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Training and Practice of Carving at LAUTECH Art School: Trainees' Feedback

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ABSTRACT

Carving is a subtractive sculpture technique. In Nigeria, it evolved from traditional to contemporary art periods with its training domiciled in informal and formal art schools. Existing literature largely addressed traditional, informal training methods and historical practices of carving, however, there is a notable lack of focused studies on carving training and practice in formal Nigerian Art schools. This study investigates the training and practice of carving at LAUTECH Art School via students' and alumni feedback. It aims to document existing Carvings, assess the pedagogical approaches employed in carving training, identify challenges limiting effective carving training and practice, and propose potential reforms to revitalize and sustain the carving practice in formal Nigerian art schools. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology, collecting primary data through surveys, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and field investigation. Secondary data were sourced from academic journal articles, and reports on carving practice in Nigeria. All data gathered were subjected to qualitative analysis. Findings revealed that carving is not a preferred sculpture technique at LAUTECH Art School. The lack of infrastructure dedicated to carving and insufficient staffing hinder effective training. Respondents' concern about carving's economic viability resulted in a declining student interest in the practice. The study recommends increased investment in tools and materials, recruitment of specialized instructors, integration of traditional and modern carving methods, and the organization of regular exhibitions and training programs. These efforts could revitalize interest in carving, enabling LAUTECH Art School to preserve and promote Nigeria's rich carving heritage.

Keywords: Carving, LAUTECH Art School, Practice, Training

INTRODUCTION

Sculpture is a visual art form that involves creating three-dimensional works of art using a variety of techniques and materials. Sculptural forms are tangible and visible and appeal to tactile and visual sensibilities. Sculptures can be either relief or freestanding. Sculptural expressions come in various styles, themes, and mediums. The mediums include cement, fiberglass, plastics, stone, wax, fabric, glass, rubber, wood, metal, clay, ivory, plaster of Paris, randomly found objects, and mixed media. Distinctive styles such as naturalism, realism, abstract, etcetera., themes such as biomorphic, anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and several others emanated from different sculptors (Oladugbagbe and Akintonde, 2016a).

Carving is a subtractive sculpture technique involving the creation of artefacts by shaping a solid mass of materials like stone or wood through the controlled removal of their particles to reveal an image seemingly locked within the mass (Rogers, May 2025). Carving as a subtractive sculpture technique is unique in its own right. Contrary to carving additive sculpture techniques such as modelling, casting, stamping, molding, fabrication, and assemblage are common practices. Carving is executed in mediums including stone, wood, ivory, plaster of Paris, etcetera. The medium dictates the tools to be used for carving. Steel tools like chisels, pitchers, iron hammers, heavy point tools, fine point tools, stone gouges, drills, bush hammers, power-driven pneumatic tools, grinders, and sanding tools are often used in stone carving. Saws, axes, wood gouges, wood rasps, coarse files, sandpaper, and wooden mallets are used for wood carving. In Africa, wood carving is done with an assortment of adzes. Ivory is carved with a collection of knives, rasps, files, chisels, drills, and scrapers amongst other tools (Rogers, January 2025). In addition to carving tools are Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as safety goggles, gloves, safety boots, and earplugs. After the carving and finishing are completed, the surface of the carved work can be polished with various processes and materials. The carver may choose to protect and improve the appearance of woodcarving by sealing and colouring the wood with natural oils, gloss varnish, or wax (Woodcarving, 12 December 2024).

The earliest societies indulged in some form of stone sculpture. Petroglyphs are perhaps the earliest form during the Paleolithic age. The Western art tradition of sculpture particularly during the classical period produced carved masterpieces. The Renaissance period also produced famous and remarkable carved sculptures (Kleiner, 2015). Wood carving is a common sculptural expression in Africa (Coleman, 2016). Perhaps because the medium is light and fit for mobile sculptures common to Africa, appears easier to work than some other mediums, and because its needs are not sophisticated, as they are essentially carving knives, gouges, and sharpening equipment. With wood in abundance and handy in Nigeria, wood carving has been used for cultural and traditional expressions (Guardian Nigeria Life, 14 November 2024).

Carvings in wood though extensively practiced did not survive in comparison to carvings executed in other mediums, particularly stone. Woodcarvings are often at risk of decay, insect damage, and fire. Nevertheless, its significance as an important element in the art history of several cultures, particularly in Africa is conspicuous (Wood Carving, 12 December 2024). Historically, the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria are significant in art creation (Akinde 2023: 11-12). Carving, smithery, cloth production, mat weaving, woodcraft, and leather works are among the traditional arts practiced in the region. Njoku and Okafor (2019) identified the Yorubas as prominent for traditional artistic practices such as stone and wood carving, and bronze casting. It highlights the richness of Yoruba art traditions and affirms her artistic leadership and contribution to Nigerian contemporary art as exemplified in the contributions of Yoruba artists such as Aina Onabolu; pioneer modern Nigerian artist, Cornelius Adepegba; foremost African Art historian and critic, and Yemisi Shyllon; art collector with the largest Nigerian contemporary art collection to mention but a few.

The training and practices of traditional artistic practices were via informal institutions and structures. The emergence of formal art schools in contemporary times birthed the formal training of artists and seemingly induced a decline in the informal lineage apprenticeship training method (Ayodele and Babalola, 2019). Carving in Nigeria thrived from pre-colonial through colonial to post-colonial times (Njoku and Okafor, 2019). It has evolved from traditional to modern and to contemporary processes with its training in both informal and formal art schools. Fundamentally, formal or informal art institutions established for training artists in Nigeria are often referred to as Art schools (Kalilu and Odeniyi, 2024a: 569).

As a working definition and regarding this study, Art school is a visual arts department in Nigerian colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities offering programs in the visual arts. These visual arts departments are commonly named Fine and Applied Arts departments. In some instances, they exist independently as Fine Arts departments or Industrial Design departments. These departments are basically made up of painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic design, and textile design units which represent areas of specialization. Painting and sculpture are classified as Fine Arts while ceramics, graphic design, and textile design are classified as Applied Arts. Despite Nigeria's rich artistic heritage, the contribution of carving to economic development, and the deep-rooted history of carving in Nigeria, the state of carving in Nigerian art schools faces challenges that impact pedagogically.

Existing literature largely addressed traditional, informal training methods and historical practices of carving. There is a notable lack of focused studies on carving training and practice in formal Nigerian Art schools. This paper investigates the training and practice of carving at LAUTECH Art School (the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho), relying on the feedback from students and alumni of the Art school, particularly

those whose area of specialization is sculpture. It aims to document existing carvings, assess the pedagogical approaches employed in carving training, identify challenges limiting effective carving training and practice, and propose potential reforms to revitalize and sustain the carving practice in formal Nigerian art schools. Among studies on Nigerian Art Schools particularly LAUTECH Art School are chronological studies of Art school emergence in Nigerian university system and biographical studies of Art school administrators revealing their contributions to Nigeria Art school development (Odeniyi 2022, Kalilu and Odeniyi, 2024b). Also existing are researches highlighting the significance of carving in Nigerian culture and its potential for economic development. The importance of carving in Nigerian art history is well-documented in various scholarly works. However, studies specifically addressing the state of training and practice of carving in Nigerian art schools are limited. This study thus reviewed extant related literature.

Onuora (2015) told the story of the development of sculpture in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Nigeria. It examined sculpture teaching, learning, and appreciation in the Department between 1961 and 1994. Works executed by the pioneer students are a few cement sculptures located at various locations on the University campus. It reported that some of the works were carvings in wood. Woodcarvings in stylized mode of representation of ideas and forms became the hallmark of sculptures from the Nsukka art school. Prominent among the artistry mentioned are Emejue's massive woodworks as well as Okeke's uli-inspired carvings. It observed that the works were finished in masterly chisel marks, which provided strong resource references for sculpture students.

Oladugbagbe and Akintonde (2016b) examined continuity and changes in sculpture practice via form, style, theme, and material. It documented all the identifiable sculptures in and around the African Studies complex at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. In all, 34 sculptures were identified, grouped, and discussed based on thematic issues. However, in all these works, carving was conspicuously missing.

Oyinlola (2017) revealed that before the advent of foreign religions, most African wooden sculptures were carved to deify gods. It studied wooden objects in the National Museum, Lagos. It also studied the techniques of conserving wooden objects against deterioration. The study selected 10 wooden objects which include masks, headdresses, ancestral figures, door panels, house posts, wooden bowls, and ceremonial wooden drums for discussion from the museum. The carvings were done in pre-colonial times by traditional carvers who were trained informally.

Adepegba and Abati (2017) highlighted the uses of wood carving by the Yoruba. It focused on the change from traditional to contemporary woodcarving, mentioned factors responsible for the change, and itemized resultant characteristics of the contemporary wood carvings. The paper analyzed the works of Olabisi Fakeye and Ayanladun Ayandepo, noting the new dimensions of contemporary woodcarving.

Ajadi and Akinde (2019) researched ceramic art training at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, the Polytechnic Ibadan, and Ladoke Akintola University of Technology via the analysis of the works of products of the schools. Though this study captures artistic training in Nigerian art schools with LAUTECH as a case study, its focus is ceramic art training. Similarly, Abiodun and Akinde (2024) examined selected ceramic works with COVID-19 inclinations from the Ogbomosho Art School. The selected works were examined based on material, technique, style, and theme. The study documented the COVID-19 visual synthesis of Ogbomosho Art School and brought to the fore the School's ceramics contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Njoku and Okafor 2019 reviewed the traditional arts of Nigeria and the cultures that birthed them from pre-colonial, through colonial to post-colonial times. It identified stone and wood carvings among art traditions that thrived amongst the Yorubas, Igbos, Edos, Igalas, and Ibibios in the pre-colonial era. It acknowledged the emergence of formal art training in post-colonial Nigeria. The article is not focused on carving as other traditional art types were reviewed. The stone and wood carving traditions described were of pre-colonial and colonial times. As such, its training and practice were informal.

Nwanna and Nwanna (2020) researched the Awka wood carving industry from the pre-colonial period to the present. The study revealed Western education influenced wood carving in Awka. It recommended the introduction of traditional wood carving methods to the academic art curriculum in Nigeria, advocated for the inclusion of carving in primary schools, and urged carvers to organize and participate in seminars, art exhibitions, and workshops.

Ajayi and Adeoya (2021) focused on the technology and craft of wood carving in Ìṣàgìrà-Eletè town, a riverine area of Lagos State, to revive the technology and craft of wood carving with modern digital technology and promote afforestation. It identified boats/canoes, paddles, crab traps, and masks as the items mainly carved in the area. Its findings show the non-availability of big trees (timbers) to carve canoes. The findings also indicated that technology is responsible for the decline in carving as it presents an easier option in construction. Wood fetching and production of charcoal are phasing out boat/canoe carving. It concluded with recommendations to revive canoe and paddle carving in Ìṣàgìrà-Eletè town and Africa at large.

Kalilu and Oladugbagbe 2022 examined postmodernism in sculptural practices at Nsukka, Benin, and LAUTECH Art schools between 2000 and 2020. It revealed that the exploration of found objects and the production of sculptures that provoke deeper conceptual meaning of subjects had become the norm. It concluded that postmodernism can be incorporated into sculptural training in Nigerian art schools without inhibiting the development of knowledge and skill according to classical sculptural principles and values. It posits that postmodernism should be geared towards solving problems of material, technique, and form. It discussed nine

works selected randomly from the three art schools. The works discussed were not carvings. The works were casting and assemblages executed in cement, metal, fiberglass, and mixed media.

Ayodele and Babalola (2019) examined the woodcarving lineages in Iseyin and the change in practice and patronage against the backdrop of a change in the art culture of Post-colonial African societies. It identified factors responsible for the shift as Western education, religion, and technology. It analyzed their effects and gave recommendations for the revitalization of traditional art practices in contemporary times for sustainable artistic heritage and development in Africa. Ayodele and Babalola (2022a) studied the extant woodcarving lineages in Iseyin in the 21st century. It identified nine active wood carvers from surviving four of the thirteen lineages that flourished before colonial times. It affirms that the artists still carve traditional themes. It however noted that the lineage wood carvers struggle to remain relevant in Post-colonial presence. Babalola and Ayodele (2022b) investigated the continuity and the changes in the woodcarving practices in Iseyin. It revealed that the woodcarving traditions remained, though with records of developmental changes in iconography, functions, techniques, and tools. It advanced the absorption of the change into continuity to evolve a global art form.

In most of the literature reviewed, training and practice of carving are apparently informal and do not tell of the contemporary state of carving in Nigerian formal art schools. As such LAUTECH became a handy case study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative research techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the state of carving training and practice in Nigerian art schools. Primary data was collected via surveys and semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and alumni of LAUTECH art school. The survey instrument consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, designed to gather data on students' perceptions of carving. Data was also collected via field investigation to gain insights into the pedagogical approaches to carving and the integration of traditional practices with modern techniques. Secondary data was also gathered from relevant academic journals, reports, and extant literature on carving in Nigeria. The carvings identified are documented. The study qualitatively analyzed data collected via questionnaire and highlighted challenges identified in the training and practice of carving in the art school with the hope of strengthening the practice.

A semi-structured questionnaire was designed and administered to undergraduate sculpture students in 300, 400, and 500 levels and postgraduate sculpture students to survey their opinions on the effectiveness and efficacy of the training in carving techniques. The questionnaire was also designed on Google form and an invite was given to alumni of LAUTECH art school to fill out in order to capture their opinion on the training and practice of carving. The Alumni WhatsApp

group was harnessed for easy reach. Data gathered via interviews and responses to the administered questionnaires was analyzed qualitatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LAUTECH Art School

LAUTECH was established in 1990 as Oyo State University of Technology (OSUTECH). Its name was changed to Ladoke Akintola University of Technology after the state creation exercise that created Osun State from Oyo State in 1991. Until recently, the University was jointly funded by Oyo and Osun States (LAUTECH Official Website, 2025). The Faculty of Environmental Sciences in LAUTECH is host to the Department of Fine and Applied Arts. The Department was established in 1992. It provides training from Bachelor to Doctoral degrees in visual arts and art history. Degrees offered include a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) degree in Fine and Applied Arts, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Fine and Applied Arts, Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Art History, Post Graduate Diploma in Fine Art (Drawing, Art History, Computer Art, Form, and Material Technology, Painting, and Sculpture), and Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Art (Graphic Design, Textile Design, and Ceramics), Master of Technology (M.Tech), Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Fine Art (Drawing, Electronic, and Digital Art, Form and Material Technology, Painting, Environmental and Industrial Sculpture), Master of Technology, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Arts (Furniture Design and Interior Decoration, Communication Design, Textile Design and Clothing, Ceramics and Glass). Post-graduate programmes in Art History are Master of Arts, Master of Philosophy, and Doctor of Philosophy (Students' Handbook, 2021, Part Time Undergraduate Curriculum, Top-Up Undergraduate Curriculum).

Carving at LAUTECH Art School

At LAUTECH Art School, the sculpture unit where carving is taught has been training students for more than three decades. Muyideen Adio Jaji, Donatus Martins Akatapo, Moses Akintunde Akintonde, Otonye Bille Ayodele, Francis Ebunola Allan Oladugbagbe, Babasola Jacob Bada, and Tirimisiyu Ayedun Oladimeji had taught sculpture in the department in permanent and temporary capacities. Currently, Francis Ebunola Allan Oladugbagbe, a professor of Environmental Sculpture is the head of the unit. Carving-related courses in the Department are FAA 381 (Carving Techniques I); a 2-unit practical course described as Studio works in various carving techniques and processes in wood, soapstone, bone, etcetera., and FAA 382 (Carving Techniques II); a 2-unit practical course described as further exploration of carving techniques in stone, marble, and wood (Students' Handbook, 2021: 26). Other courses that could accommodate carving at the undergraduate level are FAA 585 (Architectural Sculpture); a 2 unit practical course described as Advanced works / projects in architectural sculpture using various

media, and FAA 586 (Special Project in Sculpture); a 2 unit practical course described as Accomplishment of a major sculpture work (Students' Handbook, 2021: 36).

LAUTECH Art School offers Postgraduate Diploma programmes in Fine Art with specialisation in Sculpture. It offers a Postgraduate (M.Tech) programme in Fine Art with specialisation in Environmental and Industrial Sculpture. Carving-specific and related courses at the Postgraduate Diploma level include FAA 653 (Relief Sculpture); a first semester, 2-unit practical course described as Relief Techniques: bass and high, studies of three-dimensional forms in different media and FAA 658 (Carving); a second semester 2 units practical course described as studio exercise in various carving techniques and processes in wood, soapstone, marble, bone, etc (Handbook, 2010: 100 & 101). Carving specific and related courses for the M.Tech programme in Fine Arts (Environmental and Industrial Sculpture) include FAS 703 (Materials and Techniques); a first semester, 3-unit practical course described as Familiarisation with an exploration of various sculpture media. Emphasis on peculiarity and techniques of handling each medium. Development of high technical proficiency. FAS 707 (Figure Sculpture); a first semester, 3-unit practical course described as Studio exercise to develop advanced skills in form construction. Critical study of anatomy expressed in various sculpture media. FAS 708 (Material Technology); a second semester, 4 unit practical course described as Detailed analysis of nature, type, and peculiarities of materials for sculpture. Emphasis on procedure of production. Development of materials with locally sourced materials (Handbook, 2010: 142 & 143).

A conscientious examination of the sculpture garden where the sculpture and ceramics studios are currently located revealed the existence of some carved works. The carved works are not conspicuous, perhaps due to their small sizes. Also, the Plaster of Paris (POP) and cement medium in which the works were executed did not readily stand out as carved works, as a lot of sculptures in the sculpture garden and its environment are in cement but are not carved. For carved works in POP and cement, a mass or lump is first made in the medium, and is subsequently carved. Among the items carved include: animals, traditional drums, floral motifs, and abstract representation of human figures (Plates 1 - 4).



Plate 1.

Eagle Head, Medium: Plaster of Paris

Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 2.

Traditional Drum, Medium: Soap Stone

Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 3.

Floral Motif, Medium: Wood

Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 4.

Abstract Representation (Mother and Child), Medium: Soap Stone
 Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)

The carvings are executed in the round and as a relief. Some of the carvings are uncompleted and the subject/theme being carved is unrecognisable. No doubt, the carvings identified, particularly those in wood would have been better preserved indoors than outdoors; in and around the sculpture garden. The carvings, unlike other works in the sculpture garden, are not student projects but rather coursework assignments evacuated from the studio where they were carved and placed in and around the sculpture studio. Identifying the students who made the carvings is herculean.

Around the sculpture studio is a wood carving of a pregnant woman's torso (Plates 5). The carving was executed as a special project in sculpture by Mayowa Akintoye; a female graduate of the Department under the supervision of Dr. Mrs. Ayodele Otonye. According to Oluwagbenga Oladipupo; a M.Tech (Industrial and Environmental Sculpture) student in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts at LAUTECH, Mayowa observed her Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) at Oshogbo and was exposed to the practice of carving in wood. She picked an interest in carving and opted to execute her special project in wood carving.

Another female figure carved in wood was found in the old ceramics studio. The carving portrays a stylised naturalistic expression of a kneeling female figure. The work was executed by Akinde Toyin Emmanuel. It was an experimental attempt and a product of influential interaction with Mayowa Akintoye who was

then an undergraduate student. Akinde, T. E., though a ceramic lecturer was encouraged to produce the kneeling female figure (Plate 6).



Plate 5.

Pregnant Woman Torso, Artist: Mayowa Akintoye, Medium: Wood
Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 6.

Kneeling Female Figure, Artist: Akinde Toyin Emmanuel, Medium: Wood
Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)

Further search around the sculpture studios revealed another wood carving of an owl (Plate 7). Oluwagbenga Oladipupo again identified the “Owl” as a wood carving executed by Agboola Oluwanifemi; a male sculpture graduate of the Department. The “Owl” was his special project in sculpture. He had its maquette executed in clay and subsequently the carving in wood. The carving was supervised by Professor F. E. A. Oladugbagbe.



Plate 7.

Owl, Artist: Agboola Oluwanifemi, Medium: Wood
Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)

Ipadeola Samuel; a 500-level sculpture student of the Department at the time of this research attested to the details of the “Owl” and confirmed the existence of other carvings, particularly mentioning a carving done on a door panel by a group of students as a group work (Plate 8). Generally, there are records of carvings in relief on door panels executed as assignments by a group of students in the Department. In the Departmental gallery was found a wood carving of a masquerade (Plate 9) said to have been carved by Adeka Akochi Echo, a postgraduate diploma student. The carving though small is well finished. It bore fine details effectively depicting the masquerade’s costume.

Oluwole Babajide; a M.Tech. Environmental Sculpture student of the Department had produced some carvings as part of his coursework among which is a quart stone carving of a maiden’s bust with a traditional hairdo associated with maidens from the southwestern region of Nigeria, particularly those of Ibibio and Efik tribes (Plate 10).



Plate 8.

Carved Door Panel, Artist: Group, Medium: Wood
Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 9.

Masquerade, Artist: Adeka Akochi Echo, Medium: Wood
Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)



Plate 10.

Maiden Bust, Artist: Oluwole Babajide John

Medium: Stone

Photograph by Afolabi Bashir (2025)

Findings indicate that though carving is offered in Nigerian art schools, with particular reference to LAUTECH Art School, it is faced with challenges related to inadequate resources, and manpower shortage. Many students express a desire to learn carving techniques but lack the necessary support and opportunities. Additionally, the market for carved artworks remains underdeveloped, hindering the economic viability of carving as a specialisation. The results of the survey and interviews reveal several important trends in the current state of carving training and practice in LAUTECH art schools. Students reported that carving is often treated as a supplementary skill in art rather than a core focus. It is typically introduced in the early stages of training but is overshadowed by more popular techniques.

Furthermore, most of the students expressed that they do not view carving as a financially viable career option, this further reduces interest in pursuing carving professionally. A significant finding was the lack of proper facilities and equipment for teaching carving. The Department reportedly does not have a well-equipped workshop dedicated to carving and the shortage of quality tools and materials has been identified as a major hindrance to effective teaching. The manpower strength is inadequate as the sculpture unit of the department is currently understaffed with just one Professor handling all the courses in the area of specialisation. The lack of specialized instructors, particularly those well-versed in carving techniques, is also a significant challenge.

Many respondents indicated that modern art practices have created a shift in student interests, with fewer students expressing interest in traditional methods like wood carving. This trend, while indicative of global art movements, has contributed

to the marginalization of carving in LAUTECH and perhaps Nigerian art schools in general. Despite these challenges, several respondents emphasized the need to preserve and promote traditional carving as a cultural heritage. Concerted efforts to integrate aspects of indigenous carving techniques with contemporary art practices are identified. These efforts, however, are often dependent on institutional support and funding. Interviews with students revealed that while there is a strong appreciation for the cultural value of carving, many are uncertain about the economic prospects of pursuing carving as a career. This perception is compounded by the scarcity of carving-related job opportunities.

Respondents to the Google form are alumni, undergraduate, and postgraduate students of LAUTECH Art School admitted between 1999 and 2023. Their responses show that casting and modelling are the most preferred sculpture technique, and carving is the least preferred sculptural technique. According to the respondents, Plaster of Paris (POP) is the most preferred medium of carving. Other mediums are stone, wood, and cement. The most preferred carving expression is relief, though a good number of carvings are expressed in the round. The majority of the respondents confirmed they had carved torsos, abstract expressions, busts, animals, drums, and drummers. Carving in LAUTECH Art School is less conspicuous, hence not visible. The state of carving in the LAUTECH art school is unsatisfactory. No specific facility (tools and equipment) is dedicated to carving, and manpower is inadequate, hence carving training is less efficient and its practice is less vibrant. Despite the challenges, several carved works were identified for documentation. LAUTECH art school is faithful in little and deserves to be given much. Respondents agree that carving could be economically viable and most of the respondents are positively disposed to pursue a professional career in carving. Recommendations for carving practice revivification include addressing identified challenges such as the provision of hand tools, power tools, and equipment, supervision, and mentorship. Participation in regular exhibitions, workshops, and training. Intertwining traditional with contemporary techniques. Providing aid in material sourcing, and recruitment of carving instructors.

CONCLUSION

Carving, as a sculptural technique, has played a fundamental role in the artistic and cultural identity of Nigeria. From pre-colonial times to the present day, carving has served not only as an artistic practice but also as a means of preserving history, storytelling, and economic sustenance. Despite its historical significance, carving has experienced a noticeable decline in Nigerian formal art schools. This study, which focused on LAUTECH Art School reveals several critical challenges that have contributed to the diminished status of carving in Nigerian art schools. One of the most pressing issues identified is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure dedicated to carving. LAUTECH Art School, and by extension other

Nigerian Art Schools, lack well-equipped carving workshops, leading students to work with inadequate or outdated tools. This limitation discourages interest in carving, as students are unable to effectively engage with the medium. Furthermore, the shortage of specialized instructors with expertise in traditional and modern carving techniques exacerbates the issue, leaving students without the necessary mentorship and guidance to develop their skills.

Additionally, the perception of carving as an economically unviable career path has further contributed to its decline. Many students prioritize other sculptural techniques, such as modeling and casting, due to their perceived commercial benefits. The lack of structured career pathways for carving graduates limits opportunities for professional advancement, discouraging students from choosing carving as a specialization. Moreover, modern artistic trends and technological advancements have led to a shift in preferences, with contemporary materials and digital art forms becoming more dominant. This shift has marginalized traditional techniques like carving, making it less prominent in Nigerian art schools. Despite these challenges, the study identifies key opportunities for revitalizing carving in Nigerian formal art schools. Many respondents acknowledge the cultural and historic value of carving and support efforts to revive its practice.

Increased institutional support for carving programs, investment in modern carving equipment, recruitment of specialized instructors, and the integration of traditional carving techniques with contemporary artistic trends will make efficient carving training and sustain its practice. Additionally, mentorship programs, exhibitions, and workshops can play a significant role in generating renewed interest and appreciation for carving. To preserve and promote carving in Nigerian art schools, the host educational institutions, relevant government agencies, and private stakeholders must collaborate to create a sustainable framework for its development. By implementing strategic reforms, carving can regain its prominence as a respected and thriving artistic practice, ensuring its continued relevance for future generations.

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