



# Effect of Improper Disposal of Wastes: An Artist View in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Abstract

One of the saddest realities of modern day is the fact that wastes, which we generate abundantly every day is now becoming a threat to life. Yet the problem has not been solved and given proper attention to. Wastes are everywhere in the society. The challenge is that it has become a next neighbour to every living soul in plain sight. We see it and it sees us. Interestingly, one of the major reasons that waste is becoming more rampant in the society is because we use it everyday. We use and use it to pollute the environment. We consume and never think of helping Mother Nature to put her environment back in use through the natural proper disposal. The impetus for this study arose out of the uniqueness of the creativity ingenuity of the works of Dotun Oluwa, who over the years has found a solution to the improper disposal of wastes in the environment. This paper therefore examines the discarded rumble paper sculptures of Dotun Oluwa with the aim of finding another alternative to recycling paper in the environment. Photographs of works are taken and the procedures involved in executing the works were highlighted.

**Keywords:** Rumble paper, Recycling, Waste, and Environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Problems of waste pollution have always been a subject of keen interest to environmentalists, activists and even world leaders. Climate change and other environmental and aesthetic degradations have broken our natural systems, giving rise to new and fatal diseases—case in covid-19 consequentially resulting in a breakdown of the global economy (Chukwumeka, 2021). Few movies and books have predicted grim versions of a dystopian world where a few groups of mankind are forced to survive after global warming and pollution have devastated human society.

Global leaders are on a quest to alleviate waste pollution of all kinds, ocean, air, land, etc. also organizations and initiatives continue to run public awareness campaigns in an effort to make responsible and respectable dwellers out of earth's citizens. To say the least, with rapid urbanization and economic growth come greater implications. In Nigeria, waste is piling up and overflowing to boot with nowhere to go, spreading disease and dishevelment across the continent. According to a World Bank report, waste generation in Sub-Saharan African is about 62 million tonnes annually. Also the World Economic Forum has it that in Africa, a total of 8 million tonnes of waste leaks into the ocean each year. Alarming, it is projected that come 2050, there will be more waste than fish in the ocean if we do not take action to curb waste pollution (Olojede, 2018).

We live in a nation where nobody seems to care about tomorrow. Many people, especially our politicians and business men make decisions via prism of the present gains in the bargain, and not considering the wilder implications of today's actions as they would inevitably affect even Nigerians yet to be born (Greg, 2020). This is why some businessmen take money from foreign interests to dump wastes and other toxic consignments in Nigeria. It is no more farfetched to imagine a scenario where Nigeria becomes a dumping ground for these banned waste products prior to 2030, from the developed nations who will be struggling to beat the deadline and therefore use Nigeria as a veritable dustbin for these wastes. These waste materials exist in liquid, solid waste, organic, recyclable and hazardous.

Creative artists have been mostly concerned with utilizing wastes as products of art with utilizing wastes as products of art and means of expression. This aimed at reducing the quality of waste thereby partially or totally decimating it. Every reduction man can apply to waste is a worthwhile effort to ensuring his own survival (Whetto, 2019). Creating a form in sculpture is as important as the work itself. The creative search for creating form in sculpture is as old as sculpture. Different materials ranging from stone, rock, terracotta, mud to ceramic tiles have been experimented with. The search for more possibilities for creating form in sculpture has been a constant one till date. One of such possibilities explored in this research is discarded rumble paper.

Paper sculpture often described as found object art or three-dimensional art, involves using everyday objects, both natural and man-made, to create a sculptural composition or construction. If the objects are old, rusted, weathered, or incongruous, so much better. Using societal cast offs in assemblage art has a long history in works by Dada artists Marcel Duchamp and Kurt Schwitters and later in the early 40s by Joseph Cornell, whose boxed assemblages created a new way to present the art. The fact that using found and discarded objects fits well into a contemporary interest in recycling may be part of the reason it is so well accepted today, but recycling is certainly not the driving force behind most assemblage artist work. There are no rigid rules for creating a paper sculpture. It can be simple abstract work created with few papers or a complex work with many layers of overlapping paper elements.

### ***1.1 Statement of the Research***

Improper disposal of wastes deface the aesthetic beauty of the state by indiscriminating dumping of refuse on medians and unauthorized places. The road medians are piled high with bin bags. The gutters began to smell. The previously contained leachate-havens began to seep toxic liquids into human habitats.

#### ***1.2.1 Objective of the Research***

- i. To identify and collect discarded rumble paper.
- ii. To develop new alternatives to discarded rumble paper and aid the move towards creative sculptural work.
- iii. To actualize recycling, re-use and re-purposing.
- iv. To sensitize the public on the issue of waste management.

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## **2.LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Recycling***

The concept of wastes and recycling in art is the ability of the artist to use their initiatives to create, recreate, and reuse the rejected and discarded materials in production of artworks. These materials are given new functional values through artistic expression (Sobowale, 2015). The artists recover, re-use, and re-arrange them for works of art, to reflect interesting concepts for utilitarian purposes as well as restoring aesthetics to the rejected material substances. The term recycling involves processing the used materials (discarded substances of wastes) into new products, to fresh materials, reduce energy source utility, and then reduce water and air pollution. Okeke (2004), define recycling as the third component of the reduce, re-use and recycle waste hierarchy. The material usage in sculpture in terms of recycled waste materials exploration helps a lot in redressing environmental waste accumulation dilemma.

Nonetheless, assemblage in sculptural construction is the artistic expression which employs wastes and has led to an innovative and enormous use of improvisation, through exploration in visual language. The artwork that is displayed in alfresco are used as very potent tools to the public, hence visual language. Recycling therefore is the process of converting old or used substances into new, useful products instead of dumping them in landfills. In other word, recycling of old products could produce fresh supply of new same products.

### ***Role of Visual Artists in the World of Waste in Nigeria***

In contemporary times, the artist has explored his environment to create and recreate objects for aesthetic purposes. The artist tries to rescue the environment from the havoc wrecked to human and animal life by domestic and industrial wastes on daily basis has generated many terms and terminologies. This artist approach to waste management is better understood and workable in solid waste which can be seen. Such solid wastes include combustible wastes such as paper, wood and cloth and non-combustible wastes such as metal, glass, plastic and ceramic items. Other waste items are animal bones, vehicle parts, computer remnants (e-wastes), shoes, knives, sawdust and other related items.

The process of making art of items that are primarily non-art materials, particularly trash or junk has attracted different names overtime (Ademuleya, 2012). Artists and art scholars, since Picasso's chair caning (1912) and Duchamp's Fountain, (1917), for want of specificity have labeled the by-product of this process (that thought was initially found too radical to be accepted as art) such names as "readymade", "funk art", "trash art", "junk art" etc. This literature review chronicles some artists across Nigeria with their works making waves across the globe in various categories. The works of this artist connotes the idea that there is a new language of art communicated by Nigeria artists who work in this genre is exciting: cultural inspiration melds with historical memories. The found objects are the same as those distributed all over the world but the aesthetic responses and the technical application are African in context, creating transfigured art that reflects a continent's beliefs and society in a newly powerful way.

One of such artist is OluAmoda, who is an international recognized sculptor, muralist, furniture designer and multi-media artist, always visible at major art fairs and attending workshops around the continent. He describes his art as "repurposed material art". In one of his works, he made use of cutlery (spoon primarily) and other metal objects to create versions of sun flowers in a highly unusual and technically skillful manner. They are the perfect illustration of the transformation of inconspicuous materials to an object of beauty.

Another prominent Nigerian artist that works completely with waste is Nwocha Ernest. He is a sculptor who specializes in waste tyre. He lives in Lagos Nigeria and he is a graduate of Auchi polytechnic. His tyre works which is driven by the desire to clean up Lagos, is gaining popularity in Nigeria. He started by creating small parts with the tyre material and wanted to show Nigeria that he could create something out of nothing.

Olabanke Banjo is also another environmentalist whose passion birthed Cyrus45factory, a creative agency focused on creating bespoke avant-garde and ultra-modern furniture products using tyres. According to Olabanke, her creativity was born out of pure coincidence. Her goal is to minimize the damage caused by tyre waste-tyre are non-biodegradable, and burning them creates both environmental and health hazards.

However, the works in discourse showcase paper casting which is a means of finding another alternative to casting in sculpture. It implies the process of articulating from found waste paper to make a sculpture. The artist shows a complete mastery of naturalism and a delight in the beauty of simple human gestures. The artist's ability to organize the lines, shapes, forms and rhythms organically, gives the figure a feeling of monumentality-the power of something larger than the mind.

Lanre Tejuosho, is also another waste sculptor, born in Nigeria and a graduate from the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2005. He is one of the new generation artists that have found love for artistic expression through wastes. Tejuosho understood the waste works of El Anatsui and draws inspiration from him. Although Tejuosho's style and production have resemblance with that of El Anatsui, the difference lies in the use of materials. While Anatsui uses bottle covers and tin cans, Tejuosho uses mostly flexible wrappers (polythene and papers). The choice of materials avails him a variety of brilliant hues as observable in his works. Lanre dogged creative resilience character distinguishes him from many of his contemporaries who place a premium on the economic aspect of artistic practice. Tejuosho admitted motivation is his passion for creativity and the need to solve environmental problems.

One of the ways of reducing waste in the environment is by finding alternative uses to discarded materials. Several research works have been devoted to this area by artists in the quest for new medium of expression. This singular action has led to the aim of finding alternative use to wastes which invariably helps in reducing the hazards of waste to human life and environment. This present research therefore focuses on the use of discarded rumble paper as a means in casting in sculpture.

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### 3. ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dotun Oluwa was born in Lagos Island on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1966 to the famous Oluwa family of Lagos, Apapa Lagos State. He attended Holy Trinity Anglican School Lagos, Zumratul Islamiyah Grammar School, Yaba/Igbogbo Ikorodu for his post primary education. He had his Higher Secondary Education at Igbogbi College Yaba and later gained an admission to the prestigious Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, where he had his Ordinary National Diploma in General Art, he had his Industrial training with Macsell Associates, an advertising agency in the late 80s to early 90s. Later went back for his Higher National Diploma at Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, having completed the Programme with major in Sculpture. He had his National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Programme in Benue State and was absorbed for his primary assignment by Nigeria Air Force Secondary School, Makurdi where he was later retained as an art teacher. At the completion of the Programme in which he won the state award and several others. He worked briefly in the state for about three years, before leaving for Lagos to pursue his studio practice career.

Dotun Oluwa joined Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education as an instructor in 2000 and later in 2005 decided to head to University of Lagos for Bachelor Degree in Art (Sculpture), where he bagged B.A. in Sculpture. He enrolled at University of Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State to pursue his post graduate Diploma in Education (art and language) for his teaching career. He is also bagged his Masters of Fine and Applied Degree at Obafemi Awolowo University. He has worked with some highly reputable studios both within and outside the country. He has to his credit some private, public and corporate art projects and commission executed within and outside the country. He has also participated in several groups' art exhibitions around the country.

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### 4. ANALYSIS OF THE WORKS OF THE ARTIST



*Plate 1: Acada*

*Medium: Rumbled paper and top bond*

*Size: 4by5ft*

*Year:2015*

*Artist:DotunOluwa*

1. **“Acada”**:Acada is a Yoruba meaning of academics. The above picture depicts a young man or a youth, rigorously studying in an uncomfortable position preparing for an examination. He is seated bending, shirtless, with a short trouser, putting on a glasses, also holding on his right hand a large book supported with his left thigh while his left hand his used to support the whole body masses from falling. Dotun tries to depict the schooling environment where a student is subjected to rigorous reading and learning before such a fellow can pass an examination. Dotunsculpture are largely concerned with meticulously recreating the experience of environmental activities.

Dotun combines elements taken from both observation and his imagination in his fantastical figures. Constructing a composition around this complex figure involves meticulous research and preparation. His sculpture is meant to be read as an extension to the room in which the viewer is standing. He uses movement to unify the figure and introduce an element of visual drama. The realism of movement also helps to provide continuity between the space inhabited by the viewer and the imaginary space contained within the picture. The direct lights which floods his sculpture has the enduring quality associated with classical sculptures. The work is full of activity but is perfectly balanced. The luminous skin tones, the drapery, the anatomically perfect forms and the advanced movement show how far Dotun had progressed. The figure is busy in a moment of concentration, and it is this sort of intimacy that gives Dotun art its sense of informality. Dotun claimed that “the art of sculpture lies entirely in the modelling not in the rendition of movement or character”. He likes to use historical references, but he doesn’t really want that many external influences. He wants his works to be self-contained, from his own head.



**Plate 2:** *Mary*

**Medium:** *Rumbled paper and top bond*

**Size:** *2by2ft***Year:** *2012*

**Artist:** *DotunOluwa*

2. **“Mary”**:Dotun has spent decades developing a precise practice to make sculpting’s that look as if they grew spontaneously. Yet preparatory sketches reveal that his is a meticulously planned effort. His highly simplified stylized figure represents the empirical observation of the detached scientific eyes. Dotun perceived beauty of form and references to figurative tradition as indispensable elements for the realization of an artwork, the emotional intensity and sheer creativity prove just how innovative his sculpture was, of a strength sufficient to pour new vitality and remarkable meaning into the theme. Dotun interpreted the space surrounding the figure as part of the figure itself, and the figure as part of the space in accordance with the principles of movement. The delicate movement of the head seems to hint at the processes and persistence of memories.Dotun greatest talent was the way he could give life to sculpture.



**Plate 3:** *Area Father*

**Medium:** *Rumbled paper and top bond*

**Size:** 2by2ft

**Year:** 2013

**Artist:** DotunOluwa

3. **“Area Father”:** Dotun works are largely representational. Area father is someone who has dwelled long in Lagos, Nigeria. They are always known with their conventional “kangoo” cap. They are known to be, notorious, drinkers, trouble maker and always found with illicit substances. The forms are traces from real-world events and day to day activities and others are out of studio experiences. Dotun invests the forms with colours amusements so that his constellation of spill shapes punctuate the picture plane and create pictorial space. A representation of conventional subject matter, such as a human head, may acquire provocative content through the use of unorthodox techniques or the combination of conflicting stylish influences. Knowing this, the sculptor considers content and makes choices about technique and style while a works potential effect on an audience.

The artist was determined to render the subject as emotionally convincing as possible so he resorted to a direct, gripping presentation of the figure with a close up depiction of his human pathos. The delicate grace of the sculpture shows the sculptors sensitivity and ability to imbue the posed figure with a sense of freshness and spontaneity. The work is a beautiful combination of formal equalities and naturalness, an image of exquisite beauty suffused with spontaneity inspired by several classical Venuses.



**Plate 4:** Michael

**Medium:** Rumbled paper and top bond

**Size:** 2by2ft

**Year:** 2014

**Artist:** DotunOluwa

4. **“Michael”:** in his sensitive, introspective portraits, Dotun sharpens the contrast between soul and appearance. He works life size in scale and rich with texture and he often sets figures against the environment. He is a visual artist who is interested in exploring the mechanism of perception. He tries to manufacture situations, which will make the spectator become aware of the psychology of visual perception. The saturated greening look allow us to experience the relative effects of warm and cold environment. We cannot ignore the lucidity of Dotun surface texture and the great economy of his techniques. His economy of means helps our attention to the more salient points of the composition. Almost invariably he structured the composition so as to return our gaze constantly to the facial features, in particular to the eyes. Typically, he achieved this by increasing the definition of the work in this area. The figure is portrayed in the intimacy of his environment. The sculpture suffused with an intense human sensitivity, can be regarded as a reinterpretation of these characteristics and compositions of Dotun portraits.



**Plate 5:** Flamingo

*Medium: Rumbled paper and top bond*

*Size: 3by2ft*

*Year: 2015*

*Artist: Dotun Oluwa*

5. **“Flamingo”**: The work explores the style that relies primarily upon the line to describe forms; shapes and space. Flamingoes are birds known that spend most of their time the sea searching for foods. Light and perspective play equal parts in ordering the space within this composition, although Dotun took artistic license with both. Perspective is a mathematical system of taking the world as we perceive it through the eye and reproducing it on two dimensional planes. Perspective is used to chiefly create rhythm and patterns, and secondarily to reinforce forms and space. The drama of the composition is restrained by the precision with which the artist places the elements of his composition. This is seemingly based on the same preoccupations with Pythagorean mathematics that influenced the severe geometry of the sixteenth century Escorial monastery near Madrid.

The main part of the composition consists of only three elements, the larger figure on the right balancing the two bending figures on the bottom and above. Dotun placed them so that they dominate the picture, which simplified each figure and emphasized their sculptural solidity in relation to the flatness of the scene behind. The precise arrangement of the Flamingo communicates a sense of order and self-sufficiency that is quite alien to Dotun. This can be taken as symbolic of the artists' deeply held composition convictions, and may also reflect his isolation from the environment but unrivalled position as a master of composition. The composition remains indebted to the symmetry of Gothic art: almost every element finds its mirror image reflected about the central vertical axis of the picture. This gives the painting its balance and harmony, although Dotun Oluwa skillfully ensured the symmetry was not too obvious.

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## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The study of waste management is very complicated and for now poorly understood. That is why it is practically impossible to make accurate future predictions about curbing wastes. Nevertheless, research shows that are going on in the climate, which is why there is a scientific consensus on the rise of global mean temperature degree since the 1850s and the increase in carbon dioxide emissions relative to pre-industrial era, premised on the burning of fossil fuels by humans. Despite the diverse challenges faced by contemporary artist in the area of waste conversion to artefacts, there are still wide area of application and expression that we can explore which overshadow such difficulties/challenges in order to make our world a better place. All world cultures, existing and new techniques, technologies and art forms are great platform in adapting the wastes in the environment and be repurposed to beautiful and functional items. As artists, we must come to the terms with the fact that with the right thinking, something can be created out of nothing; that problem can be solved through meditative thinking.

Dotun use the visual language elements as subject surpasses his concern with subject matter. He takes a modest scene as raw materials and transforms it into a delight for the eyes by composing the lines, shapes, forms, textures, tones and colours. Dotun also takes great joy in creating the illusion of space and in rendering the play of light on forms; notice the variety of contrasting edges from hard to soft and the full range of values from light to dark.

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