Art and Covid-19: The Impact of Visual Art Lexicons in Communication during a Pandemic

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Abstract
COVID-19 is the official name of a disease which was declared a pandemic on January 20, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID-19 is novel but pandemics are not. Historically, several diseases had affected the world globally in the magnitude of a pandemic, crossing geographical, racial, class, and age boundaries. The effects of a pandemic are intrinsic and extrinsic, visible in health, population, education, economy, socio-cultural norms and governance. One major effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is the total lockdown of the world system for several months and a new "normal". The entrance of new verbal and visual lexicons in communication was a noticeable trend. Words such as "quarantine", "PPE", "social distancing", "self-isolation" and "facemask" came into everyday usage. Also visual art lexicons played very important roles in the communications during the pandemic. This paper through the methods of participatory observations, interviews, visual aid (photographs) and review of literature documented and analyzed the emergent visual art lexicons during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the impact it had on the society. The data sources included the internet which is global. It was observed that visual artists, like other professionals, responded promptly to the pandemic by delivering several visually communicative items that impacted society in different ways. The various types of art rendered and how they have affected society now and the future are discussed. From the data collected, it was observed that a graphical image which represented the COVID-19 disease was created and popularized by visual artists. The images identified the disease globally. There were various art works such as cartoons, posters, paintings, sculptures, installations, videos and exhibitions that warned and informed the society on the disease and motivated and advocated for action to curb it. Post-COVID-19 is a reality that will naturally unfold, therefore the paper projects into the role of art and artists in the after-math of COVID-19.

Keywords: Art, Communication, COVID-19, Lexicons, Pandemic, Representation

Introduction

In the first six months of 2020, the lifestyle, health and safety of billions of people around the world were disrupted due to the threat of the infection and spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 is the name of a disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. This disease was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 31 December 2019. The outbreak of the disease was declared a *Public Health Emergency* and a *Pandemic* by WHO on January 20, 2020. On February 11, 2020, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the head of WHO, christened the disease COVID-19. At present, all the continents of the world have been directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19. The pandemic is without borders, therefore, many countries and communities have been forced to apply measures to contain the disease and curb its deadly impact. According to the WHO (2020) coronaviruses are not new to science, they are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illnesses ranging from common cold to more severe diseases such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The COVID-19, however, is a novel coronavirus which has not been previously identified in humans and so it is yet to have a cure or a vaccine in 2020.

A pandemic is an epidemic occurring on a scale which crosses international boundaries and usually affecting a very large number of people at the same time. In a pandemic, the geographical area, number of the affected and the deaths are of a higher magnitude than other epidemics. Several pandemics have been recorded in history, such as Richard (1914), Samal (2014), Qui et al (2017), Pudsey (2017), Snyder and Rav (2018), Jarus (2020), and pandemic historian Howard (2020). These are some authors who have documented various pandemics from pre-historic times. The oldest of the most impactful pandemics recorded is the prehistoric epidemic (C.5000 B.C) which was evidenced in a village in China. The archeological sites are now called "Hamin Mangha" and "Miaozigou", both located in the north-east of China. Fossils and artefacts from these sites suggest and support that an epidemic ravaged. Another ancient pandemic that had been recorded was the *Plague of Athens* (430 B.C.) recorded by the Greek historian Thucydides (460 – 400 B.C.). This pandemic resulting from the Athens- Sparta war around 430 B.C. had a death toll of about 100,000. The *Antonine Plague* (165 A.D. – 180 A.D.) in the Roman Empire, *Plague of Cyprian* (250 A.D. – 271 A.D.) in Tunisia and the *Plagues of Justinian* (541 – 542 A.D.) in the Byzantine Empire totally recorded about five million deaths at maximum and as high as 5000 deaths a day at their peaks. The first recorded global pandemic was the *"Black Death"* (1346 A.D. – 1353 A.D.) This pandemic spread from Asia to

Europe. *Cocoliztli Epidemic* (1545 – 1548 A.D.) was continental and killed about 15million in Central America. Pandemics that destroyed more than 100,000 people between the 16th century and the 19th century included the *Great Plague of London* (1665 – 1666 A.D.), *Great Plague of Marseille* (1720 – 1723 A.D.), *Philadelphia Yellow Fever* (1793) and the *Flu Pandemic* (1889 – 1890 A.D.) which recorded the death of about one million people and was also global, travelling from Europe to the rest of world, being enabled by the industrial age transportation. The Pandemic that had recorded the highest number of deaths in the history of pandemics was the *"Spanish Flu"* in the twentieth century. From 1918 to 1920 about 500 million people were infected by this flu and about 100 million people lost their lives due to the poor living conditions that emanated from the World War I (1916 – 1918). Other diseases such as the *Asian Flu* (1957) from China, the *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* (AIDS) in 1981, the *Ebola Pandemic* (2014) and the *Zika Virus* (2015) have persisted to date continentally and have high death tolls and without cures or vaccines. (Richard, 1914; Samal, 2014; Qui et al, 2017; Pudsey, 2017; Snyder and Rav, 2018, Jarus, 2020; Howard, 2020).

One conspicuous feature of a pandemic is that it alters human history. Some human civilizations have even ended and new ones born with pandemics. For example, the *Black Death* (1346 – 1353) had so many casualties that it changed the labour laws of Europe. As a result of the pandemic, labourers became harder to find as many men had died. This brought about better pay for workers and eventually a higher quality of living. This also led to the innovation of the technology age (Jarus, 2020). The trajectory of pandemics reveals that when there is a pandemic, there are several reactions from humans which range from the mild and simple to the bizarre. People respond either negatively or positively. The first reactions are panic and fear as individuals, governments and society collectively respond to the crisis with some combination of actions to protect the endangered human race. Howard (2020) records that during the 1918 pandemic, large cities responded by isolating the ill, quarantining suspected cases, closing down schools and markets and generally banning public gatherings. The goal then was to take measures that allow for social distancing in order to curb the transmission of the disease. Social distancing does not cure or prevent viral infections but it reduces the spread of infections. As beneficial as this protocol is, social distancing is also disruptive to society because socio-economic gatherings such as parties, religious services and markets cannot function, also physical contacts are limited and can strain relationships.

COVID-19 has its peculiarities in addition to its similarities with previous pandemics. Firstly, it is novel, not as other flu-related viruses because the strain is unusual. Other peculiarities include the wide geographical spread within a short period of time due to the easy disease movement and transmission through faster human travel. The high attack and explosiveness, severity, infectiousness and contagiousness are also peculiar to COVID-19. The group of persons that may be immune to COVID-19 is quite minimal as it has broken through the various strata in terms of age, class, race, gender, diet group, sexual orientations and professions. Globally, COVID-19 has also impacted the health sector, economy, social security and education. In Nigeria (the location of the researcher) and most countries in the world, the direct and indirect cost of dealing with and containing the disease has led to a big economic and social problem. There were job losses because of initial lockdown, socially there were travel restrictions (ban on flights, closure of internal and external borders, airports and seaports) and checks on movements. Schools were shut down, markets were closed, social and sporting engagements cancelled. Due to the lockdown, street riots caused by food shortages and mass robberies challenged the security measures put in place by governments and communities. The negative impacts of a pandemic like COVID-19 can be overwhelming individually and collectively because, for example, the deaths resulting from the virus of family members, colleagues, neighbours and close friends can lead to depression. Lockdowns and the inability to socialize had impacted families and cohabitants with pressures that resulted in some cases to domestic violence and suicides. The directives and new practices recommended for society's safety such as the ritual of hand-washing, facemask-wearing (disrupting makeup), regular use of sanitizers and social distancing (no hugs, kisses and touches) can be mentally tasking and these demands on the individual have become the "new normal". Other emerging "normal" situations are the addictive and heavy dependence on the use of the internet, new routines, habits, addictions and new language and lexicons. COVID-19 has made some words popular and has added to the lexicons of communication. From the recent updates of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the evident addition of COVID-19 lexicons included words such as "self-isolation", "social distancing", "flatten the curve", "essential PPE", "ventilator", and "sanitizer" (Tables 1&2). OED editors, who are continuously monitoring linguistic development for analysis of language corpora have observed abbreviations for COVID, corona and coronavirus such as "rone", "rona" on social media (http://public.oed.com). Kaushal (2020) records new words such as "covidanoid", "quarantigue", "covidarium", "covidiot", "covidcrazy" and "covidsmart" that have been added to common vocabulary.

Like in the case of war periods, there have been pandemic metaphors, virus vocabulary, shifting definitions and word-rebranding.

	January	February	March
1	outbreak	outbreak	outbreak
2	novel	novel	pandemic
3	deadly	spread	spread
4	Wuhan	case	case
5	spread	China	novel
6	China	epidemic	positive
7	2019-nCoV	impact	crisis
8	strain	COVID-19	test
9	case	fear	COVID-19
10	infection	deadly	impact
11	infect	confirm	new
12	confirm	new	confirm
13	epidemic	test	fight
14	originate	Wuhan	fear
15	symptom	infection	response
16	new	positive	disease
17	fear	infect	patient
18	toll	concern	cause
19	spreading	patient	death
20	declare	disease	concern

Table A

	January	February	March
1	bushfire	COVID-19	COVID-19
2	coronavirus	coronavirus	pandemic
3	Iranian	quarantine	distancing
4	SARS	pandemic	coronavirus
5	Iraqi	virus	self-isolate
6	sign-stealing	outbreak	lockdown
7	koala	caucus	self-isolation
8	virus	locust	sanitiser/sanitizer
9	impeachment	infect	quarantine
10	airstrike	epicentre/epicenter	ventilator
11	human-to-human	self-isolate	non-essential
12	locust	nCoV	self-quarantine
13	airliner	epidemic	virus
14	respiratory	SARS	outbreak
15	outbreak	infected	corona
16	assassination	sign-stealing	PPE
17	flu-like	acquittal	postpone
18	fire-affected	hereditary	disinfect
19	quarantine	stop-and-frisk	isolation
20	militia	evacuee	self-isolating

Table B

When communication through language is analyzed, scholars often pay more attention to verbal communication. Other communicative avenues which include Music, Theatre and Visual Arts are often relegated. The Visual Arts is a very effective channel in communication. Visual lexicons convey various levels of communication that are emotional, mental, sensual and physical. The expressive interpretation of figures, icons, images and symbols has opened up levels of understanding of historical and socio-cultural events. Communal and global conventions and practices have often been successfully captured and communicated by the individual expressions of artists. From the outbreak of COVID-19, it was observed that many individual artists, groups, associations and corporations embarked on visual responses. On the international scale, Magnum Photos (www.magnumphotos.com) received a groundbreaking number of thousands of submissions from photographic artists in just 10 days of a call for COVID-19-inspired photo images. *www.smithsonianmag.com* recorded that Graffiti artists, street artists and muralists have been taking over public spaces during the pandemic lockdown, using their art forms to express beauty, support and dissent. The "viral paintings" of artist Marc Quinn

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(https://www.theguardian.com) are torrents of paintings inspired by his isolation in his London Studio during the lockdown. Niyi Akinmolayan, a Nigerian filmmaker produced graphical cartoons to teach children how to survive COVID-19 (https://www.bbc.com). Several forms of art that have been produced in Nigeria and globally during COVID-19 pandemic serve various purposes in the communication system. These artworks are in the categories of Graphics, Paintings, Sculptures, Drawings and Textile Arts. These arts have been vital in the areas of information, education, historical documentation, therapy and entertainment.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework
This paper was dependent on a qualitative research method. The sources of data were participatory observations, surveys, interviews and literature reviews. The COVID-19 pandemic had confined everyone indoors, therefore the field investigation was carried out totally online through the internet. Several internet platforms were used as the field for collection and observation of emerging news, art and images from virtual exhibitions, webinars and displays from platforms such as *TikTok*, *Eventbrite*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *Zoom*, *Tumbler*, *Badoo*, *Reddit*, *Instagram*, *Pinterest* and *Viber*. Interviews were carried out over voice-calls, *Skype*, *Telegram*, *WhatsApp*, *WeChat*, *Twitter*, *Messenger*, *Line* and *LinkedIn*. Selected artworks by Nigerian artists where the researcher was located are used as samples in the paper. The following artists who participated in online COVID-19 –related art exhibitions from Nigeria were interviewed: Bolaji Ogunwo, Sotonye Jumbo, Olalekan Adeyemi, Ali Azeez, Seye Lawson, Damilola Jacob, John Olorunto, Olamide Okunade and Tolu Mustapha. Others that were also interviewed included organizers and curators of online COVID-19/ Pandemic art exhibitions and hosts of visual art online programmes, who are based in Nigeria, such as Theresa Iyase-Odozi, Adebimpe Adebambo, Obasegun Ayodele, Jumoke Afolayan, John Oni, Oluseyi Gbadebo, and Oladapo Afolayan. Photographs were downloaded from the internet with permission from several artists' personal social-media pages, online exhibition catalogues and from photo transmitting internet engines such as *Google* and *Pinterest*. Literature review contributed a large part of this paper especially in the aspect of historical and archival records.

The theory of semiotics is the theoretical framework this paper is built upon. Semiotics as a theory was developed independently by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce in the late 19th and early 20th century. The theory is relevant as a foundation for this study because semiotics as a theory originated from the academic study of how meanings are

communicated through visual and linguistic signs and symbols. Semiotics is built on "semiosis" which is the relationship between a sign, an object and a meaning. Saussure defines it as the study of the "life of signs within society" The levels and speed of comprehension in semiotics are the iconic, indexical and symbolic. The iconic is the similarity between signs and the objects they represent. Indexical signs or images are not similar to the objects they represent but are logically referential to the meaning the object conveys. Symbolic signs and images are not representational but in most cases are universally understood when used. (https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-de-Saussure). This paper discusses how COVID-19 images, icons, indexes and symbols are used to communicate the presence, danger and impact of the disease in the world and how society should respond to it.

Findings and Discussion

(a) Iconography and Symbolism of the COVID-19 Image
Iconography is the identification, description, classification and interpretation of visual images and symbols, and how these icons are used by artists in their artistic expressions. The primary visual image for consideration is the image of the coronavirus itself which is responsible for COVID-19. The first images of coronavirus representing COVID-19 that emerged were images of an organic object as seen by molecular scientists from an electron microscope. This image was a reddish-grey coloured spherical form with surface attachments that appeared like a coral reef (Fig. 2). However this image quickly graduated to be represented by a spherical form with spikes projecting from the surface. There have been several drawings and photographs showing variations of the surface projections. Some appear as spears and some others like nails that are stuck to the surface of the spherical object (Fig. 3). The COVID-19 image has become the most popular artistic figure of COVID-19 pandemic. Images of coronaviruses have been in existence before COVID-19, but the COVID-19 image has come to be the most distinguished in the last 100years. The celebrated image is used as Logo, Backdrop, Signpost, Motif, Brand and Signal. (Fig. 1a). The COVID-19 image is so exalted that websites such as *http://unsplash.com* provide free images for download which are described as the "perfect" COVID-19 images and *https://shutterstock.com* offers what the site calls "pixel perfect" photos of very attractive and colourful versions of the COVID-19 image. *Https://www.pinterest.com* uploaded a bluish-grey image of coronavirus which it describes as "awesome". There are also YouTube channels that are offering drawings, graphical exercises and classes on "How to Draw COVID-19 Image".

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Iconographically, the COVID- 19 image has developed to be an image laid with multiple meanings and interpretations. The simplest understanding is that of the spherical shape representing the earth and the attachments as external invasion on the surface of the earth.Some graphical cartoon presentations have added a monstrous face to the image to depict and reference the monstrosity of the virus attack on the world system (Figs. 1b & 3).

The original and early colour of the coronavirus image was red, however the subsequent images of the coronavirus which also represent COVID-19 have gradually been represented in various other colours, depending on the version of the COVID-19 narration. Colour symbolism is vital in the interpretation of icons, and, according to Abodunrin and Oladugbagbe (2006), is important in non-verbal communication because colours have cultural meanings in different societies. Some verbal expressions that involve colours such as "green with envy", "going through the blues", " red with anger", and " red danger" are universal acceptance of the cultural symbolism of colour. COVID-19 image has so far been most presented in colours of Red, Blue and Green. These colours symbolically represent danger, anger, violence, energy, depression, depth, stability and life or healing. These are symbols of extremes: from the worst scenarios to the best in the development of the events of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fig. 3).

Comparatively, symbolism shows from observation that the COVID-19 image is a mimicry or semblance of some pre- existing cultural icons. Many of such icons are pleasant. One such African art object that can be symbolically metaphoric to the COVID-19 image is the art object known as *Nkondi* (also *Minkondi, Zinkondi, Ninkondi*) from the Congo region of Central Africa. This is because of the similarity of their physical appearance in the surface projections and also in the meaning and function of both art icons. (Fig.4)
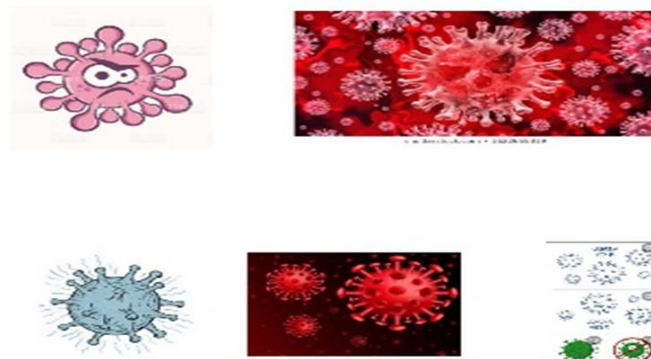
Fig: 1a, 1b COVID-19 Image as Logo, Signpost etc
Source: Pinterest 2020
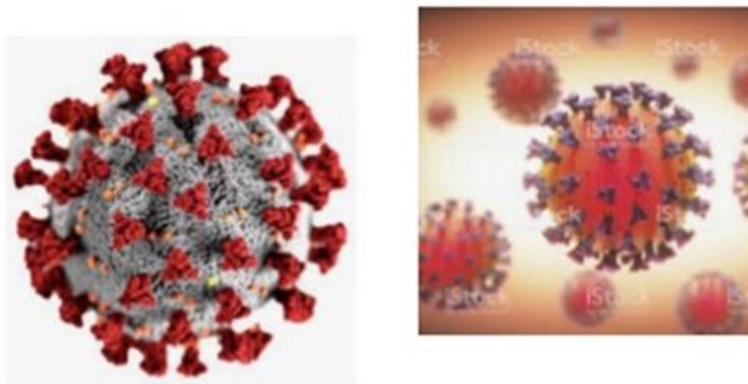
Fig. 2: Original Image of COVID-19 Coronavirus

Fig. 3: Different presentations of COVID-19 Image
Source: Pinterest 2020

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Fig. 4: Graphical Lexicons Informing on COVID-19

Fig. 5: Images of Nkondi from Central Congo

According to Bassani (1977) and MacGaffey et al (1993), the *Nkondi* are a subclass of the group of nail fetish sculptures known as *Minkisi* and are considered the most aggressive and powerful of the *Minkisi*. The *Minkisi* are wooden carvings of anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures which can also be made of shells, gourds, horns, and clay pots. Repeated use, care and devotion is what gives the *Minkisi* character and individuality. According to Imagawa (2016), when the European colonizers first came to Africa and saw the figures, they

recognized and named them *fetishes* because they saw them as mainly tools and products of a savage culture. The Europeans, however, did not understand the full scope, depth and complexity of purpose behind them in the same way scientists and health workers are metaphorically yet to unravel the enigma of COVID-19 coronavirus. In spite of this, the *Nkondi* is a profound work of art. The primary function of the *Nkondi* was to be the home of spirits which can travel out from its base, hunt down and harm other people. They were used to identify and arrest unknown wrong doers or enemies such as thieves and people who were believed to cause sickness and death. They were also used to punish people who swore falsely and those who broke treaties. The purpose of hammering nails into the *Nkondi* was to invoke curses to harm. Each nail is a hope or a wish and therefore builds up over time. To inspire it to action, the *Nkondi* was both provoked and invoked. Invocations were carried out in bloodthirsty language and provocation by having gunpowder exploded in front of the object with nails hammered into it. Could the coronavirus responsible for COVID-19 be an "*Nkondi*" invoked and provoked and sent to earth by some extra-terrestrial forces, by the aggrieved and revengeful forces of nature or some evil black-coat scientists? Persons who believe in a sixth sense, power beyond perception, logic or science and in ghosts and spirits may subscribe to such thinking. This direction of thought may also be significant for conspiracy theorists and further research.

b.   Intrinsic and Extrinsic Values of Visual Art Lexicons in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Different types of visual arts have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic from individual artists, art groups, social groups and government organizations. The main goal of these different art forms is communication. The prime goal of communication is to selectively send symbols, in this case, visual symbols; in such a way that the listener or observer perceives and recreates in their mind the meaning of the content in the intention of the communicator. When the listener assigns significance or a meaning to an internal or external stimulus, then communication has occurred. From the Egyptian hieroglyphics (C. 3000B.C.) to contemporary Emoji, Meme, Gif and graphical cartoons, visual lexicons have played indispensable roles in human communication. In some instances the visual language is more effective than the verbal or written words. One observation from field investigation carried out, is the various messages communicated by the visual image of the COVID-19 coronavirus. (Fig 5). The many versions of the COVID-19 image have randomly and severally conveyed fear, panic, death, hopelessness and intimidation. In order to instill the danger and high risk of COVID-19, the WHO and many health-monitoring organisations and

institutions have released sinister-looking images of COVID-19 coronavirus (Figs. 6&7). The intrinsic value of such COVID-19 images help in the enforcement of self-isolation, social-distancing, mask-wearing, etc. in the control of the COVID-19 worldwide. Other areas where visual art lexicons have been of great value during the pandemic are: information, education, historical documentation, therapy and entertainment.

Information: During the pandemic, one of the major forms of sending out information to the nooks and crannies of the earth was through visual arts. The WHO and other centres for disease control maximally employed and utilized graphic arts in disseminating the directives and warnings on COVID-19. Drawings, illustrations, paintings and prints of instructional materials on preventive measures such as washing of hands, wearing of facemasks and social distancing have been seen on internet platforms, on television, billboards, posters and handbills. Figs. 6&7 serve as an interface between humans and the virus.

Education: People are educated from various Posters, Billboards, Graffiti, Handbills, Comics, Cartoons and Pamphlets by artistic media that have been used abundantly in the education concerning COVID-19. The instructional value of these visual arts cannot be underestimated, because they have contributed immensely to the education of even the non-literate, very young children and the hearing -challenged individuals (Figs.6&7). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) declared that the use of comics and cartoons is a powerful way to teach kids about COVID-19 (https://theconversion.com). This agrees with Joubert (2020), when he says that comics have great potential to make complex topics more meaningful to diverse audiences. The combination of visuals with powerful metaphors, character-driven narratives and emotionally-charged storylines is both entertaining and educative. This has been very effective in the effort of explaining viruses and COVID-19 (Fig.7).
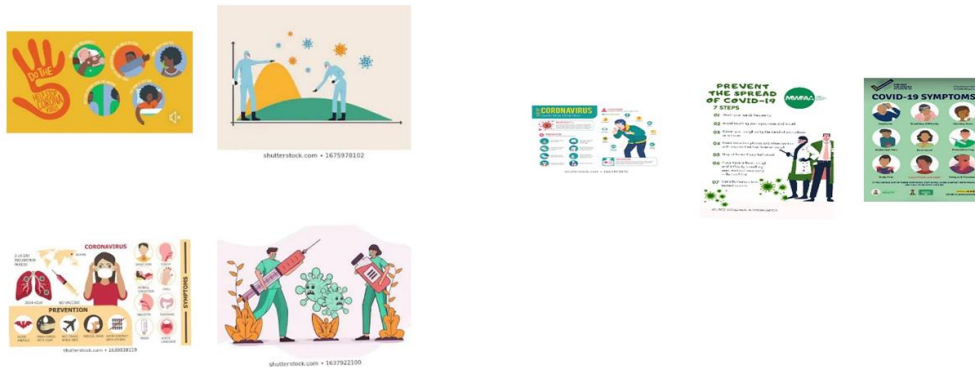
Fig 6: Various Visual Art Lexicons on Information and Education on COVID-19
Source: Pinterest 2020

Fig 7: Cartoons, Graphics and Sculpture as Visual Lexicons on COVID-19
Source: Pinterest 2020

Historical Documentation: Over time, visual documentations have proved to be more lasting than oral or written history. The pre-historic cave arts in Europe and Africa, ancient stone sculptures and the pyramids of Egypt are some tale-telling legacies of history which have outlived other forms of historical records. Visual documentation of history is also authentic, less prone to alteration and easier to decode or decipher. This is because the artist records the intrinsic and extrinsic effects of events as they unravel. Quinn (2020) says "being an artist, the only way I can cope with reality is to turn it into art... In the past, artists have made paintings to commemorate historical moments. Now we have got a historical moment happening every 12 hours, every one hour... The task for artists is to make historical paintings presently about what is probably the most historical event in contemporary times that humans are ever going to live through". One of the visual images that went viral on the internet during the COVID-19 pandemic

was the resurfaced photograph of mask-wearing women in 1918, confirming the similarity of the measures applied during the 1918 pandemic. Edvard Munch (1863 – 1944), the Norwegian Painter painted "Self Portrait with the Spanish Flu" (1919) and "Self Portrait after the Spanish Flu" (1919) which were paintings of his experiences in contracting and surviving the 1918 Spanish Flu and pandemic. Some other artists such as Egon Shiele (1890 – 1918), Gustave Klimt (1862 – 1918) and Morton Shamberg (1881 – 1918) unfortunately died from the Flu. According to *Time* (https://time.com) these paintings characterized Munch's obsession with the existential drama of the pandemic and speaks to the feelings of trauma and despair that were widespread amid the pandemic. Munch's painting "The Scream" has become one of the most iconic images of world art and records history.

Several artworks have been observed to be documentations of COVID-19. Fig. 8a titled "Vaccine", "Odyssey" (Fig. 8b) and "Social Distancing" (Fig. 8c) are paintings from Sotonye Jumbo. "Odyssey" shows the trauma and burdensomeness of domestic requirements in a lockdown, Olamide Ogunade's "The New Normal" (Fig. 12) is self-explanatory and reveals the new lifestyle of Post- COVID-19. In this same trend are Bolaji Ogunwo's "Make-over" (Fig. 9), "In Love We Shall Conquer" (Fig. 15) by Seye Lawal and "Embracing the New Living" (Fig. 11) by John Olorunto. "Fatal Eyo" (Fig 10b) is a sculptural assemblage made up of slippers supposedly left behind by those who have died from COVID-19. Visual documentation of history is vital in the aspect of recording authentic news. One negative result of lockdown was the proliferation of fake news on the internet. Since the world is heavily dependent on the internet at this period, it has also witnessed several outputs of false information and news. These can and were strongly countered by visual images which are more lasting in the memory.
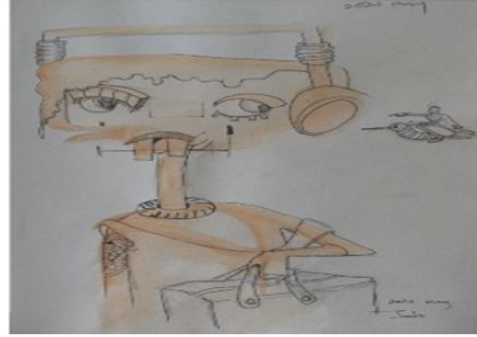
Fig. 8a

Fig. 8b

Fig. 8c

Fig:8a, Fig.8b, Fig. 8c
Top: Fig. 8a. Sotonye Jumbo, *Vaccine,* **Acrylic, 16"X16", 2020.**
Bottom: Fig. 8b Sotonye Jumbo, *Odyssey* **Acrylic, 5" X 5". 2020   Acrylic, 105cmX105cm, 2020**
Right: Fig. 8c. Sotonye Jumbo, *Social Distancing,* **Ink, 16"X12", 2020**

Fig. 9: Bolaji Ogunwo, Make-over Oil on Canvas, 2020

Therapy: "Ebofin" (Accepted Sacrifice) (Fig.14) by Olalekan Adeyemi (2020) is a painting based on Yoruba philosophical thoughts. The artist says that he tried to think of different options in combating the disease that has invaded the world. The painting depicts a ritualistic procession that seeks to appease the gods of disease and the pacification of the effects of COVID-19. This type of artwork is therapeutic for a society in a dilemma of a pandemic. "Planetary ICU" (Fig. 10a) shows a painting of sympathetic solidarity from other planets in the earth's solar system. This painting is an encouragement that earth will be restored to health. Seyi Gbadebo's "Eda Titun" (New Creation) (Fig. 13) is an example of an art that shows that newness emerges from rot. Seyi Gbadebo (2020) claims that he got his inspiration while meditating on solutions to the pandemic. Comical graphics have also been a source of therapy in this period of the pandemic.

*Entertainmen*t: One form of entertainment during a lockdown is cartooning. During this pandemic, many arts have emerged in the form of comical cartoons, graphical skits and cartoon animations. Examples are in (Fig. 7)

Fig. 10a: *Planetary ICU*   **Fig. 10b: Fatal** *Eyo*

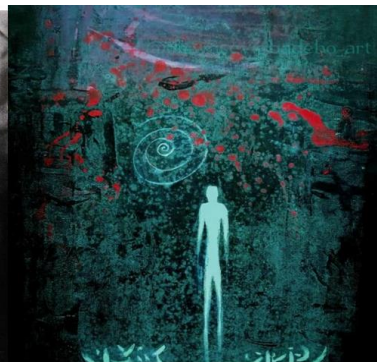**Fig, 11. John Olorunto**   **Fig 12. Olamide Okunade**   **Fig. 13. Seyi Gbadebo,** *Eda Titun*

Embracing the New Living
2020, Ink
on Paper, 12" X !6"

The New Normal, Charcoal &
Graphite, 2020 15" X 18"

Ink on Paper, Charcoal,
2020 16'X12',

Fig. 14. Olalekan Adeyemi, Ebofin
(Accepted Sacrifice) Oil on Canvas
106cmX 127cm, 2020

Fig. 15 Seye Lawal, In Love We Shall Conquer
Graphite & Pastel, 12" X 14", 2020

Conclusion

Post-COVID-19 is a reality the world must embrace. From the likes of HIV/AIDS and Ebola, many diseases have only been controlled and not eradicated to date. Vaccines may be found yet humans have had to live with their reality. Post-pandemic periods usually come with new lifestyles, patterns, language and culture. Lifestyles and social etiquettes will be altered or changed. Post-COVID-19 will also be the same because there is a new normal that has come to stay. This new normal has to be fine-tuned and digested into the mainstream society. The full impact of the new normal is yet to unravel since the world is gradually easing back into routine activities after a total lockdown. For art, many things have changed rapidly and artists are falling in line with new trends and attitudes. The internet sphere is the new world hence many artistic activities have also moved online. Art exhibitions that previously resided in art galleries are now 3D virtual realities. Vilsquare's "Exploring COVID-19 Through the Lens of Art" (May 26 – June 7, 2020) exhibited the works of 25 artists from all over the globe on a proprietary 3D virtual gallery. Some other exhibitions that were instant responses to COVID-19 include: "Beyond Lockdown" (April 25, 2020) by the Sculptors Association of Nigeria (ScAN); "Defiance: Creativity in Times of Crisis" (June 12 – 26, 2020) by Breath of Hope Africa Gallery; "Sister Art" (16 – 25 June 2020) by Brother Art Productions. These were very engaging 3D online tours. Even though online viewing of an art exhibition does not give the physical feeling of encountering a powerful work of art, however, it offers time and space away from the crowd, opportunities for slow and repeated viewing and absence from

aggressive salesmanship. Encouraged by path-breaking technology such as Vortic and Artlab and other 3D proprietary platforms, digital commercial exhibitions will be sustained as the new art world normal. Online classes and lectures such as Peju Layiwola's "Art Masterclass", Tolu Mustapha's "The Narrative", Bolaji Ogunwo's "Talent Is Not Enough", Theresa Iyase-Odozi's "Awaken Your Creativity" and Seyi Gbadebo's "Art-titude" on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Zoom have taken up the challenge of interrogating art in the new normal. Each of these organizers from their interviews expressed the fact that they embarked on their projects to enrich the art world through inspiration, training and motivation.

Several positive changes in the art world have been accelerated by the COVID-19 Pandemic and may come to stay and define art in the future. Noticeable among these changes are:

(a)   The proliferation of art audiences globally since the rise of online initiatives. Online consumption of culture has risen. An example is the exhibition "Exploring COVID-19 under the Lens of Art" which had worldwide participating artists and a viewership of 4,462 people from 58 countries and 240 cities in five continents. Obasegun Ayodele (2020) the organizer remarks that such attendance to an art exhibition would never have been possible for a physical exhibition.

(b)   Ethical gains. Since there is wider accessibility to the artworks online, there is less elitism and therefore art may soon be acquired by more people.

(c)   More exposure to contemporary art education through online classes, discussions, trainings and exhibitions.

(d)   More art practice from more time in lockdowns and available technology. However there is a high possibility that the quality of artwork may drop because artworks seen online may not be as great physically. In all, the art market, hopefully, will come out through Post-COVID-19 as stronger, smarter, richer and more relevant in society.

One aspect to watch out for is the direction of art styles, genres and movements. In 1918, the pandemic and other then-emerging world situations created social chaos, hopelessness, meaninglessness and despair of that period which were the inspiring themes of new art movements of modernism. Dadaism (which was nihilistic in its approach), Bauhaus and Abstract Art are some of the art movements that emerged, post- 1918 pandemic. The world art scene in similar fashion may experience a wave of new art movements motivated by the experiences and dialogues of COVID-19. Already the United Nations Education,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has launched the Resili Art Movement which, among other things, will consist of a series of global virtual debates with renowned artists and draw support for the cultural world throughout the COVID-19 crisis and after.

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