

VOYAGE OF EXCELLENCE

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Introduction



Adjacent to the administrative heartbeat, located at the South Campus of the University of Education, Winneba, is a non-panoptic horseshoed visually-spiced technical frieze clothing the amphitheatre that enjoys visual ovation from users of the main gateway to the campus. Encapsulated from the top part is a two-wavy serpentine beam wall that imitates the randing technique of basket weaving pattern, a treatment creating sense of duality and strength as well as directing the eye of viewers to the work. The painstakingly executed work is an embodiment of the plethora academic disciplines of the University to its students; a living reminder of the obligatory dedicative service the nation requires from her academic products; an indelible imagery of the history of Winneba fishing folks, and the portrayal of the distinctive 'Aboakyer Festival' of the Effutu (of Winneba).

The skilful use of simplified planes, the varying degree of reliefs and the elaborative details of the poly-thematic oeuvre show an influence of incisive philosophical manoeuvring and symbolism of sculptural elements overtly packaged in a non-conventional interplay. As a result of its entablature, viewers are faced with aesthetic scrambling, which involves movement around the curvaceous structure to gain a full glimpse of the sculpture with multi-sectional aesthetic enjoyment. The sectional details are hereby appreciatively presented.

The Frieze

Sculpted in simple geometrical contortions, is a panoramic view of Science and Technology educational environment (plate 1) showing laboratory apparatus, a writing tool and human figure. Occupying the central position is a human figure in a relaxed disposition, pointing to an easel-like structure with a pointer and juxtaposed by a fused rectangular and ellipse-shaped object resting on another circular shaped object that appears to a test tube. The two incised oval shapes successively arranged, one on top of the other and attached with contour lines together with the writing tool give a sense of writing activity. Closely following is interplay of oval and curvilinear lines that also show various learning activities in all the department of languages and the libraries. Besides, a stylized linear 'matie masie' adinkra motif design engulfs a reading human figure while two other human figures placed directly below listen in attentive mood (plate 2). Located at the top left-hand corner are countercurrently sited musical notational that suggests an atmosphere of musical entertainment despite the uninterrupted seriousness shown in the figural rendition.



Plate 1: Science and Technology educational environment. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

A quadrant of the technological symbol appears at the lower left corner of the scene that confirms and highlights the essence of the computer (plate 3) as a tool in the 21st Century world of education. In portraying Science and Technology education, the sculptors used rectangular monitor-like object and what appeared to be a keyboard



Plate 2:
Learning human figures and matie masie motif design. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.



Plate 3:
Computer and matie masie motif design. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

sided by a sectioned upright rectangular image overlapping the abstracted and simplified matie masie motif, a frequently featured symbol in the frieze. Notwithstanding its dominant appearance, the overlapping treatment, the incised negative and positive spaces transform the symbol to a partially chequered effect and forceful attraction. The computer symbolizes the Secretarial courses, the Information Communication Technology and its application in modern office.



Plate 4:
Vehicular image and microscope. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

In depicting the expected outcomes of science and technological education, robust radiant of diverging visual linear rays run to the top width and touching a seemingly vehicular image on which a microscope sits (plate 4). It is a message suggesting that Science and technology education is to equip learners with productive skills to produce the needs of Ghana to curtail their importation.



Plate 5:
Depiction of Two and three-dimensional aspects. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

Considering the multidisciplinary creative-building nature of art education to the development of the country, both two-dimensional and three-dimensional aspects (plate 5) of visual art education are represented. On the left-hand side is portrayed a palette, two brushes and a drawing tool. In a sunken relief, these depicted figures enjoy free negative spaces that project the contoured brushes and the drawing tool, overriding their thin nature. Indeed, the painting and drawing tools connote the two-dimensional idea while the abstracted human figure transfigured into throwing (forming objects on the potter's wheel) mannerisms has both hands skilfully gripping an object with pot-like curvature. In between the two ideational artistic representations of the aspects of visual art education, are vibrant diagonal lines with tapering edges as they converge, in a sharp contrast with thin diagonal lines slanted towards the left.



Plate 6:
Funtufunefu adinkra motif design. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

Using simple visual lines and shapes to achieve a unified compositional structure, the sculptors convincingly portray a symmetrically balanced design with binary interpretation. A cursory look at the design reveals a seemingly simplified abstracted 'funtufunefu' (Siamese crocodile) adinkra motif design which also gives an illusionary abstract expression of a football pitch (plate 6). Both ends reveal zigzagged lines that create an illusion of a truncated starburst separated by an equidistant rhombic object. The starburst is an intra-import from the University's logo which adds to the structural unity of the purely geometrical composition.

Organised in a splendiferous catchiness, a dramatic seated female cook (plate 7) portraying Home Economics Education is flanked on the right by two circular shapes upon which a simulated vegetable symbolising Agriculture Education is superimposed with a two abstracted cohort orchestrating varying interesting movements, a suggestibility of waiting on the cook for 'daily bread'. The cook holds a driving stick centred in the pot that rests on a coal pot. There is meandering wavy movement of a line which is a complete imitation of a vaporized effect and a display of the sculptors' use of intense dramatic spatial dynamics of positive and negative imagery free from academic realism.



Plate 7:
Seated female cook. (details from
"Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South
campus, UEW.

Just like Bucknor's sculptural idiom experimentations in the 1970s, the frieze is characterized by figural distortions and abstractions of sculptural forms. By the use of oval shapes and lines, the work captures a mother caressing a baby (plate 8), an expression expunging the tender loving care sentimentality of Early Childhood Care and Education, and Basic Education which are parts of the major components of the university's programmes of study.



Plate 8:
A mother caressing a baby. (details from
"Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South
campus, UEW.

Occupying the central position of the entire frieze is the emblematic university logo (plate 9). A dominant feature of the logo is the *matie masie* motif inscribed in a starburst. The *adinkra* motif symbolizes 'knowledge and wisdom'; the burning flame signifies the hardworking presence of the University's products while the jagged undulating pinnacles of the starburst are a connotation of the varied peaks at which the graduands of the institution would attain in the world of work. Sided on the right of the logo lies a chequered design and stylized right-angled triangle depicting Mathematics education.

Eliciting an almost superlative achievement, a host of percussion and orchestral instruments, dancing figures, a hand holding a flaming torch (plate 10), and musical notational (plate 11) presentation are composed to indicate musical studies in the school. This scenic musical milieu is a confirmation of the Department's trained practising music living legends such as Papa Kofi Yankson, Bessa Simons and Sherif Ghalley who continue to exercise their melodious voices in Ghana's show biz industry.



Plate 9:
The University's logo. (details from
"Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South
campus, UEW.



Plate 10:
A drum and a hand holding a flaming
torch (details from "Voyage of
Excellence").

In creating awareness of the various varied forms of disabilities and special needs education that is capable of preparing teachers to teach well in the classrooms of disabilities have been composed. These scenes comprise abstraction of a seated figure in a wheelchair alluding to orthopaedic condition, an eye superimposed on a hand, referring to visual impairment and a composite Braille identified by alternating thick vertical and horizontal lines (plate 12). A diagonal line merges with an ear to suggest hearing impaired condition.



Plate 11: Musical notional scene. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

The religious pluralism of Ghana comes to bear in a harmonious ideological composition depicting a flying dove, an Arabic inscription, two disfigured Christian crosses, a curvilinear flying whisk, as a tribute to the peaceful ecumenical co-existence of the country's religious sects. The implication of this awesome composition is that though



Plate 12:
Special needs education. (details from
"Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South
campus, UEW.

the University is a secular institution, it tolerates learners with religious diversity (plate 13). The merging of the broad graceful lines with the hooked beak head of an eagle dominated by multi-directional powerful agile lines create a sense of indomitable strength.



Plate 13:
Religious diversity. (details from "Voyage
of Excellence"). 2005. South campus,
UEW.

The eagle is bejewelled in similar star symbol that occupies the middle of Ghana's national flag. Evidently, this representation implies the University's sense of spirit of patriotism (plate 14).

The abstracted fish (plate 15a), the gathered multitude, the moving deer in their lucidity and harmony, to indicate that the sculptors showcased Winneba as a fishing community with its spectacular traditional cultural 'Aboakyer' festival, creating a new festive visual



Plate 14:
Patriotic spirit. (details from "Voyage of
Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

striking world of tremendous positive consequences. There seems to be an increased psychological tension initiated around the deer (plate 15b) in its galloping stance that creates spontaneous visual excitement. A big baobab tree (plate 16) surrounded by a crowd representing the university community replicates their sense of unity in support of the mission and vision of the university.



Plate 15a:
Fish. (details from "Voyage of
Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.

Climaxing the frieze is a huge processional rhythmic athletic (plate 17) cohort racing for a symbolic excellence (plate 17a), another stylization of the matie masie design. The foreground is simplified by the overwhelming use of diverging lines substituting tracks leading them to academic excellence, an intellectual battle that is achieved by hard work. It is obvious that the athletes also represent the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports. The lines symbolize rays of hope for the students of the University. The frieze measures 13metres x 2.5metres, and is titled "Voyage of Excellence" executed by a 13-member practising professional teacher-artists (whose names are engraved on a plaque (plate 18) in 2004. The frieze reveals the artists'



Plate 15b:
Depiction of deer and tidal waves.
(details from "Voyage of Excellence").
2005. South campus, UEW.

bountiful modernist iconographic styles, themes and exploratory verve that culminated summation of professional success in the sculptural frieze.

It was unveiled on Saturday, 14th May 2005 by Elizabeth Ohene, the then Minister of state for tertiary education under the Vice-chancellorship of Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah.



Plate 16:
The Baobab tree surrounded by people.
(details from "Voyage of Excellence").
2005. South campus, UEW.



Plate 17: Trotting athletes. (Details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.



Plate 17a: Symbolic excellence. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.



Plate 18: Plaque showing names of the sculptors. (details from "Voyage of Excellence"). 2005. South campus, UEW.