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# ART AND CRITICISM

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Jimoh Buraimoh was born into a moslem family in Osogbo, Oyo State in 1945. His contribution to the field of African art can be described as creatively original. The media he is associated with is bead painting, which he evolved as early as 1967; twenty four years after he was born. Buraimoh started his life humbly as an electrician, trained in stage lighting at the Arts Theatre in Ibadan and joined Late Duro Laipo's National Theatre as stage light technician in 1964.

In 1964, Jimoh, participated in art summer school which was organised at the Mbari Mbayo in Osogbo. He had further experience about art when he worked with the Institute of African Studies at the Ife University, now renamed Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. He also attended the Fine Arts Department of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in Kaduna State as an artist in residence. He took courses in Arts and Design,

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specialized in sculpture and graduated, in 1974, with a diploma.

He had been exhibiting even before he went to Zaria, and since his graduation, his work has been widely shown. He has exhibited in Togo, Ghana, Britain, Western Germany, the Netherlands, India, and in the United States of America. In Nairobi, Kenya, he represented Nigeria at the First All African Trade Fair.

In addition to exhibiting, he shares his creative talents, through the medium of teaching. He has been widely involved in the teaching of African art. For example after completing his course at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1974, he proceeded to America on invitation and taught African

art, bead painting and casting in many Universities and Secondary Schools.

Jimoh Buraimoh has been commissioned to execute numerous mosaics and paintings. His dexterity can be noticed in the works he executed at prominent places, particularly in Lagos. His murals adorn the Ikoyi Hotel, India Door House, Day and Baker, Western House and State House, all in Lagos. The Institute of African Studies and the Conference Hall, University of Ibadan, the Premier Hotel, Ibadan, the standard bank in Osogbo and Benin National Museum of Art exhibits also have murals by this artist. Several of his bead paintings and mosaic designs in several hotels in Ogburn as well.

Usually Buraimoh works in the medium of colourful beads which are arranged threaded upon strings and skillfully glued upon a background of plywood board which usually have oil colours. Having experimented with beads, broken bottles, shells, pieces of pottery and cement, Buraimoh carried his experiment further by concentrating on the use of the medium of beads on painted plywood background because, the use of broken bottles, shells and cement were altogether too heavy and bulky.

Jimoh's painting titled Faces (See The Nucleus) is typical of his bead painting. In this work, his representation of heads and hands seems to follow some traditional principles of design in African

art. The head, Ori, is very important in the traditional object representation, and it often occupies the major proportion of the form. Buraimoh's use of black beads to delineate the various heads gives the impression of a flow of pattern outlining the figures. With the use of design, repetition of shapes and blending of variously toned coloured beads, the sublime images of 'Faces' seem to emerge even in a somewhat three-dimensional form. But this is a result of colour modelling, manipulated skillfully with the use of many beads.

His theme is societal as centred on myths, metaphor, and Yoruba mythology. His earliest and most influential patron, Wm Beier, probably encouraged him to explore mythic or obscure figures. He often works in abstract. One of

his paintings titled 'My God and my Nation' which was exhibited at the National Centre for Arts and Culture between January 24 to February 19, 1977, is based purely on abstract shapes. However, the abstract work may be regarded as a reflection of his early exposure to stage lighting techniques. The geometric shapes particularly the circular shapes seem to radiate and illuminate the darker areas of the board.

Similarly, Jimoh Buraichon's beadwork titled 'The Peacock' (see Nucleus) further explain the colourist nature of the artist. There is the blend of reds, red orange with yellows, purples and browns. The whole figure, semi-abstract though, is rendered in such a way that it occupies

the design area very effectively. In his use of lines, the black bold outline of the 'Peacock' contrasts with the multicoloured tail of the colourful bird. The semi-circular spread of the peacock's tail and the unfolding patterns, line and textural details of the tail tend to give the bead painting an evolving natural life.

It may be concluded that Jimoh Buraichon made a success of his medium of picture making with coloured beads. One of the reasons could be his involvement in stage lighting. Second his exposure to the western world through Ulli Beier and Duro Ladipo's troupe and thirdly his home environment in Osogbo may have stimulated him to experiment with the medium of bead painting. Similarly, members of many performing groups often wear traditional regalia which

include beads of various colours and dresses made from fabrics. This simulation of traditional Yoruba life may have influenced Buraimoh's unique medium of painting.

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