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THEMATIC EXAMINATION OF PAINTING AND GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS ON SELECTED SCHOOLS MURAL IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

Olugbenga Oladeji ABOKEDE^{1*}, Olatubosun Morakinyo OYEYODE², Ayodeji Samuel OLUYEMI³

^{1,2,3} Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria.

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***Corresponding author:** Olugbenga Oladeji ABOKEDE

Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria.

Abstract

The elements, sun and rain, has constituted threats to murals due to its transient and ephemeral nature. The obvious damages observed include cracks, disintegration of paint layers, swelling of the paint film, detachment of portions of painted layers and disintegration of the underlying ground. The murals are deteriorating and reducing fast in quality and quantity. It perhaps led to reduction in the number of mural paintings in Ilorin public places. This constitute rationale why the murals should be studied before they are destroyed. It also necessitates this urgent research inquiry. The research identifies and examine painting and graphic illustrations on selected schools mural in Ilorin. In scope, it discusses themes of the murals in the study area, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Method adopted for the study is field research complimented with library studies. Nineteen (19) works were examined. Mural painting and graphic illustrations in Ilorin schools depict communicable themes. They are instanced in figural and non-figural compositions, alphabets, numbers, calligraphy, geometry, cartoon and portraiture. Significantly, the mural serves aesthetic and educative purposes. It also fill the gap of scholarship neglect on the subject and in the study area, Ilorin.

Keywords: Mural, Painting, Arabic alphabets, Braille numerals, Graphic, Geometric shapes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mural paintings are often on public buildings like shrines, Churches, Mosques, Schools, palaces. They are equally found on the shrine walls of priests, mud walls of nobles and houses of important personnel and the interior or exterior walls of the modern cement block in Yorubaland [1]. Bascom [2] and Adepegba [3, 4],

Oyelola [5], Bowen [6] affirm that the Yoruba decorate house walls and shrines with paintings and geometric designs. These scholars discusses the origin, location, type, material and significance of murals with specific reference to Oyo palace. Okediji [7] and Campbel [8, 9, 10] also examine the

commissioning, materials, methods, form, style, the creative process, continuity and change, and comparative study of shrine paintings in Ile-Ife, Ikirun, Osogbo and Ilesa.

Adepegba [11] compare forms and themes of paintings and engravings in Igbeti and Igbaraoke Yoruba towns with those in North Africa and the Sahara and discovered no significant correlation. Adejumo [12] compare the past and present mural paintings in Africa; the past paintings according to him were confined to walls of shrines or caves for religious purposes while the contemporary ones are for decorative purposes. Folaranmi [13] makes a comparative analysis of the Oyo palace mural with other selected traditional wall paintings in Yoruba land. His findings reveal anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images and several other royal paraphernalia as dominant themes on the mural. Folaranmi [14] also look into the importance, impact and potency of cognomen (oriki) in the execution and interpretation of selected Yoruba traditional murals.

Similarly, Abokede [15, 16 and 17] researched on shrine paintings in the Upper Ogun Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The studies examine *Egungun* as a tradition and classifies the paintings on its shrines from thematic and stylistic point of view. Also of significance is Abokede's [18] work on Baptismal paintings of some churches in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. The study makes a thematic, stylistic and material analysis vis-à-vis classification of the paintings. It also examines the distribution, development, continuity and change in the art forms. Abokede, Ayeni and Akintonde [19] examine the usage of stained glass paintings in some selected Churches in Osogbo and its neighborhood. The study identifies and discusses the origin, history, theme, form, style, and techniques of the art works.

Ojo [20] did a comparative study of the shrine decoration of the Yoruba with that of Borgu and the Nupe. Abokede [21], Kalilu and Abokede [22] examine styles and development of paintings in formal art schools in Nigeria. The result indicated a thematic similarity of reptiles and human figures as the dominant theme. Apart from painting and sculpture traditions [19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25], the Yoruba race embraces and partake in other forms of art forms like cloth weaving, embroidery and pottery [26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38]. Ilorin no doubt is an integral part of the Yorubaland [39, 40, 41]. Ilorin, the study area is the capital city of Kwara State. It lies between longitude 8°, 3° North and 4°, 3° East. The city is also located between the forest zone of the West and the Savanah Region of the North [31, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45].

In Ilorin, mural paintings with religious themes are on the walls of Saint John Catholic Church, Isale Taiwo; First Bank Church, Emir Road; and Celestial Church, Sango area. Emir's market also has mural paintings in form of mosaic and Islamic calligraphy. Art and Culture Centre, Ilorin have mural paintings depicting cultural themes. Stella Obasanjo Hall along Offa Road and Children Health Centre at Okelele have mural paintings in form of mosaic. Mural paintings in Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions is a common phenomenon in Ilorin. Hence, several schools have mural paintings [46, 47]. However, mural decoration in Ilorin public spaces are deteriorating fast in quality and reducing in quantity. This explain why research inquiry on mural painting and graphic illustrations in Ilorin is imperative.

It therefore, necessitates urgent studies before the works are destroyed and the visual records got lost. The research identifies

and examines mural painting and graphic illustrations of some schools in Ilorin. It analyses the mural illustrations from thematic point of view. The study in scope is limited to mural illustrations in selected Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions of learning in Ilorin [31].

II. CONTENT OF THE MURAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Mural paintings and graphic illustrations in Ilorin schools depict communicable themes. They are figural and non-figural compositions, exemplified in alphabets, numbers, calligraphy, geometry, cartoon and portraiture [31].

Alphabets: are set of letters or symbols in a fixed order used in a language, and arranged in conventional order [46, 47]. Alphabets represented in Ilorin mural paintings are English, Arabic, Braille and Manual ones. Common images associated with English alphabets are apple, ball, cup, door, egg, fish, groundnut, hat, snail, orange, parrot, jug, key, ladder, question mark, ring, scissors and mango (plates 1-2). Apparent also is Arabic alphabets (plate 3).

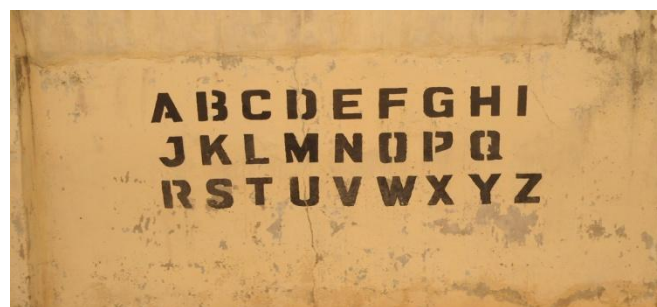


Plate 1

Anonymous, Year Unknown, *Alphabets A to Z*, 90 cm x 93 cm. (Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

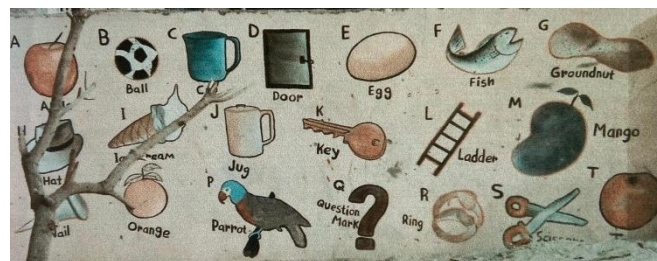


Plate 2

Anonymous, Year Unknown, *Alphabets and Images*, 180 cm x 360 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)



Plate 3

Alhaji Ameen, 2007, *Arabic Alphabets*, Oil Colour, 180 cm x 360 cm.

Oil Colour, 180 cm x 360 cm.

Braille is a form of written language for the blind [48]. Braille characters are patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips [49]. It is a tactile simple and elegant writing used by visually impaired individuals [50, 51, 52, 53]. Hence, braille writing or printing combines tangible dots or points to represent letters (plate 4).



Plate 4

Alhaji Ameen, 2007, *Braille Numerals*, Oil Colour, 150 cm x 380 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Sign language is a symbol which employs hand shapes, facial expression, gesture to communicate to an audience [54, 55, 56]. It is a means of communication through bodily movements, especially of the hands and arms, used when spoken communication is impossible or not desirable [57]. So, sign

Numbers: refers to exact quantities otherwise known as numerals [61]. In mathematics, numerals are symbols, figures, groups of symbols or figures that represent any given number. For instance, the numeral 40 represents forty as seen in Plate 6. There are Arabic, Braille and Roman Numeral as instanced in Plate 7. Arabic numeral is any of the number symbols such as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 (plate 6).

alphabet also known as manual alphabets is used to finger spell a series of the alphabetical letters to form a spoken or written word of a foreign language (plate 5). The deaf and people who are hard of hearing and individuals who can hear, but unable to speak physically uses sign language [58, 59]. Those who have trouble with oral language due to a disability, and those with deaf family members uses sign language [59, 60]. Similarly, French priest Charles-Michel de l'Epee (1712-1789) is known as the father of sign language. His alphabets, were later adopted into American Sign Language a few decades after his death [55].

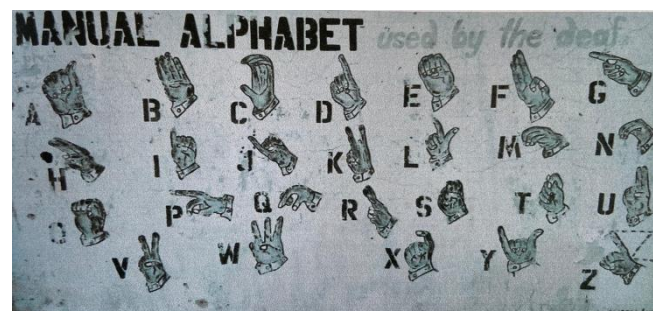


Plate 5

Alhaji Ameen, 2007, *Sign Language/Manual Alphabets*, Oil Colour, 240 cm x 390 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

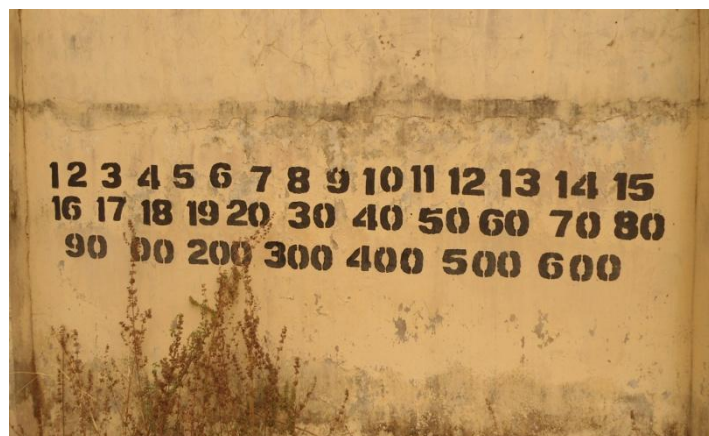


Plate 6

Anonymous, Year Unknown, *Numerals 1 to 600*

Oil Colour, 180 cm x 360 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)



Plate 7

Alhaji Ameen, 2007, *Braille Numerals*,

Oil Colour, 60 cm x 75 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Geometric Shapes: are figures or area closed by a boundary, but made out of points and lines [62]. It is any structure, open or closed, having a definite shape and properties made up of lines, curves and points [63]. The shapes on the murals are represented in two and three dimensional forms (plates 8-9). Plate 8 is predominantly drawn separately as illustration. While Plate 9 housed six overlapping forms drawn and painted in monochrome of blue and redish-pupple colouration. These murals display circle, cylinder, rectangle, square, oval shapes in two and three-dimensional forms (plates 8 and 9).

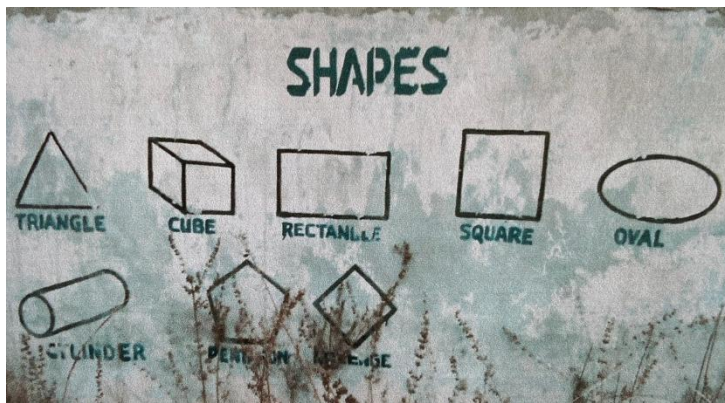


Plate 8

Anonymous, 2007, *Geometrical Shapes*,
Oil Colour,
90 cm x 180 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)



Plate 9

Akintunde, 2009, *Roemichs, Sport Activities
and Postman*, Acrylic on Wall,
90 cm x 150 cm

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

For instance, a square is a four-sided figure created by connecting four lines of equal lengths to form four right angles. Circle is a combination of curves that are all connected. Circular shape has no straight lines and angles. A rectangle is also created by connecting four lines. However, the rectangle has two lines, which are longer than the other two lines. In geometry, a rectangle is described as an elongated square. Triangle comprises three connected lines. For instance, if a triangle has one right angle, it is a right-angle triangle. When the angles in the triangle measures more than ninety degrees (90°), it is obtuse angled triangle. Finally, there is an quadrangular triangle, in which all the angles of the triangle are sixty degrees (60°). On the other hand, the triangle can be identified or labeled on the type of side they have. Polygon is made up of only lines and has no curves. It may not have any open parts. Art uses geometrical shapes such as triangles, squares, circles, and lines to organize space, convey ideas and emotions. Therefore, artists' uses geometry to develop a theme. For example, Cubism uses cubes to develop a design. The use of geometric shapes in art also allows artists to isolate and display emotion in their work [64, 65, 66, 67, 78].

Leadership: is a process involving two or more people in which one attempts to influence the others behavior towards the accomplishment of some goals or goal, it is the direction and influencing of individuals or groups to achieve goals [68, 69]. Stogdill [70] considers leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goal achievement. Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of people to influence and guide followers in an organization, society or a team [68]. Leaders are required and found in most aspects of society, including business, politics, religion, social and community based organisations. An effective leader is expected to possess and exhibit the following qualities: self-confidence, strong communication and management skills, creative and innovative thinking, perseverance, willingness to take risks and openness to change among others. Leadership styles are autocratic, democratic, pseudo-democratic, and laissez-fair [68]. As exemplified in Plates 10 and 11, these paintings showcases portraiture of the Nigerian presidents and Kwara State Governors. Among these leaders are Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Late Alhaji Usman Sheu Shagari, Late Sanni Abacha and Late Muhammed Buhari among others (plate 10). Plate 11 on the other hand has eighteen (18) military and civilian governors of Kwara State.



Plate 10

Alábéré, 2007, *Portraiture of the Nigerian Ex-Presidents*, Oil Colour, 60 cm x 120 cm.
(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)



Plate 11

Yusuf A. K., 2005, *Kwara State Governors*, Oil Colour, 30 cm x 300 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Sports: are form of physical activity or game [71]. It is used to improve physical ability or skills. Sports serve various purposes; it provides enjoyment to participants and entertainment to spectators. Sometimes it is for achievement or reward [72]. Games can be played alone, in teams and online by amateurs or professionals. It involves mental or/and physical stimulation. Many games help develop practical skills, serve as a form of exercise, or otherwise perform an educational or psychological role. Types of games are Lawn Games, Tabletop Games, Board Games, Card Games, Dice Games, Pencil and Paper Games among others [73]. Ilorin murals and graphic illustrations exhibit sport activities like volleyball, football, discus, running (sprinting), lawn tennis and basketball. Painting produced by Balogun Saheed Kayode, 130cm x 300cm depict Nigeria College of Education Games (NICEGA) (plate 13). Akintunde executed another painting while the other one in the same category is anonymous (plate 12 and 13).



Plate 12

Akintunde, 2009, *Sport Activities*,

Acrylic on Wall, 90 cm x 150 cm,

Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

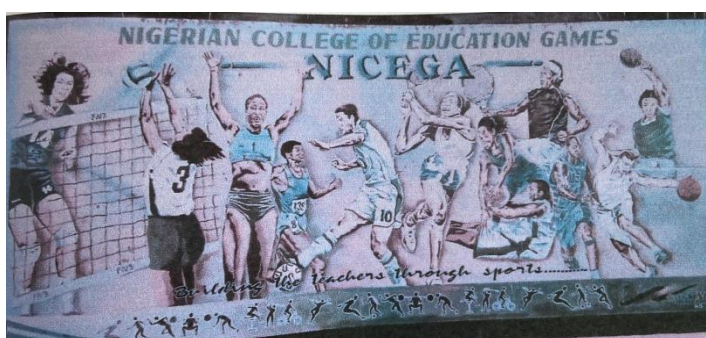


Plate 13

Balogun Saheed Kayode, 2005, *Nicega*,

Oil Colour, 130 cm x 300 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Vocational Education and Career Choice: are training for a specific occupation, acquired through a combination of theoretical teaching and practical experience. Vocation training may be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning methods [74]. It is known as career and technical education. Technical and vocational training provide knowledge and skills related to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life [75]. Technical and vocational training focuses on learning and mastery of specialized techniques, as well as general knowledge, skills and values. The curricula often include entrepreneurship training. Technical and vocational education serves several purposes. It offers several employment and/or work opportunities. It open avenues for formal and self-employment [76]. It prepares people especially youth for skilled craft and employment with requisite skill [77, 68]. Murals paintings and graphic illustrations depicting various professions prepare children's mind on the importance of career choice.

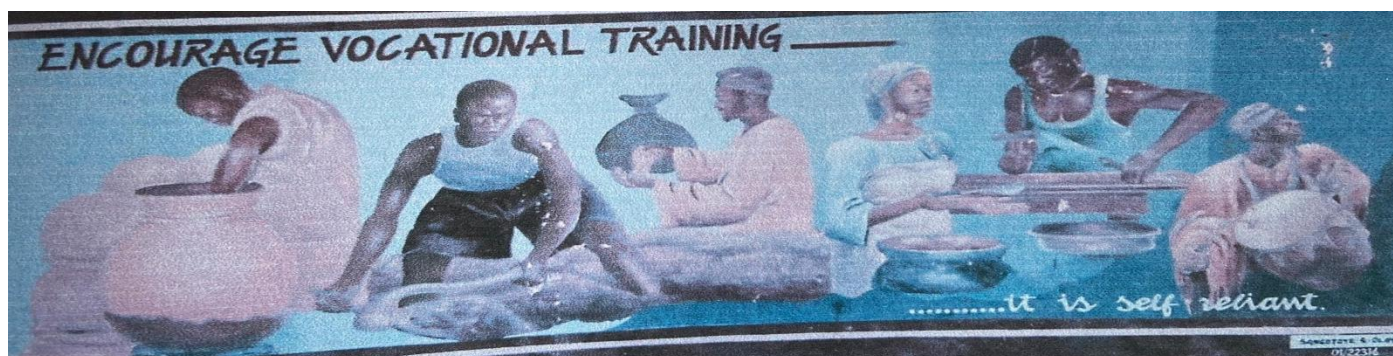


Plate 14

Sangotoye S. Olayinka, 2001, *Vocational Training*, Oil Colour, 130 cm x 300 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

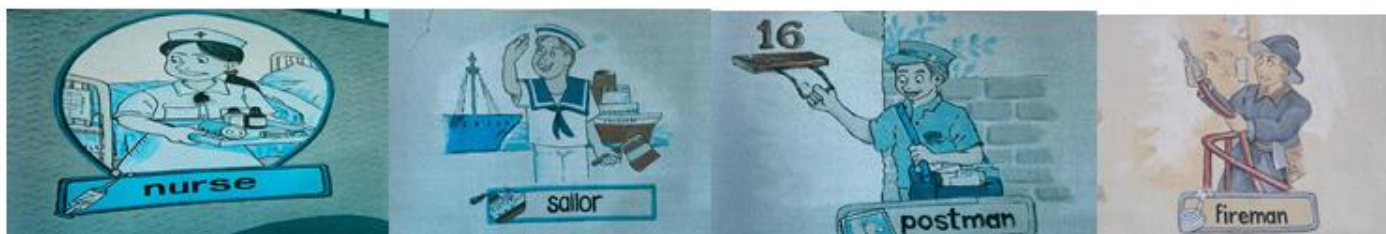


Plate 15

Akintunde, 2009, *Nurse, Sailor, Postman and Fireman*, Acrylic on Wall, 550 cm x 150 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Warnings /Caution: Caution is warning against danger or evil. Paintings of Kabir O warn against social vices such as cultism, examination malpractices, sex trade, drug abuse, hooliganism. His painting composition presented group of students' in various activities mentioned above with skull, a sign of danger for involving in the act. Painting of Gafar Raheem and Oyelaran Idowu, Sanjo also warn against promiscuity and illicit sex (plates 16-17). The painting points to the terminal disease, "AIDS" and "HIV" as the consequence of indulging in such act. The painting depict two men infected by HIV, human Skull and human bone.

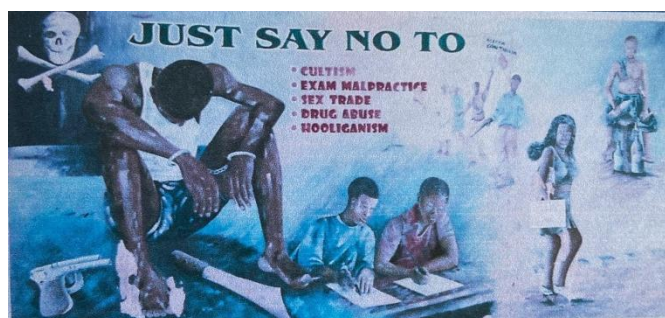


Plate 16

Kadir O, 2003, *Just Say No*,
Oil Colour, 240 cm x 300 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

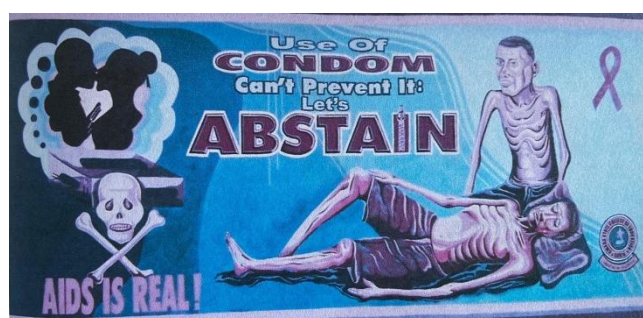


Plate 17

Gafar Raheem, 2003, *Aids is Real*,
Oil Colour, 120 cm x 280 cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

Cartoons: are drawings showing features of its subjects in a humorous and exaggerated way [79]. Cartoons are classified by their usage. Among them are gag/ pocket, comic strips, editorial, illustrative and animated cartoons. Gag cartoon is known for making fun of groups of people rather than individuals. Comic strips cartoons illustrates stories of a super hero in a book. Editorial cartoon also known as political cartoon expresses public opinion on current events in a humorous manner [80]. Illustrative cartoon aid visual understanding in teaching/learning process. It educates readers and audience in general. Painting of Oyelaran Idowu, *Aids is Real* and *Just Say No*, are of editorial cartoons (plates 18 and 19).



Plate 18

Oyelaran Idowu Sanjo, 2003, *Aids is Real*,
Oil Colour, 120cm x 280cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)



Plate 19

Oyelaran Idowu Sanjo, 2003, *Just Say No*,
Oil Colour, 240cm x 300cm.

(Photograph by Oluyemi A. S.)

III. CONCLUSION

The paper thematically examine painting and graphic illustrations of selected schools mural in Ilorin. Nineteen (19) works were randomly selected and examined visually. Their themes are figural and non-figural compositions, exemplified by alphabets, numbers, calligraphy, geometry, cartoon and portraiture. Significantly, the mural serves aesthetic and educative purposes. However, nature, (sun and rain) has constituted threat to structural and aesthetic qualities of these murals due to their transient and ephemeral state.

The obvious damages observed in Ilorin murals include cracks, disintegration of paint layers, swelling of the paint film, detachment of portions of painted layers and disintegration of the underlying ground.(plates 10, 18 and 19). Nonetheless, this study fills the gap of neglect on the subject and in the study area. Conclusively, the research hopes its findings will provoke further studies on mural illustrations, particularly in Ilorin and Nigeria in general.

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