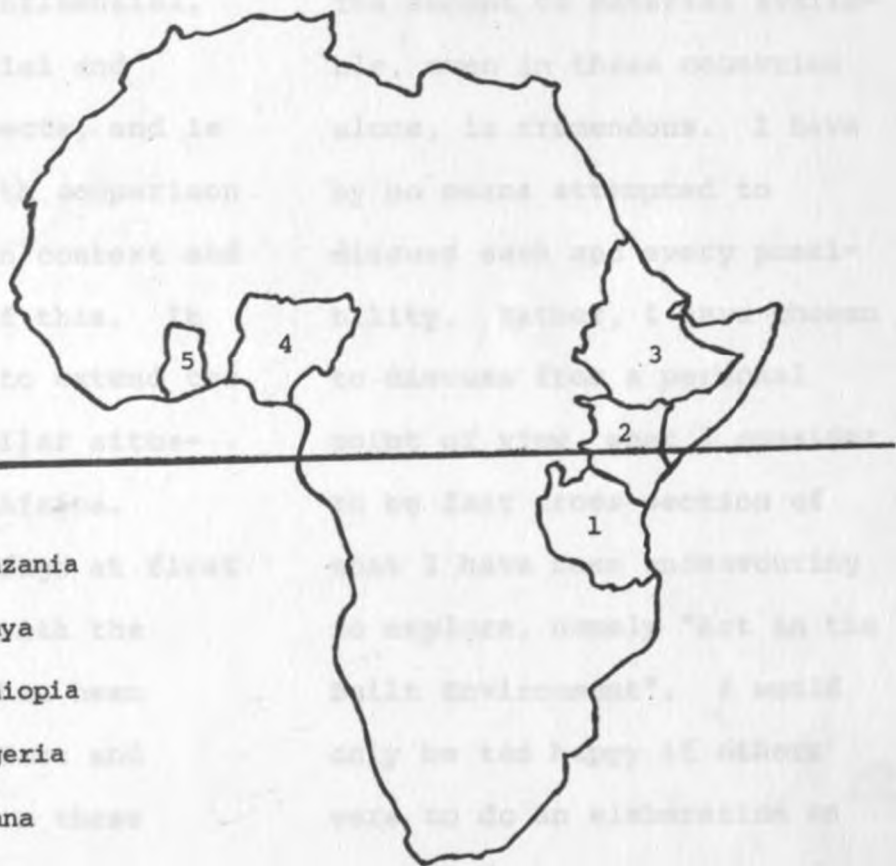
P R E F A C E

This study is an observation of the way in which people in Africa, notably in the East and West, place their personal mark, through art in relation to the buildings that they construct.

Hassan Fathy, Paul Oliver, and Amos Rapoport have done some work in this direction. All three have been concerned with the built form, and also beyond this basic framework, as relates to cultural factors and the various artifacts which occur as a part of a peoples heritage.

This study does not go

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- 5.



- Tanzania
- Kenya
- Ethiopia
- Nigeria
- Ghana

into historical aspects that are in some way influential. It deals with social and psychological aspects, and is only concerned with comparison within the African context and an appreciation of this. It makes no attempt to extend the comparison to similar situations outside of Africa.

My study, though at first intended to deal with the entire continent has been narrowed down to East and West Africa, and in these regions, the specific countries of, in the East, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia, and in the West, Ghana and

Nigeria, have been selected. The amount of material available, even in these countries alone, is tremendous. I have by no means attempted to discuss each and every possibility. Rather, I have chosen to discuss from a personal point of view, what I consider to be fair cross-section of what I have been endeavouring to explore, namely "Art in the Built Environment". I would only be too happy if others were to do an elaboration on this study, at some point in the future, as there is much still to be observed, evaluated and documented.

SECTION ONE

Chapter One

The following information is provided for your information. This information is intended to provide you with a general overview of the program. It is not intended to be a substitute for the actual program materials. The information is provided for your information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for the actual program materials. The information is provided for your information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for the actual program materials.

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C O N T E X T

SUBJECT AREA

The examples drawn from the particular countries of East and West Africa, have been placed into three sectors, namely, the Traditional, the Informal, and the Modern; classified as such according to the time of their placement in the now rapidly transitional, African culture.

METHOD OF APPROACH

The exaplesⁿ in the three sectors are discussed in the form of case-studies in a similar manner; location, description of art

in relation to the building; the participants, and the degree of success in the objectives. Some graphics and photographs complement each case-study. Included in the study is an appendix, consisting of a list of all the built forms observed on field trips; as well as a record of a photographic exhibition held as a part of this thesis on July 30th 1975.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

One of the world's major concerns of the present time is about living. To have sufficient food, clothing and shelter, is of primary importance. If this is achieved, then elaboration and enjoyment of a life style can begin to flourish.

Basically shelter has been evolved as a means of protection against a constantly changing climate, whilst a sophistication in the type of shelter constructed has arisen due to an awareness of available resources in the surrounding environment.

Once the essential built form of shelter is constructed, improvements of comfort and aesthetic appeal are then considered. Such aesthetic appeal assumes an importance because it lends a point of individualism to the building. It makes the building unique, and gives it a personal mark, which manifests itself in the form of art.

Man is thus able to relate to the environment. He has made a contribution by creating the basic inanimate structure of the built form, but feels a necessity, in his quest to relate to the environment, to

inject a part of life, his own life, into his particular contribution.

To make relevant the main areas of examination as evolve within the Thesis, it is necessary to outline specific aspects which occur in the case studies which follow. These are Art, Environment, Relationship, Zones, The Pace of Progression, Space, Participants, Time and Influence.

A R T

Art is a projection of the conscious and unconscious state. It reveals the inner self, and is a mode of expression open to all ages.

The variation in expression is influenced by the exposure one has had and the manner of expression in itself reveals the nature of response to such exposure.

The particular mode of art which this study is concerned with, is that of modelling, painting and sculpture, in relation to the built environment.

E N V I R O N M E N T

The physical environment is the place to which one has been exposed. It is the area in which one has learned to live and in the process of learning to live, has made use of the available resources.

Man's capacity to structure his environment according to his needs, his ability to work out a rapport with his world, determines the quality of his life.

R E L A T I O N S H I P

The Role of Art in the Built Environment presents man with a challenge to express himself, and provides him with an opportunity to share his total self through his creativity.

Z O N E S

The areas of study in this thesis cover three simultaneous aspects of present day Africa.

a) AFRICA TRADITIONAL which can loosely be termed Africa in the past. This is an already established area, in that the building method, tool and technique, have surpassed the test of time, and are accepted wholly.

b) AFRICA INFORMAL, a stage of transition, that has become so as a result of the awareness of an industrial process of specialization. This is the vivid and vibrant,

present day Africa in which the mass of people have a possibility of participating.

c) AFRICA MODERN, very much the future stage, to which everyone is casting his eye. This sector is heavily influenced by the Western nations. Ideas on building technology have been injected into Africa by these Western nations, and have been adapted, without much question.

T H E P A C E O F P R O G R E S S I O N

The above three sectors are to be viewed in a progression of time. The Traditional is the least concerned about the pace of time. Functions here have been so well learned, that they have become second nature, and the assumption of various functions is more automatic, in an unconscious state. People know what is to be done.

The Informal presents an uneasy situation. Here, one is moving away from the established identity of the

Traditional, and is aspiring towards the Modern. It is a time of anxiety and uncertainty, an awareness of something different has been created, but people are not afraid, they find a way of expression, and create a new style, with whatever conglomeration of material.

In the Modern Sector time is very much in a conscious form. It presents the height of awareness and dictates every move. Every building is given individual attention, it is planned and has been thought out, prior to the actual construction.

S P A C E

These three areas of study the Traditional, the Informal, the Modern are to be viewed against areas intended for different types of space.

- a) RESIDENTIAL: dwelling houses, in which people live.
- b) COMMERCIAL: buildings in which some form of economic trade takes place.
- c) INSTITUTIONAL: buildings that present an atmosphere for teaching and learning exchange.

The point of discussion will be, how much space has been allocated to the art form in the building, and in what part of the building this space is located.

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- M : MODERN
- I : INFORMAL
- T : TRADITIONAL

- I : INSTITUTIONAL
- C : COMMERCIAL
- R : RESIDENTIAL

PARTICIPANTS

Common to the three sectors, the Traditional, the Informal and the Modern, in regard to the built environment, are three characters, in a decisive interplay. They are the client, the architect, and the artist. The user of the building, if he happens to be a separate person, has little to say, as his role is merely that of making use of an already completed building.

An artisan can sometimes be a substitute for an architect and an artist, and one man performs the work of two.

As one moves from the Traditional, through the Informal, to the Modern, the more specialized and distinct are the characters.

PARTICIPANTS

TRADITIONAL

In the Traditional, the man intending to build, knows the material available for building. For example, he will build in the manner that houses have always been built, and he will decorate his house with the method that is used for decorating. The decoration on the house is according to his choice. He will then live in the house that he has built. He is thus a client, who is his own architect and artist and who builds for his own use.

Everyone in a traditional society is able to build for

his own requirements, but generally the social pattern is such that a task within the community is shared and so the construction of a building will be done by many, co-operatively.

PARTICIPANTS

INFORMAL

In the Informal Sector a client seeking to construct a building, will engage an artisan. A man who is schooled in the traditional methods, but who has also had exposure to some modern skills and techniques.

The building will usually be for the client's own use.

PARTICIPANTS

MODERN

In the Modern Sector, a client wishing to build, will seek an architect whose responsibility it will be to construct a building and who might at some point seek an artist to produce an art form in relation to the building. Specialization is to the utmost in this sector.

Once completed, the building is either for the use of the client, or more usually it is for another set of users altogether.

T I M E

Time is a duration in space, and is a period influenced by the environment. It signifies change which has always been regarded as desirable as the emphasis is on renewal; it denotes a transition, an elapse from one situation to another.

The occurrences in the duration of time, act as a measure in the success of coping with environmental evolution; and the activities in an environment are dependent upon time and place. It is the very environment that we look at, to be able to tell,

what has been happening.

Time is appreciated because it gives order to events in a stream of succession, it provides a record, and it sets a pace.

The concept of time in the Traditional, Informal and Modern sectors, is one that needs clarification.

T I M E

T R A D I T I O N A L

In a Traditional society, events occur in a relaxed nature, the direct influences in the environment, are the biological rhythms. The emphasis is on crops for survival, and the concern, regarding immediate time is that it should rain at the time of the year when it is supposed to rain, so that the crop will be abundant and will be able to be harvested at the time of the year, that is meant for harvesting.

There is the social aspect of time, in which the

traditional community is affected, and the events are shared. Time here, is told in terms of an age or an era, and the reference is always in approximation, governed by the elapse of an age, which in turn is earmarked by good or bad misfortune which had a notable effect on society. Hence people speak of being born around the time of a particular famine. This could be within a period of ten to fifteen years, from the time of the famine until the time of the next major event, possibly that of a flood or a disease, that hit

the land. Birth, puberty, marriage and death are highly regarded and they signify personal as well as communal landmarks of time.

Conventional time of chronology has been infused into the Traditional Society and the adaptation of it is interesting. The people in this society respond according to their physiological rhythm, when they wake up at day break (in modern chronology, around seven o'clock in the morning) that is the first hour of the day. Throughout the day, they look up at the sun, to tell if it is morning or afternoon.

Sunset occurs between the twelfth hour of day and the first hour of night (between six and seven o'clock in the evening) and the night too, is divided into twelve hours.

T I M E

I N F O R M A L

The pace of time in the Informal Sector, is one of the latest fashion. The transition taking place here, is tremendous in it's rapidity. The economic demands of industrialization have caused an awareness of future time, a stage beyond that of the accepted, traditional time. "There is too much to look forward to, there are too many opportunities; too many things are happening for the first time." ¹

There is a use of the old and the new in the Informal environment. A bit of the

Traditional is retained, and a bit of the Modern is borrowed and adapted, hence a rectangular mud hut with a corrugated iron roof. A man in this sector wearing a watch, will have the hands of the watch set at the twelve hour pattern of day and night, mentioned earlier, and so at eleven o'clock in the morning, his watch will read five o'clock, the fifth hour in the day.

¹ Julian Beinart, "Education of Vision". P. 186.

T I M E

M O D E R N

Time in the Modern Sector is the conventional time of chronology, in which time is placed into the categories of century, decade, year, month, fortnight, week, day, hour, minute and second. The last three categories can be neatly packaged into the technological mechanism of the clock or watch. It is this mechanical device that stipulates a conventional time, that is bound by the movement of the arms on the face of the watch, or more recently the numerals of the digital clock.

People in this sector have become so overtly aware of the ticking away of every minute, as a measure of time, that they have realized they must organize and fit themselves, as economically and as productively as possible within a short span of time. They have become obsessed by time. Everybody wears a watch, and keeps glancing at it every so often to see if he is keeping to the pace he has set for himself, in the race of that day. In certain European countries for example distance from one city to another will be told in terms

of hours!

Timing in the Modern Sector, has become a real issue to man and his actions are based on the watch. Everyone is in a hurry.

I N F L U E N C E

The Traditional, the Informal and the Modern occur simultaneously, and run as it were, in parallel form. The sectors therefore influence one another, and although each has been precisely described, it will be noticed, in the case studies, that the particular factors attributed to each sector are not strictly adhered to, and can occur outside one sector in other sectors.

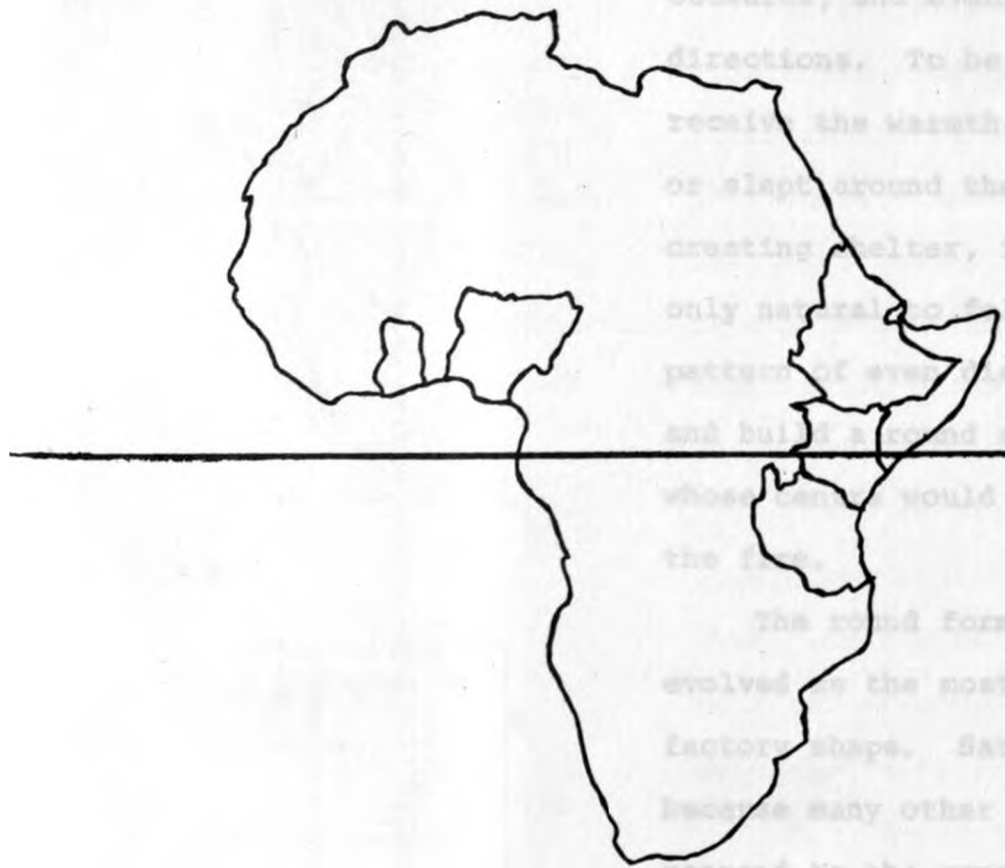
SECTION TWO

Chapter One



The continent of Africa is the second largest in the world, covering an area of approximately 30 million square kilometers. It is home to a diverse range of cultures, languages, and ethnic groups. The continent is rich in natural resources, including minerals, oil, and agricultural products. Despite its vast size and resources, Africa faces significant challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability. The continent's population is growing rapidly, and it is projected to become the world's most populous continent by the year 2050. The continent's development is a complex and ongoing process, and it requires the support and cooperation of the international community.

FIGURE 1.1 THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA




AFRICA : TRADITIONAL

T R A D I T I O N A L

In a Traditional culture a norm has been established and is one that satisfies both the practical and aesthetic need of the people and whose resulting techniques, using available material in the environment, is handed down from generation to generation.

Readily available material is the earth and all that grows upon it. The form for shelter has to conform with the environment, there has to be a relationship between it and other bodies in the cosmos.

Prior to built shelter, the fire presented a circular



pattern. It radiated heat outwards, and evenly in all directions. To be able to receive the warmth, one sat or slept around the fire. In creating shelter, it seemed only natural to follow this pattern of even distribution and build a round shelter, at whose centre would be placed the fire.

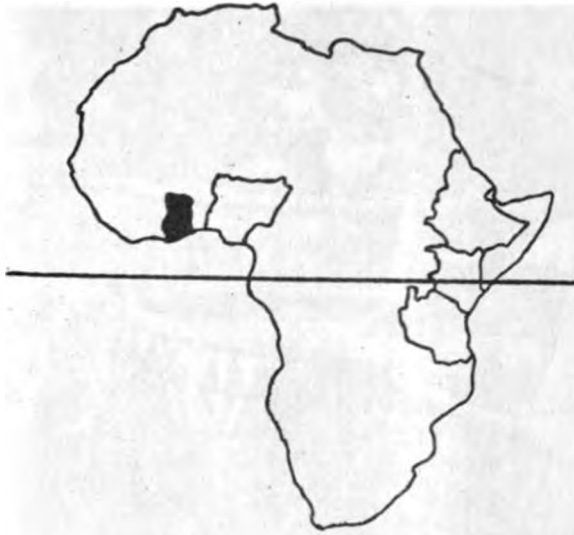
The round form has evolved as the most satisfactory shape. Satisfactory, because many other things respond to the round form. The Earth is round, as is the sun and the moon, and the path that they follow. Seasons



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occur in a cycle and they
lend life. There is a cycle of
life and in this are several
smaller cycles, for example
the rotation of crops in the
fields, birth, and death and
re-birth. The features of
the people are gentle and
round, and a woman is thought
of as being beautiful if she
is voluptuous.

The round form is
apparent and reoccurring in
the environment and so it
follows that an introduced
form should also be round and
so it is that mud houses in a
traditional society are
rounded.

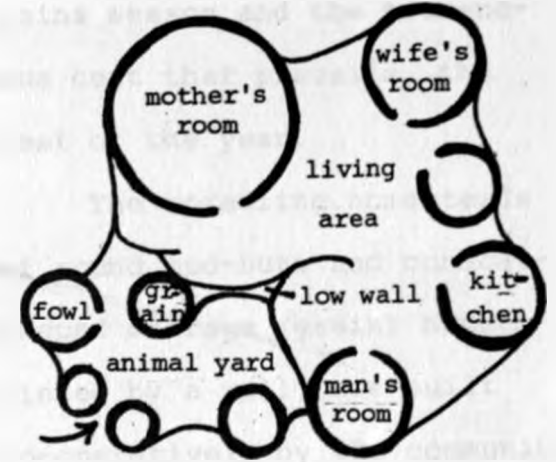


C A S E S T U D Y I

In the area between Tamale and Bolgatanga in Northern Ghana, the people live in settlements amongst the dry, semi-desert savannah, that is only lush, during and for a short while after the heavy annual rainfall.

These settlements vary in size, from a single compound that consists of a family unit to a larger compound linking several family units.

The houses are rounded mud huts with flat roofs, used for sleeping on in the warmer months or as storage space for utensils (calabashes and




Homestead in Northern Ghana. 2

firewood). The adjoining wall from hut to hut is also of mud as is the very smooth and even floor within the entire compound. The floor, apart from being beautifully smooth is hardy and able to withstand the annual heavy

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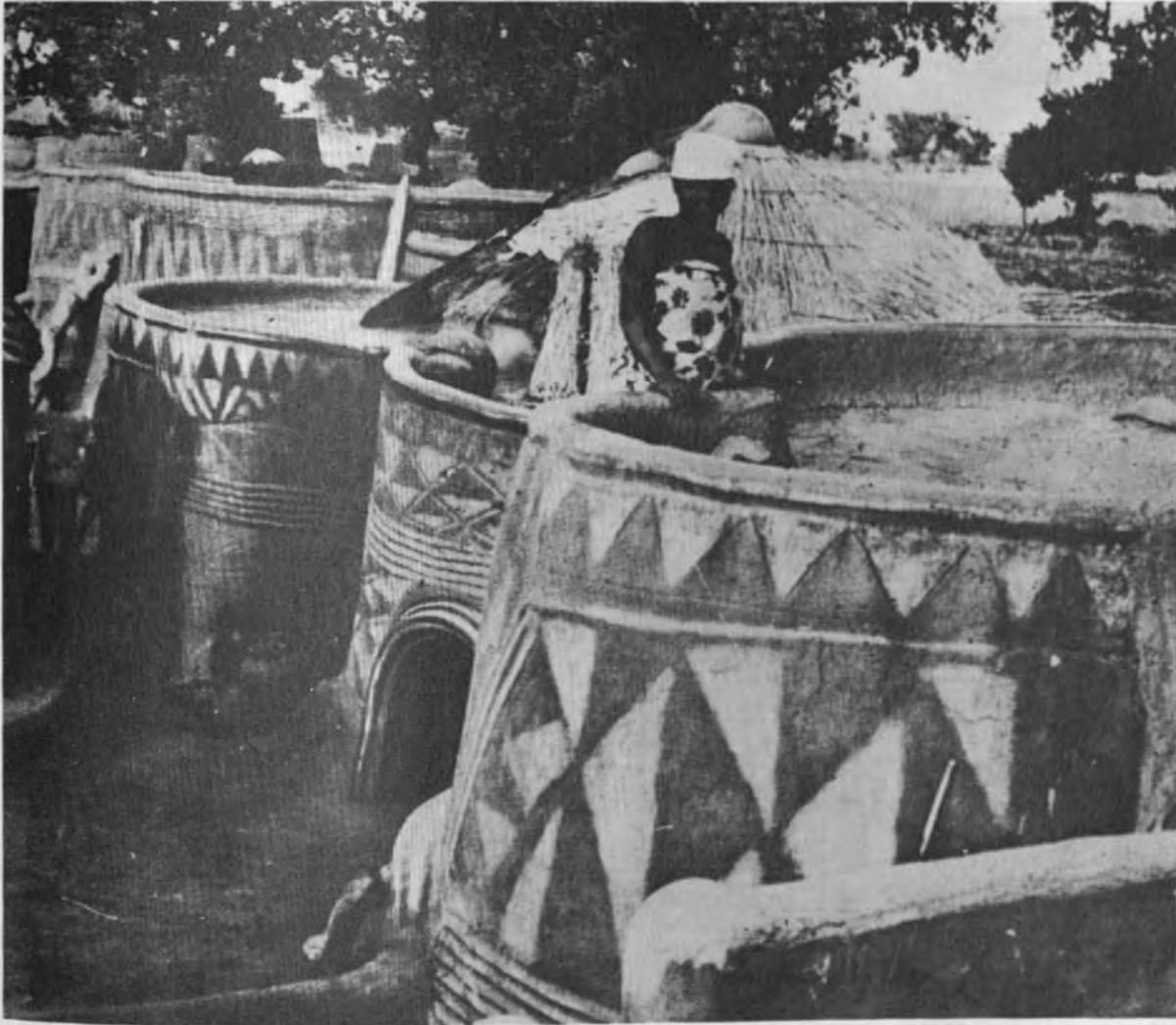


Northern Ghana.



rains season and the tremendous heat that prevails, the rest of the year.

The sprawling homesteads of round mud-huts and conical-shaped storage (grain) houses linked by a wall, are built co-operatively by the community. Everyone contributes. The men initiate the building process by making the skeletal framework of thin branches. The women then take over, filling in this framework with a mud of clay and animal droppings; the mixture providing for plasticity. When this dries a burgundy coloured plaster, obtained from boiling the



Compound at Bolgatanga, Northern Ghana.

rains season and the tremendous heat that prevails, the rest of the year.

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contents of pods from the "dava-dava" tree, is then worked over the entire mud surface. The plaster coat is important as it has a quality of being water resistant.

Decoration is then done on top of the plastered surface and this is either in geometric forms of triangles, lines, squares or of representational subjects, (usually animals), painted flat or modelled in low relief and then painted. The choice of decoration is according to the owner and is executed by a special, occupational group of women painters, within the



Houses prior to decoration.

society.

These women are invited to the individual homestead to perform the decoration, when the plaster is dry. They come on a commission basis, their fee being shelter and food for as long as it will take to complete the task.

The mural painting takes place in February, March and April, just before the rainy season. The colours used, are natural dyes, white from chalk, and blue/black from graphite.

Fingers as well as flat pointed stones are used for the decoration. Grooves are

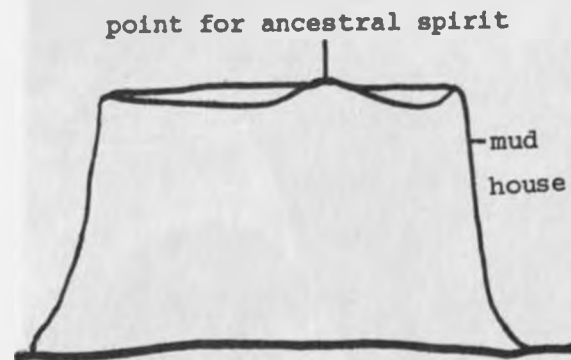


Houses after decoration.

formed with these, which are then filled with dyes, alternatively, to form a pattern. They also have a practical feature, in that the ridges formed, across the plaster, provide an erosive protection for the entire wall as they prevent the rainwater from soaking the whole wall surface.

Some of the representational subjects painted, such as lizards, crocodiles, snakes, which are quite common or tortoises and birds, are mostly symbolic of ancestors. The seat of the ancestral spirit is the highest point in the mud

construction of a compound. It might be a slightly higher point on the circular wall of

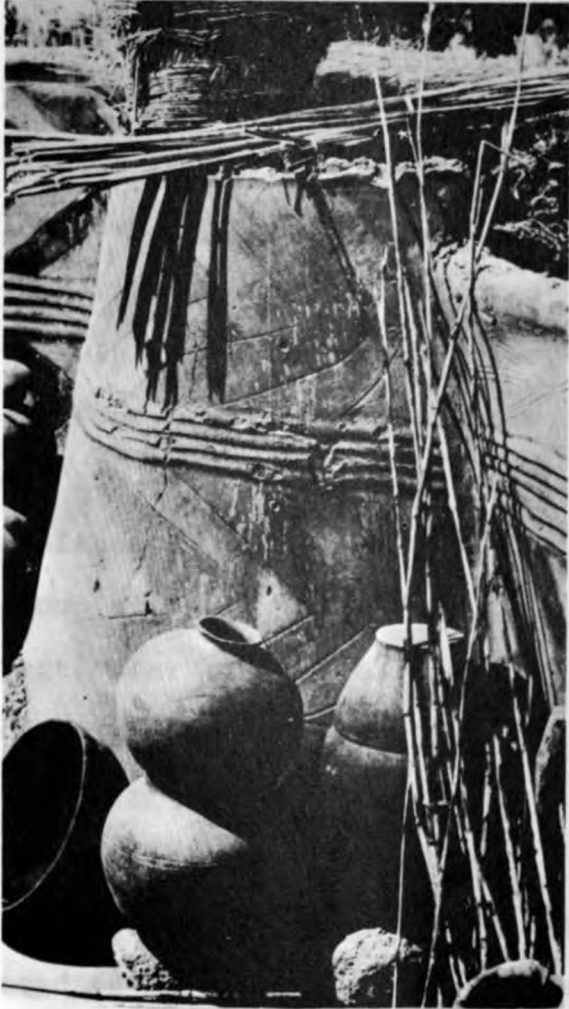


Home in Northern Ghana.

a hut, a detail such as this is never ignored for it might anger the ancestors. They too, are very much a part of the compound, in its continuing life.

Present are those yet to be born, those living and those who are dead. Each commands respect, as each represents a stage, in a life that is never ending, because there is always something else that will follow.

The symbolism of the painted subjects can also vary, and it is just as likely to find in these compounds, portrayed for example, on the house of a successful chicken-farmer a mural about his particular farming occupation. Ideas are adopted gradually and will be acceptable as long as they do not present an extreme diversity.



Utensils used in the homestead.



Entrance into a house.

Just as the thatch on the roofs is changed from time to time, so the decoration on the compound houses is re-done, when it begins to chip and wash off. The occupational women painters are summoned from amongst the community to renovate the decoration.

The communal groups, involved in the various building processes in the compound, are of a cross-section of ages, the young learning from the old, as they participate and help one another.

The above case study indicates the fusion of the

characters, client, architect/
artist and user. The client,
wishing to build a house, makes
it known in the community, and
immediately the society comes
to help him in his task. They
all know how to build a house,
and are willing to give any
assistance. Some amongst the
group are more interested in a
particular area (i.e. the
occupational women painters)
and their contribution to the
house is in the decoration of
it. The client is one, but his
need is shared. He chooses the
type of decoration for his
house and with the help of the
community it is done. When the





house is complete, he uses it and the rest of the community is welcome to visit and use the house too. It is his, but he shares it with the rest of the community, as they share their experiences and always welcome, one another.

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² Paul Oliver, "Shelter in Africa". P. 49.

C A S E S T U D Y 2

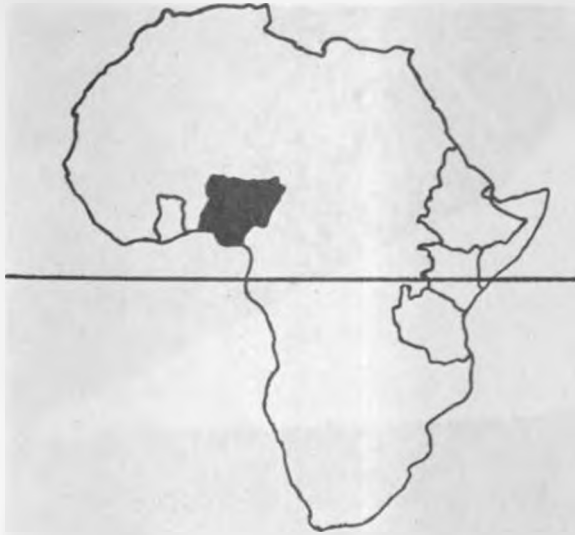
Mbari, found scattered throughout the Nigerian countryside, in the East Central State of the Ibo people are a traditional structure, but one with a significant religious connotation. They are not shrines, and are referred to, simply as Mbari houses.

The Mbari are built away from the village in a clearing made in a grove or forest known as "Eke Nworie". They are built to fulfil a specific purpose, that of appeasing Ala, the Earth Mother. On completion a

ritual is performed and then the Mbari is abandoned.

Ala, the ruler of men is a very important figure and is considered to be a personification of the Earth. Ala is regarded with much honour in the village and the events occurring in the village are attributed to her, hence Ala is a child-giver, a life-taker, the protector of the harvest, a peacemaker and the one who will be judge.

When Ala is happy, there is peace in the village, however if Ala should become angry misfortune spreads throughout the village, and



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Mbari, in Owerri, Nigeria.



a disruptive atmosphere will reign until Ala is appeased. Appeasement being by the construction of a Mbari. Ala requests a house, as she is also Goddess of Creation and demands that her people display their latest skills in the creation of a Mbari, from time to time.

Ala displays her anger by casting a curse on the village, which could be in a variety of forms; for example, the birth of several abnormal children; disease might spread throughout the village, there might be a series of murders, or the crime rate might rise

drastically.

When this occurs in the particular village, Ala then sends a symbolic message to the chief priest. Swarms of bees, sudden deaths or snakes are regarded as symbols, and the chief priest on receiving the message, issues an order to the villagers, to construct a Mbari.

The process involved in the construction of Mbari, is a ritual life drama, the Divine "Dibia Afa," that reveals to the community the sacred command from Ala, and everyone is expected to take part.

The village community is asked to present the best possible building material for the construction of the Mbari. The latest is considered to be the best and hence Mbari, that were once roofed with thatch, are to-day roofed with corrugated iron sheets; and colourful tin plates are now inserted into the walls of the Mbari, instead of the carefully modelled pots and painted designs that used to fill the Mbari.

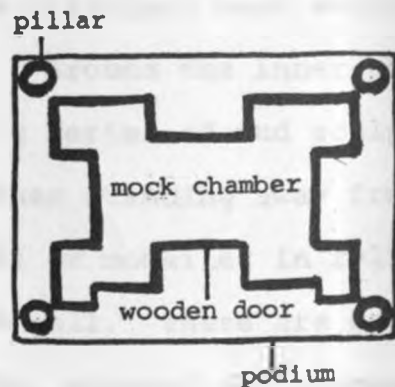
A group of men and women are chosen from the community, by the chief priest, to construct the Mbari. A crite-

rión sought after, to enable one to be in the chosen group is that of an outstanding ability or skill, which could be a contribution to the Mbari. The men and women vow to live together in chastity for as long as it takes to complete the Mbari. This could be for a period of several months. During this period, they live at the cleared site and remain there until the completion of their task. Food and clothing being brought to them by other, chosen villagers.

The "Dibia Afa" consists of clay modelling; drawing,

mural painting and decoration; incarnations (in which models, representing persons or symbolic personages are depicted) drumming and dancing.

The Mbari are built in a particular manner, they are rectangular in shape, with an open veranda around the central chamber.



Mbari house. Owerri, Nigeria.

The roof is pointed, long and sloping, covering about two thirds of the building; and supported by wooden pillars or mud pillars at each corner of the veranda. The rectangular inner chamber of mud over a wooden frame, has thick buttresses and in between these are mock, wooden doors.

The mural decoration of painting and sculpture is on the outer wall of the Mbari.

Next to Ala's Mbari, a little way from it, is a smaller building in an open-veranda style. This is a Mbari for the chief priest, as

a gift from the villagers to show their appreciation for his role as mediator and interpreter.

Decoration is done on the Mbari after the coat of white plaster, which is applied over the mud, is dry. Up to this point, it is the men who have worked on the Mbari. The women's role begins with the decorating. They take over from the men and begin to paint; using white obtained from chalk, black from charcoal, a red/brown from camwood, red from ochre, slate grey from clay and a royal blue from washing-blue.

On the walls of the Mbari

are painted, a series of patterns and designs in the geometric shapes of squares, rectangles, semi-circles in simple and more complex designs. Inserted, in the mud, amongst the designs are brilliantly coloured tin plates in yellow, blue, orange, red, green and white, the villagers best service.

Around the inner chamber is a series of mud sculptures either standing away from the wall or modelled in relief, on the wall. These are carefully made, unbaked sculptures, from ant-hill mud. The free standing sculptures have

slender bamboo sticks as a skeletal frame.

The sculptures represent a Pantheon, at whose head is Ala; and who, due to the importance awarded her, is placed in the Mbari, in the veranda, on the side that faces the road.

Ala is a tall figure, with a particularly long trunk. She is seated, but her feet do not touch the ground, symbolizing a trait of a great leader. Her head carries an elaborate hair-do, worked to appear as a crown. Her face is painted in chalk and black colouring is used to outline her eyes, nose

and mouth.

Ala sits upright and her long neck, upper arms and body up to the hips is covered with spiral markings, a mark of beauty amongst the Ibo, still practised, until a few years ago.

Ala is majestic and her eyes are cast down in an authoritative manner.

Next to Ala, coiled, in relief on the wall is Eke, the python that is Ala's vehicle. Eke symbolizes the cycles of life that flow as a current, throughout the cosmos.

On either lap Ala holds her children, Ota Mmiri her son



Ala, Goddess of Creation and Earth Mother.

and her daughter Oche, who are symbolic of the people within the community.

The rest of the Pantheon is representative of events and occurrences in the village community that have particular significance. A chiaroscuro technique is employed in the colouring of the sculptures; the light colours indicate goodness and that which is desired, and the sculptures painted in dark colours indicate obscurity and are a reminder of what could happen, if one deviates from the accepted ways of life.

To compliment Ala is

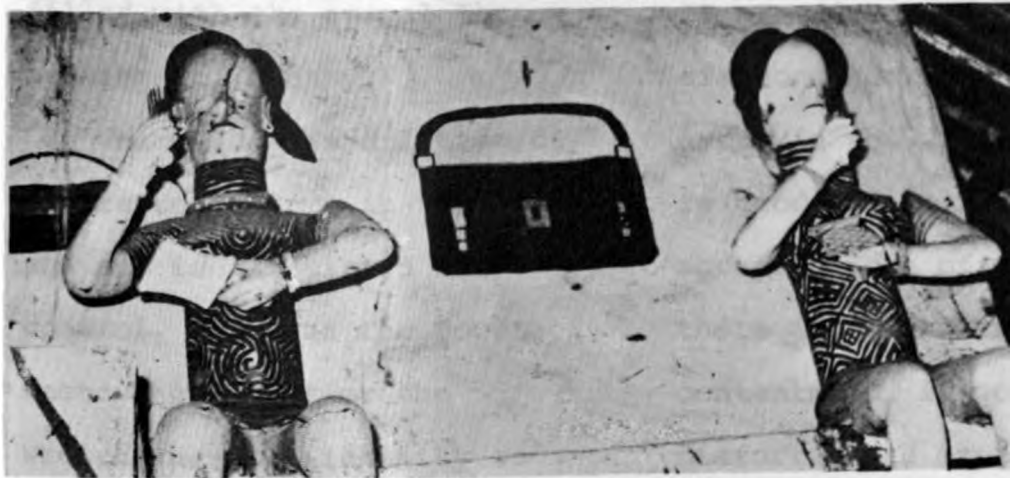


Amadonia, her husband and God of Thunder



Ala with her two children.

Ekwunoche, the



Daughters of the River Goddess.



River Goddess.



Amadonina, her husband and the god of thunder. He is portrayed with a fair skin, to be like the sky and the lightning. He is supposedly said to have once had Albinos as slaves. In latter years, he has been appearing in the Mbari in the Western dress of jacket and trousers. Complete with a pith helmet. He carries a staff and a horn, and an ivory trumpet. His whole appearance indicates his status. Ala and Amadonina represent the duality of male and female on Earth.

The next in importance, in the Pantheon is Ekwunoché, the beautiful river goddess, who is

associated with fertility and assures a large family. She has two daughters, also included in the Mbari, who are dressed in a similar manner to their mother. Their hair is in several clumps, protruding from the head and their bodies, apart from the limbs, are filled with the spiral Ibo markings of beauty.

Mamy Wata is a latter day figure to feature in the Mbari, and she is associated with control. She has the power of bestowing riches or the wretchedness of insanity to men; according to the treatment she receives; and so she

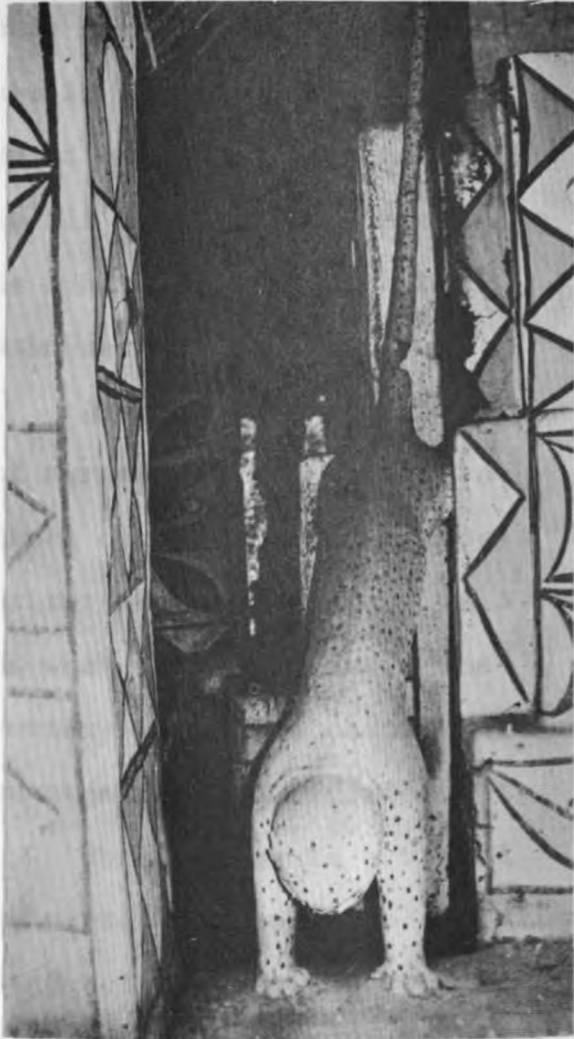
must be entertained regularly or she will turn on the people and cast her wrath.

The deity acts as a guardian of public ethics and morality. It can both give and take, and it is honoured for love and respect, as well as for fear and the desired. It provides answers, by association, to the events that occur in the village. If one is good and is following the accepted code of ethics, then there is reward in the form of contentment, if not, then misfortune is experienced.

Also represented in the Mbari but on the more obscure

side are a number of beastiary spirits; shady characters in shady colours. Their representation emphasises the forbidden. Leopards and snakes warn of that which could strike quickly and without much notice, causing only misfortune; and often a leopard in a Mbari is depicted in a leaping motion or actually attacking a goat or domestic animal. The line and form of these beasts is not specifically accurate, but is bold and definitely portrays the message.

Okpangu is a grotesque spirit and is the embodiment



A leaping leopard that signifies danger.

of ugliness. He has a companion Mgbeke Nwekperi, a devious character, half man, half ape, with a particularly huge and prickly penis. He roams at night, troubling wanderers, wrestling with men and raping the women. These two friends both represent licentiousness. Their portrayal is jokular but one that produces a laughter of terror.

The adaptability of new ideas is also portrayed in the Mbari; and with the arrival of Europeans, they too were modelled and placed in the Mbari, careful attention being paid to details such as

partings in the hair, (where pith helmets were not worn) and spectacles, ties, jackets and trousers, shoes and socks. Amadonina has donned the costume of these great white men. At times however, Europeans were not only depicted realistically but in caricature. That which was not known appeared amusing.

In some recent Mbari, school teachers and their pupils are represented. The chief priest's Mbari is usually the classroom, the teacher is European and the pupils, usually a boy and a girl are Ala's children, who

have gone to school. They too are in Western dress. Ota Mmiri holds a slate and chalk in his hands and on Oche's lap is a handbag, on which her hand rests.

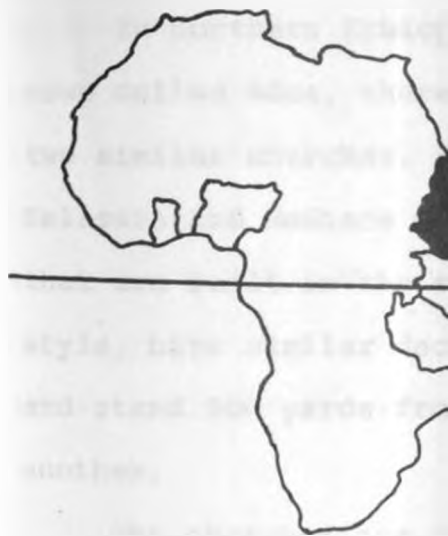
Also in Mbari are models of nurses, clerks sitting at their desks which have typewriters on them. Mbari tell of what is happening in the society and hence changes are encompassed and recorded.

Mbari presents a visual interpretation of life and all it's activities, the traditional and the recently felt. The entire community contributes in one form or another right from

it's concept, through to the animal sacrifice held on completion of the building. The mission is then accomplished. Ala is appeased and the Mbari is abandoned. No-one is to enter or to touch it, no-one is to clear the undergrowth that sets in, and anyone who attempts to destroy the Mbari, is tabooed. It's disintegration is to be perfectly natural. It has served it's purpose, and other Mbari will be built when the occasion arises.

In this second case study, the client is the community, the Mbari is being built to serve the community and the artist and

architect are also drawn from the community. The emphasis is on the goal, to build a Mbari to appease Ala, so that a happy atmosphere can again befall the village and it's community. Mbari also symbolize the procreative spirit of the Earth. It is regenerative, and by being built again and again, it is a reminder of the continual cycle of life. The artist and architect remain anonymous, they are more than one person and are chosen because of talent shown in their skill. There is a perfect harmony in their interaction.



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C A S E S T U D Y 3

Another kind of religious attachment, introduced into the traditional society, and one that has been gradually assimilated, and in several instances accepted, is Christianity.

In Ethiopia a very high form of religion is practised and has always been associated with the Egyptian Coptic Church. Christianity has been the mode since the arrival to Ethiopia of Nine Holy Men in the sixth century, who wandered over the country, spreading the good word, and converting those who they met.

As a result of the early introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia, Christianity has become deeply steeped into the culture and is further enhanced by the fact that the Church has developed in a category of its own, under the patronage of the State. Until recently the Emperor was the churches' patron, and was thought of as being next in importance to God.

Throughout Ethiopia, there are numerous churches, built in a variety of styles, and the majority of them have some form of decoration, on the inside or outside of the church or in both areas.

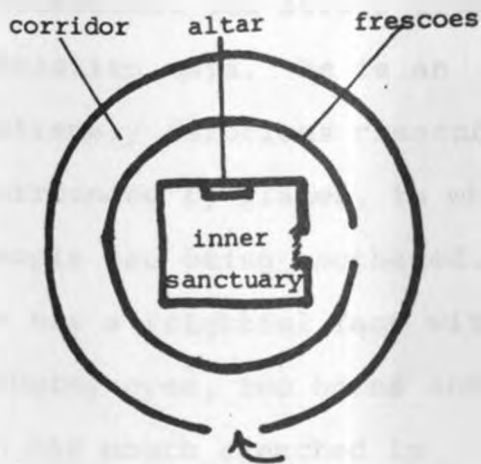
In northern Ethiopia in a town called Adua, there are two similar churches, Enda Selassie and Medhane Alem, that are built in the same style, have similar decoration and stand 500 yards from one another.

The churches are of stone, with a corrugated iron roof (most likely a replacement of an original thatched roof). They are round in form, as is the old Christian cross at the apex of the roof and which is surrounded by seven ostrich egg shells. The round shape is reminiscent of the mandala an early christian symbol of



Enda Selassie Church at Adua, Ethiopia.

oneness with God, with the environment and with the self. Several lattice windows, half the length of the outer wall, allow light into the inner corridor that surrounds the square shaped inner sanctuary.



Round church. Adua, Ethiopia.

The round inner wall of the corridor, is filled with frescoes, from floor to ceiling. They tell Biblical and religious stories. These stories are painted in great detail, and are full of activity.

The subjects have been adapted to be Ethiopian; they have Ethiopian features and characteristics; large almond shaped eyes, long, angular noses, a tiny mouth, and black, busy hair. They have also been given Ethiopian names.

The faces are full of expression, and this is depicted mostly by the eyes.

The face itself is almost always painted in a frontal position. The body is usually painted in a similar angle and depending on the positioning of the eyes, the direction the person is supposed to be facing, is indicated.

Amongst the subjects in the frescoes is the Madonna and child, who are painted large and bold and who occupy an important position at the front of the church. Next to the Madonna is St. Giorghis, an equestrian saint who is King of the Saints and who is also the patron saint of Ethiopia. He is always painted

mounted on his white stallion and in an act of valour, about to lance a dragon, to save a poor maiden.

A character such as the devil is featured big and bold and is a continuous reminder of what can happen if one is disobedient and strays from Christian ways. He is an extremely ferocious creature, surrounded by flames, in which people are being smothered. He has a frightful face with gouging eyes, two horns and in his mouth clenched in between his sharp canine teeth are the heads of two people he is devouring. Around his



Saint Giorghis, Patron Saint of Ethiopia.

head is a heavy chain of bondage, and on his back is a pair of bat-like wings. His hands have claws for fingernails.

There are also a number of saints. The equestrian saints and the more popular saints of humanity: Among these are Tekla Haimanot, Gabre Manfas Kiddus and Abuna Samuel. A story of some memorable event is associated with each saint.

Tekla Haimanot is usually painted, clothed in bishop's robes, and it is said that he stood praying for seven years on one leg, with spears



St. Abuna Samuel, St. Manfas Kiddus and St. Tekla Haimanot.



The Devil.



pointed at him. As a result of this ordeal, his other leg withered and fell off. During this time, he ate once a year, and only a single seed, brought to him by a bird. God's reward to him was three wings, one at each shoulder and a third in between the shoulder blades.



His withered right leg is depicted, detached from his body, standing in space next to where it should be.

Gabre Manfas Kiddus is robed in furs, held up by hemp robe. He, like Tekla Haimanot is in an attitude of prayer. Around him are beasts that accompanied him on his travels,

and at his head, close to his eye flies a bird. It is said that while traversing the desert, preaching peacefully to his beasts, he saw a bird laying on the ground, dying of thirst. He allowed it to drink from his eye, and the bird was revived.

Gabre Manfas Kiddus wandered preaching, for three hundred years, and during this time sustained himself with only water. After the three hundred years, God summoned him, to sit with Him in heaven.

Abuna Samuel is depicted astride his vehicle, the lion,



Scenes from the martyrdom of the saints.



Angel heads on the ceiling of Debre Berhan Selassie Church at Gondar.

on which he rode as he wandered, preaching throughout the country.

The rest of the illustrated scenes in the mural are of what is written in the Revelation of St. John, i.e. The Creation, the downfall of both man and the angels, and the exaltation of the Lord. There are scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary and of her son Christ; the equestrian saints amongst them, Claudious, Esteros, Fasilides, Ghiorghis, Menas, Mercurius, Philataos, Sisinnois, Solmon, Theodonis, and Victorius, are featured.

The Nine Holy men, who

brought Christianity to Ethiopia, are amongst those in the mural.

Painted in a series of scenes are martyrdoms of saints and apostles, and in a lengthy sequence is the martyrdom of John the Baptist.

Debre Berhan Selassie in Gondar has similar decoration, to the churches of Adua, on the walls of it's rectangular form. It's ceiling is also covered in a mural of angel heads. Wings are attached at the neck of the angels and fan out like a ruff. The pupils of the angel's eyes, show in which direction the angel is

looking. They all appear to be watching those in the church.

The murals in the above churches mentioned, were done by anonymous artists, amongst the village community, and likewise, could be retouched by any willing and able artists in the community, when the time came. This is still the practice today. The characters in the mural being Ethiopian makes it easier for the congregation to relate to and identify with.

The pictures themselves were and still are highly important as they capture a

larger audience, including those who cannot read. Alongside each scene is a written inscription in Amharic, for those who can read, and who are then able to tell the story, and hence it is passed on.

"When stories are no longer told, there will no longer be a need for them."³

³ Kevin Lynch, "What Time is This Place". P. 63.

OBSERVATIONS

All the pictures are painted in a simple and bold manner and are easy to comprehend.

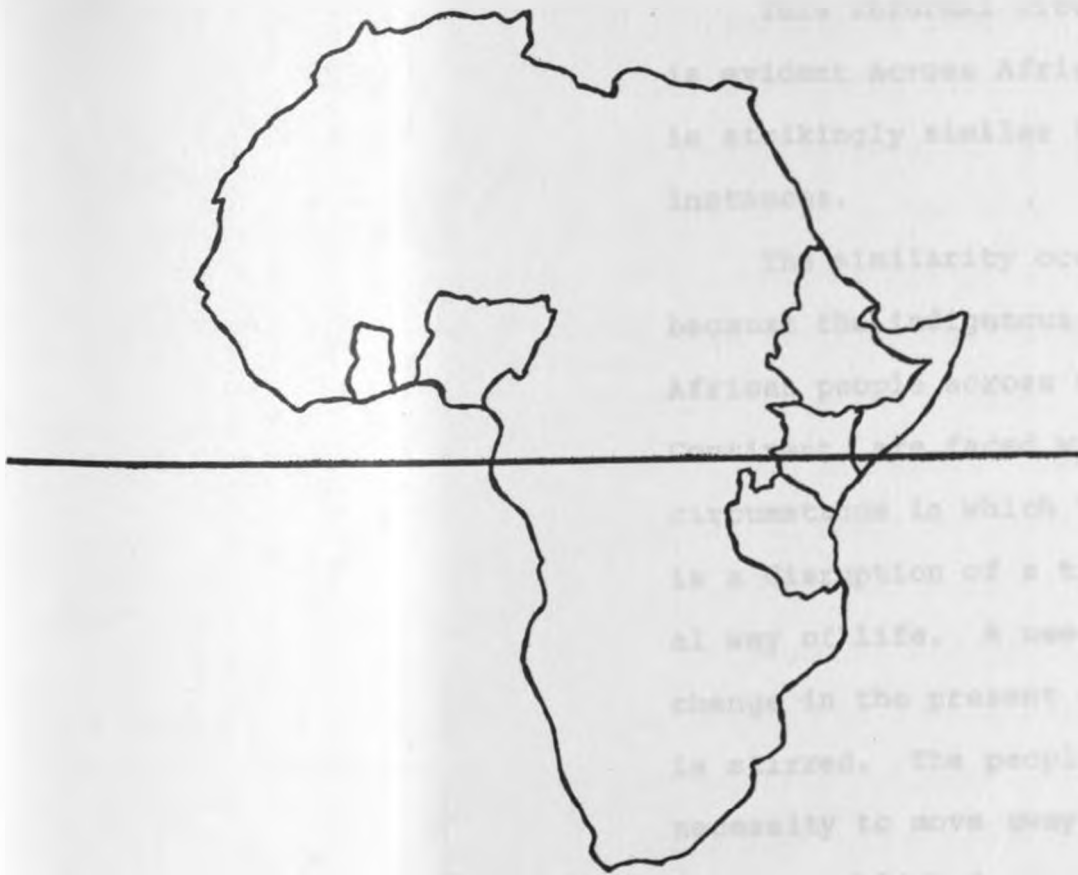
As in the Bolgatanga residential houses and in the Mbari, the architect is the community, his individuality being of little consequence. The client is the community and the people build and decorate the buildings for themselves. Everybody contributes and the result is shared.

The experience of sharing, in the making of the traditional building is very important, as it enables the

community to know and understand and appreciate what it has meant, to construct the built form, and for it to be suitable for its intended function.

A cross-section of the community takes part in the activities of the building, and those who know a particular skill provide an opportunity for others to see and acquire some knowledge and practical experience in ways of doing things. This kind of situation lends a harmonious atmosphere throughout the building, as everybody is aware of the effort, in a

variety of ways, that is being directed towards the built form.



AFRICA : INFORMAL

I N F O R M A L

The Informal Sector has arisen in the hopes of bridging a gap between the extremes of the Traditional and the Modern.

It is a situation which has been forced to emerge as the result of the influence of the Modern on the Traditional.

It is informal because in endeavouring to incorporate some of the Traditional aspects into the Modern, it has evolved into a relaxed situation, in both modes of expression. The preciseness has been lost, giving way to



AFRICA



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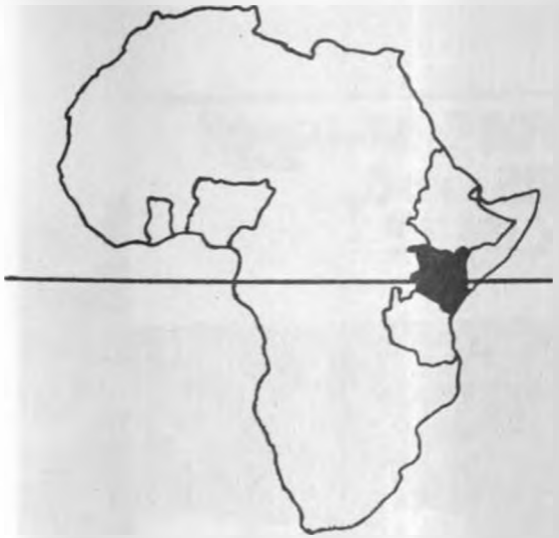
haphazardness.

This informal situation is evident across Africa, and is strikingly similar in all instances.

The similarity occurs, because the indigenous African people across the Continent, are faced with a circumstance in which there is a disruption of a traditional way of life. A need for a change in the present culture is stirred. The people feel a necessity to move away from their established way of life, and the example they have to look up to, is a modern and sophisticated, Western

orientated style of building and decoration, that employs a variety of durable and plastic materials, in conjunction with complex, technical apparatus.

A client will engage an artisan to build for him in a newly developing area, outside of the village but not in the bustling, modern city. The artisan aims at appealing to both worlds. He then sets to task, experimenting with cement, and cement blocks, and corrugated iron sheets. He no longer relies on the traditional norms, he is on his own.



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C A S E S T U D Y 1A

Muranga in Kenya is a fast developing town in close proximity to farming village communities in the rural area. The town consists of single stoned buildings of cement and stone or cement blocks. These buildings are usually rectangular in shape and have a corrugated iron roof.

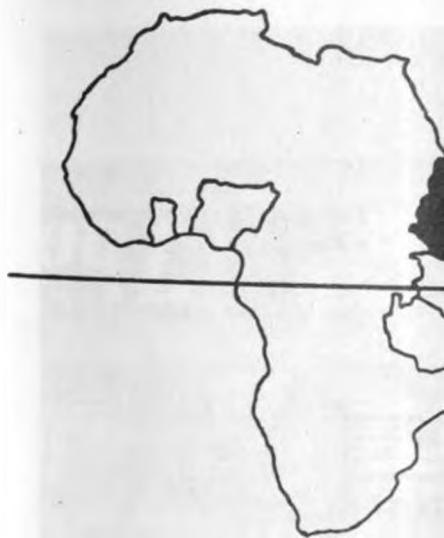
Kongu-Ini Provision Store in Muranga is such a building. At the front of the building where the main entrance is situated, murals have been painted on the white-washed wall. The murals depict a variety of animals and

alongside this in large and bold letters is written the type of fodder for the various animals.

The name of the artist is clearly shown on the mural as is his address.



Kongu-Ini Provision Store at Muranga, Kenya.



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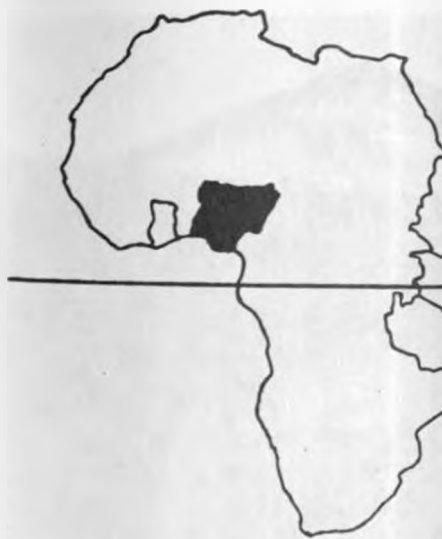
C A S E S T U D Y 1B

Dire Dawa in Ethiopia is a similar town to Muranga in regard to the buildings that comprise the town, although it is much larger. The town serves a semi-urban community.

The building shown in the picture is of cement and cement blocks. The painting indicates the building to be a furniture store, and the items available are clearly depicted.



A furniture store in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia.



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C A S E S T U D Y 1C

Ibadan in Nigeria is the largest slum city in Africa. It is comprised of a variety of buildings ranging from modern skyscrapers to shanty dwellings, depending on which part of the city one is in.

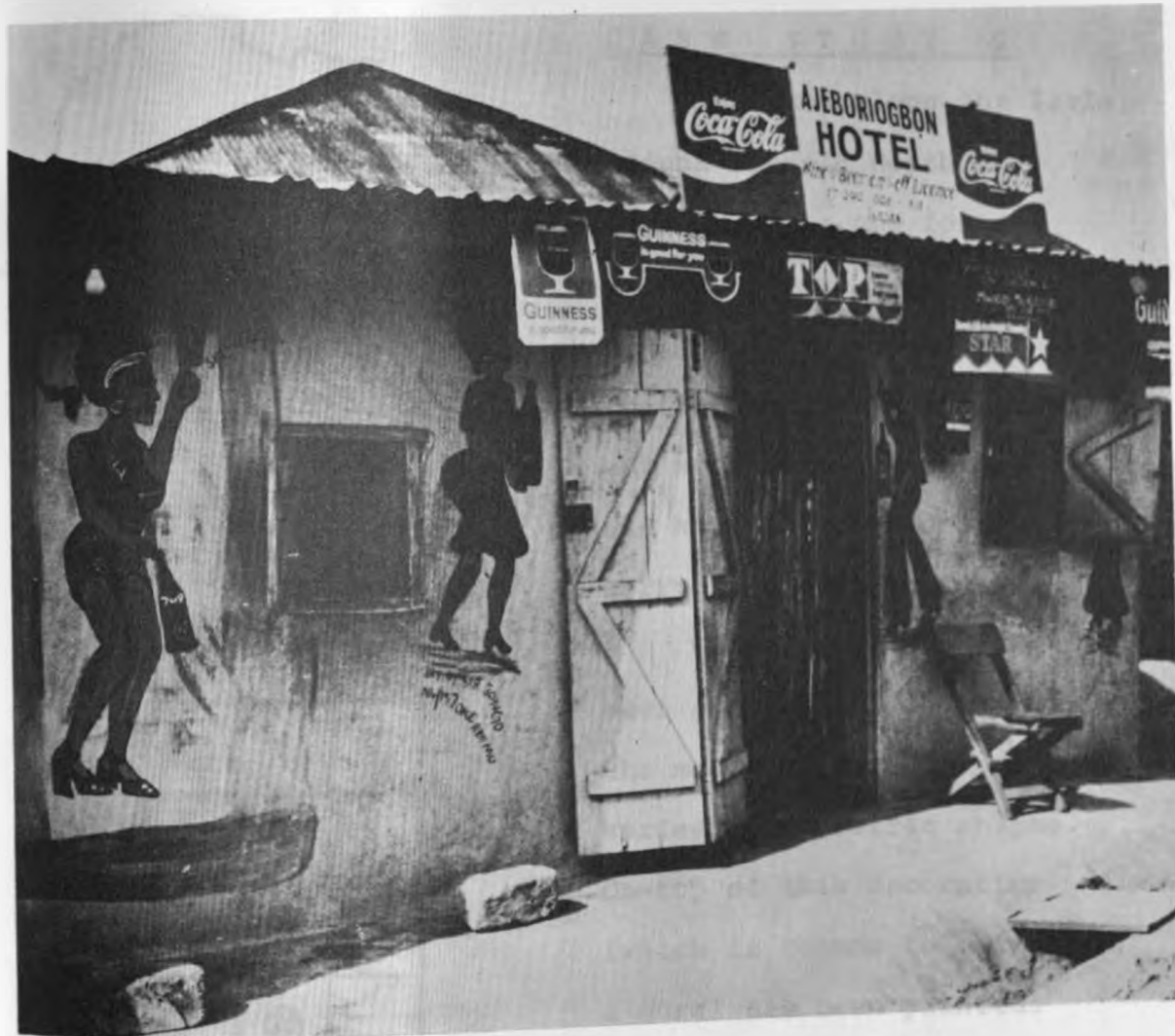
The Ajeborilogbon Hotel is a rectangular cement and cement block building, supporting a corrugated iron roof and it has wooden doors and windows.

Although labelled as a hotel it is really a restaurant and bar. Painted in mural form on the outside wall are curvaceous girls holding

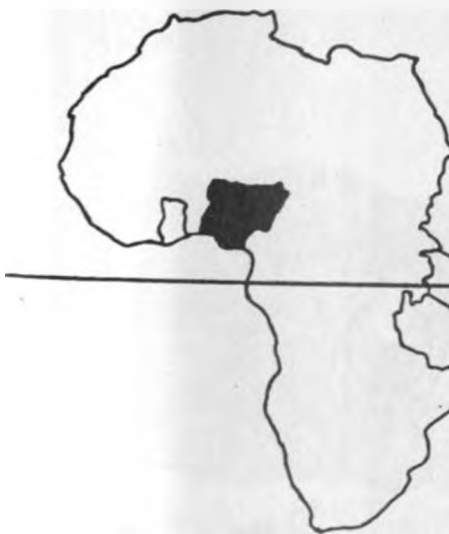
the types of beverage available inside. The artist has painted both his name and address boldly and in a prominent position.

In the three examples of a similar case study mentioned above, an artisan was engaged to both build and decorate.

The form of decoration in the three instances, has provided a means of advertisement for both the client and for the artisan, and the idea of decoration is a method carried over, from the Traditional.



The Ajeboriogbon Hotel in Ibadan, Nigeria.



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C A S E S T U D Y 2

Situated along the Zaria, Kaduna road in Northern Nigeria, is a new form of dwelling-house.

These houses are of the traditional mud and plaster, but are rectangular in shape and have a fashionable corrugated iron roof.

The plastered wall has been chipped at, to expose the mud underneath, in a series of geometric shapes. On top of this decoration (which is common to this area) a mural has been painted.

The mural records what is associated with the

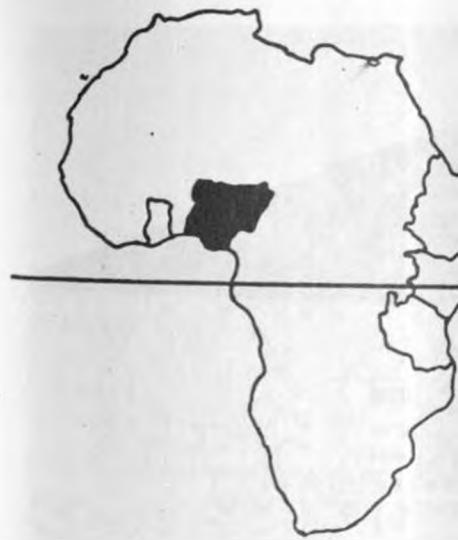
particular house.

In most instances there is a portrait of a stately man, undoubtedly the owner of the house, and alongside this portrait, spanning the entire front wall are painted a series of his material possessions.

This building as in the previous examples, was constructed and decorated by an artisan.



A residential house, near Zaria, Nigeria.



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C A S E S T U D Y 3

The Albaka Cinema is situated just outside the walled city of Zaria in Northern Nigeria. Apart from a cinema house, the building also serves as a community hall.

It is a stone and cement building with a corrugated iron roof.

The front of the building is quite different from the rest of the building. It has a flat roof and three buttresses protruding beyond the roof level. The entire wall and part of the side wall on either side is covered with

a thick coat of white plaster, into which a variety of designs have been engraved and then painted. The engraving is not of a consistent pattern but is of several patterns, that are repeated for a time and then break and form into another pattern. Geometric shapes, Northern knots, lizards, birds, snakes, bicycles, guns, crossbows, cars, flowers are all represented in an intermingled fashion.

This building was constructed by a group of artisans. The frontal face keeps the original engraved designs, but from time to time, the colour is retouched,



from the white-wash stage and usually the colour added to the plaster, changes with every retouching.

The Albaka Cinema house in Zaria, Nigeria.



Details of the Albaka Cinema house in Zaria, Nigeria.



modern materials, and will proceed with concept and corrugated iron... irrespective of the defective building that he will produce. He accepts a modern method of building, because he has seen it work in the city, it is a new method and he has the opportunity to introduce this modern style into the district. It will therefore afford him prestige and his client status.

The artisan has also to cater for the decoration. In this direction he aims at pleasing his client and asserting his client's name in the community. The painting he does with some confidence as

OBSERVATIONS

In the above case studies, a client has employed an artisan or group of artisans, to construct and decorate a building for him. The artisan has been drawn from amongst the village community. He is a man who knows the traditional way of building and who understands the tools and the materials that would be used in such a venture. He however only comprehends a few skills involved in the construction of a modern building, and he has limited knowledge in the architecture concerned.

The artisan finds himself in a position where he is being looked up to. He is put under pressure to introduce the "fad" of the time into a building. The pressure has arisen due to a continual rapid transition from the Traditional to the Modern. The current fad however is unstable, as it is dependent upon sudden change. It can be argued then, that the artisan is in a situation of continuing struggle with the modernity he is being bombarded with and his ignorance of it. Perhaps, rather than struggle, he gives in, and easily accepts these

modern materials, and will build with cement and corrugated iron, irrespective of the defective building that he will produce. He accepts a modern method of building, because he has seen it work in the city, it is a new method and he has the opportunity to introduce this unusual style into the district. It will therefore afford him prestige and his client status.

The artisan has also to cater for the decoration. In this direction he aims at pleasing his client and asserting his client's name in the community. The painting he does with some confidence as

it is apart of his automatic, traditional heritage. A variety of colours is available for his mural decoration, and he sets about painting contemporary events. These events will range from rural scenes i.e. farming, to modern scenes of a motor-bike or a lorry, to historical events i.e. a boxing tournament, featuring Mohamed Ali.

In all cases, the subjects painted are simple, bold and make a definite statement. They serve the purpose of communicating, as well as providing a means of identification, there is pride in

telling a story, in this modern fashion.

The artisan's name is written in readable writing, for purposes of making himself known, as a specialist, in the area.



AFRICA : MODERN

M O D E R N

Foreign ideas have been introduced into Africa in the guise of development. A great emphasis has been placed on adopting these modern ideas, thereby keeping pace with the advancing, Western societies. This development is termed as Modern and is supposedly for the betterment of people.

In regard to the built environment, what has actually happened is that different kinds of materials and tools, other than those that the African people are used to, have been introduced. Those introducing them term this new technology

as better because it is more durable, and indicates an acquisition of new knowledge and hence progress.

Little attention is paid to the fact that this new technology of improved skills is unknown and not understood by the people it is being fostered upon. No thought has been given to the adaptability of the indigenous people to these new habits being forced upon them. or what the long term effects of such drastic changes in the long established ways of life, will be. The period of exposure to these new techniques has

not been long enough for absorption, and the resulting effect on a culture, is a distortion of values, because of the lack of comprehension of this new idea.

Modern buildings are today of a variety of durable and plastic materials. The building of them requires a trained and specialized mind in architecture. The client wishing to construct a modern building has therefore to engage an architect to carry out the task. In some instances the architect might decide to have some art form in the building, in which case,

he will commission an artist to execute this particular job. When the building is complete, it is used by another set of people who had nothing to do with the building's conception or construction. Everyone who is involved in the building, is involved in a specific manner, and at a specific time.



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C A S E S T U D Y 1

The Bank of Tanzania in Dar-es-salaam is a modern building of concrete and glass. It is located on one of the new and broad streets of the city, in an area housing Government offices and an International hotel.

The bank building is square in form and has a small courtyard. On one facade, of the walls of the courtyard is a large mural, spanning the length of the four storeys of the bank. The mural "Making Money in Tanzania" was done by a local artist, Elimu Njau. The architects, a foreign firm,

had constructed most of the building, and were nearing completion, when the artist was approached by a friend of his, the then Governor of the bank, to do some art form, for the new bank. Elimu Njau decided to do a mural, and was shown, a large available space, by the architects, in the bank's courtyard.

The mural itself is large, bold and makes a statement of the various ways in which Tanzania makes money; through farming in the rural areas and with the aid of technology in the cities. It took the artist much effort and time to

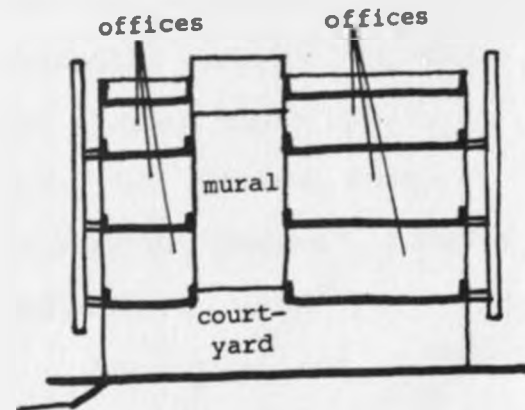
chip at the concrete and arrive at the desired textures. However, the mural is placed in an unfortunate position.

One catches a glimpse of the mural on the left, as one enters the building on the way to the banking-hall on the right, but one is not allowed to enter the guarded courtyard; and the mural is not visible from the banking-hall as there is a wall between that area and the mural.

The most opportune view of the mural is offered from an office on the forth floor, which faces the mural. This office is for members of staff

only, and is partly cramped with desks at which the clerks and secretaries sit and work. The rest of the room is filled with tall book-cases placed next to each other in rows across the room. The windows, from which one can view the mural, have venetian blinds, that are closed for most part of the day to keep out the strong sunlight.

The decision to have Elimu Njau's mural in the bank building was an after thought; it had not been incorporated at the conception of the building.



Bank of Tanzania. Dar-es-salaam.

However when that idea was born, available space was suggested, but not space particularly suitable for a mural, in the total sense. Consequently the lack of interaction between the

architect and artist from the beginning, has resulted in a lack of communication with the artist's work and the appreciation of the public, for whom it was made. It's purpose for being in a public building is lost, and the time and money spent on the mural is to no avail.

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C A S E S T U D Y 2

Africa Hall in Addis Ababa, houses the Head-quarters of the organization of African Unity. This building is therefore a focal point in the capital.

Prior to construction, the clients, architects, and artists sat together and discussed the building.

There is a variety of decoration within the building, and that which is of concern here, is the stained glass mural by Afewerk Tekle.

As one approaches Africa Hall there are steps leading from the portico of the

building to the foyer. As one gradually goes up the steps, the stained glass mural, entitled, "Africa, Past, Present and Future", becomes visible.

The sun shines behind it throwing the brilliant colours of the stained glass into the foyer. The mural covers one entire wall of the foyer, and the plain glass partly employed in the hall area and in the adjoining corridors reflects the colours of the mural and one feels enveloped in the radiance.

The mural itself is done in three sections a panel of

Africa in the past, depicting the struggle against colonialism. At the foot of the panel are three stooped figures, a man, a woman and a child, sad and separated from one another, as a result of slavery. In the centre are a group of people, herded by a skeleton dressed in red, representing evil. The group carries a dragon that symbolizes the load of colonialism. These two scenes are symbolically surrounded by a chain of bondage.

The central panel Africa in the present the largest of the three, tells quite a different story. The figures

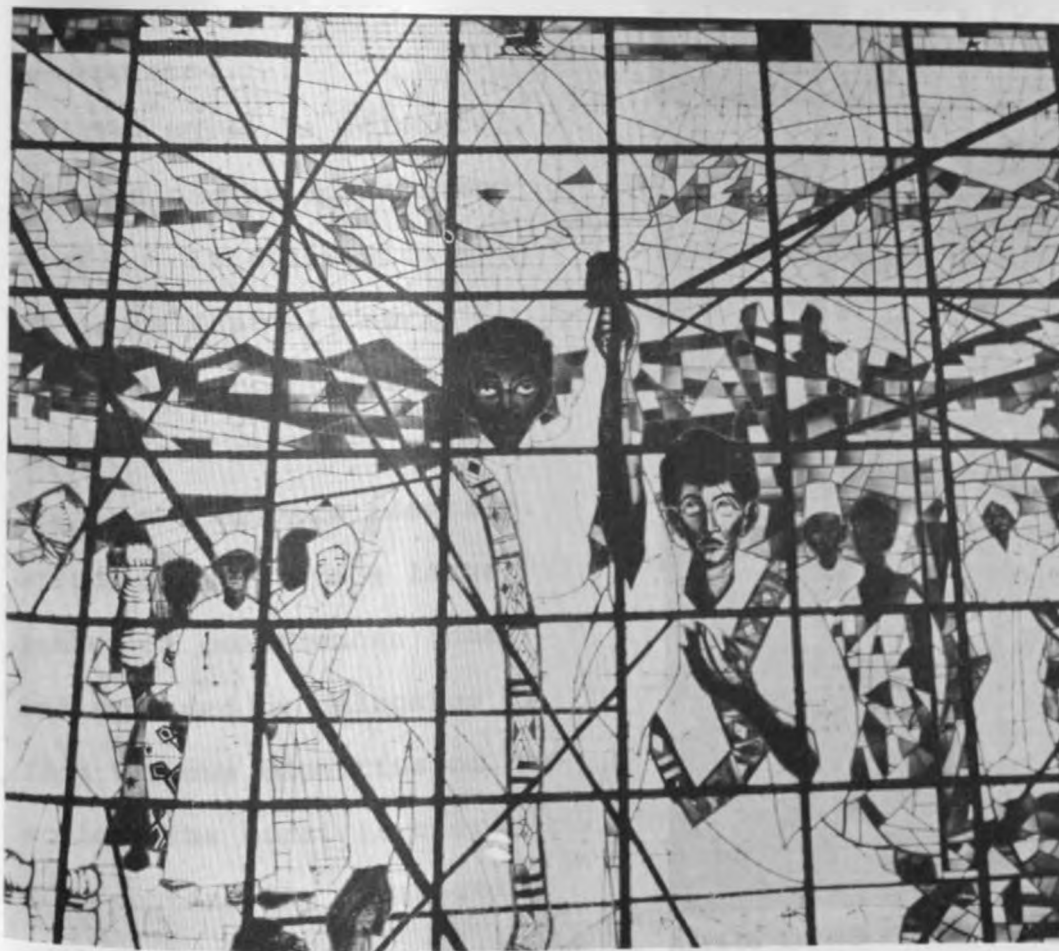


Africa in the Past,
left panel of the stained glass mural.

here stand upright and are dressed in a variety of African National Dress. An Ethiopian couple is in the foreground and the man holds up a flaming torch, symbolizing enlightenment. An unusual figure and one that stands out is an armoured knight with a United Nations flag on his breast plate; in one hand he holds a sword and in the other he holds up scales of justice.

The knight is depicted because of the African countries association with the United Nations and the rapport that exists between them.

In the background is a



Africa in the Present, central panel of the stained glass mural.



huge sun rising from behind the hills, and bringing with it, hope. Around the panel are flags of the then independent African countries in 1961.

The third panel, Africa in the future depicts a slave, slaying the dragon, that was colonialism. In the centre is a free and United Africa, full of hope and from it has fled the red clad skeleton who is shown in flight, at the top of the panel.

The mural's positioning is to it's advantage; it does not appear as an afterthought in the building, but as a part of it. It spans the length of a

wall, from floor to ceiling,
and has been carefully
incorporated.

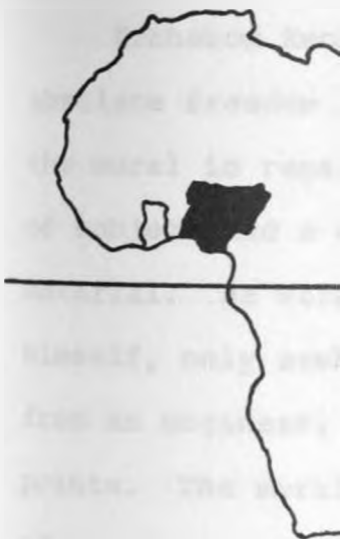
The mural is colourful,
bold and can be appreciated
readily. It deals with a
situation that all newly
independent countries have
experienced and with which
they can therefore identify.
Africa Hall, hosts a large
number of conferences that
are attended by delegates
from various countries of the
world. The mural is there-
fore continually interacting
with the users of the building.

The interaction amongst
the clients, the architects,



Africa in the Future,
right panel of the stained glass mural.

and the artist, although each
is a specialist, has been from
the beginning and there has
been no friction. They have
therefore been successful in
achieving the one harmonious
objective.



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C A S E S T U D Y 3

At the Institute of International Affairs Building in Lagos, adjacent to the main building, stands a large 12' x 70' mural in concrete done by Erahabor Ogieva Emokpae.

The mural represents the world, symbolized by a central sun, radiating rays, out to the people in the mural who are stylized figures of men set in profile and different only in height and in the lines that constitute their face.

The concrete figures of the men and the sun are set against a background of

terazzo, to which they are bolted. Forming a central panel across the terazzo is a design, in African motif of circles, squares, triangles and parallel lines. At either end of the mural, next to the last figure is a mask, placed in a central position amidst more African designs. The mural is bold and quite definite and succeeds in making it's statement. It is different from the rest of the modern building, but although a part of it, the mural is set in such a way, that it looks like a garden sculpture.

Erahabor Emokpae had absolute freedom in executing the mural in regard to a choice of subject and a choice of material. He worked on it himself, only seeking help from an engineer, on technical points. The mural is positioned at the edge of a lawn and faces a T-junction. The mural's location in relation to it's surrounding, provides a substantial visual opportunity. It can be seen just as well during the night as during the day, because at night it is flood-lit.

The artist worked in close collaboration with the architect



Mural at International Affairs Building in Lagos, Nigeria.

and saw to it that his mural was to be placed in a position where it would be appreciated by as many people as possible.

Some time after the completion of the mural in 1965, it was decided by the occupants of the building to plant a six foot hedge at the edge of the lawn opposite the mural and next to the road.

It was also decided to plant flag poles at four foot intervals on the inside of the hedge by the road.

The effect to-day, is that the total visability of the mural is limited to those looking at it from within the



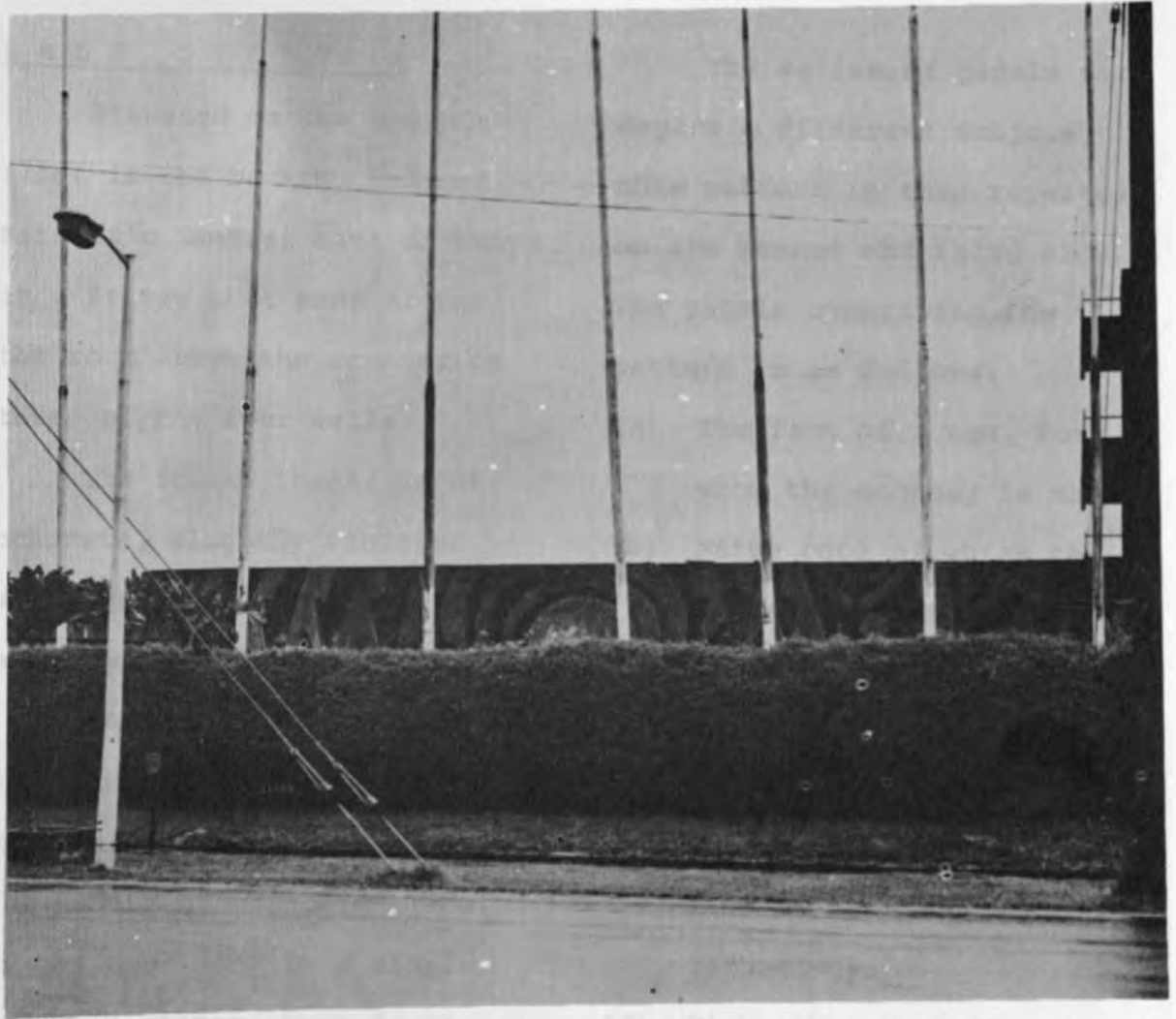
The mural as viewed from the left.



Detail of the mural.

distance of the lawn, as the hedge and flag poles greatly obstruct the view of any onlookers beyond the point of the hedge.

The hedge was planted for security reasons but is a feeble hedge and does not serve a security purpose at all.



The mural after the hedge and flag poles.



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C A S E S T U D Y 4

Situated on the ground floor in the banking hall of Nairobi's Central Bank of Kenya is a frieze that runs around the room above the counter on three of the four walls.

The frieze itself is of concrete, slightly finished with terra cotta and was executed by Gregory Maloba.

The theme, in the thirty-eight panels that constitute the frieze, is the story of the medium of economic trade. It has been done in a simple and bold manner, that is at once striking and easy to comprehend.

The series of panels each depict a different subject, this pattern is then repeated on the second and third side. The panels comprising the pattern is as follows:

- (a) The face of a man, for whom the economy is made.
- (b) Maize cobs of which the divisions of the sections are very much exaggerated. Maize is a staple food in Kenya.
- (c) The wheel which is indicative of machines used in technology.
- (d) Fish, that symbolize food. A marine resource.
- (e) An elephant that represents,



The banking hall in The Central Bank of Kenya in Nairobi.

the rich natural resources of the country.

- (f) A man and a woman encircling two shields that have cowrie shells and shilling pieces as their decoration. The cowrie shells were once used in trade, to-day they have been replaced by the shilling. The shield is for defence that a man and a woman have for their economy.

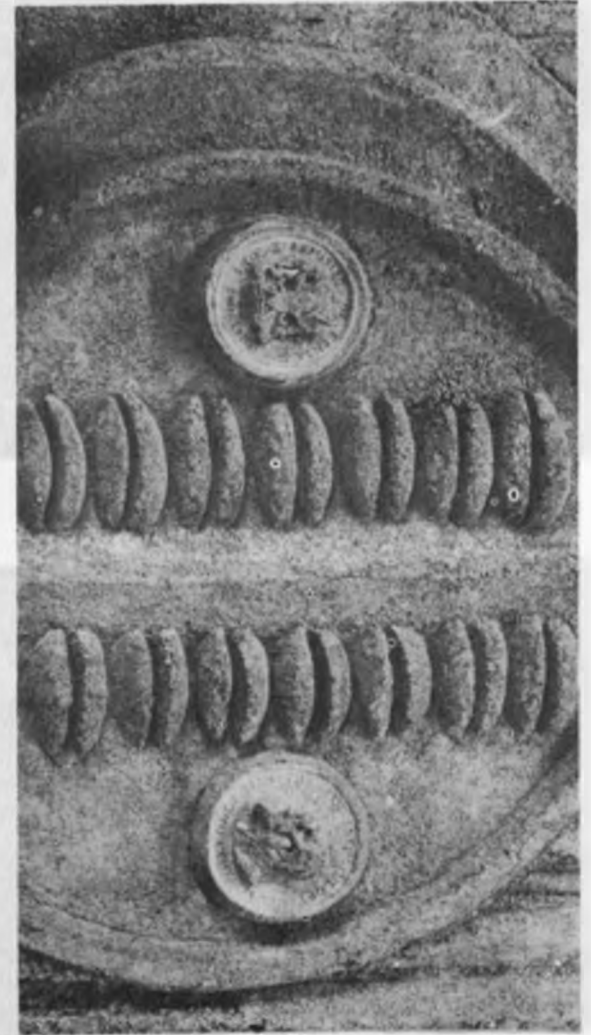
- (g) Two hands that indicate the labour that is put into the economy.

- (h) Cattle, that tell of the wealth and prosperity.

In a number of African



The face of a man in the frieze.



Cowrie shells and shilling pieces used in trade.

tribes, the more cattle
a man has the greater
his wealth.

- (i) A torso of an obese
woman that tells of
prosperity.

The sequence of the
pattern is slightly altered on
the other two sides.

Altogether there are
thirty-eight panels that
comprise the frieze, and each
is simple, bold comprehensible,
and attractive. The natural
state of concrete with the
slightly reddish touch has
enhanced the frieze.

The rest of the building
is in concrete and glass, and



Details of the frieze.



Details of the frieze.



the frieze fits in well, being only subtly different and immediately noticeable due to it's colouring.

The positioning of the frieze is in such a way, that the area behind it is a functional part of the building, that acts as a landing corridor for the first floor. The lower part of this encasement is support for lighting strips, for the ground floor.

Gregory Maloba's frieze has been done in a modern building, but it has drawn information from the traditional, from the transitional

and from the modern areas, which has been married to fit into the situation of to-day. He has bridged gaps not only in culture, but also in the arts, to produce a harmony and an understanding. His frieze tells an important story, and it is in a place which is visited often and where it can be shared and passed on, and can continue to live.

Gregory Maloba had an opportunity of working with the firm of architects commissioned to construct the bank building, from the time of it's inception, and was in

a position to see that his contribution to the building would be incorporated in such a way as to be an integral part of the building.

OBSERVATIONS

Specialization is the key factor in the Modern Sector. The participants here are identified with particular training in a specific field, and their contribution towards a building is undertaken through the strict terms of commission and contractual agreement. During the design and construction of a building they will interact at specifically defined parts of this time.

Their interaction varies, and the variation of this interaction influences the

final result in the built form.

If the principal characters, the client, the architect and the artist begin to work together in the early stages of the conception of the building, each will be aware of the others' wishes, suggestions and ideas, and a policy will be adopted to work towards amalgamating these into the design of the building. The result is usually a harmonious one, in which the art form is incorporated and will appear as an integrated part of the building.

If the artist is approached at a very much later date after the client has been in contact with an architect, to execute a building for him, and when the architect has already begun and progressed well into the construction, their interaction will pose difficulties.

The basic design of the building has already been established and the architect by inviting an artist at a later date suggests that the idea of an art form was an afterthought and so the space in which the architect would ask the artist to perform would

be limited to "spare space"
somewhere in or on the
building. No matter what
the artist tries to produce
in the given space, it will
never catch up with the rest
of the building and will
always be supplementary.

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SECTION TWO

Chapter Two

R E S P O N S E

This study has aimed at providing a perception and an appreciation of Art in built forms created by man.

In Africa one finds simultaneous parallels cast, by the presence of Modern, Informal and Traditional circumstances. Each of these sectors has a way of communication and expression, but each is in a position to borrow and adapt, as it were, across the parallels. This offers unlimited possibilities in choice.

The Traditional is a known situation, in which

tools, methods and techniques have withstood the test of time, and everything appears to be satisfactory and harmonious. However, it is a situation on the other hand that is being surpassed by time and is a situation that falls into the category of the past.

The Modern sector offers, in accelerated terms, the advancement of the sciences and technology; a NEW way of doing things. It is a situation to aspire to; a future stage. It opens up an avenue to the International World.

These two extreme conditions have created a restlessness, something has begun to stir, and the response has emerged as the Informal sector. This is an area of experimenting and learning; the critical present stage.

The trend is a path that leads from the Traditional, through the Informal and onto the Modern.

Perhaps then, a concerted effort should be placed into the flexible situation of the Informal sector, which is in a position to adapt from the "past" as well as select from the "future".

The hope of enriching the African culture, without first distorting it, lies in bolstering this transitional stage.

It is at a level that is neither too far removed from the Traditional nor too far ahead of the Modern.

This way, Africa would be progressing and developing to the best of her advantage.

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A P P E N D I X

A list of all the built forms observed on field trips, in the course of research for this study; listed according to the categories of Modern, Informal and Traditional.

Modern : Institutional

1. Biblical Mural by Elimu Njau. Muranga Cathedral, Kenya.
2. "Africa Past, Present and Future." Stained glass mural by Afewerk Tekle. Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
3. Mosaic and Wooden Panels by Kofi Antibam. Accra, Ghana.
4. Carved Panels by Kofi Antibam. Parliament Buildings. Accra, Ghana.
5. Dominican Monestary by Demas Nwoko. Ibadan, Nigeria.
6. Friezes by Yusef Grillo. Agricultural Building. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
7. Murals on British Council Building. Kano, Nigeria.
8. Mosaic in Parliament Buildings. Nairobi, Kenya.
9. Frieze by Erahabor Emokpae at the Institute of International Affairs Building. Lagos, Nigeria.
10. Murals done by students, University of Kumasi. Ghana.
11. Murals done by students Kenyatta University College. Nairobi, Kenya.
12. Nursery and Primary School murals at Legon University and at Kumasi University. Ghana.
13. Frieze by Nostvik on The Kenyatta Conference Centre. Nairobi, Kenya.
14. Heads of State Mural. Africa Hall. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

15. Sculpture Composition by Louis Mwaniki. Ministry of Agriculture Building. Nairobi, Kenya.

Modern : Commercial

1. Mural in Commercial Bank by Gebrekristos Desta. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
2. "Making Money in Tanzania." Mural by Elimu Njau. The Bank of Tanzania. Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania.
3. Mural, in the Rest House at Axum, Ethiopia.
4. Ceramic Murals by Gerd Von Stokar. City Hotel. Kumasi, Ghana.
5. Mosaic on Nigerian National Shipping Line Building. Lagos, Nigeria.
6. Mosaic Mural by Yusef Grillo on Apapa Supermarket. Lagos, Nigeria.
7. Mosaic by Foster on the Co-op. Bank Building. Lagos, Nigeria.
8. Mosaic Mural, at Ikoyi Hotel. Lagos, Nigeria.
9. Carved Panels by Kofi Antiam at the Intercontinental Hotel. Accra, Ghana.
10. Sculptures and embossed copper murals by Erahabor Emokpae. The United Bank of Africa Building. Lagos, Nigeria.
11. Frieze at the Post Office in Zaria, Nigeria.
12. Mural by Francis Msangi. Nairobi Cinema, Kenya.
13. Frieze by Gregory Maloba. The Central Bank. Nairobi, Kenya.
14. Mural by Kofi Antiam. Ambassador Hotel. Accra, Ghana.
15. Carved Zanzibari doors on The Commonwealth House. Nairobi, Kenya.

Modern : Residential

1. Carved doors by Demas Nwoko on several houses in Ibadan. Nigeria.
2. Carved doors on several houses in Lamu, Mombasa, and Nairobi. Kenya.

Informal : Institutional

1. Decorated Social Halls, bars and restaurants in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania.
2. Mural on Albaka Cinema. Zaria, Nigeria.

Informal : Commercial

1. A number of shops decorated by artisans in Muranga, Limuru, Ibadan, Dire-Dawa, Tema, Zaria, Accra, Asmara, Axum, Gondar, Nairobi and Mombasa.
2. Mural on Albaka Cinema. Zaria, Nigeria.

Informal : Residential

1. Some houses just outside Zaria with murals painted either on the plaster or on top of the traditional geometric designs. Zaria, Nigeria.

Traditional : Institutional

1. Mbari houses. Owerri, Nigeria.
2. Alusi Temples. Nri and Neni, Nigeria.
3. Monolithic Churches. Lalibela, Ethiopia.
4. Enda Selassie Church. Adua, Ethiopia.
5. Medhane Alem Church. Adua, Ethiopia.
6. Debre Berhan Selassie Church. Gondar, Ethiopia.
7. Primary School (old church building) outside Asmara, Ethiopia.
8. Shrine at Adakwa Jachie. Kumasi, Ghana.
9. Shella Mosque. Lamu, Kenya.
10. Stelae at Axum, Ethiopia.
11. Gates of Kano, Nigeria.

Traditional : Commercial

None.

Traditional : Residential

1. Carved doors on homes of Zanzibar, Lamu, Mombasa, Massawa, Ohitsha, Oyo and Awka.
2. Decorated houses in Tamale, Bolgatanga and Navarongo. Ghana.
3. Plaster etching and relief decoration on houses in Zaria, Kaduna and Kano. Nigeria.
4. Granneries in the area around Jos, Zaria, and Kaduna. Nigeria.

5. Plaster relief decoration inside Lamu houses. Kenya.
6. Mural on the Oba's Palace. Oyo, Nigeria.

Interior view of the exhibition inside the house. Kenya.

View on the interior of the Palace. Oyo, Nigeria.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF
EXHIBITION

T : TRADITIONAL

In this sector people build in a way that they have always built. Techniques have been developed and handed down from generation to generation. There is an appreciation in the handling of the material that is found in their particular environment.

The community participate in the construction of building, being happy to share whatever skill. The community consists of a cross-section of age groups, the young learning from the more experienced older generation.

Time is of little consequence and the duration of the construction of a house will be however long it takes to complete the house.

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Wade Whaley, 1930s, Central America

1. The house is built on stilts.

2. The house is built of mud and plaster.

3. The house is built of mud and plaster.

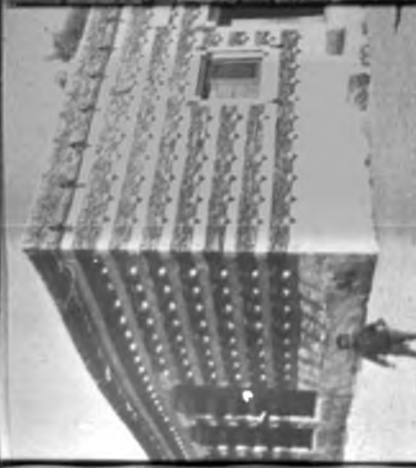
4. The house is built of mud and plaster.

5. The house is built of mud and plaster.

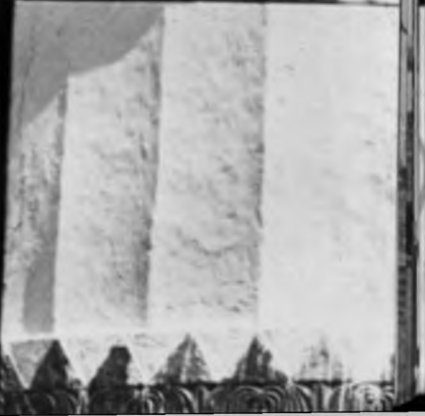


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I : INFORMAL

The Informal sector is as a result of moving away from the Traditional, towards the Modern. There are ties to the one and not a complete understanding of the other.

An artisan is engaged to both build and decorate the house. He has traditional knowledge and he struggles with the technology of the modern way of building.

Time is in continual rapid transition and the result is not as harmonious as it could be.

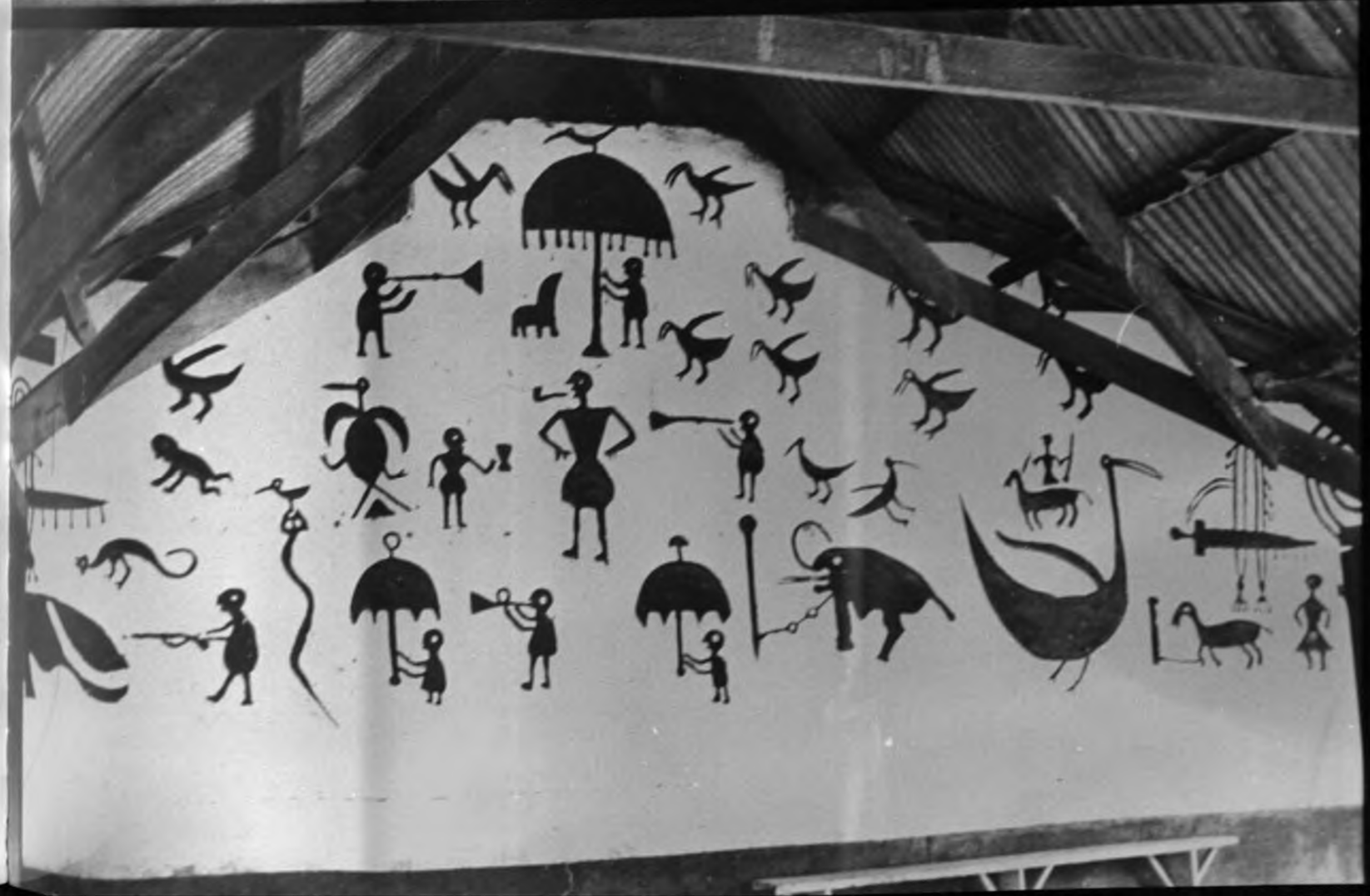


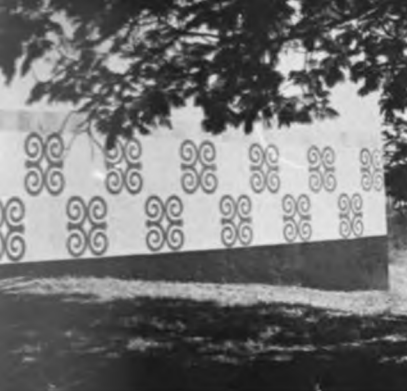


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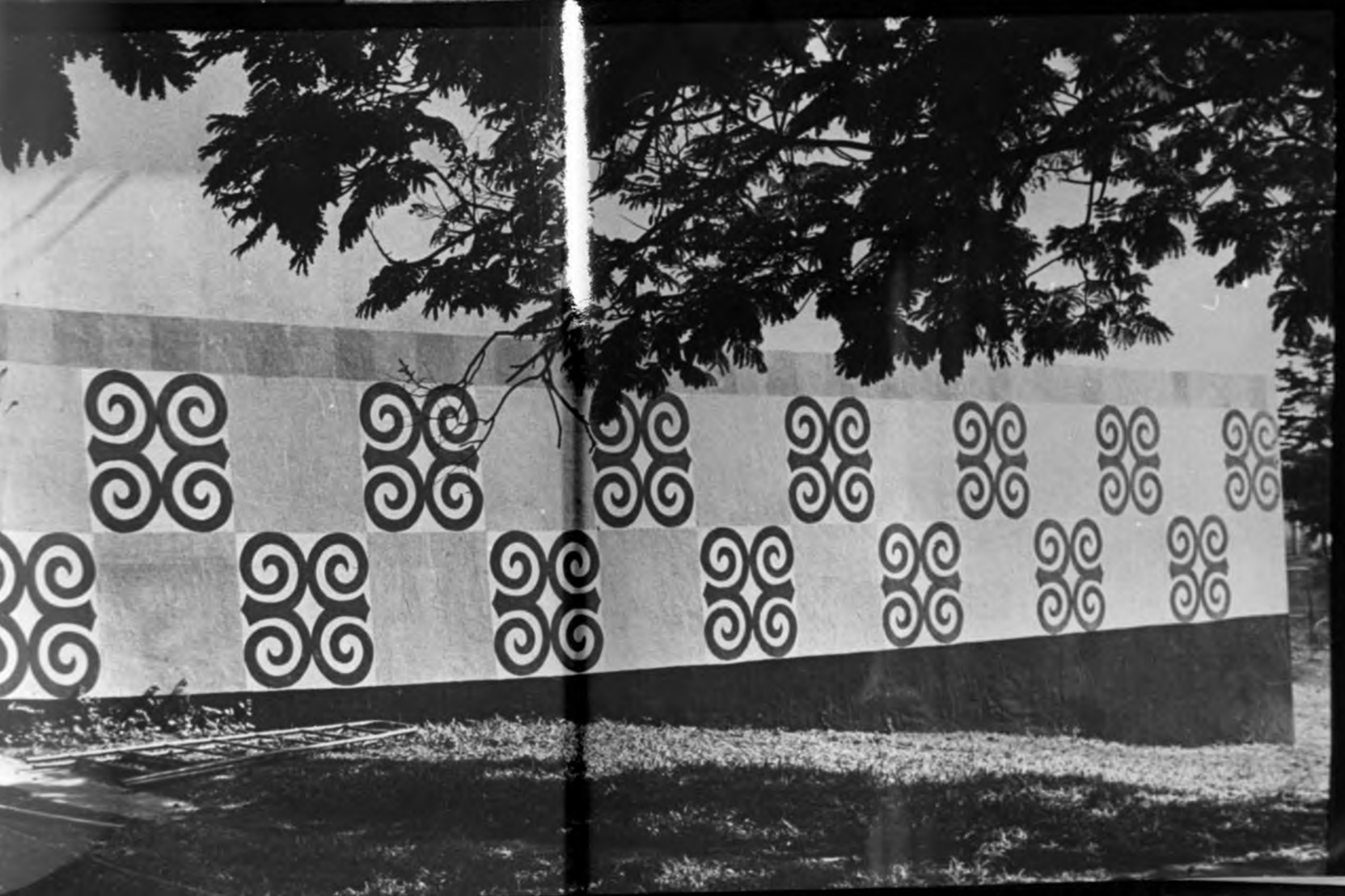








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M : MODERN

This is a highly specialised sector, in which the client, the architect and the artist are three distinct characters each with his particular role.

During the design and construction of the building, they interact at specifically defined parts of this time.

Time is of importance and the construction is undertaken through commission and contractual agreement.











