

Creative Beads Embellishment on Ceramic Wares in Nigeria

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Abstract: Conventional products are often decorated by incision, stamping, embossment, sprigging, graffiti and glazing. However, some pieces are often marred by the kind of finishing that are given to them, particularly, inappropriate glazes. Therefore, the introduction of beads on ceramics wares might be a remedy to cushion the problem. The experimental process of this study went through the sourcing and processing of materials which include: Clay and kaolin collection, beneficiating the materials, production on the potter's wheel and drying, bisque and glaze firing. While the beads design entailed collecting assorted colours of beads and strand, passing the strands through the beads and finally hanging on the ceramics vases in a creative manner. Bead design on ceramic ware added value and enhanced the texture and aesthetic qualities of the products produced. This is a pointer to the fact that other non-conventional materials could be explored for such products to inspire and educate producers to increase creativity.

Keywords: Creative, mix media, beads, glaze, ceramics

I. Introduction

Ceramics and Fashion design belong to the industrial design field and this field is more importantly concerned with the development of products which range from that of utility to decoration. Ceramics and beads design can independently fulfil the aspect of utility and design but this study aim to bring both together to evolve a creative product. According to Asmah *et al* (2013), this brings to the fore the need for pottery in mixed media. Pottery or ceramics in mixed media is either a clay pot or sculpture that incorporates different materials such as wood, metal, textiles, sound or light, glass, paint, or any other materials the artist wishes to add to the pottery piece.

Beads and ceramics are two areas that can be effectively manipulated for the sake of decoration or adornment. Though both have a meeting point when we talk about glass but are basically fashioned in different creative manner. According to Ibebabuchi (2012), beads are made of a great variety of materials namely: glass, copper, wood, silver, brass aluminum, bone, horn, shell, coral, pearl, jet, amber, and mineral, including precious stones, ceramics and plastics, ceramics according to Johnson (2014), are made of inorganic, non-metallic materials. Beads are made into basically round shapes with different sizes but there are also other shapes of beads that are also in vogue now and they are used to beautify or adorn a surface. while ceramics on the other hand are made into different shapes and sizes and are both for beautifying and for use. The fact that both beads and ceramic are usually creatively made with some common materials of interest, reveals that they can be creatively combined to evolve a unique product.

The history of beads dates as far back as 40,000 years with the advent of modern people. They have been made by every culture since then. Every society has had the basic technology to make beads consisting of items from plant seeds to various stones. Plant material required the least technology to produce beads and was a widely available medium. In contrast, the material from gems, semiprecious stone and bone required a labour intensive production process. (Callum, 1997). Callum further stated that the technique of beadwork is fairly basic and straightforward. It requires neither extensive training nor is it difficult to accomplish. However, it does require patience as beadwork can be very monotonous. According to Donnette (2014), The first bead made in Africa was created of a special soft clay called faience, which is usually vivid blue or dusky green. African beads are still treasured and used throughout the African continent.

Ibebabuchi, also revealed that the wife of Oduduwa, Olokun Senaide established the art of glass bead-making in the ancient city of the Ile-Ife, and Igbo-Olokun is known to be her work-shop which covers some acres of land as long as 12 acres. Bida is noted for its flourishing bead-making industries for years. In Bida, craftsmen are famous for glass beads. They make the glass beads from discarded coloured glass which they melt down and form into beads. They also make their glass beads from a mixture of quartz, sand, chalk and natron. Besides Bida, cities like Ilorin, Kano and Vere in Adamawa are famous for local bead-making in Nigeria.

According to Dictionary.com (2014), creativity is the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination. Arete (2001) opines that Creativity occurs when a person, using the

symbols of a given domain such as music, engineering, business, or mathematics, has a new idea or sees a new pattern, and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain.

Wisegeek (2014), reveals that the earliest ceramic glaze appeared in Mesopotamia in the 9th century BCE, on decorative tiles. Centuries later this glaze was adapted to be used in drinking vessels, leading to a great improvement in their use. Peterson (2014), opine that glazes are a type of glass that are especially made to stick onto pots and other ceramic surfaces. When molten, this specialized glass is stiffer than glass that is poured or blown is. This is important, as otherwise the glaze would run off the vertical surfaces of the pots when brought up to temperature in the kiln. Glazes come in a huge array of colours, the result of minerals and inorganic compounds. The most commonly used colorants are the iron oxides, cobalt oxide, chromium oxide, copper oxide and copper carbonate. Peterson further revealed that Glazes range from being completely transparent to being completely opaque. Most opaque or partially opaque glazes derive their effect due to either tiny particles or trapped air bubbles held in suspension within the glaze. Many white glazes are white due to opacity rather than an actual colorant.

Wisegeek ascertained that Ceramic glaze is a glassy substance that has been applied to a ceramic object, and then fired to meld it with the ceramic. Ceramic glaze may be used for purely decorative reasons, to strengthen the underlying ceramic, or to waterproof the vessel. Ceramic glaze is used for everything from vases, to bowls, to plates, to decorative pieces of ceramic artwork. Early glaze was used primarily to make earthenware vessels suitable to hold drinks and liquid foods, since without the glaze the clay simply soaks up the liquid overtime, imbuing the vessel with its taste, and weakening it.

Materials and Methods

Ceramic wares: Kaolin and Clay were obtained in the form of fine grain materials with some lumps. The kaolin and clay were soaked in different bins but in the same quantity of 50/50 for two weeks and this was followed by blunging the clay and Kaolin together to form a homogenous mixture which was sieved to improve the clays plasticity resulting in the formation of the stone ware clay. The clay was kneaded into workable consistency and then shaped on the potter's wheel into vases. The wares were bone dried, bisque fired and later coated with transparent glaze and fired under 1120°C for the glassy effect.



Fig. 1 : Production on the potter's wheel



Fig. 2: Glaze firing of wares in the kiln

Bead design: Materials and tools that were used are glass beads (assorted colours), copper wire, little stone gems, metal plate, adhesive and cutter. The beads were inserted into the copper wire to make a strand of beads necklace on the shoulder of the ceramic wares while other strands of beads were attached to the necklace in a drooping manner in varying lengths, some parts of the strands were left exposed. Adhesive was applied in little amount to the body of the ceramic wares and the drooping beads were laid to rest on the adhesive to keep the beads in shape.



Fig. 3 : Adhesive for sticking the bead design on the body of the ceramic ware



Fig. 4 : Craft wire for bead design



Fig. 5 : Multi coloured beads



Fig. 6: Decorating ceramics ware with beads

II. Conclusion

Bead design on ceramic wares added value and enhanced the texture and aesthetic qualities of the products produced. As such, other non-conventional materials could be explored for such products to inspire and educate producers to increase creativity.

The pieces showed originality, contrast, harmony and stability, and as well, captured the aesthetic energy inherent in ordinary materials.

The research proved that the integration of ceramic vases with other materials can add value and improve the marketability of indigenous ceramics wares.

This study has shown that the mixed media materials employed in the projects could be used effectively to achieve high quality aesthetic contemporary ceramics products. It also ascertains that materials such as, beads and many other materials could be a wealth of additional resources to enhance indigenous ceramics products.

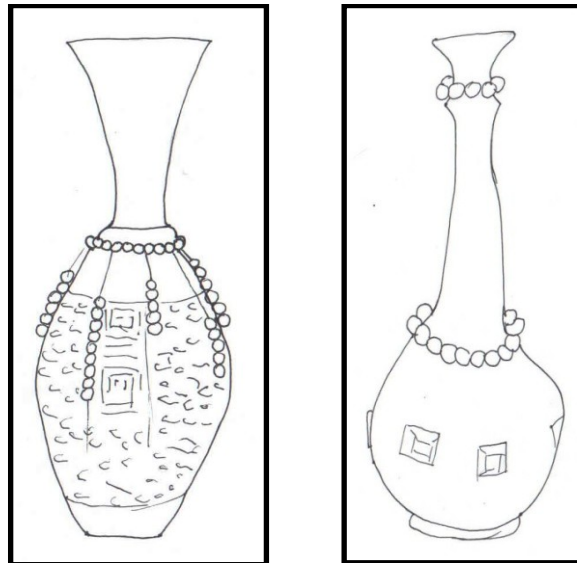


Fig. 7: Sketches of mixed media work



Fig. 8: The actual mixed media works

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