

Title: Akamba sculpture as a means of visual communication: its origins, development and functions

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Abstract: This inquiry investigates the origins, the use, the development and the rationale of sculpture among the traditional and the contemporary Akamba Societies. It further investigates those factors within the environment which influenced the artistic skills, competence and orientations for the total creation of the sculptural forms and designs. The study's main hypothesis is that sculpture was made, used and existed among the traditional Akamba societies before the first world war of 1914 to 1918, which many scholars refer to as the beginning of this art amongst the Akamba. Further hypothesis states that the demand for sculpture sprung from the Akamba Cultural needs and therefore the art was used as a means of cultural expression alongside dances, riddles, tales, songs and wise sayings. The study looks into the availability and choice of raw materials and the constructions of the various sculptural properties such as size, form, and topic. It further looks into the sculpture's functional characteristics and the possibilities for innovations. Some of the shortcomings of the previous studies are discussed and their contribution and setbacks assessed. The major difference between these early works and this inquiry is that while these early investigations tried to cover the Akamba arts in general this study confines itself to sculpture. Data collection procedures used are: (a) Oral interview. (b) Observations. (c) Drawings. (d) Photography. Fifty-one specimens of Akamba traditional sculpture are studied, described and used as illustration for this study. Problems arising from these proceedings are outlined and the ways employed to solve them stated. The main hypothesis is upheld and the evidence to support it presented using specimen photographs, drawings and data charts. Lastly, recommendations and measures to be taken by particular groups of people in order to improve the usage of the Akamba sculpting skills and products are outlined. These recommendations are based on observations and data implications. The inquiry stresses the adoption and integration of traditional and modern ideas and values in order to create a positive attitude in observers towards sculpture. Specifically this inquiry seeks to fulfill the following objectives: (a) To determine the extent to which sculpture was and is used by the Akamba with a view to suggesting effective use and practice of sculpting. (b) Explain the factors which hinder the effective use of this art. (c) Find out the main instructional value contained in sculpture. (d) To establish sculpture as a means of instruction/communication in educational institutions and public. (e) To recommend new strategies for the utilization of sculpting skills.