

Enterprise

By UCHE NNAMANI

Dr. Peju Layiwola is renowned for her conquests - not just in the classroom where she instructs students on what she knows and does best, but also in the art of bronze casting, an area of the creative arts which tasks skill, strength, patience and ingenuity.

A renowned female artist, Dr. Layiwola's latest initiative is a product of research, experience, exposure and full studio practice, having anchored, as well as participated in, several workshops within and outside Nigeria. In 1996 for instance, she facilitated a bronze casting workshop titled 'The Experimental Bronze Age Casting Project' organised by the Sculpture Society of Ireland, Umba Aon at the Navan Centre, Armagh, Northern Ireland. She has since 2002, been a facilitator in goldsmithing, bronze casting and beadwork at the famous 'Harmattan Workshop' series held annually in Delta State of Nigeria by Dr. Bruce Onobrakpana.

In 2003, she organised the 'Creativity Workshop' for the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, this workshop attracted several participants from all over the country. For the Bin Princess workshop experience provides greater interaction with others and provides an avenue to learn techniques outside a formal art school training, this she believes is the driving force behind her workshops.

Additionally, "it provides opportunity for people outside of the school system to learn skills"

Presently a lecturer at the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria, this Benin-born metal designer is an artist of many parts although she is best known as a bronze caster, an area viewed before now as the preserve of the masculine gender. Peju is also an art historian and academic of repute. Her scholarly articles and several exhibitions, which she has attended within and outside Nigeria, attest to her prowess in visual arts.

Peju's themes and concepts are as varied as the media in which she chooses to express herself. For several years her prints, paintings and sculptures revealed themes which mainly isolated and centered on women. In the last few years, her themes have broadened out to accommodate other issues that dwell on the identity of the artist and indeed the African, in a wider cultural orbit. Some of her works as shown in her exhibition titled 'Migration Stories' looks at the inter-connections among cultures as a result of movement of people from one place to another and 'Dispersed History' reveals the interplay between external forces and how their interaction impacts on our socio-cultural milieu.

In this latest outing, this mother of three, through her WY-ART FOUNDATION - a non-profit, non-political, non-governmental organisation - released demonstration VCD's in visual arts. The VCD's are aimed at meeting a major part of the foundation's objective, which is to teach women and youths various artistic skills to improve on their life standards.

Layiwola says the VCD will enable the beneficiaries to begin to live a more rewarding life once skills have been learnt. Although some of the programs such as teaching less privileged women within churches and communities began about 15 years ago. The foundation actually became structured very recently in the last two years. Its founder and



•Peju Layiwola

coordinator, who has organized several training workshops within and outside Nigeria explained that one of the programs of this foundation is to provide free demonstration and training for women and youths particularly in local communities. "This is done mainly through the church or organizations that identify with our mission" she stated. Explaining further how it works, she said that "the beneficiary group shall provide the materials, while the foundation provide necessary instructional facilities and resource persons "We believe that this will go a long way in alleviating poverty amongst the people. We also realize that when a woman is equipped with necessary skills, the likelihood of her children learning from her is very high. All you need do is inform us in good time about the type of training you desire" she said.

Funding

On how the programme is funded, Dr Layiwola stated that "from the sale of the VCDs, we are able to offset a bit of our expenses but we are hopeful that support for this mission will continue to increase. Our impact has been felt widely within Nigeria and our fulfillment comes from having contributed to the lives of many people who hitherto had low self worth. There are four VCD'S available in several arrears of creative Arts each with an hour duration. The VCDs provide a pleasurable way of learning skills in the comfort of your living room, they were all released in January 2005. These include:

- Goldsmithing
- Te & Dye/Bank
- Beadwork
- Cookery/Baking

The four VCDs provide about 4 hours of intensive training in vocational skills and shows step by step, materials, tools and processes involved in various areas of skill acquisition. These vocational training tapes are the first of its kind in Nigeria as it is quite uncommon to find educational VCDs of this nature. Most other VCDs available in the market are usually for entertainment.

VCD in Goldsmithing, for instance, provides a unique opportunity for those wishing to learn this art which has often been relegated to particular families who practice it.

Training

Due to popular demand, a summer school training workshop will hold in the areas of silk painting, glass painting, goldsmithing, beadwork, mixed media and general crafts for both children and adults between August and September this year in Lagos.

Art on CD

- Bronze caster Peju Layiwola takes creative arts to video compact disc
- Now you can train, make money and still enjoy your art

WY-ART FOUNDATION
Teaching Women and Youths Artistic Skills

- Goldsmithing
- Tie & Dye/Bank
- Beadwork
- Cookery/Baking



Memories of Maltex

I remember nostalgically the early 70s in Benin-city when at church receptions, drinks (non-alcoholic of course) were served and children were left out of Maltex, that was exclusively reserved for the adult VIPs. That first malt drink I saw and the only malt drink I knew until few years later that I started seeing the likes of Vitamalt and Malta Guinness.

I also remember how I usually wink at my mum and in a jiffy I will be drinking from her glass of Maltex.

I can't forget how it tasted then - good, but more of a tonic. I want to believe that some people reading this column right now would have had one of these experiences too.

On Friday, April 11, two years ago, the 40-year old brand had its label changed and a new one christened "brand identity" for the first time. It was at this ceremony held at Lagoon Restaurant I got to know the brand the more.

The Managing Director of DIL/Maltex, Iyonel Monage at the relaunch ceremony stated that the former label of Maltex was the original label of the brand from the time it was imported into Nigeria from Denmark over forty years ago. He added, "then, the brand was marketed as a tonic through drug stores, that is why the old label look more like medical prescription"

So what is Maltex today? Hear him, "Maltex is not just a tonic with vitamin of B-Complex family and essential minerals, but also a refreshing drink for every member of the family. That is why it has become necessary to change the visual identity of the brands to reflect its freshness, energy giving proportions and youthfulness."

The Managing Director emphasised that although the brand label has changed but "the core benefits of Maltex still remains same with promises of providing nourishment and vitality in a newer garb". He reiterates that the new label only reflects the brand repositioning as a brand for the whole family.

There is something that continues to bother me about this brand. It reminds me of the proverb that states "a carpenter is not known in his hometown". The production plant of this product is located in the West. But the product sells more in the East and Mid-West than in the West. The former Commercial Manager of DIL/Maltex, Mr Ayo Durodoye touched on this issue during the ceremony. His explanation, "since the inception of the production of Maltex in Nigeria, a higher percentage of its customers are from the Eastern and Mid-Western part of Nigeria, probably because of the introduction of the drink by health officers to these two areas as a result of the devastating effects of the civil war on the people. And as such the sales of Maltex drink, was up all date more concentrated in the East and the Mid-West than in Lagos despite the fact that the production plant is located in the West"

The launch would be a new vista for a great future for the brand, the company and their teeming customers. For many years before now DIL/Maltex had some production problems as production was epileptic.

But about two years ago, the company embarked on re-engineering exercises for full reactivation of the company's facilities, culminating in the revitalisation of the brand with a view to sustaining its appeal and vibrancy, as a result of which there has been a total revamp of their production line so as to meet up with consumer demands. The launching of the new label was the beginning of an array of marketing activities to commence. Almost immediately, DIL/Maltex embarked on market repositioning of their sales team. Recently they concluded a three-month consumer sales promotion tagged "Maltex Drinks and Smile" which involved winning instant gift items.

The eye catching Kachis water

There is a pure water brand presently making waves in some suburbs of Lagos. Barely six months in the market, Kachis water has found its way into a number of outlets and homes.

Though simple in packaging, you cannot but notice the distinct nature of the pack. And the water I would testify is good. Most curious about the packaging is a human hand, with all the five fingers spread.

This column gathered that the man behind this fast selling water is Chief (Prince) Odinaka Iwu. 'Odinaka' in Igbo means 'in the hand'. Is Iwu saying that Kachis water is a product of his handwork and hard work?

But again I have heard others say that the full name of the brand is "Olinakachukwu" that is "in God's hands". I believe that the man Iwu is an unwavering Christian. I hear that the way you find his hand in the packaging is also the way you find his hand in the water.

A colleague just whispered now that the name of the company that produces the water is "Nakachi" in Igbo means "God's own water". We would leave the rest of the