

**The Development of Visual Arts in Tanzania from 1961 to 2015:  
A Focus on the National Cultural Policy and Institutions' Influences**

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By

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**Dedicated to**

Zimanimoto and Mtemisi

Dominikus and Sesilia

Herbert and Epifania

Dommy 'Bob' Makukula

Walter and Assumpta

Moses and Kochiwe

John Fratera Gama

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## Abstract

This study provides a concise history of the developments of Tanzania's visual arts from 1961, when Tanzania achieved its independence, to 2015. It investigated the influences behind visual art developments in Tanzania and ideologies that informed the arts that are manifested in each period. The study found that visual arts in Tanzania developed in three periods that were essentially shaped by socio-cultural, political and economic events. The first phase was that of the Independence Period which lasted for only six years from 1961 to 1967, with the visual arts developing under the strong influence of President Julius Nyerere's steadfast drive towards cultural decolonisation in Tanzania. Nyerere, ambitiously engineered a campaign to revive and promote precolonial traditions and customs in a bid to redefine and construct national cultural identity of the newly independent Tanzania through the arts. The study has established that Nyerere's ideas received positive support from many Makerere-trained Tanzanian artists and art educators such as Sam Ntiro, Sefanie Tunginie, Elimo Njau, Kiure Msangi, Elias Jengo, Fatma Abdallah and Louis Mbughuni, whose contributions helped realise modern art education systems and institutions in the country. Nyerere was also instrumental in the formation of majority of the public and private patronage agencies that were involved in the production and promotion of the visual arts throughout his 23 years' reign. Moreover, during the Independence period, the production and promotion of visual arts were encouraged to establish media of a novel African cultural identity and symbols of national political independence. The second period was that of *Ujamaa* which lasted from 1967 to 1984 and saw the promotion of visual arts as tools for political propaganda and "economic goods" to help incept and consolidate the socialist state and its ethos. The state was then the chief patron of the visual arts produced and promoted in specialised parastatals

and co-operative unions. Yet, some parastatals that were not specialised in the arts business commissioned artistic productions as advertising mediums for their activities whereas those established as art enterprises or companies administered visual art production and promotion for business purposes. Finally, in the third period, the neo-liberal economic era, which began in 1985, allowed visual arts to develop under the auspices and patronage of the Western cultural promotion organisations such as the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, Goethe Institut, Alliance Française, British Council and SIDA. This study found out that these foreign cultural agencies were largely responsible for the inception and promotion of contemporary art practices that apply new media technologies and the internet in production and display. Of the local influences, only a few private enterprises such as the private press and publishing companies which emerged after the collapse of the *Ujamaa* policies promoted visual arts besides their activities. During this period, there were changes in the country's leadership and governance coupled with the adoption of free market economy and new political system<sup>1</sup> which significantly changed the dynamics of the nation's visual arts scene and development. In short, this phase created the necessary conditions that revolutionised visual art production and promotion practices in Tanzania from 1985 onwards. However, the study also found that in Tanzania, visual art developments were highly influenced by the activities of public and private institutions instead of state cultural policy. Generally, there were huge successes in the production and promotion of visual arts that reflected Tanzanian national culture during the Independence and *Ujamaa* phases but not so much during the neo-liberal economic period influenced by liberal, commercial and even hybrid factors.

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<sup>1</sup> See, '*Azimio la Arusha: Chimbuko la mfumo wa Tanzania lililotelekezwa*' by John Ngunge, Nipashe 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016

## **Zusammenfassung**

Die vorliegende Arbeit bietet einen Überblick zu Geschichte und Entwicklung der Bildkünste Tansanias im Zeitraum von 1961, dem Jahr, in dem das Land seine Unabhängigkeit erlangte, bis in die Gegenwart des Jahres 2015.

Untersucht werden neben den kulturellen Faktoren, die die künstlerischen Entwicklungen in Tansania prägten, auch die ideologisch-weltanschaulichen Diskurse, vor deren Hintergrund sich die dargestellten Entwicklungen vollzogen. Dabei wird herausgearbeitet, dass sich die Geschichte der Bildkünste in Tansania während des betrachteten Zeitraums in drei distinkte Phasen gliedern lässt, die wesentlich von soziokulturellen, politischen und ökonomischen Faktoren bestimmt waren.

In der frühen Zeit der staatlichen Unabhängigkeit Tansanias als der ersten Phase, die lediglich sechs Jahre von 1961 bis 1967 dauerte, stand die Entwicklung der Künste stark unter dem Einfluss des von Präsident Julius Kambarage Nyerere's verfochtenen Gedankens einer kulturellen Dekolonisierung. Eine ambitionierte Kampagne zur Wiederbelebung und Förderung vorkolonialer Traditionen und Tugenden sollte die nationale und kulturelle Identität des unabhängigen Tansania über die Künste neu definieren und legitimieren. Dabei wird gezeigt, wie Präsident Nyereres Ideen von an der Makerere-Universität ausgebildeten Künstlern und Kunsterziehern wie Sam Ntiro, Sefanie Tunginie, Elimo Njau, Kiure Msangi, Elias Jengo, Fatma Abdallah and Louis Mbughuni aufgriff und förderte. Diese Förderaktivitäten trugen maßgeblich dazu beitragen, ein Ausbildungssystem und Institutionen für moderne Kunst im Land zu etablieren. Darüber hinaus hatte Präsident Nyerere entscheidenden Anteil an der Gründung eines Großteils jener öffentlichen und privaten Institutionen, die sich im Verlauf seiner 24-jährigen Amtszeit einer Förderung der

Kunstproduktion des Landes verschrieben. Die Studie legt dar, dass in der ersten Phase der Unabhängigkeit die Künste staatlich gefördert und lanciert wurden, um als Ausdrucksmedium einer neuen afrikanischen, kulturell begründeten Identität und damit als Symbol nationaler politischer Unabhängigkeit zu dienen.

Die *Ujamaa-Periode* oder zweite Phase, die von 1967 bis 1984 dauerte, schloss die Förderung von Kunst als Mittel politischer Propaganda wie auch als wirtschaftlichen Faktor ein, der einen Beitrag zum Aufbau eines sozialistischen Staates leisten sollte. Während dieser Phase trat der Staat als hauptsächlicher Auftraggeber von Kunst auf, die in spezialisierten, halb-staatlichen, kooperativen Einrichtungen produziert und gefördert wurde. Einige der halb-staatlichen Institutionen, die nicht selbst im Kunstbereich tätig waren, gaben Kunst in Auftrag, um sie als Werbeträger für ihre Aktivitäten zu nutzen, während im Gegenzug solche Einrichtungen, die direkt als Kunstunternehmen gegründet waren, die Herstellung von Kunst für wirtschaftliche Zwecke steuerten.

In der letzten Phase einer neo-liberalen Wirtschaftsordnung, die 1985 einsetzte, entwickelten sich die Künste unter der Schirmherrschaft westlicher Kulturinstitutionen, darunter das Dänische Zentrum für Kultur und Entwicklung, das Goethe Institut, die Alliance française, der British Council und die schwedische SIDA. Unter dem Einfluss dieser ausländischen Kulturinstitutionen, so kann die vorliegende Studie zeigen, hielten verstärkt zeitgenössische künstlerische Gattungen und Praktiken Einzug, die sich aktueller digitaler Medientechnologien und des Internets sowohl zur Kunstproduktion wie auch im Hinblick auf deren Ausstellung und Verbreitung bedienen. Was lokale Einflüsse angeht, so befassten sich nur noch wenige privatwirtschaftliche Unternehmen, wie etwa Presse- und Verlagshäuser, die nach dem Zusammenbruch des Ujamaa-Politik entstanden, jenseits ihrer

sonstigen Aktivitäten überhaupt mit Kunst. Für diese Phase liefern die Umbrüche in Führung und Regierung des Landes, die Einführung der freien Marktwirtschaft und die politische Liberalisierung die entscheidenden Faktoren, die zu einer Erneuerung der Kunstproduktion führten. Die Studie kann zeigen, dass die Entwicklung der Bildkünste in Tansania nunmehr deutlich stärker dem Einfluss internationaler sowie unabhängiger und privater Initiativen unterliegt als dem der staatlichen Kulturpolitik. Dabei sind beeindruckende Erfolge zu verzeichnen, gerade im Hinblick auf die Entstehung von neuen Kunstprojekten, die sich nunmehr gezielt mit Geschichte und Politik in Tansania während der ersten beiden Phasen (Unabhängigkeit und *Ujaama*-Periode) beschäftigen und diese im Hinblick auf die gegenwärtige, vom Neoliberalismus geprägte Situation kritisch reflektieren.

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## **Section I: Introduction**

### **Unveiling Tanzania as a Visual Art Region**

Artistic expression is a universal human trait. As the oldest human remains have been unearthed in Tanzania and the country has, perhaps the longest of human occupation, it also has one of the oldest traditions of artifact making in the world. Besides language, art is central to Tanzania's cultural preservation, expression, and transmission. It preserves, expresses, and transmits the country's history, cultural values, and knowledge as well as its social aspirations, goals, and ideals. Because art is appreciated by all in the society, irrespective of class, income, or education level, it has the ability to communicate to people across diverse cultural backgrounds and languages. In contrast, the written word is only able to reach the literate segments of society. As art and culture are often very tightly interwoven, Tanzanian art is a good reflection of the country's culture. Thus the arts reflect the country's immense cultural diversity as well as its overriding communal social orientation (Otiso 2013:99)

The above excerpt provides a succinct opening to the present study's topic by enlightening us on its main research questions. The excerpt also helps to articulate how art, and the visual arts in particular, share a long history with humanity in Tanzania<sup>2</sup> and hence its incorporation in almost all people's aspects of life. It also depicts that visual art serves as a 'silent language' among Tanzanians. Adding to that, the excerpt clearly explains that the novel functional and aesthetic values that the visual arts reflect are experiences that are deeply engrained in the artistic and humanistic expressions that have evolved among generations of Tanzanians since

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<sup>2</sup> To aid in this study, it is necessary to provide a brief history of the United Republic of Tanzania, which was created on April 26, 1964 as a result of the Union between the People's Republic of Zanzibar and the Republic of Tanganyika. From 1885 onwards, the latter was part of what was known as German East Africa (which also included the now Burundi and Rwanda) under German colonial rule, but was named Tanganyika in the post-First World War period in 1919 when Britain took over this country as a protectorate with Rwanda and Burundi falling under different mandates. Tanganyika had been a German colony for thirty years, but following the defeat of Germany at the end of World War I, it became a League of Nations Mandate. On the inauguration of the United Nations, it became a United Nations Trusteeship and was administered by Britain for 45 years until its independence on December 9, 1961... Mshana 1999, pp.1,7

prehistoric times. In section one, which covers the Introduction part of this study, and in all its three chapters, explicates the origin of visual arts in Tanzania while attempting to answer the following questions:

1. How did visual arts in Tanzania develop from 1961 to 2015?
  - How does the Tanzanian society appreciate and use visual arts?
  - What is the significance of visual arts in Tanzania?
2. What are the factors behind the development and promotion of visual arts in Tanzania between the years 1961 to 2015?
3. What kind of influences have the National Cultural Policy and the Public and Private Institutions made in the development of visual arts in Tanzania?
  - What was the contribution of artists, politicians and foreign experts in the development of visual art in Tanzania from 1961 to 2015?

Nevertheless, the researcher found it imperative to provide brief notes that would shade more light on answers to the aforementioned research questions and sub-questions. Although the findings presented in all the three chapters in this research have meticulously responded to those questions, the opening discussions on sub-topics such as, The Visual Arts Scene Before the Independence of Tanzania, Why the Limited Literature on Visual Arts during Colonial Tanzania, Visual Arts and Society in Tanzania, Visual Art Conception and Categorisation in Tanzania, as well as Visual Art and Beauty in Tanzania will help a great deal in guiding the readers' interpretation and comprehension of this research findings.

## **The Visual Art Scene Before Independence of Tanzania**

It is unfortunate that during colonialism, majority of African visual arts and several other cultural practices were harshly dismissed by the colonial government and its agents such as Christian missionaries<sup>3</sup>, leaving very little of the arts, traditions, and customs of the past known to post-colonial generations. This is very evident in the case of present time visual arts sector of Tanzania as observed by Msangi (1987) and Mwenesi (1998)<sup>4</sup>.

Immediately after Tanganyika gained its independence, some efforts were made by the first African government to re-establish a link between the artistic activities that were practised before the advent of the colonialists. In the process, a few original African cultural and artistic practices which had survived extinction by the colonialists were restored and preserved. During his inauguration on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1962, President Julius Nyerere made a crucial interventionist speech that has since informed and shaped the direction of visual arts in Tanzania. Nyerere asserted that there was a generation of ancestors who had established an original culture with rich artistic and cultural heritage that was almost destroyed through colonial intervention. His views implied that the independent Tanzanian public is a generation whose traditional cultural identity must originate from that of their ancestors and not necessarily the 'alien culture' that had been imposed on them and promoted by the colonialists through formal education and other forms of colonial propaganda.

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates and delineates a concise history of visual arts development in Tanzania as practised by the two generations of artists from 1961

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<sup>3</sup>See President Nyerere speech in Chapter One, pp.43-44

<sup>4</sup>See Msangi 1987, pp.19-22 and Mwenesi 1998, pp.9-17

until 2015. The artists who dominated the Independence and the *Ujamaa* scenes are considered here as the first generation of artists in independent Tanzania, whose main agenda was to select, revive and improve the best artistic heritage of past African generations in an attempt to establish a synthesised visual arts tradition that would be used to create an original ‘national culture’ as well as art identity. The second generation of artists studied in this research was that which emerged during the neo-liberal economic period from the year 1985 onwards. Through the works of these artists, the present study explored the influences of public and private institutions as well as the cultural policy that was established to promote and develop artistic practices and, hence, the development of visual arts in the country. The study also observed the manner in which art promotion institutions and cultural policy influenced conformity, change and exchange of practices among the generations in the context of a desired novel African cultural productions and promotion in Tanzania.

Conversely, this study suggests that locally-derived approaches have to be used besides ‘formal methods’ for a full appreciation of visual arts in Tanzania to materialise. Retrospectively, this notion also proposes that locally-derived interpretations of art should take precedence in the appreciation of Tanzanian art. This is because the environment and culture that inspired the visual arts are relevant and familiar to the artist himself/herself, the local audiences and to some extent foreign art experts who have for so long lived and worked closely with art producers in Tanzania. This notion was clearly explained during the last interview with George Lilanga, before his death, in June 2005 conducted in Dar es Salaam by the Italian art collector and curator Sarenco:

**Sarenco:** Over recent years I have enjoyed reading critical essays about your work. My impression is that everyone wants to attribute to you strange philosophies, from most the transcendent to the mystic-esoteric,

without taking into account your origins as a Makonde artist or what you have often said about your work. You have said that at night you dream of works that you carry out during the day. The dreamlike quality is what gives your pictures the extra fascination. In fact, in order to really understand your paintings, it would be necessary to live in Dar es Salaam and travel those ten kilometres that go from the port to hill district of SabaSaba... Your painting is a collective dance, the expression of a live tribal culture, one that is authentic and exasperatedly contemporary. I don't want to ask you questions or have answers. I only want you to tell me how you began, in 1961, to devote yourself exclusively to sculpture and then, in about 1972, to become a great painter...

**George Lilanga:** Well, you see I was born in Tanzania in 1934. All my art, from sculpture to drawing and painting is related to the people who surround me because these people are part of daily life and activity. One of my best characters is a dentist, a woman dentist to be exact, who takes out a bad tooth from a patient with a monkey-wrench; or else, at times a male dentist who does the same thing. The most important thing, something that makes my work easier to understand, is that all my art must be seen as an expression of my happiness (Mascelloni and Sarenco 2005:23)

George Lilanga thus confirmed two important things about his practice. First, he admitted that his art was inspired by his local culture and the people around him. Second, he acknowledged the cultural diversity in his work as Tanzanian, that is, beyond the often polarising 'tribal' confines that Sarenco appears to allude to. Similar sources were also confirmed to inspire the artistic practices of most of the artists interviewed in the present study. Nonetheless, when this interview between Sarenco and Lilanga was conducted, some Western critics of George Lilanga's artworks had already related his "*Mashetani*" paintings genre to the young American artist Keith Haring, suggesting that Lilanga had, in fact, been emulating the American artist, when the vice versa is true, as Sarenco explains:

...As far as I am concerned the points of contact between you and Haring just don't exist: your world is too rich in ideas and vitalistic madness; his world has a little invention (except for great graphic cunning). It is, though, obvious that you had never seen Haring's work, while it could well be that the young metropolitan graffitist saw your work in New York in 1977... (Mascelloni and Sarenco 2005:23)

This notion that visual arts as a cultural phenomenon is best appreciated from an insiders' view is adequately explained by Rowland Abiodun in his article *Understanding Yoruba Art and Aesthetics: The Concept of Ase*<sup>5</sup>.

Yet, a glimpse of the East African visual arts literature corpus reveals that the customary conventions necessary for understanding art and artistic practices in Tanzania have been ignored by some art historians, who have consistently maintained that modern and contemporary art developments in this area are European imports. Although some artistic practices and art genres are entirely new in Tanzania and elsewhere in the world, very few objective studies and art scholars have honestly attested to the originality of such inventions without showing some deliberate misunderstanding. In this regard, Lilanga versus Sarenco dialogue illustrates this kind of scholarship overreaching attitude regarding the origins of some artistic practices in Tanzania. Unfortunately, whenever there is nothing to compare or nobody to link to a 'controversial' African art genre or invention that does not fit the established formalist canons and maxims, it tends to be categorised as 'a naiveté' or a technically inferior or failed art, as was the case with Sam Ntiro's painting genre<sup>6</sup>. This kind of scholarship has long undermined a full appreciation of visual arts in the context of Tanzania. In her publication *Art in Eastern Africa*, Marion Arnold recounts how this hegemonic paradigm in East African art histories began when she states:

The West, with a long, sustained history of constantly evolving art and tradition of critical, theoretical and aesthetic engagement with culture, has been responsible for formulating many concepts and definitions of art crystallised in printed words. When knowledge circulates freely, it becomes influential and thus Western ideas on art, embodied in art literature, discussed in the media, endorsed by teaching institutions, acquired power. Confident that its theories were substantiated by

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<sup>5</sup>See Abiodun 1994, pp.69-73

<sup>6</sup>See Pissarra 2015, pp.29-37

evidence, the West proposed its cultural models as universal (Arnold 2008:15)

Arnold aptly explains how the dominant glitch that emerges in most African art history narratives by some Western authors has affected the way they have studied, interpreted, and documented East African and Tanzanian art in particular, largely from a Western perspective. East African regional-based art history studies such as Margaret Trowell's *Classical African Sculpture* of 1954, the *Commonwealth Art Exhibition Catalogue* published in December 1962, Marshall Ward Mount's *African Art: The Years Since 1920* published in 1973, Judith von D. Miller's *Art in East Africa* in 1975, and Johanna Agthe's *WEGZEICHEN: Kunst aus Ostafrika 1974-89* published in 1990, in some parts, have employed western approaches of art appreciation that may not extensively apply to unveil the essence of East African art<sup>7</sup>. To contribute to a fuller understanding of Tanzanian arts, the present research establishes that post-1961 Tanzanian visual arts has been mostly inspired by traditional practices<sup>8</sup> and culture instead of external influences.

To illustrate the consequences arising from partial art appreciation, the present research uses the example of the experience of Sam Ntiro, a renowned Tanzanian artist. On different occasions, Sam Ntiro, a pioneer of modern art in Tanzania and the East African region at large<sup>9</sup> has acknowledged having fetched most of his artistic inspiration from ancient rock art traditions<sup>10</sup> found in central Tanzania (Ntiro 1963:121-22, BASATA 1982:31-35 and Fosu

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<sup>7</sup> See, 'Rudiments of Yoruba Artistic Criticism', Abiodun 2014, pp.246-248

<sup>8</sup>See Ntiro, 1963, p.134 and Fosu 1986, pp.vi-vii

<sup>9</sup>See Kyeyune, 2003, p.101 and Pissarra 2015, pp. 25-27

<sup>10</sup>The Rock Art Paintings of the Kondoa-Irangi sites in Dodoma and several others in Singida, Kagera and Mwanza regions in Tanzania are among the oldest artifacts that have been extensively researched upon and documented with little relationship established to link them with current painting practices in Tanzania. Some writers noticed this irregularity in the full study of origin of Tanzanian visual arts. Hans Cory's 1953 study "*Wall Paintings by Snake Charmers in Tanganyika*" attempted to show a relationship between ancient rock painting



1986:33). A closer look at Sam Ntiro's admiration of the ancient rock paintings of Kondoa-Irangi as his source of inspiration yet suggests another viewpoint in looking at the origin of modern art in Tanzania, while at the same time continue to shed more light on the present research's main question. This research is of the view that Sam Ntiro would appreciate it if his artistic practice would be considered as an extension or a continuation of the aforementioned ancestral functional and aesthetic values of rock art. Ntiro's veneration of rock art aesthetics is evidently justified by his artistic practice that emulated similar customary artistic codes as Kojo Fosu also observed:

...Ntiro is proud and eager to share the joys and romance of the rural life with city folks. In doing this, the ancient rock wall paints in East Africa provide him with precedents from which he romanticized genres of everyday people. His figures share the same stylized profiles without details. They hang in rhythmic floatations. Primary colours are favoured (Fosu 1986:33)

A closer analysis of Sam Ntiro's works produced during his low and high phases of production suggests his conscious rejection of a large portion of the western formalistic aesthetics<sup>11</sup>, a quality which he was expected to adopt in his painting practice after his many years of training at Makerere University in Uganda and Slades School of Arts in the University of London. In fact, Ntiro has been extensively analysed by several critics of East African art for his 'unscholarly art genre'. While constantly ignoring the local influences inspiring Ntiro's art, his detractors have argued that his paintings display neither anatomical skills when he draws human figures nor perspective consideration in his panoramic

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practices and the present day snake charmers' wall paintings among the *Wasukuma* and *Wanyamwezi* societies that live around the same sites. In 2003, Fidelis Masao conducted a study of the rock paintings of the Kondoa-Irangi site to investigate the ancient stylistic characteristics and colour schemes in relation to the socio-cultural, political and economic activities of the inhabitants of areas surrounding the rock painting sites.

<sup>11</sup>See, Fosu 1986, p.33 and Masao 1976, pp.354-360

landscapes. As a result his paintings have largely been dismissed as works of a naïve painter, a distinctive characteristic that is closely associated with rock painting tradition in Tanzania<sup>12</sup> rather than creative productions of an intellectual, full of genius, worthy of his university education (Mount 1973:97-102, Sanyal 2000:105-108, and Kyeyune 2003:98-102). Ironically, Elias Jengo, a prominent Tanzanian artist and art educator, but also one of Sam Ntiro's influential art students at Makerere and subsequently a colleague at the University of Dar es Salaam, at times, appears to coincide with the claims made by Ntiro's critics (Jengo 2003:39-47). Yet, Jengo also admits that the ancient rock paintings in Tanzania and other parts of Africa provide a deep root for the painting art practised by later African artists' generations as well as reveal strong evidence proving the existence of painting art traditions within East Africa prior to the colonial and Western influences as reads one of his comments:

One key element in the first category of the attitudes is an attempt by most Western art historians to ignore African rock paintings as irrelevant to the development of the visual art in Africa. Current archaeological evidence reveals that many African communities practiced the art of painting. Such communities include Kondoa-Irangi in Tanzania. Wadi Sera in Libya, Tassli n' Ajjer in Algeria. Ethiopia has had a painting tradition going back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. What further evidence on the painting tradition should Africa give to the world? African traditional sculpture may be highly prized for its anthropological and aesthetic reasons, but certainly not because Africa has had no paintings to show to the west (Jengo 1985:118-119)

In this passage, Jengo appears to add to the controversy that has for long complicated the full appreciation of local artistic stimuli in Tanzania<sup>13</sup>. On one hand, the influences of local sources of inspiration are appreciated as a significant impetus of traditional creations while on the other hand, foreign influences are maintained as the archetypical yardsticks for

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<sup>12</sup>See Fosu 1986, pp.vi,1-5

<sup>13</sup> ...Elias Jengo, the artist who is now the acting Director of the Institute of Education, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania refers to Ntiro's naïve style as a deliberate effort to "bring art to the people" ... (Fosu, 1986:177)

judging the perfection of the same artistic creations even in places with unique art characteristics and influences such as Africa in general and Tanzania in particular.

At large, Sam Ntiro represents many Tanzanian artists whose acknowledgment of the local influences that inspired their artistic practices have been deliberately misunderstood by detractors. The modern Makonde sculptors provide another example. Despite firm proclamation that ancestral beliefs and mythologies are the main source of inspiration in Makonde artistic creativities<sup>14</sup>, their proclamations remain fiercely contested and often accepted with scepticism largely because they produce for wider souvenir markets in the East African tourism business than for traditional gods' altars. In contrast to Sam Ntiro's example, autodidactic painters such as George Lilanga and Edward Saidi Tingatinga<sup>15</sup> who are currently highly embraced and commended by some Western writers and art critics<sup>16</sup> as pioneering 'contemporary artists' in Tanzania, albeit this notion is disapproved by some local art scholars on the ground that the aforementioned artists produced 'naïve' or 'folk' art, which display poor artistic skills and thematic qualities unaccepted as representations of the Tanzanian national culture<sup>17</sup>. Nahimiani (2008:1-5) reveals that, for a long time the Tingatinga art genre never attracted local scholars' attention but that of foreigners. Since late 1960s when Tingatinga painting genre surfaced, only one local scholar has researched and

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<sup>14</sup>See Kasfir 1999, pp.110-111

<sup>15</sup>Until the present study was accomplished, there were only two studies conducted on Edward Said Tingatinga and none had yet to be undertaken on George Lilanga. There is an ongoing debate among local scholars against some Western scholars who impose and establish the significance of Tingatinga and Lilanga's art genres in Tanzanian national arts. The local scholars' group led by Elias Jengo contends that the two folk artists produce art that is intended for Western rather than local audiences. For this reason, their arts are controversial whenever they are brought under the spotlight of national identity and cultural representation

<sup>16</sup>See, Goscinny 2003, pp.1-18, Sarenco 2005, p.11, Thorup and Sam 2010, p.8,

<sup>17</sup>See, Jengo, 1985, p.123

documented its evolution<sup>18</sup> while several studies have been conducted by foreign art scholars. These include publications by Jaax-Zimmermann (1987), Shiraishi (2002), Gosciny (2003, 2004, 2008), Nesje (2004), Thorup and Sam (2010), Gosciny and Jengo (2016) to mention just a few. This study suggests that, Tingatinga art is more popular abroad than it is at its homeland, Tanzania.

In such a state of affairs, any keen Tanzania art lover, scholar, and critic, African or Western, is lost or confused amidst the ambivalence that emerges from the debate that the local and foreign Tanzanian art scholars engage in. With these examples, one wonders: What should be the standard criteria for appreciation of art in Tanzania? Who can approve or disapprove of artistic productions that can be accepted as representations of Tanzanian culture? To what extent are the publications by western art historians reliable and consistent as canonised texts when narrating the art history of Tanzania to the satisfaction of both local and western audiences? Under this unfolding scenario locally-produced materials are required to compliment the western views in order to enrich scholarship and artistic appreciation of art in the context of Tanzania. A publication by the National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA) sheds some light on some of these vexing issues:

*...Hata hivyo, uandikaji wa falsafa ya Sanaa za Kiafrika katika lugha za kigeni sijambo la kushtusha sana kwa Waafrika wachache wanao zifahamu lugha hizo. Jambo la kushtusha ni kashfa na mara nyingi uongo uonekanao katika uchambuzi wa falsafa ya sanaa za Kiafrika. Ikiwa baadhi ya wananchi wa Africa wanaridhika na kashfa pamoja na kupotoshwa kwa falsafa ya sanaa zao, Tanzania haioni sababu ya kuridhika huko. Hii ndio sababu falsafa hii imeandikwa na Watanzania wenyewe. Hivyo madhumuni ya kitabu hiki ni kuchambua kifalsafa sanaa za Tanzania. Watanzania wana haki ya kuchambua sanaa zao kutokana na taaluma waliyonayo bila kujali nadharia na taaluma za kigeni.*

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<sup>18</sup>George Nahimiani Mrope is the first Tanzanian to research on Tingatinga art in which he produced his master dissertation in 2008 and doctoral thesis in 2018, at the university of Dar es Salaam

*Tanzania haiamini kwamba uchambuzi wa sanaa kifalsafa umeishia katika taaluma ya Aristotle, Santayana, Karl Marx, Lenin, Hubert Read, Mao, Frantz Fanon, Gombrich au Ernst Fischer. Chanzo cha utashi wa uchambuzi wafani yeyote ya taaluma ni mfumo wa maisha ya jamii katika mazingira maalumu. Hivyo ni makosa kwa mtaalamu kukubali bila kusita, uchambuzi wa kifalsafa usio na misingi ya mazingira yake yaki utamaduni (BASATA 1982: i-ii)*

My translation:

Nonetheless, foreign-language art philosophy publications on African artworks are not new phenomena to the Africans who understand such languages. But what is surprising are the false accusations and often lies that one finds in the analyses of their African arts philosophy. If some Africans agree with these claims and misleading interpretations of their art philosophy it is all right, but Tanzania does not see any reason to do so. That is the reason this particular treatise has been written by Tanzanians themselves. Therefore, this book is intended to analyse Tanzanian arts philosophically. For Tanzanians are entitled to analysing and talking about their own arts based on their knowledge regardless of the prevailing foreign models of analysis. Tanzania does not believe that philosophical analyses of works of art are limited to models established by Aristotle, Santayana, Karl Marx, Lenin, Hubert Read, Mao, Frantz Fanon, Gombrich or Ernst Fischer. The basic criterion used in the analysis of any field of knowledge is a culture that produces it within its unique environment. Therefore, it is wrong for any expert to comply without questioning the conventions behind any philosophical analysis of art that blatantly ignores the original cultural context of the analysed artwork

Apparently, there are more books and articles on Tanzanian art written by Western scholars than those written by local scholars. It is also apparent that not all publications on Tanzanian art by Western writers are irrelevant, however, what raises questions on some of them is the manner in which they present their findings and views. Controversial classifications of art practices such as ‘Fine Art’, ‘Applied Art’, ‘primitive’, ‘sophisticated and unsophisticated art’, ‘folk art’ or ‘souvenir art’ are some of the conventions of Western thought that, at times,

are carelessly applied in the appreciation of local art in Tanzania<sup>19</sup> without recourse to the local particularities that might cast some doubts on some of the interpretations and labels.

Moreover, the above extract suggests that not everybody can create artworks, or narratives that qualify for the national cultural representation' status, no matter how good, culturally relevant and intelligent their artworks may be, because in Tanzania, such a rank is archived after a long channelled process and must be executed through formal procedures<sup>20</sup>. Although, implicitly stated, the authorities responsible for national culture preservation, protection, and promotion such as the BASATA, the National Museum and the Ministry responsible for cultural production reserve the rights of approval and disapproval of what can be accepted as 'Tanzanian art'. However, it will be misleading to ignore the fact that several western art appreciation models have significantly contributed to the establishment of an outstanding literature corpus of African art practices which has largely benefited this study. Moreover, artistic creations of Tanzanians in general can be treated as being immune to foreign influences and interpretations. In fact, Otiso (2013:100) argues that in Tanzania, art is a product of complex cultural fusions, which cannot preclude in its entirety any foreign influences as no artistic developments of art in this area happen in isolation.

### ***Why the limited literature on the visual arts in colonial Tanzania?***

This part of the study attempts to shed some light on research question number two which inquires on the issues surrounding the little promotion of Tanzanian visual art that have

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<sup>19</sup>See Foreword by Elimo Njau in Stout, 1966, pp. xi-xii, also Kiure Msangi's explanation of the differences on art meaning and perceptions between Westerners and Tanzanians, see Msangi 1987, pp.22-36 and 104-5

<sup>20</sup> Rowland Abiodun has expressed a notion similar to that of Tanzania's official stand on this matter when he talks about who can assume a role of a critic of art among the Yoruba community in Nigeria (see Abiodun 2014:247-9). The only difference here is that in Tanzania, the practice involves a national society of more than 120 ethnic groups who, besides their sub-cultures, have to abide by and identify themselves with the national culture, which is a paramount culture for all in the country.

stalled its appreciation in the world before and after independence. When this study began at the Free University of Berlin in September 2014, there was a big scarcity of literature on the visual arts in Tanzania. There were just a few books covering the East African region with some sections and chapters on art in Tanzania. This was not just the case at the Institute of Art of Africa of the Free University of Berlin but also at the neighbouring Humboldt and *Der Kunst* universities, as well as in most public libraries in Berlin. Whereas, shelves were full of books, journals and articles on the visual arts of West, North and Central Africa. Indeed, a lot of material has been published on the arts of Nigeria, Cameroon, the Congos and Egypt. Visual arts scholarship in Tanzania has been affected by both internal and external factor since the colonial period.

The plundered artifacts from Benin City during the British Punitive Expedition of 1897, which were first unveiled in Europe during the early 1900s, resulted in a kind of scholarship fad among Western scholars of African art. The discovery of the marvelous Benin bronzes, the later Yoruba terra cottas from the Jos plateaus in Nigeria, and many other artifacts around the Gulf of Guinea, attracted hundreds of Western art scholars. Thus, countless research projects were carried out and numerous publications were produced on this area more than in any other place in Africa throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This had its pros and cons in the scholarship and collections of visual arts in most of the present-day West African countries, but had worse ramifications for art scholarship trends in the rest of the continent, including the East African region, where Tanzania, the focal point of the current study is located. After all, massive research and publications projects were concentrated only on the West African countries, which created an impression that the rest of the African continent and the East

African region<sup>21</sup> in particular, did not have parallel or competing visual arts traditions<sup>22</sup> as noted by some scholars in following extracts:

The West has long held romantic images of Tanzania as the land of safaris and game reserves, as the home of the socialistic ujamaa of Julius Nyerere, and as the location of anthropological studies of the Leakeys in the Rift Valley; however, the artistic heritage has remained relatively unexplored and little is known of it in the United States. We now find that a marvelous variety of sculptural forms existed. Also, the art has not been exhibited as extensively as that of West Africa, the Congo, or even the Western Lake Tanganyika area (Bordogna 1989:7)

Similarly, Wanjiku Nyachae observes:

Only in three parts of East were works of fine art produced in significant quantity before the colonial period: around Lake Victoria in the interlacustrine area; in southern and south-eastern Tanzania among the Makonde, Yao, Makua, and Ngindo; and in the hinterland of the Kenyan coast, among the Mijikenda. The absence of sculptures and masks of a genre similar to those associated with traditional African art from North, West and Central Africa led scholars and collectors to conclude that there is no “serious art” in East Africa (Nyachae 1995:162)

Given the nature of art research and education networks in Western Europe and the US (where African art scholarship and publications have been doing better than anywhere else in the world), the argument supporting the paucity of visual arts in East Africa in general and Tanzania in particular, has also contributed to the little understanding of the rich visual arts in the area. In fact, different publications, collections and exhibitions also appeared to follow

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<sup>21</sup>While writing the foreword for Anthony Stout’s *Modern Makonde Sculpture*, Elimo Njau quotes this false belief in the catalogue of Commonwealth Art Exhibition of December 1962: “The contemporary artist in East Africa has...no inherited artistic traditions or forms from the past either to perpetuate, to build upon or from which to seek inspiration. Europe has made its impact and influence felt all over this great area and it is fair to say that all the present activity has been stimulated by European example and influence commencing from the schools”, Stout, 1966: xi

<sup>22</sup>“...But East Africa shows neither the sophisticated paintings of the Bushmen nor the excellent carvings of the Congo and the western part of Africa...” Herskovits 1967, p.12



this continued unabated trend of projecting a limited tradition in the visual arts in the area .

In this regard, Hans Cory exposes this anomaly when it comes to visual arts in East Africa:

In 1949 an Exhibition of the traditional art of the British Colonies was organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain. The following statement appeared in the introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition: *'The East African dependencies are represented only by one piece from the Makonde of Tanganyika (a mask, plate 18 of the catalogue), and this circumstance draws attention at once to one of the major mysteries in the study of primitive art – why that great region is so lacking in any tradition of representational sculpture, when the forms of utilitarian objects, head-dresses and the like, display a considerable artistic sensibility'*. *This mystery is even more puzzling in the light of the knowledge that the region is rich in works produced in other spheres of art* (Cory 1956:15; emphasis added)

This expository for the existence of practices and a diversity visual arts in Tanzania<sup>23</sup> that may parallel the functional and aesthetical values of those of their colleagues in West and Central African countries, has had very little impact. For a long time, the East African region and Tanzania in particular, has been considered as 'an art desert'. However, evidence of visual art abounds in this area and is attested by several publications based in Tanzania which have been published since the 1960s. These include Ntiro (1963) and Stouts (1966), Fosu (1986), Bordogna (1989), Felix (1990), Meurant (1994), Nooter (1994), Jahn (1994), Bacquart (1998), Ewel and Outwater (2002), Arnold (2008) and van Wyk (2013). However, such literature has not yet helped to change the long established 'belief' that Tanzania has had no noteworthy visual art tradition except for a few ethnic practices that are not given a national significance.

This problem with regard to the view of limited Tanzania's visual art tradition could partly be attributed to limited narratives on the visual arts in the country as portrayed by Fagg and

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<sup>23</sup>See, Bordogna 1989, pp. 7-10

Plass (1964) and Beier (1968).<sup>24</sup> These scholars produced highly reputable publications to have covered African art practices until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and have massively contributed to the general view among western scholars and audiences of African art. Even recent studies that cover modern and contemporary African arts, such as Sidney Littlefield Kasfir's masterpiece - *The Contemporary African Art*, which claims to establish 'the new art map of the continent'<sup>25</sup> and Okwi Enwezor's *Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994*, have shortchanged Tanzania's visual art production ability despite the fact that this East African country has produced comparatively outstanding artistic achievements among African modern artists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup>. It is against this backdrop that the present researcher appeals for the restructuring of the map of African visual arts production sites.

When looking at the internal factors that caused a deficiency in publications on art in Tanzania during the colonial period, two main factors were discovered. These were; the early anti-colonial resistance and poor colonial art education policies. To begin with, the early anti-colonial resistances in Tanganyika. The hostility of the natives against early colonial 'pathfinders' such as missionaries, traders and explorers began even before the Berlin conference of 1884-85. Unlike the pre-colonial kingdoms in central and west parts of Africa comprising present-day Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and the Congos, which had

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<sup>24</sup> In her doctoral thesis, Yvette Mutumba criticises Ulli Beier's art promotion activities that mostly involved only a few Nigerian artists as representative of the continental artistic practices at the Iwalewaha in Bayreuth, Germany (See, Mutumba 2012:100-128). The researcher of the present study is also of opinion that such generalization by Beier (1968) has to be critically considered as the African continent has diverse artistic cultures that, until the present time, have not been synthesised and practiced throughout the continent as one.

<sup>25</sup>See, Kasfir, S.L., *The Contemporary African Art*, London 1999, p.16

<sup>26</sup> See, Pissarra, M., *Re/writing Sam J Ntiro: Challenges of framing in the excavation of a 'lost' pioneer*, *Third Text Africa*, Vol. 4, 2015, 25-60

been frequented by European merchants and slave traders since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in its early colonisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rodney 1965:84-116), the vast area of present-day mainland Tanzania was still largely unknown and seemingly impenetrable to most aspiring European colonial agents and explorers during this period. Moreover, the hostile indigenous peoples made it difficult to socialise with foreigners and constrained information exchanges. In fact, only a few European explorers, anthropologists, geographers, missionaries, and traders had surveyed and reached the interior of pre-colonial Tanganyika before 1880. The *Wahehe* under Chief Mkwawa rebelled against Germans from 1883 to 1898, when they were vanquished. Their wars made south-western Tanganyika, the area that presently comprises both the Iringa and Njombe regions, very insecure for foreigners. David Pizzo's extract serves as a brief narrative that shows how hard it was, even when the German colonial forces were involved:

...German authorities hoped they would merely have to tap the caravan routes from the coast to the interior, particularly the central route leading to Lake Tanganyika, in order to turn the 'jewel' of their African empire into a profitable colony. Events would soon prove such expectations illusory—the route to the interior was dangerous and unreliable due to raiding by the most powerful polity in the southern highlands, through which the route passed. That polity, Uhehe, was seen as the only major obstacle to the profitable trade with the interior. German forces were dispatched in summer 1891 under Commander Emil von Zelewski with orders to reduce the Hehe and other 'rebellious tribes' to submission and secure 'peace' in the region. The column, in fact, engaged in a rampage of destruction as it meandered westward, and word of the column's depredations quickly reached the Hehe. The column was nearly annihilated by a well-planned Hehe ambush on 17 August 1891. Far from the easy victory anticipated by German officials, the war with the Hehe would prove every bit as bloody and far more difficult to win than the coastal rebellion of 1888... (Pizzo 2007:46)

Africans' hostility against foreigners in Tanganyika did not only begin when the Europeans arrived, but some years back due to invasion by fellow Africans. For example, in the 1850s

there were several territorial clashes between the *Wahehe* and the *Wangoni*, who were crossing the *Uhehe* territory after leaving South Africa, during the *Mfecane*<sup>27</sup> or the wars of dispersion, on their way to Songea, where they eventually settled. Apart from the *Wahehe* rebellion, between the 1890s and 1907, German colonial forces faced resistance from several other native polities. These include the *Wachagga* of north parts of Tanganyika under their leaders such as *Mangi* (Chief) Sina and *Mangi* Meli, and the *Wanyamwezi* of west parts of Tanganyika under *Mtemi* (Chief) Isike. The last bloody and widespread resistance against European invasion was dubbed the “*Majimaji*” war of 1905 - 1907 and involved a vast participation of ethnic polities led by the Wangoni of southwest Tanganyika (Ebner 1959, Davidson et al. 1970, Iliffe 1979, Gewalt 2005, and Greenstein 2010). Until 1907, when the German colonialists settled in Tanganyika, only two studies describing issues related to the visual arts within this area were conducted in expeditions that were undertaken under heavy German soldiers’ escorts. These were *Das Deutsche Njassa-und Ruwuma Gebiet, Land und Leute, nebst Bemerkungen über dies Shire-Länder*, an anthropological account by Friedrich Fülleborn and *Negerleben in Ostafrika*, an ethnological research project by Karl Weule. Both were published in 1906. However, during the expeditions, thousands of artifacts and objects were collected and sent to Germany, where they are still kept in several museums in Bremen, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin<sup>28</sup>. Since 1989, these two publications have been used by various researchers as important sources in numerous published research projects on traditional Tanzanian arts and culture.

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<sup>27</sup>See Mfecane wars at: <http://myfreeschooltanzania.blogspot.de/2015/02/mfecane-war.html>. Accessed on 11th August 2017 at the Free University of Berlin

<sup>28</sup> See, Bordogna 1989, p.9

When examining poor colonial policies for art education in Tanzania, we realise that the British colonialists deliberately discouraged traditional artistic practices. Before the coming of colonialists, art was one of the important activities practised within this area. According to Msangi (1987:19-22), talented children were identified, encouraged and apprenticed to skilled master-artists to acquire full time training in the arts enterprise as a whole. In fact, there were steady artistic developments which resulted in the production of most of the traditional artworks which the Europeans found when they came to Tanganyika for the first time. However, the advent of colonialism disrupted the traditional art education activities with the introduction of formal education intended to train local colonial officials and largely marginalised traditional art education, let alone integrating art education in their mission to ‘civilise’ the locals:

...Teaching of art in schools started to be neglected right from British Colonial times. The British Colonial administration regarded the teaching of art in African schools as unimportant compared to other subjects [such as] Mathematics, English, and Geography. Art as a subject—for reasons given below—was not included in the colonial African school curriculum...The colonists, as implied from Muhando’s contention, only emphasised subjects that could mould their African servants into profitable labourers. That is why disciplines [such as] domestic science (home craft), carpentry, bricklaying, and tinsmithery featured prominently in the curriculum. Art for them, especially drawing painting, design, sculpture and art history, did not have any immediate use for the proper functioning of the colonial government. In this case, art for the colonial administration was marginalised, if not totally set aside (Mwenesi 1998:61,63)

As also pointed out by Hans Cory’s comment on the art exhibition organised by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain in 1949, the British colonialist’s bad publicity further reinforced the fallacy that Tanzania was a visual art desert, which did not attract western experts to conduct art history research projects in Tanganyika. Moreover, the colonists never financed or promoted art education, research and other activities for either

British settlers or native Africans in Tanganyika the way they did in Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda<sup>29</sup>, where Western experts were allowed to establish art promotion institutions (Fosu 1986:2-37). In short, there was nothing the locals in Tanganyika<sup>30</sup> could do as traditional art history scholarship and appreciation systems were not developed compared to those in Europe, as Marion Arnold explains:

In African societies, there were no indigenous written texts to facilitate knowledge of African art, and oral traditions were not readily accessible to westerners. Thus, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the dominant theories about African art originated from literate foreign viewers, who possessed little accurate information about the artists' society, cultural norms, values, and religion. Africans themselves did not have the concept of 'African' art: they constructed identity through family, clan, tribal relationships. Only in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when a few African art historians, theorists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and artists were able to undertake and publish research, were black African perspectives formulated in writing to enrich and extend African art discourse from inside (Arnold 2008:16)

Yet, regardless of the inconsistencies coupled with huge biases in its distribution and curricula, formal training in the field of visual arts in present-day Tanzania is still a product of colonial influences (Msangi 1987:19-22 and Mwenesi 1998:61-65). After independence, not much was published on the visual arts of Tanzania, as the independent government

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<sup>29</sup>The early colonial visual art training institutions were installed in the British West African colonies such as Nigeria and Ghana in the early 1900s. In Uganda, the Makerere Art School initiated by Margaret Trowell was started in 1937. The school catered for Tanzanians and Kenyans too as subjects of the British colony in East Africa. There was no art training for Africans in Tanzania until the 1960s, when the independent government established a department of art at Butimba Teachers Training College in Mwanza in 1968, and a few years later at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1975. See, section 3.2.3.2 *The Stagnant Tertiary Education for Visual Arts in Tanzania* in Chapter Three of this study.

<sup>30</sup>"...No properly co-ordinated history of art and crafts in the country has yet been written, and neither the Culture Division nor the university has a research programme. Work by amateurs and curio hunters has been scanty and sporadic-something about rock paintings, figurines, and modern Makonde sculpture, for instance, but very little about modern painters. There is a strong ethnographical and archaeological bias. Both traditional and modern art need more systematic and coordinated study..." Mbughuni 1974, p.53

inherited the big portion of the colonial education system, which had side-lined art education because it did not seem to fit into the colonial programmes and its priorities:

The colonial administration treated the teaching and learning of art as unimportant for Africans. This attitude contributed towards excluding art as a compulsory subject in schools. The teaching and learning of art depended on the whims of the head of a particular school. In considering the present trend of education in Tanzania, it is very likely that the Tanzanian Ministry of Education has carried forward this negligence in providing consistent art education. The research does show this possible link between the past colonial treatment of art education and the place art occupies in the present Tanzanian education system... (Mwenesi 1998:64)

The exceptions were a few early studies by foreigners that illuminated on the visual arts scene in Tanzania albeit in a limited way. These include Hans Cory's *AFRICAN FIGURINES: Their Ceremonial Use in Puberty Rites in Tanganyika* in 1956 and *Wall Paintings by Snake Charmers in Tanganyika* (1965), Anthony Stout's *Modern Makonde Sculpture* (1966) and Judith von D. Miller's *Art in East Africa* (1975), Johanna Agthe's *WEGZEICHEN: Kunst aus Ostafrika 1974-89* (1990), Max Mohl's *Masterpieces of the Makonde II: Ebony Sculptures from East Africa, a Comprehensive Photo-Documentation* in (1990), Marc Leo Felix's *Mwanahiti: Life and Art of the Matrilineal Bantu of Tanzania* (1990), Jens Jahn *et al.*'s *Tanzania: Meisterwerke Afrikanischer Skulptur (Sanaa za Mabingwa wa Kiafrika)* and Zachary Kingdon's *Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Modern Makonde Carving Movement* in 1994. These publications have largely explained the visual art traditions in Tanzania based on Western perspectives. Neither was the area awash with publications by the local scholars.

Until 1980, there were only five publications by local scholars that briefly tackled historical and theoretical views of art in Tanzania. These were Sam Ntiro's *East African Art* (1963)

and *Tanzania Traditional Arts in the Independence Era* (1975), Louis Azaria Mbughuni's *the Tanzania Cultural Policy* published (1974), Kiure Msangi's *ART HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOLS: A guide to non-artist teacher on how to teach art* (1975) and John Wembah-Rashid's *Current African Art: A Case Study of Makonde Sculpture in Tanzania* (1979). Moreover, numerous research on visual arts was conducted and documented by local Tanzanians during their academic training at the master's and doctoral levels. These include the following dissertations: Fidelis Masao's *The Later Stone Age and Rock Paintings of Central Tanzania* (1976); Sam Ntiro in 1982; Kiure Francis Msangi in 1987; Fadhili Mshana's *Art and Identity among the Zaramo of Tanzania* (1999); Leonard Charles Mwenesi's in 1998; Dinah Enock's *Stylistic Evolution of Modern Makonde Sculpture in Tanzania* (2013); Frederick Maeda's *Pioneers of Contemporary Painting in Tanzania: A Case Study of Sam Joseph Ntiro* (2008); George Mrope's *Stylistic Development of Tingatinga Art* (2008); Juma Swafi's *Contemporary Art in Tanzania: A Study of the Artworks of Elias Jengo* (2009); and Peter Msuya's *An Enquiry into Five Decades of State Patronage of Visual Arts in Tanzania: 1961 – 2011* (2014). Other studies include; Diana Kamara's *In Search of Identity in Contemporary Painting of Tanzania: A Study of Art in the Life of Thobias Marco Minzi* (2014); Charles Enock Ruyembe's *Practical Linkages Between Cultural Policy and Education Policy in Promoting a Creative Workforce for Youth in Tanzania* (2015); Kiagho Kilonzo's *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Graphic Design Carricula in Tanzania: A Case Study of Dar es Salaam City and Bagamoyo town* (2015); Emmanuel Ishengoma's *Authenticity Through Informal Art Education in Contemporary East African Visual Arts: The Official Artist's Viewpoint* (2012); and *The Influence of Western Patronage on Authenticity of Contemporary East African Visual Arts* (2017). Most of these visual art



studies which record and reveal a wide range of local perspectives on art in Tanzania, are inaccessible to wider audiences and can only be accessible in some few university libraries.

However, the multiplicity of studies undertaken on specific artistic genres and practices, e.g. sculpture, painting, drawing etc., as well as traditional and contemporary art practices at different times since the early 1950s, and several other disjointed records which account for the development of the visual arts in Tanzania, have not succeeded to provide a consistent national arts' narrative. What a reader learns from past visual arts publications on Tanzania is a broad coverage of unrelated artistic practices by different ethnic groups in the same country. Regarding the topic of the present research, the suitable time to establish a coherent and inclusive narrative on the *Visual Arts of Tanzania* was by setting it from 1961. This setting is suitable for two major reasons. First, 1961 was the year of the independence of Tanganyika, the birth of a sovereign state that united with the Zanzibar archipelago on 26 April 1964 to form the present United Republic of Tanzania. The second factor was that most of the cultural promotion institutions and policies which will later be investigated to ascertain an inclusive story of Tanzanian visual art were formally established and co-ordinated in a national scope from 1961 onwards, thus the availability of reliable and well-documented information related to the study. Unlike other genres, such as dance, music and theatre arts which have been recently widely researched upon and documented<sup>31</sup>, not much was there to establish one expansive and inclusive 'national' narrative about the visual arts of Tanzania before the present research. Mbughuni (1974:53) also confirms this literature vacuum. Some exceptions can be made for some studies based on ethnic arts practices and several others on

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<sup>31</sup> See, Lange, S. (1994) and Askew, K. (2002)

specific art schools and movements as exemplified by a few modern artworks created by some Tanzanian art scholars and artists.

### **Visual Arts and Society in Tanzania**

This subsection is intended to introduce to the readers the systems of visual arts appreciation in Tanzania. Besides, it helps to show the significance of visual arts to its producers and audiences. These are among the issues that are raised in research question number one of this study. In Tanzania, a big part of the meaning and value of visual art is derived from its functional rather than its aesthetic aspects (this concept is also explained in detail under the *Visual Art and Beauty* sub-section) as Leonard Mwenesi notes:

...Dr. Msemwa<sup>32</sup> agrees that art has an important role in society. He specifically points out that any work of art has to be functional. And it is only through a function that art assumes a value, especially in the Tanzanian context. The value in art is what is behind its creation and existence... (Mwenesi 1998:171)

Indeed, art in Tanzania appears complete in its meaning and purpose when it serves a particular function. This characteristic is, therefore, integral to understanding the general process of art appreciation constructs in aspects such as beauty, which is fully appreciated alongside the role(s) a work of art plays. Since the independence of Tanganyika in 1961, the experts in the ministry responsible for National Culture development and creation were also responsible for developing official concept(s) articulating the art definitions as they have to be understood in the context of Tanzania. In his most influential study that has been referred to by most Tanzanian art scholars, Louis Azaria Mbughuni, a former director of arts and language in the Ministry of Culture, asserted:

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<sup>32</sup>Dr. Paul Msemwa was the former Director of the National Museum of Tanzania

Art is the distillation of man's physical and spiritual existence: his happiness and misery, his folly and his wisdom, war and peace, gods, spirits, people, politics, social life, nature, life and death (Mbughuni 1974:53)

Nevertheless, it was observed during this study that the so-called "official definitions", as spelled out in the Tanzania Cultural Policy, the *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo* (1979:20-31) and the *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania* [(1982:28-37), were largely derived from the communally-shared concept as the excerpt above from Leonard Mwenesi explains. Indeed, until the present study, there was no single, complete and consistent definition of what constitutes art in Tanzania relative to its functionality in society. During the present study, it was established that art was officially defined during the *Ujamaa* era (See, Chapter Two: *The Visual Arts of the Ujamaa Period in Tanzania from 1967 to 1985*). Eventually, a general concept that persists and is equally shared in its definition among the general public is that, art is a product of creative skills that a talented person can use to produce a tangible or a visual form to represent thoughts/imaginings, feelings, ideas, and emotions that surround him or her and his or her society. Visual arts in Tanzania are practised in an officially-monitored environment, with several acts enacted to shape and guide the practices, although, in many instances, this study has highlighted deficiencies in their implementation. From the colonial times to the present, Tanzania's authorities have enacted a number of laws to guide visual arts practices in the country. These include the Antiquities Act, 1964, cap.55; the National Emblems Act, 1967; the National Culture Council Act, 1974; the Newspapers Act, 1976, which was recently replaced by the Media Services Act, 2016; the National Construction Council Act No. 20, 1979; the Society Ordinance CAP 337 (Ministry of Home Affairs), National Arts Council Act No. 23, 1984 and No.53, 1997; the Copyright and Neighbouring Act, 1999; the Founders of Nation Act, 2004; and the Cyber Crimes Act, 2015.

More detailed information on the relationship between visual arts and society in Tanzania is provided in the subsequent discussion in two sub-sections.

### ***Visual Arts Categorisation in Tanzania***

Until the present study, in Tanzania, the visual arts are still categorised as traditional, modern and contemporary in accordance with their forms of presentations, i.e. media, the functions for which they are created, the time in which they were created, and their subject matter. A slightly similar practice that determines art classification in Tanzania is evident in the Mozambican visual art scene, as Vanessa Díaz Rivas notes:

...New configurations and structures that have evolved in recent years, which may collide with presumed 'global' sense of the art world, its modes and activities, are at stake. Nevertheless, I would like to approach these questions from the ever-shifting perspectives of the local. As we will see, the denomination and evaluation of art in Mozambique, ascribing content and meaning, is very much an active field. Its various contributors, critics, artists, curators, and scholars have engaged in an ongoing contested and controversial discussion about what art should be, and during this engagement, they have contributed to the development and affirmation of the arts in Mozambique. Arts have been described in terms such as 'national,' 'traditional,' 'modern,' 'Mozambican' and 'contemporary,' sometimes creating dualistic models dichotomizing between "we" and the 'others' and between 'local' and 'international.' Owing to the political history of the country, marked by a very long colonisation period and two wars, studies of the emergence and development of the arts are far from straightforward (Díaz-Rivas 2014:160)

In other words, particular experiences may require a myriad of descriptions and classifications of art in the world. Therefore, categorisation of visual arts and taxonomy as traditional, modern, national, and contemporary in Tanzania, as observed during the present study, is not conclusive and exclusive in the worldview of these terminologies. In fact, this study acknowledges ongoing and previously-established art categories and definitions for these similar concepts. For example, Ogunfuwa *et al.* (2013:22) argue that traditional African

art is categorised as fine art when ordinarily assessed on its face value, especially when it is displayed in foreign museums as the arts of some particular African people, whereas Nicodemus (2012:42-58) suggests that modern African arts generally constitute a category of artistic practices that resulted from events and effects of slave trade and slavery, colonialism, independence and life among Africans in the Diaspora. Smith (2013), on the other hand, defines contemporary art as contemporaneousness of lived differences, incommensurable viewpoints, and the absence of an encompassing narrative that will enlist the participation of all.

Nevertheless, it is necessary for the reader of this study to understand that the locals in Tanzania, regardless of continuing discussions on different artistic views elsewhere, have also been engaged in a process of appreciating their local artistic manifestation and practices within as reflected in their political, economic, cultural and social reality parameters<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, the meaning and approaches that emerge in their experiences are, sometimes, similar or slightly different to those constructed from other experiences. Yet, in many instances, local perspectives, such as those developed in Tanzania or Mozambique, are left out of the general narratives about African art practices. This happens due to the over-generalised concept that African art is inspired by similar cultural experiences and conditions cutting across the entire continent, the multifarious, diverse and innumerable cultural and context-specific particularities notwithstanding. In an attempt to set the stage on which

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<sup>33</sup>This notion is well-explained by the objectives and reasons for the establishment of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth by President Julius Nyerere in 1962 as well as the National Arts Council, or BASATA, in 1974 and its reformation in 1984 (See Chapter One in this study). In addition, in attempt to establish and spread Tanzanian philosophy of art and culture, in which basic definitions and conceptions of these concepts are formally enacted, two major publications were produced and distributed among the public. These were *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo* or *Culture: Tool for Development*, published the Ministry of National Culture in 1979 and *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania* or *The Philosophy of Tanzanian Art*, published by the BASATA in 1982.

modern art practices can be defined and widely understood from different angles of the African continent, Salah Hassan's argument on taking into account a diverse array of life experiences that influence the definition of concepts such as modernism in African art has been particularly enlightening:

Elusive as it may be, Africa is a complex intellectual construct whose significations differ from audience to audience. The 'idea of Africa,' as V. Y. Mudimbe has argued, is partly an invention and partly the affirmation of certain natural features, cultural characteristics, and values that contribute to Africa as a continent and its civilizations as constituting a set of differences from those, say, designated by Asia and Europe. But Africa is also a diverse and highly complex historical entity. For the last four centuries and due to experiences of slavery, colonialism, and the resultant mass displacement and diasporization of African peoples and cultures, it is no longer possible to speak of Africa as a mere geographic entity or a delimited locale. In this context, 'Africa' and African modernism are products of this historically complex entity and global presence. 'African' as a concept may signal commonality, in the sense of a shared historical experience, but it is by no means a product of cultural similarities. Such an understanding is crucial to a deeper and more nuanced approach to the analysis and investigation of African modernist practices and Africa's place within the discourse of modernity (Hassan 2010:453)

The contention here is that the modern art practices that have been cropping up in different African countries since the mid-twentieth century are similar and are at the same time different. The same view is evident in the appreciation of contemporary art. By the same token, the present researcher observed these diversities and, specifically, explored, recorded and presented art definitions and conceptions as expressed in this specific area.

In Tanzania, visual art is categorised, or rather defined as being of a traditional kind when it refers to its ritual and spiritual functions as its chief essentials for production. Although at times the term traditional would refer to local or indigenous practices with little foreign influences. A good example of traditional Tanzanian art here is the life-size *Ujamaa* pole

sculpture, which is also known among the Wamakonde as *Dimoongo* (See how this artwork was adopted and assumed the features that represent national art under the aegis of *Ujamaa politics* p.273 in Chapter Two). Modern art in this study refers to artistic inventions that emerged as products of cross-cultural synthesis as influenced by formal education that was brought by Europeans, which were assimilated into the already established local traditions coupled with the acceptable artistic practices adopted from neighbouring African countries.

Fadhili Mshana (2009), has rightly explained this notion of modernisation as applied in this study. He investigated the changes in the Wazaramo sculpture's artistic practices in independent Tanzania, especially during the imposition of *Ujamaa* policies. He equates the newly-adopted formalistic and subject matter aspects within the Wazaramo sculpture to "*Usasishaji*"<sup>34</sup> in Kiswahili, or modernisation of the traditional Zaramo sculpture practices through adoption of new aspects of artistic presentations and construction of new meaning to suit the national art quest by the state. Besides, modern art in Tanzania refers to visual arts without fixed ritual or spiritual functions. Nonetheless, most of the modern art, such as the sculpture and painting genres that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, were also dubbed "national" art. And contemporary art in the present study refers to the present-time artistic practices as influenced by new production technologies such as digital cameras and computers as well as new media, for example, the Internet, which open up new possibilities for display and distribution. Unlike modern art that has strong local roots, contemporary art

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<sup>34</sup>"... *Usasishaji* derives from the noun root *sasa* which means 'now', the present. *Kisasa* refers to modern, and *kusasisha* is to modernise; thus, *usasishaji* means change in values that reflect the present; Tanzanians say *kwenda na wakati*. But *usasishaji* is not from the West only; it is from all over the world. For instance, Tanzanian dress styles have borrowed from East, and from West and Central Africa. In Tanzania, *usasishaji* has positive and negative aspects..." Mshana, 2009. P.6

in Tanzania is highly influenced by Western artistic traditions, a factor that might distance it from locally-evolved practices. Celenko explains this notion by pointing at its striking differences with the traditional arts that are still prominent in many African countries:

Defining ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’ is difficult. Indeed, particular types of art may be viewed as falling into both categories. ‘Contemporary’ art in Africa is generally considered to have begun about eighty years ago; on the other hand, so-called ‘traditional’ art is still being made and used today. There is a consensus that ‘contemporary’ African art is not used for generations-old religious, social, and political purposes; its patrons are of the international art world, primarily outside of Africa, and many of the artists live outside Africa, and artists’ materials, techniques, and training are usually European or American (Celenko 2000:7)

Nonetheless, the present study looks at contemporary art practices that are currently experienced in Tanzania alongside other locally-inspired activities, as much of the artworks that fall into this category (see the Nafasi Art Space section in Chapter Three) contain and display messages addressing issues relevant to the Tanzanian cultural milieu and setting. Although alien in its conception and a big chunk of its formalistic presentation, contemporary art is a reality that is experienced in Tanzania and the entire East African region, as Wanjiku Nyachae explains:

‘Is there contemporary art in East Africa?’ Yes! There is a great deal of contemporary art in East Africa—art that is defined by individual and collective logic distanced yet not antagonistic towards the exigencies and exercise of western visual art practice. Contemporary art in East Africa draws inspiration from myth/reality; execution is figurative/symbolic, derivative/pure, and contained/unruly. In other words, contemporary art in East Africa is the same inspiring fusion of paradoxes as is expected and accepted of contemporary art in other parts of the world (Nyachae 1995:161)

Therefore, this background information facilitates understanding when a local expert explains the use or essence of terminologies such as “modern” and “contemporary” when categorising visual art practices in the Tanzanian context. After all, African art did not stand



still, like artistic expressions elsewhere, it was also influenced by emerging trends and technological advancements. With minor differences to Western conceptions, modern and contemporary arts in Tanzania are associated with the adoption of new media, techniques of production, and ways of presenting art as practised by the Western art traditions in relation to the post-independence period beginning in 1961. Okwui Enwezor's comment that "...*Contemporary art is resistant to global totalization, let alone the distinctive features of its particular genre, media, region of philosophy define it where it is practiced...*"<sup>35</sup> provides a basis on which these terminologies have been used to categorise the practices in this study.

### ***Visual Art and Beauty in Tanzania***

This sub-section of introduction is intended to extend a detailed discussion on the art appreciation practices in Tanzania as inquired in one of the research's sub-questions. The understanding of beauty in an artwork is a somewhat a complex process for outsiders operating outside the often innate concepts of beauty that locals have imbibed it wittingly or unwittingly as part of the cultural experience to comprehend in the Tanzanian context. The English word 'beautiful', that westerners prefer to use to express appreciation of an artwork's completeness and magnificence, for example, with pleasant visual qualities in its form as well as its thoughts (message) is not universally applied and understood during the same process by the Kiswahili speakers, a dominant socio-ethnic group in Tanzania. The word "beautiful" can simply translate into Kiswahili as "*mzuri*" when referring to the general looks of a person's physique, especially a woman, or "*kizuri*" or "*nzuri*" when referring to the pleasant visual qualities of an object or thing, like flowers or colour. These Kiswahili adjectives, *nzuri*, *kizuri* and *mzuri*, are formed from a root word, "*zuri*", which means a

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<sup>35</sup>See Mirzoeff, 2013, pp.552-569

combination of criteria for quality that make something look pleasant or attractive to look at, or to listen to, to touch, to smell or to taste (Bakita 2015:1185). *Uzuri* is usually preferred to replace the word beauty in English. It is normally used as a compliment expressed during appreciation of something which pleases the eyes of the beholder. In most instances, Tanzanians would appreciate flowers in a garden and colours on walls of a house or on a piece of cloth, for example, *Khanga* (waist wrapper) as beautiful the same way Westerners would do. But they would not similarly use the word ‘beautiful’ to express their utmost appreciation of the ‘beauty’ of things which are expected to deliver a service beyond visual satisfaction; normally, this could be the case when Tanzanian arts and crafts are to be appreciated beyond their decorative functions.

The present researcher works on the notion that the manner in which Tanzanians generally appreciate ‘beauty’ in art is almost similar to that observed among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Perhaps, Rowland Abiodun’s explanation of the concept of beauty in art and how it is appreciated by the Yoruba people suffices to explain the same process in Tanzania:

Yoruba *ewà*, it should be emphasised, is not the equivalent of ‘beauty’ as understood in Western tradition, although both *ewà* and ‘beauty’ share some qualities, such as ‘embellishment’ and ‘adornment.’ Whereas ‘beauty’ in Western thought often refers to a quality that makes a person or object seem pleasing or satisfying in a certain way, *ewà*, in the Yoruba aphorism *iwà l’ewà*, extends to qualities not necessarily pleasing and attractive. Rather, *ewà* concerns the appreciation and expression of *iwà* – one’s essential nature. This definition makes it possible for practically all the *òrìṣà*, human beings, and everything in existence to possess *ewà* as long as that *ewà* is the expression of their *iwà*—their essential nature of character (Abiodun 2014:247)

It is no wonder that what attracts and captivates an African patron to see a certain work of art as a marvellous piece for which he can spend his fortune on to become its proud owner is a ‘puzzle’ to a western audience and vice-versa. For example, when appreciating the beauty

of material things such as a dress or a jacket, a pair of shoes or a wooden fertility doll, an ordinary *Mswahili* or Swahili person will consider his choice to be beautiful when it meets all his preconceived notions of quality and aesthetic standards of beauty in terms of class or status (this should not be confused with the status of designer labels such as *Nike* or *Gucci*, but rather a quality that goes with age or social status of the owner of such an object within his local community), colour, silhouette, function, and durability. Likewise, the beauty of the *Mwanahiti* fertility doll<sup>36</sup> is assessed by the success stories told about the number of young women who caressed and nurtured it before they gave birth to their real offsprings and not otherwise. Ordinary Tanzanians do not share any other meaning of the colour of flowers e.g. red roses or pink tulips beyond their visible qualities before their naked eyes, as is the case in the Western flower appreciation traditions. The point here is that Westerners treat the beauty of roses or tulips beyond their colours. They express things that are a mystery to most Tanzanians including the present researcher. In Germany, for example, lovers exchange flowers to express the deepest of feelings in their relationship, whereas some flowers are exchanged to console or congratulate its receiver about something that has just happened. This is not how flowers are used among the majority of Tanzanians except for a small group of people who have borrowed it from elsewhere.

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<sup>36</sup>A *Mwanahiti* doll is a fertility charm popularly used in female initiation rites among the coastal peoples of Tanzania such as the Wazaramo, Wadoe, Wakwere and Wandengereko. The doll is associated with traditional beliefs of the aforementioned groups in many aspects of their social and cultural lives. When handed to a newly-married young woman to nurture it as a baby, after an intensive training and a ritual known as *Unyago*, the doll is believed to produce powers that enhance a young bride's maternal abilities and, therefore, she will produce her own offspring within a short period after marriage. In these societies, the primary objective of marriage is procreation. Rituals intended to enable married couples to procreate are popular among many ethnic groups in Tanzania.

Nonetheless, beauty in Tanzanian visual art, and traditional art in particular, is a quality within the purposes or essence of the artwork that is usually assessed alongside the function(s) of the art by its owner(s). It cannot only be seen through naked eyes, but also through the service it provides. This notion is expressed by Kiswahili clichés such as “*Uzuri wa mwanamke sio urembo, bali tabia yake*” (A girl’s or a woman’s beauty is not from her looks but her behaviour or character) and “*Siri ya mtungi, aijuaye kata*” (what lies beneath the drinking water pot is best known by the cup that fetches from it). It can be understood that ‘beauty—social function—meaning of art’ in Tanzania are inseparable and in most cases they are expressed interchangeably. Although not every Tanzanian will have such a high understanding and appreciation of the process of assessing beauty as explained in this study, a keen listener to their discussions will always associate their ideas with the explanations offered by these findings.

To some extent, the standards for the appreciation of beauty in art among Tanzanians were, for long, ‘informally’ established and indirectly inculcated to people in many ways<sup>37</sup>. The application of these canons is more evident in Tanzanian oral traditions, like storytelling, that were performed and broadcasted on the national radio (RTD) beginning in the *Ujamaa* period. A story was not only good, or as others may say, beautiful, for its arrangement of incidents, events, twists, as well as a simply understood plot, but also for the lessons or morals it entails and delivers to the audience. Adding to storytelling practices among family members in evenings after dinner, which is still practised in most rural areas of Tanzania, a formal platform of passing traditions and spreading knowledge as well as instilling good

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<sup>37</sup>See Arnold 2009, pp.15-18

values to youngsters by the adults was devised by the state organs to reach wider heterogeneous audiences countrywide. Since the 1970s, two radio programmes for children by Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) were created and made instrumental in inculcating what the present researcher would call a ‘trinity principle’ in a ‘formal’ Tanzanian storytelling tradition.

The ‘trinity principle’ demands that a story must be first creative and interesting and, secondly, it must be participatory (engaging the audience in its telling, e.g. when a song is a part of a story, audiences can be asked to do the chorus) and relevant to the respective audience (children) and, thirdly, it must convey lessons or morals to be learned by the audience. Nonetheless, this storytelling technique was not entirely new, as it had been a characteristic of classical practice, but constituted an improved version in modern Tanzanian literature that was practised by some prominent Tanzanian children storywriters such as Edwin Semzaba (*Funke Bugebuge*), Richard Mabala (*Mabala the Farmer* and *Hawa the Bus Driver*), Walter Bgoya (*The Chameleon who Could Not Change His Colour*), and Peter Dominic (*The Vanity which Killed the Fish*).

Storytelling programmes on the RTD, the state-owned and for a long time the dominant national radio, were organised by the programme producers who were RTD staffers and executed by special presenters, school teachers, pupils, and guest storytellers. The most popular of the two programmes on RTD was called “*Mama na Mwana*” or Mother-and-Child. This was entirely organised and produced by RTD personnel. It also involved telling a few selected stories from other cultures. In the early 1990s, children were exposed to great classical stories such as “*Alfu lela ulela*” or the Thousand and One Nights, Cinderella, and Rapunzel that were also translated into Kiswahili as “*hadithi za kuasa*”, or stories that are

intended to teach. The second popular programme was known as “*Kipindi cha Watoto*” or Children’s Programme. During this programme, children practised and participated in telling local stories and later responded to questions asked of them by their fellow kids and sometimes the facilitators in the audience. The most frequently asked question was “What do we learn from your story?” or “What is the moral of your story?” This question allowed the storyteller to summarise the most important lessons drawn from the narrative. Thus, the children slowly became orientated to an art of creating and telling meaning-ridden stories. The children were also taught that a story is not good or beautiful if it is not interesting to the listeners as well as when it offers no moral lessons to the listeners.

Similar to the ‘trinity principle’ of storytelling, the creation of art observed among children also entailed taking into account three salient things, which were integral to making a piece of art composition—for example, a drawing—complete. These important things were: (i) a background, which consisted of a forest, a house, a street or a town or setting of the story being told; (ii) people or animals involved in the story; and (iii) activities that dominated the story’s events and incidents. This practice is evident in most of the schoolchildren’s drawing compositions in Tanzania<sup>38</sup>

Kiure Msangi’s book *Art Handbook for Schools: A guide to the non-artist teacher on how to teach art*, contains instructions in several sections that direct teachers to train their pupils in a way that complements the ‘trinity principle’ composition. The ‘*Mama na Mwana*’ aired every Wednesday from 2:00pm to 2:45pm and the “*Kipindi cha Watoto*” aired every Sunday

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<sup>38</sup>A drawing by Gift George “Harvest in Tanzania” who was involved in the art competition project known as “Zero Hunger: A World Without Hunger” organized by UN-WFP at Rome in September in 2014 helps to explain how children’s art productions are influenced or shaped by aesthetical and formal conventions such as those promoted in children storytelling programmes. See, <http://www.wfp.org/stories/zero-hunger-world-without-hunger-pictured-child-artists-around-world>. Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

starting from 10:30am to 11:30am were radio programmes involved in inculcating storytelling techniques to children. They were both nation-wide broadcasts for children audiences. Before the 1990s, RTD was the only mass media with nation-wide coverage in the country. Thus, its influences as a national voice in shaping children's sense of aesthetics in the arts were enormous. This exchange has been facilitated by the spread of Kiswahili as a national language that has united all ethnic linguistic groups in Tanzania since the long-distance trade in the pre-colonial times. On many occasions, politicians and government leaders have been delivering speeches that support the adoption of Kiswahili as a unifying language for other cultural aspects such as the arts in a national one with the same way of appreciating aesthetic values such as beauty.

## **Study Plan**

This study is structured into two sections and three separate chapters. The first section of the study provides the basic introductory information on visual arts practices, appreciation, and management in the context of Tanzania whereas the second section contains concluding remarks of the study in the arrangement of visual arts polity, policies and politics in Tanzania. Each separate chapter is designed to discuss findings on the visual art of a particular generation of artists, with a focus on policy and institutional influences that determined artistic practices and demeanours. The chapter organisation in this study is determined by the discovery that the visual arts in Tanzania between 1961 and 2015 can be classified in three distinctive periods delineated as the immediate post-independence (1961-1966) period, the *Ujamaa* and pre-neo-liberal period (1967-1984) and the Neo-Liberal period (1985-2015 in the context of this study).

Chapter One, which is titled *The Art of Independence: The Quest for Cultural Identity in the Visual Arts of Tanzania from 1961 to 1966*, presents findings on a cultural production period informed by a young nation's deliberate drive to establish a national visual arts culture capable of transplanting the colonial artistic productions and cultural orientations, thereby laying a foundation for new ones that depict and represent unique African identity as informed by remnants of pre-colonial African artistic traditions, as well as a few selected and acceptable cultural influences from other nations. The chapter presents findings on the early public and private cultural agencies that were established to help the creation of national culture through the production of visual arts based on acceptable African traditions and the best of other cultures. The chapter is dominated by nostalgic discussions on the revival of African values or traditionalism (Askew 2002:190) in the cultural identity of a newly-independent nation that had been driven to the verge of extinction under the pressure and deliberate manipulation of the imposed Western influences.

The second chapter, which is titled *The Visual Arts of the Ujamaa Period in Tanzania from 1967 to 1985*, presents findings on an epoch that was crafted to counter the setbacks experienced after six years of the *Arts of Independence Period*. The period extends the cultural production projects for a synthesis between traditionalism and modernity into a more complex politically-grounded system, *Ujamaa*, Tanzania's brand of African socialism based on communalism. The study presents findings on the state-owned parastatals and co-operative unions that were established to help cultural productions, i.e. visual arts production, in addition to incorporating and accommodating or commissioning the production of artworks as the mediums for *Ujamaa* propaganda, particularly for spreading and entrenching its core values. The chapter reveals three dominant groups of people whose activities



determined the contents of most visual arts that were produced in that period (Transition from traditionalism to *Ujamaa* - Askew 2002:190). The chapter also presents some observations on the state's invention of a set of aesthetics and iconography that were fully appreciated as new symbols and values of the national culture of Tanzania.

The third and final chapter, entitled *The Visual Arts of the Neo-Liberal Economy Era in Tanzania from 1985 to 2015*, presents findings that show artistic developments during a transition from the *Ujamaa* period to the Neo-Liberal Economic Era in Tanzania. The chapter briefly discusses the factors that led to the collapse of the artistic practices of the *Ujamaa* period as well as those that paved the way to the advent of Neo-Liberal Economic Era visual aesthetics. Besides, the chapter includes discussion of findings that describe artistic agencies and modern and contemporary visual art practices that were influenced by the private sector and international co-operation institutions—mainly serving as sponsors and patrons—which emerged during this period.

## **Methodology of the Study**

This qualitative study takes a descriptive approach in its presentation of the findings. The Introduction Section, opens up by shedding light on the main four research questions as well as laying the backdrop on which the research findings can be easily interpreted and understood. The study used structured and unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observation methods in the collection of primary data. Secondary data, on the other hand, was gathered from books, journals, newspapers, organisations reports, and internet sources such as blogs and websites. Interviews provided the artists' narratives on sources of inspiration, technical and financial support(s) that have helped keep their practices

afloat. For government officials working in various visual arts sectors, interviews provided supplementary information that was either missing, unpublished or unreported anywhere. Questionnaires served as an alternative method for the interviews which could not have happened due to time constraints and other bureaucratic issues which emerged during the fieldwork activities. The questionnaires were also used to collect additional information on the activities of foreign cultural promoters operating in Tanzania such as the Goethe Institut (from Germany), the British Council (from Britain) and the Alliance Francaise (from France). During fieldwork, it was discovered that almost all foreign cultural promotion organisations did not provide published documents or official reports concerning their activities for public access. Therefore, scheduled questionnaires distributed to the cultural officers in these organisations served as effective tools for the collection of detailed information from them. Unlike interviews, questionnaires provided respondents with sufficient time to prepare answers and return them to the researcher. The researcher visited eight regions on Mainland Tanzania and two in Zanzibar to observe and collect photographs of artworks such as paintings, drawings, illustrations, sculptures, murals, statues and monuments that were created during the Independence and *Ujamaa* periods.

In addition, ten art galleries and three museums were visited in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) Kampala (Uganda), and Nairobi (Kenya)—a triad of cities that are important in understanding visual arts in East Africa as they relate to Tanzania. These galleries and museums were visited for the purpose of observing and collecting information on yet-to-be recorded or published modern and contemporary artworks produced by Tanzanian artists since the 1950s. Although to a great extent these approaches act as windows to understanding research techniques used during the collection of the massive textual and pictorial

information presented, I still find it insufficient to claim that even these methods can quench the reader's thirst for more methodological insights, for it has been proven that not one or even two methods can fully explain aspects of African Art studies as Stephen Folaranmi notes:

Methodologies in African Art studies are multidisciplinary in nature. Thus allowing for the art historians to use whatever means to get information from the field, especially when dealing with works of art where the artist can no longer be interviewed. This present study falls under such category. Scholars like Perrinder (1967), Okediji (1995 and 2002), Campbell (2008), have all at one time or the other in their studies examined interpretations of icons and images encountered in African works of art. Their models provide a platform with respect to what should be done when the art historian is faced with objects or work of art on the field; however, it is usually not sufficient to have a fixed idea with such theories. This is so because the historian is expected to be very open minded to what is yet to be analyzed before conclusions are drawn (Folaranmi 2012:39)

The present study can be appreciated with some theoretical guidance as a magnifying glass to aid a clear depiction of its findings. The approaches found relevant in the analysis and explanation of the research's findings are the Sociological Problem of Generations and Art Historical theories. As this study was intended to examine and elucidate on how the visual arts developed in an independent Tanzania between 1961 and 2015, with its focus on the contributions of national cultural policy and institutional influences, the Sociological Problem of Generations theory is employed in the examination of cultural development as a constant process in which generations (larger group[s] of people in the same social location) exchange traditional ways of life, feelings, and attitudes (Mannheim 1928:178).

The theory provides this study with two premises or factors through which the visual art developments in Tanzania are explained as a conscious and an unconscious process of cultural heritage transmission between participants in the same or different generations, as

well as societal intellectual activities that were informed and inspired by surroundings, historical events<sup>39</sup> within different life experiences, aspects, and times in Tanzania. The factors or rather premises of experiences exchanged between the generations discussed here are ‘Social Location’ and ‘Time’. While employing Karl Mannheim’s social location factor in the analysis of the supposedly national visual arts, the researcher considers Tanzania as a geographical location (a country) defined as a combination of unique social interaction patterns (*Umoja wa Kitaifa*—national unity or cohesion), the definable social structure as well as a history of continuity of its people. According to Mannheim’s theory, these characteristics have consistently proved to influence a particular kind of a generational or a societal collective behaviour in action and reaction to event(s) or experience(s) that affect the majority in a given social location:

The fact of belonging to the same class, and that of belonging to the same generation or age group, have this in common, that both endow the individuals sharing in them with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limit them to a specific range of potential experience, predisposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action. Any given location, then, excludes a large number of possible modes of thought, experience, feeling, and action, and restricts the range of self-expression open to the individual to certain circumscribed possibilities. This *negative* delimitation, however, does not exhaust the matter. Inherent in a *positive* sense in every location is a tendency pointing towards certain definite modes of behaviour, feeling, and thought (Mannheim 1928:168-9)

In this notion, Mannheim’s theory fits in the examination of visual artists’ attitudes that were integral in the formation of art genres, movements and schools that emerged in independent Tanzania. In the 1960s, many independent African countries’ governments and private established organizations for arts and cultural promotion preferred the ‘collective approach’

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<sup>39</sup>See Arnold 2008, p.24

in which artists' societies, groups and associations were formed, encouraged and supported in their 'supposed' task of creating national cultures or arts. A good example here is a current study on the history of visual art in Cameroon by Annette Schemmel. In this research, Schemmel employs Karl Mannheim's generations theory as lenses to investigate and explain the aspects of 'Collective Action' and 'Intergeneration Solidarity' among autodidactic-visual artists in Cameroon<sup>40</sup> while practicing their activities as individuals, groups or associations. Similarly, the present study exploits Mannheim's theory to investigate and explain the influences behind Tanzanian visual artists' embrace of collective action towards their 'attitude' or preference to use much of local socio-cultural and local political themes in most of their artistic productions. This trend was particularly observed in the artworks produced during the Early Independence and the *Ujamaa* periods. The generations theory also helps to explain factors such as shared life experiences and events among Tanzanian visual artists as binding<sup>40</sup> forces that inspired formation of artist groups, associations, and societies that reflect two distinct generations of visual artists who dominated the aforementioned periods of Tanzanian art. As shown in all three chapters of this study, Tanzanian visual artists, both formally trained and autodidactics, have in different periods engaged themselves in 'group' production practices that have been associated with particular political or economic ideologies. This tendency implied that, there is a genre(s) of visual arts by artists from a society occupying and sharing the same social location, time, aspirations and realities. This notion is very evident in the artworks discussed in Chapter One (See the explanations on the artworks by the CEAA) and Chapter Two of this study. Moreover, the present study's use of Mannheim's theory emulates Jessica Winegar's concept of

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<sup>40</sup>See, Annette Schemmel's *Visual Arts in Cameroon: A Genealogy of Non - formal Training 1976-2014*, Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon in 2016

transnational dimension. Winegar's transnational approach is very critical when looking closely at contemporary art practices in Tanzania as stimulated by global changes in social, cultural, political, and economic systems since the mid-1980s and early 1990s. The changes such as a shift from socialist politics to neo-liberalism in African countries like Tanzania paved a way to the birth of somekind of a global youth's generation<sup>41</sup>. During those years, although from different corners of the world, youths came together as one group who wanted more freedoms in self expression, participation in political activities, and increased human rights and representation. Likewise, young artists in African countries, Europe and America too were not left behind in demanding for changes and improvements in in various life aspects<sup>42</sup>. While undertaking her research on the Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt, Winegar found it easier to connect and understand the younger generation of Egyptian artists who she felt to have shared with interests in certain kinds of ideas, politics, popular culture and of-course the coming to the age of a similar 'geopolitical moment' (Winegar 2006:28). While looking at the second or new generation of artists in Tanzania, the present researcher finds Winegar's view of shared geopolitical issues very relevant to the present study while employing Karl Mannheim's theory as magnifying glasses to look closely to the factor that have inspired contemporary artists in Tanzania. This research presents that the new generation of visual artists in Tanzania have been inspired by international artistic practices, in particular western art traditions and inspirations more than local stimuli. When exploring essence of themes expressed in the artworks, techniques and even art media used

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<sup>41</sup>A series of social and political events taking place from the late 1980s and early 1990s brought the world youth groups much closer than before. Perhaps, Jessica Winegar's idea of similar 'geopolitical moment' refers to the events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of Apartheid Regime in South Africa in 1994 to mention just a few

<sup>42</sup> See, Post-Berlin-Wall art featured at Kemper by Liam Otten, February 8, 2007. Retrieved from:<https://source.wustl.edu/2007/02/postberlinwall-art-featured-at-kemper/> on April, 10 2018

by artists based at the Nafasi Art Space in Tanzania, one sees a rich global generation's artistic practice than a Tanzanian one. Thus, employing Mannheim's Sociological Problem of Generations Theory, that provides a possibility of comparing and contrasting contemporary artists as a group of people in one location sharing certain ideas, the same technological age, as well as socio-political and economic setting with their colleagues in another location in the same time-frame was inevitable. The theory also made it easy for the researcher to investigate conditions of the multifaceted artistic practices of the new generation of visual artists in Tanzania<sup>43</sup> and other parts of the world.

Although much of the inventions and projects that were intended to realise their new identity as Tanzanians—after Tanganyika united with the Zanzibar archipelago to form a united republic—as part of the efforts aimed at building national cohesion and developing a national culture instrumental in nation-building that defines the first two visual art periods as informed and shaped by a few individuals and institutions. Ultimately, the masses also participated in the socio-cultural activities aimed at forging a sense of identity and national identity not registered particularly under the British colonial system of divide-and-rule. These preoccupations—particularly from a visual arts perspective—have been described, delineated, and discussed in various sections in chapters one and two. The manifestations of these visual overtures and the kind of reception they received as part of a national identity formation during the immediate post-independence and *Ujamaa* and pre neo-liberal periods are indicative of the consent from the populace and how they bought into the new nation's

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<sup>43</sup>Contemporary art by new generation of Tanzanian artists as promoted at the Nafasi Art Space is not very different to that of their colleagues in the neighbouring African countries such as Uganda and Kenya, or in South Africa and that in the West. They share almost the same media, techniques, platforms of exchange and display, and even themes. Chapter Three of this study covers this topic consistently.

national cultural vision and how they participated in this shared vision and behaviour<sup>44</sup> that was probably influenced by their life experiences within their ‘social location’.

And when looking at the ‘Time factor’, the Sociological Problem of Generations theory helps to explain the practices of two generations (Independence and Post-independence) in cultural productions, i.e. visual art production in Tanzania based on the ‘participants experienced time and environments of their practices’ rather than on literal meaning of time that explains the notion of generations by years or decades (Pilcher 1994:486-87). Under this theory, the exact time experienced or lived by the subjects of a particular generation in this study is an integral aspect that determines the causes and nature of historical events that have influenced different artistic and cultural activities of generations or cohorts<sup>45</sup> of social groups of people in a specific time frame, as explained in all three chapters of the study. The closest example to expound on the notion of time in the context of the present study, as described in Karl Mannheim’s theory, is Okwui Enwezor’s “The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa”, in which social and political events that transpired across the continent for only 49 years describe a short-lived century in life experiences instead of a century as we know in the number of years.

Nonetheless, through the art historical approach, the present study examines the consistency of the thematic and formal pattern components of artworks produced in three different periods. This approach helps in the process of assessing conformities and changes taking place in artistic productions in all three periods involved in this study. The assessment focuses on older established thematic values perceived as standards or yardsticks for the

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<sup>44</sup> See, Mbughuni 1974:18 also Askew, 2005:310

<sup>45</sup> See, Pilcher 1994, p.483



evaluation in the latter productions. In Tanzania, where people embrace old adages such as “*Ya Kale ni Dhahabu*”, or “Old is Gold”, older artworks or artifacts have been consistently considered as canons for the appreciation of additional artworks or new productions throughout time. In this study, a very small part of the findings has critically involved a discussion of an artwork’s formalistic qualities and thematic appreciation, although in most instances the artworks have been used as critical pictorial evidences to complement various facts about the activities of institutions and influences of cultural “policy” presented in different narratives.

## Chapter One

### THE ARTS OF INDEPENDENCE

#### **The Quest for Cultural Identity in the Visual Arts of Tanzania, 1961-1967**

##### **1.1. Background: The Visual Arts in Tanzanian Cultural Production**

This chapter refers to the period of the visual arts during Independence-era Tanzania. This period, between 1961 and 1967, involved the production of visual arts based on the values of pre-colonial customs and traditions as a source of fresh interpretations of African culture. Although this period lasted only for six years, it was profoundly influential, and the foundation which it laid continues to define both the character and trends of visual arts in the country. Two decisive events mark the inception and conclusion of the Visual Arts of Independence in Tanzania. The first event was the country's independence pronouncement which was officially made on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1961. Whereas the second event was the adoption of *Ujamaa* in 1967, a Tanzanian version of a socialist manifesto that served as the guiding ideology towards locally-driven socio-economic, cultural, and political developments. These two events are imperative in the narrative of visual arts development of this particular period. With the advent of independence, the visual arts, along with all other art genres, were formalised into production units so that they could be fully developed and thus widely implemented in the new nation's cultural development programmes. In the next period, the *Ujamaa* policies came up with the amplification of strategies to create and promote Tanzania's national culture through its integration into economic development programmes in order to maintain constant cultural production activities. The general atmosphere of cultural productions during this period could be characterised as nostalgic,

with most visual art projects focusing on the cultural decolonisation of all aspects of Tanzanian life. The new government aspired to revive the best of local traditions and customs to replace the elements of Western modernism (which was left behind by the then colonialists) that were detrimental to the ethos and values of the local environment. The visual arts of the early Independence-era cover the shortest of three major visual arts periods in the history of Tanzania to date.

A closer look at most of the artworks produced during the Independence-era depicts a dominance of the young nation's cultural identity campaigns, as shown in figures 3 and 4, which represent newly-created iconographies intended to establish Tanzania's visual identities. The national visual arts development projects during this period conformed to President Nyerere's ideas on cultural liberation<sup>46</sup>. This is evident in the structures and outlined visions of several public and private arts and culture promotion institutions and agencies established during this period, which is explored further in the *Visual Arts Institutions of the early Independent Tanzania* section in this chapter. The first national body established to administer the cultural production sector was the Arts and Crafts Department in the Ministry of National Culture and Youth (Mbughuni 1974). President Nyerere proposed it himself and he even went further to the extent of prescribing its major roles. This quest was clearly stated in President Nyerere's inaugural speech, which reads:

...The major change I have made up is to get up an entirely new Ministry: The Ministry of National Culture and Youth. I have done this because I believe that culture is the essence and spirit of any nation. A country which lacks its own culture is no more than a collection of people without the spirit which makes them a nation. Of all the crimes of colonialism, there is none worse than the attempt to make us believe we had no indigenous culture of our own; or that

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<sup>46</sup> See Mbughuni 1974, pp.16-19 and Mshana 2009, pp.2-13

what we did have was worthless – something of which we should be ashamed [of], instead of a source of pride. Some of us, particularly those of us who acquired a European type of education, set ourselves out to prove to our colonial rulers that we had become ‘civilized’; and by that, we meant that we had abandoned everything connected with our own past and learned to imitate only Europeans ways. Our young men’s ambition was not to become well educated Africans, but to become Black Europeans! Indeed, at one time it was a compliment rather than an insult to call a man who imitated the Europeans a ‘Black European’.

When we were at school we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many of us were taught the songs of the *Wanyamwezi* or of the *Wahehe*? Many of us learned to dance the ‘rhumba’, or the ‘chachacha’, to ‘rock ‘n’ roll’ to ‘twist’ and even to dance the ‘waltz’ and the ‘foxtrot’. Lots of us can play the guitar, the piano or other European Musical instruments. How many Africans in Tanganyika, particularly among the educated can play African drums? How many can play the *nanga*, or the *zeze* or the *marimba*, the *kilanzi*, *ligombo* or the *imangara*? And even though we dance and play the piano, how often has that dancing—even it is ‘rock ‘n’ roll’ or ‘twist’—often does it really give us the sort of thrill we get from the *mganda* or the *gombe sugu*—even though the music can be no more than the shaking pebbles in a tin? It is hard for any man to get much real excitement from dances and music which are not in his own blood.

So I have set up this new Ministry to help us regain our pride in our own culture. I want it to seek out the best of traditions and customs of our tribes and make them a part of our national culture. I hope that everybody will do what he can to help the work of this new Ministry. But I don’t want anybody to imagine that to revive our own culture means at the same time to reject that of any other country. A nation which refuses to learn from foreign cultures is nothing but a nation of idiots and lunatics. Mankind could not progress at all if we refuse to learn from each other. But to learn from other cultures does not mean we should abandon our own. The sort of learning from which we can benefit is the kind which can help us to perfect and broaden our own culture...<sup>47</sup>

Nyerere’s fervent critique of the colonial cultural setting in Tanzania and his proposed course of action, as stated above, was strongly supported and shared by most of the local elite

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<sup>47</sup> Nyerere, J.K. (1967) *Freedom and Unity: A selection from Writing and Speeches 1952-1965*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Oxford, p. 176

generation of that time. This was because the early independence generation in Tanzania had both experiences, that of colonialism and the post-independence. To most of them, the latter meant the freedom to start everything afresh and bury the painful memories of colonialism with all its attendant features and connotations. In an interview, Daniel Ndagala, the former Director in the Art and Cultural Development Department in the then Ministry of Education and Culture, claimed that “Nyerere’s speech was always mistakenly considered by many government personnel within the cultural sector to be the cultural policy itself”. He further asserted that since its delivery, various public institutions had formulated a considerable number of rules, regulations, and bylaws to guide arts and cultural development in Tanzania<sup>48</sup>. Other developments which preceded Nyerere’s aforesaid inspirational speech included the opening of the first local art gallery in a rural area in the Kilimanjaro region,<sup>49</sup> and changes to the Dress Code as witnessed among national leaders during national events and appearances (see figs. 26, 72 and 74). Several elites took radical responses in support of President Nyerere’s appeal for the people to value their local arts, traditions and customs as crucial components in the quest for national identity, as well as an expression of cultural freedom. This was also evident in the deeds of several prominent local experts in the public visual art promotion institutions. During a conference in Nairobi, three years after the delivery of the aforesaid speech, Sam Ntiro, the then Commissioner for Culture, in showing his support to President Nyerere’s call for complete traditional culture liberation, proposed that the Tanzania government should stop employing foreign experts, European teachers in particular, in the field of visual arts at all levels, as well as increase state censorship over the

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<sup>48</sup>The laws which were inspired by President Nyerere’s speech include the National Music Council and the National Arts Council Acts of 1974

<sup>49</sup>See the Kibo Art Gallery in this chapter.

production and dissemination of artifacts (Sanyal 2013)<sup>50</sup>. A remark aired eleven years after the speech sums up the kind of reaction Nyerere's speech received from government officials working in that particular sector:

President Nyerere's assessment of the state of our culture in 1962 seems to have rightly placed most of the blame for the chaotic state of our culture on the colonial powers. His statements also seem to have promised an immediate hope for change, for the problem areas were clearly identified and, later, positive remedies were spelled out, and these remedies were to be carried out by a revolutionary government of an independent United Republic of Tanzania. The situation as it appears now eleven years later indicates considerable success. Many traditions and customs have been revived, and measures have been taken for the preservation of our culture (Mbughuni 1974:18)

More radical support for Nyerere's vision of the national culture development campaign was evident among local elites who, through various activities such as teaching in schools and colleges, influenced the majority of the ordinary population, mostly with little knowledge of what was happening at that time<sup>51</sup>. Louis Mbughuni expounded President Nyerere's speech in an attempt to refine it as a complete Tanzanian Cultural Policy in 1974 and presented it at a UNESCO conference in Paris. The general impression was that the entire nation accepted the idea that returning to traditional African ways of life was an ideal way for Tanzanians to express their newly-attained freedoms and celebrate their independence as a new nation. All these developments were linked to Nyerere's speech.

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<sup>50</sup>See a sub-section entitled: *Sam Ntiro* in "Being Modern" *Identity Debates and Makerere's Art School in the 1960s* by Sunanda Sanyal in Salami, G., and Visona, B.M., 2013, pp. 255-275.

<sup>51</sup>Many local elites do support President Nyerere's decolonisation ideals as evidenced in Kiswahili novels and dramas published from the 1970s to 1980s. Books such as *Shida* by Shafi Adam Shafi and *Hesabu iliyoharibika (Ngoswe-Penzi kitovu cha Uzembe)* by Edwin Semzaba are among a few literary works that supported the "back to African traditions and customs" towards locally-grounded development in the independent Tanzania

Within a short time, the entire early independence period's aura was laden with traditional art and culture appreciation attitudes. Apart from the artworks produced, many slogans<sup>52</sup> were also created and spread among the public to enhance their understanding and appreciation of local arts and culture. “*Sanaa ni Kioo cha Jami*”, or ‘Art is a mirror through which the society sees its self-reflection’ and “*Mkataa Kwao ni Mtumwa*” or ‘He who mocks and denies his origin is a slave’ are two examples of numerous slogans from that period. Most of the effort in the promotion of local culture and arts campaigns involved government officials and institutions rather than the general public, as explained in the *Establishment of Visual Arts Institution* segment. When the early Independence Art Period ended in 1967, several essentials for looking at the works of arts produced by local artists within traditional Tanzanian life systems had already been established alongside the Western lifestyles, which were introduced during the setting up of the colonial state.

## **1.2 Approaches that shaped Tanzania's Visual Arts of the Independence Period**

Many will wonder why Tanzania took radical approaches against “modernisation” as pioneered by British colonialists in an attempt to establish its national arts and culture during independence. To answer this question one first needs to understand several approaches to the creation of cultural production practices in Tanzania. This also requires a thorough understanding of the ambivalent views produced by different scholars, who have from time to time researched and documented arts and cultural production practices in Tanzania before and during the colonial period. Although the Introduction expounded on several issues related to this question, while writing this chapter, more information was added to

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<sup>52</sup>See, *Effective use of slogans in development* in Samuel Wangwe's *Culture, Identity and Social Integration: The Tanzania Experience in Social Integration*, 2005, p. 11, Arusha Conference, “*New Frontiers of Social Policy*”

supplement to the narrative in this section. This study found that visual arts of the early and post-independence periods in Tanzania are still appreciated with a degree of ambivalence among locals themselves and foreigners. However, there is no uniform approach which the majority of Tanzanians could employ for appreciating the visual arts. Several factors are responsible for this situation. The main factors include a multiplicity of art traditions, lack of art history aspects in the informal art training programmes, inconsistent ‘African’ based content in colonial education, and general lack of art curricular for the native Tanzanian pupils within the colonial education systems<sup>53</sup>. These factors contributed to the emergence of several approaches to the appreciation of arts in Tanzania. However, three approaches have essentially been employed for decades to look through the visual arts of this country. The first approach is the view of Tanzanian National Art based on the retention of the best traditions and customs for unique African aesthetic and some acceptable foreign values<sup>54</sup>. The second is through Ethnic Arts approaches, whereby most of the visual arts are regarded as living attributes of particular sub-societal realities within a wider national society. The third is through modern art theories, which were introduced to the country during colonial education<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> See Msangi 1987, pp.19-22

<sup>54</sup> President J.K. Nyerere’s inaugural speech provided guidelines on how all cultural activities should be organized. His ideas shaped the way arts, visual arts included, should be produced in order to reflect in the new national culture in its totality.

<sup>55</sup> Cecil Todd introduced modern art training based on European standards and curriculum in Makerere after he took over the school directorship from Margaret Trowell (Kasfir 1999:146-147). The Tanzanians were affected by Todd’s program because during that time, Tanzania was part of British East Africa; the Makerere College in Kampala was the only colonial institution of higher education in the region.



### 1.2.1 Modern Visual Art Approach

This view towards the appreciation of African art in Tanzania was first imposed through colonial cultural projects<sup>56</sup> and later on by colonial education institutions<sup>57</sup>. Currently, visual arts such as drawings and paintings in particular are viewed as manifestations resulting from colonial influences. Through colonial education, Western art practices, including production techniques, media and means of distribution or display of the artworks for public consumption were introduced to African art students as modern art practices. Thus, the best way to analyse and appreciate visual art in Tanzania is through the aforementioned Western conventions. Against this backdrop, the view that visual art is a universal cultural heritage seems void except that it was brought to Africans—in this context Tanzanians—by the Europeans through formal education. According to Kasfir (1999:146), during their introduction, modern art practices replaced the traditional system which locals—and even a few Western art experts in East African countries such as Margaret Trowell and Kenneth Murray in Nigeria—had been using. This view was evident in the activities of some foreign experts who were involved in the initiation and running of modern facilities of visual art training as stated in the following passages:

...If Trowell represented a traditionalizing approach common to the projects of the 1950s, her South African successor Sweeney (Cecil) Todd was fully committed to an African modernism based on knowledge of twentieth-century developments in Europe as well as canonical African Art. Students were given a thorough training in world art history, scientific colour theory and life drawing... (Kasfir 1999:146)

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<sup>56</sup> Sam Ntiro's thesis sub-chapter titled *The Coming of the Europeans* includes a brief but thorough analysis of European views on the Art of Tanzania. It clearly shows how Tanzanian arts were perceived by the Europeans within and outside Tanzania itself. See, Ntiro 1982, pp.62-68

<sup>57</sup>The Makerere School of Fine Arts under Cecil Todd, Jonathan Kingdon and Ali Darwish discouraged traditional art aspects and put more emphasis on Western art techniques and standards as yardsticks of perfection (Mount 1973; Miller 1975; Kakande 2008 and Kyeyune 2008)

Sunanda Sanyal shares a similar sentiment by noting:

... She did her job, and that's it. Now we have a different mission, namely to introduce a modern art school based on European art (Sanyal 2013:257)

To most Western scholars, writers, and critics of African arts, visual arts in Tanzania had little or no strong traditional influence or roots. Margaret Trowell (1957), Siri Lange (1999) and Kelly Askew (2002) in their analyses argue that Tanzania had no traditions to develop into its own national culture, particularly the arts, hence the assumption that only Western art models would fit as proper tools of analysis and appreciation. This claim is evident by the major publications on this area such as *Art in East Africa* by Judith von D. Miller (1975) and *WEGZEICHEN: Kunst aus Ostafrika (SIGNS: Art from East Africa) 1974–89* by Johanna Agthe (1990), which used Western standards to appreciate artworks produced in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. A closer look at their analyses shows no dialogue between the aforementioned writers and their subject artists' discussions on the works studied. It is supposed, in this research, that Miller's (1975) and Agthe's (1990) art appreciation knowledge was as insufficient to understand African artists and their works as it was for their counterparts in Europe and America. For almost three centuries, Western approaches have been circulated and repeatedly recited by many African art lovers and scholars from the West.

Marion Arnold sheds light on this attitude or trend clearer than any other writer:

The West, with a long, sustained history of constantly evolving art and tradition of critical, theoretical and aesthetic engagement with culture, has been responsible for formulating many concepts and definitions of art crystallised in printed words. When knowledge circulates freely, it becomes influential and thus western ideas on art, embodied in art literature, discussed in the media, endorsed by teaching institutions, acquired power. Confident that its theories were substantiated by evidence, the West proposed its cultural models as universal (Arnold 2008:15)

Marion Arnold's comment suggests that the West "proposed" its theories as universal approaches for understanding the *Other's* cultural production. In fact, the proposed Western art theories were impositions, which were to be adopted by Africans as the only alternatives to their underdeveloped and unrefined ways of art appreciation. This matter has a long history among Western scholars, who in many instances have shown interest in standing head and shoulders above all non-Western world civilisations in the area of cultural advancement, i.e. the arts in particular. In his book *A Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume (1739), one of the influential Western philosophers of the eighteenth century, wrote:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or in speculation. No ingenious manufacture among them, no arts, no sciences.

About two centuries later, Hume's oppressive<sup>58</sup> view was polished and repeated, with some extraneous examples in this context added to emphasise its legitimacy:

For them [Africans] as for us the treasures of the world's past have heaped up. We received the treasures of Greece and Rome and Judaea, and have added to them. And if for us, barbarians and Gentiles, Plato thought and Virgil sang and Jeremiah agonized—Christ died, these things happened for the Africans too. For him later days Beethoven played, Leonardo painted, Shakespeare wrote, Pascal invented. There is no 'African Culture,' as of yet. *There is this universal heritage waiting to be taken up by them* – my emphasis (Victor Murray, 1929: 323; emphasis added)

And in the 1930s, supposedly under the influence of the aforesaid racist fallacies, Margaret Trowell, a British painter and art teacher<sup>59</sup> took a step further and came to Uganda to fill the art production culture gap imagined long beforehand by Hume (1739) and Murray (1929) when she established her school of art at Makerere, Kampala in 1937. In her own words,

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<sup>58</sup> See, Gardi, 1969, p.7 in Elias Jengo's Special Problems of an artist in a Developing Country, Institute of Education, Dar es Salaam (1984)

<sup>59</sup> See, Mount 1970, pp.91-96

which confirmed her subscription to David Hume's and Victor Murray's views, Trowell asserted:

...and for the last seventy years the European has worked steadily to bring the African into the orbit of western civilization. Materialistic as this civilization is, it has stimulated fresh life and energy among the indigenous people. In these livelier circumstances, we must look for the development of a latent aesthetic sense if these people are to produce a culture which is worthy of the name (Trowell 1957:112).

These few examples demonstrate that having "exhaustively studied" the world cultures and arts from their perspectives and cultural institutions, some Western scholars have generally been oriented towards a biased impression that there is no other credible or reliable approach to looking at the arts of Africa other than that of their own. To explain this, let us review Marion Arnold's view, which continues to shed some light on how the modern art approach came into play:

During the renaissance, Western philosophers became reacquainted with classical Greek and Roman culture and, as a result, they developed the concept of humanism: a set of ideas about what it means to be human that prioritise the power of reason and individual awareness. Humanism and rationalism characterized the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment and then in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of modernism evolved to accommodate western industrialization, urbanisation and self-conscious awareness of modernity. The discourses of humanism and modernism were promoted as progressive of sophisticated civilizations but, while these ideas were relevant to the western art, their Eurocentrism did not accommodate cultural values beyond the West. As a result, the products of other cultures tended to be labelled as "non-art", to be designated as anthropological artefacts, material culture or craft, and to be accorded lesser significance than 'art'. This had obvious repercussions for encounters with African art (Arnold 2008:15)

The modernistic art view, as imposed by Europeans through colonial education systems in Tanzania until the present, has been cemented among Western and some local scholars as a formal approach to looking and assessing the visual arts from this area. Several East African writers on the visual arts have employed this approach in their explanations. Judith von D.

Miller's comment on Nnaggenda's modern sculpture piece, titled *Spirit Within Man*, is a manifestation of this claim:

What, then, is the art of modern Africa? A close scrutiny reveals that its conscious mind is very aware of the rest of the world; but its subconscious roots are in a heritage more ancient than history has been able to record. Take for instance, Nnaggenda's<sup>60</sup> 'Spirit Within Man'. The artist is the product of a European education. He uses an old saw blade, nails and painted wood in a monumental-sized sculpture, much as any ambitious sculptor abroad. But the faces on the sculpture are African and the concept of an immense head as the "seat of the spirit" is an old, old African idea (Miller 1975:15)

She adds:

Perhaps painting is the greatest anomaly in Africa. Excepting the ancient Bushman cave paintings, Islamic and Coptic art, painting can be considered comparatively new in Africa—appearing, say, within the past half century. Styles in painting are thought to be more influenced by western art than are styles in sculpture. Still, what emerges is uniquely African (Miller 1975:15)

Elimo Njau, in Anthony's publication, *The Modern Makonde Sculpture*, sees another Western writer's view of African art as being based on this prejudiced view:

...But most other foreign scholars I have known saw East African Art either as anthropological data or as a minor branch of western art and thought. The quotation below from a catalogue of the Commonwealth Art Exhibition of Dec. 1962, confirms this: 'The contemporary artist in East Africa has...no inherited artistic traditions or forms from the past either to perpetuate, to build upon or from which to seek inspiration. Europe has made its impact and influence felt all over this great area and it is fair to say that all the present artistic activity has been stimulated by European example and influence commencing from the schools' (Stout 1966: xi)

It is apparent that these writers have had a typical western orientation in their views towards modern African art, but it is still not yet properly acknowledged that visual arts also have

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<sup>60</sup> Francis X. Nnaggenda is a Ugandan sculptor, one of a few who never studied arts at Makerere but acquired his skills in the craft as an apprentice in Germany and Switzerland and became one of the celebrated local East African artists

informal roots in Africa<sup>61</sup>. Fallacies such as those by Miller (1975) have been questioned by local art scholars. In an attempt to address and correct these unfounded claims against African art traditions, Elias Jengo writes:

One key element in the first category of attitudes is an attempt by most Western art historians to ignore African rock paintings as irrelevant to the development of visual art in Africa. Current archaeological evidence reveals that many African communities practised the art of painting. Such communities include Kondoia-Irangi in Tanzania; Wadi Sera in Libya and Tassir n' Ajjer in Algeria. Ethiopia has had a painting tradition going back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. What further evidences on the painting tradition should Africa give to the world? African traditional sculpture may be highly prized for its anthropological and aesthetic reasons but certainly not because Africa has had no paintings to show to the West (Jengo, 1984:118-119)

An honest critique of Miller's view hints at two things. First is the prejudiced view of the dominant role of the Europeans in contributing to the models for appreciation of the visual arts of Tanzania and elsewhere in East Africa; and second, a lack of sufficient information on the traditional art practices and development before colonialism. Miller's survey of modern African arts traditions has been very meticulous in identifying, picking and separating media and styles that are supposed to be Western in the production of African visual artworks. In many instances, she only highlights concepts, techniques, and media as well as elements from European art traditions which have been constantly acknowledged as non-African inventions, but completely avoided acknowledgement of developments which were results of exchanges from African art traditions and adopted as modernity in Western art traditions. This is evident

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<sup>61</sup> In showing that some modern artists in East Africa have been inspired by pre-colonial art practices, Sam Ntiro wrote that "...The Art of East Africa would be incomplete without a short consideration of its prehistoric painting... It is ridiculous to hear prejudiced critics "Africans do not take painting naturally". It remains to be seen, after a lot of research on pre-history has been done, exactly when Africans started painting. East African Art, Tanganyika Notes and Records, No. 61, September 1963, *The Journal of the Tanganyika Society*

in Miller's comment on Pablo Picasso's painting genre, in which she deliberately avoids admitting its African origins:

The reduction of human shapes to geometric patterns has always been an essential element in African art. At the turn of this century it became the preoccupation of Picasso and early Cubists in Paris. Neither form is a copy of the other. The Cubist merely happened upon an old idea at another point in history. An artist like Msangi can paint 'The Fish', for instance, in a style as reminiscent of Picasso as it is of traditional African art. The same may be said of Mukiibi and Tunginie. The forerunners of today's modern art were Cubists, but cubism with a small "c" was the basis of traditional African art. To claim that any of these artists, European or African, is derivative is to invite serious disagreement (Miller 1975:16)

Through such comments, one sees how perplexing it was for some foreign writers and critics to admit that, over time, African and western art traditions have mutually enriched one another since their first contacts. From this Judith von Miller's view, a keen reader sees that, the West has consistently assumed the position of the 'generous provider', while placing their African colleagues in the role of the humble receiver. There are many examples to attest to this claim. In a struggle to maintain this Western hegemony, Judith von D. Miller, a writer with some controversial views on East African art, includes a one-sided classification of an art style evolved in East Africa related to the aforesaid cultural exchange process by differentiating its wording as "Cubism" with a capital "C" and "cubism<sup>62</sup>" with a small "c", which turns a similar concept in expression and stylistic characteristics into two styles, one European and the other African in origin and logic. The case of Western modern art, such as cubism, as an emulation of African art traditions is a buried fact<sup>63</sup>. It is without doubt that

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<sup>62</sup> Cubism and cubism among artists in East Africa is described by Judith von D. Miller, *Art in East Africa* (1975) p.16

<sup>63</sup> See Giacometti sculptor, a prince among artists... Retrieved from: <https://donaldelley.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/giacometti-sculptor-a-prince-among-artists/> Retrieved on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 at FU-Berlin

celebrated modern sculptors such as Antonio Giacometti have emulated the San and Bushmen rock paintings, which also resemble the *Wanyamwezi's Ntomo* stick figure. Picasso's cubism too massively borrowed from African masks and semi-abstract sculptural concepts. Mutumba (2012:124) critically addressed this problem in her doctoral thesis and pointed out that it is unfair for the West to claim credit for its modern art inventions such as surrealism and cubism in particular without acknowledging the influence of African art on such iconic modern artistic inventions.

The modern approach of looking at visual arts in Tanzania reflects many European cultural colonial ambitions. It bases its arguments on a view of African visual arts as “unrefined” and “stagnant” when examined outside Western educational influences (Nyerere 1962:186). Even its classifying jargon entails the use of derogatory nomenclatures such as “fine Art”; “applied art”; “primitive”, “sophisticated and unsophisticated art”, “folk art” or “souvenir art” conforming to a long held colonial attitude of ignoring Africans’ development of local art forms<sup>64</sup>. The tenets of this belief are derived from the concepts of superior-inferior culture as endorsed by David Hume and Victor Murray; as a result, it posits African civilisation within a ranking of cultural development. In Tanzania, art educators such as Elias Jengo describes this view as an unfounded attitude due to ignorance on the essence of art in a particular African society when he argues that:

Probably the greatest problem facing African visual artists is brought about by Western attitudes that modern African arts must use traditional African forms of art in order to preserve its identity. Too often it seems that the modern forms of African art are accorded a lower status than those of the past. They are assumed to be of concern only if they help the western anthropologists to comprehend the social matrix surrounding the art object. In this case, art is viewed as index of continuity and change in African culture. For example, Helke

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<sup>64</sup>See, Foreword by ElimoNjau in *Modern MAKONDE SCULPTURE* by Antony Stout, 1966, p. xi



Kammerer-Grothaus (1983:80) feels that “the documentation of modern art...is of interest not only to present researchers; in the future it may be used by African organisations working to preserve a culture that is in danger of being lost”. We see here that one of the strongest reasons for the interest shown on African visual arts in Europe is purely anthropological. In order to maintain this interest, the art collectors seem to insist on collecting African art objects which satisfy their set criteria for authentic African art (Jengo 1984:119)

Elias Jengo explains that some Western art historians, writers, critics and anthropologists look at African visual arts with pre-conceived ideas, an attitude that has consistently misled them into misconception and hence make erroneous comments whenever they attempt to explicate about African and Tanzanian art in particular.

Although art training institutions such as the University of Dar es Salaam and Bagamoyo Institute of Arts and Culture (TaSUBa) have integrated modern art views<sup>65</sup> as introduced by Europeans into their curriculums, repressive, or rather, dismissive criticism of the artworks produced by trainees from these institutions have increased and worsened. Under such circumstances, local art scholars find most of the foreigners’ criticisms directed at modern art in Tanzania both contradictory and unfounded<sup>66</sup>. On the whole, there is no single way of satisfactorily addressing the controversial comments on visual arts in Tanzania as raised by some foreign scholars. It is also unfortunate that the widely-read foreign writers and critics<sup>67</sup> of art in Tanzania have not engaged local experts in discussion on the many ambivalent issues they express in their research and publications. In the most recent publication on the visual arts of Tanzania, the author, deliberately, ignores research on works by artists with formal

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<sup>65</sup> The UDSM and TaSUBa offer fine art courses which are internationally recognised. World Art history and Modern Painting techniques are among many courses on offer

<sup>66</sup> Louis Azaria Mbughuni, *Utata wa Tafsiri ya Maana* (Ambiguity in Meaning translation) in *Falsafa ya Sanaa ya Tanzania* (The Philosophy of Art in Tanzania) 1985, p.9-11

<sup>67</sup>William Fagg and Margaret Plass, 1964, p.23, 72, 132-33; Marshall Ward Mount, 1973, P.97-101; Kelly Askew, 2005, 304-306

art education. Despite his title suggesting to have included a wide range of visual arts scene in Tanzania, Van Wyk centres his research on only a few traditional art pieces by “unknown artists” from the colonial times. The reasons behind this omission is supposedly the same view that artists with formal art training are “unauthentic”, because they emulate Western art practices in their styles, media and thinking. Therefore, they do not fit in the research topic category intended to depict an “authentic” Tanzanian Art<sup>68</sup>.

Some scholars on art production are of a view that, ‘novel’ African art is one created free of foreign art tradition influences. The foreign influences discussed here include not only formal art education that was introduced by colonialists, but also the foreign art production techniques and media of composition, such as oil, watercolours or acrylic paints and canvases in painting, as well as the use of bronze and plastic in sculpture. The *Shangaa: Art of Tanzania*, published in 2013 by Van Wyk, involved only selected narratives and analyses of artworks from the early 1900s, that is, ethnic sculpture and some ‘ethnic’ dress pieces without indicating so in its title. This approach is intended to create an impression of ‘authentic’ visual arts of Tanzania. This has been a trend in many studies seeking to maintain the notion that there is “authentic” and “unauthentic” African art based on influences behind the artists who created the artworks, the kind of media used in production, and timeframe. It is also observed that works of art by artists with formal training are generally appreciated with a degree of scepticism by foreign writers and critics. Johanna Agthe’s (1990) major publication, *WEGZEICHEN: Kunst aus Ostafrika (SIGNS: Art from East Africa) 1974–89* and Judith von D. Miller’s (1975) *Art in East Africa* include brief narratives on formally-

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<sup>68</sup> See Dennis Duerden’s comments on the authenticity of traditional Makonde art of Tanzania in *Dealing with the devil: Meaning and the market in Makonde sculpture* by West, Harry G; Sharpe, Stacy. *African Arts* 35.3, Autumn 2002, pp.32-39

trained artists such as Sam Ntiro, Elimo Njau and Kiure Msangi as pioneers of modern and “contemporary” art in Tanzania but still maintain that these artists lack the originality of African art in their works and therefore much of the art they produce are byproducts of Western influences (Agthe 1990:75-76).

### **1.2.2 Tanzanian National Culture Approach**

With regard to the Tanzanian National Culture construction as an approach towards the appreciation of visual art, we are introduced to a view that looks at the visual arts and practices in Tanzania as cultural activities to bring about national and international identity and unity<sup>69</sup>. In some way this approach conforms to Okwi Enwezor’s view in *A short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*, which places the advent of African modernism in Africa’s independence period. Similar cultural revolutions were happening in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah introduced African Socialism as an adaptation and expansion of Pan-Africanism, whereas in Senegal, Leopold Sedar Senghor came up with Negritude. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mobutu Sese Seko, who had renamed the country Zaire, came up with Authenticity (Enwezor 2001: 10-14). In Tanzania, this approach emerged with the advent of independence in 1961 and later the adoption of socialism in 1967. For the first time, the national culture approach in its wider sense was proposed by Julius Nyerere during his Presidential Inaugural speech on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1962. The indicators which this study considered as the basis of Nyerere’s grounding of the national cultural perspective towards appreciation of national

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<sup>69</sup> Art is a component of the national culture in Tanzania, hence its strictly controlled use in enhancing national unity, *Utamaduni Chombo Cha maendeleo*, URT 1979, p. 3

culture in Tanzania were outlined by Samuel Wangwe. These include adhering to the principles of socio-economic liberation and human dignity, peace and stability, recognition of the link between peace, stability and justice, de-tribalisation and the creation of national consciousness. Other indicators are religious tolerance and state secularism, national language policy, a one-party system for the sake of nation-building, education policy and programmes, health policy and programmes, as well as national service and promotion of a people's militia, which TANU and its government had already achieved. Therefore, when looking closely at the newly-created Ministry of National Culture and Youth within his government, it was clear that President Nyerere was also providing a way through which national visual arts were to be officially harnessed, shaped and systematically appreciated. Among the key issues in his speech, in which the Ministry was pronounced, President Nyerere called for voluntary Tanzanian participation in the national culture building project. Moreover, he openly stated his stand against the colonial approaches which looked down at all earlier African cultural manifestations and values in Tanzania (Nyerere 1967:186).

As President Nyerere was aware of ethnic and cultural diversities within the young nation, he proposed the creation of a national culture based on public administration ethics and acceptable traditions and customs across the ethnic majority. Kelly Askew records the early stages of the national culture network as proposed by Rashid Kawawa, Nyerere's second Vice President, in his February 1965 speech to Regional Commissioners:

In his speech, he laid out specific guidelines for the formation of Cultural Committees at the village, district, regional, and national levels whose responsibilities were 'to promote activities in fields (a) Swahili language and literature, (b) music, singing and dancing, (c) drama and theatrical performances, (d) traditional arts and crafts', the committees were directed to draw their membership from national organizations, for example, TANU, NUTA [National Union of

Tanganyika Workers], UWT [Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania, the National Women's Organization], TYL [Tanganyika Youth League], TAPA [Tanganyika African Parents' Association], government representatives, 'and a few interested individuals'. A key element emphasised throughout the memorandum was the competitions held at each of the four levels should constitute the primary means of promoting the arts... (Askew 2002:172)

A closer look at Kawawa's speech shows that the selection and merging of the best customs and traditions from all ethnic groups in Tanzania, as well as some acceptable values borrowed from outside for the purpose of creation of a new national culture was an indirect procedure. People from different ethnic groups were primarily brought together into administrative groups in which they worked together to devise and approve acceptable ways in which they could work as one people pursuing a common goal. This approach allowed the Tanzanian national culture construction to be influenced by communally-shared attitudes based on egalitarian principles beyond ethnic formations, which have caused problems in many newly-independent African nations. In a Tanzanian cultural synthesis, all the people are expected to accept one another and live together as 'one ethnic group' and members of one big and homogenous national society (Nyerere 1967: 258-259). Nyerere appealed for the people to appreciate one another's good cultural practices and receive them as valuable heritage for the betterment of a new Tanzanian culture. Nevertheless, in his speech, Nyerere mentioned only a few traditional dances and inherited colonial theatre practices. It is worth noting that he was referring to all artistic manifestations, including visual arts. In Tanzania, the drum, or *ngoma* in Kiswahili, is a central instrument in many traditional dances which represent culture or the arts as a whole (Otiso 2013 and Askew 2005). This is supported by the fact that the visual arts in Tanzania are an integral component of the general culture, a concept which is clarified in the extract below:

*Kipengele kinachojulikana zaidi kama sehemu muhimu ya utamaduni ni Sanaa, Sanaa ni kipengele cha utamaduni kinaiwezesha jamii kuelezea kiwango cha mafanikio yao kihisia. Sanaa yeyote ile yenye msingi katika juhudi ya watu kila mara hufanya mambo haya matatu makubwa. Kwanza, huelezea juhudi iliyofanywa na jamii ya watu; Pili, huelezea matatizo hayo ni ya kijamii, kisiasa ama kiuchumi; na mwisho, sanaa ndicho chombo ambacho jamii zisizo na jadi ya kusoma na kuandika inatumia katika kuhifadhi na kuwasilisha kumbukumbu muhimu katika maisha yao (URT 1979:3)*

My translation:

The most popular component of culture is the art. It enables members of a society to express themselves to the climax of their feelings. Any art which reflects its creator's development process serves three major functions: First, it records and appreciates the developmental achievements attained; second, it expresses the societal, political and economic challenges of its creators and, finally, art is the only medium which many societies without the tradition of writing and reading employ to preserve their culture and history as well as pass on knowledge to other generations throughout their lives.

In other words, insofar as art and culture are concerned in the Tanzanian context, Kefa Otiso provides a brief clarification:

“As art and culture are very tightly interwoven, Tanzanian art is a good reflection of the country's culture” (Otiso 2013:99)

As Trowell (1957:112) proffered, after observing the materialistic nature of civilisation of the peoples in East Africa, it is better to appreciate Tanzanian national culture through the arts which give it a tangible form. In his speech, President Nyerere did not outline or mention the criteria through which the national arts should be analysed and appreciated; instead he insisted on revival and improvement of localised ways of production and consumption of the arts and other cultural products. In this regard, Jengo (1985:123-124) takes note of this lack of direction when he says:

...Nevertheless, there has never been any attempt in Tanzania, official or otherwise, of making the visual arts strictly subservient to the conception of the prevailing political ideology as had happened in

Guinea in 1958 when ‘art was fully linked with the politics of development...’

Since the late 1960s, various arts and cultural promotion institutions and individuals<sup>70</sup> have independently published pamphlets, thesis and books stating and describing how the arts and visual arts in particular should be appreciated, i.e. taught in schools, produced and distributed among the Tanzanian public. The arts sector was directly administered by the responsible Ministry through the Division of Culture, which also approved all major projects in the arts and culture sector. The functions of the Ministry included reviewing all manuscripts for publications by different arts and culture agencies and partners, accrediting, issuing regulations to guide artistic practices in Tanzania and art curricula for schools and colleges. Publications such as *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo*, or ‘Culture A Tool for Development’ by the Ministry of National Culture and Youth in 1979 and *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania*, or ‘The Tanzanian Art Philosophy’ by the National Arts Council (BASATA) in 1982, were among the blueprints produced under the close supervision of the Ministry to instill a sense and disseminate the idea of national culture to the public. The national culture approach agitated towards mainstreaming visual arts in Tanzania as edu-tainment media for criticising society whenever it strayed from the national agenda, promoting the national identity of Tanzanians wherever they went, preserving national history, as well as modes of expression. With regard to the visual arts, the National Culture Approach emphasises the exploration and adoption of good traditions and customs as raw materials for the production of new artworks, which must promote ethics and good values to be incorporated in the envisioned Tanzanian national culture. This approach precluded the “art for art’s sake” kind

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<sup>70</sup> See, Msangi.K.F. (1975) *Art Handbook for Schools: A guide to the non-artists’ teacher on how to teach art*, TPH, Dar es Salaam, pp. viii-xii

of artistic productions, since art was supposed to be strictly functional and meaningful to its immediate audience. This point is explained by the government publication titled *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania* (The Tanzanian Art Philosophy):

*Elimu ni lengo muhimu la sanaa kwa sababu, moja ya asili za sanaa ni elimu. Sanaa zote za hisi zina mawasiliano ya lengo la ujumbe maalum, lakini ni baadhi tu ya sanaa aina ambazo zina lengo na ujumbe maalum. Kwa hiyo katika uwanda wa nadharia na mantiki, tunaweza kujadili kwamba; Sanaa isiyotoa elimu au funzo fulani kwa jamii haitimizi moja ya lengo lake muhimu. Vilevile sanaa hiyo hupingana na asili yake ikiwa haitoi elimu yenye maadili. Kwa hiyo sanaa hiyo ni sanaa lakini sio sanaa kamilifu au sanifu; wala siyo sanaa muhimu na ya hali ya juu kwa jamii ya msanii (Mbughuni, 1982:80-81).*

My translation:

The objective behind art creation is to educate; the primary purpose for the creation of art is to share knowledge through it. All arts have the objective of communicating a certain specific message to its audience which sometimes is not the case in every artwork. Therefore, in theory and logic we can argue that an artwork that does not deliver any message to its audience does not fulfill its primary objective. Also, that particular kind of artwork creates a contradiction with its essence if it does not communicate good morals. Therefore, that artwork is incomplete and has no value within the society of the artist who created it.

Under the National Culture approach, artists were fully appreciated for their roles within the nation or their immediate communities. The beliefs, dreams, imaginations and aspirations of individual artists, if not shared by the majority of his audience, his society, or nation in this case, were irrelevant.<sup>71</sup> Most of the visual arts produced under this approach reflected the aspirations of the people as established by the society. In this context, the patrons who were mostly parastatals i.e. the Bank of Tanzania (BoT), Tanzania Posts Corporation and the ruling

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<sup>71</sup>On this aspect, Sam Ntiro writes: "...Tanzanian carvers, whether they are Wamakonde, Wazaramo, Wandengereko, Wanyamwezi, or any other tribe [ethnic group], produce carvings inspired by traditional mythologies, stories told by old people, tribal [ethnic] history; and customs and habits of the people amongst whom they live. Working from this important and fundamental background gives them impetus and the vital force which is ageless" (Ntiro 1975:115)



Party (TANU) to mention just a few, prescribed criteria for national arts. Promotion of traditional values, advancement of local and international peace and unity, hardworking peasants in the fields and workers in factories, as well as depictions of charismatic party and government leaders, were among dominant topics of artworks which indicated the implementation of the Tanzania national culture approach. Clearly, this approach was massively promoted during the *Ujamaa* period, which is covered in chapter two of this study. Although the National Cultural approach was practised in Tanzania, some artworks produced in the same time frame in the neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Kenya displayed similar characteristics. Evidence of emergence of this approach in the visual arts of independent East African countries were easily noticed by Johanna Agthe and Christina Mundt when they curated an exhibition on contemporary art from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, mounted in 1991 in Frankfurt am Main:

The painters and sculptors are predominantly occupied with themes such as their conditions of life and the state of their country. Native traditions and Western influences work side by side. Many artists describe with regret the way in which traditions are still being lost, and this is often seen contrasted with presentations of the new era, whose negative effects are picked up sometimes humorously, sometimes severely. Many of them also do not restrict their comment to the goings-on in their own country, but follow up events in the world outside too-events which ultimately affect Africa, whether directly or indirectly (Agthe and Mundt 1991:15).

However, the Tanzania National Culture approach to the visual arts of Tanzania is not acknowledged beyond a few public institution's publications. It was perceived by most Western and some African art critics in Tanzania as mere political propaganda intended to use visual arts as alternative communication channels for the government (Jengo 1982:124). The approach lacks a philosophical and theoretical basis from which visual arts could be analysed and appreciated accordingly. In a way, it promoted the general view of visual arts

as commodity for self-employed-artistic' youths to sell in addition to serving as objects of political propaganda. Since its pronouncement, the approach has been scarcely researched and promoted in relation to visual arts production. Apart from the aforementioned publications, the Tanzanian National Culture approach is found in very small corpus of literature. Its founder, President Nyerere, had not written a single comprehensive article on visual arts; only a few were written by some experts in his government<sup>72</sup>. In fact, most of the publications after the early independence period of visual arts in Tanzania, were based more on the modern art and traditional African sculpture approaches than on the national culture of Tanzania approach. In this regard, the current study assumes that the lack of official guidelines on the approach by its proponents was a cause for its failure as an alternative perspective for a full appreciation of Tanzania's visual arts from the local perspective.

### **1.2.3 Traditional African Sculpture Approach**

Under this approach, the visual arts of Tanzania are viewed in classes or categories based on the ethnicity of their producers. It is rather an ethnological approach focused on guiding the appreciation of artworks, particularly traditional sculpture and crafts, based on four main criteria: the media, which includes art materials such as wood, clay etc. as related to the general culture of the producers; stylistic characteristics of the sculptures, such as realism or abstraction in relation to their function in society; patronage system, in which the analysis is centred on understanding the function of the artwork by understanding its patron(s) or immediate audience, and the social functions of the artworks within the society in which they are produced. These four are the tools of analysis used in this approach when studying visual

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<sup>72</sup> Sam Ntiro's article: *East African Art*, TRN, 1963, Number 60, p. 121-134 and *Tanzanian Traditional Arts in the Independence Era*, 1975, Number 76, p. 113-118

arts in the East African region. They were first introduced and grounded by Margaret Trowell in the 1950s through her book titled *Classical African Sculpture*. The approach became a standard model in the study of traditional arts of Tanzania in many later publications<sup>73</sup>.

Jengo (1985:119) observes that this approach, mainly consists of analytical tools which are used to obtain ethnological information about the visual arts creators and users in order to ascertain past African ethnic, cultural, and intellectual development through visual art. Artistry is scarcely appreciated in the model. The creativity behind the stylistic genres, which were diverse across artworks, is also not acknowledged. In addition, it has ignored research on individual artists and their individual inventions to the extent that appreciations to the final products—be they sculptures, figurines, or masks—are based on the descriptions provided to the carvers by patron(s). Thus, more credit is given to the patrons of these arts such as chiefs, rainmakers, medicine men or oracles who commission the art object based on the needs of their institutions on behalf of their societies. This explains why most of the publications on traditional African sculptures in Tanzania have no artists' personal information alongside the pictures of their artworks as can also be seen in the publications on medieval and renaissance art in Europe. The value of artworks in this approach is based on the significance of the art objects to its patron (s) or users and not the general impression and creative display of the artwork. Under this approach, even Western writers have not considered art for art's sake principles. Publications written under this approach include *African Figurines: Their Use in Puberty Rites in Tanganyika* by Hans Cory (1956); *The Modern Makonde Sculpture* by Anthony Stout (1966); *The Role of Plastic Art Traditions in*

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<sup>73</sup> Antony Stout's the *Modern Makonde sculpture*, 1966 and Van Wyk's *Shangaa: Art from Tanzania* 2013 employed this approach in preparing their publications

*Tanzania, the Northeastern Region* by Gerlad Hartwig (1969); *Sculpture in East Africa* by Gerlad Hartwig (1978) and *Mwana Hiti: Leben and Kunst der matrilinearen Bantu von Tansania* by Marc Leo Felix in 1990 and ‘A Brief History of the Development of Modern Makonde Carving’, unpublished essay by Zachary Kingdon et al.

Under this approach, Tanzania is divided into several art regions by drawing clear boundaries based on ethnic diversities and artistic practices as reflected in the visual arts as Kingdon (1996:59) observes in his article on Chanuo Maundu, a Makonde master carver from Tanzania:

The artist stated emphatically that he loved ‘the things of the past,’ and he had clear notions of what, for him, did not constitute Makonde culture. Furthermore, he CHANUO MAUNDU indicated that his own work was rooted firmly in the domain of Makonde culture. This latter point presents an insurmountable challenge to any visual interpretative method which might seek to establish ‘authentic’ cultural continuities in Chanuo’s work through comparison with pre-colonial material forms. Chanuo conceived of culture not as primarily a visible material category, but rather as something that provides one with an identity and an awareness of one’s situation in the world.

This trend or approach of art research was mainly conducted in Africa by Western anthropologists who heavily informed subsequent art scholarship in the area. Its “anthropological and ethnological” requirements to categorise arts based on ethnic or “tribal” differences as independent entities are seen in the recent publications by Gary van Wyk (2013) *SHANGAA: Art of Tanzania* and Manfred Ewel and Anne Outwater’s (2001) *FROM RITUAL TO MODERN ART: Tradition and Modernity in Tanzanian Sculpture*. However, local Tanzanian art educators and writers such as Wembah-Rashid (1979), Sam Ntiro (1982) and Fadhili Mshana (2009) have improved it by using the traditional African Sculpture analysis approach for appreciating the diversity of traditional arts by avoiding the sharp

contrast which puts two or more ethnic groups in comparison. Instead, they have expanded it into a complementary approach to explain and appreciate all visual arts from some traditional Tanzanian subcultures. The view on discussion was exhaustively criticised and abandoned by local culture experts during the *Ujamaa* period, when the mission was to do away with “tribalism” or ethnicity and all of its manifestations. It is unfortunate that some Western scholars have for so long continued to employ this ambivalent approach for the appreciation of regional visual art practices of Tanzania in what is sometimes viewed as a never-ending quest for “authenticity” in African art<sup>74</sup>.

### **1.3 The Visual Arts Institutions of the early Independent Tanzania**

The modern art institutions established in Tanzania during the independence period have their roots in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. This study suggests that after examining the origin of pre-colonial cultural institutions, Nyerere’s ambition to resurrect them alongside modernity provided a strong ground for future developments. There is sufficient evidence in the history of pre-colonial and colonial visual arts in Tanzania to illustrate that visual arts have long been practised within specific institutions. Cory (1957)<sup>75</sup>, Trowell (1956)<sup>76</sup>, Ntiro (1975)<sup>77</sup> and Leakey (1983)<sup>78</sup> presented narratives which show how visual arts production, use and management were conducted during the pre- and colonial periods in Tanzania. While referring to the traditional African societal organisation of cultural institutions, which the

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<sup>74</sup> This claim is confirmed by the approach used by Van Wyck in his new publication, *SHANGAA: Art in Tanzania*

<sup>75</sup> See *Wall-Paintings by Snake Charmers in Tanganyika: Introduction*, Cory, H. 1957, p. 11-18

<sup>76</sup> Trowell, M., (1954) *Classical African Sculpture*, Faber and Faber, London

<sup>77</sup> Sam Ntiro’s article: *East African Art*, TRN, 1963, Number 60, p. 121-134 and *Tanzanian Traditional Arts in the Independence Era*, 1975, Number 76, p. 115

<sup>78</sup> See Mary Leakey, *Africa’s Vanishing Art: The Rock Paintings of Tanzania*, 1983, Doubleday & Company, Inc. New York

first President of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere sought to retain and improve in making the new national culture of independent Tanzania, the surviving and thriving ethnic visual arts' productions promised a bright future.

President Nyerere believed that reinstating formal institutions to administer small visual art units, which were then widely scattered and ethnically operated, was necessary and could serve as a starting point on which the visual arts sector could be established sustainably and eventually support its development. It was later observed that Nyerere's move towards establishing formal institutions to administer and promote the national visual arts sector was not only intended to revive and improve the operations of the sector, but also to control and monitor its progress towards the creation of a national visual identity. Many politicians with knowledge of the role of visual arts in traditional African societies took similar steps to those by Nyerere before they could grant the visual arts sector total autonomy in production during that period of nationalism, unity and identity construction<sup>79</sup>. This notion is also evident in the last paragraph of Nyerere's presidential inaugural speech.

When Tanzania achieved its independence in 1961, visual arts were practised through both formally and informally-structured institutions. With the British indirect rule system, cultural activities such as traditional visual arts production were free from interference by the colonial administration, except for the missionaries<sup>80</sup> activities. Ethnic-based sculpture and crafts were still produced for domestic use and business purposes among the locals. Fadhili Mshana's

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<sup>79</sup>*The Idea of a National Culture: Decolonizing African Art in Kasfir, S.L., Contemporary African Art, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999, p.166*

<sup>80</sup>Missionaries in churches and their established schools discouraged any African figurative art for the fear of continuing 'Paganism' among the converted – Jengo, E. personal interview, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

(2009) study<sup>81</sup> on *Wazaramo* sculpture presents an interesting account, which describes the survival of the *Wazaramo* art tradition during the colonial, independence and post-independence periods in Tanzania. Mshana (2009) agrees with many other visual arts writers before him, who argue that art production and businesses in Tanzania had long been conducted in structured organisations. From the 1940s until today, most painters and carvers have worked under specific registered and unregistered groups, associations and societies (Stout 1966:9 and Miller 1975:73). This kind of organisation is reflected in the genres of visual artworks produced throughout these periods. The organisational production systems resulted in a stamp-like character of the products, particularly the Makonde sculptures<sup>82</sup>. The later categorised schools, societies and movements of visual arts such as the Wamakonde carvers or Tingatinga painters (Agthe, 1990; Sam and Thorup 2008) were due to the classification of a similar stylistic orientation of artists and production character or artworks. In recent Tanzanian art research, some art scholars have termed this system of production as “copying” (Sam and Thorup 2010). Among the Wamakonde and the Wazaramo sculptors, copying from one another or from master-carvers is an acceptable practice of a working group of somewhat related carvers. It has never been documented that a sculptor sued or quarrelled with his colleagues for copying his work or style. Wembah-Rashid (1979:5-7, 11-16) accuses foreign art dealers, who have long insisted on the group work production system<sup>83</sup> of

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<sup>81</sup> Mshana, S. (2009) *The Art of the Zaramo: Identity, Tradition, and Social Change in Tanzania*, New Orleans, university Press of the South

<sup>82</sup> See Antony Stout's comments on stamp-like productions of Makonde sculptures from Dar es Salaam and Mtwara production workshops in his book, *Modern Makonde sculpture*, 1966, p.8-19

<sup>83</sup> Antony Stout (1966:8-9), Wembah-Rashid (1979: 5-7, 11-16) and Zachary Kingdon (1996:58) record cases in which art dealers mostly Indians, but also some European businessmen, who had established art workshops in the Dar es Salaam and Mtwara regions encouraging apprentices to copy and mass reproduce works by Wamakonde master-carvers such as Samaki Likankoa or Yakobo Sangwani to fill their curio shops with reproductions of the successful genres such as *Shetani* and *Ujamaa*. Most of the times, reproductions were encouraged to meet art product orders placed by collectors or clients from Kenya or abroad.

responsibility for the continued copycat productions, which have denied many talented sculptors copyrights for their masterful inventions<sup>84</sup>. Not many individual artists are known in Tanzania from the early independence and the *Ujamaa* visual arts period, because these scenes were dominated by the group or organisational system of arts production. Tanzanian artists such Sam Ntiro, Elimo Njau, Elias Jengo, Kiure Msangi, Samaki Likankoa, Eduard Said Tingatinga, and George Lilanga, were, in a number of articles, presented as individual artists of an independent Tanzania. The most important institutions that spearheaded the development of visual arts in Tanzania during the independence period were mainly public, with only a few privately owned<sup>85</sup>.

### **1.3.1 Ministry of National Culture and Youth**

The Ministry of National Culture and Youth was the first nationwide, public institution created primarily to administer all cultural development activities in Tanzania. It was officially born on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1962, with Lawi Sijaona appointed its first Minister, and Titi Mohamed and Joseph Nyerere as his deputies<sup>86</sup>. Before then, arts and culture development were co-ordinated as a department within the Ministry of Education and Culture. After several re-organisations which started in 1964 up to 1973, it was agreed that the main task of this particular Ministry was to guide government and private cultural

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<sup>84</sup> Yakobo Sangwani, the inventor of Ujamaa Style, and Samaki Likankoa, the creator of Shetani style, were not assisted by art dealers such as Mohamed Peera, or even the HANDICO to acquire copyrights for their creativity. Instead these aforementioned art dealers promoted reproduction of their artistic inventions by other artists to increase the volumes of the products as well as revenues from sales.

<sup>85</sup> See Art Institutions in East Africa, National Museum of Tanzania, Art Societies in Miller, J.D. (1975) Art in East Africa, p.37-77

<sup>86</sup> See, The Tanzania Cultural Policy by Mbughuni, L.A., 1974, pp.20-25



development agencies as well as the general public in the construction of the new national culture. Louis Mbughuni documents this development as follows:

The ministry should provide four essential services:

1. Identification and analysis of cultural opportunities and new cultural needs
2. Co-ordination of the planning of cultural development.
3. Development and management of manpower for cultural programmes
4. Provision of central services and professional advice to cultural organs needs on all cultural programmes (Mbughuni 1974:24)

Askew (2005:306) adds an explanation on the role of the Ministry:

Nyerere assigned the Ministry of Culture primary responsibility for ensuring recovery, promotion and development of the nation's culture. He furthermore proclaimed it the most important ministry of his administration.

Although the last statement in the above quotation was never in the original speech delivered by President Nyerere himself, Askew (2005) is one of the few writers to ascertain the crucial and strategic position of this particular ministry during the independence period. This ministry consisted of three departments to oversee the cultural decolonisation process and creation of novel developments for an envisioned national culture. These departments were Arts and Crafts, Kiswahili, and Sports and Games.

### **1.3.1.1 Arts and Crafts Department and the later Division of Culture**

Through the Arts and Crafts Department, which is the focused authority in this chapter, the ministry was expected to conduct the following activities: (i) to co-ordinate a process for the revival of best traditions and customs; (ii) establish and promote a new Tanzanian national culture through visual arts, as already achieved in traditional performing arts such as songs,

dance<sup>87</sup>, drama and music genres; (iii) connect visual arts production with other economic and political activities in the service of national development as illustrated in Fig.1 (Mlama 1991:8-9); (iv) encourage the use and inclusion of visual arts among media of communication in the envisioned cultural development projects (Fig.1); (v) reinforce the use of visual arts in promoting peace, unity and patriotism (Fig.2) and oversee the ethical use of visual arts in creating a cultural synthesis which adopts the best local traditions and customs; (vi) influence the creation of local symbolic representations to enhance national visual identity (Fig.3); (vii) ensure that visual arts, as it was for songs and dance arts in agricultural activities, were employed as media of communication to complement other ongoing development activities, i.e. used as teaching aids in schools.

Gradually, some objectives of the Ministry were realised. Visual arts such as sculptures, murals and posters were purposefully created and extensively employed either to envision or to provide visual guidelines in development projects by other sectors. For example, the Ministry of Health commissioned illustrators and painters to create artworks to be used as communication channels in their national campaigns such as '*Mtu ni Afya*' (Person is Health), while the National Electoral Commission employed illustrators to create its posters in a campaign known as '*Uchaguzi ni Wako*' or the Election is Yours in figure 77 (URT 1979:25-27 and Mbughuni 1982:87). Several public institutions established after independence were encouraged to brand themselves using locally-inspired iconographies. Details on the origin and meanings of such iconographies are provided in 'Political and Cultural Iconography' in the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts section in the next chapter of this study.

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<sup>87</sup> See, *Cultural Production in Tanzania: Of Troupes and Officers*, (Askew 2005:306)

Good examples here include the emblems (Fig.3) and logos (Fig.4) such as the Coat of Arms, the National Bank of Tanzania logo, the Tanzania Prisons' as well as the Police Forces' logos, as well as the University of Dar es Salaam's emblem, to mention but a few. An analysis of several artworks produced between 1955 and 1967 is also evident in the Agencies of Visual Arts section of this chapter, which cumulatively attests the achievements of the Ministry's activities in promoting visual arts in the country.



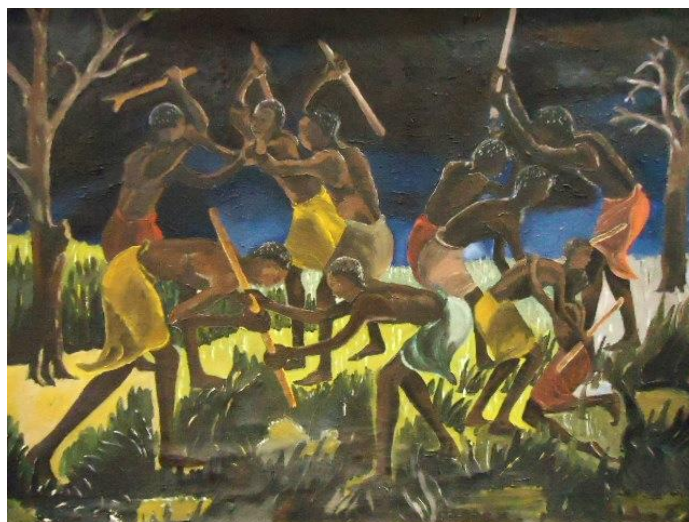
**Fig.1 Working on the Winding Road' Sam Ntiro, 1963**

(Source: <http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/modern/ntiro4.htm> August 2019)

Figure 1, titled 'Working on a Winding Road' painted by Sam Ntiro in 1963 portrays his unwavering support to the government's development campaigns through social capital and communitarianism, among the highly exalted tenets in President Nyerere's Ujamaa policy. This notion was also observed by Angelo Kakande, a Ugandan art scholar whose thesis also

analyses several of Sam Ntiro's political paintings linked with the Ujamaa ideology in Tanzania (see Kakande 2008:141). Since the early 1960s, it was clear that Tanzania was about to adopt a 'socialist' path towards its development as a new nation. Eventually in 1967 Tanzania was declared a socialist country as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter of this study. In those days, the central government encouraged people all over the country to participate in community work campaigns known 'Msaragambo' or 'Kazi za Ujenzi wa Taifa' as organized by local authorities within their immediate surroundings, particularly in the villages. Community work campaigns during the Ujamaa period were strictly implemented with a legal reinforcement. This was vivid during the construction of social service provision centers. The campaigns helped to provide immediate, effective, and cheap manpower where government funding was insufficient for the construction of dispensaries, schools, roads etc. in villages and other remote settlements. In the 'Working on the Winding Road', Ntiro portrays village men and women working on a road construction project by using hand hoes. The hilly, thicketed red soils background on which Ntiro paints his busy working 'villagers' symbolizes the 'freshness' of a newly independent Tanganyika (Tanzania) which without the 'community' labour and the people's unity would never develop and support people's living. Again as observed by Kakande (2008), the absence of supervisors among the working community, cements the notion of Ntiro's portrayal of Nyerere's 'Ujamaa' ideology which insisted that leaders should be best examples in performing community chores. Technically speaking, 'Working on a Winding Road' highlights Ntiro's 'colour smearing' technique rather than painting. His overweighted application of opaque colours such as red, blue and yellow makes it hard for him to put clear shadows underneath his objects as well as essential shading on his figures for clear and

realistic impressions. While looking at this work, a viewer with little knowledge of the *Ujamaa* practices in Africa or in East Africa can hardly comprehend the meaning of the activities as portrayed in the painting. As discussed in figures 2 and 83, this work also has an inexplicable perspective arrangement which may complicate the viewers' sense of time and the actual location of the human figures in it. The source of light, that dimly reflects on the hills, roadsides, and the working villagers is unclear. It is difficult to suggest as to whether the light comes from the top, left or right side of the painting. One can hardly predict that perhaps the light falls overhead the human figures. In addition to that, lack of a clear horizon line, that would clearly suggest the distance and the actual position of objects and figures in the paintings reveal more technical flaws to a trained eye. The best example to explain this problem in this work is the positioning of working men's figures which look sunken into the trench instead of standing on the freshly constructed road. Additional, and intensive discussions on thematic and stylistic aspects of Sam Ntiro's *Ujamaa* propaganda' artworks as discussed through figures 1, 2 and 83 are further discussed in Chapter Two of this study under the title 'Sam Ntiro and Tanzania's Visual Arts Scene'.



**Fig.2 A painting depicting “Ethnic Unrests” by Sam Ntiro 1962?**  
(Photograph by researcher at the National Museum of Tanzania, October 2015)

Looking at figure 2, which was displayed without its ‘original title’ in the NMT permanent collection, is a fabled piece among Sam Ntiro’s greatest works produced during the eve of the Tanganyika’s independence. During the present research, several respondents on this particular artwork attempted to assign a name to this work. About the possible title of this painting, Mac Sawaya’s suggestion to name it “*Disharmony*” was very convincing. When considering the nationalist politics of the 1960s, it is obvious that the painting represents a powerful message on ‘peace and unity’ issues, complementing the then-popular slogan ‘Freedom and Unity’ used by President Nyerere in his speeches during and after independence struggles. This painting captures a scene of a traditional warfare, popularly known as ‘stick fighting’ amongst northern regions’ ethnicities such as the Wachagga, the Wamaasai, the Wameru and the Waarusha. It displays bare-chested men in bright-colourful waist-wrappers fighting each other with ‘wooden throwing clubs’ or ‘*Marungu*’ in Kiswahili. As a ‘Mchagga’, an identity which most of his critics have used while decoding his art’s messages, Ntiro, in this painting seems to recall and reconstruct a scene of a dispute taking place at night in an unknown location, probably some village(s) within Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions where frequent disputes over grazing grounds or land borders had happened in the past. Growing up in a Wachagga society has given Sam Ntiro tremendous experiences on northern Tanzania people’s lives which heavily depends on crop cultivation and animal husbandry. In this particular artwork, Ntiro, artistically, exposes a land dispute between neighbouring ethnic groups. A closer look at the choice of colours used, objects, and traits of the characters in the painting suggest that Ntiro has supposedly depicted a long-time dispute over the land border between the Wachagga and their neighbouring nomadic Maasai herders. In the painting, the Maasai are easily identified by their use of ‘stick’ weapons as

well as their popular bright ‘red waist-wrappers’. Also, as a ‘political painter’, Sam Ntiro’s message in “Disharmony” reflected the uncertain social situation in many parts of the country during the early independence days and therefore appealed for national unity and peace among the people in independent Tanzania as was constantly campaigned for by President Nyerere in his speeches.

Despite his sensational socio-political themes, a lot can be said about Sam Ntiro’s painting style. As Mount (1973:98) observes, Ntiro’s biggest stylistic ‘anomaly’ is his ‘non-academic realism’. In this work, Ntiro’s human figures, the night skies, and the general landscape are scarcely detailed. The supposedly night skies lack stars and the moon that supposedly produces the linear and sporty light reflections seen on the figures’ heads, backs, hands, sticks as well as the tips of grass and leaves in the surrounding vegetation. The thick dark clouds covering the whole sky in the artwork add to the inconsistency as to the source of the lights that brightly reflect on the human figures, vegetation as well as on the fore and back grounds in the painting. The human faces on some figures are blank, with waning lines that delineate body parts such as eyes, mouth, nostril and fingers where the hands hold the sticks. These apparent ‘stylistic flaws’ in Ntiro’s realistic painting style are observable in most of the artworks he produced during his high and low peaks of his artistic career. When looking at the “Market Day”, a work he produced in 1955<sup>88</sup>, the time he was attending further studies

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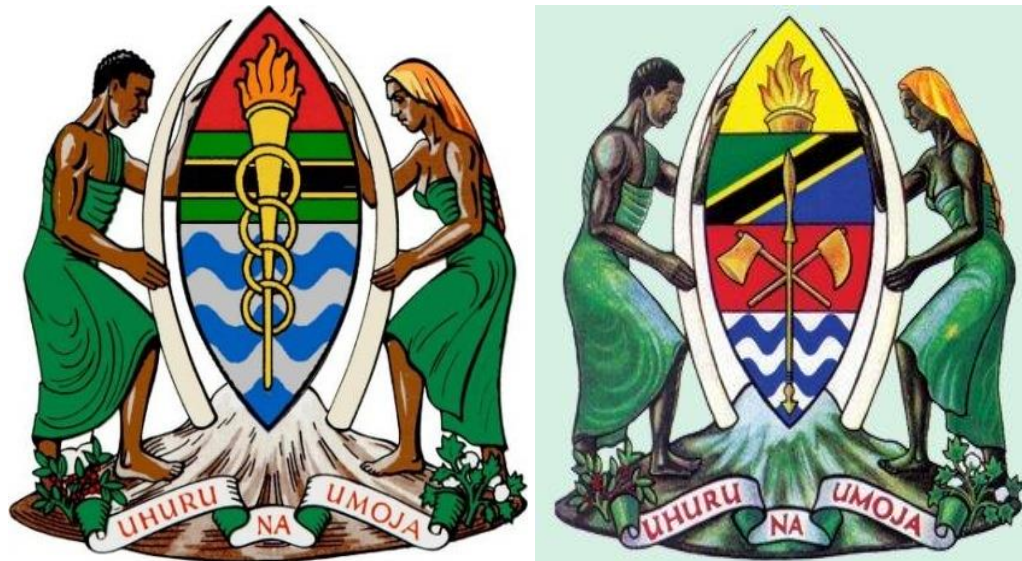
<sup>88</sup> ‘*Market Day*’ translated into Kiswahili as ‘Gulio’ is among a few powerful artworks that directly links Sam Ntiro’s art with the *Ujamaa* politics of the 1960s. It depicts the peasant market experiences, one of the central features of the *Ujamaa* economy as adopted from the traditional African economies. In this artwork, Ntiro’s complements President Nyerere’s claim that the *Ujamaa* as practiced in Tanzania was originally a way of life among the pre-colonial African societies and not an imposition borrowed from the socialism practiced in the northern hemisphere countries. The painting depicts an old marketing tradition known as the Gulio by the Wachagga of Kilimanjaro region, where Sam Ntiro was born, and in several other places in Tanzania. In his painting, Ntiro reconstructs a nostalgic scene in which local farmers and potters used to exchange, sell and

at Slade School of Art in London, one sees almost similar technical anomalies as the ones explained in figure 2. Perhaps a little improvement is observed in Ntiro's painting style when he employed linear perspective in his composition. In "Market Day", a dominant one-point perspective is clearly detected through the figure of a tree positioned in the middle of the painting. In addition to that, one sees a vanishing point marked by V-shaped branches of the tree at the near-top of the painting. Also the diminishing sizes of women figures descending on pathways from both sides of the hill as well as a clear horizon line where the pathways meet on the hill's top. Despite these perspective considerations, Ntiro's human figures, vegetation and objects such as pottery goods and crops carried by women in fig. 83 remain undetailed and very 'unrealistic'. His brush strokes on most of his paintings suggest his little mastery on his supposedly *alla prima* technique.

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buy goods to each other. In the past, before 1900s market day involved barter system in which no money transaction was involved. As one can see that women on the right side of the painting brought pots and logs of firewood in an exchange with agricultural products such as bananas and maize which were brought by the women seen on the left side of the painting. The 'Gulio', was and still is a formal local marketing activity in which peasants meets their customers directly and sell their produces on a prescribed day once or twice in a month, especially on weekends such as Saturdays and Sundays. During the Ujamaa period, the Gulio provided the only platform for small-scale producers and individuals to market their goods while leaving all the large-scale productions in the operations of cooperatives and parastatals. This notion is evident in this painting. To date, in Kilimanjaro region, coffee and banana production are considered very serious activities and therefore handled by men, while leaving small production activities such as vegetable farming, poultry and pottery activities to women and young people. The Wachagga society has a strong social construction which clearly defines sex, age and gender where economic, political and land ownership are concerned. In Ntiro's eyes, the Marketing Day or the Gulio in the context of Kilimanjaro region represented the Wachagga's general way of life. It is a platform where household economics and transactions, socialization, information exchange were performed and a place in which a sense and bonds of the Wachagga community among its members were constructed, and strengthened.





**Fig.3 From the left, the Tanganyika Coat of Arms and the new Tanzania Coat of Arms following the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar by Abdulla Farahani in 1961 and 1964**  
 (Source: <https://tanzania.go.tz/documents> August 2019)



**Fig.4 The new national logos. From the left, the Bank of Tanzania logo, the Tanzania Prisons Service logo and the Tanzania Police Force logo by TAS in the 1960s**  
 (source: <https://tanzania.go.tz/documents>, August 2019)

However, the Ministries responsible for national culture construction and promotion were not very successful during the Arts of the Independence Period. Several problems emerged and many of the administrative patronage objectives and development plans by the Ministry(ies) were impossible to achieve. Among many, four problems were critical. These were: (1) shortage of qualified and competent personnel at the Ministry, regional and district levels; (2) lack of sufficient funds for smooth co-ordination and execution of administrative tasks and implementation of cultural development projects nationwide; (3) the incompleteness of the

cultural policy, which caused lack of direction and unclear objectives; and (4) lack of political will to realise aspired changes and development in the arts and culture sector. These problems were apparent in both the visual and performing arts development schemes. Kelly Askew, whose comments build on Amandina Lihamba's observations on the performing arts genre, reveals these problems:

The years immediately following the Arusha Declaration of 1967 witnessed a sudden efflorescence in cultural production. Poets, musicians, dancers and playwrights all rallied behind government's ambitious program to eliminate social inequality and evenly distribute the nation's resource. They produced art that extolled the party and its leaders and sang the praises of socialism. Yet despite this 'unleashed energy hitherto untapped, the production and development of cultural expression after 1967...did not develop to their envisioned dynamic potential' (Lihamba 1991:270) Lihamba attributes the failures to three factors: (1) a vaguely defined, incoherent cultural policy, (2) weakness in the cultural administration, and (3) lack of moral and material investment. The Ministry's weak administration and critical lack of resources resulted in a pattern of it being bounced from one Ministry to another—a pattern continuing even to the present day... (Askew 2002:184)

All national visual arts projects were expected to be created or designed, planned and distributed to other governmental and private institutions for implementation. However, with the aforesaid problems remaining unsolved, the Division of Culture through the Office of the Promoter of Arts and Crafts was incapable of executing its duties and achieving the envisioned objectives of the Ministry.

A closer look at the shortage of qualified arts and culture experts within the Division of Culture at ministerial level as well as at cultural offices in regions and districts contributed to the chaotic and broadly uncoordinated cultural production activities nationwide. Since the Division of Culture was officially created in 1963, several months after the Ministry was established in December 1962, only a few cultural units or sub-departments were opened in

about 20 regions to create a countrywide network of cultural production authorities. Most of the officers in those cultural promotion offices were unqualified for the jobs they were assigned to undertake; moreover, the offices they worked in were empty rooms which needed a lot of facilities so as to function properly<sup>89</sup>.

In an interview with Elias Jengo, a prominent artist and visual art educator in Tanzania, he claimed that of the four problems outlined, the shortage of qualified and competent personnel was the most critical during this period:

“Most of members of staff in the new Division of Culture were ignorant in arts and culture fields. Because they were public servants, previously served in the community development departments as clerks and administrators and were later promoted to serve in the new Division of Culture. Thus poor plans and projects performance in the division of culture was inevitable”  
(Personal interview, September 2015)

Jengo’s observation hints at the lack of professional staff as the cause for all the Ministry’s failures in the creation and promotion of national visual arts. Certainly, Jengo’s argument is affirmed by the results of the first major project of the Cultural Division. In the attempt to implement one of its chief objectives, the creation and promotion of national cultural identity through the arts, in this context, the visual arts, the Office of the Promoter of Arts and Crafts in the Culture Division aspired to transform the majority of popular traditional visual artworks into national cultural representations. Thus, the best artworks produced by local artists, such as the *Wamakonde* and the *Wazaramo* traditional carvers and craftsmen, as well as modern artworks by formally-trained artists had to reflect the new national culture based on African traditional values. However, responses to this quest for new national visual identity creations

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<sup>89</sup> See Mbughuni 1974, pp.14-18 and Askew 2002, pp.184-190 on the narrative of a disillusioned cultural officer called Musa Kongola at the Dodoma District Cultural Office

were slow, with very little achievements. The few success stories, according to Wembah-Rashid (1979:12), include the adoption of the Makonde sculpture, traditionally known as *Dimoongo*, by Yakobo Sangwani into a national art genre under the new name of *Ujamaa*. A detailed narrative of the transformation procedure is provided in chapter two of this study. It seemed as if this adoption became the standard procedure. In most new visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, much of the supposedly new national visual arts were directly borrowed from the existing traditional arts rather than being invented in newly-produced artworks. Some critics of the visual arts of the independence period viewed these developments as a misguided process, mainly due to the incompetence of its co-ordinators and promoters in the fields of arts and cultural productions. In an attempt to explain this problem, Mshana (2009:24-25) observed that the problems surfaced after new artistic productions adopted the Wazaramo carvings and performing arts:

...Nevertheless, cultural and art objects survived and mapped new meanings. Due to this disruption, some art forms had their meaning transformed. For example, some stuffs of the Zaramo were affected. The uses changed since the position of headman was no longer in place. Many traditional dances were taken out of their traditional and ethnic cultural contexts and placed on a national level. There they were used by the government to further political objectives, such as entertaining foreign dignitaries at state functions. In this way, art had become de-ethnicized and co-opted by the government.

Kelly Askew, on the other hand, commented thusly:

What one finds, then, is that forms and formulations of artistic production outlined by the state policy in Tanzania failed to replace local forms and formulations; instead, a somewhat awkward co-existence emerged (Askew 2005:310)

The former remark above exposes the apparent ignorance of the arts' administrators in their roles towards the construction of national culture through the appropriation of some existing traditional art forms. Furthermore, it exposes that not only did the Division of Culture

insufficiently research the ethnic production systems in the process of defining, planning and implementing the new national cultural policy, but also completely misunderstood and ignored the traditional values of the ethnic arts it was haphazardly transforming into national arts. This was all reflected in the poor staffing situation, which lacked knowledge of indigenous cultures and hence made a poor contribution to the transformation processes. In the latter sarcastic comment, Kelly Askew confirms that there was a co-existence of sub-cultures in one, which the commentator describes as “awkward”, implying that she found it questionable. In other words, there were neither clearly accepted nor shared objectives among the team of visual arts practitioners and cultural unit authorities in the pursuit of the new national culture. Inevitably, there were irrationalities and irregularities presented by Askew (2005) and Mshana (2009).

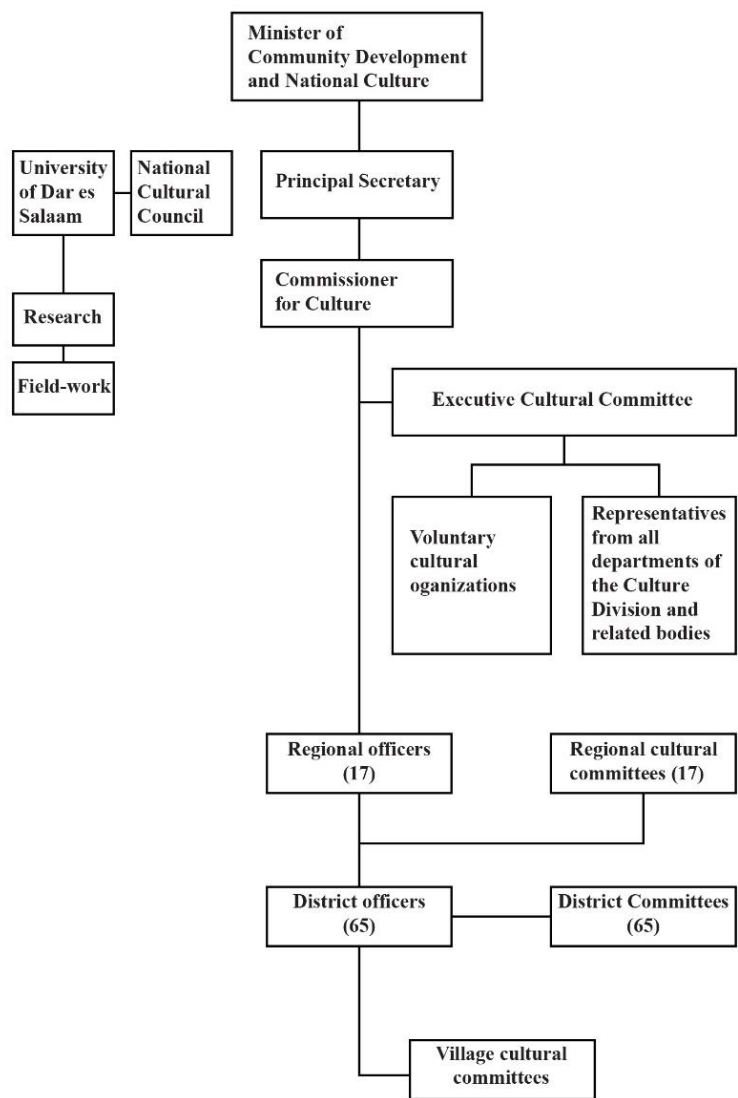
The measures taken by the government to address the challenges undermining the performance of the Cultural Division, in the Ministry responsible for national culture creation, were perceived as both radical and controversial<sup>90</sup>. In 1964, the Ministry of National Culture and Youth was reformed into The Ministry of Community Development and National Culture, with the Cultural Division transformed into the National Culture and Antiquities Division. The reforms came with a major re-organisation of the entire Cultural Division’s structure. To begin with, as noted in Mbughuni (1974:21), the new ministry considered two recommendations presented in 1963 by Harold Chopeta, the first Commissioner for Culture. In his early attempts to improve the division’s operations as well as extending its reach countrywide, Mr. Chopeta proposed the establishment of a National Cultural Council

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<sup>90</sup> ...These changes were not conducive to the planned developments, particularly in an area as sensitive as culture. The changes of leadership and administrative heads limited success and delayed policy, but did not significantly affect the policy itself as outlined by the President in 1962 (Mbughuni 1974:20)

(constituted by several committee members) to serve as a legal advisory body to the ministry. He also called for the establishment of a fully-equipped and independent Division of Culture with its leadership from the national to regional, district and village levels. Both of his recommendations were implemented in 1965, as the new divisional organisation Chart 2.1 illustrates:

**I. The Division of National Culture (1965)**



**Chart 1. The New Division of Culture network**

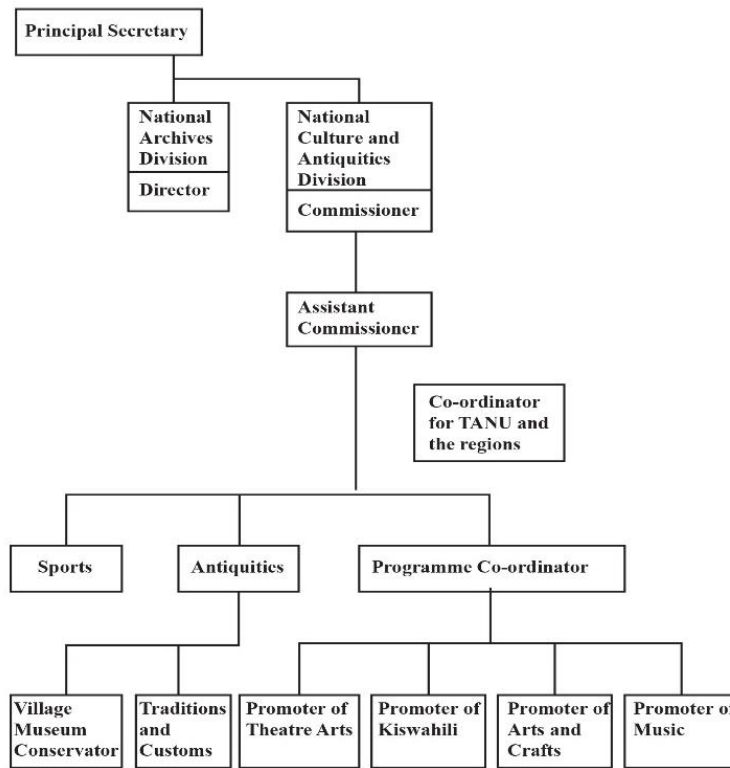
(Source: The Cultural Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mbughuni 1974:66)

This new organisational structure was expected to provide the Ministry with smooth co-ordination and execution of activities and allow public participation at all levels of policy implementations. Nonetheless, there were no deliberate efforts made to improve the visual arts section. As it was in the former ministry, the section was still small with limited authority, facilities, and staff to put its plans into action:

At the head of the Culture Division is the Commissioner for Culture. He is assisted by eight technical officers, formerly known as technical divisional officers, since their work at the headquarters consisted of planning field strategies. The original eight officers consisted of: a conservator of the Antiquities Division; a curator of the National Museum; a sports and games officer; a football coach; a chairman of the National Film Censorship Board; an officer of the National Festivals and Celebrations Office; a promoter of arts and crafts; a promoter of theatre and drama; and finally a promoter of Swahili language and literature. This group of experts was supported by a small regular administrative staff (Mbughuni 1974:29).

The text above is illustrated in the organisational chart below:

2. National Archives Division and National Culture and Antiquities Division: current organization<sup>1</sup>



**Chart 2. National Archives Division and National Culture and Antiquities Division: current organization**

(Source: The Cultural Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mbughuni 1974:65)

As illustrated in Chart 2, the official titled the “Promoter of Arts and Crafts” was the sole planner of the projects at the ministerial level. Since there is no evidence of the professional qualification of its staff members, the office of the promoter of arts and crafts’ personnel from 1963 to early 1967 lacked the capacity to execute its expected tasks. According to Miller (1975:94-95), the first professionally-trained official to work as the promoter of arts and crafts in the cultural unit of Tanzania was Louis Azaria Mbughuni, who came into office in 1967. Before Mbughuni, the post was not filled by an expert. Furthermore, the Promoter of Arts and Crafts was not one of the planners of art education curricula at the national level. Therefore, his office could neither inspire nor influence the young talents to actively



participate in the visual arts. He was also not a member in any of the then-active associations and societies which dominated visual arts promotion activities. Thus, the Promoter of Arts and Culture's position and powers to influence awareness and developments in the visual arts practices were particularly limited. All these challenges contributed to its isolation from both the visual arts practitioners and its would-be partners in activities related to national cultural promotion through the visual arts. However, the Ministry was successful in creating a network of cultural-based organisations and groups under one authority for the easy of co-ordinating activities from 1962 onwards, as this extract of its reorganised plan of activities reads:

In regard to culture, the ministry will operate in four main ways in order to overcome the problems identified:

1. Co-ordinate, and provide liaison at the highest level between the government and the cultural agencies
2. Supervise and assist in the planning of cultural agencies and their activities, advising both the agencies and the government on the policy aspects
3. Supervise and assess the effectiveness of the cultural agencies
4. Co-operate with TANU in ensuring that cultural policy is consistent with governmental objectives and seek TANU's assistance in implementing programmes (Mbughuni 1974:25)

Regarding financial problems, Kelly Askew provides information on how the government planned to overcome cultural development project funding challenges when she captured a speech by Rashid Kawawa, the Second Vice President of Tanzania, giving guidelines to Regional Commissioners during a conference held on 26 and 27 February, 1965:

He did not skirt around the issue of finances, but neither did he provide much by the way of actual funds. He later directed that funds should be raised by:

1. Charging entrance fees to competitions
2. Donations from individuals or organizations (e.g., employers, NUTA, Co-operative Societies)
3. Contributions from Local Authorities (Town Councils and District Councils)

4. Special exhibitions and sales
5. Small and ad hoc subventions from the Ministry of Community Development and National Culture (Askew 2002:172)

In the extract, Kelly Askew makes a sceptical remark “...neither did he provide much by the way of actual funds...” as she had yet to understand the then Self-Reliance policy, which the government of Tanzania devised in its development projects. The policy required that citizens gather and utilise resources from their own contributions, and Kawawa’s directives emphasised on that policy. Several other minor changes in the administrative machinery were realised and discussed during the annual conference of cultural officers and art administrators aimed to evaluate progress and challenges in the activities of the Ministry. In 1981, the Ministry established the Bagamoyo College of Arts to train more qualified cultural officers and arts administrators in all arts genres for national cultural administration developments (Askew 2005:305). As will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, the office of the promoter of arts and crafts played a pivotal role in the achievements of the *Ujamaa* (Tanzania’s brand of African Socialism) visual arts period under Louis Mbughuni’s advocacy.

#### **1.4 Visual Arts Institutions and Agencies during the Independence Period**

Until Tanzania became independent in 1961, most of the visual arts activities were conducted and promoted through several private institutions with a wide range of interests. This continued to be the situation throughout the first six years of the early independence period, with changes made in the administration in the ministry. In these agencies, some traditional visual arts were produced; modern ones were invented and promoted. The dominant agencies that pioneered and promoted visual arts during the independence period were the National Museums; three visual arts elite societies, and three privately-owned art galleries. Some of

these organisations go back to the colonial times, when the visual arts were legally practised only by members of the colonial administration and communities. When Tanzania acquired her independence, most of those organisations were reformed to accept the membership of local artists. This came with a major decline in European and Asian members, who had hitherto dominated the visual arts field in the administration, production, and business aspects during the colonial era. After 1961, most of the visual arts and other cultural promotion activities agencies were thoroughly reformed. At the beginning, they were all required to register under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Later, when the Ministry of National Culture and Youth was created, all the visual arts and cultural-related activities were brought under the wings of this new ministry and superintended by the Division of Culture.

#### **1.4.1 The National Museum of Tanzania**

The National Museum is the oldest public institution that was assigned the task of national culture preservation and promotion in Tanzania. Its establishment can be traced back to 1899, when an old warehouse in Dar es Salaam housed several geological objects collected by the German colonial government (Miller 1975:49). In the mid-1930s, the site became a memorial accommodating a number of collections of indigenous cultural objects and slowly evolved into a small museum. According to Masao (1975:103), the old National Museum building was officially set up in 1939 and opened in 1940 by the British colonial authorities in Tanganyika. It was then known as the King George V Memorial Museum. During this period, the museum was intensively preoccupied with the collection of anthropological objects and other antiquities. In the mid-1940s and late 1950s, the museum acquired and added to its

collection several archaeological and historical objects of the German and later British colonial administration. The collections included the rock art stone sections and photographs of the early local nationalistic uprisings against colonial rule, as well as records of the First and Second World Wars in Tanganyika. Immediately after independence in 1961, the new government of Tanzania nationalised the King George V Memorial Museum and made it the National Museum of Tanzania in June 1963 (see Fig. 5). Though with a small and slow increase of its budget and qualified local staff, from 1964 onwards the museum's activities were vigorously extended into institutional operations in pursuit of preserving past cultural developments while promoting the historical and natural heritage of the new state (Masao 1975:103).



**Fig.5 The Old National Museum building**  
(Photograph by researcher in Dar es Salaam, November 2015)

Collecting and preserving visual art objects by locals were certainly not a priority of the museum when it was established by its English managers. As it was under the British colonial education policy, the museum, which was also a colonial institution, was scantily involved in visual arts promotion. Since the 1930s, the museum's interests were openly directed towards archaeological and ethnological collections. Even when the rock paintings were discovered

in central Tanzania in the 1930s, they were highly promoted by the Tanganyika Society as mere archaeological objects and rarely connected with the visual arts practices of the pre-colonial people of Tanzania. Almost all articles published by English archaeologists and ethnographers in the *Tanganyika Notes and Records* journals between the 1940s and the late 1970s ignored and discouraged this fact. It was only in Fidelis Masao's<sup>91</sup> doctoral research, submitted to Simon Fraser University of Canada in 1976, and in another article he published in the East African Art Biennale catalogue in 2003, where the rock paintings were acknowledged by a local archaeologist as ancient artworks inherited from pre-colonial Tanzanian societies. None of the hundreds of extensive studies on rock paintings by the Tanganyika Society (TTS)<sup>92</sup> were linked to the visual arts practices of independent Tanganyika. The Tanganyika Society's activities, which were headquartered in the museum during the colonial period, intended to promote rock painting research and encourage its appreciation as archaeological objects rather than visual art forms, which were abundant in the central and Lake Victoria regions of Tanzania. In fact, there was not even a single art gallery in the museum before 1961. The colonial museum's suppression and ignoring of artistic collections in Tanzania came to an end with the advent of Tanganyika's independence:

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<sup>91</sup> Fidelis Masao is a Tanzanian archaeologist and also an academic teaching archaeology and history studies at the University of Dar es Salaam since 2003 to date. Before, he was the Director General for the National Museum of Tanzania (NMT) from 1973 until 1986. Professor Masao is the only local scholar who conducted extensive research on the rock paintings of Tanzania and published many articles about it. During his tenure at the NMT, he ensured the inclusion of a rock paintings display in the artistic heritage collection.

<sup>92</sup> The Tanganyika Society (TTS) was an organization comprised of experts, Europeans still working in independent Tanzania and some local elites. Tanganyika Society was officially launched on 8th August 1947. The objective of the Society was to promote the study of ethnology, history, geography, natural history, and kindred sciences in relation to Tanganyika, co-operate with other institutions and organisations with similar aims, and in particular with the National Museum of Tanganyika. The Society encouraged and facilitated the publication of records and studies on subjects in *Tanganyika Notes and Records* (TNR) journal published twice a year. The journal was founded in 1936. The Tanganyika Society operated on a membership system. It was hosted by the National Museum of Tanganyika as its headquarters. Its members were privileged to use libraries of the Museum and of the Dar es Salaam University College. In return, the Society donated and shared its publications such as journals, reports and book reviews (TNR 1965).

With political Independence in 1961 came the realization that the newly acquired independence would be like a tree without roots, if the new nation did not have a cultural identity. The museum has been playing a big role in reconstructing and reviving our suppressed cultural past. Since 1964 the museum ethnographers have made various collecting trips in many parts of the country. From the southern part of Tanzania, we have added to our pre-Independence collection of *Makonde* masks unequalled anywhere in Africa, while other cultural regions of the country have various representative articles among the museum collections. The carvings however, in spite of an apparent *Makonde* artistry were collected around Dar es Salaam. As has already been remarked, construction work for the village museum<sup>93</sup> started in 1965. Here an attempt has been made to exhibit examples of traditional architecture and handicrafts. By 1971 there were twelve homesteads depicting not only the diversity of traditional architecture but also cultural adaptation to the physical and biotic environment. In 1967 arrangements were made for a demonstration of traditional iron smelting technique. For this, members of a clan of iron workers from the *Wafipa* were contacted. A documentary film which is the property of the museum was shot recording all the stages from iron ore to the finished implement which may be a hoe, sickle or some other tool. The film was expected to be ready for distribution in 1972 (Masao 1975:107).

Despite some apparent continued inconsistencies in the collection of artworks, the excerpt shows that the collection was also intended to add to the visual arts collection of the museum. As records in the *Art Catalogue, 2012* published by the National Museum of Tanzania illustrate, more artworks from all over the country continued being collected to add to the new art gallery collection. Some of these artworks were solicited as donations from private owners, whereas others were directly bought from artists and commissioned<sup>94</sup> by the museum. Several others were re-categorised from archaeological and ethnographic

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<sup>93</sup> The Village Museum at the Makumbusho area in Dar es Salaam is an appendage of the National Museum of Tanzania. Apart from the Museum's cultural pavilions established there for a Tanzanian local culture display, it accommodates artists' studios and crafts curios too. A famous Tingatinga artist, John Kilaka and Nyamwezi sculptor, Petro Mayige are among artists who work within the Village Museum's compound

<sup>94</sup> The terracotta figurines by Joseph Lucas Kitambi were collected by the National Museum in the early 1960s. But new commissioned works, also terracottas by Petro Mayige, were brought in for permanent display in the 1980s and 1990s (Personal interview, Petro Mayige-November 2015)

collections and thus added to a permanent display of visual arts in the art gallery section (MHCD-Art Catalogue 2012: ii). The re-categorised artworks within the museum include several rock art sections and photographs of the rock paintings from ancient cave dwellers in central Tanzania; photographs of the *Wasukuma* snake charmers' hut murals of Mwanza region, and hundreds of pieces of initiation figurines mostly produced and used in the past by the people of Pwani (Coast), Tanga, and Kilimanjaro regions of modern Tanzania (see figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 below). As Masao (1975) and Miller (1975) have noted, most of the visual arts collections are credited to the efforts of Hans Cory, the British colonial government sociologist, who collected and donated artworks to the museum of Tanzania since the 1930s. Other earlier period artworks included in the museum collection were the clay figurines by the *Wasukuma* and the *Wanyamwezi* ethnic groups of the Tabora and Shinyanga regions, which have been purchased for the museum's art gallery since the 1940s.

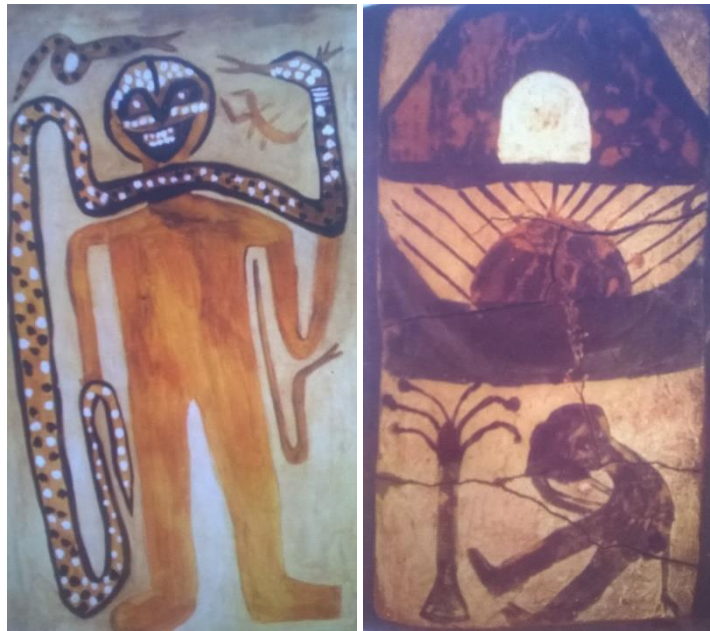


**Fig.6 'Abduction scene' Rock Painting photograph**  
(Courtesy of the National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)





**Fig.7 'The Dance' A rock painting photograph**  
(Courtesy of the National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)



**Fig. 8 Snake charmers' wall murals photographs from Mwanza and Tabora regions**  
(Source: Hans Cory 1930s collection donated to the National Museum of Tanzania)





**Fig.9 From the left, Nguu pair of terracotta figurines with beads attached as eyes, and Zigua dolls for initiation rites for girls; both made of clay**  
(Source: Hans Cory 1950s collection donated to the National Museum of Tanzania)



**Fig.10 Old Portraits of unknown colonial staff members made in the early 1900s by unknown artists; the two portraits are found in reserved museum collections.**  
(Photographs by researcher in December 2015)



**Fig.11 Portraits of an unknown Wahaya couple from Bukoba made between the 1900s and 1930s by unknown artist. The pieces are found in the reserved museum collection.**  
(Photographs by researcher in December 2015)

The collections of early artworks by local artists have significantly influenced continued visual arts practices in Tanzania after their increased exhibitions in the National Museum from the 1960s onwards. Of all the collection, the terracotta by Joseph Lucas Kitambi, purchased by the museum in Tabora between the early 1930s and the late 1950s, and another unknown artist from Shinyanga region are among the artworks which continue to influence the present terracotta figurine art produced in Tanzania. As the following photographs (figs. 12, 13, 14 and 15) illustrate, these stunning realistic terracotta figurines, which depict local people in their daily domestic chores, bear a strong resemblance to the artworks currently being produced in Dar es Salaam by Petro Mayige and George Shija.



**Fig.12 'A woman with grinding stones' by Joseph Lucas 1958, a terracotta figurine purchased for the museum from the Igumo R.C. Tabora region in 1958/66.**

**Photograph by T. Jacobs in July 1970**

(Courtesy of National Museum of Tanzania November 2015)



**Fig.13 From the left: 'A man carving a hoe handle' and 'A woman carries a pot on her head and a gourd in her right hand' by Joseph Lucas. Terracotta figurines purchased in Shinyanga region in 1941/1958 Photographs by N. Ngumba in 1970**

(Courtesy of National Museum of Tanzania November 2015)



**Fig.14** From the left: ‘A man eating with a glass of water in his hand’ and ‘An old man playing ‘Bao’ with a young boy’ Figurines in fired clay by Joseph Lucas purchased in the Igumo R.C. Tabora in 1941. Photograph by N. Ngumba in 1970  
(Courtesy of National Museum of Tanzania November 2015)



**Fig.15** Two men playing Bao by Joseph Lucas 1940, a terracotta figurine purchased from the Igumo R.C. Tabora region in 1958. Photograph by T. Jacobs in 1970  
(Courtesy of National Museum of Tanzania November 2015)

In a recently-held interview with Petro Mayige and George Shija, the current research confirmed that Joseph Lucas Kitambi’s clay works have had a significant impact on the

present clay figurine arts beyond the lake zone. Despite acknowledging that clay works such as pottery are common among the local populations of almost all of Tabora region districts, Mayige divulges that Kitambi's influence on his artistic activities is infinite. As a young boy, Mayige personally met Joseph Kitambi and saw his original terracotta works in the early 1960s at the Igumo catholic mission at Nzega in Tabora. In 1972, Mayige visited his relatives, who lived in Kinondoni - Mkwajuni in Dar es Salaam. He happened to visit the National Museum exhibitions in Dar es Salaam and once again saw Kitambi's terracotta among the artworks displayed. It was at this moment that Mayige realised that the clay figurines he himself used to make as a kid were important artworks with big cultural and economic values. After his visit to Dar es Salaam, he returned to Tabora, where he took his clay moulding career seriously. Between 1972 and 1975, Mayige created hundreds of his own clay figurines and frequently visited Dar es Salaam to sell them to curio owners and art galleries. His fame grew quickly and he eventually got a job as a technician in the casting department of the National Museum in 1975 (MHCD-Art Catalogue 2012:22). In the late 1970s, while still working for the museum in Dar es Salaam, he was joined by his childhood friend and fellow clay work artist George Shija, with whom he collaborated on many projects.

Mayige is one of many great Tanzanian artists whose successes can be directly linked to the promotions by the National Museum of Tanzania. According to the MHCD-Art Catalogue (2012: 22-23) Mayige's fame grew beyond the borders of Tanzania when his artworks were exhibited in several group shows at the National Museum between 1976 and 1999; the Art in Tanzania show 1999 in the same venue; International Trade Fair of 1999 shows in Dar es Salaam; the Bujora Museum exhibition in Mwanza Tanzania in 1985; Tanzania's 1994 Crafts Exhibition week at the Skansen Open Air Museum in Stockholm, and his participation in the



international Crèche Festival Association of Bellingham in Washington, US. Most of his artworks have been popular in Africa, Europe and the US. In the past five years, the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam purchased hundreds of his clay figurine pieces to add to its collection; some were purchased by the Skansen Museum of Stockholm and the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. (MHCD-Art Catalogue 2012: 22-23). Mayige retired from his technician job at the museum in 1985 and in 1990, he opened his own art studio in the Makumbusho Village Museum on Old Bagamoyo Road in Dar es Salaam, where he still works as a freelance artist today. His most recent exhibition was held at the Russian Cultural Centre in Dar es Salaam in 2013.



**Fig.16 Petro Mayige working in his Makumbusho Village Museum studio**  
(Photographs by researcher in October 2015, Dar es Salaam)



**Fig.17** From the left 'Mpiga Marimba' (thumb piano player) and 'Msusi' (Hair braider) terracotta figurines by Petro Mayige, 2015  
(Photographs by researcher in October 2015, Dar es Salaam)



**Fig.18** 'Wacheza Ngoma' (Dancers) terracotta figurines by Petro Mayige, 2015  
(Photograph by researcher in October 2015, Dar es Salaam)





**Fig.19** From the left: George Shija in his Nafasi Art Space studio; Next is his version of terracotta figurine, ‘Woman and Grinding stones’, 2015 [A famous subject in the Nyamwezi terracotta figurine art] (Photographs by researcher in October 2015, Dar es Salaam)



**Fig.20** A parade of terracotta figurines by George Shija, 2015 (Photograph by researcher in October 2015, Dar es Salaam)

Unlike his successors, Joseph Lucas Kitambi enjoyed neither the fruits nor the fame of his master clay terracotta. Moreover, it was because of his art that the museum made an



immediate reference to its perpetual obligation as an institution that connects generations in the pursuit of national culture creation. Compared to clay arts, contemporary painting and drawing practices have little connection with the ancient rock paintings and the later wall mural arts in Tanzania during and after the colonial period. In this context, the location of the arts practices can hardly be used as a factor to link the past experiences with present ones in the same area. Although in the first decade of independence, the National Museum lacked both enough artworks and funds to establish a professional art gallery space, it was evident that the new local management worked hard to achieve most of its intended objectives:

Another deliberating factor has been the lack of enough funds to achieve [the] envisaged projects. However, this is a national problem and in the spirit of self-reliance we have had to develop less expensive methods of doing our work; for example, we have had to improvise and substitute local material for imported and more expensive ones (Masao 1975:112).

The most challenging part of the task of promoting the visual arts in the museum was how to create space for temporary and permanent exhibitions. As Figure 21 illustrates below, crude materials such as cement blocks were used as stands to elevate the display platforms in the then main foyer of the museum during one of the national visual arts shows in the early 1970s:



**Fig.21 Display of Tanzanian painting during the Saba-Saba festival in the National Museum exhibition hall in 1970. Photo by T. Jacobs**  
(Courtesy of National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)

Due to having only one hall for all temporary displays and daily museum activities, organising visual art objects exhibitions was a difficult task. Yet the museum was tasked with participating in the creation of a new national culture. Against this backdrop, it was clear that much needed to be done to fully achieve the operational goals of an established museum. Masao (1975:109) in brief presents the hardships that arose during the exhibition organisation back then:

On the eve of Independence, the museum had only one exhibition gallery in which ‘an all for all’ display of the museum collection took place, invariably creating topsy-turvy, theme less and hard-to-follow exhibits. Displays were rather isolated in the sense that the story depicted in one did not necessarily run into the next display. For instance, it was not uncommon to find, say a display of royal regalia of the former ‘*Kingo*’ family of Morogoro standing next to one on the pottery in Upare. In some instances, displays were arranged in a manner which punctuated a tribal feeling and differences. Shortage of space necessitated the lumping of too many articles into one exhibit and instead of providing innocent enjoyment to a visitor, such exhibits encouraged and perpetuated boredom.

Similarly, during an interview with the current researcher, Elias Jengo said that insufficient funds for improving the museum’s facilities were not the only problems, as there was also an absolute lack of trained local staff in the arts, which frustrated the realisation of the new national museum projects grounded in visual arts promotion. Jengo explained that back in the 1960s, there were one or two European curators, who barely worked on the local visual arts section with the museum. Miller (1975:49) notes that from the early 1930s until mid-1960s, the curator job positions in the museum were dominated by British personnel, none of whom had specialised in visual arts as an independent field. Thus, the National Museum of Tanzania needed a fresh start, which was to be realised by patriotic and professional staff as well as the full political and financial support of the new government to fulfil its envisioned roles.

During fieldwork for this study, it was hard to comprehend that 50 years after independence, the National Museum of Tanzania was still not collecting pieces from the new visual arts genres such as Tingatinga art, etc. In addition, only one professionally-trained curator in the visual arts was employed to manage the art gallery, which had remained the same despite the increase in volume of artefacts and needs of the present time. In the *Museum House of Culture Dar es Salaam: Art Catalogue, 2012*, Fabian F. Lyimo is acknowledged as the only local NMT Exhibition Designer, Artist and Curator of contemporary art exhibits since the 1980s. However, the NMT provided very little information on the activities of its only local curator, Fabian Lyimo, who was a UDSM's graduate from the first batch of Fine Art degrees in 1978. The catalogue is the only source which briefly documents how Lyimo tried to organise the Museum's collection. He had already retired from public service when this study was conducted. His position is still vacant; presently the NMT art gallery is under the supervision of two young historians without any knowledge of the visual arts of Tanzania.

The current study confirms that since 1962, when the cultural decolonisation campaign was officially initiated, the National Museum of Tanzania has played an active role. It provides the only nationwide platform for all cultural-related activities such as performances, exhibitions, workshops and academic discussions for new national cultural production progress. In the case of the visual arts, the small collection of artworks and several records from pre- and colonial Tanzanian societies in the museum were useful in providing both the immediate canons<sup>95</sup> from which the envisaged unique national visual arts were to be

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<sup>95</sup> During the independence period, the little inherited visual arts objects such as the ancient rock paintings were used as a yardstick to perfect the newly-invented artworks bearing traditional values. Ntiro (1975:115) claimed: "Similarly Tanzanian painters base their work on the way of life and activities of the people of Tanzania. The rock paintings of the Kondoa District in central Tanzania tell us what the people who lived in that period used to do. There are paintings showing hunting scenes, herds of wild animals, people dancing

produced, and also as sources of inspiration for young people, the visual artists, and the policy-makers in their work to ascertain a new national identity through visual arts. It is through the collection of the original artworks preserved in the National Museum of Tanzania and its branches that today's young Tanzanians can confidently disagree with many unfounded western theories on the origin of the visual arts in the country. It is still argued that art in Africa—in this context art in Tanzania, was a result of European influences, as the following comment illustrates:

The contemporary artist in East Africa has... no inherited artistic traditions or forms from the past either to perpetuate, to build upon or from which to seek inspiration. Europe has made its impact and influence felt all over this great area and it is fair to say that all the present artistic activity has been stimulated by [the] European example and influence commencing from the schools (Elimo Njau in Stout 1966: xi).

Other collections, such as those in figures 10 to 20 in the museum and artists' studios, refute biased comments such as this one by authenticating the artworks as “originally” Tanzanian. Even with such overwhelming evidence, some western writers hardly acknowledge these facts as already observed in Judith Miller's views on East African painting practices<sup>96</sup>.

Despite limited funds and fewer qualified museum staff, several small and big projects were designed and executed with some success. The early years of independence were dominated by the National Museum's activities as the hub for the new national visual arts development campaigns alongside a few other institutions. This was evident by many nationwide cultural development projects implemented from 1962 to the 1970s. The number of museum visitors

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and so on. The cave painters captured what he saw and what he believed belonged to his people. If he had tried to paint something different he would not have been understood by the people around him.”

<sup>96</sup> See Miller 1975, p.15

continued to grow as the institution developed into a functional source of knowledge exchange, as Masao (1975:111) demonstrates:

Starting museum's school service from scratch was not easy. The first piece of assignment was to secure and assure the co-operation of teachers, without which any museum service is doomed to fail and defeat its own aims. [With] This in mind, circulars advertising the museum's educational facilities were sent to all primary, secondary, technical and teacher training schools in Tanzania (mainland). The response as evidenced by requests to visit the museum and the growing number of visits were quite good. In the year 1966 more than 5,000 students in 70 organised parties visited the museum. The number more than doubled in 1971/72 during which a total of 10,500 students visited the village and the main museum. This compares very well with the figures for all visitors. The average number of visitors rose from about 40000 in 1963 to about 100,000 in 1971/72, an increase of more than 50 percent. If anything, this increase, perhaps shows how much the demand for the museum services by the public has increased and to meet the ever growing demand, obviously the museum had to increase its services accordingly.

Even though it is not specifically stated here, the visitors went to the visual arts shows, but as the museum operated under the new Cultural Division, which was the overseer of both visual arts and antiquities, the visitors had an opportunity to enjoy both the archaeological and artistic exhibitions at their disposal. Moreover, the presence, in the museum exhibition activities, of curators such as Fidelis Masao and John Wembah-Rashid<sup>97</sup>, who were interested in the visual arts of Tanzania, indicate that visual arts were not part of the exhibits.

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<sup>97</sup>John Rashid-Wembah is a Tanzanian anthropologist among a few local experts who have researched and published on traditional and modern Makonde sculptural arts in Tanzania. Dr. Wembah-Rashid has also worked with the National Museum of Tanzania as a traditional arts and culture curator. His first publication came out in 1979 with several articles being published between 1980s and the early 2000s.



**Fig.22 The mobile museum, June 1969, from the left Terry Jacobs, John Rashid-Wembah in the first photograph and Fidelis Masao, first from the right in the second photograph**

(source: courtesy of the National Museum of Tanzania December 2015)

The exhibitions of traditional, modern and experimental artwork for new national visual arts were highly encouraged at the National Museum through the Cultural Division programmes. According to Miller (1975:96), numerous temporary exhibitions on artworks such as sculptures and paintings by local artists have been successfully organised and executed since 1962, when the museum started to promote the national visual arts. Works produced by trained Tanzanian artists from the Makerere Art School in Uganda such as Sam Ntiro; Elimo Njau in 1963 and 1964; Omari Mwariko in 1963; Kiure Francis Msangi on Independence Day in 1961 and in 1967 during the Arusha Declaration; Fatma Abdullah; Sefania Tunginie; Elias Jengo and many others. These were pioneers of modern arts in the country based on traditional life experiences in pre and post independent Tanzania.

Through these exhibitions, the National Museum succeeded in inspiring the production as well as the promotion of the new national visual arts. Steadily, the museum extended its activities to reach more Tanzanians beyond its headquarters in Dar es Salaam. Several other

visual arts and crafts sub-sections of the National Museum were established in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Mwanza regions. In 1969, UNESCO's Africa mission contributed a mobile museum truck to the National Museum of Tanzania. The truck was used to reach marginalised communities in Dar es Salaam and in other regions in an attempt to promote and extend the services of the museum. Successes of the National Museum in helping to produce and promote the national culture, specifically the visual arts, are attributable to its increased collaboration with artists, visual arts producers and promoters such as art galleries and the Division of National Culture and Antiquities from 1964 onwards. Furthermore, an increased government contribution to the Museum's budget, coupled with international support in capacity-building among its staff, and the Museum's facility improvements increased the National Museum's capacity in executing its day-to-day activities in the preservation and exhibition of national culture through the arts.



**Fig.23 UNESCO's head of mission, Ajumogobia with Sam Ntiro (CDNA) during the official handing over of mobile museum gallery in Dar es Salaam on 25.02.1969**  
(Courtesy of the National Museum of Tanzania, October 2015)

The construction of the new National Museum building, which includes the art gallery as an independent section, has inspired and increased the museum's collection of the visual arts, as well as an extension of its activities in this area. In addition, more workshops, art competitions for pupils and students also visual art exhibitions were organised and successfully accomplished. Hundreds of artworks, including modern and traditional, have been displayed in several organised exhibitions between the 1960s and 2010 (MHCD- Art Catalogue 2012). Below are some of the numerous and diverse artworks which were displayed in October 2015, when fieldwork for the current study was conducted.



**Fig.24 New National Museum of Tanzania Building in 2010**  
(Courtesy of the National Museum of Tanzania, October 2015)

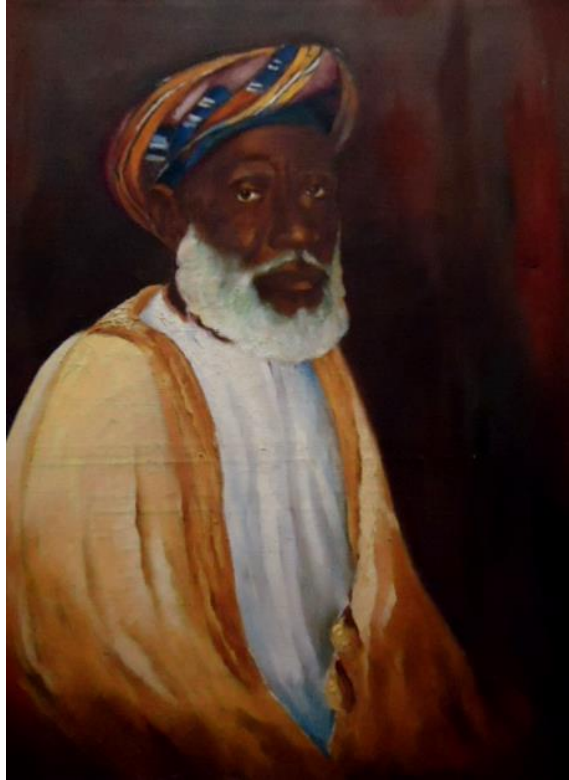




**Fig.25 Exhibition of Makonde carvings by Kashmir Mathayo in the new Art Gallery at the National Museum of Tanzania**  
(Photograph taken by researcher in Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



**Fig.26 New Art gallery, National Museum of Tanzania**  
(Photograph by researcher, October 2015)



**Fig.27 A portrait of Tippu (The infamous Afro-Arab Slave trader in East Africa) by S. Aboud, 1942**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)



**Fig.28 'Playing Traditional Music' A painting by Elias Jengo, 1980**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)



**Fig.29 'Adult Education' A painting by N.K. Shariza 1973**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)



**Fig.30 'Zaramo Masked Dancers' a painting by B.N. Desai, 1979**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)





**Fig.31 ‘Shaaban Robert bust’ cement casting by unknown sculptor**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania December 2015)



**Fig.32 Makonde Mapiko Mask by an unknown sculptor**  
(Photograph by researcher, National Museum of Tanzania, December 2015)

#### **1.4.2 Community of East African Artists (CEAA)**

In Tanzania, the CEAA was acknowledged as an important agency linking the country's new arts and cultural development programmes in the East African region. The birth of CEAA in 1964 was to some extent inspired by the Pan-Africanist movements at the Makerere University College in Kampala in the 1940s. African students studying abroad and within Africa were forerunners of Pan-African movements through various approaches. The CEAA found its roots in Tanzania through early fine art students, who became its members while studying at Makerere from the 1940s onwards. When the East African countries such as Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania achieved independence in the early 1960s and later formed the East African Community in 1967 (Fig. 33), CEAA was already in place, with artists working in collaboration across their national frontiers. According to Miller (1975:73), in its first meeting, Sam Ntiro was elected chairperson, Elimo Njau as its Secretary-General and Eli Kyeyune as its treasurer. The School of Fine Arts at Makerere University in Kampala, apart from its continued tradition of providing art education to East African students, also provided space for visual art societies and group activities. CEAA assumed MSFA as its regional headquarters while creating branches for its members in their respective countries. In Tanzania, the CEAA branch office was situated in the Division of National and Antiquities at the Ministry of Education premises in Dar es Salaam. The CEAA was known from 1969 as the Society of East African Artists (SEAA), while Francis Musango from Kenya replaced Elimo Njau as its new Secretary General (Miller 1975:97).

Based on its founding objectives, CEAA intended to organise and co-ordinate projects to improve and promote visual arts activities in East African countries. The focus was to inspire young artists and join forces to localize visual art practices by incorporating a form and

content style based on indigenous traditions within the East African region and Africa as a continent. Closer reviews of CEAA activities indicate that in many instances this organisation pioneered cultural decolonisation campaigns in the visual arts field. The Community in Tanzania significantly inspired and promoted the visual arts through training, exhibitions and conferences. Member artists volunteered to teach visual arts in secondary schools, teachers' training colleges and later, when established, at the University of Dar es Salaam. Elimo Njau lectured in the Department of Theatre Arts of the Dar es Salaam University College between 1965 and 1969 (Miller 1975). Other Tanzanian artists who did the same were Elias Jengo and Louis Mbughuni, who volunteered to teach Fine Arts and Stage Design in the Institute of Adult Education and at the UDSM before the Fine Arts Department (now repackaged as the Creative Arts Department) was established on campus. Kiure Francis Msangi, as Assistant Headmaster and Art Master at the Iyunga Secondary School in Mbeya region, volunteered as a visiting tutor in arts and crafts classes at the Loleza Girls School and Mbeya Secondary school, which were adjacent to his workplace (Miller 1975).



**Fig.33 East African Community leaders: From the left, Presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania; Milton Obote of Uganda; and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya**  
**Water colour painting by unknown artist in the early 1990s**  
(Photograph by researcher, courtesy of Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, October 2015)

Tanzanian members of CEAA or SEAA participated in numerous conferences advocating for the visual arts and cultural development in independent African countries. Among these conferences, include the Universities of Eastern Africa Social Science Conference on Cultural Imperialism and Artistic Underdevelopment in East Africa organised in Dar es Salaam in 1977 and the FESTAC '77 in Logos, where Elias Jengo, Sam Ntiro and Louis Mbughuni presented papers. Concerning the exhibitions, CEAA Tanzania branch participated in many exhibitions organised by partner societies and government institutions in Tanzania as well as in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Europe and America. In 1964, Tanzanian artists mounted their works in a group show at the opening of the Chem-Chemi Cultural Centre in Nairobi. In the following year, the CEAA-only show involving members from the East African region was mounted at the Kibo Art Gallery in Moshi and a few months later in the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam. These were followed by the biggest

show, titled “Africa Creates” at the Union Carbide Building in New York in 1969. For this exhibition, Tanzania sent 102 paintings and sold most of the works (Miller 1975:73). The shows that involved only Tanzanian SEAA members included a paintings and Makonde sculpture exhibition at Madurodam, Holland, in 1968 (Ntiro,1965:115) and the one-man show by Kiure Msangi in Frankfurt, Hannover and Düsseldorf, Germany in 1970. Regular exhibitions of this group have been hosted by the Goethe Institute in Dar es Salaam since 1968 (Miller 1975).

Through its activities, this group demonstrated that visual artists were capable of providing significant contributions to many development aspects within and outside their countries socially, culturally, economically and politically. A thematic analysis of four masterpieces produced and exhibited by its three Tanzanian members from the early 1960s to the late 1970s revealed the CEAA artists’ interests as Pan-Africanists. Artworks based on topics such as liberation struggles, political oppression and sufferings of refugees fleeing still-colonised African countries were produced and highly encouraged. In Tanzania, one of the issues addressed by the independent government included the inevitable participation in the liberation of all African countries to achieve their independences<sup>98</sup>. Thus, visual artists’

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<sup>98</sup>Tanganyika’s independence in 1961 was an inspiration to those who believed that political independence could not be achieved by non-violent means and President Nyerere worked tirelessly in support of this goal for Zambia (1964), Malawi (1964), Botswana (1966), Lesotho (1966), Mauritius (1968), Swaziland (1968) and Seychelles (1976). When other countries were forced into wars of liberation to achieve eventually the same end, Tanzania provided political; material and moral support until independence and majority rule were achieved in 1975 in Mozambique and Angola; Zimbabwe (1980), Namibia (1990) and finally in South Africa in (1994). Nyerere pursued the ideals of liberation, democracy and common humanity into the rest of the continent and, with the leaders of other few African countries that were independent by 1963, established the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which later became the African Union. The main objective was political liberation for the rest of the continent. Retrieved on 2016-02-12 from Nyerere Centre for Peace research:

[http://juliusnyerere.org/index.php/resources/news/nyerere\\_the\\_father\\_of\\_southern\\_african\\_liberation](http://juliusnyerere.org/index.php/resources/news/nyerere_the_father_of_southern_african_liberation)



activities were highly commended as major communications media and inspiration aids in this struggle. A number of artworks are presented here as evidence showing visual artists' participation in the liberation struggles of Africa through their artworks. Figures 34 and 37 depict refugees in misery due to unrest in their home countries. Through these paintings, the artists comment on the situation in the Tanzanian refugee camps at Newala in Mtwara; Nachingwea in Lindi; Likuyu Sekamaganga village in the Namtumbo district in Ruvuma and the Bagamoyo district in Pwani (Coast) regions, areas where Zimbabwean, Mozambican and South African freedom fighters were accommodated in the 1960s and the 1970s. The same is evident in Figure 39, in which the artist portrays the evils of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. Kiure Msangi captures a most traumatising incident of murder by South Africa's white supremacist policemen killing Africans at Sharpeville in March 1960, an event which led Tanzania to build a camp in the Mazimbu area in Morogoro region in order to shelter hundreds of South African refugees, particularly ANC fighters who freed South Africa, as from the mid-1970s until the end of the 1990s. Chali Shogholo in his work (Fig. 37) depicts soldiers assisting their wounded comrade on the frontline. Shogholo's painting was possibly inspired by the camaraderie and heroic acts of the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces.

Generally, Tanzanian members of the Society of East African Artists worked as ambassadors in eliciting the interests and active support of Tanzanians and other parties by employing the visual arts as media for fostering African solidarity and expression of common humanity, as well as the Pan-African movements' virtues among African national states. The Society of East African Artists produced several works in Tanzania which widely addressed issues the people faced in the early African independence days within and beyond their national frontiers. These include artworks by Elimo Njau (Fig.34), Elias Jengo (Fig.35), Kiure Msangi

(Fig.36), and Chali Shogholo (Fig.37). Njau and Jengo tackled the refugees' problems in the neighbouring countries of Mozambique and Angola, which waged armed struggles against Portuguese colonialism from the 1970s to the 1980s. Msangi and Shogholo expressed and appreciated death and bloodshed as sacrifices of the African independence fighters in South Africa and Mozambique during the independence struggles. Such works were not reviewed by Judith von D. Miller when she wrote her book *Art in East Africa*, hence her question:

Perhaps the most striking omission in the art of East Africa is the Art of social comment. Where does an artist express feelings about African unity, African freedom fighters, African Socialism or protest of any sort? (Miller 1975:19)

Miller's erroneous questioning<sup>99</sup> was also disapproved of by Johanna Agthe, a German scholar who published on East African art in the 1990s. Unlike Judith von D. Miller (1975), Johanna Agthe (1990) came up with two subtitles in her research dedicated to exploring social commentaries in the visual art of East Africa: *Social Criticism* and *Political Subjects* thusly:

Today, however, the social criticism implicit in artists' treatment of many different subjects cannot be overlooked. The more foreign influence and drastic change make their presence in society felt, the more numerous are the artistic works that tackle such matters. Some of the subjects are of international relevance, such as drug abuse, unemployment or environmental pollution; others are specifically African for instance, abandoned children in the city or the problem of overpopulation (Agthe 1990:121)

And on *Political Subjects* Agthe argues:

Some works deal critically with political subjects; but the emphasis is not necessarily placed upon the artist's own country. Topics of neo-colonialism, war and refugees, hunger and armaments affect many African countries. Some works are devoted to South Africa—not only those by South African artists who live in Kenya, but also those by

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<sup>99</sup>See, Miller 1975, p.19

East African artists, such as Kiure Msangi and Julius Njau (Agthe 1990:121)

Agthe's comments, which came 15 years after Miller's, are certainly more realistic and positive with regard to the progress East African art had actually made. She was complimentary and highly appreciative of works by Tanzanian artists as legacies of visual arts in the East African region as a whole. Nevertheless, Agthe (1990) did not cover a big part of artists' activities in Tanzania. Her research was based in Kenya and, therefore, she could not possibly look at the same art movements in societies and associations as Miller (1975) did. Unfortunately, no proper records exist to account for when and how the CEAA or SEAA ceased its activities in Tanzania and the East African region in general.



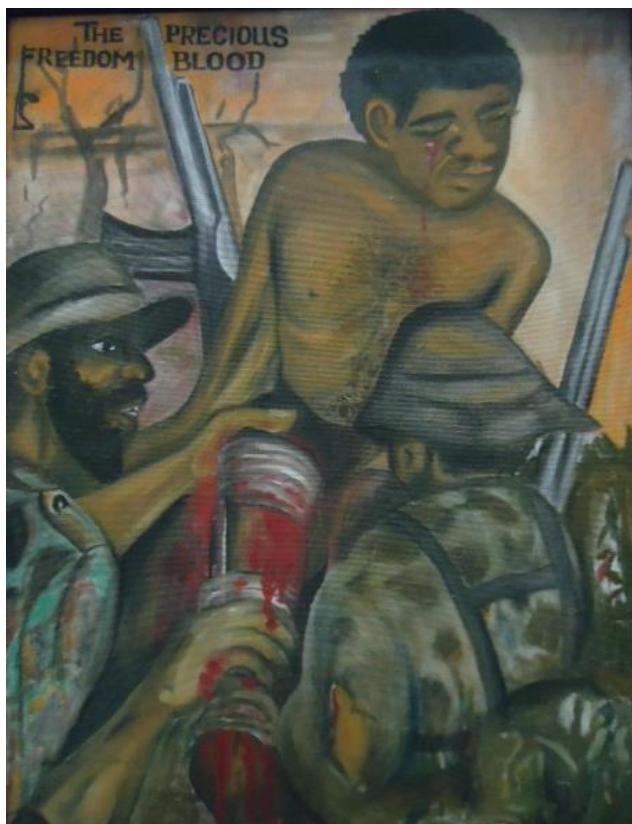
**Fig.34 'Refugees' by Elimo Njau in 1962**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau: Paa ya Paa Art Gallery, Nairobi, 2015)



**Fig.35 'Refugees' by Elias Jengo in 1963**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, Dar es Salaam, December 2015)



**Fig.36 The Sharpeville Massacre by Kiure Francis Msangi in 1976**  
(Source: University of Pennsylvania: African Studies Centre webpage August 2019)



**Fig.37 “The Precious Freedom Blood” by Chali Shogolo in 1974**  
(Photograph by researcher, the National Museum, Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

#### **1.4.3 Tanzania Art Society (TAS)**

This was one of only two colonial visual arts societies that existed when Tanzania achieved independence in 1961. Like its sister society, the Kenya Arts Society, which was set up by the Nairobi settler group in 1922, the Tanzania Arts Society (TAS) was also founded by colonial settlers in the early 1940s (Miller 1975:71-73). In her account of TAS, Judith von D. Miller asserts that when it began, TAS was like a hobby group that allowed its artists to meet regularly to pursue a common artistic goal. In the colonial period, its membership was limited to Europeans, with some exceptions for Asian bureaucrats, as was the case with the Shah Brothers, the famous Asian painters from Zanzibar. Immediately after independence, the society was confiscated and placed under the authority of the new Ministry of National

Culture, with membership opened and encouraged to local Tanzanian artists as well. Most of its local founding members were ex-Makerere School of Fine Arts students and a few other local arts practitioners from all over Tanzania. Sam Ntiro became TAS's first local head in 1964, with Elias Jengo as his deputy and Louis Mbughuni as the secretary. As a government agency, the Tanzania Arts Society was fully subsidised and administered by experts from the Division of Culture in the Ministry. It was responsible for creating and organising campaigns or projects aimed to impart and instil a sense of new national culture through the visual arts countrywide, as its chairperson explained:

Immediately after our independence on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1961, our collective responsibility was to establish a national cultural identity. Our urgent task was to formulate our confidence as a people of one nation under one flag. We had to procure our Independence—which we very deserved, but the task which lay ahead of us was immense; and, to overcome it, we required the cooperation of every Tanzania. We soon realised it was our duty to create the necessary atmosphere for appreciating and, encouraging and building up national culture (Ntiro 1965:113)

TAS's revitalisation of its membership and activities in 1964 as well as its mission towards creating a national culture through visual arts allowed it to come up with its three focal objectives: 1. To mobilise artists and the general public into active TAS membership and participate in the creation of the new national culture by producing and embracing new Tanzanian artworks; 2. To encourage visual arts training for aspiring young talents as well as improve the skills of self-taught (traditional) artists; and, 3. to organise and mount exhibitions of artworks by local Tanzanian artists for new visual culture promotion.

In its period of operations, TAS achieved more for the second objective than for the other two objectives. TAS co-ordinated art training sessions in many parts of Tanzania. To increase its capacity, TAS invited its partner art educators from the Society of East African Artists

residing in Uganda and Kenya to help in Tanzania. Almost all TAS artists were also active members of the SEAA. The artists worked voluntarily, with sporadic travel fares and hotel accommodations offered to them as tokens of appreciation. The pioneers of TAS activities were Sam Ntiro, Elias Jengo, Louis Mbughuni and Bhupendra Nathubhai Desai<sup>100</sup>. Following the opening of its art workshops and classes at the Mnazi Mmoja, Kisarawe, and Upanga Primary Schools in Dar es Salaam, and in Mbeya, Tabora, Arusha, and several others in the Moshi and Mwanza districts of Kilimanjaro region, the enrolment of young visual art aspirants increased at art training institutions such as the University of Dar es Salaam and Makerere School of Fine Arts by the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s. Slowly, Tanzanian visual arts practices were transformed into an activity informed by formal training. Little was achieved in the campaign aimed at increasing the number of new members of the Society. According to Miller (1975:73), the annual membership fee of 5/= Tanzanian shillings, together with other formal obligations to be fulfilled for active membership, created difficulties for increasing membership. In fact, TAS never attracted the attention of members without formal art training backgrounds. Furthermore, TAS did not mount as many exhibitions as it had aspired to. Miller (1975:73) confirms that TAS managed to organise several annual exhibitions on then-public holidays such as the Independence and Saba-Saba Day Celebrations (Peasant's 7<sup>th</sup> July Annual Festivals), mostly held in Dar es Salaam. In 1970, TAS was privileged to get a permanent space for temporary displays of its artworks in the Kilimanjaro Hotel, then a first class hotel in Tanzania in the 1960s. The goal was to help TAS raise funds for its building construction. The project never came to fruition (Miller 1975:73). However, TAS participated in three successful exhibitions: The Zambian National

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<sup>100</sup> Desai was an Indian art scholar and educator. He acquired his education in India.



Arts Festival held in Lusaka in 1968, and two other events organised through cultural exchange programmes with the Soviet Union and Germany. During these exhibitions, the paintings of several member artists were displayed in Munich in 1968, and in Moscow in 1971. In the mid-1970s, the activities of the Tanzania Arts Society waned when most of the art activities were to be commissioned and produced by parastatals. In a recent interview, Elias Jengo, a founding member of the revised TAS, claimed that the Society was active until the 1990s, but subsequently ceased its activities due to lack of leadership and direction in its operations.

#### **1.4.4 Tanzania Crafts Council**

The Tanzania Crafts Council (TCC) was formally a British colonial cultural agency in Tanganyika. According to Miller (1975:73), it was established by a group of European settlers, artisans and amateur artists in 1959. Like many other colonial institutions or agencies after independence, TCC was revitalised and pronounced among the government's cultural activities agencies under the Ministry of Community Development and National Culture in the Division of National Culture and Antiquities in 1964. In the same year, it became a member branch of the World Crafts Council. Its new chairperson was Sam Ntiro, who was then working as the Commissioner for National Culture and Antiquities, in addition to serving as the African General Secretary of the World Crafts Council, Africa branch (Pissarra 2015:25). Bibi Titi Mohamed, who was the Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Community Development and National Culture, was the TCC's first secretary, whereas Wilbert K. Chagula was the council's activities co-ordinator from 1964. The Tanzania Crafts Council was the only visual arts and cultural development agency with a variety of countrywide



membership. Of course, this was viewed as a characteristic reflecting its membership during the colonial era, when its scattered European members throughout the colony were brought together through it. The reformed TCC embraced all craftsmen, artisans, trained and non-trained artists who paid 5/= Tanzanian shillings as annual membership fee.

As defined in the introduction, craftworks in Tanzania are defined alongside the visual arts. The Council was therefore an umbrella organisation made up of small groups of cultural products such as crafts producers. These were established nationwide as small branches, which networked through public and private organisations such as UWT, an acronym for *Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania* (Tanzania Women's Union), a female-based political wing of the then-ruling party TANU and later CCM; Small Industries Development Organisations (SIDO), which had offices in all the then 20 regional (provincial) headquarters on the Tanzanian mainland between the 1960s and late 1980s; Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); Tanzania Prisons at the Isanga Prison in Dodoma, Kingolwira Prison in Morogoro, and Ukonga Prison in Dar es Salaam. In these places, TCC provided work and exhibition spaces for their products; materials and training through seminars and workshops. When the Village Museum was established at Makumbusho in Dar es Salaam in 1966, the ministry directed it to host all TCC national events, i.e. meetings and annual exhibitions, which were conducted during all major public holidays and events such as independence commemorations on 9 December, the Tanganyika and Zanzibar Union Day on 26 April; the Saba-Saba festivals on 7 July (Ntiro 1975:114). TCC managed to execute many national projects in crafts production through these organisations and a sister association then known as the Tanzania Society of African Culture (TSAC) which was headed by Wilbert Chagula. Through this sister organisation,

TCC aspired to administer individuals and groups in spreading artistic and cultural activities (Miller 1975:74). The Council was charged with the promotion of creative works such as carving, sculpture, painting, pottery, weaving, basketry and miscellaneous handicrafts (Ntiro 1975:114).

The major contributions of TCC in its nationwide campaigns were in promoting and inspiring the production and sale of visual arts and crafts. Immediately after its revitalisation, the TCC secretariat, with its regional branch committees, created rules and regulations to guide the quality and value of its products. Ntiro (1975:114) links TCC's activities with the Division of Culture's programmes when he notes that the promoter of arts conducts research in indigenous crafts and artistic achievement to develop them as a basis of inspiration for modern cottage industries. On the other hand, Miller (1975:74) notes that TCC's objective was to raise and maintain standards of Tanzanian crafts and arrange for their exhibition and sale, activities which were implemented by a brochure advertising illustrating 148 carvings and baskets available from the Council. Both authors compliment the Council's undertakings in a progressive manner. From 1964 to the mid-1980s, the TCC produced a variety of craft products which were massively exported for trade and utilised within Tanzania. According to Miller (1975:74), in 1970 Tanzania handicrafts were sent to the Arts and Crafts International Fair in Florence, Italy and all were sold on the first day. During and after the Kagera War of 1978 - 1979, TCC producers of Tie - Dye and Batik garments in many regions supplemented the clothing supply, which was scarce due to closure of many textile mills. A garment popularly branded '*Mawingu*' (clouds) for its patterns and polychromatic designs was locally produced and sold by women's groups trained by SIDO all over Tanzania. Ntiro (1975:115) records that the Tanzania Crafts Council had organised and mounted several

crafts and arts exhibitions in and outside Tanzania and brought back both fame and foreign exchange to the country. He provides examples of the first Pan-African Cultural Festival in Algiers in 1969, where TCC displayed hundreds of paintings and crafts, and the paintings exhibition in Moscow as amongst the successful activities of the Council after its establishment. In a nutshell, TCC's activities in the early years of independence encouraged traditional artists towards co-operative endeavours, better administration and encouraged the public to display local crafts and traditional materials in offices, homes and public places (Ntiro 1975:114).

On the other hand, TCC also attracted negative criticism. The council was dogged by financial mismanagement. It was also accused of contributing to the deteriorating standard of visual arts, such as the Makonde sculptures, by encouraging mass production of crafts for sale. In this regard, Jengo (1985:121) elaborates this point succinctly:

The creation of the national parastatals such as Tanzania Handicrafts Marketing Corporations has made the situation worse. Its board of governors and the management feel that their chief concern is business and not the welfare of the craftsmen and artists. It is the wish of the customer that is respected and not the artistic life of the sculptor.

More on the poor performance and problems surrounding the Council's activities in the promotion of arts and crafts in Tanzania which occurred during the *Ujamaa* period, are intensively discussed in the next chapter.

#### **1.4.5 Mohamed Peera's Curio Shop**

A large part of the story of the developments of modern sculpture arts in the early independence period in Tanzania is traced back to Mohamed Peera, an Indian businessman, whose curio shop was located on Acacia or Independence Avenue, presently Samora Avenue

in Dar es Salaam. This was the famous “Peera’s Curio Shop” (Kasfir 1999:110 and Mshana 2009:70). According to Kasfir (2013:375), Peera’s shop was opened in the early 1950s. Its fame and economic boom in the modern Makonde sculpture business in Tanzania was achieved in the 1960s (Miller 1975:33). During the early independence years, that is from 1961 to 1967, the Peera Curio Shop was favourably considered among the private promoters of sculptural arts in the new nation. Its registration, which was formally filed with the Ministry of Home Affairs, was easily transferred to the Ministry of National Culture and Youth as required by the new cultural organisations/associations/groups registration procedures in 1965. As Fadhili Mshana notes, Mohamed Peera was highly commended as a mentor and an influential patron of the modern Makonde and Zaramo sculpture arts of Tanzania:

Peera was so enterprising in his curio business that in 1970 he was considered ‘the most successful of the dealers’. In 1975 Miller wrote that for many years Peera owned the largest outlet store for Makonde sculptures in the capital. It is noteworthy that by 1953 Peera was running a carving workshop and provided carvers working for him with tools, wood, and a steady market for their art products. His flourishing curio business also dealt with the exportation of carving to department stores abroad (Mshana 2009:71)

Similarly, Miller (1975) and Mshana (2009) credit Peera’s patronage as a strong force behind the advent of modern Makonde sculpture genres. Zachary Kingdon extends his acknowledgement to Peera as well—the Makonde sculptors—as exceptional individuals behind the actual creative work:

It is certainly true that Peera was able to stimulate the individual creative initiative of many of those who worked for him by giving originality a certain meaning and a value within the context of his business. Yet his form of patronage could not have existed without the dialogue that developed with the more creative sculptors (Kingdon 1996:58)

Besides, Kingdon (1996:58) and Mshana (2009:74) also record that, as his art business expanded, Mohamed Peera opened a warehouse yard in the Chang'ombe area, a few kilometres outside the Dar es Salaam city centre to serve as a workshop for a group of about 20 sculptors, whom he had assembled to work regularly for him since 1958. Among the renowned sculptors at Peera's Chang'ombe workshop were the Makonde master-carvers, including Samaki Likankoa, Abunuas Anangangola, Dastan Simuni Nyedi, Chanuo Maundu, and Atinas Maskolas. The Zaramo sculptors who worked full time for Peera included Atesi Mulungu, Salum Chuma, Sultan Mwinyimkuu, Ayubu Uwesu, Buge Madunda and Juma Mikembe. As a businessman in the visual arts, Peera worked with hundreds of other sculptors from different ethnic groups such as the *Wazigua*, the *Wasukuma*, the *Wanyamwezi* and the *Wakerewe*, who were also famously acknowledged for their traditional sculptural works and talents (Hahner-Herzog 2001:7-19). It is widely acknowledged that the Makonde sculptors in Peera's assembled group invented modern Tanzanian wood sculpture iconography:

Kashimiri Matayo, a carver who did not work in Peera's warehouse yard but who knows many who did, admits that there was something special about the Peera group. He told me that most of them had learned to carve in Tanzania (and therefore did not have direct links with the original Mozambican 'school' of blackwood carving). They had their own ideas and developed rapidly because they worked very hard full-time, and each was always watching what the others were doing and trying to surpass it (Kingdon 1996:58)

Stout (1966:8-9) and Wembah-Rashid (1979:11-13) confirmed this claim as well in their studies on the same subject. However, it is an overstatement that all the sculptors in the group invented carving styles of their own. Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, in her recent review, questions Mathayo's exaggerations:

A few master-carvers who worked for him became innovative, beginning with Samaki—but most others merely adopted the models of the innovators, so that there continued to be a high degree of

stylistic replication within a single carving workshop. Thus Makonde carvers have been innovative as a group, but paradoxically quite conservative as individual artists (Kasfir 2013:376)

As Kasfir observes, most of the sculptors in the group replicated a few styles which were invented as Peera demanded or on his clients' orders. There were some slight differences in stylistic characteristics, but not much was done to invent new styles that completely differed from major genres such as *Shetani*. It is worth noting that the Zaramo sculptors had not invented any carving style drawn from their own female initiation traditional carvings. In Peera's workshop, and in many other curio shops, the Wazaramo were kept as "copying experts". In this regard, Stouts (1966:9) explains:

...It is interesting that the same warehouse is the site of export division of the dealers' business. Carvings bought from Mtwara manufactory are retracted for overseas shipment, and similar items are mass produced by a group of carvers on the spot. These carvers are mostly Wazaramo, and they work much closer to the warehouse – and supervisor – than the Makonde group.

In fact, Peera purposely kept the Zaramo carvers in his workshop to replicate Makonde genres whenever a bulky consignment was required. Fadhili Mshana's observation on the Zaramo sculptors in the Peera group at the Chang'ombe yard shows that they were considered the best at the production of animal figurines, a wide range of craft items, as well as replicas of Makonde invented genres such as *Ujamaa*, *Shetani* and *Binadaam* (Mshana 2009:70-79). This was also the case for other less-talented Makonde sculptors working for Peera. In fact, the Wazaramo have not invented a particular modern carving genre. Some literatures on modern sculptures under Peera's patronage in Tanzania have ignored the Zaramo carvers, since the style of artworks they produced were dominantly of Makonde affinity. Such publications include Judith von D. Miller's (1975) book titled *Art in East Africa*.

#### **1.4.5.1 Peera Curio Shop's Patronage Systems**

The current study examines the contribution of Mohamed Peera to the development of modern sculpture arts, the modern Makonde sculptures in particular, in two important aspects: production and marketing. Kasfir (2013:75) notes that in the production part of his patronage, Peera actively encouraged stylistic innovation by providing the artists with materials such as wood, as well as tools for experimentation before the final production of an artwork. As far as marketing is concerned, Peera's Curio Shop guaranteed an immediate market for the sculptors' products. Both aspects were favourable to the artists as they provided them with enough time to concentrate on their work; they had a work site and a little financial security. These conditions were not enjoyed by many other sculptors outside the Peera patronage.

Kingdon (2002), Mshana (2009) and Kasfir (2013) assert (from different angles) that before the 1960s, Peera had worked with many sculptors and art dealers in Tanzania and Kenya for a couple of years. They also devised and discussed several schemes to explain Peera's patronage system. In this study, Peera's acquaintance with his customers and his knowledge of the abilities of artists he closely worked with are also seen as factors that enhanced his position in the visual arts business and the modern Makonde carving practices in Tanzania. With this personality, Peera supplied his customers with quality artworks in any desired quantity (Stout 1966:7-9). Peera had control of other dealers' businesses too, as he was influential in deciding what, when and where to supply; his opinions were seriously considered by artists in their productions as well. So much evidence indicates that Peera monitored and mentored artists 'creative developments and advised them accordingly to create and improve an individual style or perfect a copied work to maintain the standards of

his business as a dealer of original works (Stout 1966:9-11). Mshana (2009:76) presents one of the artists' views on Peera's influence on their creativity:

Peera was not a sculpture teacher, but he was well-versed enough to tell a good piece from a bad one. Within the advisor-participant-consumer scheme, Peera often made reference to the work of prolific carvers, emphasizing originality and criticised copied work. At the end of the working day Peera had a practice of asking his carvers to assemble and show what he chose as the best carving of the day – a move designed to motivate them...

His method of providing materials, instruments and workspace inspired creativity and production. Most of the sculptors could not afford to buy wood for experimental works or rent a private studio to work free of interruptions. Moreover, working close to Peera and colleagues provided a friendly environment where sculptors enjoyed free advice, sometimes criticism and, hence, a break from reproducing the same artworks over and over again. In fact, all the artists were assembled to work, both individually, and with others in the same workshop yard. The best sculptors were also required to train several apprentices. These apprentices were primarily recruited and paid by the workshop owner to assist master-carvers with minor tasks such as sand papering or varnishing the completed artworks. During their apprenticeships, the amateur sculptors were also used to replicate masterpieces to fill Peera's Curio Shop. Some apprentices later became renowned artists, for example, Chanuo Atelebwele Maundu and Dastan Simuni Nyedi, who were apprenticed by Abunuas Anangangola in the 1950s and early 1960s at Peera's workshop (Kingdon 1996:57). This operational environment helped the artists working for Peera break from producing predominantly traditional sculptures such as *Mapiko* masks (Fig.38), *Binadaam* figurines, and animals—particularly snakes and elephants. Anthony Stout, without directly mentioning



Peera, confirms that his Curio Shop influenced the Makonde carvings' stylistic departure in Dar es Salaam:

...But creative freedom is elusive anywhere. To my knowledge the Makonde have found it only in Dar es Salaam area. The irony is that so far there is no evidence of a similar renaissance among the nearly one hundred professional carvers on the Makonde plateau itself (Stout1966:8)

He adds:

...For instance, the Makonde seem at their best when they have minimal contact with their market, are at least supervised or rushed, and can work where they please and carve what they want. It would be an enlightened public or private enterprise that could set about to insure these conditions without inhibiting them in the process. In theory it can be done, but how often human structures (business, government agencies, cooperatives) find it easier to provide control than protection from control (Stout 1966:11)

These comments imply that Peera's workshop, which in practice provided the above-described conditions for sculptors, was home to the Makonde carvings renaissance, as no other dealer, collector or curio shop owner managed to inspire stylistic transforms in the way Mohamed Peera did (Wembah-Rashid 1979 and Mshana 2009). Instead, most of those curio shop owners and dealers of Makonde arts who were upset by massive replications and "dull" products in their shops opted to complain, yet did absolutely nothing to rectify the situation:

"At first I was upset by all the snakes, snakes, snakes they were making. I don't know why, but they just upset me. So I asked them to stop. And you know, they kept right on making snakes. I said nothing. What to do?" (Stout 1966:10)

Peera's techniques of doing business with his group of sculptors suggest that he was planning to work longer with them, unlike other curio shop owners, who could neither invest in nor inspire creativity among the sculptors for them to progress in the business, but rather exploited them and turned their works into crafts by encouraging excessive copying and crafts production, as Anthony Stout explains:

Probably the largest concentration of migrant Makonde carvers in Tanzania is at a remote lime estate thirty miles south west of Mtwara. There 150 carvers supply a thriving export business managed by a European. He insists on good craftsmanship and personally accepts or rejects each piece offered to him for sale. While the models (and their realism) are standardized, new lines are occasionally introduced, such as the currently popular African chess pieces. Originality is seen as making an unnecessary marketing problem and is consciously discouraged. From an art standpoint, then, the Makonde ebony output of Mtwara is essentially like that in Mozambique (Stout 1966:8)



**Fig.38 A variety of Mapiko Masks as carved for different initiation occasions**  
(source: <http://www.skygoblin.com/tag/makonde/> August 2019)

Several other publications on the Makonde sculptures, such as Judith von D. Miller (1975), Max Mohl (1990), Enrico Castelli (2001), and Dinnah Enock (2013) reveal that before Peera's involvement, the only widely known *Wamakonde* sculpture arts styles were mainly from two genres: The *Mapiko* mask, the central *Wamakonde* male initiation ritual object (Castelli 2001:81) and the *Binadaam*, a carving genre of the first human figure made by the first Makonde sculptor as explained in Kimakonde legends. "*Mama Kimakonde*" is the name of the first piece in the *Binadaam* genre. "*Mama Kimakonde*" encapsulates a myth of the origin of the "first woman" among the *Wamakonde* people (Kasfir 1980:52). These carving genres were originally and similarly practised by both, traditional Makonde carvers in Tanzania and Mozambique.

However, the *Binadaam* style was recently transformed into a multitude of variations of figurine sculptures in particular, so that one may erroneously believe that they are of a different stylistic origin. The current inventions, such as famous life-size depictions of Maasai warriors holding spears (Fig.39) and sometimes small Askari figurines holding German rifles are also categorised as the *Binadaam* genre. There were many traditional sculpture genre variations, but a closer look indicates that these were the two original genres from which many other sub-genres sprouted. Implicit in this evidence is that modern Makonde sculptures entail slight variations in their form and content. According to Stout (1966:5), much of the modern Makonde sculpture deals with ancestors and their relationships with the living according to traditional African beliefs, which accounts for the dominance of the two major genres. Moreover, the modern Makonde sculptures are created as windows through which outsiders can better appreciate the Makonde culture and belief system rather than simply serve as objects that “tourists” carry home as souvenirs from Africa. If the intentions of the supposed “tourists” must be clearly understood, what then is a souvenir piece such as “*Shetani*” sculpture for if not a silent gesture of appreciation for a newly-found experience in Tanzania?



**Fig.39 A Maasai Warrior and a Maasai Woman figurine, unrecorded artist 2012**  
(Source: <https://za.pinterest.com/aaacrafts/makonde-figures/?lp=true> August 2019)

Turning to the second aspect of Mohamed Peera's patronage, we realise that his curio shop provided the modern Makonde sculptors with a reliable market for their artworks. In the past, Makonde men traditionally carved as a part-time activity after farm work. When they arrived in Dar es Salaam, carving became a full-time job for earning a living. Traditionally, sculptures were made for domestic uses as well as seasonal rites for male initiation. In fact, the new Makonde sculpture styles were mostly individual artists' inventions out of the Makonde tradition's need for the arts. They were purely artistic creations to be enjoyed without ritual and spiritual significance; therefore, producing them for sale was neither sacred to the sculptors nor taboo to the art lovers.

Furthermore, there is no literature which shows that the *Wamakonde* possessed figurative representations of their gods or spirits; instead several characters were envisioned from

myths and legends, mostly from oral literature. Since the modern sculptures have incorporated much from their ancestral beliefs by exploiting their mythology, many of the Makonde and even other ethnic groups are aware of such indigenous religious elements and are still not comfortable with the new sculptures, which appear to sidestep the belief system in favour of mere artworks or decorative objects. The ambivalence resulting from adopting some traditional religious beliefs in modern art is yet to be fully absorbed by many local audiences as it has been by the creators among the Wamakonde. There is also no evidence showing that the modern Makonde sculptors or middlemen were directly involved with consumers in the sale of their new artworks as it had been with traditional artworks during the pre-colonial era. Evidently, modern Makonde arts were less concerned with local needs as they were largely dependent on the overseas market, which Mohamed Peera and other dealers sought to cater to. Sidney Kasfir notes this trend:

Although seemingly a new sculpture genre and certainly a new style, the iconography of *Nnandeenga* was drawn directly from Maconde oral traditions concerning nature spirits and from masquerade of the same name performed on the Maconde plateau in Mozambique. Yet, despite traders' claim to the contrary, no Maconde person would purchase or use such a figure: they were made explicitly for non-Maconde patrons and therefore intended for as art commodities. Even so, the Maconde played little or no entrepreneurial role in the sale—there were no Maconde traders hawking carvings to tourists on street corners or beaches. Their marketing success was made possible through the promotions of Mohamed Peera, a knowledgeable curio and gemstone dealer in Dar es Salaam who, like Tom Blomefield in Rhodesia a few years later, encouraged carvers to find their own direction (Kasfir 1999:110)

Mohamed Peera's and many other Asian curio shops encouraged massive production of modern Makonde sculptures for sale to a wide range of consumers within and outside Tanzania (Stout 1966: xvi). Although most Indian curio owners in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi paid low prices for the great works of Makonde sculptors, at least the payment arrangements

and business conditions Mohamed Peera offered were favourable to the majority of them. Peera used to commission the master carvers for orders he received from art dealers from Kenya or elsewhere abroad. But he would also ask for the production of artworks which he could stock and sell in the future. In some instances, Peera paid the sculptors in advance to make them comfortable in their daily production. These conditions provided sculptors with a regular production routine from which to earn money throughout a year and hence a guarantee to meet living and other costs. This explains why when Mohamed Peera was expelled from Tanzania, most of the Makonde sculptors who had worked for him could not continue to work for the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT), which took over Peera's business, because the business conditions had completely changed and the artists found them unbearable, as Zachary Kingdon points out:

Peera's business was nationalised and merged with the National Arts of Tanzania in 1970. However, not everyone who had previously worked for Peera was satisfied with the new arrangements at the NAT. Chanuo was among those who followed the carvers who had set up workshops in Temeke on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam (Kingdon 1996:59)

In a recent interview, Origenes Uisso, the owner of Karibu Art Gallery, an establishment which aspired to take over the modern sculpture business in the early 1970s, revealed that Peera also knew how to motivate the sculptors working for him. In this regard, he was very talented in annihilating competition with other dealers and keeping the best sculptors and artworks for himself. Among other things, he frequently surprised his sculptors with favourable deals, such as doubling the previously agreed upon prices when the works produced turned out to be splendid. He also provided occasional material and cash incentives to the sculptors who worked during public holidays. All these factors cemented Peera's personal relationships and business ties with many sculptors he worked with. For the majority

of the Makonde sculptors who fled civil wars in the Mueda Plateau in Mozambique and experienced hardships as immigrant-labourers on sisal estates and later as ‘independent’ peasants, in their early lives in the Pwani (Coast) and Morogoro regions in Tanzania, the art business with Peera and many other Asian dealers in Dar es Salaam assured them a steady flow income, something they found far better, regardless of how small the amounts received were.

#### **1.4.5.2 Modern Makonde Sculpture Genres and the Shadow of Peera’s Patronage**

After Mohamed Peera’s patronage of the modern Makonde sculpture arts in the 1950s and 1960s, much has diverted from traditional Makonde sculpture’s stylistic inclination. At present, the *Wamakonde* modern sculptures are produced in about 7-10 major genres, with most having slight variations from the original inventions. Under Peera’s patronage, three original modern Makonde sculpture genres were invented. These were the *Dimoongo* (see Fig.40), the *Shetani* (Fig.41) and the *Mawingu*. To begin with the first style in this series, the *Dimoongo*, a Makonde word which means ‘Power of Strength’, and later dubbed ‘tree of life’ by some Western writers such as Stout (1966) and Miller (1975). Presently, the sculpture style is known as the “*Ujamaa Pole*”, a newly-coined brand name by socialist propagandists in 1967 (see the manifestations of the *Ujamaa* visual art in Chapter Two). *Dimoongo* was an early modern Makonde carving style created by Yakobo Sangwani in the mid-1950s. The style is based on Makonde wrestling traditions. After a wrestling match, the winner is carried and lifted onto the shoulders of his relations and fans. The number of lifters increases as they pass through the streets towards the home of the champion. Consequently, there is a big base and long monument of people with the champion atop. Sangwani, who visualises his experience of the wrestling celebrations with a figurative ebony wood sculpture, calls his

invention '*Dimoongo*'. Stout (1966) and Mshana (2001) acknowledge that Peera made a significant fortune from *Dimoongo* (family group) carvings in the 1960s.



**Fig.40 Family Group with Ancestor, plate xxx, probably by Roberto Yakobo Sangwani, who was rarely mentioned by Anthony Stout in his legendary study (Source: Stout 1966:47)**

Although the *Shetani* (Fig.41) is a name for another sculpture style created by Samaki Likankoa in Peera's workshop in 1959, this fact has been contested by Western writers such as Kasfir (1992) and Coote (1989). *Shetani* is a Kiswahili name for a malicious Makonde spirit known as the *Nnandeenga*, a spirit believed to be a source of suffering and calamities in the Makonde community. *Shetani* is a Kiswahili word for devil, hence the malicious spirit. Samaki's invention of *Shetani* sculptures, which he carved with many variations, was also a mythological commemoration that allows a mythical creature to gain tangible form. His fellow Makonde sculptors, who were also familiar with the myth, developed their own



versions of the *Shetani*, slightly modifying the original stylistic features, which send chills up the viewer's spine. This petrifying impression is evident in Anangangola's artworks (Fig.45) and Chanuo's versions of the *Shetani* developed later in the 1960s and 1970s. *Shetani* carvings became some of the world's famous Makonde carvings after their creation the 1950s.



**Fig.41 A hybrid 'Shetani' sculpture style by Abunuas Anangangola 1990s?**  
(Source: Daniel Augusta's Afrum Exhibits accessed in February 2016)

The last of the original three styles is called *Mawingu*. The style is named after the Kiswahili word for "Clouds". *Mawingu* style was invented by Clement Ngalla in the 1960s. During its invention, the style displayed a striking stylistic characteristic resemblance to the *Shetani* style, but still contained small variations on the subject matter, a development which Peera noticed and instantly criticised. Explaining the origin of the *Mawingu* style, Zachary Kingdon records the incident in which Peera discouraged Ngalla from copying Samaki's *Shetani* style:

Mohamed told Clement not to copy Samaki's work and instead to carve in his own style. So Clement then came up with an original carving of a human-like figure without a face wearing a kind of headdress. In its right hand, which is raised, was the moon, and in his left hand, which was lowered, it held the earth. Clement called his

new carving *Mawingu* and he told Peera that, he got the idea from watching early morning clouds (Kingdon 2002:89)

Ever since their invention, these styles have inspired multitudes of later Makonde sculpture genres. The recent inventions are the four famous Makonde sculpture styles developed between the 1970s and 1992 by Chanuo Atelembwele Maundu, who also had formerly worked in Peera's workshop. These new sub-genres are in a way considered "doppelgangers", or rather extensions of the *Shetani* style, but this time evolved outside Peera's workshop. According to Jengo (2009), the remaining four genres of the major seven, apart from the cardinal three, were all later invented by the currently-discussed sculptor. In an exclusive interview conducted by Zachary Kingdon in Dar es Salaam in early 1990, Chanuo Maundu is referred to as a "Master of Blackwood Sculpture" (Kingdon 1996). Chanuo's exceptional creative skills and eloquence in explaining the stories behind his works earned him this title from his Western clients and colleagues in many Wamakonde carving workshops. Jengo (2009)<sup>101</sup> fetches most of his information on the newly-invented modern Makonde sculpture genres from this interview. Chanuo invented four styles between the mid-1970s and early 1990s while working as a freelance sculptor at Pugu on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam, where he built his own house.

During this period, Chanuo also displayed his artworks at the *Nyumba ya Sanaa* (Home of Arts) workshop in the city centre of Dar es Salaam. Chanuo's newly invented carving genres were *Mandandosa* (Fig.42), a Makonde word for ghost-like creatures, which Kingdon (1994:100-102) translated as "enslaved victims of a sorcerer's wizardry." The sculpture style entails a scary human-like figure with distorted or rather disproportional body parts like long

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<sup>101</sup> See Background of the Makonde Sculpture by Elias Jengo at: <http://www.tanzanian-art.de/service/the-makonde-by-prof-e-jengo.html>. Accessed on 8th September 2017 in Berlin, Germany

chins, big eyes or long arms and legs; *Giligia* (Fig.45) was his second sculpture, whose style name was derived from the Makonde word “*Kugiligia*”, which means “to be startled”. *Giligia* is a sculptural piece portraying an ugly-looking scary spirit believed to be dwelling in thick forests. A kind of creature a person is afraid to encounter alone in the deep forest; *Tumbatumba* (Fig.43) is a name of the third sculpture genre derived from a Makonde word “*Situumba*”, which means “gourd”. According to Jengo (2009), the genre was invented in the mid-1980s. *Tumbatumba* sculptures are dominated by gourd-like features with exaggerated human body parts attached or protruding outwards from it; Chanuo’s fourth genre is called *Kimbulumbulu* (Fig.44), a Kiswahili name that was originally derived from the Makonde word *Kuumbuluka*, which refers to a particular type of a nervous behaviour (Kingdon 1996:61). Chanuo Maundu describes *Kimbulumbulu* as a sculpture which portrays person possessed by an evil spirit. This carving comes in different versions, each displaying the unpredictable behaviours of a possessed or a mentally disturbed person.

All the four genres are sculpted and brilliantly finished in the same manner of modern Makonde sculpture genres. The dominant theme contained in these genres is the expression of supernatural powers among the *Wamakonde*. An honest analysis of the four new genres by Chanuo Maundu provides an informed audience with such an impression. Unlike the former three master-genres, Chanuo Maundu’s sub-genres were not very popular. They remained his own creations, with most pieces reproduced by himself, not by his colleagues. In his doctoral research on modern Makonde sculpture, Zachary Kingdon (1994) categorised Chanuo’s new inventions as *Shetani* sub-genres when he dubbed them “Hosts of Devils”. There is still an ongoing debate in which the taxonomy of modern Makonde sculpture genres is scrutinised. Fadhili Mshana’s contribution to a recent publication titled *From Ritual to*

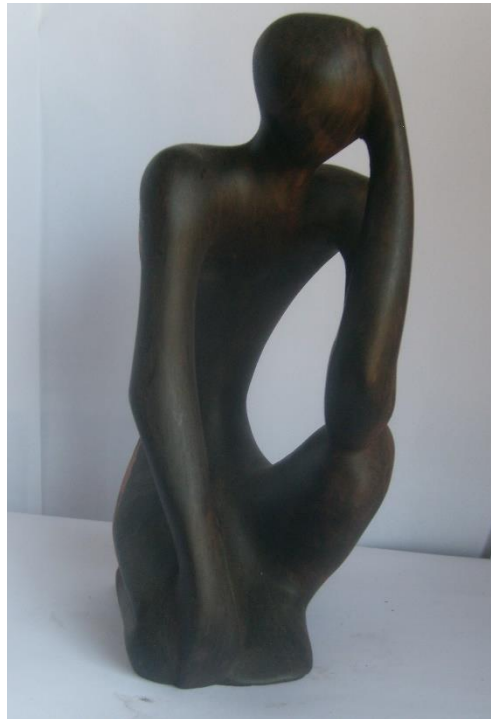
*Modern Art: Tradition and Modernity in Tanzanian Sculpture* ignores the new four genres by Chanuo Maundu in his classification, and sticks with only four genres: *Binadaam*, *Shetani*, *Ujamaa* or *Dimoongo* and the *Mawingu*, which were invented in Peera's workshop at Chang'ombe in Dar es Salaam, but included *Binadaam*, which is an older genre and normally considered, alongside the *Mapiko* mask, the archetype in the history of Makonde sculptures. Other modern Makonde sculpture sub-genres adding to the taxonomy include *Fikiri* (Fig.51), a Kiswahili word for 'think', and *Wapenzi*, a Kiswahili word for 'lovers'. Both figurines are derivatives of the *Binadaam* genre in the early 2000s. *Tengamatu*, invented by Martin Legu in the 1990s, is an emulative sub-genre of *Mandandosa* originally invented by Chanuo Maundu; and *Kimbunga*, created by Joseph Nyunga 'Stone'. Nyunga is one of the best Makonde sculptors currently. His new version of *Shetani*, the *Kimbunga* is a Makonde and Kiswahili word for a whirlwind or storm which, according to Makonde myths, is one of the manifestations of the *Nnandeenga* spirit.



**Fig.42 'Mandandosa' 1992    Fig.43 'Tumbatumba' 1992**  
 (Source: Works from Nyumba ya Sanaa, MaryKnoll Collection 2013)



**Fig.44 'Kimbulumbu' 1992 Fig.45 'Giliglia' 1992**  
(Source: Works from *Nyumba ya Sanaa*, MaryKnoll Collection 2013)



**Fig.46 Fikiri figurines by Pajume**  
(Photograph by researcher in August 2009 at Mwenge Arts & Crafts Market, Dsm)

From this discussion, it is apparent that Peera's patronage was a vital catalyst for the birth of modern Makonde sculpture genres. This kind of development never happened in Mozambique, where patronage for the same Makonde arts came very late. The current study concurs with Zachary Kingdon's argument that the combination of Mohamed Peera's influence as a patron and the hard work of the talented Makonde sculptors was the force behind the Makonde sculpture renaissance in Tanzania:

The existing literature on Makonde blackwood art has given some attention to the role of patronage in the development of Makonde sculpture, at least where it concerns the relationship between Mohamed Peera and the select group of carvers who worked in his warehouse yard during the 1960s (see Kasfir 1980). The accepted view is that Peera practiced a freewheeling, entrepreneurial 'system' of patronage which permitted, and even encouraged, creative experimentation by the Blackwood artists. It is certainly true that Peera was able to stimulate the individual creative initiative of many of those who worked for him by giving originality a certain meaning and a value within the context of his business. Yet his form of patronage could not have existed without the dialogue that developed with the more creative sculptors (Kingdon 1996:58)

With regard to some additional sculpture genres invented outside Peera's patronage, Kingdon (2002) observes that Roman Catholic missionaries in several dioceses and parishes in Tanzania have been inspiring and commissioning the production of modern Makonde sculpture genres since the 1930s. During the fieldwork for the present study, two genres of modern Makonde sculptures on non-traditional media were discovered. These were the low relief, curved red-wood-door panels of the entrance of the Archdiocese of Songea (Fig. 47) and at the main entrance of the Karibu Art Gallery in the Dar es Salaam. The sculptures include mini-busts, masks and some figurines carved on hard-grey granite and also cement to be put in prayer grottos located outside Catholic Church buildings or other locations designated by the church authority. The relief-carved doors contained several scenes from the

Gospel purposely made to enhance the spiritual essence of the place and its teachings from the outside.

Similar low relief curved-doors are also found at the Ndanda parish and Lindi Diocese's main church doors. Two pieces of Makonde stone carvings were seen at the Karibu Art Gallery in Dar es Salaam. According to Oligenes Uisso, the gallery owner, the pieces were made by Yakobo Sangwani in the early 1990s. Uisso claimed that these pieces were among the only recent stone sculpture genres produced for Roman Catholic patrons from the Old Catholic churches in the Mtwara, Tabora and Kilimanjaro regions. Some Wamakonde sculptors made Mapiko masks by using clay and cement, but never hardstone. Mshana (2009:38-43) presents evidence for how missionaries at the Maneromango mission in the Kisarawe district, in Pwani region have influenced the production of religious artworks, such as crucifixes, among the Wazaramo sculptors for a long time. However, unfortunately none of the genres and alternative media they inspired have been documented.



**Fig.47 Relief-carved door at the entrance of Songea Archdiocese Church**  
(Photograph by researcher November 2015)

#### **1.4.5.3 Political and Social-Cultural Ramifications of Peera’s Patronage**

That the stylistic transformations that Mohamed Peera engendered in Tanzania’s modern Makonde arts brought about both the advantages of modern sculpture arts practices and its commercial aspects are manifested by the ongoing discussion. On the one hand, the changes appear to have caused devastating drawbacks for the general sculptural art traditions and their appreciation among the local audience in Tanzania. To begin with, there is the over-commercialisation problem. Then there is the search for “exotic” subject matters and rare stylistic forms in Makonde sculptures to satisfy growing Western demands for the ‘arts from the jungle’. This orientation led to the invention of a new sculptural grammar alien to indigenous Makonde sculpture audiences and patrons. In fact, the new Makonde sculpture genres have audaciously drawn their inspirations from ancestral mythologies, which they



gave tangible shapes to subject matters such as “*Shetani*” and “*Kimbunga*”, which were formerly taboo subjects among the Wamakonde society but are now used by modern sculptors. The modern sculptors were compelled to use them for business purposes to amuse their Western customers and Asian patrons. As it is in many traditional African settings, indigenous beliefs forbid people to meddle or take for granted anything related to mystical powers, for the repercussions of such acts can potentially harm the entire society (Mbiti 1975)<sup>102</sup>. Therefore, the new sculptural genres, which satirised and brought to life vicious spirits such as the *Nandeenga*, were not applauded by the ordinary *Wamakonde*, as they commonly feared that such sculptures might bring about misfortunes to the host of such artworks, as previously observed by Kasfir (1999:110). Visual beauty or enjoyment, which are central for the Western patrons of modern Makonde sculpture arts, are of less significance and value to the local Makonde patrons, whose primary needs for such artworks were strictly utilitarian or ritualistic, as Zachary Kingdon explains:

In pre-colonial society Makonde sculpture, such as the famous *mapiko* masks and figurative bottle stoppers, was geared toward, for example, fulfilling the requirements of particular social events. However, Chanuo's Blackwood sculpture was not tied to a determinate social function beyond its function as a commodity to be sold for cash. This is a significant fact, because in the absence of a need for him to tailor his work to serve a specific purpose on the societal level, he evidently came to relate his sculpture to what we might call a kind of reflective ‘meta-level’ (Kingdon 1996:59)

Based on their production, the new forms and content or subject matter of modern Makonde were distanced from their local patronage’s needs for art. Even many Tanzanians who were not of Makonde ethnic descent but who were nevertheless aware of the mythologies on which

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<sup>102</sup> Mbiti, J.S (1975), *Introduction to African Religion*. Heinemann Educational Books, London

the modern sculptures were based could not easily appreciate the sculptures as art for art's sake. Aurelia Doto in her ongoing research titled "*Why Tanzanians Do Not Buy Contemporary Makonde Sculptures*" asserts that the majority of Tanzanian art lovers are sceptical of most modern Makonde sculptures because of their startling aspects, regardless of the meanings embedded underneath. Despite hundreds of publications which appeal to the unfounded fear of Makonde sculptures, many Tanzanians cling to their 'instincts' that tell them that there is something peculiar about the Makonde sculptures. When the present research was being conducted, the most frequent buyers of modern Makonde sculptures were Europeans, Americans and Asians, including Chinese and Japanese tourists, not Tanzanians.

In a very exceptional experience while conducting this study, a number of Makonde interviewees challenged the "authenticity" of the artistic manifestations of their mythologies as portrayed by some of sculptors, such as Samaki Likankoa and Chanuo Maundu. They argued that all the stories on gods, spirits and myths belong to the whole of Makonde society, a fact that was also confirmed by Nangumbi (1996:265-266). In other words, Makonde sculptors—as other members of their society—are at liberty to produce artworks out of their perceptions of these powers, but their creations should not be considered as the novel-tangible-representations of the mythologies equally understood by the rest of *Wamakonde* society members. Even in the legendary oral stories about the *Wamakonde* spirits such as *Nnandeenga*, the storytellers may describe the same spirit differently from one tale to another. The implication here is that the idea of the existence of these supernatural powers or spirits among the *Wamakonde* in Tanzania and Mozambique may be similar, but how each individual imagines and interprets the details of the actual physical appearances of the spirits may vary. Therefore, the notion that the modern Makonde sculptors invented the '*Shetani*' or

spirits or the ‘devil’ genre in Dar es Salaam is equally acknowledged by all the *Wamakonde* as fallacious. Nonetheless, occasionally some talented sculptors managed to produce sculptures which captivate the imaginations of many. Therefore, it can be an exaggeration to assert that the *Wamakonde* people universally fear being haunted by the powers that may inhabit modern sculptures. Moreover, it would be unfair to assume that they do not see anything resembling what they already know from their mythologies portrayed in the modern artworks. Many studies by Western writers have presented stories on Makonde sculptures involving spiritual exposé, with tones that suggest the sculptors have perfectly created actual or factual manifestations of the belief system shared by all *Wamakonde* people. Such studies include Ulli Beier (1968) Zachary Kingdon (1996) and Max Mohl (1992).

A drastic consequence of all this was due to Peera’s commodification of Makonde sculptural productions in Tanzania. This commodification has caused uncontrollable “copying” or replication of the original modern Makonde sculpture genres. Peera is associated with the early practices of mass production of the same genres by several other sculptors, mostly amateur sculptors. In fact, his production systems appear to debase and spoil the originality of the artworks. Moreover, modern Makonde creativity and new inventions in sculptural arts have been reduced to diminutive craft products or objects often dubbed “Airport Art” or “Tourist Art”. John Wembah-Rashid describes how the market became saturated with Makonde sculptures:

One of the developments of Makonde sculpture during the first years of Tanzania independence was the sheer increase in numbers of the sculptors. Due to lack of ‘employment’ opportunities, the competitiveness for sale, and sometimes encouraged by the response the artists received from the market, most apprentices abandoned their masters before qualifying fully to establish their own workshops. This partially accounts for the mushrooming of roadside

workshops in the area under study. The *Shetani*, *Ujamaa* and *Mawingu* styles became too common, flooded the market and failed to guarantee a steady income especially for the less experienced sculptors (Wembah-Rashid 1979:14)

In addition, copying has eroded the market value of the original artworks and denied their masters, the innovative sculptors, the copyrights for their novel artworks. Only three of the modern Makonde sculpture genres (*Shetani*, *Ujamaa* and *Mawingu*) were popular and sold more in international trade during the 1960s and the 1970s as Peera, a businessman, turned the replication of major styles into the mass production of sculptures in order to meet the demands of his business partners, such as small curio shop owners in Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Nairobi and Mombasa, as well as other customers abroad. Peera's commodification of Makonde sculptural practices and sculptors' working traditions went beyond Makonde art genres as the extract illustrates:

Peera himself would be the first to admit that this was so. In an interview at his home in Paris in October 1992, he told me that quite early in his involvement with Makonde carvers in Dar es Salaam, a friend of his convinced him that if they could be made to copy West African works, which sold for very high prices, he would become a millionaire. The two of them presented Chanuo with a picture of a Nigerian carving depicting a horseman and asked him to make ten copies of it. Chanuo made a first copy and it was all right, then he made a second which was also fine, and then he made a third copy, but this time he carved the horse looking over its shoulder 'laughing.' Peera said that this incident made him wiser; from that time on he no longer dreamed of making millions from the carvers. He offered this reflection: 'I was taking him [Chanuo] to copying which would have been very sad. But he warned me. He gave me the indication and I am happy that I took that hint' (Kingdon 1996:58)

Sculptors who worked in Peera's workshop were not employed. He treated them as free lancers but deliberately provided them with a workspace, tools and wood so that he could easily control and determine the kind of "merchandise" they produced for his business. In a way, Mohamed Peera misused the "good" relations he cultivated with the sculptors. This

would not have been possible if laws and regulations to govern artistic production systems had existed. The combination of the lack of legal guidelines and a laissez-faire business system in the early independence period allowed unscrupulous businessmen to exploit the loopholes in the lucrative modern Makonde sculpture production sector. The following extract from Anthony Stout suffices to explain this exploitative environment:

The following exchange took place between myself and a dealer who has been doing very well lately by having his carvers make accurate reproductions of West African art:

**Dealer:** (*graciously*) ‘Yes, I’m eager for your book to come out. I look forward to putting my carvers to copying the best ones. We like to have the new styles’

**Stout:** ‘You will what? Don’t you realise that every time you make a carver copy another man’s work you are preventing him from doing something creative of his own?’

**Dealer:** (abashed) ‘Yes, perhaps for the Makonde. But look at these Wakamba people do when you leave them on their own?’ (*points to an unfortunate variation on West African sculpture*)

**Stout:** (*immoderately*) ‘I tell you that it would be criminal to make your carvers copy the work of East African artists from my book!’

**Dealer:** ‘There is no law that can prevent me. I’ve looked into that.’

**Stout:** (*lamely*) ‘No, but remember that there’s always public opinion’ (Stout 1966: xvi)

The Copyright Law in Tanzania was enacted on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1966, just a few months after the publication of the first Modern Makonde Sculpture-based book, which revealed the dark side of the Makonde art business in Dar es Salaam’s Indian Curio shops. Although the legislation changed how businessmen and the government authorities operated in terms of business levies, the law was still not helpful to the sculptors, many of whom were illiterate. This loophole let the unscrupulous curio owners to continue exploiting the carvers. The Copyright Law, under the subtitle: *Works Eligible for Copyright* recognised Makonde sculptures, but unlike Ulli Beier, the patron of Oshogbo artists in Nigeria, Mohamed Peera never assisted his three innovative master-sculptors (Samaki Likankoa—the inventor of

*Shetani* genre, Yakobo Sangwani—of the *Dimoongo/Ujamaa* style, and Clementi Ngalla—of the *Mawingu* style) to register and acquire authorship rights to their novel modern Makonde sculptures.

Nevertheless, like many other Indian businessmen in the then post-independent Tanzania, Peera continued abusing the royalties he gained from his Makonde master-sculptors such as Samaki Likankoa and Chanuo Maundu. He appears to have systematically exploited them since they started working for him in the 1950s. Despite their worldwide celebrated sculpture styles, these two Makonde master-sculptors, and many others who worked for Peera, remained poor until they died of health problems that could possibly have been cured with the help of a little money from their sweat and labour. Zachary Kingdon explains the death of the Makonde master-sculptor Chanuo Maundu in 1994 as follows:

In my opinion he also was one of the most remarkable African sculptors of his generation, but he died in poverty and relative obscurity at his home near Pugu, Tanzania, on August 17, 1994, after a short illness (Kingdon 1996:56).

Exploitation of artists was reported as characteristic of Indian art dealers, who owned most of the curio shops and art galleries in all East African countries. The former Commissioner of Culture for Tanzania provides a critical clarification:

Indian traders are found all over Africa. The majority of Indians in any African country are engaged [i]n business[es] of all kinds. They are not essentially interested in helping to participate in the country's economy or offer help to the indigenous people, with the exception of a few individuals. In the case of Makonde carvers, Indian traders got in touch with them many years before independence. They bought carvings from them cheaply and sold them to tourists in their curio shops all over the country at high prices. What was more, the colonial governments gave them export licences with which they exported Makonde carvings to Europe, United States, and to other foreign countries, making amounting thirty to fifty times more than what they had paid the Makonde carvers. In order to ensure that the Makonde carvings trade remain in their hands, Indian traders established curio

shops in those European countries whose businessmen they were dealing with. The Makonde carvings which the Indian traders exported from Tanzania went to their own curio shops. (Ntiro 1985:68)

In Tanzania, most of the Indian businesses closed with the advent of the socialist policy in 1967 as intensive nationalisation programmes were launched against private property, particularly illegally-gotten wealth and property. The Indians, whose population dominated many business establishments, suffered under the nationalisation programme. Subsequently, Mohamed Peera's shop or Art Gallery was nationalised in the early 1970s, but given his experience in the arts business, the socialist government offered him a job as a manager of the State's newly-established visual arts business, the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT), to oversee the Makonde sculpture arts business and its development. However, Peera's tenure with the NAT ended in 1973 due to misunderstandings with the NAT management. Several times, it was reported in the media that some prominent Indian traders in Tanzania treated the locals unjustly in many instances. A few years before the nationalisation of Indian businessmen's properties in Tanzania, two eminent Members of Parliament from the Dar es Salaam region presented two bills addressing the issues of Indian traders' misconduct and their alleged questionable citizenship before the Parliament of Tanzania<sup>103</sup>. In 1971, Idi Amin took over power in Uganda after overthrowing Milton Obote in a coup, he immediately expelled all the Indians from the country and confiscated their property and businesses. It was only in Kenya and Rwanda where some Indians continued to work freely as businessmen. Many of them remained in Tanzania but kept rather low profiles. The sculpture

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<sup>103</sup> Hon. Kitwana Kondo, MP for Dar es Salaam, argued that "many Asians make known their citizenship only in the time of hardship or when they want to obtain something. They show no willingness to co-operate and intergrate with other people, and appeal to immigration authorities to be very cautious when granting citizenship to such people". The Nationalist, 17 July 1968

visual arts developments in the early independence period ended in co-operative unions and art business agencies which were run in partnership with the socialist government.

Although Mohamed Peera might be considered a good patron of modern Makonde sculptures, he was not a good promoter of new art styles outside his business interests. The international publicity achieved by Makonde sculptors such as John Fundi, who participated in the *Magiciens de la Terre* in Paris in 1989 and *Africa Explores* in New York in 1991, came many years after Peera's patronage. There is no sufficient evidence to establish that he organised either exhibitions or publications for either the *Wamakonde* or the *Wazaramo* sculptors who were working in his Chang'ombe workshop. Peera is also not acknowledged anywhere as a contributor to the development of the national visual arts. His interests in the arts were purely commercial. As Wembah-Rashid (1979) notes, the adoption of *Dimoongo* sculpture in the *Ujamaa* ideology was facilitated by government officials from the Division of Culture during an exhibit of Makonde sculptures preparations in 1967, although the piece was first invented under Peera's patronage a couple of years before. In fact, most of the Makonde sculpture exhibitions in the 1960s were organised by the Division of Culture through its partners such as the Kibo Art Gallery, the Tanzania Society of Artists and the Tanzania Crafts Council, in which individual Makonde sculptors were invited to display their artworks in group shows or trade fairs.

#### **1.4.6 Art Galleries in Independent Tanzania**

Art galleries were important agencies of visual arts production and promotion in Tanzania during the independence period. Since the early 1960s, three major galleries were actively involved in the visual arts, including crafts production, as part of national culture creation



and promotion. These galleries were, The Abdullah Gallery which is recorded to have operated between 1963 and 1965; the Kibo Art Gallery, from 1964 until the early 1970s, and Mwariko's gallery which ran from 1966 to the 1970s. Unlike Uganda and Kenya, Tanzania did not establish its national gallery during the Early Independence period, but at some stage of the *Ujamaa* period in 1970 (Miller 1975:44). The National Art Gallery of Tanzania under NAT is covered in Chapter Two of this study.

#### **1.4.6.1 Kibo Art Gallery**

The Kibo Art Gallery was one of the few private visual arts agencies in rural Tanzania during the early independence period. It was located at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, about 25 miles away from Moshi town. When it began, it looked as if it was a mere private art venture founded on purely professional philosophy and love of the arts. A closer look at the founding beliefs underneath the gallery reveals that it had more to do with post-independence cultural decolonisation aesthetics and politics of the art business itself. This orientation is perhaps captured by Elimo Njau's speech delivered at the opening of the gallery in 1963:

Kibo Gallery started as an experiment in June 1962. Encouraged by the artistic response of local schools and visitors, my wife and I decided to build a bigger art gallery. We have saved some money to build our family house but when we looked at the plan of our dream house we found the money was not enough; so we agreed to spend all the money we had to build this new art gallery. It is all part of a larger cultural project. Here we intend to re-define culture in our local terms. This gallery, among other things, will serve as the beginning of a creative art centre. Around this centre, we shall have a library, tribal dances, African drama, music, and creative hobbies for girls and village women. We also plan to build residential huts for visiting artists—at the moment we can offer only camping ground to any artists who may want to come to paint Kilimanjaro. All this may sound impossible or too ambitious. But we know we must make a beginning and play our part fully...

Adding:

It is our earnest hope that the inauguration of this project will see the humble beginnings of a genuine cultural and spiritual revival in the life of our people of Tanzania (Njau 1965:147)

The phrases “*here we intend to re-define culture in our local terms*” and “*this project will see the humble beginnings of the genuine cultural and spiritual revival in the life of our people of Tanzania*” conform to and reinforce President Nyerere’s agitation for a national consciousness and cultural revival in the quest for cultural decolonisation in the new Tanzania, which was presented at the beginning of this chapter:

...So I have set up this new Ministry to help us regain our pride in our own culture. I want it to seek out the best of traditions and customs of our tribes and make them a part of our national culture. I hope that everybody will do what he can to help the work of this new Ministry... (Nyerere 1967:187)

While establishing the gallery, Elimo Njau, an educated artist, was not just putting into practice what he studied at the Makerere Art School in Uganda, but he was also ardently playing his role as a motivated and patriotic Tanzanian young man in the service of his newly-independent nation. During his visit to the Kibo Gallery, Jonathan Kariara, then Kenya’s Deputy Director of the East African Literature Bureau in Nairobi took note of the essence of this cultural agency when he said:

Towards the end of June, 1964, I was passing through Moshi, and therefore took an opportunity of paying a flying visit to the Kibo Art Gallery. I had always wanted to visit the Gallery. If you know Elimo Njau well you will come to realise that Kibo is not, simply a house where pictures by East African artists are displayed. It is much more than that, and the whole concept of Kibo, its physical and spiritual reality are very aptly expressed in his own words: “*It is like a mango tree; too slow in growth to compete with ephemeral fashions of the art world; but with roots too deep in the soil to be uprooted by any shallow wind of ‘civilization’.* Its roots sink deep into the earth to reach out to the bones of our ancestry and the sap that is our heritage from God; its trunk powerful and round like true communal life in unity and harmony; its branches open up into a generosity of leaves, flowers and colourful fruits to feed the world and inspire humanity

*with spiritual health, joy, love, peace and humility in eternal wonder...”*

He then adds:

The overall impression for me was a kind of homecoming, for here was a scene of cows shut up for the night in the shed, the boy milking and the calf impatient to get him away from the source (Fig.58), the head of crucified Christ (Fig.59), the village women, the cascading hillsides, the water (Fig.60), which are all as much part of one's childhood. I went away feeling that here was someone who did not need to talk of his heritage, his African background and personality, because it was so palpably there (Kariara 1965: 147-149).

These narratives attest that the Kibo Gallery's diverse collection and activities beyond ethnicity succeeded in establishing an atmosphere of cultural synthesis in the Kibo village, a place secluded in its own ways of life before independence. In many of his early speeches, President Nyerere repeatedly stated that his new government forbade all kinds of discrimination among the people's traditions in a country with a multiplicity of sub-cultures, as captured by the caption of independent Tanzania's coat of arms, the new state's motto, *'Uhuru na Umoja'* or Freedom and Unity. In addition, Kariara's description of the themes of artworks displayed provides a clear picture of Africanised visual arts. In other words, the Kibo Art Gallery was putting into action the national motto through its cultural and artistic expressions. This was one big virtue which enabled the gallery to win over the government's approval and full support as a partner in the process of cultivating and promoting a new national culture through the arts. To understand the Kibo Art Gallery's core principles, mission and objectives for the visual arts of post-independent Tanzania, it is imperative to understand its founder first.



**Fig.48 Kibo Art Gallery in 1964**

(Photograph by Jonathan Kariara in *TNR*, Vol. No.64, March 1965)

#### **1.4.6.1.1 Elimo Njau's Early Art Experiences in Tanzania**

Elimo Njau, whose original first name is *Rekya Elimoo*, a traditional Chagga name that his parents gave him after he survived a mysterious illness in his infancy, which they believed to be a miracle. He was born on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1932 in the Marangu village in Moshi District, Kilimanjaro region. Most of his art aptitude as a young boy was nurtured through the encouragement of his father, Philipo Njau rather than through formal education. In a recent interview, Elimo Njau (Fig.64) explained how his childhood art experiences at home influenced him to become one of the great artists from Tanzania and the East Africa region. Elimo reported that his father, as a teacher and a Lutheran clergyman, respected and used art as one of the best mediums for communicating with people and God. Philipo Njau was a poet and a good singer, but not a painter. In his family, almost all the children could create some kind of art, but Elimo and his brother Siairuka were exceptionally talented. Jones (2014:48-49) records that Philipo Njau influenced the growth of artistic skills in his family, and in an

attempt to keep his children in line with their art talents, he occasionally organised portrait drawing contests in which he himself always posed as the model. Elimo often won the contests for producing portraits that everybody agreed captured the true likeness of his father. Siairuka, his older brother, who was far better in drawing and could have easily upstaged him, never took up the drawing challenges and thus aided Elimo's reputation as the best artist in the family. As a youth Elimo, never attended formal classes on fine arts but instead acquired skills through practice with other kids at school. A better account of his early art training is presented here:

Early art experience paralleled those of countless school boys: art activities in a hobby group; no instruction as such, but the supportive presence of a teacher; limited materials, but the occasional use of someone's water colours; in the school library, books about art where paintings were produced in colour. But tellingly, throughout his adolescence, he illustrated bible stories for Sunday school lessons, peopling what he produced with figures were Africans, that work curiously anticipating the murals he would paint in Murang'a in 1959 (Jones 2014:49)

His love for the arts, his perpetual efforts to perfect art techniques, as well as his parents and community support were the strongest thrusts that helped Elimo pursue his career as a visual artist. It was unusual for parents in the Kilimanjaro region, during those years, to let their children study or practise arts as a profession. In those years, colonial education promised immediate prospects for African young men by serving in the colonial offices as clinical officers, clerks, police personnel, etc., a sort of what was then called "a white-collar job". But as a teacher and a clergyman (jobs which have always embraced art in their manifestations), Philipo Njau embraced liberal ideas in contrast to his community's conservative view of the purpose of education. With this background, we understand how in those years, Elimo seized the moment and opportunity to freely develop his artistic skills and finally began further studies at the Makerere School of Fine Arts in Kampala, Uganda in 1952.

#### **1.4.6.1.2 Early Activities before Kibo Art Gallery in Tanzania**

Elimo Njau was part of the early East African generations of visual art graduates from Tanzania. Between 1952 and 1959, he attended a diploma course in fine arts for four years and subsequently received a one-year diploma for teachers of art in schools, both offered at the Makerere School of Fine Arts in Kampala, Uganda. Upon his graduation, he had no permanent employment and thus became a freelance artist, African art tutor, manager and activist. For a couple of years, he wandered the capitals of East Africa working as an ‘African Art Missionary’. Elimo’s first appearance as an outstanding artist in East Africa came in 1956, when he was still a student at Makerere. He was commissioned to paint five Gospel subjects in relation to the life of Christ on the interior walls of Saint James and All Martyrs Memorial Cathedral in the town of Murang’a in central Kenya. The church was built as a memorial to Christians and British settlers who had died at the height of Kenya’s Mau Mau wars of independence between 1950 and 1959. Njau’s artistic fame was heightened by his simple painting techniques used to execute the murals. He creatively succeeded in interweaving the authentic African scenery of the Murang’a environs, the *Kikuyu* personalities and Kenya’s liberation history into his version of Africanised Christian liturgy and Jesus’ life to appreciate both the success of the Mau Mau as an anti-colonialism liberation force and the power of religion in upholding good against evil as manifested by those involved in Kenya’s independence struggles.

The Murang’a mural’s original miniatures, formal painted on ceiling boards to serve as sketches, were among the permanent displays at the Kibo Art Gallery in Marangu, Tanzania. They were later moved to hang beside other new artworks by Elimo Njau at the Paa Ya Paa

Art Gallery in Nairobi. Below are two photographs of five murals as they were finally painted in St. James and All Martyrs Memorial Cathedral in Murang'a:



**Fig.49 'Nativity' by Elimo Njau (1959)**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau in Nairobi September 2015)



**Fig.50 'The Last Supper' by Elimo Njau (1959)**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau in Nairobi September 2015)

Miller (1975:40-41) records that as an established artist, Elimo worked in two big galleries in Nairobi before he ventured on his own at Marangu, his home village in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. Between 1960 and 1963, he worked as an artist in residence and later as an assistant director at the Sorsbie Gallery, a modern art venture by a rich British settler couple in Kenya. The Gallery conferred immense advantages upon Elimo's career since it had connections with other reputable artists and art dealers in London and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). When the Sorsbie Gallery closed in 1963, he worked with his Makererean contemporaries such as Hezbon Owit, Eli Kyeyune and Jonathan Kariara at the Chemi-Chemi Cultural Centre, an art platform he co-founded with Ezekiel Mphahlele, a South African writer who was then based in Nairobi. At Chem-Chemi, Elimo was the head of the Visual Arts Programme, whereas Mphahlele was the centre's director. It was a place for various visual and performing arts projects dependent on donor funding. The Chem-Chemi Cultural Centre in Nairobi lasted for only three years. After a year and some months of financial hardships, Elimo began his plans to open the Kibo Art Gallery in Tanzania, where he eventually moved to early in 1964.



**Fig.51 Elimo Njau painting outdoors at the Chemi-chemi Art gallery in Nairobi, 1963**  
(source: <http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=66667>, Accessed August 2019)



Adding to his success as a distinguished artist and art manager between 1959 and 1963, Elimo played an active role as an African art educator in the struggles to influence art training based on African environments. As noted by Kasfir (1999), Sanyal (2000) and Jones (2014), his ideas on how art should be taught in African environments were aired in several occasions at Makerere University in Uganda while reflecting on the same situations in Tanzania, Kenya and Africa as a whole. In appreciation of Elimo's views as an art teacher at Demonstration School, an appendage within the Faculty of Education at Makerere University, William Jones comments:

Nevertheless, he championed the same investigation of material and cultural environments that fuelled such art practices among Makerere students...

He continues by quoting Mr Njau:

If art teachers, he maintained, wanted their students to work inventively and with power, students had to use indigenous materials they were familiar with. In part that meant art programmes in schools should not be entirely dependent on the availability of imported supplies. Local clay to mould or to use for marking the way that charcoal and ashes can be used should be brought into classroom. The frayed ends of sticks might become stippling brushes that students use to create pictures with powdered paint (Jones 2014:46-47).

The success of this experiment while teaching at the Demonstration School were evident in a series of exhibitions entitled "*Let the Children Paint*" staged by Elimo in several countries:

The result of this perspective were on display in *Let the Children Paint*, an exhibition of children's art that Njau mounted first in February 1962 at the Uganda Museum, and subsequently in April at Sorsbie Gallery in Nairobi. By Christmas time, it was in Germany, in Munich, and later in Frankfurt, Mannheim, Hannover and Hamburg. It was an exhibition that, in fact, garnered greater attention than undergraduate work in the art department. Full of powerful images, the exhibition declared Njau a gifted teacher, an evaluation easy to arrive at (Jones 2014:47)

Elimo is one of those strong adherents of art as one of the oldest traditional aspects of African civilisation. Thus, it must be nurtured, left to evolve and develop independently in African ways, free from the forces which aspire to make it dependent on the media, audience and philosophies from the West, a trend which was officially identified at Makerere by Cecil Todd at the end of the 1950s. Elimo wanted African artists, art students in particular, to exploit rich African local materials, forms and local subject matters to produce artworks of interest to Africans first and then others beyond the artist's immediate audience or society. His quest to Africanise art teaching was viewed as a rebellion by Cecil Todd and some Makerere members of staff, but also as a positive move by some of his African contemporaries:

Three young artists whose ideas Todd opposed were the Ugandan painter Eli Kyeyune and the Tanzanians Sam Ntiro and Elimo Njau, an outspoken and charismatic artist who had been trained by Trowell herself and graduated in the first diploma class, was not invited by Todd to teach in the Art school and Kyeyune, who later won an international artists' competition sponsored by the then-fledgling journal *African Arts*, left without finishing his degree to follow Njau to Nairobi (Kasfir 1999:147)

Elimo incessantly questioned the legitimacy of Western experts to make decisions about Africans' art education and cultures, as well as on how they should progress through formal training based on Western theories as Sunanda Sanyal notes:

Todd was one of the few teachers who also practiced what he taught. He initiated the idea that Africa is a blank slate on which to create something. So he started from ground zero. I differed with him when he wrote off that whole tradition that nothing existed before. Todd was blanketing our history, which was not his duty (Sanyal 2000:156)

Similar to this critique once noted by Kasfir (1999:147) were William Jones' contention that Elimo's views were misinterpreted and perceived as "radicalism" associated with the 1960s

nationalistic struggles and hence, as a consequence of his “rebel” attitude, he was never offered a job at the school, regardless of his exceptional skills, as was the case for his contemporaries:

He questioned the pronouncements of self-professed experts on African education and culture. Clearly he imagined a future more accommodating to divergent ideas than Makerere’s expatriates seemed willing to acknowledge. It is not surprising, then, that he was viewed as a troubling presence and not invited back to teach at the end of 1961(Jones 2014:48)

However, after many years of criticism and debates, the Makerere School of Fine Arts, to some extent, reviewed its Fine Arts curricula to include a few traditional African art aspects, such as the narrative characteristic of art. The examples here stem from the artworks of 1980s Makerere graduates like George Kyeyune<sup>104</sup>. Africanised depictions of the Uganda martyrs painted in many churches by Makerere artists also attest to this claim. Many changes took place during the Ugandan independence period and after the 1979 Kagera War. In Uganda, generally, colonial art and cultural practices were radically replaced by African ones, as Sidney Littlefield Kasfir proffers:

When Okot p’Bitek, a Ugandan poet, took over as a Director of the National Theatre in Kampala in 1967, he promptly and ceremoniously replaced the British Council’s grand piano with a drum post driven into the ground outside, announcing, “Our national instrument is not the piano—tinkle, tinkle, tinkle—but the drum—bum, bum, bum!” Such pronouncements fed the debates over neo-colonial, national and Pan-African identity which punctuated the first decade of political independence (Kasfir 1999:166)

However, during this study, it was observed that the MTSIFA, to some extent, continues to embrace a big chunk of its inherited Western art standards in the assessment of qualities of

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<sup>104</sup> See, George Kyeyune at [mojaartgallery.com/? portfolio=prof-kyeyune-george](http://mojaartgallery.com/?portfolio=prof-kyeyune-george). Retrieved on 9 September 2017, Berlin, Germany

its trainees, while the radical changes in the East African art curriculum, as campaigned for by Elimo Njau<sup>105</sup> and Sam Ntiro<sup>106</sup> at Makerere were seen at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from the 1960s onwards.

An immediate example to elucidate this problem is given by the transformation of the painting genre by a 2008 MTSIFA's graduate from Tanzania, Emmanuel Ishengoma. When Ishengoma registered for his MFA at the University of Dar es Salaam in 2011, his portfolio containing photos of paintings previously produced while studying at the MTSIFA in Uganda showed his strict adherence to Western-inculcated art techniques. Only little of his formalistic painting technique depicted Africanised elements<sup>107</sup> (see figures 52 and 53). In fact, a sharp contrast is observable in his freshly-made paintings a year after his admission into the master's programme at the UDSM in 2010 (see figures 54 and 55). The anatomical inclination of the figures, colour application and the general composition as seen in figure 52 are too conservative and in sync with European realism as promoted by Cecil Todd in his training at MTSIFA in the 1960s (Kyeyune 2008:140). A closer look at Ishengoma's artworks demonstrates his acquired artistic skills and considerations of technique with only a little effort put to realize the themes contained in his artworks. The general impression produced by Ishengoma's artworks, as evidenced in figures 52 and 53, confirms Kyeyune's assumption

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<sup>105</sup>Personal interview in Nairobi in September 2015 (Fig. 68) in which Njau repeated to the researcher his famous line that "Copying puts God to sleep"

<sup>106</sup>See, Sanyal 2013, p.269 "...Ntiro, who at that time was working for Tanzania's Ministry of Culture, examined the current problems of the visual arts in his paper "The Future of East African Art". Instead of using a religious rhetoric as Njau had done in Ghana, Ntiro argued his case by combining some of Trowell's views of indigenous arts with his own socialist political ideals. He proposed such reforms as government regulation of outside influences, such as the import of foreign art teachers, and state control over the production and dissemination of artifacts..."

<sup>107</sup> In most African artworks of the early artists in East Africa, one sees very little attention was paid to the anatomy with more emphasis being placed on the content of artworks. Sam Ntiro and Elimo Njau have been subjects to this style of painting on many art historians' studies on post-independence East African art

that realism represents a higher degree of technical ability (Pissarra 2015:32). Elimo Njau always slammed this kind of painting technique<sup>108</sup> at MTSIFA as a ‘copying’ practice. The present study assumes that this art technique shift has much to do with Ishengoma’s exposure to traditional African art training by Elias Jengo<sup>109</sup> at the UDSM. His new artworks, such as “*Umugoole na Iba*” (Fig.54), and his master’s thesis *Authenticity Through Informal Art Education in Contemporary East African Visual Arts: The Official Artist’s Viewpoint*, submitted to the UDSM in 2012, is also evident of his newly-found path as a modern African painter whose technical shift is also inspired through exposure to traditional art practices. However, slow to adapt to modern Tanzanian painting grammar, such as that practiced by Sam Ntiro or Elimo Njau, Ishengoma’s artworks appropriate a decorative form with mixed-stylised motifs such as those described by Kasfir (1999:166-170) in her evaluation of the Senegalese artists Bacari Dieme and Boubacar Coulibaly’s painting genres.



**Fig.52 Emmanuel Ishengoma’s ‘A woman weaving a basket’, MTSIFA in 2010**  
(Source: Emmanuel Ishengoma’s Facebook photo album)

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<sup>108</sup> See, Sanyal 2000, pp.153-54

<sup>109</sup>Elias Jengo is a former student of Elimo Njau at Mpwapwa Teachers’ College in the mid-1950s and he was also taught by Sam Ntiro at Makerere in the early 1950s (Personal interview, Elias Jengo November 2015)



**Fig.53 Emmanuel Ishengoma’s ‘Fresh Maize Corn’ in Kampala, MTSIFA in 2010**  
(Source: Emmanuel Ishengoma’s Facebook photo album)

**Ishengoma’s new paintings during his MFA training at FPA in UDSM 2011:**



**Fig.54 Emmanuel Ishengoma “Umugoole na Iba” at FPA, UDSM in 2011**  
(Source: Emmanuel Ishengoma’s Facebook photo album)





**Fig.55 Emmanuel Ishengoma with his new paintings at FPA, UDSM in 2011**  
(Source: Emmanuel Ishengoma's Facebook photo album)

In attempt to influence his views on the necessity of promoting 'African artistic genres', Elimo Njau made two presentations on the debate on African identity and cultural decolonization in visual arts which were then centred at Makerere University. These were; an article titled '*Current Copying Puts God to Sleep*' which he published in 1963, and a paper presentation on '*The Role of the Visual Arts and Artists in Africa*' which he made in Accra, Ghana in 1962. Through these papers, he addressed several issues which hinder the manifestation and promotion of novel African visual art genres. Basing his arguments on his faith as a Christian and a traditionalist, a stand adopted by most Makerere graduates groomed by Trowell, Elimo asserted that Western experts had to understand how Africans appreciate artworks. To him, the unyielding 'Western stereotype', namely that Africans had no art traditions, is invalid, a mere hegemonic ideology derived from a colonist's colossal ignorance of African civilisation. Elimo's views are still irrelevant to some critics and writers of African

art in East Africa, such as Sunanda Sanyal, who has recently published an article, *‘Being Modern’: Identity Debates and Makerere’s Art School in the 1960s*”.

#### **1.4.6.1.3 Elimo Njau at Kibo Art Gallery 1963 until 1966**

The 1963 debut of the Kibo Gallery signified individual Tanzanians’ awareness on issues pertaining to cultural identity and patriotism. The KAG’s opening was highly commended by individual artists in Tanzania and the entire East African region. Several artworks of the then-celebrated artists including Sam Ntiro (Fig.63) and Omari Mwariko (Fig.62) of Tanzania; Louis Mwaniki of Kenya, Francis Musango, and Eli Kyeyune (Fig.61), both from Uganda, were found in the permanent exhibition of the new Gallery. During its inaugural show, the National Museum of Tanzania supported the Kibo Gallery by lending its priceless Makonde carvings selected from Hans Cory’s collection (which he contributed to the National Museum) alongside paintings and sculptures by members of the Community of East African Artists (Njau, 1965:147). President Nyerere’s November 1967 visit to the Kibo Art Gallery marked and confirmed its significance as an ideal Tanzanian cultural production and promotion centre:



**Fig.56 Philipo Njau (Elimo’s father) showing President Nyerere some artworks inside the Kibo Art Gallery exhibition hall in November 1967**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau. Photograph by Bo Lundberg)



The contributions of the Kibo Art Gallery to Tanzanian national culture promotion, specifically in visual arts development, were enormous. The gallery provided a national and international platform for intellectual discussions on African cultural production and progress as well as artistic production. It was at the Kibo Art Gallery where the first and only group show of the Community of East African Artists was held in Tanzania in 1963. The show was broadly applauded and placed Tanzania alongside Uganda and Kenya, where modern visual arts institutions were firmly established. The gallery also advocated for proper Tanzanian traditional visual arts research, appreciation, and documentation. This campaign was successfully achieved when the first publication, *Makonde Modern Sculpture* by Anthony Stout, came out in 1966, to which Elimo contributed a foreword (Miller 1975:44). The Kibo Art Gallery was a great inspiration for many young artists around the Kilimanjaro region and Tanzania at large.

As the *Wachagga* are among the ethnic groups without clearly defined figurative art traditions, the recent developments in fine arts in this area might have been massively influenced by the Kibo Art Gallery's activities. Among his success stories, Elimo, as an exceptional artist in the Kibo area groomed several young artists whom he personally trained as artists, Omari Mwariko is one of the celebrated modern painters and sculptors since the late 1960s. Mwariko was also among prominent apprentices to serve at Kibo Art Gallery. The self-proclaimed artist, Charles Njau (none of his artworks or literature were available for analysis during this study) also claims to have blossomed under the Kibo Gallery's patronage. Felix Mallyi, a famous contemporary sculptor from Tanzania, also comes from the Marangu area, but no evidence is available to suggest that his early art practices have any links to Kibo Art Gallery. The Gallery also served as a source of income for many residents who brought

in their handicrafts to sell to tourists who flocked to the gallery on weekends and those from various parts of the world who seasonally visited Marangu to see and climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. Presently, Kilimanjaro is one of a few regions in Tanzania with many curio shops and galleries stuffed with thousands of arts and crafts for sale.

Despite its stunning beginning, the Kibo Art Gallery's rise into a full-swing operation lasted only for five years—from 1962 to 1967. The story of its collapse is contradicted by several 'speculative' accounts. One was that Elimo's multiple roles as an active member and partner in more than one visual art enterprises in Tanzania, where modern art was new in the early 1960s, and Kenya, in where he was well known and admired for his creative works than in his home country, could have among main reasons he could not settle in his home country as his teacher and colleague, Sam Ntiro. Another theory has been provided by Elias Jengo, who revealed that in 1964, Elimo Njau competed with Sam Ntiro for the Cultural Commissioner position in the Ministry of National Culture of Tanzania. Elimo lost the interview to Ntiro, who got the job. According to Jengo, Elimo, who was more artistically astute and articulate, could not swallow the defeat easily, which prompted him to move to Nairobi. The other reason could be that Elimo's decision to open an art gallery at Kibo was too ambitious, backed by his radical stand on socio-politics and the cultural identity debates during the post-independence period; therefore, he appears to have overlooked the economic consequences of his move, as he himself had doubted in his opening speech:

Who would have dreamed of building an art gallery in a rural village?  
Who ever thought that my old father would willingly offer us land for  
this purely cultural project? (Njau 1965:147)

Furthermore, at the end of the 1960s, Kenya provided a more favourable atmosphere for good business and vibrant activities in the visual arts sector than Tanzania did, as the *Ujamaa*

policies petrified the few Indian and European art enterprises operating in the country (Miller 1975:40-43). Taking advantage of all these factors, in 1966 Elimo Njau established Nairobi as his new base. Thus, he and his former partner and later wife, Rebecca Njau, opened their new art space and gallery, *Paa Ya Paa*, or Antelope Rises. Since then, his activities and active role in Tanzanian cultural revivalism through the Kibo Gallery slowly deteriorated. When President Nyerere visited the Kibo Art Gallery on 11 November 1967, Elimo was not around to welcome him, but only his parents (see Figure 56). Since its opening in 1966, Elimo's full attention was given to the *Paa Ya Paa*, which he runs to-date. He left behind the Kibo Art Gallery under the management of his father while paying it occasional visits whenever there were pressing issues requiring his presence. In what the present study perceives as a gesture of appreciation to his motherland, Elimo still maintained his position as a patriotic Tanzanian art promoter when he opened another Art Centre known as '*Sanaa Zetu*' or our arts in Moshi during the 1970s to cater to the local population's needs for crafts. According to Miller (1975:44), Elimo nicknamed it 'The People's Art Gallery' to acknowledge the locals' positive response to its supplies such as batik garments, traditional pottery and jewellery.



**Fig.57** Elimo's parents with President Nyerere, when he personally visited the Kibo Art Gallery in Marangu, November 1967  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau. Photograph by Bo Lundberg)



**Fig.58** 'Milking' by Elimo Njau displayed at the Kibo Art Gallery, 1964  
(Source: Kasfir 1999:149)



**Fig.59 'Head of Christ' by Elimo Njau displayed at the Kibo Art Gallery, 1964**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau, Nairobi, September 2015)



**Fig.60 The Load and the Hoe- Lithograph by Elimo Njau, 1963**  
(Photograph from Harmon collections of the 1963 exhibition in USA)





**Fig.61 Conversations by Eli Kyeyune (1963) displayed at the Kibo Art Gallery in 1964**  
(Photograph from Harmon collections of 1963, exhibition in USA)



**Fig.62 Sculptures by Omari Mwariko, displayed at Kibo Art Gallery since 1965**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau. Photograph by Bo Lundberg)



**Fig.63 A painting by Sam Ntiro (1963) displayed at the Kibo Art Gallery in 1964**  
(Courtesy of the NMT, Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



**Fig.64 Elimo Njau and Dominicus Makukula at the Paa ya Paa Art Gallery, Nairobi**  
(Photograph by Ms. Njau, Nairobi, September 2015)

#### 1.4.7 Mwariko Art Gallery

This small art gallery was opened in the town of Moshi sometime between 1966 and 1967. Its owner and director was Athumani Omari Mwariko, more prominently known as Omari Mwariko. He was formerly a servant of Elimo Njau at both his Makerere and Nairobi residences. Miller (1975: 44, 98) briefly recounts Omari Mwariko's origin and early artistic practices. Mwariko who is not a formally trained artist but had been closely associated with the Tanzanian Makerere schooled artists' practices. Elias Jengo, a Makerere graduate from the class of 1963 and once Njau's student at Mpwapwa Teachers' College, confirms that Mwariko never acquired formal training from Makerere outside of Elimo's aegis at the Kibo Gallery (Elias Jengo, Personal Interview-September 2015). Jengo's argument is also supported by Denis Bowen's (1973) review of Mwariko's artistic background in the *Exhibitions at the Commonwealth Institute*:

He himself is one of eight children, and he is now twenty-seven years of age; his schooling was rudimentary but he learned to read and write Swahili and in addition speaks several other related languages. His English, largely self-taught, is good. While no more than a boy he became associated with Elimo Njau in Nairobi at the Chem-Chem Cultural Centre and later moved to Moshi with him to form another gallery.

Generally, it can be argued that Mwariko's artistic career was informally acquired while working with Elimo Njau. His apprenticeship to Elimo Njau appears to be the only confirmed influence on his art career. His artistic practice cannot be linked to his *Wazigua* ethnic group's clay moulding traditions for initiation ceremonies. The *Wazigua* are among the a few ethnic groups recorded by Hans Cory (1956) in his *African Figurines: Their Ceremonial Use in Puberty Rites in Tanganyika*.



The new wood sculptures created by Omari Mwariko presented a new genre of modern sculpture arts, with slight differences when compared to the prevalent Makonde carvings and those by the Wasukuma and the Wakerewe in Tanzania, as presented in Fig.65. His sculptures were comparable to modern artworks produced for the first time at the Makerere School of Fine Arts in the 1950s and 60s:

His carvings have the energy of quick, spontaneous drawings. As in the work of Mwaniki and Nnaggenda, the rugged strokes of the adze remain. The resulting strength is reminiscent of work by Ghana's Vincent Kofi. However, there is an important difference. Though generally smaller than Kofi's giant pieces, and in contrast to the calm strength of the latter's sculpture, Mwariko's work expresses emotion that is volatile, and the figures seem to cry out in despair (Kennedy, 1992)



**Fig.65 From left, the 'Wrestler' and the 'Figure' by Omari Mwariko, displayed at his new Mwariko Art Gallery in Moshi, 1966**  
(Courtesy of Elimo Njau. Photographs by Bo Lundberg)

Louis Mwaniki, a Kenyan sculptor and advertising artist, also a Makerere graduate, and Francis Nnaggenda, a Ugandan sculptor and art tutor at the Makerere Fine Arts School, whose works were compared to Mwariko's sculptures, were among the celebrated artists at Makerere art platforms in the 1960s, when Mwariko was living with the Njau family.

Therefore, there is a possibility that Mwariko was also influenced by these masters' genres and techniques in his later sculptural productions.

There is little literature available to account for the Mwariko Art Gallery's activities in the promotion of national culture through visual arts within Tanzania, but abroad where he resides to date. Bowen (1973) briefly shows Mwariko's contribution to Tanzanian visual arts promotion as a mentor to young artists while working at his Moshi gallery:

In 1964 he established his own gallery, which was wiped out by fire in 1970. To say that Omari is energetic and enterprising is an understatement: already his home and studio are rebuilt and he has students drawing, painting and carving under his direction.

Besides Bowen, Miller (1975:98-99) notes that Mwariko mounted several exhibitions at the National Museum of Tanzania in 1963; the Hindu Mandal School in Moshi in 1965; the Kibo Art Gallery in 1965; the New Africa and Kilimanjaro Hotels in Dar es Salaam in 1969. The impacts of these activities are either unknown or not properly appreciated. Omari Mwariko was not known to many in Tanzania until 2015, when he ran for president in the Tanzanian general elections. In the campaign, he employed his 1960s and 1970s cultural and artistic success stories to back his speeches and policies. Although he was not successful, he managed to catch the attention of many as a first visual artist who sought a top political job in Tanzania.



**Fig.66 Vice President Samia Hassan admiring portraits drawn by Omari Mwariko during the Dodoma presidential campaigns in September 2015**  
(source: ccmchama.blogspot.com, accessed August 2019)

Omari Mwariko is internationally acknowledged as a modern Tanzanian artist with a distinctive art style, as Denis Bowen's (1973) review explains:

...of Omari, Bowen wrote, In the Mwariko Omari exhibition we were confronted by work of marked contrast to that of Grillo, a sharp reminder that Africa is a continent, a mosaic of different peoples and cultures. Omari is of the Zigua tribe of Tanzania.

As a member of the Tanzania Arts Society and the Society of East African Artists, Mwariko had an opportunity to participate in many group exhibitions held in Europe, Asia, the US and other countries within Africa. Miller (1975:99) records that Mwariko was among the Tanzanian artists who exhibited at the National Museum in Kampala in 1962; the Chem-Chemi Cultural Centre in Nairobi in 1964; the Permanent Mission of Tanzania to the United Nations, New York in 1968; the Expo' 70 in Osaka, Japan and at the Commonwealth Institute, London in 1972.

In the early 2000s, a sculpture genre similar to the one introduced at the Mwariko Gallery in the 1960s was discovered in a modern sculpture school in Bagamoyo, where young sculptors were trained and inspired to produce artworks in a wide range of media, specifically using

red wood and cement. The current research could not find reliable information to establish a link between the two agencies in terms of exchange of skills and knowledge. Although a number of sculpture pieces by Mwariko are available at the National Museum's collection store, the current research also found some of his 1970s paintings in the permanent exhibition of the Karibu Art Gallery in the Africana area of Dar es Salaam. Since the 1970s severe fire, which badly destroyed the Mwariko Gallery in Moshi, there has been no information to trace its recent developments. Omari Mwariko migrated to the US between the late 1970s or the early 1980s, where he resides to date and continues to work as an artist.



**Fig.67 Omari Mwariko in one of his political campaigns at AICC Arusha during a CRDB Bank stakeholder's 19<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
(Source: mrokim.blogspot.com, Accessed on August 2019)

However, of the private visual arts agencies during the Art of Independence Period, only the Kibo and the Mwariko art galleries could be included to tell the story of visual arts in Tanzania and the struggle for the creation of a national cultural identity. The Abdullah and Karibu art galleries were founded on purely commercial purposes. With their owners being oblivious in the visual art field, the two galleries, or rather curio shops, dealt only with cultural products for tourist markets, hence their absence in the present study. Although the Karibu Gallery is still operational, its owners have not been involved in the research of most of the

artworks they have always collected, exhibited and sold. In fact, its rare collection of surviving master artworks by some prominent artists is inadequately preserved, without any information on the artworks available. The Gallery keeps its collections for sale to exclusive antique collectors abroad. Until the present research was conducted, there were no private art institutions in Tanzania that were involved in arts preservation practices. It was also found that responsible government authorities such as the National Art Council and the National Museum had not done much to ensure that the few surviving master artworks in the country are collected and preserved for posterity.

### **1.5 Chapter Summary**

The Visual Arts of Independence Period in Tanzania was concise and closely linked to early independence politics. The period was characterised by artistic productions based on nostalgia as a strategy towards cultural decolonisation. President Nyerere's government intended to employ cultural productions to create and ultimately cultivate a new Tanzanian culture free of ethnic divisions—the infamous tribalism and its ugly side—which haunted many African nation states soon after attaining their independence. Okwui Enwezor views such developments in independent African states as constructions of African modernisms. In his introduction to the companion book for his exhibition, *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*, he indicates that of the many African countries the exhibition covered, a general impression produced was that cultural decolonisation through the arts involved an artistic assessment of the decolonisation process from a holistic perspective outside of a sole cultural production or, specifically visual arts perspective:

...A liberated African modernity? The question bears upon what this exhibition seek to demonstrate, namely, that the construction of African Modernity in the twentieth century is inextricably bound to the defence and legitimation of all and every sphere of African thought and life. It seems unnecessary, then, to make an argument that does not take the totality of this manifestation (political, social, economic, culture, etc.) into full account. Thus this exhibition and the book that accompanies it should be understood in light of this totality, which bears upon the construction of both political and cultural order (Enwezor 2001:14)

Unfortunately, Okwui Enwezor (2001), who curated the *Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945-1994*, an exhibition that supposedly summarised visual arts and cultural decolonisation movements in Africa as a continent, did not include narratives from Tanzania, which had unique experiences when compared those of the other postcolonial African states. In her quest to create a national culture, Tanzania involved more socio-political activities alongside artistic productions than in other fields. As different sections of this chapter demonstrate, the early independence artistic productions tackled the issues on African liberation (Figs. 34, 35, 36 and 37), self-reliance (Fig.1), and good local and international social relations (Figs.33 and 40) through clear visual political statements. Decolonisation movements such as *Negritude* and Pan-Africanism or Marxism, as Kasfir (1999:166) and Enwezor (2001:12-13) describe them, do not fit as assessment lenses for the same process in Tanzania, despite some similarities pointed out by these writers in their analyses. Perhaps the failure to distinguish Socialism or Marxism with the *Ujamaa* had been an impediment to the Western art scholars who attempted to evaluate artistic productions in Tanzania using socialist or Marxist approaches. Unlike Zaire's *Authenticity*, Ghana's *African Personality*, Zambia's *African Humanism*, Senegal's *Negritude*, Gabon's *Renovation*, Chad's *Cultural Revolution*, and even Togo's *A New Match*, as socialist and holistic African modern cultural movements, or rather multi-sectoral national culture

construction schemes, Tanzania introduced a campaign known as *Operation Vijana* (Operation Youth). This drive in Tanzania emphasised ethical conduct such as decent dressing, upholding traditional values, and hard work among the youth, and could not go any further than that (Jengo 1985:1). In a nutshell, as Kasfir (1999:166) has observed, these counter-movements were created with different visions and objectives from place to place. Nonetheless, during this period Tanzania was relatively successful in mobilising its political leaders, elites and the formally trained artists as policy makers to participate in the creation of a national culture through the visual arts. Clear examples of trained artists' contribution to the construction of the national arts were evident in artworks such as the Coat of Arms, which contains all Tanzanian important national iconographies (see Chapter Two) and the national anthem. Furthermore, with the establishment of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth in 1962, Tanzania was able to install an administrative machinery to co-ordinate artistic productions and promotion from the national to the village level (see chart 2.1). Generally, the Art of Independence Period's curtain in Tanzania closed with little achievement in constructions of national culture, particularly in the visual arts. The leaders were divided in their views of a national culture, as could be seen in a photograph depicting President Nyerere and his colleagues (Fig.68) as well in the Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union event photograph (Fig.70) which depict a mixture of dress codes resulting from the diverse cultures coexisting in independent Tanzania. An evaluation of the national culture creation campaign becomes more complicated with national cultural events such as the beauty pageant contest of 1967 (Fig.71), which showed that so much needed to be done to clear the strong Western cultural influences that had encroached upon the indigenous cultures of Tanzanians.



**Fig.68 President Nyerere seated in the middle, wearing a striped Mgolole in the morning he was sworn as the 1<sup>st</sup> Prime Minister of Tanganyika in 1961**  
 (Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation)



**Fig.69 The Wangoni Paramount Chief, Nkosi Gwazerapasi Mputa Gama (No. V) and his Indunas or sub-chiefs**  
 (Courtesy of the Songea Mausoleum, November 2015)





**Fig.70 President Nyerere mixing the soils of Tanganyika and Zanzibar to mark the Union of the two countries on 26 April 1964**  
 (Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, November 2015)



**Fig.71 The Miss Tanzania Contest 1967 at the Kilimanjaro Hotel in Dar es Salaam**  
 (www.missiepopular.com, accessed on August 2019)

However, unlike in Senegal, Ghana and Zaire (now the DRC) where national dresses, music bands, theatres and art galleries were established, not much of the like was achieved in Tanzania to establish the aspired national culture, despite a vibrant cultural scene that

emerged. Several factors were noted during this research as reasons behind this failure. First, the national culture creation process in Tanzania utilized a top-down approach. Under this approach, the government entrusted a few politicians, arts and cultural professionals with powers and resources to create and instil a national culture on behalf of several million Tanzanians. According to Mbughuni (1974:18), the government intended to create the national culture through a selective revival of accepted traditions and customs alongside some tolerable foreign values. Kelly Askew argues against this approach given the diversities and complexities of the more than 120 ethnic sub-cultures in Tanzania. She questions “how a few individuals could decide on what was acceptable and what was not”, asserting that the Tanzanian government had ignored the general public in its construction of national culture, which she sees as being absurd (Askew 2005:305).

Second, the national culture creation activities in Tanzania, unlike in other African countries, were limited to only a few intellectual institutions such as the National Museum, the University of Dar es Salaam, and a few Teachers’ Training Colleges, as well as a few recognised galleries, ignoring the public’s experiences and opinion. On this aspect, Askew (2005:305), while referring to Homi Bhabha, believes the Tanzanian national culture construction was informed by two perspectives, *pedagogical*, as promoted by the government institutions, and *performative*, as practised by the common people in their chores. Askew further contends that these two versions of culture in Tanzania are not one but could merge if only the government’s cultural version was created based on the practices among the people. She views the official Tanzanian national culture as a construction of artistic elements directly borrowed from China, South Africa, Ghana, Zambia and Guinea, with whom Tanzania had happened to partner in some cultural exchange projects (Askew 2005:306).

Siri Lange, in several publications on performance arts in Tanzania since the mid-1990s, has similar findings<sup>110</sup>. This study finds Askew's criticisms directed towards the Tanzanian national culture uninformed. For example, the contention that President Nyerere (Fig.68) copied Ghanaian President Nkrumah's dress code is difficult to substantiate, since some ethnic groups (Fig.69) in Tanganyika had been dressing in the manner President Nyerere did many years before Kwame Nkrumah appeared with such a style in the 1950s. Askew also argues that the Tanzanian national anthem was adopted from the South African African National Congress (ANC) party anthem, whereas the Tanzanian national theatre group is dubbed a replica of Guinea's and Zambia's national troupes, even the prominent choir groups established all over the country as result of interactions with Western Christianity (Askew 2002:190 and 2005:308). The original hymn "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica" (Lord Bless Africa) was composed by Enoch Santonga, a South African clergyman of Xhosa decent in 1897, and has, for nationalistic reasons, been adopted by Tanzania and Zambia as national anthems. South Africa followed suit following the demise of apartheid. On the whole, Kelly Askew believes that Tanzania has nothing like cultural creations of its own. Perhaps she gets her ideas from Siri Lange, who argues that:

Tanzanians had no great tradition from which to create their national culture. There was little to build on from the past, with the approximately 120 ethnic groups each having their own histories and myths, traditions and heroes. None of them were substantially larger than the others, and there was no attempt by the Tanzanian authorities to re-define "tribal histories" to be the history of the nation (Lange 1999:42)

Putting these ambivalent views in the background, the study research conforms to the notion that cultural exchange across societies and nations of the world at large is an inevitable

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<sup>110</sup> See, Lange 1999,p.43

practice. All nations have gone through it in the process of making their own national cultures. Therefore, there is no way a culture can be born, mature and die without having absorbed any external influences which are consciously and unconsciously borrowed. It is unfortunate that most critics cannot appreciate the cultural manifestations in Tanzania as it happened in their own national cultures which have no one straight root to be traced as the original.

Western modernity was still embraced by some foreigners who remained in Tanzania after independence, the elites and middle class societies in cities and towns were difficult to clear off immediately after independence. This was because, for some time Tanzania practiced a type of liberalism towards its development as a nation. This resulted in ambivalent views among locals when the national culture construction was forcefully propagated by the state. Some people viewed cultural production campaigns focused on the revival of some African traditions and customs in the process of national culture construction as a naive move which embraced primitivism or backwardness, or '*Ushamba*' in the Kiswahili language. On the other hand, some claimed that adopting modern lifestyles, known '*Usasa*' or '*Mamboleo*' in Kiswahili, constituted embracing Western cultural domination as well as agreeing with the colonialists' view that African traditions and customs are backward and must be dumped. Because of such contradictions among Tanzanians, most of the national culture projects stagnated. Elimo Njau, during an interview for this study, asserted that it was because such myopic views that some parents in the 1950s and the 1960s would not let their children take arts lessons to become professional artists. Everybody wanted his or her children to become lawyers, medical doctors, bankers and many other white collar jobs because many believed that there was no need for a diploma or a degree to work in the arts and cultural sector. From the 1950s to date, art and culture jobs in Tanzania have always been viewed as insignificant

or dubbed “blue-collar jobs”. For long, this has been an underlying cause of the shortage of qualified personnel and professional artists in Tanzania. The current influx of young people involved in cultural productions is due to the unemployment problem. Furthermore, political activism among some artists have also contributed to the little success in the construction of national visual arts. Examples to explain this dissidence include the activities of Ali Darwish, a successful art scholar from Zanzibar and Jonathan Kingdon, a Tanzanian artist of British descent, after finishing their studies at Makerere. Both Darwish and Kingdon tended to disagree with the *Ujamaa* policies practised in Tanzania and therefore decided to stay and work at Makerere in Uganda despite the unconducive atmosphere there due to Idi Amin’s dictatorial rule throughout the 1970s. Adding to his dislike of the *Ujamaa* policies, Darwish also embraced religious art (Fig.72) which was not favoured in the secular Tanzanian national culture either.



**Fig.72 A painting titled ‘Allah Akbar’ (God is Great) by Ali Darwish in the 1970s**  
(Photograph by researcher at Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala October 2015)

## Chapter Two

### **The Visual Arts of the *Ujamaa* Period in Tanzania, 1967 to 1985**

This chapter presents findings on the visual arts practised and produced during the *Ujamaa* period in Tanzania. The chapter is divided into six sections which present visual developments as invented and commissioned by state agencies. Specifically, it discusses the *Ujamaa* Politics and Visual Arts since 1967, Art Definition during the *Ujamaa* Period, Generic characteristics and aesthetics considerations during this period, the Ruling Party Heroes and Government victories in the Visual Arts of the *Ujamaa* Era, the Kagera (Tanzania-Uganda) War of 1978/1979, as well as *Ujamaa* Visual Arts Themes, before presenting the chapter's summary.

#### **2.1 The *Ujamaa* Politics and Visual Arts since 1967**

The *Ujamaa* visual arts were produced in Tanzania from 1967 when the country embarked on a path to socialist politics, until the mid-1980s, when the country abandoned African socialism for a neo-liberal economic direction. Despite Jengo's (1985:124) observation that the socialist government in Tanzania never enacted laws to make visual arts strictly subservient to its needs, so much of the arts produced during this period reflected the prevailing socialist political ideologies and policies. The type of visual arts which saturated public space back then were mainly wall murals, monuments and paintings hanging on public building walls while sculpture, such as Makonde carvings, and a wide range of crafts were primarily produced as cultural export goods. This study reveals that almost all the visual arts produced during the period of *Ujamaa* politics were predominantly state-commissioned and were used as propaganda tools. Despite serving as alternative communications media by parastatals and the ruling party, the themes and topics that these visual arts carried were

purposely created to spread the socialist policies of the independent government. This claim is supported by Tore Saetaerdal who states:

The authorities also used art politically. The figures depicting columns of humans, often performing daily chores, were said to symbolize African Socialism, as practised by President Nyerere. Carvers were sent around the world at government expense to show off the Socialist Art of Tanzania (Saetaerdal 1996:288)

In many instances, it was evident that the socialist government of Tanzania seemed to appreciate the power of visual arts for the Tanzanian public and was determined to exploit art's communicative potential to achieve its political communication objectives. Since 1970, the ruling party and the government, through several ministries in charge of the promotion of National Culture through visual arts, issued many statements which declared the arts as important aspects of Tanzanian culture which had to be closely observed and taken care of by the government. Most of the statements were incorporated in different topics of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth's guidebook for public awareness published in 1979.

In this book, the socialist government explicitly states its will to use the arts, thus:

*Sanaa ni chombo chenye nguvu sana katika kuleta mafanikio au elimu inayotarajiwa. Ni kweli kwamba si sanaa peke yake ambazo zinafanya mambo hayo, lakini nguvu zake ni kubwa kuliko hotuba, maandishi au mazungumzo ya kawaida. Sio suala rahisi kuleta mabadiliko katika jamii. Watu wengi huamini kuwa hali ilivyo ni sawa tu, haina kasoro. Kwa hiyo tunapotaka kuleta mabadiliko, iwe kwa nia njema au mbaya, inahitaji maelezo ya ushawishi wa hali ya juu. Mambo hayo ni rahisi kutekelezwa kwa njia ya sanaa kuliko njia nyingine yeyote. Hii ni kwa kuwa sanaa hutumia kivutio kizuri cha mifano ya kimatendo badala ya maneno matupu. Kwasababu ya nguvu hizi, sanaa hutumiwa na mabepari hali kadhalika wajamaa katika kutetea maslahi yao (URT 1979:22)*

My translation:

Art is a powerful medium in bringing about success or the targeted education outcome. It is true that it is not only art which can do that but unlike other media, art surpasses speech, text, even casual or

friendly talk. Most people believe that life is the way it is; there is nothing wrong with it. So when we want to change things from worse to better or vice-versa we need to be thorough and persuasive. And that can only be achieved through the arts. Art provides visual examples instead of mere words. For its strengths, art, at certain times, has been employed by both capitalists and socialists for their own advantages.

A survey of most artworks produced between 1967 and the 1980s reveals several themes about *Ujamaa*'s economic systems, traditional architecture and socio-political relations as then-practised in Tanzania (see figures 1, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 40). Mbughuni (1982:88-89) asserts that since 1968, several policies and nationwide public education campaigns benefited from the deployment of visual arts as media for easy public communication and comprehension. A good example of this practice can be traced to the 1970s, when campaigns such as '*Kuleni Chakula Bora*', or 'eat a balanced diet' and the 1968's '*Jifunze Kusoma*', or 'learn how to read' campaign used illustrative posters and murals to reach thousands of people nationwide. It was proved that most of those campaigns which employed visual art as its chief media of communication were very successful (Mbughuni 1982:88).

Visual arts production during the *Ujamaa* period was closely monitored and censored by the socialist government of Tanzania. Indeed, the ruling party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), closely supervised and co-ordinated all cultural related productions, i.e. visual arts, through regional commissioners' offices on the Tanzanian mainland and Zanzibar. The office of the Cultural Officer at the regional and district levels organised and facilitated the registration of artists in production groups and other registered associations such as co-operative groups and artists' societies for easy consultation and mobilisation whenever state agencies or big private clients needed artistic services or artworks. TANU's decision to acknowledge and involve the arts as well as artistic activities in its operations during this



period is viewed in the present research as a crucial step taken towards helping the government offset the failures it experienced during the Arts of Independence Period campaign established in 1962:

*Mara tu baada ya kupata Uhuru, kupepea kwa bendera ya Taifa na kuimwakwawimbo wa Taifa havikubadilisha utaratibu na hali ya maisha wakati huo. Tuliendelea kuwa na hali ambayo ilitokea kufuatana na mgongano kati ya mbinu za kuzalisha mali na uhusiano wake wa jamii. Yaani tuliendelea kukabilia na uchaguzi kati ya utamaduni ulio na misingi katika mfumo wa uchumi wa asili na utamaduni wa kupandikiza wenye misingi ya kibepari (URT 1979:16)*

My translation:

Immediately after independence, when our flag was raised and our national anthem sung, our traditional life systems were not affected by these developments. We continued to experience a conflict between our economic production systems and our social relation structures. We were struggling to reshape and choose between our traditional cultures as evolved within our local economic systems and an imposed capitalistic culture.

With determination to improve the situation, in the early 1970s, TANU took the lead to ensure that it played a central role in promoting national culture and all activities related to its development as declared in its statement below:

*Mwaka 1970 Mkutano Mkuu wa 15 wa TANU ulitambua utamaduni kuwa ni 'Kielelezo cha utashi na uhai wa Taifa' Tangu hapo jitihada imefanywa Kuzingatia maana hii katika utekelezaji (URT 1979:1)*

My translation:

The 15<sup>th</sup> TANU's general meeting in 1970 acknowledged that Culture is an illustration of national determination and identity. Since then, more efforts were begun to implement cultural developments based on this notion.

TANU's statement revitalised the cultural decolonisation campaign by first, conforming to and rephrasing Nyerere's declarations of the significance of a National Culture, and second, by increasing its financial and ideological support for local culture sector's stakeholders such

as art institutions and individual art groups and artists' associations. This mission is articulated aptly by the following statement:

*...Maneno haya ya busara aliyoyasema Baba wa Taifa letu yalirudiwa tena kwa njia nyingine na Chama mnamo mwaka 1970, wakati Chama kiliposisitiza umuhimu wa Utamaduni kwa kuutambua kuwa ni 'kielelezo cha Uhai na Utashi wa Taifa'. Kwa hiyo ni sawa kabisa kusema kuwa Mtukufu Rais, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere ndiye aliyeweka msingi wa juhudi mpya za kufufua Utamaduni wa Taifa letu baada ya Uhuru. Kutokana na msingi huo, wale waliopewa jukumu la kutekeleza wajibu huo kwa upande wa Wizara, wamejitahidi kujenga juu ya msingi huo. Msingi huo pamoja na tamko la Chama vimekuwa ndiyo dira ya kuiongoza Wizara katika utekelezaji wa kazi yake iliyo ngumu, lakini pia ya muhimu sana (URT1979:)*

My translation:

These wise words, as delivered by the founding father of our nation, were slightly repeated albeit differently in the 1970s when the Party declared its acknowledgement of culture as an illustration of the nation's livelihood and self-determination. Therefore, it was correct to say that our honourable President Mwl. Julius K. Nyerere was the one who laid the foundation for the empowering strategies designed to revive our traditional culture after independence. It is from the foundation he built that those who were assigned to implement the cultural development task at the ministerial level have added their efforts. The foundation and the party declaration have guided the ministry in its execution of its difficult but imperative task.

In this regard, we can also see that the advent of *Ujamaa* Visual Arts period stemmed from political intervention in the cultural promotion programmes which led to the reinforcement and intensification of the earlier strategies set on national cultural development projects. This chapter later demonstrates that in the whole process of visual art production and the systems of distribution, there was a close relationship between visual arts and *Ujamaa* politics in Tanzania.

Before the current study, there has never been intensive research conducted on the subject of visual arts in relation to *Ujamaa* in Tanzania. The manifestation of the *Ujamaa*, or African

Socialism as the West prefers to call it, surfaced in a somewhat difficult form for the Western writers who have dominated art research in this area to decode and appreciate. The *Ujamaa* arts, particularly painting and murals, have benefited more from the attitudinal aspects of the Tanzanian *Ujamaa* concept than from its policy structures. As it will be explained later in this chapter, *Ujamaa* as an attitude manifested differently in the visual arts when compared to the kind of socialism which was practised in Europe and some parts of Asia. In fact, there are few similarities between *Ujamaa* art and ‘Socialist realism’, which was based on the form, such as realistic depictions of peasants and workers at work, but also in the socialist concept of “Art for a Purpose”. The *Ujamaa* visual arts, on the other hand, were created to conceptualise, visualise and depict synthesised traditional African societies’ cultures in aspects of economic and political relationships among members of an envisioned national society in the pursuit of community life and development. In this regard, *Ujamaa* art visualised an attitude of ‘associationalism’<sup>111</sup> as practised in many extended African families of pre-colonial Tanzanian societies (Nyerere 1968:162). A few writers have appreciated the visual art forms of the *Ujamaa* period without necessarily detailing its distinctive characteristics. Basing their analysis on a few elements of socialism as practised in the northern hemisphere, some Western writers on art in East Africa generally overlooked the socialist visual arts in Tanzania. Judith von D. Miller’s publication *Art in East Africa*, for example, comments that topics such as African socialism were not among the subject matter tackled by visual artists in the East African region during the early 1970s<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup>See Kakande 2008 p.141

<sup>112</sup> “...Perhaps the most striking omission in the art of East Africa is the art of social comment. Where does an artist express feelings about African unity, African freedom fighters, African socialism or protest or social comment of any sort...” (Miller 1975:19)

### **2.1.1 The *Ujamaa* as an Ideology and Policy in the Visual Arts of Tanzania**

The *Ujamaa* concept in the visual arts of Tanzania emerges from two political standpoints. These are *Ujamaa* as an ideology of the society as well as a state's policy machinery. These attributes have tended to attract controversy when it comes to a general appreciation of *Ujamaa* artworks whenever displayed before uninformed critics and audience. As an ideology, *Ujamaa* refers to an attitude of mind practised by people in Tanzania in relationship with one another in all societal life aspects. In Kiswahili, the *Ujamaa* ideology is simply defined as '*Utu*' (humanity) also translated into English as 'acts of a caring human being'. Generally, this interpretation was delivered by President Nyerere, the proponent of the retention of traditional African life system based on the extended family-like values in Tanzania. The *Ujamaa* attitudes were to be embraced and fully integrated in the new socio-cultural, political and economic life systems of independent Tanzania. The ideology was pronounced in all official practices in 1967 and ever since was slowly inculcated into people's minds, when all government development policies focused on bringing people more closely by referring to them as relatives within one big extended family, a wider society of the nation. Briefly, the *Ujamaa* attitude can be broadly referred to traits which produce a communal sense which displays 'familyhood' relationships. In relation to a political system, Nyerere explained in detail this attitude thusly:

*'Ujamaa'*, then, or 'familyhood', describes our socialism. It is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which also seeks to build a happy society on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man. We in Africa, have no more need of being 'converted' to socialism than we have of being taught democracy. Both are rooted in our own past-in the traditional society which produced us (Nyerere 1968:170)

As a version of African Socialism practiced in Tanzania, *Ujamaa* is ideologically different from European Socialism despite sharing some similarities with socialist policy structures such as those practised in the northern hemisphere when it comes to governance aspects such as state control of production systems and one party rule. The *Ujamaa* ideological aspects made it more of a somewhat lenient administrative practice than a strict political system. In fact, *Ujamaa* focused on building a humane affiliation, free of all precincts which would complicate their collective sense and instigate individualism which, in President Nyerere's view, could lead to acquisitive competition attitudes and, eventually, to capitalistic mindset. These differences basically stem from the essence and origins of socialism as practiced and as it evolved as a political system in some countries in Africa and Europe:

European socialism was born [out] of the Agrarian Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which followed it. The former created the 'landed' and the 'landless' classes in society; the latter produced the modern capitalist and the industrial proletariat. These two revolutions planted the seed of conflict within society, and not only was European socialism born of that conflict, but its apostles sanctified the conflict itself into a philosophy... [yet]

African socialism... did not have the 'benefit' of the Agrarian Revolution or the Industrial Revolution. It did not start from the existence of conflicting 'classes' in society. Indeed, I doubt if the equivalent for the word class exists in any indigenous African language; for language describes the ideas of those who speak it, and the idea of 'class' or 'caste' was non-existent in African society (Nyerere 1968: 168 - 170)

Against this backdrop, the *Ujamaa* ideology when represented in the visual arts is best appreciated based on the issues the arts portray with a focus placed on the political and economic values which have inspired the artists. In Nyerere's *Ujamaa* manifesto, the predominant theme he repeatedly maintained was people's caring for one another<sup>113</sup>. In an

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<sup>113</sup>See, *The Purpose is Man* (Nyerere 1968, p.162)

attempt to instil this ideology among the people, the socialist government of Tanzania, through its various propaganda institutions, commissioned several artists to produce hundreds of artworks to give a tangible form of Ujamaa attitudes. Most of such propaganda artworks were installed in many public squares and institutional spaces after their completion. Some artists, willingly, produced several artworks to appreciate *Ujamaa* as a way of life without any government authority commissioning them. The same patriotic support was shown by some wealthy art patrons, who commissioned the production of *Ujamaa* artworks. Beda Amuli, the first professional local Tanzanian architect and building contractor, for example, employed Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo as his artists in many projects he commissioned. Some information on patriotic Tanzanian artists and patrons who promoted the *Ujamaa* ideology and policies in the visual arts is provided in the subsequent sections of this chapter. The analysis of several *Ujamaa* artworks produced between 1967 and 1985 presented messages on topics such as calls for people's unity; Community participation in development endeavours (Fig.1); Leadership being a service to the public (Fig.76); Hard work being a prerequisite for socialist's success (Figs. 86 and 89); and People's welfare as a focus of the *Ujamaa* policies. Hundreds of Paintings, drawings and sculptures were created to instil a sense of *Ujamaa* (humanity) to the general public as well as give it a tangible form for easy comprehension. All *Ujamaa* arts have always depicted ordinary Tanzanians in their daily life chores while assisting one another. In many instances the artworks have employed three characters, namely; the Party or government leaders; the Peasants and the Workers performing different activities in the course of national development. As ideological mediums, visual arts of the *Ujamaa* period appealed to the audience's behaviour change and maintenance in an attempt to anchor the envisioned African socialism in Tanzania.

### 2.1.2 *Ujamaa* as a Cultural Policy

As a policy, *Ujamaa* in this context refers to cultural development plans to be collectively implemented nationwide that take cognisance of Tanzania's diverse sub-cultures for the benefit of the majority in the creation of a national culture. In the making of the policy, *Ujamaa* provided a basis for the conception of an African humanity<sup>114</sup> principle which, according to President Nyerere, is an integral component of the implementation of *Ujamaa* politics. In his own words, Nyerere describes *Ujamaa* policy as a blend of African humanistic attitudes and the standard political pattern in which the people and the government adhere to the pursuit of collective development (Nyerere 1968:162). This way *Ujamaa* visual art was created to portray an unassailable unanimity of cultural, socio-economic, political values, and themes. And as required by the policy, the visual arts were employed as branding and promotion media for parastatal services and products. Apart from the visual arts, the mass media, such as Radio Tanzania – Dar es Salaam (RTD), promoted and spread *Ujamaa* policies nationwide. The radio had a mass appeal and nationwide reach. In this communication set-up, *Ujamaa* artistic expressions complemented both the ideological and policy aspects in such a way that makes it difficult to analyse these aspects of *Ujamaa* separately.

This study reveals that in several instances some foreign scholars failed to conceptualise *Ujamaa* in relation to the visual arts in Tanzania. As a result, there happened several cases

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<sup>114</sup> See, Chapter Four: The African Ubuntu Philosophy, accessed at Berlin - Germany, from: <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28706/04chapter4.pdf?sequence=5> on 9 September 2017

of misinterpretations. Kelly Askew (2005)<sup>115</sup>, while studying the Tanzanian national culture which massively influenced national artistic productions might have missed something somewhere. This particular writer for example, either had misunderstood or misinterpreted Nyerere's idea of national culture; which, she describes as an 'importation or an absurd composition of a national culture'<sup>116</sup>. A similar misunderstanding is reflected by some other Western writers in their criticism of the *Ujamaa* policies in fields such as agriculture and education. These and many other misunderstandings might have prompted Blommaert (2013:30) to argue that the conception of *Ujamaa* in Tanzania should not be lightly interpreted by outsiders. *Ujamaa* cultural policy in this case was either viewed as a replication of socialism as practiced in the northern hemisphere countries, as it was not written in one monolithic document (Mbughuni 1974). The biggest contribution to the creation of *Ujamaa* cultural policy was provided by Nyerere's presidential inauguration speech of 10 December 1962 and many other cultural statements made between 1967 and the 1980s. In the past few years, several scholars from within and outside Tanzania have pounced upon this topic as one of the areas worthy of study on cultural productions in the country. The most recent studies in this case include works by one of Tanzania's eminent scholars of theatre arts, Penina Mloma (1985), South African art historian Mario Pissarra (2015), and American writers on theatre arts such as Kelly Askew (2002, 2005). The intricate issues related to the *Ujamaa* cultural policy, as presented in the arts, were not only tackled by Western critics but also by some local intellectuals from the arts and cultural studies. In

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<sup>115</sup> Mario Pissarra, while discussing the works of Sam Ntiro, shows little understanding of the incorporation of the *Ujamaa* philosophy into the visual arts as it was practised in Tanzania. Angelo Kakande has exhaustively covered this aspect in his discussion of Sam Ntiro's art. See Kakande, 2008, pp.137-148

<sup>116</sup> See, Askew 2002, pp.178-191



the mid-1980s, two Tanzanian art educators, Elias Jengo<sup>117</sup> and Penina Mlama,<sup>118</sup> in their articles on the *Ujamaa* cultural policy and development of the arts, criticised the Tanzanian government for lacking a defined policy to administer and guide all cultural productions such as the visual arts and theatre, as was the case in other socialist countries such as the then German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Peoples Republic of China and the Soviet Union. On the other hand, this study found that since 1967, when socialism was adopted, some top officials in the arts and cultural sector claimed that the Tanzanian socialist government had a clearly-defined cultural policy operating in all its institutions and hence, there was no need to reproduce a monolithic cultural policy document. In this regard, Louis Mbughuni explains:

Recently I was talking to a friend, and I told him that I was finishing a study entitled *The Cultural Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania*. His reaction to my statement shocked me at first, although it contained some truth. ‘You know,’ he said, ‘we have no cultural policy in Tanzania. Many people misunderstand what culture is; culture is not dance, art, music and theatre alone or even traditional relics. Culture embodies every aspect of our life as a whole.’ There are three points which struck me in relation to this statement. First, in the United Republic of Tanzania there is a need to clarify and to educate people in the Culture Division, the various related government ministries and the general public on the fact that our culture embodies every aspect of our life. Second, there is a general false concept that we have no cultural policy in the republic. The opinion of this friend, whether he meant and believed what he said or whether it was merely a slip of the tongue, seems to be held by a number of people. The people who hold this view evidently have an ideal concept of a monolithic cultural high command, an effective higher authority controlling, directing and supervising a national cultural programme, cultural organs, cultural activities-creating a unified policy for all cultural functions in the life of the present-day republic as a whole. The short-comings of our machinery have misled many people into believing that we have no cultural policy. This idea of a monolithic cultural authority may be ideal in that it provides the machinery for consistency and continuity in developing policy and

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<sup>117</sup> Jengo, E. (1984) Towards a National Cultural Policy for the Promotion of Art in Tanzania, Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam

<sup>118</sup> Mlama, P. (1983) Tanzania's Cultural Policy and Its Implications for the Contribution of the Arts to Socialist Development, Department of Art, Music and Theatre, University of Dar es Salaam

co-ordinating the mini-policies for all aspects of culture. In a way, this has been one major problem for cultural policy in the United Republic of Tanzania. What some people overlook is the fact that the cultural high command of the republic, as that of any developing country, grows from the total *sum* of the government and party policies which determine the functions of the numerous departments involved in culture and the national goals; the reorganizations proposed in August 1973 seem to provide the link that was missing (Mbughuni 1974:9)

As a matter of fact, complaints about the lack of a clearly-stated cultural policy before 1997 were not new. Mbughuni was then working for the Ministry of National Education and Culture as a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts at the UDSM, where many art educators were also faculty members. This scenario of university lecturers debating whether “there was” or “there was no” cultural policy during the *Ujamaa* era in Tanzania exposes a confusion created after Nyerere’s presidential inauguration speech of 10 December 1962. Through that speech Nyerere introduced the Ministry of National Culture and Youth. Some local cultural experts<sup>119</sup> claim that he also provided a framework for Tanzanian National Cultural Policy as well. In the concluding remarks of his speech, President Nyerere observed:

...So I have set up this new Ministry to help us regain our pride in our own culture. I want it to seek out the best of traditions and customs of our tribes and make them a part of our national culture. I hope everybody will do what he can to help the work of this new Ministry... (Nyerere 1968:187)

According to Mbughuni, Nyerere’s ideas for the cultural policy were direct, simple and clearly spelled out in its purpose. To him, the new cultural policy, among other procedural activities, meant a complete revival of the best socio-cultural traditions and customs from a diversity of ethnic groups and streaming them into the ‘collective’ way of life in the

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<sup>119</sup> Louis Mbughuni and Daniel Ndagala agree that through the speech, Nyerere pronounced what constitutes the Tanzania National Cultural Policy

immediate post-independence period. Therefore, it was up to the people to start putting the policy into practice instead of waiting for it to be written and presented to them. Both Nyerere and Mbughuni assumed that every Tanzanian was aware of the best pre-colonial cultures and, therefore, no manuals were needed to guide them to its full comprehension. On the contrary, Jengo and Mloma were sceptical as they believed a written policy document was necessary to address the complexities of the process of selecting the best traditions and customs to be integrated into the new national cultural policy from more than 120 ethnic sub-cultures. A slightly similar sentiment was later shared by Askew (2005:306) who said:

The radical turn towards socialism evoked a complimentary shift in the poetics of cultural production. Whereas the ministry's goals in the years immediately following independence were to collect, document and promote all indigenous arts and customs, from 1967 on a socialist template was superimposed on the process of collection: only those practices considered progressive and in keeping with socialist principles would be retained. The writings of Fanon, Bertolt Brecht, Ernst Fischer, Paolo Freire, and Augusto Boal wielded considerable influence in this process. By the early 1970s, then, Tanzania cultural production was clearly articulated as a political project, as illustrated by the following assessment of the ruling party's (then TANU – the Tanganyika African National Union)

This extract shows that, unlike Jengo and Mloma, who were optimistic about the idea and not the approach towards the creation of a national culture, Askew is one of the Western critics who disagreed with the concept of Tanzania borrowing from other cultures to improve its own. She appears to favour Tanzania creating a national culture free of Western influences, imbued with lots of ethnic cultural aspects in order to maintain its 'authenticity'. Mbughuni, on the other hand, was among the few Tanzanian patriots who assisted the new Ministry in its task of creating and preserving the aspired new national culture. He vehemently defended the notion that Tanzania already had a cultural policy, but one which was not understood. To substantiate his understanding of the policy as delivered through

Nyerere's speech in 1974, Mbughuni, as a representative from Tanzania, used the speech in a study *The Cultural Policy of the United Republic of Tanzania*, which he presented in Paris during one of the UNESCO's series on cultural policy. The study was approved by several Tanzanian government authorities<sup>120</sup> and was hailed as one of the concrete manifestations of the Tanzania Cultural Policy:

This study will show that in the United Republic of Tanzania we have a stated and clear national cultural policy, including and subsuming the policies of the various government departments, societies, companies, the Party and government-affiliated bodies (Mbughuni 1974:10)

While analysing Mbughuni's version of the supposedly *Ujamaa* Cultural Policy, which highly commends and promotes visual arts among other art genres, Askew (2005:307) based her comments on only six issues summarised in the policy to highlight and describe the socialist (*Ujamaa*) arts practices under government patronage:

In his 1974 contribution to UNESCO series on cultural policy, Louis Mbughuni, former Director of Arts and Language in the Ministry of Culture summarized Tanzania's cultural policy in six points:

- i. A selective revival of our traditions and customs
- ii. Promotion and preservation of our cultural heritage
- iii. Our culture as an instrument of national development and unity
- iv. The development of our tribal cultures into one national culture
- v. The contribution of our cultures towards the development of man-kind and the contribution of other cultures to our own development

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<sup>120</sup> I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following sources and people: *Education for Self-Reliance* by Nyerere; the national Culture Division, for granting me access to written sources on cultural policy; McKinsey & Co. Inc. report, for the charts on the administrative structure; photographic unit, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, for the illustrations of the Village Museum houses and the National Museum; the Director of the National Archives, for the National Archives' annual report for 1964/65; K. Mturi, Conservator of Antiquities, for materials on the antiquities of the United Republic of Tanzania; the current Commissioner for Culture, and other officers in related departments; the Secretary to the National Sports Council; National Swahili Council; and E. Jengo, for letting me use his painting as an illustration... (Mbughuni 1974)

- vi. The necessity of overhauling the educational systems inherited from the former colonial powers and the need for all Tanzanian to remove the influence of the mentality from their minds

This list highlights a number of relevant points: first, the intention to be *selective* in cultural recovery; second, the use of Culture (capitalized in the original text) as a tool for nationalist—by this time determinedly *socialist*—development; third, *standardization* or *homogenization* of culture vis-à-vis the desire to unify all groups into a single national culture; fourth, a stand against cultural isolation as expressed by the desire for *cultural exchange* with other (primarily other socialist) countries; and finally, *anti-colonialist* rejection of the colonial residue in education specifically, but more generally, throughout Tanzanian society. Socialism provided the scale on which customs were weighed for selection and repression. It projected development goals to be echoed through artistic productions. In short, socialism determined both the object (a young nation struggling out from under the weight of an oppressive colonial past) and the objective (a truly egalitarian, self-reliant, socialist society) of national cultural production.

Despite her controversial interpretation of Mbughuni's six main points of the *Ujamaa* cultural Policy, Askew (2005) touches on several areas which, to some extent, help to define *Ujamaa* as a policy. Her observations show that the *Ujamaa* policy thrust to bring together and merge a diversity of artistic practices from more than 120 ethnic groups of Tanzania in an attempt to create a national culture entailed the core essence of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* policies. Evidence for this claim is enormous, as was later shown in campaigns such as Villagisation; Declaration of Kiswahili as the National Language over all ethnic tongues and the 1963 abolishment of chieftaincy as one of the recognised official political practices in Tanzania (Omari 1987:68). As observed during fieldwork for this study, the visual arts produced to

express *Ujamaa* as a policy included those made and commissioned by public institutions such as HANDICO, the Bagamoyo National Arts College and several other visual arts cooperative unions, societies and other groups which were subsidised by the government.

As a policy, *Ujamaa* was responsible for the emergence of visual arts with direct political comments incorporating narratives of the ruling party, TANU, and later CCM victories, and the successes of the good work of patriotic workers and peasants (Fig.126). Significantly, *Ujamaa* as policy in the visual arts inspired the creation of the dominant protagonists of the story of *Ujamaa* art period. These protagonists were the workers and the peasants portrayed in many artworks as the drivers of the *Ujamaa* policy (See figures 78, 79 and 81). During the colonial era, the workers and peasants were not among the subjects of the visual art practices as they were during the *Ujamaa* period. Indeed, the depiction of the common people, workers and peasants in the implementation of the *Ujamaa* visual arts policy helped to coin the *Ujamaa* visual grammar. The critics of arts during the *Ujamaa* period timidly appreciate it as an emulation of art from other socialist countries such as the USSR, East Germany and, specifically, China. Askew (2005:308) and Lange (2001:144) are critical of the arts of the *Ujamaa* period by propagating a different view from the one previously established by local intellectuals<sup>121</sup>. More on the visual grammar of the *Ujamaa* period is intensively discussed in the *Political and Cultural Iconography of Ujamaa Visual Arts* section within this chapter. On the other hand, the *Ujamaa* as a policy for the visual arts is acknowledged for stretching the borders for more participants' involvement in cultural production and increased art

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<sup>121</sup> See, *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania* (BASATA 1984) and *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo*, (Wizara ya Utamaduni wa Taifa na Vijana-URT 1979)

businesses. Jengo (1985:123) found this development a disadvantage when considering the quality of artworks produced and the welfare of the artists. As evident in Chapter One of this study, during the independence period, art productions and the businesses surrounding it were limited to a few trained artists who also worked for the government in various cultural promotion institutions. In a nutshell, *Ujamaa* as an attitude of mind among individuals in the society, as well as a policy guiding the authorities in the administration of cultural production, influenced a new way of thinking and expression through the visual arts, an expression of the people's way of life experienced only in the rural life of socialist Tanzania (Pissarra 2015:34). The persistent aura witnessed after the nationwide implementation of *Ujamaa* policy from the end of the 1960s until the late 1980s reflected precisely the aspired changes presented by Nyerere in his presidential inauguration speech of 10 December 1962.

## **2.2 Stylistic Characteristics and Aesthetics in the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

This section provides brief information on how the *Ujamaa* visual arts were produced and presented. It describes the technical features or methods as seen on displays whenever *Ujamaa* arts were encountered. The present study found that the *Ujamaa* arts had several stylistic features which were unique when compared to other visual arts practised in different socialist countries. Unlike Socialist Realism, which emphasised the formalist-realist approach in the execution of artworks, *Ujamaa* visual arts were narrative-oriented, but in some instances they borrowed formalist techniques albeit on a minimal scale. As Lange (2002) once observed, unlike other socialist policies, Tanzania's *Ujamaa* was not as dogmatic as Marxism. Indeed, the present study found that *Ujamaa* visual arts were neither Stalinist nor Maoist emulations. These opening statements should summarise what the audience of this particular kind of art should expect to discover in Tanzania's 'socialist art'.

### 2.2.1 Aesthetics in the *Ujamaa* Artworks

The *Ujamaa* arts were produced with the intention of promoting and appreciating the activities and achievements of the peasants and workers in the task of nation-building in Tanzania. In other words, these were the arts for praising the fruits of hard-working Tanzanians, since the country embarked on a socialist path. Briefly, the artworks could be appreciated as alternative mouth-pieces of the government and the ruling party besides the role played by the national mainstream media outlets such as RTD and the party papers such as *Mfanyakazi*, *Mzalendo* and *Uhuru*. Unlike in the independence period<sup>122</sup>, beauty and meanings of artworks during *Ujamaa* were more intuitive, spiritual, political, and intellectual than visual. Most of the works placed heavy emphasis on the subject matter rather than on the artistic technique. This claim is evidenced by the works of the famous *Ujamaa* artists such as Sam Ntiro, Kiure Msangi, Paul Ndembo and Fatma Abdallah. Since the state never provided aesthetic standards as yardsticks towards the appreciation of the national arts or the *Ujamaa* arts, the larger task was in the hands of artists to do their best to meet the demands of the socialist authorities and, sometimes, satisfy their audience's art needs. Generally, the aesthetics of the *Ujamaa* artworks relied heavily on their functions in promoting ethics and morals in the daily life of the society rather than their visual appeal. Many appraisals of the *Ujamaa* arts proved to be valid, as the following comment attests:

In socialist society all art is seen as a servant of society. A tool to help man better understands and shapes his society according to his collective needs. Divorcing art or the artist from society is another sin of the decadent bourgeoisie society, inseparable from commercialisation of art which all socialist societies have to fight... (Mbughuni and Ruhumbika 1974:280)

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid



Five years after the above statement, another significant utterance embraced a similar idea, but this time placed more emphasis on arts as tools for the development of Tanzanian society:

*Sanaa katika Ujamaa zimeshikamana na shughuli zote za maisha ya watu. Huambatana na fikra sahihi za watu hao, pia historia yao na matumaini yao. Nchi yetu inafuata misingi ya Ujamaa na Kujitegemea. Katika mfuma huo msanii ni sehemu ya umma. Yeye ni sehemu ya umma. Masanii ana jukumu la kuburudisha umma na kuwa mtetezi wake. Jukumu lake ni kutoa ukweli, kuupa mwamko wa kuzalisha mali, ili umma uweze kukabiliana na mazingira yanayohusika. Kwa hiyo sanaa kama kielelezo, kama silaha ya mapambano, kama msukumo wa maendeleo ya taifa, ni lazima zihusishwe kikamilifu katika juhudi zetu za kujikomboa, kujenga ujamaa na juhudi zetu za kujitegemea. Sanaa za kitanzania ni lazima zimetee mkulima na mfanyakazi (URT 1979:23)*

My translation:

The arts within Ujamaa are intertwined with all the chores in people's lives. The arts emerge from the people's righteous feelings and thoughts, also their hopes and expectations. Our country follows the principles of Socialism and Self-Reliance. Under this system, an artist is a full member of the society. In it he or she has the responsibility of entertaining and defending his society through his works. It is in the responsibilities of an artist in his works to give the truth and project it in the production activities so that the public or the society can face it in their respective environments. Therefore, art as an illustration, as a weapon in the struggle and as a force in national development must be fully involved in our efforts to emancipate ourselves and build socialism and our efforts to be self-reliant. Tanzanian arts must defend and compliment the victories of the peasants and the workers

For more than a decade after the beginning of official *Ujamaa* arts production, this view was shared by many creators and commissioners of art in this period, particularly public institutions. In fact, there is a striking pictorial and thematic similarity of many *Ujamaa* artworks despite of their being made by different artists, being commissioned by different agents, being established at different times and being installed in different spaces.

### **2.2.1.1 The Arusha Declaration and the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

All 'good' or rather accepted artworks during the *Ujamaa* period were concerned with the promotion of the values as espoused by the Arusha Declaration of 5 February 1967. The declaration was a political and administrative initiative that the TANU national executive under Julius Kambarage Nyerere, its Chairperson and the first President of the United Republic of Tanzania sought to promote. The Arusha Declaration was aimed at laying down the foundation and as a necessary condition for the adoption of socialist policies:

...The declaration defined what socialism means in the context of Tanzania, it set out qualifications which had to be fulfilled by all leadership positions in politics and public service, and it demanded a much more serious commitment to self-reliance in our development (Nyerere 1975:12)

Following the agreement to the declaration by the TANU executive committee on behalf of Tanzanians, three detailed policies were pronounced as a statement of commitment to socialism by the Party, TANU and Tanzanians in general (Nyerere 1975:12). The policies declared were *Education for Self-Reliance; Socialism and Rural Development* and *Freedom and Development*. Four pillars of socialism were devised as focus areas for implementation: The People, Land, Equitable Policies and Good Governance. In practice, these pillars were interpreted into development projects such the nationalisation of private property for complete public control and participation in production; Africanisation of the Civil Service; re-organization of scattered small peasants' settlements into *Ujamaa* villages for easy of socio-economic service provision and labour mobilisation; Education for Self-reliance to expedite development in the Tanzanian context; and promotion of collective agricultural practices thereby making it the backbone of the national economy. Artwork subject matters such as Collective Action, Unity of the People, Hard Work and Life in the Socialist Villages,

and many others as analysed and discussed by Ntiro (1975), Fosu (1986), Kyeyune (2003), Kakande (2008) and Pissarra (2015) in connection with socialist politics in Tanzania reflect the principles and policies of the Arusha Declaration. In fact, the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary monument in Arusha symbolises these four pillars of the Arusha Declaration (see Fig.77). In its 1979 publication, the government urged and encouraged artists to understand and interpret these policies into artistic messages and help the government reach the majority of the people nationwide:

*Kwa mfano, baada ya azimio la Arusha kupitishwa mwezi Fubruari mwaka 1967, jambo la kwanza la muhimu lilikuwa kuwaelimisha wananchi juu ya Azimio hilo ili walielewe barabara na ndipo utekelezaji wa ujenzi wa Ujamaa na kujitegemea uanze na kuendelea kwa kasi. Sanaa zilihusisha kikamilifu katika utoaji wa elimu hiyo. Vikundi vya ngoma, kwaya na muziki vilitunga nyimbo zilizofafanua Azimio. Tamthiliya, ngonjera, mashairi na tenzi vilitungwa na kuonyeshwa hadharani au kuchapishwa vitabuni. Sanaa za kuchora na kuchonga zilitengenezwa. Hata picha ya filamu “Fimbo ya Mnyonge” ilitengenezwa. Vyote vilikuwa na lengo la kuendeleza ufahamu wa Taifa juu ya Azimio la Arusha. Mfano mwingine ni kwamba mapema mwaka 1978 Ofisi kuu ya Sensa iliwaomba wasanii wa ngoma, kwaya na muziki washiriki katika kutoa elimu kwa Taifa juu ya umuhimu wa hesabu ya watu kwa kutunga nyimbo zenye lengo hilo (URT 1979:27)*

My translation:

For example, immediately after the Arusha Declaration, it was pronounced in February 1967 that the priority was to raise public awareness of the Declaration so that they can better understand its objectives for them to participate fully in the building of Socialism and Self-Reliance. The arts were fully involved in providing the intended knowledge. Dance groups, choirs and music ensembles created and performed songs which explained the values of the Declaration. Drama, recitations and poetry pieces were also created and enacted before public audiences or published in books. Murals and sculptures too were executed for this course. All these aspects were intended to increase national awareness of the Arusha Declaration. Another example was that of the National Census Office, which in early 1978 used dancers and music artists to create

and perform artworks which explain the significance and benefits of participating in the national population census activity

Despite reports<sup>123</sup> showing that the achievements of the Arusha Declaration post-1967 were mainly due to the good work of the Tanzania Information Services (TIS), or *Maelezo* in Kiswahili, the RTD remained the oldest and largest medium that administered the official information sector since independence. Other media such as the arts were also fully involved as information dissemination channels. With the liquidation of the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation, formerly a British colonial entity, into Radio Tanzania – Dar es Salaam (RTD), the only national medium until 1994, when more privately-owned media came into being in Tanzania, communication through RTD broadcasts was inconsistent and unreliable throughout the country (Sturmer 1993). In many instances, art during Tanzanian socialism was considered an important and suitable alternative means of communication. *Ngoma*, traditional dances and visual arts were always employed beside radio programmes to deliver government messages to the remote populations which could otherwise not be easily reached by the government, as the following statement illustrates:

*Picha, sanamu na michoro ya vitu au mapambo mbalimbali hutumika kutoa maana zaidi ya kufafanua ujumbe wa mwalimu kwa wanafunzi. Ni kwa njia hii ya pekee wanafunzi wanaweza kuelewa barabara na kuweka kumbukumbu kichwani ya kile kilichoelezwa na kukiona...Taifa letu ni mojawapo ya mataifa yanayokabiliwa na Ujinga, Maradhi na Umasikini. Katika kampeni ya taifa “Mtu ni Afya”, “Chakula ni Uhai” na “Kisomo chenye Manufaa” zilizoandaliwa kukabili matatizo haya, Ofisi ya Waziri mkuu ikishirikiana na Chama na Mashirika ya Umma imemhusisha sana msanii katika utoaji vielelezo kwa njia ya khanga na vitenge. Nguo hizi hupendwa sana na wananchi na hivyo ni rahisi kusambaza ujumbe wa serikali kwa wananchi. Hii ni njia pekee ya kuweza*

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<sup>123</sup> At independence, TBC had six studios and one transmitting station. The transmitter’s total power output was only 38.75 kilowatts. Now RTD has eight studios and three transmitter sites with a total power output of 242.25 kilowatts; this is more than six times the capacity of 1961. In other words, apart from occasional ionosphere problems, RTD signals can be picked up throughout the country and beyond its borders, in TNR no.76, 1975 on *Information Services and Radio Tanzania: Informing the Nation*

*kuwafikishia ujumbe wasomi na wasiojua kusoma mahali pote mikoani ambako pengine ujumbe kwa njia ya redio usingewafikia*  
(Bishota and Kandoro 1979:68-69)

My translation:

Murals, paintings, and sculptures and other object arts are used by teachers as aids. It is only through these ways and methods that students can better understand their lessons and remember what they have learnt and saw as examples...Our nation is one of those countries struggling and fighting against poverty, ignorance and diseases—dubbed the three enemies of the country. In our national campaign such as ‘*Man is Health*’, ‘*Food is Life*’ and ‘*Literacy for Social Development*’ which were prepared to tackle these problems, the Prime Minister’s Office in collaboration with the ruling Party and parastatal organisations have closely involved artists in designing and producing information communication materials in textiles such as the *Khanga* and *Kitenge* wrappers. Such textiles are favourites among many in the public and, hence, facilitate the effective dissemination of information. This is the easiest way to reach both the literate and illiterate populations in regions (provinces) of the country. Indeed, if the message was channelled only through the radio it could not have reached some pockets or segments of the population



**Fig.73 The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary monument in Arusha**  
**The murals on the side-walls of the monument’s feet created by Sam Ntiro in 1974**  
(source: tutokemedia.blogspot.de & mwananchi.co.tz, accessed on August 2019)

However, the later *Ujamaa* arts, particularly paintings created by the younger generation of artists during the mature stage of *Ujamaa* policies, that is, between 1975 and 1985, borrowed a lot from socialist realism as practised in other socialist countries (see figs. 74 and 76). This

development could be attributed to many events that unfolded. One could be Tanzania's friendship with these countries, even though there is no evidence indicating that Tanzanian art educators acquired their training in those countries. Moreover, the lack of traditional life experiences among the younger artists' generation when compared to their seniors, such as Abdalla Farahani and Sam Ntiro, could have encouraged them to look for models under the socialist banner. Furthermore, university education<sup>124</sup> had exposed them to more sophisticated genres of socialist arts, such as GDR expressionism, for example. Also, there was a desire for them to display their acquired artistic skills, a characteristic which was ignored by the older generation of the pioneers of independence and the *Ujamaa* arts in Tanzania such as Elimo Njau. The new *Ujamaa* artworks (figs. 74 and 76) displayed both visual beauty and socialist values such as collective action; hard work and commitment to the society, the same dominant values of socialist realism as presented by Elizabeth Rogers in her online publication - *Socialist Realism* (2012). In these artworks, we see hard-working peasants in the fields (Fig.74) and workers in mining industries, as well as a young patriot, Julius Nyerere, as a teacher in the classroom teaching a young generation of Tanzanians (Fig.76), affirming a popular political slogan which says '*Vijana ni Taifa la Kesho*' in Kiswahili, meaning that the youths will determine the nation's future.

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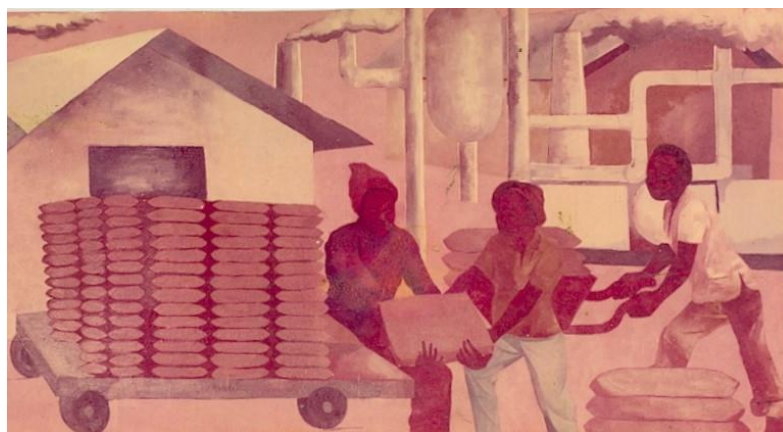
<sup>124</sup> Festo Kijo and John Masanja were among early graduates of the art course at the University of Dar es Salaam. Their art style is always confused with that of Elias Jengo, their teacher while studying Fine Arts at the UDSM in the 1980s. Unlike Njau and Ntiro, who were his teachers, Elias Jengo's painting style was affected by Cecil Todd's curriculum at Makerere. His painting is based on Western techniques which emphasise on anatomical composition and canonical application of colour. Yet, his paintings are sometimes not very different from that of European artists depicting their experience in tropical Africa, full of vibrant warm colours and narrative to specific moments.



**Fig.74 Tea Harvesting, Oil painting by Yunga, 1979, contributed by B.N. Desai**  
(Photograph by researcher in October 2015, at NMT in Dar es Salaam)

‘Tea Harvesting’ by Yunga is an interesting piece created for the purpose of extolling the hard work of peasants as well as farm workers in the large plantations during the Ujamaa policy period. The painting depicts khaki-uniformed workers harvesting tea. Its background is covered with a thick forest of trees under heavy cirrocumulus clouds which suggests a cold weather such as that of Iringa, Mbeya and Kilimanjaro regions where tea grows well among the chief cash crops. According to Elias Jengo, Yunga is supposedly a former student or an apprentice of Bhupendra Nathubhai Desai, who was an influential artist and art teacher at the Zanaki Secondary School in Dar es Salaam. Desai was also among key painters of the Tanganyika Art Society (TAS), a vibrant art association, under the chairmanship of Sam Ntiro in the early 1960s. Like his supposed mentor, Desai (fig.30), Yunga’s preferred painting style is ‘impressionism’ as seen on his only artwork (fig.74) available at the NMT in Dar es Salaam. In his artwork, Yunga paints, clouds, tea baskets, and human figures are realistic with a strong alignment in creating colour harmony. His white and blue hatching is

carefully distributed in the entire painting to enhance light balance. His good command in the use of impasto strokes and ‘broken colour’ technique helps to categorize him among young modern painter of the Ujamaa period alongside Elias Jengo and Kiure Msangi. Desai’s portrait of President Nyerere (fig.182) is used as a canon in the process of appreciating Yunga’s work. In addition, the fact that Desai donated Yunga’s work to the NMT’s permanent collection in 1979 seals the claim that Yunga was definitely Desai’s apprentice or a friend with whom he trained and worked.



**Fig.75 Workers in a Cement factory, mural at the Bank of Tanzania (BoT)—the country’s central bank, Mbeya Branch, by Elias Jengo (1980)**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)

Elias Jengo’s artworks which frequently featured in many art projects executed under Sam Ntiro’s supervision, appeared with a different technical and aesthetic taste in the new Ujamaa artworks. Jengo’s murals executed in several BoT branches clearly depict his mastery of anatomical formalisms, colour theory as well as an amazing understanding of perspective. When looking at his artworks, it is impossible to resist the assertion that, while studying at Makerere he became a devout ‘disciple’ of Cecil Todd’s teachings on ‘African modernism’ that was based on ‘European standards’ (See, Kasfir 1999:146-147). Unlike Sam Ntiro,



Jengo's art style is academic<sup>125</sup>. Fosu (1986:177) argues that Elias Jengo's style is academically composed while making his themes naturalistic. A number of murals he co-created with Ntiro during the BoT commission is attested by the compliments he receives. Fig. 75 also portrays Jengo's ability in both, stylistic skills and creativity on naturalistic themes. The mural depicts an encounter of three central elements of the Ujamaa production system. On the background, there is a factory in full swing operation with several chimneys blowing smoke in the skies. On the left side of the painting stands two factory operators receiving raw materials (produces) delivered by a group of men, presumably the peasants who are seen at the right side of the painting unloading bags of goods. As described in Fig. 146, it is Jengo's artwork themes as for the essence of all the murals made for the BoT, are direct and simple to understand. The works promote successes of the central bank during the

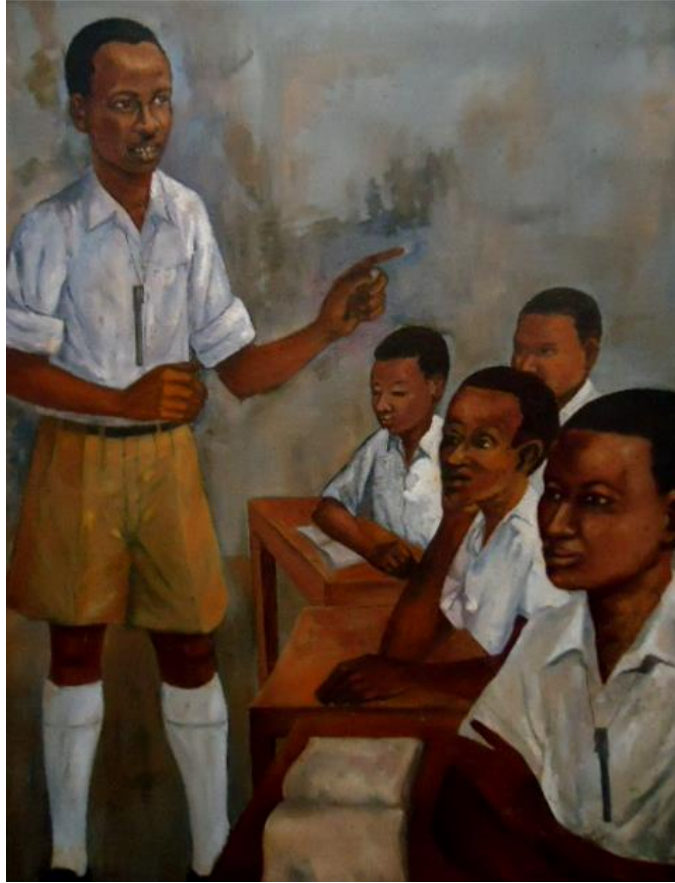
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<sup>125</sup>During my analysis of the BoT murals, I realized that Elias Jengo was struggling to be a 'perfectionist' in his artistic practice. Most of the murals he executed were carefully tackled and well finished unlike those executed by his colleague, Sam Ntiro. But when I looked at Fig. 145, painted on one of the walls at Mbeya branch, I found something unusual. This particular mural has been co-painted by Ntiro and Jengo. This has never happened before. In almost all projects these two artists have participated, each of them made his own artworks independently. This is evident in the Kilimanjaro Region CCM Headquarters' mural series as well as those made in Dodoma CCM headquarters. In September 2015, when I visited the Posta House at Dar es Salaam to collect information on another mural project by these same artists, I also noticed that Jengo has worked on some parts of several murals executed by Sam Ntiro. A trained eye sees clearly that Jengo's additional touches were meant to correct Ntiro's technical flaws. On several of Ntiro's pieces at Posta House, Jengo tried to sharpen anatomical proportions of the human figures as well as the balance of objects in compositions. Unlike in the Posta House mural, where only a few minor details were added. On the Mbeya mural, Jengo pierces into Ntiro's complete work with a full woman figure. He positioned the figure at the far right side of the painting, portraying her picking tea leaves with a tea-basket on her back. The big part of the mural is dominated by Ntiro's composition depicting coffee trees and banana plants arranged in a shallow one-point perspective, also a woman and a man harvesting coffee. Jengo's woman figure is very realistic and so are the tea leaves he painted. As commented in the past works, Ntiro's human figures are more of 'outlines' with very little details but on the coffee and banana plants. His baskets filled with coffee beans are poorly proportioned too. Both artists have not painted the background of their compositions. When I met Elias Jengo on the 25th September 2018, I asked him about this mural. His response was that, he and Ntiro agreed that he (Jengo) had to paint that part of the mural as it looked 'empty'. Jengo insisted that he had no other intention but to complete the mural nicely.

Ujamaa policy. Jengo's stylistic confidence and boldness over the oil paint medium and artistic tools he uses enable him to suggest appealing details and texture with minimal brushwork effort. However, apart from his 'artistic accomplishments' Jengo's overuse of yellow, brown and tan colours in the BoT murals (particularly in figures; 146, 147 and 148) contradicts the supposedly 'flamboyant and warm atmosphere' of the Ujamaa period to that which he creates in his artworks. The BoT murals particularly fig. 146 and 148 despite appropriating loud, crowded and busy factory' scenes such as the production section in the Urafiki Textile Factory, they depict a 'serene mood', very 'calm and leisurely' environment such as that which a viewer expects to experience in the artworks about hospice environment. The 'calm and slow' mood of the workers and the general atmosphere depicted in Jengo's BoT murals is very different to the busy and warm impressions of the Ujamaa supporters depicted on Kiure Msangi's *Ujamaa* artwork (Fig. 106). Perhaps, Jengo's inspiration was not fetched from his actual experience of *Ujamaa*. A closer look at his profile shows that, his academic painting style was highly influenced by serene scenery painters such as Eugène Henri, Paul Gauguin, and John Constable. Jengo's style closely emulates that of Gauguin. His early and later painting genre, particularly in the choice and use of warm colours on works such as 'Refugee' (1963) Fig.35 and 'Playing Traditional Music' (1980) Fig.28 bears a close resemblance to Paul Gauguin's '*Where do we come from? What are we? Where do we go?*' (1897-1898) and 'Hail Mary' (1893). This observation affirms the claim that Elias Jengo's painting genre is definitely influenced by the modern art training he received at Makerere University in Uganda and Canada (Swafi 2008).

The murals in the BoT commend the vital position of this institution in the national social and economic growth. Mural art has helped to clearly show BoT's progress and contribution

in influencing the development of education, agriculture, and industry sectors. Without the aid of texts, the murals narrate the story of the growth of skilled labour needed in the new industries and other production sectors in independent Tanzania. Through these murals, figures 146 and 148 in particular, the BoT conceitedly advertises its sponsorship programmes in the education sector. The factory technicians or workers depicted in the mural are perhaps the proud graduates from the new Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) and the then Faculty of Engineering (now College of Engineering and Technology [CoET]) of the University of Dar es Salaam. Before 1994, these institutions were fully subsidized by the central government through BoT as chief higher education sponsor. The murals also help to advertise advancements in the local manufacturing sector in which the Urafiki Textiles represented achievements in the installation of new Ujamaa factories such as MUTEX in Musoma, MWATEX in Mwanza, MOTEX in Morogoro, Sungura Textile Mills in Dar es Salaam and the Arusha Textiles Limited.



**Fig.76 Mwalimu Nyerere teaches a class by John Masanja and Festo Kijo (1985)**  
(Photograph by researcher in October 2015 at NMT in Dar es Salaam)

Figure 76 depicts John Masanja and Fest Kijo's co-created painting titled, '*Mwalimu Nyerere Akifundisha Darasani*' in 1985. The work displays their pure academic painting orientation. Both artists took fine arts, taught by Elias Jengo, as their major course while studying for their bachelor degree at the University of Dar es Salaam. Truly, their art style reflects Jengo's instructions when he started teaching at the Art Department in the UDSM in the late 1970s. During an interview he made with the present researcher, Elias Jengo admitted to this claim when he said, '...in my painting classes I insisted that my students learn and master different composition techniques, colour theory, and human anatomy as prerequisites during their practical training...'. This work depicts a renaissance's triangular composition technique. The apex of its main triangle of the composition is established by the head of President

Nyerere's figure, leaving the converging lines and the base of the triangle occupied by Nyerere's legs and sitting pupils. Triangular composition technique is among popular ways of establishing an emphasis on the central object in the paintings. The scheme of colour such as tan, grey, tint and shades of yellow and red as used in this painting by Kijo and Masanja corroborates Elias Jengo's testimony on colour theory teaching to his students. Their artistic talents and skills are clearly reflected in their ability to depict realistic facial features and gestures of the subjects in their artwork. They depict Nyerere in an official dressing code for civil servants. He is seen on white stockings, khaki shorts and a white shirt, a colonialist standing before students in a classroom. The painting resurrects a perfect reminiscence of President Nyerere's old days as a teacher at St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School in Tabora and later at Pugu's St. Francis Secondary School in Dar es Salaam, before he became the first president of Tanzania. Nevertheless, looking at the theme of this painting, it is obvious that artists commended *Ujamaa*, specifically on its promotion of 'the policy of Education for Self-Reliance'. This policy was very popular in the early 1970s when Kijo and Masanja were still young attending their primary and secondary school education.

### **2.2.2 Form of the *Ujamaa* Artworks**

The forms of *Ujamaa* visual arts were diverse in shape, media used, size, and the general visual impressions. They were not confined to the same kinds of materials and structures in the way their topics were limited to traditional and political ethics. The choice of materials for the *Ujamaa* artworks depended heavily on the purposes of the desired artwork such as decorative, commemorative, or commoditative for export abroad. Some *Ujamaa* artworks were produced on paper, canvas, stone, metal, wood, clay soils, cement, and plastics, as well

as on textiles. Sometimes, the choice of subject suggests the kind of media as well as its final appearance<sup>126</sup>. Concerning size, the study established that the *Ujamaa* period had produced both gigantic and small artworks. The large artworks such as monuments (Fig.73) and murals (Figs.75 and 86) were produced either for the ruling party's propaganda or for parastatal advertising purposes. These life-size artworks were normally installed around the premises of the commissioning institutions such as yards and gardens (Figs.151 and 152) or walls (Figs.120 and 127). Small-sized artworks such as watercolour posters and book illustrations; Tingatinga square board paintings (Fig.161); reed baskets; blackwood or ivory bangles and pendants; Batiks and Tie and Dye textiles were also produced for utility purposes as well as export commodities for business purposes, i.e. most of the *Ujamaa* commercial arts were sent to different art galleries in the world. These exhibitions included the Arts and Crafts International Fair in Florence (Miller 1975:74 and Wembah-Rashid 1979:15). For the latter case, the sizes were small and lightweight for easy transportation. A general or rather satisfactory description of the forms of *Ujamaa* artworks was provided by Sam Ntiro's analysis of Tanzanian carvings:

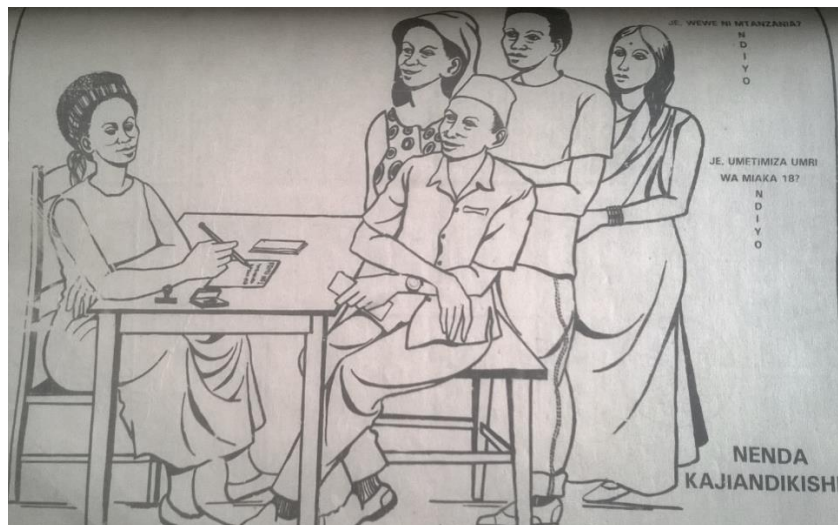
Tanzanian carvers, whether they are Wamakonde, Wazaramo, Wandengereko, Wanyamwezi, or any other tribe, produce carvings inspired by traditional mythologies, stories told by old people, tribal history; and customs and habits of the people amongst whom they live. Working from this important and fundamental background gives them impetus and the vital force which is ageless. They project the image of their own people in tangible form, which is easily understood by any observer. The creative force is enshrined in the imagination of the carver whose concept of three dimensional form is clear and well-defined in his mind before he starts. He chooses his material according to the figure he conceives. Once he starts the actual carving the figure gradually evolves itself from the ebony.

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<sup>126</sup> See, Ntiro1975, p.115

Usually the carver goes on with one carving until it is finished before he starts carving another one. And so a good Tanzanian carving is the one which can tell the observer something about life of the people of Tanzania. Sometimes the subject appears to be simple and straight forward, but when one learns something about the background upon which it is built, one begins to appreciate it more fully; and the longer one looks at it the more meaning he sees in it. (Ntiro 1975:115)

Ntiro suggests that despite being under a certain group or public organisation such as co-operatives, the artists were free to create and produce on any subject and in any media of their choice. The eye of scrutiny was on whether the artworks were ethically correct and the media used met the required standards (Askew 2005:308). Of all the *Ujamaa* art forms, only two have been popularly acknowledged. These are the Makonde ebony woodwork known as *Ujamaa* carvings, also called the “Tree of Life” or “*Dimoongo*”, and Sam Ntiro’s paintings depicting socialist Tanzania’s rural life experiences. Detailed narratives of the forms of *Ujamaa* art are covered in the following section, *Approaches to the Manifestations of the Ujamaa Arts*.



**Fig.77 A poster for the Presidential Election Campaign of 1985 by Elias Jengo**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)

### **2.2.2.1 Approaches to the Manifestations of the *Ujamaa* Visual Art**

This section briefly presents the theories that establish the origin of the stylistic characteristics of *Ujamaa* visual art and their originators in Tanzania. The section offers concise technical and conceptual narratives on the emergence of the *Ujamaa* art outlook, specifically its visual elements and how they emerged in three theories. These are first, Sam Ntiro's Pre-Colonial Tanganyika Nostalgic Paintings; second, the Adoption of Yakobo Sangwani's *Dimoongo* Sculpture Theme; and third, Kiure Msangi and Fatma Abdalla's Imagery of the Arusha Declaration Event.

#### **2.2.2.1.1 The *Ujamaa* Art 'Proper'**

This study contends that Sam Ntiro's paintings portraying peasants and workers undertaking chores and other communal development work marks the origin of the later version of the popular *Ujamaa* art genres in Tanzania. A series of state-commissioned murals and paintings that Sam Ntiro made between the early 1950s and the 1960s depicts his pictorial interpretations of Tanzania's brand of African socialism, positively supporting and promoting it as a way forward after Africans had gained their independence. Several studies conducted on painting art developed some years before and during socialist politics in Tanzania have credited Sam Ntiro as one of its chief originators and advocates. These are, for example, studies by Kojo Fosu (1986) *20<sup>th</sup> Century Art of Africa*, Elias Jengo (2003) *Pioneers of Contemporary Art in Tanzania*, George Kyeyune (2003) *Art in Uganda in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Angelo Kakande (2008) *Contemporary Art in Uganda: A Nexus between Art and Politics*, Frederick Geoffrey Maeda (2008) *Pioneers of Contemporary Painting in Tanzania: A case Study of Sam Joseph Ntiro*, and Mario Pissarra (2015) *Re/writing Sam J Ntiro: Challenges of framing in the excavation of a 'lost' pioneer*, Indeed these are only some



of the comprehensive studies that were conducted on Sam Ntiro and his art in Tanzania between the early 1940s and the early 1990s. The narrative of Sam Ntiro's career as an outstanding artist and art educator in Tanzania and of East Africa as an art region, can be recounted in two different phases: Low and High. In this study, the Low Phase of Sam Ntiro's career consists of accounts of his early years of engagement with the arts at the Makerere School in Uganda as a student and later arts tutor, as well as at the Slade School in London. The High Phase encompasses the years of Ntiro's involvement with the arts as a Tanzanian diplomat in the UK, and as a civil servant and art educator in several public institutions in his Tanzanian homeland.

A closer review of Sam Ntiro's works produced during these two phases reveals an interesting account about him as a pioneering modern Tanzanian artist on a long journey of learning and practicing art. Most of Ntiro's works reflect his artistic practices as being influenced by his adventurous life experiences. The ancient rock art of Kondoa-Irangi sites in Tanzania, surrounding environment, socio-political issues of the time, imagination—as well as Ntiro's perpetual desire to tell his homeland's<sup>127</sup> life stories through his art have

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<sup>127</sup>Basing their references on Sam Ntiro's handwritten biography supplied to the Harmon Foundation in 1960 (Pissarra 2015:47), Mount (1973) Fosu (1986), Kyeyune (2003) and Kakande (2008) and many other writers have limited Sam Ntiro's portrayals of his homeland life to his Chaggaland experiences, hence leaving out the bulk of stories he tells in his works, which reflect peasants' life experiences in his motherland of Tanzania. In the later productions, Ntiro proved that his art depicted the national space of Tanzania more than the esoteric Chaggaland (Pissarra 2015:52). On the other hand, Ntiro's Ujamaa depictions can best be understood when viewing him as a pro-Tanzanian, rather than through his Chagga ethnic identity. The Wachagga were among a few ethnic groups that silently protested against the Ujamaa policies' adoption in Tanzania. As Kilimanjaro, the home of the Wachagga, is located near the country's border with Kenya, where capitalism and mixed economic policies were long practiced since colonialism, even after independence, the Wachagga were neither practicing socialists nor capitalists; instead they embraced both systems in their everyday lives. However, they later joined other leading ethnic groups with powerful and well-organized co-operative unions (the Kilimanjaro Co-operative Union, for example), which strengthened *Ujamaa* farming and business practices in Tanzania. See, Lisa Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists*, New York, Oxford University Press 2005, p.91

always been his inspirational forces. During the Low Phase, which spans from 1942 to 1961, a few years before and during the independence of Tanganyika, Sam Ntiro's paintings reflect a modern African painter's freshness, vigour, and quaintness in freely expressing himself. His artistic aplomb is conveyed by his choice and use of bright colour tones and thick brush strokes. His ability to tackle a wide range of topics in his art reveals Ntiro's accomplishment as a professional painter. Like his contemporaries such as Ben Enwonwu of Nigeria and Gerald Sekoto of South Africa, Sam Ntiro was involved with Pan-Africanism<sup>128</sup> in the 1950s, although on a very minimal scale in which he has not produced a single work on that topic. Themes such as the Africanization of Western modernity, promotion of *Ujamaa* politics, expression of traditional socio-economic activities and appreciation of general peasant life in pre- and post-independent Tanganyika are evident in many of his paintings from the 1940s to the 1950s. Ntiro's masterpieces tackling these topics include works such as *Agony in the Garden*, painted in 1950 (Fig. 82), *Market Day* of 1955 (Fig.83), *Banana Harvest* painted in 1960, and *Working on a Winding Road*, probably created in 1961 (fig.1). During this phase, Ntiro's choice of topics for his artworks points to his protest against colonial disillusionment as well as his anticipations for independence or a new beginning for himself and his fellow countrymen. The painting titled *Agony in the Garden* (Fig.78) depicts Ntiro's unspoken mind concerning anti-colonial legacies such as Europeanized Christian liturgy and imagery in Tanganyika.

Apart from exercising what Kasfir (1999:142-46) describes as 'a traditionalizing approach' of making art, as inculcated to him by his mentor Margaret Trowell, during art training at the

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<sup>128</sup>See, <http://science.jrank.org/pages/8378/Arts-Africa-Pan-Africanism-Negritude-Decolonization->  
Accessed at FU-Berlin on 10th March 2017

Makerere School<sup>129</sup> in Uganda, Sam Ntiro's African Jesus is portrayed kneeling on an elevated rock dais, with three of his disciples sleeping in a thicket behind him. This piece suggests his desire to create an African idiom of the Christian liturgy's imagery. In a way, *Agony in the Garden* exposes Ntiro's active participation in the acculturation of the Christian faith into the African congregation by challenging its dominant Western foundations<sup>130</sup> and thus proclaiming its universality. This interpretation evolves from Ntiro's recurrent proposal to do away with Westernization while training African students in the art of independent East Africa, which he openly presented during the East African Cultural Heritage conference held in 1965 in Nairobi<sup>131</sup>. Since Christianity<sup>132</sup> was one of several methods employed to perpetuate colonial rule in East Africa, it was also one of the hot topics bitterly undertaken and addressed, alongside other colonial conflicts, by East African artists including poets, writers, and painters in several cultural decolonization debates<sup>133</sup> held from the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s at the Makerere University College in Kampala. Ntiro exhaustively expressed himself through biblical themes as well. Apart from his legendary work entitled *Agony in the Garden* made in the 1950s, Ntiro also created several other works tackling liturgical themes such as the *Last Supper*, the *Entry into Jerusalem* and the *Kakindo*

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<sup>129</sup> Pissarra (2015:29) relates Ntiro's choices of topics and technique of making art to Margaret Trowell's pedagogy at the Makerere School more than any other influences attributed to him when he says "...In as much as Ntiro painted Africanized Christian themes along with African scenes, in a style that broadly can be described as naive, it is perhaps understandable that he is all too often seen as a product of Trowell's pedagogy. However, while she evidently impacted profoundly on Ntiro's art, Trowell was not his only influence..."

<sup>130</sup> Read William Jones, 2008, p.56

<sup>131</sup> See Sunanda Sanyal, "*Being Modern*" *Identity Debates and Makerere's Art School in the 1960s in A Companion to Modern African Art* (West Sussex, Wiley & Sons Inc., 2013) p.267

<sup>132</sup> See Viera Pawliková- Vilhanová, CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN AFRICA AND THEIR ROLE IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN SOCIETIES, ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES, 16, 2007, Vol.2, pp. 249-260

<sup>133</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1986), *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Heinemann Educational, Nairobi

*Crucifixion*. Nevertheless, a close review of Sam Ntiro's themes and painting genre during the Low Phase of his career belies the notion of his being a political artist but instead reveals him as a curious muralist with great impressions of African modern figurative and landscape art.



**Fig.78 Agony in the Garden by Sam Ntiro, 1950**  
(Source: archive.stevenson.info, accessed on August 2019)

The High Phase of Sam Ntiro's artistic career, on the other hand, occupies a substantial portion of the discussion in this particular section of Chapter Two. As pointed out earlier, the phase consists of narratives of Ntiro's art as produced by a Tanzanian socialist diplomat, civil servant, and art educator during the period of intensive *Ujamaa* policy establishment. In this phase, we are exposed to numerous of Sam Ntiro's panoramic depictions of the *Ujamaa* villages inhabited by industrious peasants undertaking collective labour in the fields and traditional factories, executed in medium-sized paintings on boards and canvasses as well as mural panels on government buildings' walls and ruling Party squares (Figs.73, 75 and 76).

However, the dramatic thrill and colourfulness of Ntiro's art in the Low Phase of his career is profoundly absent in this phase. In fact, his compositions became sloppy, with less-detailed

figures and other objects, i.e. trees, leaves, etc. The colours he uses are more opaque, with un-artistic brush strokes that leave behind a clear mark of incompleteness due to their rushed completion. This is evident in the untitled artworks seen in figures 79 and 80, which were possibly created in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. A general review of Sam Ntiro's artworks in this phase also reveals his preoccupation with administrative work in the government. Perhaps a recurring critique of Sam Ntiro's naïve painting genre, as claimed by his detractors such as Mount (1973) and Sanyal (2000), is valid when applied to the works produced during the High Phase of his career, rather than to those produced during the earlier phase.



**Fig.79 Men collecting firewood by Sam Ntiro, 1980s**  
(Photograph by researcher, NMT at Dar es Salaam October 2015)



**Fig.80 Men collecting firewood by Sam Ntiro, 1980s**  
(Photograph by researcher, NMT at Dar es Salaam October 2015)

Perhaps, the painting titled *Ujamaa* (Fig.81) is one of the masterpieces in Sam Ntiro's contribution to the invention of the *Ujamaa* art genre. It's summative representation of workers in their traditional factories and peasants in the coffee and banana fields undertaking hardwork collectively visualises Nyerere's core values of his proposed brand of African socialism. The weaving women, who at the same time help a labouring mother-to-be colleague at the right corner of the painting, affirms the women's self-reliant spirit while performing their domestic and socio-economic chores. Nevertheless, the depictions of a young man harvesting coffee behind the women and another boy assisting an elder clad in a long white-tunic dress also called '*Kanzu*' in Kiswahili, working in the beer-brewing trough, the two bare-chested muscled men pounding bananas in a heavily-filled wooden trough while an old man chops banana leaves for animal feed all depict the division of labour and organisation of work in the *Ujamaa* village.



**Fig.81 Ujamaa, a mural in Mary Stuart Hall at Makerere by Sam Ntiro in 1965**  
(A photograph by researcher at Makerere, Kampala October 2015)

The present research closely followed the ongoing discussions on Sam Ntiro's works and socialist politics in Tanzania. It found that Sam Ntiro was not only among the pioneers of modern art, but also the procreator of the *Ujamaa* political art genre since the early 1950s, when he was a student and later member of staff in the Department of Art of the Makerere School. During this period, Tanzania, then known as Tanganyika (before its union with the Zanzibar archipelago in 1964), was still a protectorate colony under the British. Since the beginning of his art career, Sam Ntiro's paintings have been portraying several aspects of the survival of small peasant communities in Tanzania (Jengo 2003). His themes focused on village life with emphasis placed on communal farm work; clustered *Ujamaa* settlements; cooperativeness and absolute social unity. These were also among the central issues of the 1967 Arusha Declaration, which anchored Tanzania's version of African socialism. Indeed, Ntiro's paintings boldly present a visual memoir of the interrupted and disrupted traditional system practiced before the advent of colonialism in Tanganyika.

When President Nyerere vehemently condemned the colonial atrocities towards the traditional Tanzanian culture and declared a national mission to revive it during his



presidential inauguration speech, several of Sam Ntiro's paintings, which had already been produced from the 1950s, were quickly associated with Nyerere's *Ujamaa* views. In other words, Ntiro's paintings were branded as a tangible form of socialist policies such as villagisation, self-reliance and general peasant economics. Although during this period Tanzania practised a version of liberal economics, in most of his speeches Nyerere indicated that he would soon adopt a new type of socialism and every aspect of life, arts and culture included, would take that same direction too. The writers who associate Ntiro's work with socialist politics picked their cues from this set of events. These include Kakande (2008:139, 141), who centres his analysis of Ntiro's work on topics such as densely socialised populations; collectivised and industrious rural communities, and associationalism; Fosu (1986:30) who discusses Ntiro with regard to dignity in labour and co-operative work; and Pissarra (2015:58), who looks at the pre-industrial ways of living<sup>134</sup> and traditional African socialism as focal subjects in Ntiro's work. All these topics, as documented, were among the themes which were also embraced in Nyerere's Arusha Declaration, Tanzanian socialism's manifesto of 1967. Actually, Fosu (1986:30) is the first scholar to proclaim Sam Ntiro as an originator of socialist or *Ujamaa* art in Tanzania when he comments:

[Ntiro] has based most of his paintings on the indigenous survival cultures of the peasant. He sees them as providing some of the answers to the modern African economic woes wrecked by years of colonial control and mismanagement in Africa. The salvation of the new economic order... depends on self-reliance based on the traditional principle of *Ujamaa* or working together. Ntiro cherishes dignity in labour and believes in cooperative work.

Fosu, thus, accurately highlights the colonial regime's woes and the self-reliance as among the factors that influenced Nyerere's early *Ujamaa* policies, which also served as stimulus

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<sup>134</sup> Nyerere's idea of a village (Kakande 2008:143)



for Ntiro's imagination at that time. Fosu (1986) indicates that Ntiro might have been inspired by both his consciousness as an African elite with the experience of colonial malpractice and the prevailing political atmosphere that created the seeds for Nyerere to profess the doctrine of African socialism. The latter is supported by Angelo Kakande, who also points to Sam Ntiro as a founder of *Ujamaa* art in Tanzania, he describes it as a kind of African socialism which later spread to the entire East African region:

Based on the available evidence, however, it becomes that by the 1950s Ntiro was making landscapes with no specific reference to place or time. They were harsh, anonymous and desolate. The artist employed aerial perspective, rough texture, and a limited palette explored through dramatic tones. His *Mango Tree* (1950? plate 27) stands as an example of his early work although, judging by the press interest in his work which is evident from the mid-forties onwards, it would do him less justice to suggest that this single painting wholly represents the entirety of his early works. By the 1960s, however, Ntiro had immensely populated his compositions. He depicted panoramic views of densely populated land with socialized, collectivised and industrious rural communities. These are the artworks I am most interested in because they carry the resonances from the socialist ideology which became popular in the region (Kakande 2008:139)

Kakande further props his arguments up by showing that Sam Ntiro's political affiliation with the socialist government of Tanzania made this possible. In this regard, Kakande contends:

The fact that Ntiro worked under Nyerere's socialist government and that he did paintings which, in my view, are evidence of his interest in this socialism, foregrounds the political system, rather than strictly formal aesthetic, of his work... Ntiro can be claimed to have enunciated the post-colonial socialist state (Kakande 2008:137).

Despite his convincing assertion, Kakande's time frame of Ntiro's invention of political art is contested by Pissarra (2015) who traces Sam Ntiro's works to a decade or two before *Ujamaa* policies such as villagisation came into force, long before the artist worked for

Nyerere's socialist government. Although Fosu's (1986) and Kakande's (2008) timing of Ntiro's intervention in *Ujamaa* art production seems to be convincing, its visual elements and themes, remain questionable, Pissarra (2015:52) also helps to confirm that Sam Ntiro could be the architect of *Ujamaa* visual arts when he reveals the earliest date of his works containing socialistic values, which Fosu and Kakande claim to have been influenced by Nyerere's pronouncement of the *Ujamaa* policies almost two decades later:

Fosu's positioning of Ntiro as part of the contemporary, postcolonial moment was unprecedented and ground-breaking, but Kakande has been most forceful in making an argument that Ntiro's work was political in its intentions. His argument has two main thrusts. One concerns establishing the artist's political credentials; the second focuses on presenting key themes and motifs in Ntiro's paintings as emblematic of political discourse. Kakande establishes political legitimacy through frequent references to Ntiro serving in or being in contact with Nyerere's government

He continues:

An obvious problem concerns Kakande's bold assertion linking Ntiro's villages to the rural villagisation programme implemented by Nyerere. I have already highlighted that Ntiro represented both Tanganyikan/Tanzanian and Ugandan themes in the 1950s and 1960s. I have also acknowledged that many of his themes are specifically Chagga. There is also little evidence of overt political content in Ntiro's titles or commentary. A notable exception is the catalogue listing of *A Socialist Village*, exhibited by Ntiro at The Commonwealth Institute in 1977. Nonetheless, despite a shortage of overtly political titles, I would concur with Kakande's opinion that '[Ntiro's] socialist sympathies become obvious...' However, one has to address the fact that most of the examples he discusses were produced before villagisation was introduced. My own view, still to be explored further, is that Ntiro operates somewhere between nostalgic memory and utopian vision, bringing the past, present and future into a complex conversation about not only what was but also what can be. These 'early' image of villages 'enunciated' (to borrow Kakande's term) a 'traditional' African socialism (Pissarra 2015:58)

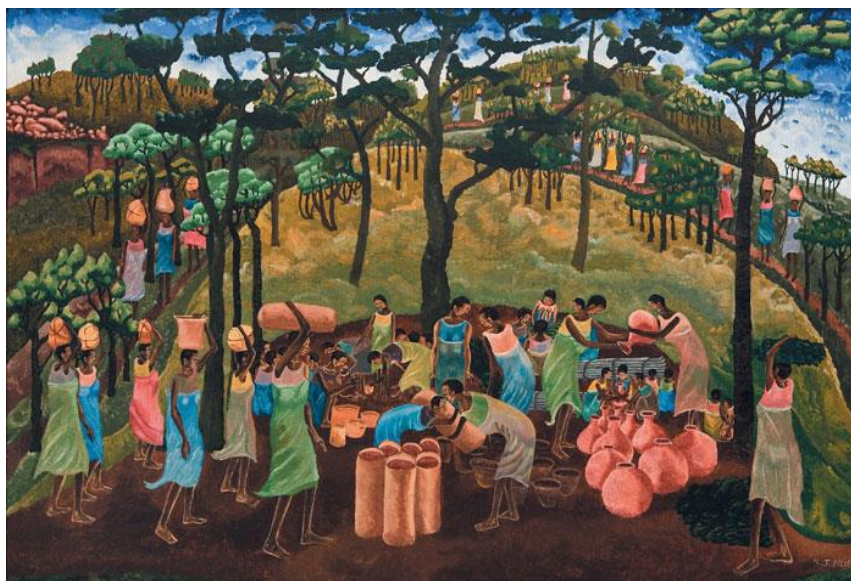
Pissarra (2015) also agrees with Fosu (1986) and Kakande (2008) that Sam Ntiro is the architect behind the painting art genre that embodies and promotes African socialism in

Tanzania but differs with them when he maintains that Ntiro invented his *Ujamaa* village arts some years prior to working for Nyerere's government in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, Pissarra indirectly asserts that Ntiro was incapable of inventing his art genre as an intellectual tackling the woes of British colonialism as suggested by Fosu (1986). Instead, he is reluctant to link Ntiro's themes with his life experiences as a Chagga young man who could not resist his feelings while studying away from home at Makerere, Uganda in the 1950s.

Having reviewed Ntiro's publications such as *East African Art* (1963), *Tanzania Traditional Arts in the Independence Era* (1975) and *Modern Creative Makonde Sculpture* (1982) as well as art works such as *Working on a Winding Road* (Fig.1), *Round Huts* (Fig.82), *Market Day* (Fig.83) and untitled relief murals at the base of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in Arusha (figs. 86, 87, 88, and 89), the present researcher agrees with Fosu (1986) that Sam Ntiro created his work as an intellectual as well as an artist while recording and commenting on life in his society. His incorporation of *Ujamaa* values to create visual elements which distanced Tanzanian socialist art from that practiced in the northern hemisphere-based socialist painting genres presents a strong evidence that he was proposing socio-political, economic and cultural changes through his paintings.



**Fig.82 Round Huts by Sam Ntiro, 1960s**  
(Source: Harmon Foundation Achieve)



**Fig.83 Market Day by Sam Ntiro, 1955**  
(Source: [archive.stevenson.info](http://archive.stevenson.info), accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.84 Gathering in the Village by Sam Ntiro, 1960s**  
(source: archive.stevenson.info, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.85 Mango Tree by Sam Ntiro (1950)**  
(Source: Kakande 2008:11, Vol.2: Plates)

Furthermore, despite several writers' exhaustive attempts to unveil the focal topics which confirm Ntiro's works as tangible forms of socialist politics, some paintings, which Ntiro purposely executed to depict his affiliation and strong belief in socialism,<sup>135</sup> were overlooked. These include artworks on the topics of leadership and gender relations as major issues during the *Ujamaa* period. Pissarra (2015), who builds on Kakande's (2008:141) assumption that Ntiro's works on *Ujamaa* lack comments on 'leadership' or 'supervision' to portray its embrace of human equality and human dignity in Nyerere's version of African socialism<sup>136</sup> has a slightly-flawed interpretation:

Kakande highlights three related themes in Ntiro's paintings, forcefully linking them to the politics of the day. These themes are collective action, the village, and coffee farming. The imaging of groups of people working together is a characteristic feature of many of Ntiro's paintings. Typically, these figures are given equal importance, and there is an absence of differentiation as individuals. The egalitarianism visualized in Ntiro's work is further emphasized by the absence of figures of authority. As noted by Kakande, no one supervises the work (Pissarra 2015:56).

On the contrary, *Ujamaa* politics in Tanzania took leadership seriously as a political activity and sometimes associated it with an individual's spiritual responsibility to his or her society<sup>137</sup>. As Kakande (2008) points out, it is true that the kind of socialism which President Nyerere promoted, put emphasis on family as a central societal unit and discourages class distinction, which could encourage the undermining of the weak within a young nation. In Kakande's comment, the absence of 'authoritative figures supervising work' was relevant to

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<sup>135</sup> See, Sam Ntiro's comments while appreciating the works of his fellow socialist and patriotic Tanzanian artists Mohamed Kassam and Elias Jengo after the execution of three monuments commissioned to them in 1971, *Traditional Arts in the Post-Independent Era: Arts and Crafts, Tanzania Notes and Records*, 1975 No.76, p.115

<sup>136</sup> Nyerere explained his ideas on human relations in his brand of African socialism in many publications. But his review on the topic as given in his official report titled: *Ten Years after Independence*, TRN no. 76, 1975, pp. 10-13, which is more informative in the context of the present study.

<sup>137</sup> The ongoing process to confirm Nyerere into sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church for his exceptional leadership qualities appears to confirm this claim.



most works which Ntiro produced while studying and working at Makerere, with the exception of some works he produced in Tanzania in which the topic of leadership and authority lightly emerged. Many of the art projects in which Ntiro was involved—either to produce or co-ordinate—while in Tanzania from 1964 onwards followed governmental guidelines, such as respect for the rule of law and affection for national leaders as subjects or themes for art production. The government, through the responsible Ministry, explained and clearly stipulated the role of the arts in relation to leadership and the public in Tanzania, as the following statement exemplifies:

*Kusifu ni jambo ambalo linalosaidia sana kujenga moyo na kuongeza juhudi za wananchi na viongozi wao. Binadamu akisifiwa uhakikishiwa usahihi wa matendo yake na juhudi zake. Jambo hili humpa motisho na kuongeza juhudi na maarifa yake katika kupambana na yanayomngojea. Msanii akiwa mtetezi wa umma, analo jukumu la kusifu juhudi mbalimbali za wananchi pamoja na viongozi wao (URT 1979:23)*

My translation:

An honest appreciation of the works by the public and their leaders helps to encourage and motivate both of them to do more and improve in their performances. When somebody is commended, he/she is assured of the perfection and significance of his or her performance. This motivates and encourages him/her to put more effort in facing and executing more that waits to be done. When an artist is a defender of his society, he/she has an obligation to appreciate and commemorate various achievements by the public and their leaders

Moreover, TANU's popular slogans such as '*Zidumu Fikra sahihi za Mwenyekiti wa Chama*' (Long live the thoughts of the Party's Chairman) and '*Chama Kimeshika Hatamu*' (The Party holds the Bridles" or "the Party Reins) of the 1970s and 1980s, respectively, indicate that leadership during the *Ujamaa* era was a serious matter addressing every aspect of socialist life in Tanzania. One of Sam Ntiro's critical works on the topic of leadership is a mural (see Fig. 86), which captures his views on established power relations between the rulers and the

ruled. In this particular mural, Ntiro portrays the Party or government leaders and the public in a meeting. Symbolically, he represents the leaders' position and status by placing them behind a high table, seated on chairs, whereas the public are squatted on bare ground, just before the high table. In addition, he depicts a leader standing behind the high table pointing at a member with a raised hand from the ground seeking permission to speak. This particular scene attests to Ntiro's views on the relationship between leaders and their subjects, the general public, during the *Ujamaa* period. In their traditional sub-cultures, Tanzanians generally still practice this form of communication, sitting before the presence of authorities or elders when there is a family or societal gathering. Ntiro's portrayal of a time immemorial gesture of order indicates his respect for order in a society that takes cognisance of the essentiality of leadership.



**Fig.86 A relief mural at the foot of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary monument in Arusha of Party leaders addressing a public meeting, by Sam Ntiro (1974)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Arusha, September 2015)

Concerning gender relations, Sam Ntiro's execution of the topic in his work is clear through his portrayal of the roles of men and women. In most of his works, Ntiro dresses his figures in a way which indicates their gender and social status. Neatly dressed characters, for example, represent Party or government officials (Fig.86) whereas casually and, sometimes, uniformly dressed figures represent workers and peasants at work (Figs.87 and 88). Women are conservatively dressed based on their gender (see figs.87 and 90). On the other hand, the



current research found it difficult to identify youth or children in Ntiro's works. Perhaps, his little attention paid to anatomical consideration in his human figure composition while painting poses this challenge. Indeed, in many of his works Ntiro depicts women conducting domestic chores such as cooking; gardening and all those which are traditionally perceived and genderly constructed as auxiliary to men's work (Fig.89). On the other hand, a considerable level of gender equity between men and women is noticeable in Elias Jengo's works; he sometimes depicts women undertaking men's chores (see figs.28 and 92). A general impression produced in the *Ujamaa* art is that the men assumed the central role when compared to women, as depicted in Sam Ntiro's paintings (Figs. 87 and 88)



**Fig.87 A mural on a foot of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in Arusha of a woman sowing as men till the land. By Sam Ntiro (1971)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Arusha, September 2015)



**Fig.88 A mural on a foot of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in Arusha of a man using an ox-plough to till land by Sam Ntiro (1971)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Arusha, September 2015)



**Fig.89 A mural at the foot of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in Arusha of women and men working together at a construction site by Sam Ntiro (1971)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Arusha, September 2015)



**Fig.90 Women preparing food by Mwenesi, C. (1980)**  
(Photograph by research at the National Museum of Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

The relief murals on the sidewalls of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in Arusha are living evidences that attest to the coverage of these topics in Ntiro's art. Other works on leadership and gender were created by Elias Jengo in several commissions placed under Sam

Ntiro's supervision<sup>138</sup>. These include the murals at the Kilimanjaro CCM Regional offices and the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) branches in Mbeya, Arusha, and Mwanza regions. At the Kilimanjaro CCM regional offices, the murals depict the story of leadership transitions focusing on the Africanisation of Civil Service policy since 1962, as pioneered by Nyerere<sup>139</sup>. As figure 91 illustrates, men pay homage to the traditional African chief as their ruler. Figure 92 portrays a European settler as a colonial master in a meeting with his African servants and Figure 93 presents the Party before TANU's flag, which symbolises African leadership in Tanganyika during and after the struggles for independence. A critical observation on the art works discussed affirms the themes of leadership that Sam Ntiro highlighted in his work.



**Fig.91 A mural of pre-colonial tribesmen paying homage to their chief, by Elias Jengo in 1971**

(Photograph by researcher at Kilimanjaro CCM regional offices, September 2015)

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<sup>138</sup> Sam Ntiro was commissioned to create artworks in almost all major government building contracted to Beda Amuli (the first and only Tanzanian architect in the 1960s). In all his major commission Ntiro invited Elias Jengo, who was his student in the early 1960s at Makerere School of Fine Arts and later a colleague at Chang'ombe Teachers' Training College in 1967 to 1969 and subsequently the University of Dar es Salaam from 1975 to 1993 when Ntiro died.

<sup>139</sup>See, Nyerere 1968, p.99





**Fig.92 A mural of Local peasants and workers before their European settler/plantation-owner during the colonial period, by Elias Jengo (1971)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Kilimanjaro CCM regional offices, September 2015)



**Fig.93 A mural of Tanzanians before a TANU flag in the 1950s and the 1960s during the struggle for Independence by Elias Jengo (1971)**  
(Photograph by researcher at Kilimanjaro CCM regional offices, September 2015)

However, the present study suggests that the birth of Sam Ntiro's art genre which extols Nyerere's African socialist principles was not coincidental but rather a *déjà vu*. Nyerere's proposal for the revival of traditional ways of life in independent Tanganyika and the emergence of Ntiro's nostalgic paintings portraying ideal traditional Tanzanian themes in the early 1960s were both parts of decolonisation politics in the region. After all, in East Africa, arts such as literature and traditional dances were among the approaches that were used to fight colonialism<sup>140</sup>. This view is slightly shared by Angelo Kakande:

Sam Ntiro was an Africanist. He, together with Enwonwu and Gerard Sekoto attended the Second Conference of Black Writers and artists in Rome from March 26 to April 1 1959. Unlike the case of Enwonwu (from Nigeria) and Gerard Sekoto (from South Africa), the available archive does not detail what Sam Ntiro's contribution to the 1959 conference was. This, however, should not detain us here, for what is important, at least for this discussion, is the fact that Ntiro made art as an embodiment of the aspirations of the post-colonial nation-state... (Kakande 2008:138)

Moreover, as contemporaries while studying at Makerere in the early 1940s, Nyerere and Ntiro shared the same colonial grievances as subjects of the British regime back home in Tanganyika. Therefore, Sam Ntiro as an artist employed painting as his medium for participating in the cultural decolonisation debates which were very much alive at Makerere after the 1950s and his art might have inspired Nyerere as a politician to employ culture, specifically *ngoma* and visual arts, in his desire to forge a new national culture when he

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<sup>140</sup> In Tanzania traditional dances, *ngoma*, were used to spread Uhuru struggle messages, according to Shani Kitogo, deputy director of culture. Mwinyi Mbago, a traditional ruler of the Wazaramo in Dar es Salaam, managed a traditional dance group which used to perform at Mnazi Moja grounds where the independence of Tanganyika was celebrated in 1961. Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o published his fictitious work *Weep Not Child* in 1959 as part of political liberation for the independence of Kenya depicting the Mau Mau guerrilla war pitying the natives against the British settlers in Kenya

became the first president of Tanganyika in 1961. The *Ujamaa* mural (Fig.81) created in 1965 demonstrates that Ntiro preceded Nyerere in espousing the ideals of socialism in the arts.

#### **2.2.2.1.1.1 Sam Ntiro and Tanzania's Visual Arts Scene**

According to Pissarra (2015:47), perhaps the first-hand information known about Sam Ntiro through many publications was supplied by himself in his own curriculum vitae, which he handed over to the Harmon Foundation in 1960. This happened during the preparation of one of Ntiro's early international exhibitions abroad. Sam Joseph Ntiro is a Tanzanian. He was born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 1923 in the Hai district of the Kilimanjaro region in Machame area. Ntiro was one of a few Tanzanians to acquire formal training in the fine arts from 1944 to 1947 at Makerere, an affiliated college of the University of London in Kampala, Uganda. He later went on to further studies at the Slades School of Fine Arts in England from 1952 to 1955 (Kakande 2008:137; Miller 1975:102; Jengo 2003:39-41). The period of his initial and tertiary education as an artist and art educator was between 1944 and 1955. Sam Ntiro acquired his doctorate in fine arts at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1982, basing his doctoral research on the subject of modern Makonde sculpture (Pissarra 2015:24).



**Fig.94 Sam Ntiro at the Makerere School of Fine Arts in the 1940s**

(Source: Copyrighted images, courtesy of Makerere University Library, September, 2015)

This study presents Sam Ntiro as the founding father of modern visual arts in Tanzania for his outstanding contributions to the development and promotion of the visual arts sector from the 1950s until his death in the early 1990s. As an artist and art educator, Ntiro worked with almost all art institutions involved with visual art and local culture promotion in Tanzania<sup>141</sup>. The most recent comprehensive account of Sam Ntiro, titled *Re/Writing Sam Ntiro: Challenges of framing in the excavation of the 'lost' Pioneer* by Mario Pissarra, presents much of the untold and unfairly recorded information about Ntiro:

This paper distinguishes several lenses or frames that have been applied to the artist. These readings [do] not only introduce multiple 'Ntiros,' but also introduce questions of different publics, highlighting the multivalence of Ntiro as a signifier (Pissarra 2015:28)

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<sup>141</sup> See chapter one in this study.

Pissarra (2015:24) asserts that Sam Ntiro is the first solo African artist from East Africa to be exhibited in the US and UK in the early 1950s, a success story once affirmed by Kasfir (1999:144) as she writes “...*the first East African artist to be exhibited abroad was the Tanzanian Sam Ntiro*”. Kasfir (1999:144-146) records the first exhibition which involved Trowell’s Makerere art class students at the Imperial Institute in London held in 1939. Her information here adds questions to Ntiro’s biography at Makerere which is boldly recorded from 1944 to 1961 by Miller (1975:102), Kyeyune (2003:98), Jengo (2003:39) and Kakande (2008:137). It is in those exhibitions abroad that Sam Ntiro became the first African artist to sell his artwork to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) of New York, in which he is also recorded as the first African artist to have his work purchased by a US public institution (Pissarra 2015:24). Sam Ntiro was the first and only African from Tanzania to head UNESCO’s World Craft Council as its General Secretary (Miller 1975:102 and Pissarra 2015:24).

This study views Sam Ntiro as the chief promoter of Tanzanian visual arts and national culture since his tenure as the Commissioner for Culture in Nyerere’s government from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, a contribution which has been missing from many studies on him, as Mario Pissarra observes:

He was active in several other arts, craft and civic associations, frequently playing a leading role. While information on many of these organisations (and his participation in them) is sketchy, Ntiro’s involvement in such a wide range of initiatives implies a broad commitment to cultural development, and his prominent position in many of these initiatives testifies to his high standing at the time (Pissarra 2015:27)

Immediately after he left Makerere in 1961, Sam Ntiro was appointed to serve as Tanzania’s High Commissioner in the UK, and became the first African artist to hold such a senior



government post in the entirety of Anglophone Africa (Pissarra 2015:27). While representing his country in the UK for four years, from 1961 to 1964, Ntiro published two articles, *East African Art* and *Tanzania Traditional Arts in the Independence Era* in his continued efforts to promote the visual arts and national culture in Tanzania. His latter paper was published in 1975 in the journal titled; *Tanganyika Notes and Records*. It briefly details facts about the general cultural sector developments component to supplement President Nyerere's report on the TANU Ten Years After Independence, 1961-1971<sup>142</sup> publication.

During an interview with Elias Jengo for this study, it was established that Sam Ntiro was not only a good visual arts and cultural activities' administrator, but also an excellent visual arts educator. Jengo affirmed that Ntiro initiated optional art classes in drawing and painting at the Chang'ombe Teachers' Training College in Dar es Salaam between 1965 and 1967. This was a period when Ntiro was actively involved in the promotion of visual arts in East Africa as a chairperson of the Community of East African Artists (CEAA) and head of the Art Department at Kyagombo Teachers' Training College in Kampala, Uganda. In Tanzania, Elias Jengo and Louis Mbughuni, also Makerere graduates, were Sam Ntiro's colleagues while teaching art at Chang'ombe until 1967, when Ntiro was reassigned to his new job as Commissioner for Culture in the Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development. In 1969, the Division of Culture was moved to the Ministry of National

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<sup>142</sup> This was President Nyerere's 10 years of his administration progress report titled: *TANU TEN YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE: Report submitted by the President of TANU, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, to the TANU National Conference, Dar es Salaam, September 1971*. In this presidential paper Nyerere reports the developments achieved in all sectors but none at all concerning the cultural sector, which was exhaustively reported in Sam Ntiro's which addresses the progress and developments in the cultural sector in Tanzania including Art and Crafts; Drama and Theatre—for example, modern and traditional music—and Sports and Games. This privilege attests to Nyerere's huge confidence in Sam Ntiro. Both Nyerere's and Ntiro's papers were published in *Tanganyika Notes and Records* journal no. 76 published in 1975. The implication is that Nyerere let Ntiro handle the cultural aspects in his paper to avoid duplication and overlapping of subject matter.

Education, where Ntiro worked until 1973, when the Division of Culture was changed into the Department of Arts and Culture. Despite his busy schedule as Commissioner for Culture, in early 1969 Ntiro introduced art courses at the Institute of Education of the University of Dar es Salaam. He again subsequently engineered the transfer of Elias Jengo to join him from Chang'ombe Teachers' Training College.

By 1971, relations with the University of East Africa declined due to the military coup which made Idi Amin the autocratic ruler of Uganda. Tanzania openly criticised the coup, which soured relationship between the two countries. As a backlash, Tanzanian artists who depended on art training at Makerere were left with no reliable opportunities to study fine arts, as the new University College at Dar es Salaam taught only theatre arts with no fine arts curriculum in place. According to Frederick Maeda, the only Tanzanian artist and art scholar who based his research on Sam Ntiro, the Ministry of Education established an art sub-department to train artists and art teachers based on Sam Ntiro's advice. Ntiro's recommendations towards countering the problem of closed admissions for Tanzanian art students at Makerere for political reasons in the early 1970s were followed by the reorganisation of Music and Theatre Department into Fine Art, Music and Theatre Department in 1975 (Maeda 2008:68).

Sam Ntiro retired as an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1983. He continued to work independently as an artist and mentor in several art organisations, including the Tanzania Art Society, which was revitalised in the 1960s. In fact, many of Sam Ntiro's artworks are unavailable in Tanzania. They are still held in many institutions and countries he has worked and exhibited in such as Uganda, the UK and the

US. A small collection of his paintings, available in the National Museum of Tanzania's permanent exhibition in Dar es Salaam was made possible through the efforts of his family and colleague Elias Jengo following his death on 31 January 1993.



**Fig.95 (Left) Sam Ntiro as art tutor at Makerere University in the 1950s and (right) Sam Ntiro's profile photo printed on the poster for the *Three Artists Exhibition* at the Goethe Institute in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s**

(Courtesy of Raza Mohamed in Dar es Salaam November, 2015)

However as once noted by Kakande (2008) and Pissarra (2015), this study has also established that Sam Ntiro has been unjustly appreciated at home and outside Tanzania. Despite his great works and contributions to promoting visual arts in the entire East African region through training and publications, he remains relatively unknown and unacknowledged:

Remarkably, despite his impressive list of accomplishments, many of them unprecedented, there is not a single full-length book, chapter or journal article on Ntiro. Catalogues of his solo exhibitions were rarely produced and are more accurately described as brochures rather than books. Published accounts are largely limited to broader surveys. Given the paucity of research into his career, it is perhaps not surprising that published references more frequently than not include errors, inconsistencies, misrepresentations and silences. If the details

of his career are difficult to establish through published sources, so too is evidence of his creative output (Pissarra 2015:27).

Since his retirement in 1983 and his death in 1993, there has been only one study on Ntiro by a local Tanzanian. The little which is available on him contains more negative criticisms than honest appreciation of his artistic legacy. Basing their arguments on two issues—Ntiro's supposed 'limited art making techniques' and thematic repetition in his paintings<sup>143</sup>, many of his detractors, including a fellow Tanzanian, Frederick Maeda, whose critique lacks a serious argument on the thrust behind Ntiro's art messages. A closer look at Maeda's comments reflects Jengo's (2003) criticism of Ntiro's art genre<sup>144</sup> and technical flaws.

With controversial realistic paintings such as his portrait of Margaret Trowell (Fig. 98), Sam Ntiro's painting genre calls for an independent inquiry. Although Kyeyune (2003:104) shows that Ntiro might have deliberately maintained the so-called 'naivety' in his paintings while ignoring the perfection of his unfamiliar colour scheme in addition to applying limited anatomical considerations to enhance his technique, still he sceptically looks at Sam Ntiro as technically poor (Kyeyune 2008:140). From another angle, while reviewing the critics of Sam Ntiro's works, this study assumes that his simple painting execution style might have been inspired by the rock art painters who had no regard for later art production techniques that Europeans introduced to East Africa and Tanzania in particular. In his own words, Sam Ntiro

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<sup>143</sup> Jengo (2003) and Kyeyune (2008) claim that Sam Ntiro has extensively painted on his Chaggaland's farming experiences and could not paint otherwise throughout his life, a claim which the present study in the section covering Ntiro contests and exposes as lacking validity

<sup>144</sup> See Jengo 2003, pp.39,41

on two different occasions mentions that the rock art of Tanzania must be acknowledged as a source of inspiration whenever artists and artworks from Tanzania are studied<sup>145</sup>.

Nonetheless, it is also observed that persistent personal conflicts, deliberate misunderstanding and cultural differences might have sparked and prompted much of the early negative comments of critics such as Cecil Todd, Gregory Maloba and Jonathan Kingdon, who have largely negatively reviewed the work of Sam Ntiro. In this regard, a close reading of Kyeyune (2003:98-143; 2008:141) reveals that these three personalities, while working with Ntiro at Makerere, made some unsubstantiated accusative comments which not only showed their dislike of Sam Ntiro as an artist who surpassed them by inventing his own art genre and ascended onto the world stage of modern art exhibitions, but also exposed their limited understanding of aesthetic standards<sup>146</sup> outside those of European origin. Todd had a particular affection for students who constituted true followers of his standards in his art classes, as he asserts:

Sserulyo possesses one of the most original talents in Uganda. There is in my view an aspect of genius in his work and I will always be one of his warmest and enthusiastic supporters of his abilities—Cecil Todd, letter to warden of hall of residence, confidential report on Sserulyo, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1970 (Kyeyune, 2003:143)

In the extract Todd confirms his desired standards in Sserulyo despite the fact that Sserulyo's painting genre (Fig.99) was not European either due to its lack of typical European criteria, i.e. vigilant use of colour and perfect anatomic figures the way Cecil Todd wanted it at

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<sup>145</sup> See East African Art, *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 1963 No. 60&61, p.121 and Traditional Arts in the Post-Independent Era: Arts and Crafts, *Tanzania Notes and Records*, 1975 No.76, p.115

<sup>146</sup> The differences between African and European aesthetic standards in arts such as painting and sculpture were among causes of unfair criticism of Sam Ntiro by Cecil Todd who believed that being African is already a disadvantage and, therefore, made it difficult for an African to conform to the Modernity dimensions of the arts (Kyeyune 2003:128). Kiure Msangi in his doctoral thesis *Proposal for a Comprehensive Art and Crafts Education Program for Tanzania and Structure for its Implementation* (1987) provides a full section that explains how aesthetically different an African artist can be in creating his or her art, pp.38-44

Makerere. Sserulyo's figures are almost flat due to the monotonously spread burnt amber hue with parts distinguished by bold dark border lines. In fact, it is almost impossible to clearly see the human figures harvesting coffee as the over-used bright colours on their top layers distract the eye's movement. Furthermore, it is assumed in the present study that, as Sserulyo appropriated Ntiro's style from "*Harvesting Coffee*" (Fig. 96), his criticism might be his only option to distance his work, "*Coffee Pickers*" (Fig. 99) from that of Sam Ntiro with an almost similar title. However, in his attempts to change Trowell's legacy in terms of African art genres, Todd never spared those who followed their own ways, specifically those embracing traditional African art modernism, such as Sam Ntiro. Generally, Todd expressed his disgust or dissatisfaction with Sam Ntiro's human figures as he dismissed them as 'busy little ants' (Pissarra 2015:56). Clearly art genres and technique discussions at Makerere School of Art during Todd's administration emerged from both, professional and personal causes. It appears Todd treats Ntiro's deviation from what he taught as standard in his pursuit of an African originality as a type of inferior aesthetic. Kyeyune (2003:100) in a subtitle, *Ntiro and Makerere: Vying for a chair?* quotes Gregory Maloba, who with unfounded evidence bitterly buttresses Todd's accusations against Sam Ntiro as a failure, on the account that he was largely misled by his teacher and mentor Margaret Trowell:

According to Maloba, Ntiro did not have the ability to rethink his work from alternative angles and therefore he could not update himself. 'Ntiro had no qualms about modelling a leg or a hand in clay as thin as this!' – showing me his finger. Maloba further explains, 'Ntiro was misled by Trowell; she went to the extent of promising, definitely promising Ntiro succession of her when she left' (Maloba, interview 2001)

Considering Maloba's comments on Ntiro's inability supposed in sculpture art, the present researcher views the remarks as unfair in evaluating Ntiro's abilities as a painter. Throughout

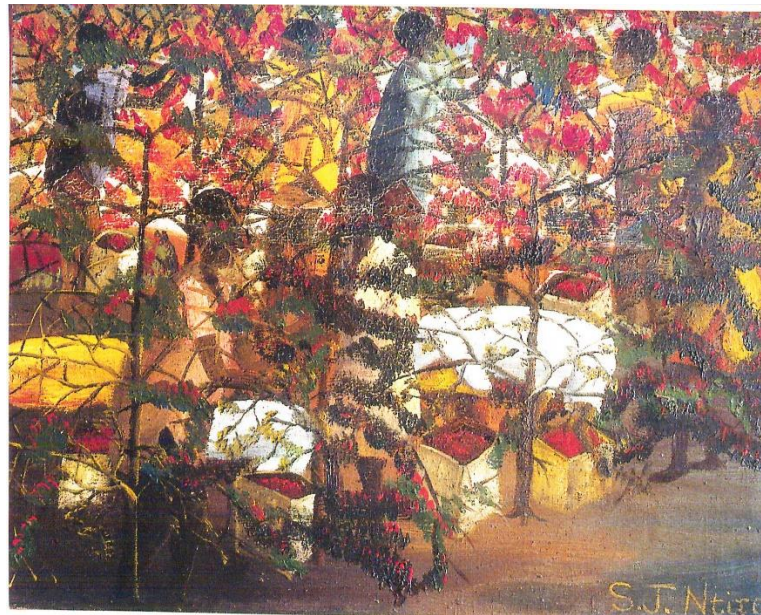
his art career, Sam Ntiro trained and worked as a painter and not as a sculptor. Nonetheless, the present research found that in 1971 Sam Ntiro produced a series of low-relief sculptural wall murals on cement, when he was commissioned to decorate the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument erected in Arusha, Tanzania<sup>147</sup> (see figs. 86, 87, 88 and 89). Maloba's criticism of Ntiro raises some reservations. By any standards, a casual glance at the murals reveals refined works of art, completed with detailed anatomical consideration and good colour application skills. In fact, Gregory Maloba's comments appear to have been made without his having seen much of Ntiro's works produced after their power-struggles at Makerere in the early 1960s.

Even recent critics of Sam Ntiro such as Jengo (2003) and Maeda (2008) appear to add nothing new apart from their rephrasing recurring criticisms produced when Ntiro worked at Makerere. Indeed, the controversial dismissal of Ntiro's *Ujamaa* panoramas of peasants on farms and others undertaking domestic chores as mere 'Chaggaland memoirs' rather than the depiction of his aspiration as well as undoubted support of *Ujamaa* politics in Tanzania appears not to be grounded in empirical evidence. As Tanzanians sharing much with Sam Ntiro where art and society are concerned, Elias Jengo and Fredrick Maeda's criticisms would be valid if they could bring up discussions based on socio-political issues overlooked in the existing literature corpus about Sam Ntiro's work. The dismissive nature of the criticism against Sam Ntiro highlighted by Sanyal (2000:105) and Kyeyune (2003), as well observed by Pissarra, (2015:44) appears to be more informed by Sam Ntiro's colleagues who were

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<sup>147</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument murals created by Sam Ntiro at Arusha were later restored and maintained in the early 2000s during a project known as BAME, which was spearheaded by an Afro-American artist Charlotte O'neal:  
<http://images.google.de/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uaacc.habari.co.tz/> See figures in appendices

critical of his administrative position while working at Makerere School of Art than from his lifetime of artworks, including his post-Makerere artworks and publications<sup>148</sup>. In this light, one can assume several reasons for the omission of Sam Ntiro's story in highly-commended publications on modern and contemporary art from East Africa in the twentieth century such as *Contemporary Art in Africa* by Ulli Beier (1968) and *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945 – 1994* by Okwi Enwezor (2001) in their narratives of art of Africa. This study finds Enwezor's account of African modernism in his book and exhibition somehow unrealistic because of the omission of the Sam Ntiro's account pertaining to the *Ujamaa* visual arts of Tanzania as being among the early initiatives towards African modernity in the visual arts during the decade of African independence.



**Fig.96 'Harvesting Coffee' by Sam Ntiro, 1960**  
(Source: Jengo 2003:46)

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<sup>148</sup> Ntiro said he was not after cheap popularity and money in artistic practice as accused by some of his detractors (Ntiro 1982). Kyeyune (2003: 100) quotes Maloba and Sserulyo arguing that Sam Ntiro was incapable of moulding a simple clay figure is disapproved by relief mural panels Ntiro executed for the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary monument in Arusha City.





**Fig.97 Twin murals at Makerere, from left, Peasants undertaking chores and Wild Animals in a game-park by Sam Ntiro, 1960s**  
(Courtesy of the Makerere Art Gallery, October 2015)



**Fig.98 Portrait of Margaret Trowell by Sam Ntiro in 1964, National Museum of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam - reserved collection**  
(Photograph by researcher October 2015)



**Fig.99 Coffee Pickers by Ignatius Sserulyo in the mid-1960s**  
(Source: Judith von D Miller 1975 – Courtesy of Irving Trust Company, NY)

#### **2.2.2.1.2 Adoption of ‘Makonde’ Sculpture Genre in the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

The second approach employed to explain the origin of *Ujamaa* visual art forms in the present study is the adoption of Makonde art forms in the making of the new *Ujamaa* art genres. An example to justify this approach is evidenced by a sculpture by Yakobo Sangwani, whose original name, the *Dimoongo*, morphed into *Ujamaa*. The *Dimoongo* sculpture as introduced in Chapter One in the Peera Curio Shop’s Patronage Systems section, had already been created more than a decade before it was adopted as an official form or symbol of Tanzania’s version of African socialism, the *Ujamaa*. The adoption of this particular carving was inspired by a striking similitude between the actions and messages it portrays and the characteristics of African socialism which President Nyerere was promoting during the *Ujamaa* period. The *Ujamaa* carvings have always carried general themes such as hard work; communal unity; collective action and rural communities’ life struggles. Humphrey (1972) offers a brilliant account which helps describe how this summative piece of art complements Nyerere’s literal doctrine of the *Ujamaa* with socialist life in Tanzania:

The word *Ujamaa* in [Ki]Swahili has no simple translation into English. But its meaning is made plain in the *ujamaa* carvings created by the Makonde craftsmen of Tanzania. In these carvings, often called ‘trees of life’, human figures, of all sorts and ages, are intertwined in a rising column of ebony (figure 1). Everyone is busy doing their own work: one cooks; another hammers; a third sews; and a fourth nurses her baby. The figures tumble up against each other so closely that their spaces and forms are defined by the bodies of their neighbours. Yet all the time they retain their separate identities and personalities. *Ujamaa*, it is clear, refers to nothing less than the capacity of human beings, despite their differences, to work together as a community—something that humans are better able to do than any other animal on earth...

Until the present day, the brandname *Ujamaa* in the discussion of socialist art in Tanzania appears to be more closely associated with Makonde sculpture art than with the two-dimensional arts such as painting. This notion did not happen by accident. In this regard, John Wembah-Rashid provides an interesting account which traces the event which led the Makonde sculpture, originally known as *Dimoongo*, to acquire its new name, *Ujamaa*:

...The indirect political implication came about when, in 1967 after Arusha Declaration, an art exhibition was arranged by the Division of Culture and one of the *Dimoongo carvings* was displayed. In attempts to give each piece a name, the exhibitors had to get ideas from the carvers and the information they got satisfied them to call *Dimoongo*, ‘Ujamaa’, togetherness, brotherhood in English. Since then such sculptures go by that name although in some quarters the name ‘family tree’ is also used. There have been a number of developments since then... (Wembah-Rashid 1979:12)

Wembah-Rashid’s idea gets support from Fadhili Mshana almost three decades later, confirming that principally, this notion has not changed to-date, but in some details of the general artwork:

It was through Tanzania’s nationalist politics after 1967 Arusha Declaration that *dimoongo* acquired a new name and concept. An art exhibition was held in which instead of the carving’s original name, the carvers and exhibitors agreed on a new one. Hence, *Ujamaa* in [Ki]Swahili or togetherness, brotherhood in English. Although in the main, this style is characterised by clustered figures in a column with

a single figure at the top, many changes have been made since the first carving was produced (Mshana 2001:99)

Since its 1967 adoption, this particular Makonde sculpture and many others in its mould have been known worldwide as *Ujamaa* carvings (Fig.100) and directly associated with the then-socialist politics of Tanzania. Unlike the first approach, which demanded the interpretation of artworks' messages in relation to their production era, political orientation informed them as well as the artists' affiliation with political systems during production, the adoption of the *Dimoongo* sculpture approach is simple and accessible. As Wembah-Rashid (1979:12) has explained, the designation of the *Dimoongo* sculptures with the *Ujamaa* brand-name was a direct political action in the implementation of socialist government directives i.e. the creation of a national culture through the production of the national arts. The organisers of the exhibition which prompted the renaming of *Dimoongo* carvings as *Ujamaa* sculptures, the Division of Culture, was a government institution, then under the Ministry of National Education and Culture. During this period, the Division of Culture, with Sam Ntiro as its leader, was in an intensive campaign to realise the components of the Tanzanian national culture in the making since 1962. Ntiro (1982:70) confirms this claim here:

There is not the slightest doubt that the Tanzania government and the CCM [Revolutionary Party] fully realise the importance of reviving Makonde sculpture.





**Fig.100 Early Ujamaa carvings by Yakobo Sangwani before 1966**  
(Source: Anthony Stout 1966:49, 54)



**Fig.101 A Monumental Ujamaa sculpture at the entrance of the CHAG, Arusha City**  
(Photograph by researcher at Cultural Heritage Gallery in Arusha, September 2015)

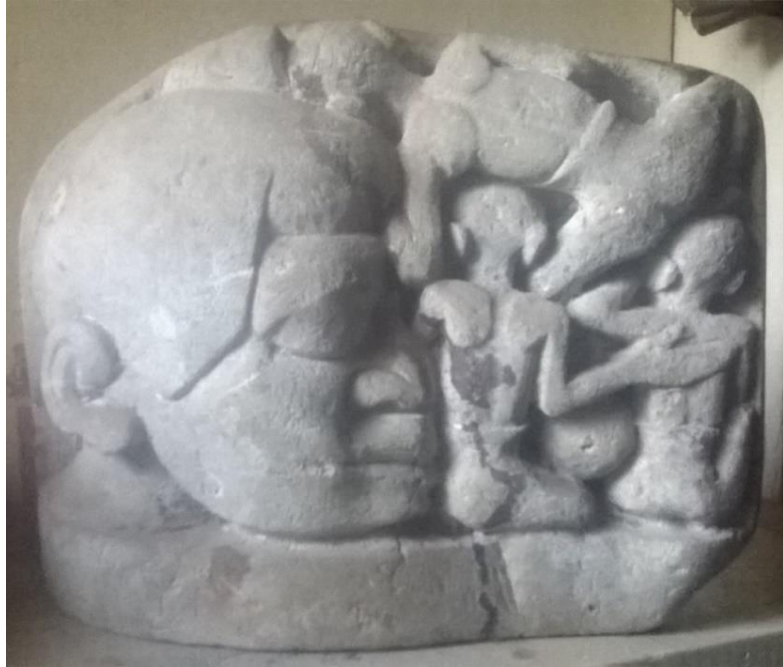
The *Wamakonde* sculptors have for long produced *Ujamaa* carvings in the same genre introduced by Yakobo Sangwani. But as the genre became more popular in late 1970s and early 80s, several developments were noticed. Notable ones include changes in size and characterisation of the carvings. The *Ujamaa* carvings, which were primarily produced for export, were small in size and lightweight so as not to inconvenience the clients, mostly European tourists, during flights. There were also big, life-size and monumental *Ujamaa* carvings (Fig.101) which were produced for institutions, specifically the socialist government authorities which promoted the *Ujamaa* policies in Tanzania and abroad. Sometimes hotels and foreign institutions such as museums and art galleries in Western countries requested such large pieces. Another change was evidenced by the diversity of characters incorporated into *Ujamaa* carvings. In the new variations, *Ujamaa* carvings also depict animals in the wild or the *Wamaasai* community in their daily activities such as cattle grazing and hunting (Fig.102). Following a ban on the use of ivory and concerted efforts in the 1980s to reduce excessive use of ebony as carving material, some *Ujamaa* artworks were produced in stone (Fig.104) and other types of wood such as *Mninga* and *Mkongo* (Mahogany), which were not commonly used before.



**Fig.102 A Ujamaa carving portraying the Wamaasai in their traditional chores on the grounds of the Cultural Heritage Gallery in Arusha**  
(Photograph by researcher at Cultural Heritage Gallery in Arusha, September 2015)



**Fig.103 A detailed section of Masaai figures**  
(Photograph by researcher at Cultural Heritage Gallery in Arusha, September 2015)



**Fig.104 A Ujamaa sculpture on a cement block by Yakobo Sangwani in the 1970s**  
(Photograph by researcher at Karibu Art Gallery in Dar es Salaam, November 2015)

However, Wembah-Rashid (1979), Mshana (2001) and Jengo (2009)—writers who associate Robert Yakobo Sangwani with the invention of the *Dimoongo* carving genre, which later became the *Ujamaa*—have not written much about the events after the sculptor gave up his discovery to the socialist authorities, who effectively used the artwork as an integral illustration in the propagation of *Ujamaa* policies in both publicity stunts and communal production education materials such as books and pamphlets. Wembah-Rashid (1979) records that after leaving Mohamed Peera’s workshop and setting up his own studio in the mid-1960s, Sangwani, with his younger brother Pesa, relocated to the village of Boko on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam on the Bagamoyo Road, where they continued producing for Peera, visiting buyers and other collectors. Sangwani is not popular among Tanzanians outside of a few people working in the visual arts sector. He died in 2006.



On 11 February 2016, Robert Yakobo Sangwani was posthumously bestowed with an honourable Fine Arts Award for his creative works which earned Tanzania fame and represented his country in the field of visual arts beyond national frontiers<sup>149</sup>. This was in an annual event known as *Msanii Day*, in which the executive secretary for Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports was the guest of honour. The *Ujamaa* carving genre is still very popular in the world (Fig.105) and is diversely reproduced by many other Makonde carvers in Tanzania. The carvings still carry its later adopted meaning, that the *Ujamaa* is the best African way of life in Tanzania.



**Fig.105 A life size Ujamaa carving presented to President Obama during his visit to Tanzania in July 2013, as seen in his office in the White House**  
(source: <https://time.com>. President Obama with Ujamaa Sculpture, August 2019)

### 2.2.2.1.3 Creation of Modern Local Art Genres

Finally, another approach that explains the manifestations of *Ujamaa* visual arts genres is derived from newly-created artworks, especially paintings, portraying various accounts of

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<sup>149</sup> Wasanii watunukiwa tuzo Siku ya Msanii by Mwali Ibrahim, Mtanzania Newspaper of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, retrieved from: <http://mtanzania.co.tz/?p=8570> on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016

workers and peasants' life in Tanzania. The most compelling artworks in this genre are the portrayals of workers and peasants in support of the Arusha Declaration as created by Kiure Msangi (Fig. 106) and Fatma Abdallah (Fig. 107). Their paintings depict the breadth and strength of socialist organisations of workers and peasants in Tanzania. Msangi's and Abdallah's central themes are the *Ujamaa* solidarity marches, also known as "*Matembezi ya Mshikamano ya Wakulima na Wafanyakazi*" in Kiswahili. They visualize the popular mass support of the Arusha Declaration.

As these semi-realistic artworks emerged immediately after the Arusha Declaration, it is tempting to associate their origin with the revolution. Clearly, the characters in Kiure Msangi's and Fatma Abdallah's artworks place the peasants and the workers at the centre as converging and chanting *Ujamaa*'s solidarity and unity slogans in unison as one big raving engine in a movement. In the actual event of the Arusha Declaration, the workers and peasants comprised the majority who joined President Nyerere's long foot march from Butiama to Arusha (458.1 km) in 1967<sup>150</sup> (Fig.111). Until the present time, the peasants and workers continue organising annual solidarity marches on specific days known as the *Saba-Saba* (7/7 or the Seventh of July), the Peasants' Day, and *Mei Mosi* (May 1), the Workers' Day in commemoration of the Arusha Declaration. Both the declaration and the concept behind it are summed up in a later popular slogan, "*Mshikamano wa Vyama vya Wakulima na Wafanyakazi*", the solidarity of workers' unions and peasants' co-operatives. This slogan

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<sup>150</sup> The Arusha Declaration March from Butiama to Arusha was meant to symbolise leaders' sacrifice and call for unity through hard-work. The March was also intended to liberate the people of independent Tanzania, mostly workers and peasants from poor social, cultural, political and economic state inherited from the colonialists and begin a journey to development through the adoption of *Ujamaa*. The March was supposedly inspired by the one Chairman Mao Tse Tung of Communist China undertook from Tingchow to Tingsha in July 1930

dominates the celebrations of workers and peasants in Tanzania to this date. In these events, workers from different organisations identify themselves using placards and banners which display the names of their organisations as well as the ‘mottos’ of the particular year’s event. The same is done by peasants who normally identify themselves in co-operatives and associations. Both workers’ unions and peasants’ co-operative unions work closely with their respective ministries in Tanzania, an idea which suggests that some aspects of socialism are still evident even in the post-1990s Tanzania largely defined by Breton Woods-induced neo-liberalism.

Kiure Francis Msangi was a Tanzanian artist who graduated from the Makerere School of Art in 1963. He was a civil servant during the proclamation of socialism through the Arusha Declaration. On the eve of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, Msangi created a wood print which he called *Ujamaa* (Fig.106). His print portrays workers and peasants carrying placards and banners with messages admiring President Nyerere as a strong leader as well as supporting the Arusha Declaration as the right action towards doing away with the people’s sufferings in Tanzania. In 1969, Fatma Abdallah Shabaan, a Tanzanian artist of Zanzibari descent and Makerere art graduate, as well as a civil servant, produced a painting portraying groups of women workers from several co-operative unions and workers’ organisations marching with placards aloft in support of the Arusha Declaration. Fatma called her work “*The Revolutionary Spirit*” (Fig.107). Unlike Msangi, who addresses only one major theme, “the workers and the peasants’ unity”, Fatma Abdallah’s painting combines three historical events into one artistic composition. In her painting, she portrays the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964; the Tanganyika and Zanzibar Union of 1964; and the Arusha Declaration of 1967 as related victories due to adoption of *Ujamaa*, as the placards’ messages carried by the women

in her colourful painting reveal. The similarities of the depicted incidents; characterisation and the messages in the artworks of Msangi and Fatma suggest an invention of a new art genre which focused on depicting peasants' and workers' experiences as articulated by the Arusha Declaration in 1967. Both artists employed the Arusha Declaration as their inspirational event and, therefore, centre their creativity on it for the easy representation of their central messages, but also for the familiarisation of their works with the politics of the socialist government of Tanzania.



**Fig.106 'Ujamaa', a woodcut-print by Francis Kiure Msangi in 1967**  
(source: [www.tzaffairs.org](http://www.tzaffairs.org), Photo by E. Court 1967, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.107 'The Revolutionary Spirit' 1969 by Fatma Abdullah**  
(Photograph by researcher at Makerere Art Gallery, Kampala October 2015)

Since the emergence of Msangi's and Fatma's artworks in the late 1960s, almost all later works produced by artists all over Tanzania on the theme of *Ujamaa* have depicted both workers and peasants involved in development activities in rural and urban settings (see figs. 144, 145, and 146). There were not many artworks by Msangi and Fatma apart from the major two figures already mentioned in the ongoing discussion to show progress in their inventions. Fatma Abdallah's later artwork, which appears on a *Khanga* (wrapper) design, *Twalipenda azimio la Arusha*, translated as We Support the Arusha Declaration (Fig.108), fitted precisely as party promotional materials for socialist policies more than anything else, as women who wear them to communicate and appreciate the message. These *Khangas* are popular among the women folk in Tanzania, whereas Kiure Msangi's untitled artwork (Fig.109) constitutes a continuation of the hard work and collective action themes which have vastly been appropriated and represented in the works of Sam Ntiro and Robert Yakobo Sangwani in most of their *Ujamaa* art pieces.



**Fig.108 'Twalipenda Azimio la Arusha' translated as 'We cherish the Arusha Declaration' by Fatma Abdallah in 1969**  
(Source: Miller 1975:57)



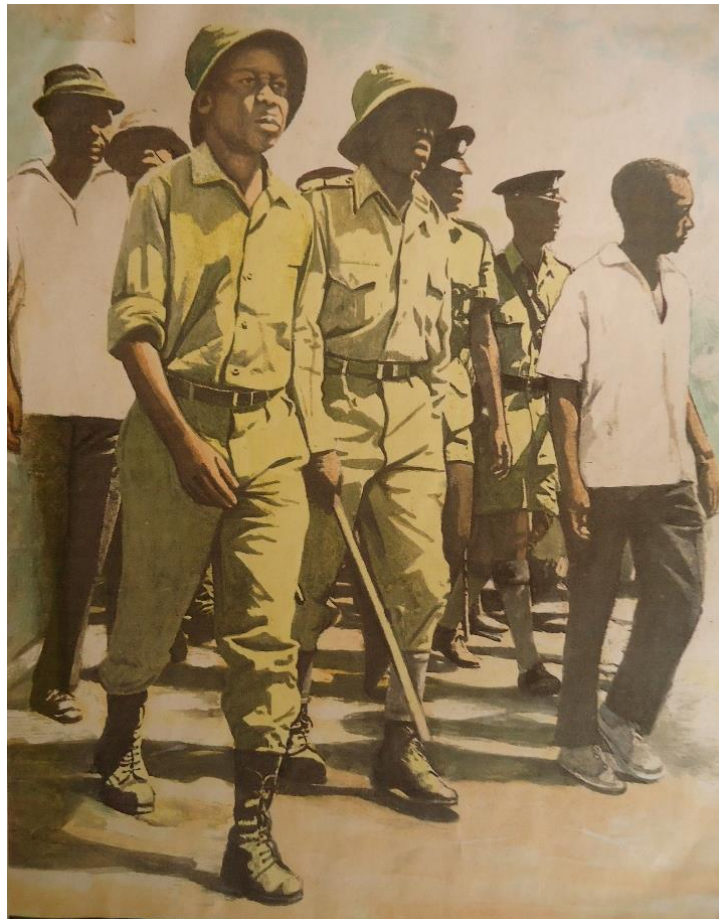
**Fig.109 Untitled ('Women working together'), woodcut, by Kiure Msangi 1969**  
(Source: [janetsplace.charbonniers.org/gallery](http://janetsplace.charbonniers.org/gallery), accessed on August 2019)

A minor development, however, is evidenced by first hybridised reproductions of Kiure Msangi and Fatma Abdallah's version of the *Ujamaa* art in a mural by Raza Mohamed and Juma Salim Mbukuzi in 1975 for the United States Information Service (USIS) hall in Dar es Salaam (Fig.110). Raza and Mbukuzi created a mural portraying workers and peasants participating in an adult education programme sponsored by the USIS in Tanzania. Their mural appropriates the *Ujamaa* characteristics of collective action and Education for Self-Reliance by depicting adult learners working hard in groups. Not much on large scale productions was done by the latter artists.





**Fig.110 A mural of Workers and Peasants participating in adult education by Raza Mohamed and Juma Salim Mbukuzi at the USIS offices in Dar es Salaam, 1972**  
(A courtesy of Raza Mohamed in March 2016)



**Fig.111 An artistic reproduction of President Nyerere, peasants, workers, government and party leaders in solidarity march from Butiama to Arusha en route to proclaiming the Arusha Declaration in 1967, by Paul Peter Ndembo,1990s**  
(Photograph by researcher, courtesy of Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation October 2015)

A closer analysis of these three approaches on the emergence of the *Ujamaa* visual art forms provides us with three major discoveries. First, Robert Yakobo Sangwani's depiction of *Ujamaa* on wood is a complementary genre to Sam Ntiro's approach, which is in the form of painting. Second, both Ntiro and Sangwani's art genres based their narratives on the lives and activities of peasants in rural parts of Tanzania. They have embraced and hailed the *Ujamaa* village life and the village community's associationalism as a core tenet of Nyerere's vision of socialism. Third, Ntiro's and Sangwani's artworks carried these dominant features for three decades since their discovery despite the later abundance of reproductions by several other adherents of the approach. Fourth, the visualisation of the Arusha Declaration evolves from both Ntiro's and Sangwani's approaches, but emphasizes the unity of the two main characters, the workers and the peasants, in one *Ujamaa* system narrative. Furthermore, Kiure Msangi and Fatma Abdallah include the urban aspects of *Ujamaa* by depicting their stories of the workers who reside near factories and processing industries, mostly established in urban spaces since the colonial era. Briefly, the present study proffers that the *Ujamaa*, as a Tanzanian version of African socialism, provides a brand name for the artworks reviewed in connection with these theories, provided that the artworks depict a fitting and very direct visual interpretation of the *Ujamaa* principles and ideologies as developed and practised in Tanzania from the 1960s to the present day.

### **2.2.3 Political and Cultural Iconography in the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

The *Ujamaa* visual arts emerged with a few powerful iconographies. Artworks such as wall murals, paintings and sculptures created during the *Ujamaa* period incorporated icons such as the Drum; the Burning Torch; the Hammer and Hand-hoe; the Spear and Gun; the Shield;



Man and Woman; the summit of the Mount Kilimanjaro; Monuments and several colour scales which served more than aesthetic purposes in the general artworks. The current study finds that the interpretation of these visual symbol in the visual arts of socialist Tanzania is integral incoming up with a comprehensive appreciation of the works. In fact, most of the symbols in the visual arts were created during the early independence period but were popularly used and promoted during the *Ujamaa* period. Towards this end, different party and government institutions commissioned artists to create iconographic images which briefly represented and explained their visions and missions. Perhaps most of these symbols as evident in multitudes of the *Ujamaa* visual arts were borrowed from two main national objects: The national flag and the national coat of arms.

The meanings of iconographies incorporated in the state- or party-sponsored artworks were not haphazard. The state institutions, such as Bank of Tanzania (BoT) or Tanzania Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (TPTC), which commissioned many artworks, deliberately asked the artists to include the iconographies in their artworks so as to communicate or promote the central government's visions and missions. This is evident by the official interpretation of several iconographies used in the visual arts, as stipulated on the Tanzanian government website:<sup>151</sup>

The central feature of the Coat of Arms is a Warrior's Shield which bears a Golden portion on the upper part followed underneath by the United Republic flag of Green, Golden, Black and Blue; and red portion under which are wavy bands of blue and white. The Golden portion represents minerals in the United Republic; the red portion underneath the flag symbolizes the red soils of Africa; while the wavy bands represent the land, sea, lakes and coastal lines of the United Republic. Superimposed features on the Shield are flames of a burning torch which signifies freedom and enlightenment and

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<sup>151</sup> <http://www.tanzania-gov.de/tanzania/national-symbols>. Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

knowledge; a spear signifying defence of freedom and crossed axe and hoe being tools that the people of the United Republic use in developing the country. The Shield is set upon a representation of Mount Kilimanjaro. On the side of the Shield there is an elephant tusk supported by a man on the right and a woman on the left. At the feet of the man is a clove bush and at the feet of woman is cotton bush—thus indicating the theme of co-operation. The United Republic motto – Uhuru na Umoja—is written in Kiswahili and it means ‘Freedom and Unity’, While the Uhuru Torch symbolises freedom and light. It was first lit on top of Mount Kilimanjaro (5,890m) in 1961. Symbolically to shine the country and across the borders to bring hope where there is despair, love where there is enmity and respect where there is hatred. Yearly there is the Uhuru Torch race, starting from different prominent places

This extract offers interpretations regarding these specific icons which are still valid in the present time. However, not all iconographies in the *Ujamaa* visual arts are interpreted on the government’s website, as they need additional knowledge outside that stricture. The Drum or *Ngoma* in Kiswahili, which is one of the dominant iconographies in the *Ujamaa* visual arts, is suitably understood through its functions in people’s everyday lives. In Tanzania, the drum is a pure symbol of traditionalism. A cultural event, be it a wedding ceremony, an opening of a political rally or a ritual is incomplete without *ngoma* (Figs.112-118). In many parts of rural Tanzania, the drum is still used as a medium of communication. Town criers use drums to call for the public’s attention or send an alarm whenever there is uncertainty. Tania Bale,<sup>152</sup> an African art lover and co-founder of African Art Online, claims that among Tanzanians, the drum is a symbol of maternity and community as well as a means of communication and celebration. Bale’s interpretation is confirmed by Shani Kitogo, the Deputy Director for Department of Arts and Culture Development within the Language Division in Tanzania. When interviewed for this study, she associated the drum as a symbol with the voice of local

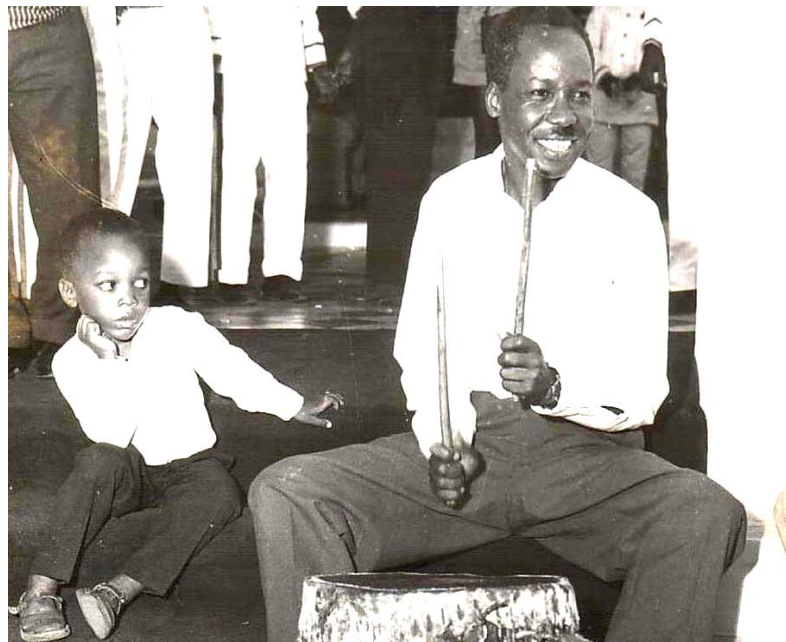
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<sup>152</sup> See, <http://blog.africanartonline.com/post/44729933783/cultural-heritage-art-gallery-in-tanzania> accessed 26th June 2017 at Berlin, Germany

communities during the struggles for independence in Tanganyika. She was explaining the essence of the statuette of a man beating a drum (Fig.115) placed at the *Mnazi Mmoja* Independence grounds in Dar es Salaam. Besides Bale's and Kitogo's views, Kelly Askew also underscores the significance of the drum as an important national symbol in Tanzania when she asserts:

...Since *ngoma* was, and often still is, viewed as the purest and most authentic representation of Tanzanian custom, one of the ministry's first acts was to establish the National Dance troupe in 1963... (Askew 2005:306)

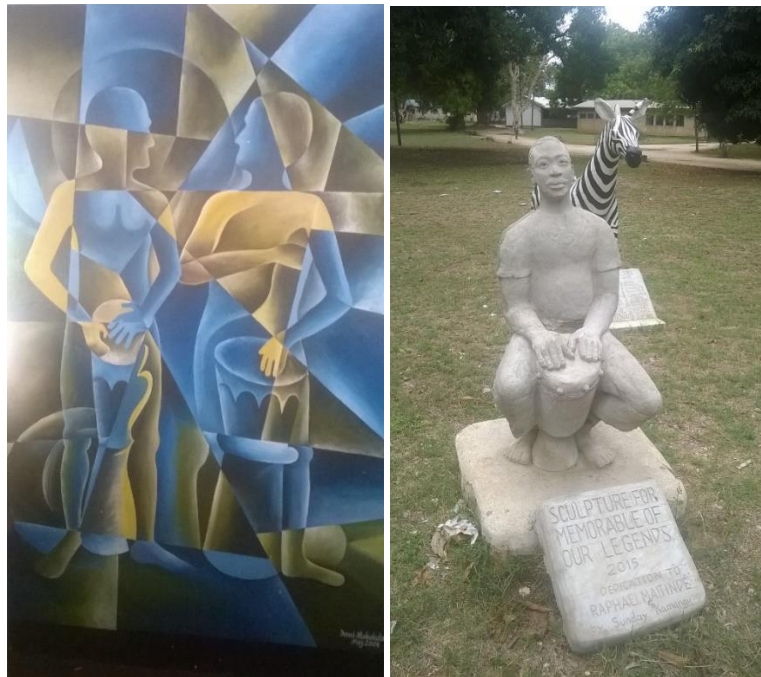
In her comment, Askew (2005) reflects on the cultural decolonisation acts of the first Ministry of the National Culture and Youth. The present research shows that in most of the *Ujamaa* artworks, the drum represents traditionalism and enhances its specific functions as a means for cultural expression.



**Fig.112 President Julius Kambarage Nyerere beats a drum in an event held to mark a Cultural Revolution in Tanzania in the 1960s**  
(Source: Pamphlet cover for Ministry National Culture and Youth published in 1975)



**Fig.113 A section of a mural at Kilimanjaro CCM Regional offices of a man beating a drum by Elias Jengo, 1984**  
(Photograph by researcher September 2015)



**Fig.114 Photographs of artworks depicting people beating drums at TaSUBa, Bagamoyo by former students of the Bagamoyo College of Arts in the mid-2000s**  
(Photographs by researcher in November 2015)



**Fig.115 A sculpture commemorating the traditional town criers of the Dar es Salaam area during the independence struggles placed on the Mnazi-Mmoja grounds, where Tanganyika's independence ceremony was held on 9 December 1961.**

**By an unknown sculptor in the 1960s**  
 (Photographs by researcher November 2015)



**Fig.116 Metal sculptures of men beating drums at the Dar es Salaam city centre by Wonder Works 2014**

(Photographs by researcher November 2015)





**Fig.117 Nyerere plays a ceremonial drum to mark the start of the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary celebrations at Kisiwandui grounds, Zanzibar, in August 1971**  
 (Source: Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation and [www.alamy.com](http://www.alamy.com), accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.118 From left, Indian Premier Narendra Modi and the current Tanzania President John Pombe Magufuli beating traditional Drums at the State House entrance in Dar es Salaam, July 2016**  
 (Source: [India.com/PTI](http://India.com/PTI) Dar es Salaam, accessed on August 2019)

Other important iconographies in the *Ujamaa* visual arts were the Hoe and the Hammer, which have since been adopted as symbols of the ruling CCM party. These were invented on the 5 February 1977 following the union of the ruling parties from the Tanzania mainland and the Zanzibar archipelago. In this reconstitution, the ruling parties from each country, TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) and ASP (Afro-Shirazi Party) forged links to

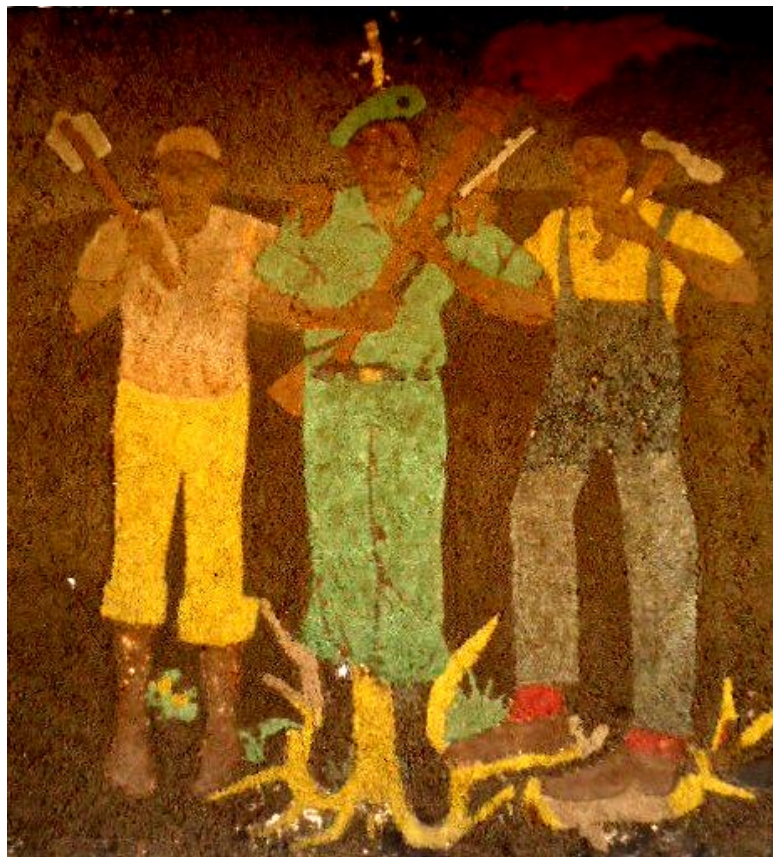
form CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi* or Revolutionary Party), a single party to rule across the United Republic of Tanzania. CCM was established as the party of the peasants and workers, and its membership was strictly based on that criterion. The new CCM flag (Fig.119) had a green field with with bright yellow icons such as hoe and hammer above the party's name. In its several statements, CCM proclaimed that its major symbols, the hoe and the hammer, represent its two bastions of membership. It claims that the hoe represents the peasants whereas the hammer symbolises the workers in plantations and industries. The official interpretation offered by CCM is similarly understood within and without Tanzania, although at times a slight variation occurs due to the wording, as Healey and Sybertz (1996) explain:

The flag of the major political party in Tanzania, CCM or the Revolutionary Party, has a hoe and a hammer in yellow against a green background. A hoe symbolizes farming and the hammer, industry—signs of Tanzania's social and economic development

Perhaps the most compelling interpretation of CCM flag iconographies and a few other symbols, such as a gun and burning *Uhuru* torch is provided through a mural at the entrance of the CCM Headquarters in the Dodoma region (Fig.120). The mural depicts three figures. From the left, a peasant carrying his hoe on his shoulder; in the middle stands a *Chipukizi* or CCM youth, probably a national service cadet from *Jeshi la Kujenga Taifa* (JKT) in full green uniform, carrying a gun on his back while holding the *Uhuru* torch with both hands; and at the far right, a worker dressed in bib-overalls carrying a hammer on his shoulder. The mural symbolically depicts the pictorial profile of party members and their activities.



**Fig.119 The CCM flag designed by Louis Azaria Mbughuni in 1977**  
(Source: CCM Logo, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.120 A mural of CCM members carrying the party and national iconographies at the entrance of CCM Headquarters in Dodoma. By Elias Jengo, 1985**  
(Photograph by researcher October 2015)



Tanzanian monuments represent political victories or achievements. Monuments in Tanzania are emulations of Mount Kilimanjaro's summit, the African continent's highest peak, where the *Uhuru* torch and the national flag were raised to mark the independence of Tanganyika on 9 December, 1961. Many monuments were built and decorated with other iconographic objects in different regions to commemorate and celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary of Tanganyika in 1971. These monuments, also known as the *Uhuru* monuments, (figs.123 and 124) and the TPDF (Kagera War) Soldiers monuments (Fig.199), were constructed after the 1978-79 Kagera War in memory of the fallen and to celebrate the victories achieved by Tanzanians in the struggles to build and defend their nation. Adding to the government's interpretations, the depiction of a man and woman together in the visual arts suggests the themes of family life, unity and equality, whereas the Shield, the Gun and the Spear serve as iconographies for power, Security (Fig.120) and the Tanzanian security forces. The meanings of the icons can be best understood when related to the Party's policies of those times, as Peter Msuya summarises in his general interpretation of the *Ujamaa* iconographies M.M. Kassam incorporated while decorating the 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument in the Mnazi-Mmoja Square Park (Fig.125):

...Both faces of the monument carry symbols expressing the key concepts of the philosophy of the ruling party; national unity, work, education, industry, defence, agricultural and cultural development Msuya (2014:51).

Almost all iconographies used in *Ujamaa* visual arts are found in national symbols which are legally acknowledged and restricted to official use and reproduction. The National Flag and Coat of Arms Act number 15 of 1971 in articles 6 sections (1) a – d, to (3) and 7, clearly describe the offences and penalties related to all unlawful use of the said national objects.

However, iconographies in the *Ujamaa* arts were not popular or even appreciated by the general public. It was discovered during this study that even some top ranking officials in various government institutions were not aware of most of the images hanging or fixed on the walls of their offices. This was noticed among key respondents of this study at the BoT branch in the Mwanza region and Air Tanzania Corporation (ATC) in Dar es Salaam, where the researcher was also denied permission to take photographs of the murals commissioned by these institutions in the 1980s. Coincidentally, similar incongruities were reported by Peter Msuya who also included ATC among his sample institutions:

According to the researcher's observation during data collection by interview technique, most administrators in the government organs were not aware totally of the importance of artistic activities in their areas of work. For instance, an officer responsible for public relations at the ATCL headquarters surprised the researcher when she told him that she was not aware of any artworks that were commissioned by her organisation. In fact, the artworks were on the walls of the building starting from the reception all the way to the Boardroom. The attitude that was shown by the public relation officer could only be changed by conscious efforts from the management to find out about the origin of the murals by contacting the authors of the murals whose names and dates are written on all the artworks (Msuya 2014:92)

This study assumes that a lack of general art knowledge or rather awareness of the enterprise has long caused little Tanzanians appreciation for the arts in many ways. Historically, in East Africa, specifically in Tanzania, there were very little shared artistic elements and meanings in things such as colour, attachment i.e. human hair, metals, beads, etc.; geometrical and objects in general among communities across the country. When coupled with poor planning and lack of good visual art curricula for primary and secondary schools from the 1970s to 1990s, it can be assumed that almost 95 percent of Tanzanians are ignorant in the visual arts field and would not fully appreciate or support visual arts as expected by experts. Cory (1953

and 1965), Stout (1966), Miller (1975), Ntiro (1982), Msangi (1987), Felix (1992), Kingdon (1992), and Enock (2003 and 2013) tried to unveil several iconographies and symbolisms integral to the study of the traditional visual arts of Tanzania. Unfortunately, all these studies covered large chunks of ethnic-based icons and only a few among hundreds of ethnic iconographies were shared across Tanzania's 120 ethnic groups. As such, the *Ujamaa* visual arts, which in their own way borrowed and developed from some popular traditional arts of Tanzania, are not rich in iconographies either. Since the *Ujamaa* visual arts were meant and intended to cater to a wide public audience from a diversity of cultural backgrounds within Tanzania, it discouraged the adoption of too many ethnic iconographies which would have divided the country into ethnic blocks. It is also assumed that this could be a reason that unlike some West African countries, Tanzania has no nationally adopted dress. As components of the national arts for the Tanzanian public, the *Ujamaa* visual art' iconographies were supposedly non ethnic.



**Fig.121 President Nyerere hands over the Uhuru Torch to Brigadier-General Nyirenda, to be taken to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro during Independence Day (madarakanyerere.blogspot.com, accessed on August 2019)**



**Fig.122 Brigadier-General Alexander Gwebe Nyirenda plants the Uhuru Torch on Mount Kilimanjaro during the Independence of Tanganyika on 9 December, 1961**  
(Source: [kilimanjaro.bplaced.net/wiki/](http://kilimanjaro.bplaced.net/wiki/), accessed on August 2019)

### **2.3 Management and Promotion of the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

This study's findings present overwhelming evidence that the socialist government of Tanzania played a central role in the promotion and management of the visual arts since the 1967 Arusha Declaration, when *Ujamaa* policies were adopted, until the late 1980s, when these policies were dropped. A review of various literatures on the post-independence visual arts of Tanzania, visual arts business reports and an analysis of major artworks produced during the *Ujamaa* period reveal that the socialist government of Tanzania was economically and politically involved as the chief patron of cultural productions. The ruling Party, TANU, which later became CCM, and the new socialist economic drivers such as the parastatal organisations and registered co-operative unions, were among the major promoters of the visual arts throughout the *Ujamaa* era.

Only a few writers have made similar claims, but without clearly explaining the political reasons behind Tanzanian socialism's patronage of the visual arts. Miller (1975:44–45), while exploring the 1970s Makonde carving business, comments that the Tanzanian government, through the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT) in its form then known as the National Arts of Tanzania Gallery (NATG), has been intervening in the carving business to improve the Makonde carvers' welfare in order to save them from exploitation at the hands of Indian art dealers since 1970. She asserts that the government's objectives also seek to publicise these art productions for national economic interests in the cultural sector. Ntiro (1982:68–69) and Mshana (2009:79) have pointed out the same economic prospects as the main factors which have attracted the Tanzanian socialist government's patronage of Makonde carvings. Mshana (2009:186-201) links political figures, such as President Nyerere and his use of artworks for prestige, without showing how this indistinct case influenced its political significance in the production of such artworks from a national scope, whereas Jengo (1985) denies any connections among political affiliations, visual arts and artists during the *Ujamaa* period. In his Master of Fine Arts dissertation, Msuya (2014), who reports on the state's patronage of the visual arts in Tanzania, records that almost all artworks commissioned by the government from the 1960s to the 2000s hardly provide any detailed accounts regarding the nature of commissions offered and how they correlated with socialist politics and visual arts. Apparently, these studies have provided insufficient reasons to establish the socialist government's impetus for their patronage of all visual arts genres. It was involved in the production of hundreds of artworks commissioned in different regions of Tanzania in relation to the *Ujamaa* politics.

Despite his contradictory comments on the lack of the socialist government's efforts for the visual arts patronage, Jengo (1985:126), while evaluating the key arts promoters of the 1970s, confirms that government institutions and the ruling party frequently promoted and commissioned the nationwide production of the visual arts during the *Ujamaa* period:

At present the Party and parastatal organisations in Tanzania are most important patrons of the visual arts for obvious reasons. The Party needs commemorative artworks on monuments and buildings, while parastatal organisations need their activities displayed permanently on their buildings

On the one hand, Jengo (1985) underscores the motives behind the institutional patronage of various visual art projects; on the other hand, he reveals by implication the role played by the visual arts in return. In order to describe and expose the relationship between visual arts and the political influences that informed them during the *Ujamaa* period, this section of the study analyses the involvement of some key patrons of *Ujamaa* artworks.

### **2.3.1 The Ruling Party: TANU/CCM Patronage**

The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), presently known as Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) or Revolutionary Party, is the only political party to have been in power from 1961, when the country gained its independence from Britain, to the present time. TANU, or CCM, has always been the patron of visual arts in Tanzania, as Elias Jengo points out:

The most important patron of the visual arts at the national level is the ruling party. From the days of TANU to CCM, the Party has been active in commissioning national visual artists to design and execute art works on national monuments (Jengo 1985:6)

As a ruling party for over five decades now, CCM claims all plaudits for political and government achievements. Since 1962, when President Nyerere proposed a nationwide

campaign to revive and utilise traditional subcultures to create a national culture, the ruling party, TANU and several art promotion agencies under the Division of Culture, which later became the Department of Culture, employed arts, particularly visuals such as murals and monuments, to spread party policies, i.e. the Education for Self-Reliance Policy (Fig.131); encourage patriotism and public affection for national leaders (figs.190 and 197); commemorate and publicise the government's successes (figs. 198 and 199). Penina Mlama, a fervent critic of socialist cultural policies in Tanzania is quoted in Askew (2002:225), criticising the way the ruling party and government used the arts to achieve their objectives:

In the guise of promoting national cultural identities, the arts have been turned into political mouthpieces of the government or party policies, exhorting people to abide by government plans and to be grateful to the leaders for their independence and whatever development has come their way. The airport or state banquet dances fashionable with many African countries is one of manifestation of such art.

Her criticism notwithstanding, Mlama confirms that there were arts which were purposely created and used for political propaganda in socialist Tanzania. The current study asserts that the kind of art which Penina Mlama critiques constitutes a big chunk of the productions on visual arts during the *Ujamaa* period. The most relevant examples of these were the works of art financed by the ruling Party (TANU/CCM) after the adoption of socialist policies, as Sam Ntiro explains:

As part of the celebrations of 10 years of independence, three monuments were built—one in Dar es Salaam decorated by Mr. M.M. Kassam, another in Tabora decorated by Mr. E. Jengo and the third one in Arusha decorated by Mr. S.J. Ntiro. The Dar es Salaam monument has different scenes depicting life in Tanzania: The Tabora one has a scene symbolising President Nyerere disagreeing with the colonialists; and the Arusha monument has several murals on important activities which have taken place during the first decade. The three artists produced works of art which clearly show that traditional cultural heritage is being used to develop a new Tanzanian

culture. The producing of these monuments by Tanzanians show that Tanzanian culture can only be encouraged to grow through the activities of its own nationals; and these nationals must be given opportunity to show what they can do. It is no good talking about culture without producing work which can be seen and admired (Ntiro 1976:115)

Ntiro's comment reveals that CCM promoted the visual arts by commissioning visual arts to be undertaken by Tanzanian artists. In addition, he confirms that the ruling party employed arts to commemorate its political victories. Since 1971, when the aforesaid three monuments were constructed and decorated, CCM has continued to commission big and massive visual art projects such as statues of national leaders, Uhuru (independence) anniversary monuments and murals in many of its regional headquarters and district offices spread out throughout the country. Major visual art projects included the following:

- (i) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monuments (figs. 124 and 125) and the Drummer statue (Fig.115) at the Mnazi-Mmoja grounds, Dar es Salaam in 1971, both by unrecorded artist(s).
- (ii) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument (Fig.73) by Israeli constructors and eight relief murals on the monument's walls by Sam Ntiro in Arusha Municipality, 1971.
- (iii) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument (Fig.125) by unrecorded constructor, decorated by M.M. Kassam at the Mnazi-Mmoja Square Park in 1971.
- (iv) The *Uamuzi wa Busara* monument (Fig. 126) by an unrecorded constructor, decorated with the *Kura Tatu* mural (Fig.126) by E. Jengo at Tabora Municipal Council in 1971.
- (v) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument by an unrecorded constructor at the CCM – Kirumba Regional Headquarters in Mwanza, 1971.
- (vi) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument by an unrecorded constructor at Morogoro Municipal Post's square in 1971.
- (vii) The first President of Zanzibar, Abeid Amani Karume's bronze statues (Fig.196a) at the Bwawani Hotel grounds and CCM Headquarters in Pemba and at Kisiwandui Zanzibar in 1972.
- (viii) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monuments (Fig.123) by an unrecorded constructor and two wall murals by Elias Jengo and Sam Ntiro at the Kilimanjaro Region CCM Headquarters in 1979.



- (ix) The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument by an unrecorded constructor at the then-Songea Town Council Park in the 1980s.
- (x) The Education for Self-Reliance commemorations monument (Fig.131) decorated with murals by S. Ntiro and E. Jengo at the CCM Regional Headquarters, Lumumba Street in Dar es Salaam, 1980s.
- (xi) CCM Party members and murals of their symbols (Fig.127) by E. Jengo and S. Ntiro at the National CCM Headquarters in the Dodoma region, 1984.
- (xii) Portraits of CCM national leaders (Figs.128, 129, and 130) by Peter Mwabamba and other undocumented artists at the CCM National Headquarters in the Dodoma region, 2005.

CCM has a string of events held annually or periodically. These events include the annual Party's Day on every 5<sup>th</sup> of February as well as the 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> party anniversaries, which were held in the years 1987, 1997 and 2007. Apart from its political activities, CCM also actively participates in other national events such as Workers' and Peasants' annual festivities and the anniversaries of Tanzanian Independence and Unity.

During such events and many others, CCM commissioned artworks to mark its achievements as a ruling party. One can notice that in many art projects, Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo were the leading artists commissioned to execute artworks for the Party. This case was also explored during this study, whereby the CCM contractor and one of the artists involved in the commissions were interviewed. Beda Amuli, the first local Tanzanian professional architect to have graduated in Israel in the mid-1960s, was one of the CCM project's chief architects and contractors from the 1960s until the 1990s, when he retired. Amuli declared that he personally knew Sam Ntiro, who was then widely known in East Africa for his *Ujamaa* paintings. Amuli said he was therefore reluctant to hire Sam Ntiro to decorate all the constructions he was commissioned to build by his major clients, the CCM and the Tanzanian government. As colleagues while working at Chang'ombe Teachers' Training College in the 1960s and later at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1974 to 1983, when Ntiro retired

from public service, Elias Jengo had worked with Sam Ntiro on almost all nationwide art projects commissioned by the CCM and other parastatals. These CCM-commissioned projects include those in the Kilimanjaro, Dodoma, Tabora, Dar es Salaam and Arusha regions. Beda Amuli confirmed that all the constructions he executed for CCM and parastatal organisations were decorated by Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo as his assistant, except for the Iringa Co-operative Union Headquarters, which was decorated by Peter Paul Ndembo in the late 1980s.



**Fig.123 The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument at Mnazi-Mmoja Uhuru grounds by unrecorded constructors, 1971**  
(Photograph by researcher in November 2015)



**Fig.124 The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monuments, the one on the left is in the Moshi Municipality and the one on the right has Nyerere's bust at the Chamwino District Headquarters in Dodoma region. They are by unrecorded constructors.**  
 (Photographs by researcher in September and October 2015)



**Fig.125 The 10<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary Monument showing National and Party symbols at Mnazi-Mmoja Square Park, decorated by M.M. Kassam in 1971**  
 (Photograph by researcher in November 2015)



**Fig.126 From the left, the *Uamuzi wa Busara* (Wise Decision) Monument, and right, the *Kura Tatu* mural on its back, at Tabora Municipal by Elias Jengo in 1971**  
 (Source: <http://www.kajunason.com/2013/07/utalii-wa-ndani-ipende-nchi-yakotabora.html>)



**Fig.127 A mural depicting CCM Party members and their symbols at the CCM National Headquarters in the Dodoma region (province), by Elias Jengo and Sam Ntiro, 1984**  
 (Photograph by researcher in November 2015)



**Fig.128 Portraits of CCM's national leaders, from the left the 1<sup>st</sup> President of Tanzania and Father of the Nation: Julius Nyerere, and right the 4<sup>th</sup> President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete. At the entrance of the CCM National Headquarters (Extension Building) in the Dodoma region, by Peter Mwabamba, 2005**  
 (Photograph by researcher in November 2015)



**Fig.129 Portraits of CCM's national leaders, on the left, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-president of the United Republic of Tanzania and President of Zanzibar: Abeid Amani Karume, and on the right, the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of Tanzania, Ali Hassan Mwinyi. At the entrance of the CCM National Headquarters in Dodoma region by Peter Mwabamba, 2005**  
 (Photograph by researcher, November 2015)





**Fig.130 Portraits of the ruling CCM national leaders, from the left, the Party Executive Secretary 1995-2010/2015: Philip Mangulla, and right, the 6<sup>th</sup> President of Zanzibar, Dr. Ali Shein at the entrance of the CCM National Headquarters (Extension Building) in Dodoma region – by Peter Mwabamba, 2005**  
 (Photograph by researcher, November 2015)



**Fig.131 Monument to the Education for Self-Reliance Policy promotion commemorations, originally decorated with murals by Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo at the CCM Regional Headquarters, Lumumba Street in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s. The current mural was repainted by Frederick Maeda under Elias Jengo's mentorship in 2003.**  
 (Photograph by researcher, November 2015)

However, from 1985 onwards, CCM's patronage of the visual arts slowly declined. Even its recent Party Manifesto released in August 2015 generally highlighted its interests in the promotion and development of the arts without necessarily clearly spelling out its plan and budget<sup>153</sup>. With the introduction of multiparty politics, CCM's influences and access to spaces such as public squares, market places, playgrounds, schools and colleges, where it used to commission artworks for public display, are now limited. In the past the distinction between government and party space were hardly separable and uses tended to overlap. Currently, these places are meant for all members of society regardless of their political affiliation. In fact, some of the artists and other intellectuals in public service were no longer obliged to work for CCM as they used to during the single party reign. It was decided that the multiparty policies, rules and regulations were completely inclusive; as such, public servants should not work in favour of political parties anymore. Kelly Askew correctly summarises these transformations:

On July 1, 1992, the Parliamentary Standing Orders and Rules were amended to accommodate multiple parties, and CCM's financial ties to the government were officially severed. Previously, in May, CCM had initiated its own internal restructuring to fit its new relationship to a multiparty government. It abolished its affiliations with the army, the police, the Prison Authority, the National Service and the Civil Service (all of which had previously supported CCM branches), and declared its intent to downsize the party (Askew 2002:241)

Indisputably, the advent of multiparty politics in Tanzania has affected CCM's cultural policies as an incumbent party, as the extract below further attests:

In 1992, the Party's youth organisation handed the Uhuru Torch Race over to the government, as a neutral institution. 49 Several of the National Days that have been connected to the Party, have been reconsidered. 5<sup>th</sup> February, for instance—the 'birthday' of the CCM party, which is also the day of the Arusha Declaration, is no longer

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<sup>153</sup>*Ilani Ya CCM kwa ajili ua Uchaguzi Mkuu wa Mwaka 2015* (CCM Manifesto for the 2015 General Elections) pp. 219-220, 2015.

celebrated as a national holiday. The artists of the cultural troupes have composed new songs to go with their dances. They are no longer supposed to support the CCM party and its leaders through their art (Lange 1999:55)

Artists from the public sector such as Elias Jengo and Sam Ntiro were slowly shunted aside in Party commissions. From 1992 onwards, CCM, like any other political party in Tanzania, was obligated to pay for every service it solicited from public institutions. CCM, which was the biggest party with offices all over the country, faced a hard time when it came to its big budget demands to finance many projects, including the arts. Before the reversion to multiparty politics, it was impossible to differentiate CCM as a ruling party from other government institutions. The old system worked to the advantage of CCM, which in most cases received and enjoyed free services for some socialist circulars and rules that obliged public servants to serve the ruling party as a contribution to nation-building, *Ujenzi wa Taifa*. It was in the 1990s, when CCM employed its own full-time artist, Peter Mwabamba, who was stationed at the Party's headquarters in the country's capital of Dodoma, to continue producing artworks to promote Party policies and decorate CCM buildings (Fig.113 and 127). Albeit on a small scale, CCM continues to commission art companies and freelance artists to execute its art projects for the same purposes of promoting its policies and preserving traditional Tanzanian culture. In this regard, Kelly Askew reports that since the early 1990s, CCM has invested heavily in the performing arts as its newly-found propaganda media:

As a newly reborn party, CCM developed a new cultural policy. Coinciding with the formal installation of multi-partyism, CCM established, on August 1992, a new cultural troupe named Tanzania One Theatre, soon to be famous by its acronym TOT (Askew 2002:246)



### **2.3.2 Parastatal Organisations' Patronage**

Soon after the 1967 Arusha Declaration, numerous privately-owned sectors of the Tanzanian economy were nationalised in an attempt to anchor the socialist economic system. The changes followed the enactment of the Public Corporations Act of 1969. According to Nyerere (1975:13), the nationalisation measures were intended to extend local economic independence by increasing natives' participation in economic development activities and of course to cut-off exploitative ways of wealth production by a few capitalists. In the cultural production sector, the Arusha Declaration will always be remembered as an event which resulted in the birth of powerful state-owned art business organisations. Only one parastatal organisation was established to transform all neutralised private art businesses and several others, which were not dealing with the arts intrinsically but provided patronage in terms of commissions for art projects, employment to artists, funding for short-training in art programmes and marketing platforms for art products. The major parastatal organisations which supported and promoted the *Ujamaa* visual arts included the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT), later known as the Tanzania Handicrafts Marketing Corporation (HANDICO), the Tanzania Advertising Corporation (TAC), the Bank of Tanzania, the Tanzania Posts Corporations, the Kariakoo Markets Corporation (KMC), Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), and the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA).

#### **2.3.2.1 The National Arts of Tanzania (NAT) – The HANDICO**

The National Arts of Tanzania (NAT) was a parastatal organisation established in April 1970 as an appendage of the National Development Corporation (NDC) to administer cultural production businesses. As a state patron, the NAT administered all marketing deals for art

products and employment of artists. The NAT replaced Mohamed Peera's Makonde carvings business, which was nationalized in 1967 when Tanzania embarked on a socialist path. Since the colonial period, there have been several private arts and crafts businesses run by Indian dealers in several regions of Tanzania, with the largest being owned by Mohamed Peera in Dar es Salaam. Judith von Miller notes:

In 1970 Makonde carvers in Tanzania came under the supervision of [the] National Development Corporation. They employ several dozen Makonde artists full-time at the National Arts of Tanzania Gallery workshop in Dar es Salaam. Many of these artists once worked for Peera, who was for many years' owner of the largest outlet store for Makonde carvings in Dar es Salaam. Peera played a largest part in the commercial boom of the Makonde art market (Miller 1975:33)

With acknowledgement of Peera's vast experience and connections in the Makonde carvings business within and outside the country, the socialist government of Tanzania persuaded Mohamed Peera to continue working for NAT as its manager. According to Miller (1975:45), NAT's initial objectives were to prevent the exploitation of Makonde artists, improve the quality and prices of their artworks, and generate more revenue for the government. The state's patronage of the art business through the establishment of NAT produced great successes within a short period. Bishota and Kandoro (1985:72) record that within eight months of its establishment, the company increased its sales and continued to better as this sales report indicates:

*Shirika la Sanaa la Taifa (National Art of Tanzania Limited) lililoanzishwa Aprili 1970 liliweza kutengeneza na kuuza mali yenye thamani ya shilingi milioni 1.1 katika miezi mine ya kwanza. Shirika la Uuzaji Sanaa la Taifa (Tanzania Handicraft Marketing Corporation) linayo taarifa ifuatayo:*  
1975 lilipata .....2.2 milioni  
1976 lilipata.....4.5 milioni  
1977 hadi Juni lilipata.....8.3 milioni  
*Takwimu hizi ni mfano mzuri unaodhihirisha nafasi ya sanaa katika uchumi.*

My translation:

The National Art of Tanzania Limited, which was launched in April 1970, has managed to commission and sell art products worth 1.1 Tanzanian shillings within four months. The National Handicrafts Marketing Corporation reports the following:

In 1975, it sold artworks worth 2.2 Tshs. millions

In 1976, it sold artworks worth 4.5 Tshs. millions

In 1977, until June, it had sold artworks worth 8.3 Tshs. millions

Since its launching, the NAT has continued to change and improve much of the Tanzanian visual arts scene, particularly the Makonde carvings business. Before NAT, Mohamed Peera treated the Wamakonde carvers as freelance artists who sold their works through his shop and occasionally commissioned them to produce for him on special orders. The government found Peera's patronage exploitative to the carvers and could not ensure constant revenue payment. Miller (1975:44 - 45) asserts that the NAT employed 75 Makonde carvers and 30 additional managerial staff on permanent basis. It also allowed artists to buy shares in NAT. In the same year, NAT, with the help of funds from the central government, managed to build and open the country's first art gallery, which mostly displayed and sold Makonde carvings (Fig.131).



**Fig.132 National Arts of Tanzania Gallery in 1970**

(source: Judith von D. Miller 1975:43)

NAT's production and promotion of Makonde carvings increased within and outside Tanzania. Among the significant achievements were the exhibitions, which were frequently mounted to promote and sell Makonde carvings in the world markets and museums. In this regard, Miller (1975:45) presents the following account:

At Expo' 70 in Japan Makonde artists from NAT made carvings with a crowd-drawing appeal that netted them 50,000 sales. In 1971 an exhibition was sent to Gallery Watatu in Nairobi and a travelling exhibition of 30 sculptures and 40 artists was sent to the Smithsonian Institution for a U.S. tour. NAT exhibited at the Commonwealth Institute in London in 1973 and other travelling exhibitions are being planned

During an interview for this study, Elias Jengo also confirmed that NAT participated in many major cultural events in Africa. These included the FESTAC '77 in Lagos, Nigeria, where it sold hundreds of pieces of Makonde carvings, craftworks, and Tingatinga paintings. At these festivals, NAT prominently represented East African visual arts. Many other success stories have been documented by several government reports as well. In 1979, the Ministry of National Culture and Youth published a report on the NAT's annual sales between 1974 and 1978, as summarized in Table 1:

YEAR	PRODUCTS	WITHIN TANZANIA TSHs.	OUTSIDE TANZANIA TSHs.	EXPORT COUNTRY	INCOME TSHs.
1974	Carvings/Crafts				1,500,000
1975	Carvings/Crafts and others	985,832	457,194	GDR, Denmark, Spain, USA, Canada, France	1,443,026
1976	Carvings/Crafts and others	1,675,685	911,523	Sweden, France	2,587,208
1977	Carvings/Crafts and others	2,731,751	2,474,230	Sweden, France	5,205,981
1978	Carvings/Crafts and others	941,386	489,663	Sweden, France and others	1,431,049
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,334,654</b>	<b>4,332,610</b>		<b>12,167,264</b>

**Table 1. Internal and External NAT (HANDICO)'s Art and Craft Products Sales Records, 1974/1978**

(Source: Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo, URT 1979:76)

As Table 1 demonstrates, NAT's successes were enormous. The in-country sales for 1975/76 indicate that NAT managed to revolutionise arts and crafts promotions during the *Ujamaa* period by reaching and harnessing the domestic market, as the following comment affirms:

*...Ni jambo la kuvutia kuwa soko la vitu hivyo linazidi kuwa ni la ndani. Katika kipindi cha miaka miwili yaani 1975/76 nchi ilipata kiasi cha sh. 2,661,516.96 /= kutoka kwenye soko la ndani. Mapato hayo ni kutoka kwenye shirika moja. Uuzaji wa watu binafsi na mashirika mengine haukujumuishwa (URT 1979:76)*

My translation:

...It is so encouraging that the cultural goods market grows in the country. Within a period of only two years, that is 1975/76, our country managed to make sales of about 2,661,516.96 Tanzanian shillings within the domestic markets. These revenues are accumulated from only one parastatal (NAT). The sales by private dealers and other parastatals were not part of these recent sales.

However, the story of NAT in the promotion and general development of the visual arts activities has never been without setbacks. Perhaps the biggest problem was the lack of

managerial expertise in the visual arts business. In 1973, NAT expelled Mohamed Peera as its manager and deported him from Tanzania. Peera was charged with treason in the visual arts business and embezzlement of NAT funds. Following his expulsion, most of the best Wamakonde sculptors also left NAT to pursue private ventures. Zachary Kingdon notes this problem:

Peera's business was nationalised and merged with the National Arts of Tanzania in 1970. However, not everyone who had previously worked for Peera was satisfied with the new arrangements at the NAT. Chanuo was among those who followed the carvers who had set up workshops in Temeke on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam (Kingdon 1996:59)

Fadhili Mshana also provides more details to illuminate on this problem, as explained by Zachary Kingdon in his later review:

When the Tanzanian government nationalised Peera's business, it appointed him the first manager of the National Arts of Tanzania. Though Peera became manager, he was not satisfied with the new arrangements of the enterprise. The artist-patron arrangement was more or less the same, but now the profit that Peera generated went to the government. Similarly, some artists were not happy with the nationalisation of the business either. Consequently, some left NAT. to set up their own workshops instead of working for the government. These carvers sold their products to NAT or to tourists... (Mshana 2009:80-81)

Kingdon's comments (1996) and those by Mshana (2009), show that NAT's problems began to surface immediately after the new local management took over from Peera. They both agree with Judith von Miller, who previously claimed that the beginning of a series of problems within NAT came with increased government control in the visual arts sector:

The prospect of government control of the art projects elicits varying responses from artists. Some are automatically apprehensive of having anything to do with governments. Others merely prefer to work on their own without outside intervention, governments or otherwise. But some artists welcome the chance to reap the benefits N.A.T. proposes to ensure. It is still too early to tell what effects the

National Arts of Tanzania will have on the quality of the Makonde art (Miller 1975:45)

Miller's observations were also confirmed by Elias Jengo during an interview for this study. He argued that many trained artists objected to the idea of the 'National Art of Tanzania'. Jengo said that a few art scholars were sceptical about the name of this new State organisation, as well as its mission in visual arts development. They argued that NAT sounded too political and connoted absolute government control over the visual arts sector. Furthermore, they also argued that NAT, as the name suggests, limited creative freedom in many ways. The critics also challenged the legitimacy of the company's name in relation to the kinds of arts which were highly promoted and marketed by NAT. They also argued that the Makonde carvings and the Tingatinga paintings, which were the chief products of NAT, did not represent all the visual arts of Tanzania; as such, the name had to be changed or the business had to be expanded to include all the visual arts produced in the country. NAT's management never responded to these rising tides of criticism.

However, for reasons still not known to-date, in April 1970, its board of directors opted to change NAT's name to the Tanzania Handicraft Marketing Corporation (HANDICO). With the adoption of a new name, nothing was changed except for the increased promotion of Makonde carvings, Tingatinga paintings and other crafts such as mats and textiles, as indicated in Table 1. Yet NAT's problems did not end with a name change. Elias Jengo singles out NAT management's lack of expertise on the general visual arts business as the major problem, as this inexperience resulted in the over-commercialisation of the Makonde carvings. Another problem was its dogmatic compliance with Western market demands for artistic products from Africa. Jengo explains this situation thusly:

...We are now witnessing in Tanzania the explosion of a very unsettling phenomenon, the proliferation in more and more areas of workshop for the production of sculptures on orders from overseas buyers. The Makonde Club in Japan, for example, is known for its habit of specifying rigidly the styles and even content of sculptures the local sculptors should produce. Pressure is brought to bear on the Makonde sculptors to produce, often in large quantities, and inevitably the overall quality of the work lacks artistic merit. The creation of the national parastatals such as the Tanzania Handicrafts Marketing Corporation has made the situation even worse. Its board of governors and the management feel that their chief concern is business and not the welfare of the craftsmen and artists. It is the wish of the customers that is respected and not the artistic life of the sculptor (Jengo 1985:121)

HANDICO's emphasis on mass production took its toll on the quality of art products which eventually flooded the market and resulted in low sales from 1979 onwards. These and many other mismanagement factors contributed to the gradual disintegration of NAT's monopoly of Makonde arts in and outside the country from the early 1980s onwards. Another problem Elias Jengo addresses concerns NAT's biased promotional and marketing strategies for visual arts in Tanzania. He argues that NAT confined itself to marketing the Makonde carvings only, while ignoring the promotion of many other local artworks:

...HANDICO has a gallery set aside to sell sculptures only. Paintings, ceramics and works of graphic art have yet to be accepted as part of Tanzania's cultural heritage because of the misconception arising from the Western attitude. Yet current evidence reveals that local exhibitions of paintings, ceramics and graphics held in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere have attracted large audiences of locals as well as foreigners in Tanzania. How does HANDICO explain this? (Jengo 1985:121)

Indeed, Figure 132 shows the National Arts of Tanzania Gallery (NATG) exhibition hall stuffed only with Makonde carvings. Ever since NAT's establishment, works of prominent Tanzanian artists such as Elimo Njau, Sam Ntiro, Elias Jengo, Fatima Abdullah and many



others were not among those promoted by NAT or HANDICO. These artists have frequently criticised HANDICO for its lack of professional personnel to manage the art business and for the over-commercialisation, which resulted in poor quality artworks and an overemphasis on marketing Makonde carvings.

Since the early 1980s, visual arts businesses never improved under HANDICO. Following economic predicaments and the Kagera War's effects in 1979, the company could not sufficiently produce and export its goods abroad. As a result, it failed to supply artists with raw materials or even pay them. More artists left the corporation and embarked on business ventures of their own. With the changes in economic policies, HANDICO was privatised in 1995 and became known as Mikono Cultural Heritage Limited (Fig.133), a private visual arts dealing firm that acquired the same building and other properties formerly belonging to HANDICO. The privatisation of HANDICO was a clear signal of the end of the state-sponsored visual arts in Tanzania.



**Fig.133 A recent photo of the National Arts of Tanzania or HANDICO Building, currently the Mikono Cultural Heritage Ltd, in the Chang'ombe area of Dsm**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)

### **2.3.2.2 The Tanzania Posts Corporation**

The Tanzania Posts Corporations (TPC) was another parastatal organisation which promoted visual arts during the *Ujamaa* period. There is insufficient evidence to show TPC's serious patronage of the visual arts before the 1970s. A brief history of TPC<sup>154</sup> shows that the corporation was firmly established in 1994 following the Tanzanian Parliament's enactment of laws to empower it as an autonomous and efficient government agency. Originally, TPC can be traced back to the German colonial Postal Agency founded on 27 February 1885 at Lamu, in Kenya, then part of German East Africa. When the British took over from the Germans, it formed the East African Posts and Telecommunications Administration, which was adopted by the East African Community from the 1960s until 1977, when it was dissolved in order for each country to create its own Postal authority. The Tanzania Posts Corporations had commissioned only a few murals, which were painted on two walls of the entrance to its headquarters at the Posta House in Dar es Salaam in 1979. The murals clearly incorporated and displayed TPC's shared aura of the *Ujamaa* principles in its operations. The murals, which were executed by Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo, portray a brief history of the corporation, thereby recording its technological progress and extension of operations in delivering its services to the country (see figs.134, 135, and 136).

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<sup>154</sup> Forbes Global Magazine: Interview with Mr. S.M. Msofe, the TPC Postmaster General, on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2000 – [www.winne.com/tanzania/to18.html](http://www.winne.com/tanzania/to18.html) Retrieved on 8th September, 2016 Ethnological Museum of Berlin, Germany



**Fig.134 A mural depicting postmen on foot collecting/delivering mail and parcels house-to-house in an Ujamaa village. Painted on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor walls of Posta House in Dar es Salaam by S. Ntiro and E. Jengo in 1979**  
(Photograph by researcher, November 2015)



**Fig.135 A mural of postmen on horses collecting/delivering mail and parcels house-to-house in a Ujamaa village. Painted on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor walls of Posta House in Dar es Salaam by S. Ntiro and E. Jengo in 1979**  
(Photograph by researcher, November 2015)



**Fig.136 A mural of postmen shipping mail, parcels and baggage through the then newly-established national carriers, Air Tanzania (1977) and TAZARA (1975), and the Central Railway. Executed on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor walls of Posta House in Dar es Salaam by S. Ntiro and E. Jengo in 1979**  
(Photograph by researcher, November 2015)

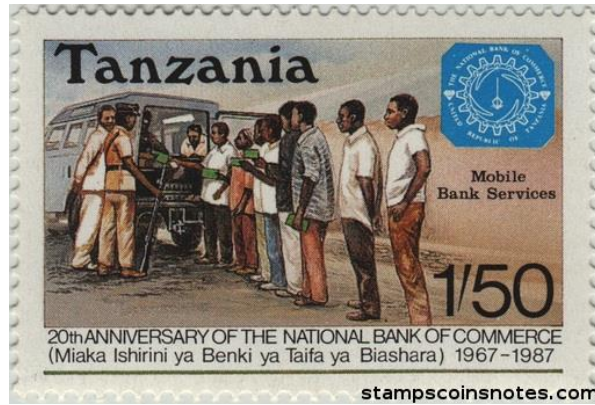
An analysis of the themes in all three murals suggests that TPC employed them as advertising as well as a display of its co-operative spirit with other parastatals, i.e. Air Tanzania Corporation (ATC) and Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC), in pushing forward the development tasks within a socialist country. These are the only artworks in the TPC Headquarters that bear testimony to the company's participation in the *Ujamaa* visual arts patronage. The other mural created on the left wall within the same floor had been covered with fresh paint when the researcher arrived. Explaining its erasure, the TPC's estate manager accused the new tenant, who had recently rented this part of the building, of being ignorant of the artworks and their meaning, and, assuming that they were old and unwanted, he accidentally covered the murals with wall paint. The estate manager claimed that his office was in talks with Elias Jengo, one of the artists who executed the murals, to restore it.

Apart from the murals, the TPC also commissioned two artists, at different times, to design and produce stamps, calendars and posters for its services throughout the country. From the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, TPC hired Raza Mohamed to design its stamps. From the mid-1980s until the early 2000s, Paul Peter Ndembo was the chief designer of TPC's stamps, posters and calendars. The stamps were mainly designed to promote authentic Tanzanian scenery and wildlife as tourist attractions; national events including political rallies (Fig.137); successes of other national parastatals (Fig.138); workers' and peasants' days; traditional festivals, etc. Sometimes, the same themes were designed and executed in stamps, posters and calendars. Recently, TPC stopped commissioning artists to design its stamps and other artworks. In fact, many of its promotional materials and stamps employ photographs rather than drawings and paintings (Fig.141). The TPC provided only partial commissions for artworks which promoted TPC's daily activities. During this study, it was established that visual art promotion was not one of the primary objectives of the TPC.



**Fig.137 A stamp designed to commemorate the Arusha Declaration through a National Solidarity Walk, later organised by CCM. By Paul Peter Ndembo, 1988.**  
(Source: Tanzania Posts Corporation website accessed on August 2019)





**Fig.138 A stamp designed for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Bank of Commerce. By Paul Peter Ndembo, 1987.**  
 (Source: Tanzania Posts Corporations website on August 2019)



**Fig.139 A stamp designed for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of TPC celebrations 1994 – 2004 by unrecorded artist in 2004**  
 (Source: Tanzania Posts Corporation website on August 2019)



**Fig.140 A stamp showing the Old Fort at Kilwa Kisiwani, designed to promote tourist attractions of Tanzania, by Paul Peter Ndembo, 1980s**  
 (Source: Tanzania Posts Corporation website on August 2019)



**Fig.141 Recent UN Stamps which use photographs to promote tourism in Tanzania**  
 (Source: [www.thesalmons.org/](http://www.thesalmons.org/) accessed August 2019)

### 2.3.2.3 The Bank of Tanzania

The Bank of Tanzania (BoT) is the country's central bank but is also one of the patrons of *Ujamaa* visual arts, specifically murals and paintings. The presence of commissioned murals executed between the 1960s and 1990s on its branch buildings in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza and Mbeya depicting workers and peasants working in farms and factories (figs.146 – 148) confirm BoT's active participation in the promotion of *Ujamaa* political and economic policies through the arts. This claim is also supported by Peter Msuya, the only researcher to have conducted a study on State patronage of the visual arts in Tanzania. Msuya observes:

The findings show that the Bank of Tanzania has been promoting the visual arts since the 1960s. According to an interview with Jengo (2012), who was aware [of] all art activities as a member of Art committee and the artist commissioned by the BoT, the first artist to be commissioned by the Bank was Elimo Njau in the 1960s. He fabricated a mural using material known as sun tax. The subject matter was based on the major sources of income to the country (agriculture and industry). The mural was burned down when the Bank accidentally caught fire in the early 1990s. Jengo (ibid.) also added that in 1979 he was commissioned with Sam Ntiro to design and execute murals at the Mwanza BoT branch. Thereafter followed the commission to design and execute other murals at the BoT branch in Arusha in 1984 and Mbeya in 1990. Plans to execute murals for the Dar es Salaam BoT headquarters and Zanzibar BoT branch were underway. However, the architects were the ones that advised the

management to commission artists to design the murals (Msuya 2014:68)

This study attempted twice to seek permission to conduct intensive research on the BoT's visual arts commissions in all its branches in August and September 2015. The requests for permission addressed to the BoT governor were never answered. Even when the researcher re-applied and personally visited the BoT branch in Mwanza, a senior official appointed by the BoT Mwanza branch manager to meet the present researcher, denied him both an interview and permission to take photos of the murals which were visible from outside the bank premises. The official claimed that for security purposes, his branch could not grant permission for research to anybody unless he was sanctioned by the governor from the headquarters in Dar es Salaam. A close review of Msuya's report on BoT patronage revealed that the present researcher was not the only one denied permission to conduct a study on BoT murals. This explains why a great deal of textual information in Msuya's report was gathered through an interview with Elias Jengo, one of the artists commissioned to execute the murals for BoT branches in 1979, 1984 and 1990 (Msuya 2014: 36, 69).

Elias Jengo was also interviewed for the present study on the murals commissioned in only two BoT branches. He provided concrete information in the form of text and photographs. All in all, this study has recorded and presents seven photographs (figs.142–148) to supplement the textual information. The study also found that the ideas to put murals on the BoT branches' walls were based on the contractors' recommendations, which, legally, required them to commission works of art for all big construction projects conducted in Tanzania. The themes of the murals originated in BoT's activities. The Mwanza and Mbeya murals display men and women participating in agricultural and industrial production



activities (figs.145 and 146). Figure 144 shows a mural at the Mwanza BoT branch's entrance, which depicts students and academics. As the central bank, BoT has been the foremost state-owned financial institution in Tanzania responsible for sponsoring most of the country's economic and education projects. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the murals were partly executed to appreciate and advertise BoT's activities.



**Fig.142 Elias Jengo standing on the steps of the Mwanza BoT branch with his twin murals, executed in 1979, displayed on the wall.**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)

The murals painted on the walls of the BoT branches in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, and Mbeya depict the successes of the *Ujamaa* policy in Tanzania almost two decades after its adoption. Various scenes of labouring peasants helped by joyous school children in green fields (Figs.143 and 147) and factory workers dressed in overalls are intended to commend

the good and hard work of patriotic citizens but also to exalt *Ujamaa* as the policy which had improved the country's economy. Figures 146 and 148 which Jengo painted inside the BoT Mbeya Branch are a good example for discussion here. Let us look at Fig.146. In this mural Jengo depicts a workers' scene in the newly opened Urafiki Textile Factory in Dar es Salaam. He portrays workmen, two mechanics on the left side of the picture repairing a machine and a textile engineer on the right side of the mural operating the machine that spines cotton thread's bales. The factory surroundings, with machines and human figures are perfectly positioned in realistic proportions to convince the viewers' eyes to its 'photographic' like effect. In creating this artwork, Jengo employs 'flat wash' as a technique when applying paints. His brush strokes establish smooth refined paint layers without leaving subtle optical mixture effect thereby helping his viewers to distinguish objects and figures on the painting based on their colour, features, and shading. The weaving and spinning machines, cotton thread rolls as well as the readymade textile rolls are realistically painted and clearly see on the artwork.



**Fig.143 A mural hanging above the entrance of Mwanza BoT branch portraying peasants participating in small and large-scale agricultural production. By Elias Jengo in 1979 and repainted in the 1990s**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)



**Fig.144** A mural hanging above the entrance of the Mwanza BoT branch portraying academics studying at the university and students putting their agricultural skills into action at school. By Elias Jengo in 1979 and repainted in the 1990s  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)



**Fig.145** A mural displayed inside the BoT Mbeya branch portraying peasants harvesting coffee. By Elias Jengo (1990)  
(Courtesy of artist, November 2015)

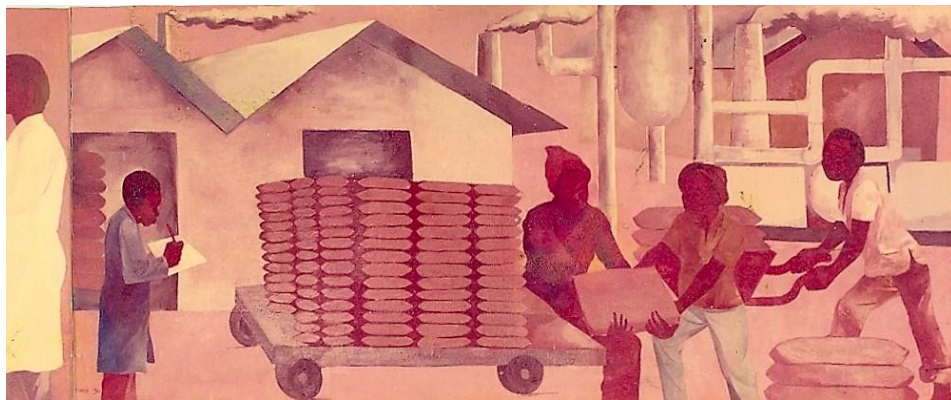


**Fig.146** A mural displayed inside the BoT Mbeya branch portraying workers in a newly-opened Urafiki textile factory. Elias Jengo (1990)  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)





**Fig.147 A mural displayed inside the BoT Mbeya Branch portraying a peasant woman winnowing a corn harvest. By Elias Jengo, 1990**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo, November 2015)



**Fig.148 A mural displayed inside the BoT Mbeya branch portraying peasants / a cooperative group bagging maize after harvesting. By Elias Jengo, 1990.**  
(Courtesy of Elias Jengo November 2015)

In the absence of permission to conduct research at BoT branches, this study could not provide a detailed report on the present condition of the bank's murals. Besides, the BoT has not provided any public information on its commissioned artworks from the 1970s to-date. As Msuya (2014) observes, even the prospective projects to replace Elimo Njau's burnt painting, as well as the installation of fresh artworks in the new twin BoT buildings in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar had yet to be released by the time this study was conducted. During an interview, Elias Jengo said that since 1990, when he executed the murals at the BoT branch in Mbeya, he has not yet heard about the BoT financing the production of more artworks. In

the face of neo-liberal reforms that swept through the country, particularly in the 1980s and subsequently in the 1990s, there could also be a marked shift in BoT's commissioning of *Ujamaa* visual arts. As elsewhere, very little evidence exists to suggest that *Ujamaa* visual arts have outlived the official ideology.

#### **2.3.2.4 Other Parastatals' Patronage of the *Ujamaa* visual arts since the 1970s**

Apart from the TPC and the BoT, several other parastatal organisations commissioned visual art productions for diverse purposes. Although some parastatals commissioned artworks on their walls and other places as advertising media, others encouraged their production as decorative objects, as well as commodities alongside the printing industry. Unlike the NAT or HANDICO, a parastatal organisation which was confined to the promotion and financing of visual art productions for purely commercial purposes, only a few other public institutions were committed to promoting the sector on a regular basis. Most of the parastatal organisations, during the *Ujamaa* period, had partially and only once or twice commissioned the production of arts in Tanzania. As such, the BoT's and TPC's patronage in this study appears exceptional for two reasons: First, their commissions were nationwide in terms of coverage; and second, their patronage promised a continuous activity of visual arts sponsorship, more so in the case of TPC patronage. This sub-section of Chapter Two provides a brief account of five parastatal organisations which partially commissioned various visual art projects during the *Ujamaa* period.

The Tanzania Advertising Corporation (TAC) offered patronage to the *Ujamaa* visual arts through employment, whereby numerous professional artists were given jobs in the

organisation. Louis Azaria Mbughuni and Juma Salim Mbukuzi were renowned *Ujamaa* book illustrators who worked with TAC from its formation in the early 1970s until the 1990s:

National parastatals such as TAC used to employ visual artists to produce billboards, posters and many other small adverts for various advertisers to be posted in newspapers, annual reports, etc. Most of the aforesaid activities depended on the skills of the artists (Bishota and Kandoro 1982:73)

Due to limited coverage of electronic media from the 1960s to the early 1990s, print media such as posters and newspapers were the chief sources of information on the Tanzanian Mainland. Examples of successful works of the TAC in the 1970s and the 1980s included poster campaigns such as *Mtu ni Afya* and *Chakula ni Uhai*. A few other private publishers also hired and worked with several freelance artists to produce visuals for their print products. TAC activities collapsed in the 1990s with the advent of the private sector, which came with digital technology. Details on the new printing and advertising technology are presented in Chapter Three of this study.

The Kariakoo Market Corporation (KMC), headquartered in Dar es Salaam, was officially opened in 1974. During its construction in 1973, its architect incorporated huge artworks portraying peasants in the fields producing for the Kariakoo Market. During his interview with the researcher, Beda Amuli said that the murals were called “*Ujamaa*” (Personal interview, Mbezi-Dar es Salaam: September 2015). Amuli, the Kariakoo Market architect, hired Sam Ntiro to execute a series of murals depicting peasants working in their farms on the outer walls of the market. Figure 149 is a photograph taken in the early 1990s; it shows the iconic market building in Tanzania from a few metres away.



**Fig.149 ‘Kariakoo Market’s *Ujamaa* murals’ by Sam Ntiro in 1973 could be seen from a distance on the front of the new building**  
(Kariakoo Market Images, accessed on August 2019)

Beda Amuli claimed to have named the murals “*Ujamaa*” to express his appreciation of the *Ujamaa* policies in the building of a new socialist Tanzania. During fieldwork, the researcher interviewed both the architect and the Kariakoo Market Corporation’s management, specifically the general manager and marketing manager. It was established that neither the architect nor the management had attempted to make and preserve the pictures of the murals after they were created. Frederick Maeda, a former assistant lecturer in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts of the UDSM (which has since been renamed the Creative Arts Department), while conducting his master’s study on the works of Sam Ntiro in the mid-2000s, attempted to photograph and put into the visual record whatever had remained of the Kariakoo Market murals without success. Most of the pieces were badly dented and he could hardly get a single picture of a complete mural piece. Peter Msuya provides a critical observation of such an unfortunate story as that of the Kariakoo Market’s *Ujamaa* murals:

Lack of awareness originates from ignorance on the value, role, importance, priority and the level of exposure to anything. In places where public monuments or murals are prevalent for example, the management often did not respect the artworks. For example, the Kariakoo market murals executed by Ntiro in 1973 have been defaced by putting advertisements on them. The management was silent about

this although Tanzania copyright laws consider this act as illegal (Msuya 2014:93)

Peter Msuya's criticism is validated by figure 150, whose photograph shows new advertisements of different industrial products presently sold in the market displayed atop the walls on which the *Ujamaa* murals were previously painted. The KMC, which had a vision of building a string of markets countrywide so as to provide local peasants with reliable marketplaces for their produce, never realised its dream. There was no other marketplace like the one in Dar es Salaam built in the country. In fact, the Kariakoo *Ujamaa* murals by Sam Ntiro in Dar es Salaam were the last and only artworks commissioned by the KMC.



**Fig.150 Kariakoo Market walls in 2016**

(Source: Kariakoo Market Images, accessed on August 2019)

The Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC) is another parastatal organisation which, since its establishment in 1978, has been involved in irregular and small scale patronage of visual arts in Tanzania. The AICC, which operates the business of providing conference, meeting, and seminar facilities and services has for over three decades hosted most of the East African Community (EAC) and other international events. During the *Ujamaa* era,



AICC—as a socialist government entity operating under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation—was obliged to promote Tanzanian national culture to reinforce the country’s national identity alongside its objectives of epitomising the country’s foreign image as a peaceful and politically-stable country.

During an interview with Ms. Catherine Kilinda, the AICC’s Senior Protocol and Public Relations Officer, it was established that AICC has been buying artworks and commissioning artists to create artworks which have been placed in different halls and open spaces within the AICC. The artworks depict authentic Tanzanian scenery (figs.151 and 152); wildlife (fig.153); as well as the country’s beautiful and hospitable peoples (Fig.154). However, as Ms. Kilinda explained, visual arts promotion is not one of the AICC’s daily priorities; moreover, the centre does not promise much future patronage apart from its plan of commissioning the late President Nyerere’s bust, set to be installed in its new extension wing of the conference centre in Dar es Salaam, which is also named after him (Mwalimu Nyerere).



**Fig.151 A mural made of Terrazzo chippings, paints and glue depicting Mount Kilimanjaro on the sidewall of a building within the AICC compound in Arusha (Photograph by researcher, September 2015)**



**Fig.152 A mural depicting the Ngorongoro Conservation Area on the sidewall of a building within the AICC compound in Arusha**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.153 A painting of a buffalo, one of the so called “Big Five” premier wildlife attractions in Tanzania’s tourism package, hanging on a wall at the Tausi Hall within the AICC compound, painted by Si-Kenguru the 1990s**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.154 A brass artwork depicting a traditional Tanzanian family resting before an evening fire, at the Tausi Hall in the AICC compound, by an unrecorded artist in the 1990s**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)

Lately, the Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) have joined other government institutions in commissioning artists to create artworks to decorate their facilities, preserve nature and advertise their services. TANAPA was established by the British colonialists in 1959 and was later transformed into an independent public institution in 1967. TANAPA is tasked with conserving the ecosystem in 15 areas designated as National Parks, to protect natural resources, park facilities and administer all tourism enterprises within the national parks. Gosciny (2003:52) notes that in 1997, TANAPA, in collaboration with the UK's Royal Geographic Society, commissioned Elias Jengo and Jonathan Kingdon as official artists to participate in a symposium and

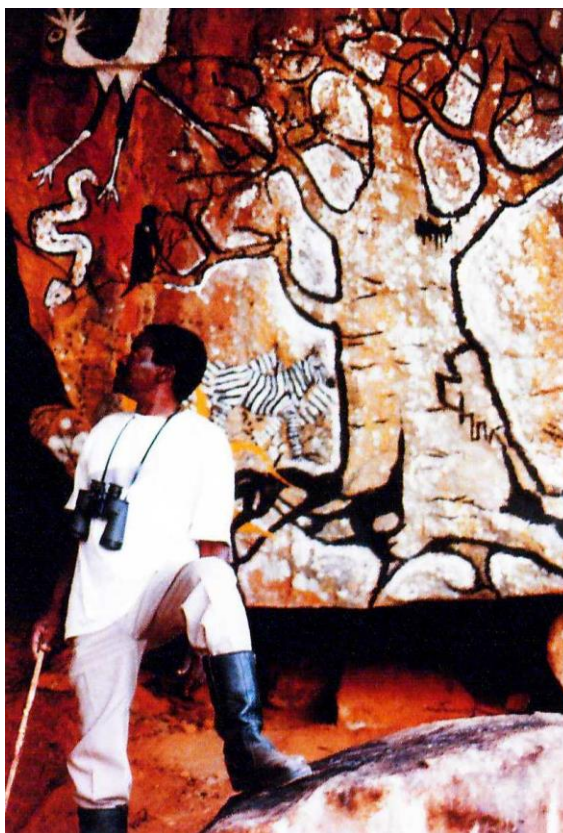
subsequently execute modern rock art pieces beside the prehistoric rock paintings in the Mkomazi National Park (Fig.156). The second project was on President Nyerere's bust (Fig.155) which was executed and installed at the TANAPA Headquarters in Arusha. The bust was created by three artists—Elias Jengo, Jon Buck and Claude Kingdon in 2003. TANAPA is also acknowledged for its sporadic purchases of artworks about wildlife as gifts for its international partners as well as decor objects in all its facilities.



**Fig.155 President Nyerere's bust at the TANAPA Headquarters in Arusha when the Saudi Arabian Princess' delegation visited Tanzania, at the right is TANAPA's PRM, Mr. Pascal Shelutete**

(Courtesy of PRM office – TANAPA, September 2015)





**Fig.156 Elias Jengo, standing before a Modern Rock Painting he and Jonathan Kingdon had executed at the Mkomazi National Park in 1997**  
(Courtesy of TANAPA, September 2015)

Besides TANAPA's patronage is the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority's mega sculpture project commissioned in the midst of the city of Arusha. Several sculptures of wild animal figures—a giant elephant (Fig.157), a family of rhinoceros (Fig.158) and rare species of bird (Fig.159)—have been executed in a roundabout, also known as the Ring (Fig.160), located adjacent to the Arusha regional and district offices, to advertise NCAA's activities. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area is a World Heritage site which includes the Ngorongoro Crater and the Olduvai Gorge. The NCAA was also founded by the colonial government in 1959 and was transformed into an independent Tanzanian authority in the early 1960s. Since then the NCAA, which is self-financed, has been charged with the responsibility of protecting natural, cultural and archaeological resources for the local and global communities.

Nonetheless, both TANAPA and NCAA have only promoted the visual arts which relate to their day-to-day activities. As the *Ujamaa* policies which stimulated institutional support for cultural productions are rapidly replaced by the neo-liberal economy, there is no guarantee that TANAPA or NCAA will continue to extend their patronage of the visual arts in Tanzania.



**Fig.157 A gigantic sculpture of an African elephant at the Ring, a roundabout preserved by the NCAA in the centre of Arusha. By Kioko 2005**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.158 A sculpture depicting a pair of rhinoceros at the Ring, a roundabout preserved by the NCAA in the centre of Arusha. By kioko 2005**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.159** A life size sculpture of the Shoebill at the Ring, a roundabout preserved by the NCAA on the centre of Arusha. By Kioko 2005  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.160** The Ring, a roundabout preserved by the NCAA in the heart of Arusha  
(source: [zanziplanet.com/tour/arusha](http://zanziplanet.com/tour/arusha), accessed on August 2019)



### 2.3.3 The National Cooperative Unions and the *Ujamaa* Arts

Until 1975, there were only two co-operative unions established for the purpose of improving the disorganised small visual arts production units in Tanzania. These were the Mtwara Makonde Carvers' Co-operative Union (MMCCU) and the Tingatinga Arts Co-operative Society (TACS). Immediately after the 1967 Arusha Declaration, the formation of co-operative unions and societies was encouraged by the socialist government of Tanzania, as convenient small enterprises could help inspire voluminous production and boost the country's socialist economy. In this regard, Golan Hyden quotes President Nyerere:

The co-operative is basically a socialist institution. However, a marketing co-operative, the members of which are small-scale capitalists and which itself becomes a large employer of labour, will increasingly take a capitalist character. The co-operative movement in Tanzania is a source of considerable strength for the growth of socialism—it represents a major advance over a private capitalist trading system. However, if it remains purely concerned with marketing, with the development of commercial farming among its members, it will become increasingly a capitalist institution. A central part of the development of rural socialism in Tanzania must be played by the cooperative movement; for it to fulfil a progressive role, however, it must be revolutionised. Two changes are required: (1) The societies must become production-oriented—through the development of cooperative farming units amongst their members at the primary level; (2) democratic participation of the membership in the control of all cooperative must be increased (Hyden 1975: 51-56)

Although cultural production co-operatives and societies were not included in Nyerere's review above, its general message addressed all types of co-operatives, regardless of the nature of the activities for which they were created. The purpose of organising artists and artisans into a co-operative was to enable them to produce in bulk, control prices of their goods, maintain their brand's copyrights and connect profitably with national and international networks of marketing. The MMCCU and TACS were successful patrons in the *Ujamaa* art period, albeit for a short time.



### 2.3.3.1 Mtwara Makonde Carvers' Co-operatives

According to Stout (1966), the Mtwara Makonde Carvers' Co-operative Union (MMCCU) started a few years after independence but before the adoption of socialism in Tanzania. As explained in the introductory part of this section, the chief concern of the MMCCU was the welfare of carvers who had long been systematically exploited by most Makonde arts dealers. Anthony Stout presents a scenario describing the working conditions and remunerations of the Wamakonde carvers working under a European dealer:

Probably the largest concentration of migrant Makonde carvers in Tanzania is at a remote lime estate thirty miles southwest of Mtwara. There 150 carvers supply a thriving export business managed by a European. He insists on good craftsmanship and personally accepts or rejects each piece offered to him for sale. While the models (and their realism) are standardised, new lines are occasionally introduced, such as the currently popular African chess pieces. Originality is seen in making an unnecessary marketing problem and is consciously discouraged... (Stout 1966:8)

It was because of such exploitative relations between art dealers and Makonde carvers that the co-operative was formed to take control of the production and marketing arrangements in the carving enterprise. Sam Ntiro, while conducting his doctoral thesis research based on Makonde modern sculpture, notes this development of co-operatives:

...Instead the Makonde carvers have formed co-operative societies, such as [the] Mtwara Makonde Carvings Co-operative society. The societies buy carvings from their members and sell them to customers under licence. The profit is shared equally amongst the Makonde carvers who are members. With the help of the government they also export carvings on orders from foreign countries (Ntiro 1982:69)

Although not so clearly, Ntiro (1982) introduces the fact that the MMCCU was one of the suppliers that had benefited from export sale facilitated by the National Arts of Tanzania Limited (NAT). The MMCCU comprised more than 100 Makonde carvers' groups or primary co-operatives (*Vyama vya Ushirika vya Msingi*) scattered in the Mtwara, Pwani (Coast), Lindi

and Ruvuma regions. The primary co-operatives provided working spaces by renting and sometimes buying working spaces for the carvers, supplied raw material and tools on loan, and immediate markets of artworks by their members. Nevertheless, the Makonde co-operatives did not last long. Ntiro (1982:20) asserts that after realising individual or independent carvers were economically far better than those in the co-operatives, some carvers withdrew their memberships to venture into private businesses. In fact, the increase in small, private Makonde carvers' curio shops and workshops in Dar es Salaam in the early 1980s is linked to the collapse of several Makonde carvers' cooperatives. Although some carvers tried to regroup and establish themselves at Mwenge arts and crafts markets from 1985 until the present, the co-operatives were never stable. The recent disintegration of the CHAWASAWATA, an association of independent Makonde art carvers and dealers at the Mwenge Arts and Crafts market in Dar es Salaam, is a manifestation of the general failures of the Makonde carvers' co-operatives. Since 2010, some Makonde carvers and art dealers at Mwenge wanted to distribute the co-operatives' land—on which several curio shops and workshops are built—among its founding members rather than share the space under one co-operative, as agreed upon when the land was rented to CHAWASAWATA by the government in the mid-1980s. The official collapse of the MMCCU is recorded to be in the early 1990s, following the privatisation of NAT. During fieldwork, there was hardly any information on MMCCU from reviews. Given the lack of systemic organisation and constant conflicts within primary co-operatives, the MMCCU was constantly dogged by instability. Generally, unlike the co-operatives dealing with agricultural productions in Tanzania, the cultural enterprises were poorly organised and unsuccessful.

### **2.3.3.2 Tingatinga Art Co-operative Society**

According to Shiraishi and Yamamoto (1992), Gosciny (2001), Nahimiani (2008), Thorup and Sam (2010), the Tingatinga Art of Tanzania emerged in the late 1960s following the invention of paintings made of bright colours on square Masonite boards by Edward Saidi Tingatinga, who is simply acknowledged as Tingatinga. This painting genre was named after its founder. Since the 1970s, Tingatinga art has been produced by several other artists apprenticed by Edward Tingatinga himself. Gosciny (2004) argues that by 1970, Tingatinga had begun to train his first five students, namely, Mpata, Tedo, Ajaba, Linda, and Adeusi. This first generation of Tingatinga students trained a second generation of painters and soon the tight grip of Tingatinga's closed circle opened up (Fig.162). When Edward Saidi Tingatinga died in a fatal shooting accident in 1972, his group of about 20 painters was considered to be a school by some Western writers such as Hatz (1996) and Schaedler (1998). In an attempt to save the business contract which, it had signed with Edward Saidi Tingatinga in 1971, the National Art of Tanzania (NAT) or HANDICO helped Tingatinga apprentices and family members form and register the Tingatinga Art Co-operative Society (TACS) between 1973 and 1974. TACS still administers Tingatinga arts business at its Msasani-Morogoro store's premises in Dar es Salaam.

The early Tingatinga paintings depicted monochromatic backgrounds behind boldly-painted lone wild animals, particularly lions, hippos, elephants and buffalos. A closer look at the paintings reveals naïve qualities of the artist in organising the form and content of his composition, hence producing an unsophisticated impression in all his artworks (Fig.161). The general atypical stylistic characteristics of Tingatinga art is its commodified quality that has won it the reputation as the most popular tourist art in East Africa. Despite having a very

small base of local audience and buyers, Tingatinga art has won a remarkable foreign art lovers support from all over the world (Jengo 1985). Since the 1970s when it spread, its reception as a ‘contemporary’ visual art genre in Tanzania is still ambivalent among local scholars as seen in the following extract:

The Tingatinga group of artists founded by the late Edward Tingatinga in the early 1970s enjoyed the popularity among overseas art buyers. The naivety of their painting style, bright colours and symbolism were seen as representing the style of art from ‘a dying culture’. As might be expected, HANDICO promoted Tingatinga art commercially until it flooded the art market in the late 1970s (Jengo 1985:123).

The Tingatinga art genre had very little to do with the *Ujamaa* arts in its conceptual sense, but in its later modes of productions and marketing aspects. It emerged as a hobby, and quickly expanded into a family enterprise catering for wide tourist art markets in the entire East African region. A few years after its invention, Tingatinga art became a Western art collectors’ yardstick and obsession in their quest to find an authentic art from Tanzania. Some writers still believe that only artists without Western art educational influence could produce ‘authentic’ art in Tanzania. Local art educators and scholars such as Wembah-Rashid (1979) and Jengo (1985) are reluctant to categorise Tingatinga paintings as ‘folk art’ and more of craftwork apart from the mainstream visual arts, which are normally appreciated as products of unique genius refined through formal training or apprenticeship. In fact, for many years, Elias Jengo, through occasional papers<sup>155</sup> and speeches, has been a fervent critic

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<sup>155</sup> Elias Jengo has written several articles to challenge a Western construction that, a naive art such as Tingatinga paintings represents true African art which is free of Western influences. Some Western scholars for more than five decades now have been arguing that African art are copies of Western art just because the creators have acquired Western art education (see *Special Problems of an Artist in a Developing Country* by Elias Jengo [1985] pp.122-123)

of Western writers who have tirelessly credited the Tingatinga paintings as the original manifestations of Tanzanian contemporary art.



**Fig.161 Two of Tingatinga's original paintings**  
(Source: Gosciny and Jengo, 2016)

The TACS inclusion in the visual arts of the *Ujamaa* period can be appreciated from two vantage points: First, it was the TACS' involvement in the co-operative unions as an economic drive for *Ujamaa* that encouraged organised groups of youths to engage in the socialist state's programmes for economic production, as Yves Gosciny observes:

...Moreover, with socialism in full swing in Tanzania at that time, the Tingatinga painters were suggested not to paint from their individual homes but rather to daily gather to paint in group, as a collective entity (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:27)

The second factor was the inclusion of its supplies into the NAT or HANDICO's products list and hence incorporated into the *Ujamaa* production and marketing systems which were practised through co-operative unions or societies. In this regard, Gosciny and Jengo (2016:29) have pointed out:

...with the opening of the Tanzania State to liberalisation, new possibilities were made available to create full-fledged companies rather than non-profit organisations, and in 1990 the Tingatinga Partnership was terminated to create a new entity, the Tingatinga Arts Co-operative Society (TACS) Ltd., as it still exists today

Both factors are validated in John Wembah-Rashid's eulogy, published in his article titled EDWARD SAIDI TINGATINGA – *An Obituary*, which reads in part:

Probably Tingatinga's highest contribution to Tanzania, and the developing world as a whole, is the fact that his works and those of his students have demonstrated what the inartistically trained hand and mind can do given the right facilities and encouragement. This development can rightly be said to be a direct fruit of independence and socialism. Independence from colonial dominance and the socialisation of cultural activities such as art, provided a favourable environment for Tingatinga's school to start and grow (Wembah-Rashid 1974:50)

Despite its limited contribution to the betterment of the *Ujamaa* artistic productions, the independent socialist government of Tanzania granted TACS' members with opportunities to earn a living through their works, as well as accepted it as a group which contributed to the national development in its own unique way. Lately, *Tingatinga* art has rapidly developed and transformed enormously in both its forms and contents. Nahimiani (2008) claims that there are now more than eight versions of *Tingatinga* painting subgenres distinctively identified by the nature of their themes, subject matters and stylistic characteristics. Of the new inventions in subgenres, there is the incorporation of complex wildlife compositions and of semi-realistic human figures portrayed in different life settings or scenes and topics (Gosciny, 2008; Teisen, 2010; Thorup and Sam, 2010). However, the TACS continues to promote productions to meet tourists' demand and those of a few middle class markets in the Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions<sup>156</sup> while doing little to raise awareness among the local population of this famous and unique Tanzanian art.

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<sup>156</sup> These are a few regions with active tourism business establishments and attractions in Tanzania. According to Tanzania Association of Tour Operators (TATO) at [www.tato.tz.org](http://www.tato.tz.org)



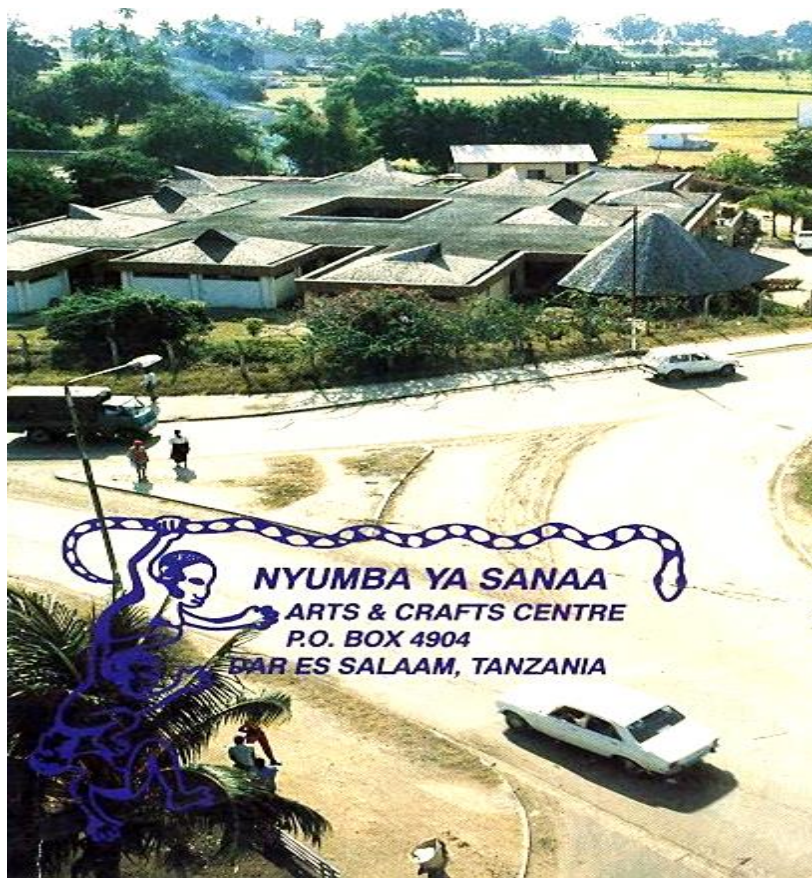
**Fig.162 Famous Tingatinga artists in the 1990s: Top row: Mimus, Ali, Lorenz, Yusufu, Hansani, Chimwanda: Amonde, Charinda, Saidi, Jaffary, Mruta, Chombo (Courtesy of Tingatinga Arts Co-operative Society, August 2019)**

### **2.3.3.3 Nyumba Ya Sanaa Workshop at Dar es Salaam**

The Nyumba Ya Sanaa (NYS) translated as the House of the Arts, was a creative visual arts workshop founded by Jean Pruitt, an American Catholic sister from the Maryknoll Sisters Congregation of Los Angeles. In her recent publication, *Nyumba ya Sanaa: Three Decades of Tanzanian Art*, Jean Pruitt admits that she managed to establish this House of Culture in Dar es Salaam thanks to the strong support she had received from President Nyerere from 1972 until a few months before his death in 1999. President Nyerere who, according to Jean Pruitt, was a friend and patron to the Nyumba ya Sanaa, provided her with a plot where the NYS building was built and granted it donor access to finance various projects. Among the other unacknowledged co-founders of the Nyumba ya Sanaa are local Tanzanians Raza Mohamed and Juma Salim Mbukuzi. Jean Pruitt, who was involved in Catholic Relief Service projects in 1969, met Raza Mohamed at the United States Information Service (USIS) centre in Dar es Salaam, where Raza used to work as Exhibition Technical Assistant



in the Cultural Affairs Department. Juma Salim Mbukuzi was Raza Mohamed's friend; he was an illustrator who worked for the Tanzania Advertising Corporation (TAC). In an interview for this study, Raza Mohamed claimed that Jean Pruitt, Juma Salim Mbukuzi and himself shared an idea to establish a training centre where they could help impart visual arts skills among the jobless but talented youths who missed opportunities to continue with their education. The first Nyumba ya Sanaa art training activities were launched by about 15 artists in a hall previously occupied by the Kalamazoo Offices on Mansfield Street in Dar es Salaam (Fig.164a). With several donations, the Nyumba ya Sanaa facility (Fig.163) began construction on Ohio Street in Dar es Salaam in 1981 and was officially launched by President Nyerere in 1983 (Fig.164b).



**Fig.163 Nyumba ya Sanaa facility in 1983, Dar es Salaam**  
(Source: Vijana FM blogspot accessed in August 2019)



Nyumba ya Sanaa operated as a type of a co-operative society. Artists of different calibres worked as one big community to produce an array of artistic genres, with a large portion of their products exported to the West, as John Wembah-Rashid observes:

The other development during 1977 took place at Nyumba ya Sanaa (House of Art) in downtown Dar es Salaam. Under the guidance of an American missionary, some Makonde artist began to employ the most recent techniques in graphics to print various design motifs on textile, bark cloth and paper. These items are sold principally in America (Wembah-Rashid 1979:15)

The NYS had several studios for Makonde carvers, painters, textile designers and craftsmen. The management team closely administered production and marketing in which artists were paid commissions and percentages from the sale of their artworks. While commenting on the successes of the Nyumba ya Sanaa, Henry Likonde, one of its prominent artists, claimed that the arrangements at Nyumba ya Sanaa greatly benefited its members<sup>157</sup>. Through its collaborations with its donors from Scandinavia, East Germany and the US, Nyumba ya Sanaa—under Jean Pruitt—managed to co-ordinate several vocational training programmes in visual arts and crafts, paintings, cement and clay sculpture, wood carving, modelling plaster and metal cutting. Mutumba (2012:82)<sup>158</sup> comments on one of these training projects, the Inter Grafik workshop, ran by experts from the GDR at Nyumba ya Sanaa in 1975 and 1976. As a supporter of the *Ujamaa* cultural policies, Jean Pruitt earned President Nyerere's trust, hence her Nyumba ya Sanaa project received all the support it needed from the government. In 1975, the Nyumba ya Sanaa managed to organise its biggest exhibition at the

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<sup>157</sup>Faces of Africa - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6noZPkLwwU>. Retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2016

<sup>158</sup> Yvette Tshamay Mutumba is a German art historian whose recent doctoral research has intensively analysed the successes and challenges of Germany-Africa integrative projects in the development of African contemporary art from the 1960s to 2011. On pages 80, 81 and 82 of her thesis (see reference section), she compliments the GDR efforts in promoting African artists involved in the InterGrafik project. Robino Ntila and Augustino Malaba Tanzanian artists from Nyumba ya Sanaa were involved in the project.

National Museum of Tanzania. Between 1976 and 1988, Nyumba ya Sanaa mounted several exhibitions of Makonde carvings, paintings, textiles and a wide range of craft products in the US, Austria, Germany and South Africa.



**Fig.164a** from the left, Jean Pruitt, Juma Salim Mbukuzi and Raza Mohamed, painting on the wall of the entrance of the newly-established NYS in Dsm, 1972  
(Courtesy of Raza Mohamed, November 2015)



**Fig.164b** The NYS opening event: From the right, President J.K. Nyerere, Jean Pruitt in the centre (wearing glasses) and Henry Likonde visiting exhibits in the newly-established NYS on Ohio Street, Dsm in 1983  
(Courtesy of Henry Likonde, 18 October 2016)

The Nyumba ya Sanaa products promoted a diversity of artistic productions. Although the relationship between Jean Pruitt and President Nyerere suggests that she was a supporter of Nyerere's *Ujamaa* policies, very few NYS artistic productions were associated with this political agenda. There were artists who produced artworks for domestic utility, beauty and decorative purposes. These were the textile designers and craftworks producers. There were also those who produced to maintain and preserve the best African traditions and customs. Among the renowned artists working on this topic at Nyumba ya Sanaa was George Lilanga. According to three interviews posted on YouTube<sup>159</sup>, Lilanga joined Nyumba ya Sanaa in 1975. Before then, Lilanga had worked briefly with the Tingatinga artists group at Msasani in Dar es Salaam. While working at Nyumba ya Sanaa, Lilanga invented his own style of art which incorporates painting and carving to produce his famous "*Mashetani*" artworks (figs.165 and 166). Unlike the scary and sometimes violent Shetani carvings by his fellow Makonde artists, Lilanga claims that his Mashetani are happy caricature-like creatures that co-exist with ordinary people in their daily lives<sup>160</sup>. George Lilanga's artworks are among the priceless artistic inventions nurtured through the Nyumba ya Sanaa's intervention. However, his art is not as appreciated by his countrymen as it is by foreigners in the US, Europe and Asian countries like Japan and China.

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<sup>159</sup> George Lilanga interviews 1, 2 and 3 at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4tRa02xxy0>. Retrieved on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 2016 at FU, Berlin

<sup>160</sup> George Di Nyama Lilanga called George Lilanga Tanzania pp.133-39, *African Art Now: Masterpieces from the Jean Pigozzi Collection*, Magnin, A. et al (2004) The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



**Fig.165 George Lilanga's Mashetani, painted carved figures in dramatic postures**  
 (source: caacart.com/artwork/Lilanga-George, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.166 George Lilanga's mural depicting Mashetani in Ujamaa-like village life**  
 (Source: caacart.com/artwork/Lilanga-George, accessed on August 2019)

From 1975 to the 2000s Lilanga's artworks were promoted in many solo and group exhibitions worldwide. These exhibitions include the 2000-2001 Shanghai Biennale and the 2003 Lilanga d'ici et d'ailleurs, held at the Centre Culturel François Mitterrand, Périgueux, France. A thorough biography of George Lilanga was published in the *Art in Tanzania 2001* publication covering the annual exhibition of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and cartoon arts in Dar es Salaam from November 30 to December 22, 2001. Following his death in 2005, several articles and books on Lilanga and his artworks have been published, the most recent book about him being *George Lilanga (African Collection) Vol.1*, published in 2006



by Sarenco and Enrico Mascelloni. Since 2014, the National Museum of Tanzania has created a small outdoor exhibition to display George Lilanga's rescued<sup>161</sup> 127 stucco portico slabs, which were previously attached to the porch of the then Nyumba ya Sanaa building (now demolished) as decorations (Fig.167). The space includes George Lilanga's brief history (Fig.168).



**Fig.167 Photograph showing George Lilanga's decorative slabs created to decorate the porch of Nyumba ya Sanaa**

(Source: Vijana FM blogspot, accessed on August, 2019)

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<sup>161</sup> George Lilanga's stucco portico slabs were among valuable remains of the now demolished Nyumba ya Sanaa facility under controversial circumstances in 2012 to give way to a modern commercial building. For several months the pieces were reported missing and later rescued following an operation conducted at the Tanzania Harbours Authority after some smugglers were spotted preparing to ship illegally the pieces abroad. Retrieved on August, 2019 from: <http://www.vijana.fm/2014/09/04/tanzania-is-at-the-dawn-of-a-cultural-awakening-an-important-and-unique-cultural-heritage-rescued/>



**Fig.168 Photograph of a collection of George Lilanga’s Nyumba ya Sanaa decorative slabs recently displayed at the NMT outdoor exhibition in Dar es Salaam**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)

Other renowned artists nurtured at the Nyumba ya Sanaa included Augustino Malaba, Robino Ntila, Patrick Imanjama and Henry Likonde. Robino Ntila(Fig.169) and Augustino Malaba (Fig.170), who were involved in the *InterGrafik* training and competition projects in 1975 and 1976 through Nyumba ya Sanaa and successfully improved their style and production techniques, as Yvette Mutumba notes:

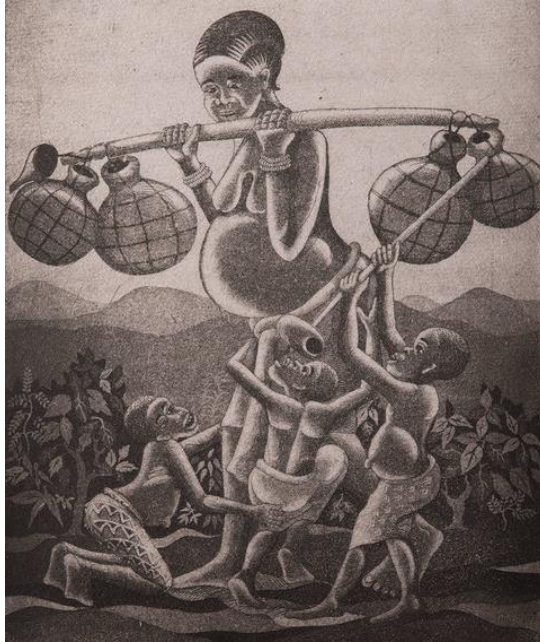
One of foremost Tanzanian artists, Augustino Malaba exhibited a linocut showing woman carrying a baby, wrapped in a cloth on her back a common way of carrying children in many African cultures. The title of the work is African mother with child, 1973. As these kinds of works had been chosen by the selection committee of *InterGrafik*, it seems that the committee wanted to include aspects of African cultures beyond the predominant issues of political struggle. This is emphasized by the fact that Augustino Malaba won a prize of *InterGrafik* in 1976 as did fellow Tanzania Robino Ntila, who also did address political issues in his works (Mutumba 2012:80)

Although Augustino Malaba never enjoyed fame at home in Tanzania, his colleague Robino Ntila did. Both Ntila and Malaba, trained in etching and woodcut techniques, produced artworks with soft approaches (Mutumba 2012). In most of their works, they complemented

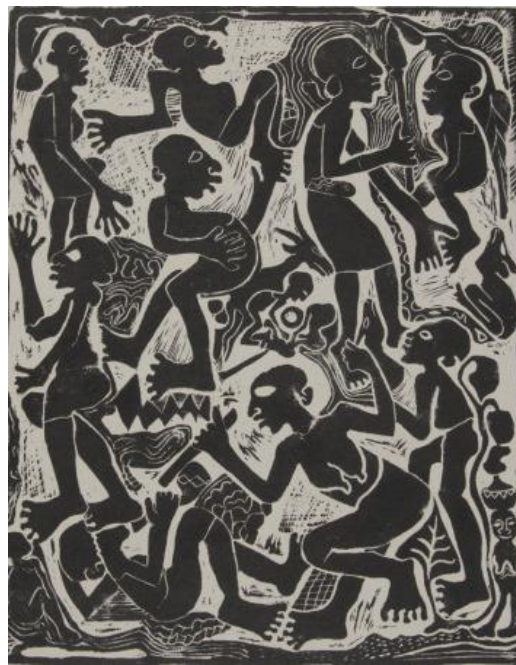
family life and hard work as well as African traditions and customs. The only artist among those trained by the Nyumba ya Sanaa group who intrinsically tackled the *Ujamaa* topic in his art was a painter by the name of Henry Likonde. A critical eye on the arts produced in the *Ujamaa* period in Tanzania, however, will associate Likonde's orientation with Sam Ntiro's choice of subject matter in executing his paintings. His composite figures of peasants' chores in village life settings (figs.171 and 172) conformed to the *Ujamaa* depictions of traditional life in works such as those by Sam Ntiro and Yakobo Sangwani. Henry Likonde's painting entitled "A Poor Family" (Fig.201), executed in 1983 is, in fact, his direct critique of the failed *Ujamaa* policies—some two years before the *Ujamaa* policies were officially abandoned in Tanzania. Henry Likonde achieved the highest successes in his career in the 1990s, when he was commissioned to paint biblical scenes on walls of Catholic churches in the Ruvuma, Mtwara and Lindi regions (fig.173). Since then, Likonde has frequently visited Germany and other European countries, where his works are well known and appreciated.

Patrick Imanjama was another Nyumba ya Sanaa graduate who never produced political art. His works are based on watercolour painting and etching techniques he acquired through various training projects co-ordinated since 1975 within the NYS, Goethe Institut Dar es Salaam and in Salzburg, Austria. In the 1990s, he engaged in topics such as fantasy, in which he painted colourful wildlife depictions of zebras, elephants, and giraffes (Fig.174). According to the interview he gave for a President Nyerere documentary entitled 'Faces of Africa', Imanjama claimed to be the one who used to wrap the gifts President Nyerere purchased from Nyumba ya Sanaa to take with him whenever he went for State visits abroad. Figure 175 supports Imanjama's claim, as it shows him and his colleagues handing a painting

to Prince Charles, who visited Nyumba ya Sanaa in 1982. Patrick Imanjama still works with Jean Pruitt's Vipaji Art Gallery at Oysterbay in Dares Salaam.



**Fig.169 'Mother and Children' by Robino Ntila, 1980**  
(Source: The Rift Collection, accessed on August 2019)

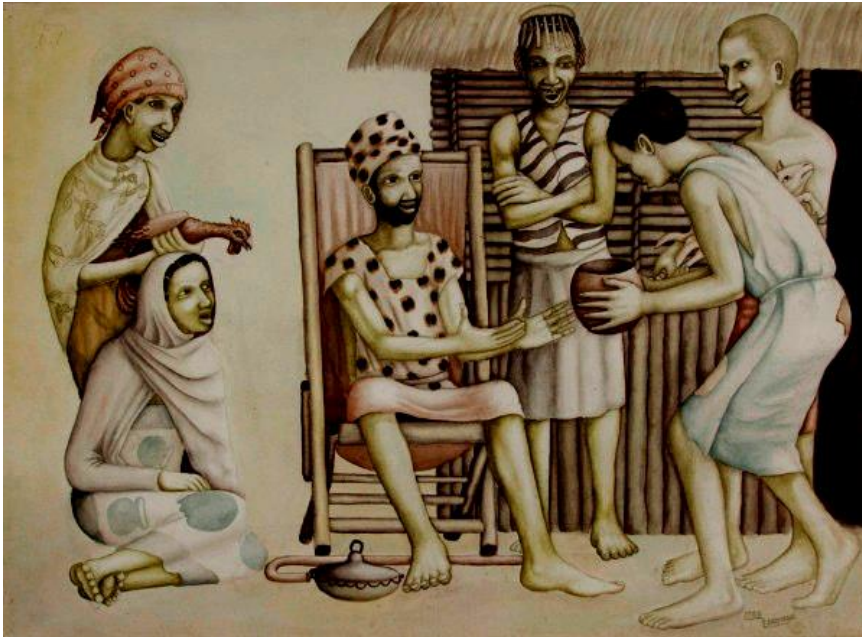


**Fig.170 'Ujamaa' by Augustino Malaba, 1980**  
(Source: Syracuse University Art Galleries Collection, accessed on August 2019)





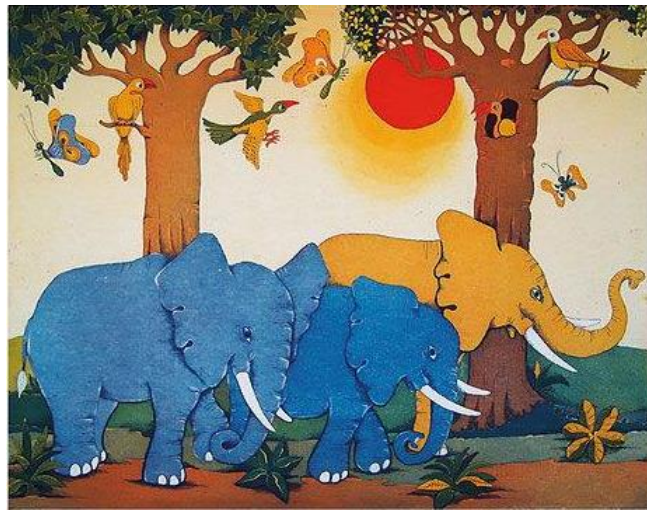
**Fig.171 'Traditional Doctor' by Henry Likonde, 1984**  
(Maryknoll Sisters Collection, SUart Gallery Exhibition, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.172 'Gift Giving' by Henry Likonde, 1984**  
(Maryknoll Sisters Collection, SUart Gallery Exhibition, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.173 Henry Likonde and Pater Polykarp Uehlein paint the walls of St. Mathias Mulumba Kalemba Church at the Songea Diocese in Ruvuma, 1997**  
 (Courtesy of Henry Likonde, 18 October 2016)



**Fig.174 'Elefantenzug' by Patrick Imanjama, 1998**  
 (Courtesy of Patrick Francis Imanjama September, 2019)



**Fig.175 Francis Patrick Imanjama (fourth left) handing a wrapped painting to Prince Charles, dressed in short-sleeved white safari suit. Robino Ntila is first from left**  
 (Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/sw/8/85/100.JPG>, August 2019)

The latter group of artists joining NYS included Edward Francis Kiiza and Evarist Chikawe. In her book, Jean Pruitt presents and discusses more than 50 artists who emerged in the Tanzanian visual art scene through the Nyumba Ya Sanaa initiative. In separate interviews, Robino Ntila, Evarist Chikawe, Henry Likonde and George Lilanga express gratitude to Austrian and German art trainers including Christine Jorg Mund and Christine Stormberg Steinberg, who ran workshops during the *InterGrafik* projects in Dar es Salaam, Germany and Austria. Moreover, artists have always appreciated the marketing opportunities for their products they enjoyed while at the NYS, as well as the entrepreneurial skills they acquired, which helped them survive in the visual arts business. Artworks by these Nyumba Ya Sanaa artists and several others who later worked at the centre highly promoted the visual arts scenes during the *Ujamaa* period through countless exhibitions and sales as tourist souvenirs all over the world.

However, the Nyumba ya Sanaa was demolished in 2012 and was replaced by a new building presently occupied by the National Microfinance Bank (NMB) Headquarters. A few visual art studios and curios shops were salvaged and re-erected in a small building on Namanga Street in the Msasani suburb of Dar es Salaam. Since 2012, several newspaper articles have reported that the matron and founder of NYS, Jean Pruitt, engaged in fierce legal battles against some powerful politicians who engineered the NYS' neutralisation and its ultimate demolition, but her efforts were in vain. The reasons for NYS' failure were never publicised and left its admirers in endless speculations. An article entitled, 'Cultural reawakening in Tanzania' by Rehema Chachage, printed by the *Citizen* newspaper on 15 November 2014 is one of many recent commentaries with ambiguous information on the origins of the Nyumba ya Sanaa and its unceremonious demise.

After the demolition of Nyumba ya Sanaa in 2012, Jean Pruitt continued promoting visual arts in Tanzania by opening the Vipaji Art Gallery, which still works closely with most of the Nyumba Ya Sanaa former artists and many new others. Jean Pruitt holds two valuable awards for her invaluable and priceless promotion of visual arts in Tanzania. These were the Mwl. Nyerere's National Award, bestowed on her in 1983 and the *Zeze Award* by the *Mfuko wa Utamaduni* (The Cultural Trust Fund) in 2005.

### **2.3.4 Ministry of National Education of Tanzania**

The Ministry of National Education was one of the patrons of the *Ujamaa* visual arts from 1967 to 1991. After 1969, the Ministry of Culture was dissolved and was departmentalised within the Ministry of National Education until 1974, when its independence was reinstated. During this period, very few cultural training projects were co-ordinated and implemented. The Ministry promoted visual arts through the training of art teachers, art curriculum development and the establishment of training centres through the central government's funding. In 1965, the Ministry of National Education, which had only one Teachers' Training College (TTC) with art courses at Mpwapwa in Dodoma, granted Sam Ntiro permission to teach optional classes in fine arts at the Dar es Salaam or Chang'ombe Teachers' College. For about five years, Ntiro organised and ran the art classes with Elias Jengo as his assistant until 1969, when Ntiro returned to work as Commissioner for Culture at the Ministry. This move was intended to increase the small number of trained art teachers at Tanzania's tertiary education levels. In 1968, when the Butimba Teachers' Training College was opened in Mwanza, the Ministry made it possible for art and design classes to be taught there as major

subjects for the diploma students who were being trained to be art teachers for primary and secondary schools. As Peter Msuya explains:

According to Vice Principal, Butimba College of Education awards a two-year art teachers certificate to its finalist students, most of whom are in-service teachers with form four or form six academic backgrounds. It was established when the late Sefania Tuginie, a Makerere-trained art educator and book illustrator was the director of teacher education. This was the time when some teachers' colleges were assigned special academic areas for teachers to specialise [in]. For example, the Butimba TTC was assigned to specialise in art education, Korogwe TTC in Kiswahili language and the Marangu TTC in the English language training, to mention a few (Msuya 2014:55)

Having established the centre offering certificate and diploma courses in art training at Mpwapwa TTC since 1961, Butimba TTC in 1968 and in Dar es Salaam at Chango'mbe TTC in 1972, the ministry, through the influence of Sam Ntiro who worked at the Ministry as the Commissioner for Culture in 1974, sought and introduced a degree programme in fine arts at the University of Dar es Salaam within the Department of Art, Music and Theatre. Slowly, the number of art graduates increased to fill up the art teacher positions, but their number was never enough to meet the high demand nationwide:

Although Tanzania has in some ways done better than her neighbours in developing [a] Cultural Policy and in creating institutions like the Bagamoyo College of the Arts and other institutions that train teachers for the school system, the need for arts education exceeds the supply (Otiso 2013:102)

With small budgets, poor training facilities and insufficient staff members within art training institutions, the situation and programmes took longer to improve. Through several alternative projects, the government and individual art educators took some steps to help

recruit more teachers and improve the situation. Kiure Msangi<sup>162</sup> prepared an art course guideline to help non-artist teachers in teaching art subjects in secondary school. His book was titled *Art Handbook for Schools: A guide to the non-artist teacher on how to teach art*. The government continued to sponsor more art teachers' education as well. Miller (1975) records that several Tanzanian artists attended art training courses within East Africa, Europe, Asia and the US and after completion of studies they returned home to teach art classes. These include later renowned artists and art educators in Tanzania such as John Somola, Abdulhamid Abshehe, Albert Taseni Msangi, who taught at Iyunga Technical School, John Elisante Lyimo, who taught at Kidia Upper Primary School in Moshi, Thomas C. Salyeem, who taught at Arusha Karafu Extended School, Gideon A.L. Senyagwa, who taught at Tambaza Secondary school in Dar es Salaam, and Peter Sweverta, who worked as an assistant instructor at Ifunda Technical College.

Unlike the Makerere and Nairobi universities in Uganda and Kenya respectively, arts training institutions in Tanzania did not promote the visual arts practically. In fact, institutions such as the University of Dar es Salaam, Butimba and Dar es Salaam TTCs never budgeted enough to finance students' practical projects. Moreover, there were neither art galleries nor entrepreneurial skills training for visual artists to train and practise fully in the art production enterprise before they could enter the art markets. The University of Dar es Salaam has only two big artworks produced through private funding and a Mwl. Nyerere bust, which was produced in 1996 (Fig.176). The four figures bronze sculpture known as *Thinkers* (Fig.177), standing in front the Main Library at the UDSM was sponsored by the Karimjee Charitable

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<sup>162</sup> Prof. Kiure Francis Msangi's brief information on his contribution to art education scene in Tanzania is covered in the discussion on the East African Artists Community (EAAC) in chapter one.



Trust architects Norman & Dawbarn and executed by a Ugandan sculptor George Kakooza in 1966. Another work is a cement sculpture of a semi-abstract sitting woman, untitled (Fig.178) by Dinah Enock, produced as part of her coursework in 2002 and placed at the entrance of Fine and Performing Arts Department, currently known as the Creative Arts Department.



**Fig.176 A bust of President Nyerere (first left) during the event to unveil Mahatma Gandhi's bust in the Council Chamber within the UDSM's Administration Block (Courtesy of the University of Dar es Salaam PRM Office, 2016)**



**Fig.177 *Thinkers*, a monumental sculpture at the front of the Main Library of the University of Dar es Salaam by George Kakooza, 1966**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)

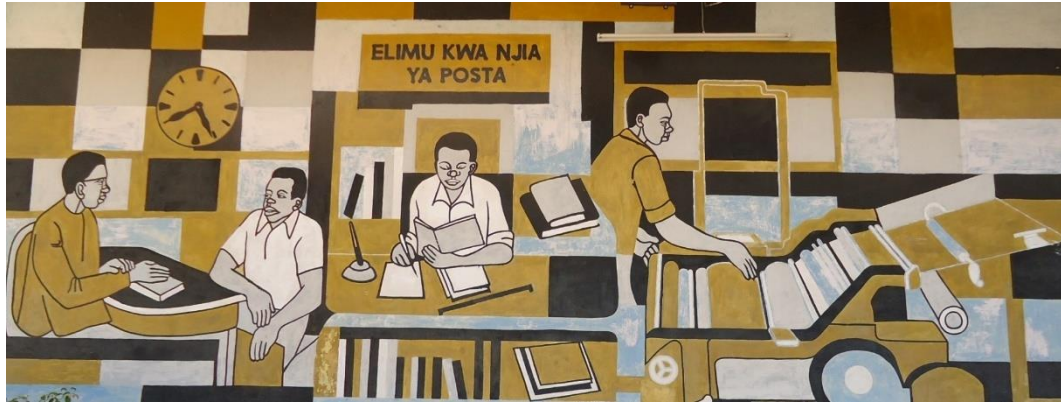


**Fig.178 A monumental sculpture at the entrance of the Creative Arts Department (previously FPA) at the University of Dar es Salaam by Dinah Enock, 2002**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



However, the University of Dar es Salaam was successful in encouraging its staff to produce and employ artworks such as drawings, paintings and sculptures as teaching aids and learning materials in classes. This productivity influenced and attracted many projects and campaigns from other institutions. In 1976, the Institute of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam, through its staff members such as Elias Jengo, Louis Mbughuni and a self-taught, artist Raza Mohamed, were involved in the production of various educational book illustrations and poster campaigns. Its most famous projects were the pictorial English books for primary and secondary schools illustrated by Raza Mohamed. Apart from the University of Dar es Salaam, the Tanzania Institute of Adult Education (TIAE), which has its headquarters in Dar es Salaam and numerous centres countrywide, has used art as its education programme medium, promoted and advertised its activities through the visual arts as well (figs.179 and 180). The TIAE used art illustrations in almost 80 percent of its learning materials which were intended for adult peasants' evening classes set in the *Ujamaa* villages. Since the late 1970s, the TIAE employed a fine arts graduate from the UDSM called Ngwawasya as its chief illustrator and art editor for its learning materials publication. Although the Ministry of Education had initiated the process of developing the art curriculum in the 1970s, its implementation took many years to be realised, as Kefa Otiso explains:

While Tanzania made the arts (music, fine art, sculpture and the performing arts) examinable subjects in both primary and secondary schools in 1997, it was not until 2008 that this partially became reality in [the] secondary school curriculum (Otiso 2013:102)



**Fig.179 A mural advertising the Tanzania Institute of Adult Education (TIAE) Services and Activities at the TIAE Headquarters in DSM, by Paul Ndembo, 1978**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)



**Fig.180 A mural advertising the TIAE services and activities at its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, by Paul Ndembo, 1978**  
(Photograph by researcher, September 2015)

Art promotion through training is somewhat more successful in mainland Tanzania than on the Zanzibar archipelago. Zanzibar, which is renowned for its brilliant watercolour artists, has the worst art training history in the United Republic. In an interview, Elias Jengo recalled that since early 1900s, the Sultan of Zanzibar had a plan to use the Beit-El-Ras castle as its cultural training institution, but the plan was realised with little effort put to its sustainability. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the Nkrumah Teachers' Training College was the only higher learning institution with partial fine art training curriculum, with a few schools providing art

lessons as extra-curricular activities. According to Elias Jengo, since the 1950s, the art classes were organised and taught by Abdullah Farahani, the designer of the Tanzania Coat of Arms and former Makerere Art school student between 1937 and 1942, at Beit-El-Ras and later at Nkrumah TTC. Among his students were Fatma Abdullah and Ali Darwish, both of who had also benefited from further studies at Makerere in the late 1950s. Fatma Abdullah returned to teach at Nkrumah TTC from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, when she was appointed as a diplomat to the UK.

In 1988 the Zanzibar Ministry of Culture and Art established the Zanzibar House of Art [ZHA] in co-operation with the Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteers (JOCV). The ZHA, which operated as a school, had 14 local artists and 10 art students. It consists of a gallery and working studio. This development was possibly inspired by the successes of the Nyumba ya Sanaa in Dar es Salaam. Similarly, the House of Art in Zanzibar introduced art training programmes in sculpture, drawing and textile design subjects. Among its teachers were Japanese volunteers who taught ceramics and textile design. There is no information which shows that renowned Zanzibar art scholars such as Abdallah Farahani or Fatma Abdullah inspired the establishment of ZHA. Several practising local artists currently running small visual arts enterprises at the Ngome Kongwe complex in Zanzibar's Stone Town area, benefited from the training offered at the House of Art. The Head of the school, Salum Muchi, claimed that since its establishment, the Zanzibar House of Art's administration experienced many problems, including the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar's lack of political will to develop the visual arts sector, which was evident by the school's frequent financial doldrums, hence its failure to run training activities smoothly.

## **2.4 Party Heroes and Government Victories in Visual Arts during the *Ujamaa* Era**

Throughout its reign the ruling Party, TANU, which from 5 February 1977 became known as CCM—following its fusion with the Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar that year—has always commissioned the creation of commemorative artworks such as monuments, statues and murals in public squares, regional and district offices and in gardens, as well as the Party's buildings and public investments for the purpose of marking and appreciating its successes. Some artworks were purposely produced to commemorate national leaders as heroes for their commendable performance in their service to the country (figs.196 a-b, 197, and 199). This was deemed necessary to continue winning over the people's support and maintaining its stranglehold on to power. In this section, the study will briefly discuss the kinds of artworks produced and present photographs of several artworks produced under this seemingly politically-charged visual arts production which serve dual roles: first, they are artistic productions and second, they seem to serve a political purpose.

### **2.4.1 Nyerere as a Subject in the *Ujamaa* Visual Arts**

The ruling Party leaders and several exceptional public servants were among the dominant themes and subject matters of the *Ujamaa* arts, particularly in music, poetry, and heroic recitations. At different times during the *Ujamaa* period, several artworks were commissioned to appreciate the victories and exceptional performances or contributions of national leaders. Good examples include the Matimila Orchestral Band and Remmy Ongalla's '*Mrema*', a song about Augustino Lyatonga Mrema, the then Minister of Home Affairs, who initiated and administered the Police Force's campaign against corruption which sent many dishonest businessmen, corrupt politicians and unfaithful public servants to prison in the early 1990s. The same song was adapted and improved by Seif Kassim

Kisauji of Babloom Modern Taarab (Askew 2002:228). There were also several dance songs, poetry and other music depicting President Julius Kambarage Nyerere as a national hero who led the country to independence from the British colonialists on 9 December 1961. In the visual arts, popular artworks on the *Ujamaa* leaders came out some years after 1967 but were still too insufficient to inspire a study. Despite the overwhelmingly positive support and high level of the general public's affection for the party and government, similar factors which inspired a plethora of artistic productions in other socialist countries, the situation was a little different in Tanzania. There were several reasons for this aberration.

It is irrefutable that during the *Ujamaa* period, Julius Nyerere appeared to be an exemplary leader in Tanzania and also in neighbouring countries. Several artists embarked on the creation of artworks which were aimed at substantiating his political powers as well as his *Ujamaa* philosophy. Some artworks were however mere appreciative compositions. On several occasions when Nyerere encountered such artworks, he either rejected or prohibited their use, particularly those works which were meant to glorify him. Fadhili Mshana notes two occasions in which President Nyerere refused to allow artistic depictions of him to be installed for public display:

Smith observes that the Dar es Salaam City Council planned to demolish the famed Askari Monument in the commercial district of the city and put up a statue of Nyerere in its place, but Nyerere turned down the idea. In 1988 the University of Dar es Salaam constructed a stand in front of the Assembly Hall, also called Nkrumah Hall, with the view to put his bust on it, but again Nyerere would not accept [it]. The project was abandoned forthwith... (Mshana 2009:200)

Indeed, Penina Mlama, a prominent theatre artist, writer and educator at the University of Dar es Salaam and chair of the Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair at the UDSM said:

*“During one of his last visits in 1980s after his retirement, Mwalimu Nyerere denied the University management his permission to put his bust in the University’s main lecture room, the Nkrumah Hall, in which a cement bust of him was already placed when Nyerere was visiting, on seeing it there he argued that, he was a normal person and does not deserve the attention and personality they would like to give him. He nobly asked the Vice Chancellor to take down the bust from public display and put it in the University of Dar es Salaam’s Council Chamber instead...”* (Personal interview - Penina Mlama 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015)

Confirming Mshana’s (2009) and Mlama’s claims, Mwasasu (1995:177) has since commented:

...It has covered a number of areas ranging from his refusal to have streets and other places named after him to erecting his monuments

There is enormous evidence confirming that President Nyerere did not encourage the creation of artworks that acknowledged or glorified him. In a recent interview series *Faces of Africa*, specifically one titled ‘Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere’, published on YouTube, Jean Pruitt, one of the interviewees and Nyerere’s foreign confidant for visual arts development, confirmed that President Nyerere opposed individualised glorification, especially when artworks about him were created for public display. In another interview conducted in September 2016 on same topic, President Nyerere’s personal secretary, Joseph Butiku<sup>163</sup>, claimed that President Nyerere repeatedly insisted that the citizen should be prepared to believe in the country’s leadership as a team in which countrymen play equal and important roles. However, this could not stop his admirers, colleagues and the majority of Tanzanians, who always looked up to him as an exceptional role model. In their own ways, they glorified him through the arts and literature. Nyerere was and still is referred to by the majority of

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<sup>163</sup>Joseph Butiku is currently working as the Executive Director of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, an institute which the late President Nyerere established to work with upon his retirement from public office in the late 1980s. The foundation spearheads Nyerere’s principles on Good Governance, Peace and Unity in the East African region and beyond.

Tanzanians as ‘*Baba wa Taifa*’, a Kiswahili phrase which means Father of the Nation, or the founder of the nation. In 2006, the Catholic Church of Uganda<sup>164</sup>, while contemplating President Nyerere’s works, legacy and contribution to the liberation struggles of African countries still under colonialism in the southern part of Africa, as well as his efforts to free Uganda from Amin’s dictatorship, initiated a beatification process to canonise him among the African saints who served God through political office. Other socialist countries like Vietnam and China glorify the founders of socialist ideologies and principles, such as Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse Tung. Nevertheless, President Nyerere has not always been hailed as a hero, as in several instances he has been criticised for various reasons:

This is not to say that Nyerere is above reproach; criticisms have been levelled against him and his administration. Given the myriad of problems facing Tanzania, Africa and the world at large, Nyerere has not been an exception to the norm. But unlike many African leaders who preferred to be deified, Nyerere was opposed to a personality cult. A good example is his refusal of public glorification... (Mshana 2009:200)

Throughout his 23 years in office as a president, there were only three known artworks produced with Nyerere as the subject. These three artefacts were portraits (Fig.182) and a bust (Fig.181). The artworks were neither funded by the government nor Nyerere, but out of the artists’ own resources, voluntary spirit and willingness to do so. The portraits were made by Bhupendra Nathubhai Desai and L.M. Patel in 1970. The portraits are among the few precious *Ujamaa* visual art collections on permanent display in the National Museum of

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<sup>164</sup> This is one of the indicators which show how well Nyerere’s proposal to adapt African socialism, *Ujamaa*, based on egalitarian and humanitarian considerations among members of a nation society was perceived in Tanzania and beyond. The process was initiated in Uganda and remains debatable in the Vatican, the headquarters of the Catholic Church. A full article on this issue is available in the following link: <http://www.lastampa.it/2012/12/04/vaticaninsider/eng/inquiries-and-interviews/former-tanzanian-politician-julius-nyerere-could-be-made-a-saint-JM4mqG4gdtkXapoiAMq6GM/pagina.html> Retrieved on 12th May 2016 at FU-Berlin

Tanzania. The bust was executed by Clara Quien, a British sculptress, who was President Nyerere's friend according to Joseph Butiku. Nyerere invited Mrs. Quien. During her visits, Nyerere posed in seven sittings for the bust, which was finalised in 1966 at the State House in Dar es Salaam (Fig.181). Several replicas of the bust were reproduced, some of which are found in various CCM party offices.



**Fig.181 Mrs. Clara Quien during the last sitting for the first bust of President Nyerere ever made,for which he posed at the State House in Dar es Salaam in 1966**  
(Source: <http://rq-art.com/clara-quien-art/portraits/>, accessed on August 2019)

The study has established that more artworks depicting President Nyerere surfaced after his retirement and at the end of the *Ujamaa* policies, that is from 1985 onwards. For examples the 1985 painting by Festo Kijo and John Masanja (Fig.76). This was probably among the early artworks produced immediately after President Nyerere stepped down from power in late 1984. Artworks depicting President Nyerere and other party and government leaders (Fig.197) were continually produced ever since. Although President Nyerere preferred to be addressed as *Mwalimu*, or 'teacher', which was his initial profession before becoming a politician, and sometimes as '*Ndugu*' a Kiswahili word for *comrade* or *fellow countryman*,



his successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi was very fond of honour and personal glorification. Only a few years after he assumed the presidential office, he accepted being called “*Mtukufu*”, or his ‘Highness, President Al Hadj Ali Hassan Mwinyi’ (Fig.129). Until the time this research was conducted in July 2015, more than 10 artworks such as sculptures and paintings of the late President Nyerere, created between 1985 and 2010, were accessible both within and outside Tanzania. These include the busts installed at the park within Makerere University main campus in Kampala, Uganda; the life-size statues at Nyerere Square in the Dodoma Municipality centre and the administration grounds of the Bagamoyo College of Arts (TaSUBa). In addition, there are several portraits on the wall of the CCM headquarters in Dodoma, the busts at Mwl. Nyerere Memorial College at Kivukoni in Dar es Salaam, the Council Chamber at the UDSM, TANAPA headquarters in Arusha, Dar es Salaam’s CCM Regional Office at Lumumba Street, Bagamoyo Sculpture School, Mwl. Nyerere’s Butiama Mausoleum, and at the Oysterbay Police Officers’ Mess in Dar es Salaam.

#### **2.4.1.1 Portraits of President Julius Kambarage Nyerere**



**Fig.182 President Nyerere portraits: From the left, a portrait by Patel L.M. and (right) another by Desai B.N. in 1970**  
(Photograph by researcher at the NMT in Dar es Salaam, September 2015)



**Fig.183 Portraits of President Nyerere at the Mwl. Nyerere Foundation, Dsm**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)

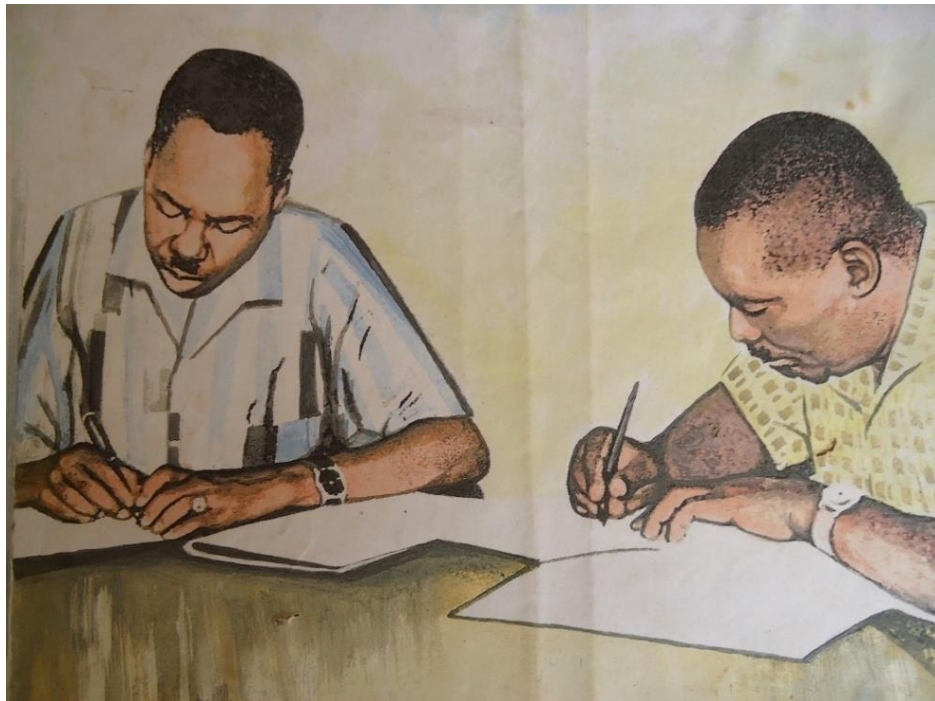
#### **2.4.1.2 Paintings depicting President Julius Kambarage Nyerere**



**Fig.184 A painting of President Nyerere and his advocates during his case in 1957**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)



**Fig. 185 Nyerere in the middle (front row seated), with the first Independent Tanganyika Cabinet in 1961, a water colour painting by unknown artist in the 1990s**  
(Courtesy of the Mwl. Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)



**Fig.186 Presidents, Nyerere and Karume signing the Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union Charter on 26 April 1964, watercolour painting by unknown artist**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)





**Fig.187 A painting of President Nyerere, third from left at a SADC meeting with Samora Machel (of Mozambique), Kenneth Kaunda (of Zambia) and Augustinho Neto (of Angola) in the 1970s**  
(Photograph by researcher, October 2015, at NMT in Dar es Salaam)



**Fig.188 A painting of President Nyerere with his family in the early 1960s at State House (Ikulu) in Dar es Salaam**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)



**Fig.189 A painting of Nyerere with his Mother at Butiama in Mara in the early 1990s**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)



**Fig.190 Visual artist Paul Ndembo shows his portraits of President J.K. Nyerere to Jakaya Kikwete, the retired 4<sup>th</sup> President of Tanzania, at the White House in DSM**  
(Courtesy of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation Dar es Salaam, September 2015)

### 2.4.1.3 Busts and Statues of President Julius Kambarage Nyerere



**Fig.191 President Nyerere's first bust by Clara Quien in 1966 at the Mwl. Nyerere's Mausoleum in Butiama, Mara region**  
(Source: kiabakarispets.blogspot.com, accessed on August 2019)

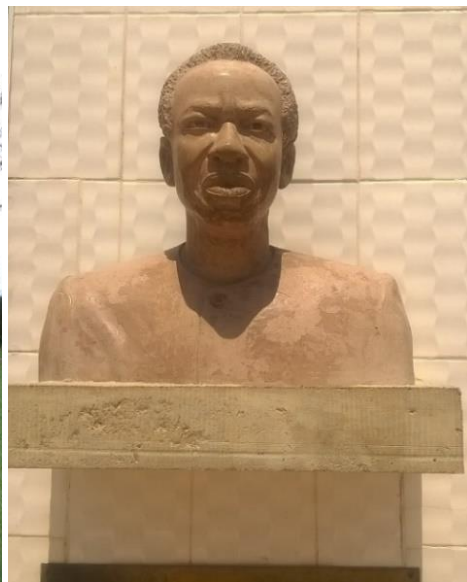


**Fig.192 Left, President Nyerere's bust reproduced from Clara Quien's 1966 model at the Mwl. Nyerere Foundation in Dar es Salaam and right, another bust by an unrecorded artist at the Dar es Salaam CCM regional offices**  
(Photographs by researcher, September 2015)





**Fig.193 President Nyerere’s bust reproduced from Clara Quien’s 1966 as installed at the Oysterbay Police Officers’ Mess in Dar es Salaam**  
(Source: richard-mwaienda.blogspot.com, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.194 Left, President Nyerere’s bust by George Kyeyune at a park in Makerere University and right, another bust installed at Chamwino Town Centre within the Independence Anniversary Monument enclosure**  
(Photographs by researcher in Sept. / Oct. in Kampala-UG and Dodoma-TZ, 2015)

#### 2.4.1.4 Life-size statues of President Julius Kambarage Nyerere



**Fig.195** Left a bronze monumental statue made in North Korea, 2005 at the Nyerere Square in Dodoma, and right, a cement statue by Paul Ndunguru at the Bagamoyo College of Art [TaSUBa], 2002  
(Photographs by researcher, October 2015)

#### 2.4.1.5 Artistic depictions of other Ujamaa Leaders

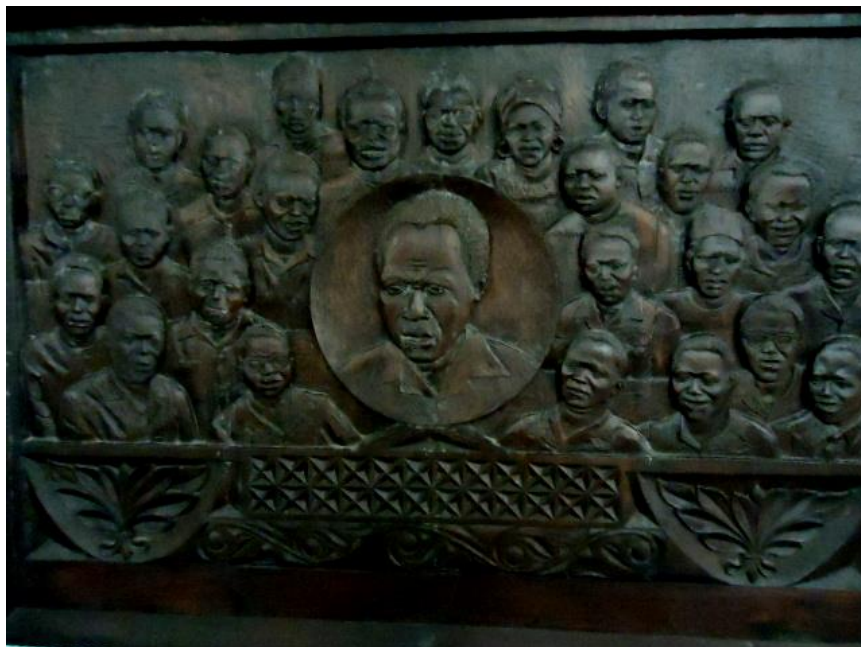


**Fig.196a** Statue of Amani Abeid Karume, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of Tanzania and 1<sup>st</sup> President of Zanzibar, assassinated in the 1972 coup attempt. Left, a monument at Kisiwandui CCM Headquarters and right, one behind Bwawani Hotel in Zanzibar  
(Photographs by researcher, October 2015)





**Fig.196b A mural of Amani Abeid Karume, the assassinated 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of Tanzania and 1<sup>st</sup> President of Zanzibar in a political rally with a huge crowd**  
(Source: gsenko.blogspot.com. Accessed on 2 November, 2016 FU-Berlin)



**Fig.197 President Nyerere at the centre of 25 Regional Commissioners of Tanzania for the 1981-85 period, by Melkior Kasenene A low-relief carving on red wood**  
(Photograph by researcher at National Museum of Tanzania, October 2015)

## **2.5 The 1978-1979 Kagera War as the *Ujamaa* Visual Art Theme**

The Kagera War between Tanzania and Uganda, which began on 9 October 1978 and ended on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1979 is one of the topics that inspired large sculptural art projects in about eight regions of Mainland Tanzania since the 1980s. Among the inspirational factors for artistic creativity and government commissions were the people's support of the government by enrolling as soldiers to fight against Idi Amin's forces and the patriotism<sup>165</sup> which every Tanzanian showed during the war. The war broke out about a month after Idi Amin Dada, a general who overthrew Uganda's elected civilian President, Milton Obote in 1971, invaded Kagera, a north-west region in Tanzania. The invasion was attributable to Idi Amin's dictatorial ambitions to win back Ugandans' support following the effects of an economic crisis which heightened in 1977 and his fierce responses to his critics and opponents who twice attempted to overthrow him.

The war he started against Tanzania was among his attempts to search for scapegoats to blame for the failures of his government. Amin's rule was characterised by violence and injustice which left hundreds of innocent civilians, politicians and human rights activists killed. His rule was opposed by several of his neighbours and the international community, a situation which made the Ugandan economy shrink drastically and fail to recover until the time he fled the country in 1979 after the Tanzanian People's Defence Forces (TPDF) liberated Uganda from his dictatorship. The Kagera war left about 1,500 Tanzanian civilians and about 373 TPDF soldiers dead. As Nyerere fought Amin using internal resources without any external assistance, Tanzania's economy was badly hit, hence adding more problems to

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<sup>165</sup> Tanzania: *Kagera War Enhanced Patriotism among Citizens*, an article by Mangengesa Mdimi, *Daily News*, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011

a recession which struck the country beginning in 1978. Industrial production collapsed; there was extreme shortage of goods and hunger struck many parts of the country as well.

As the country was slowly recovering, the ruling Party, CCM, through the help and supervision of several regional commissioners (RCs), proposed for the installation of life-size sculptures of TPDF soldiers, who won the 1978-79 Kagera War, in selected places countrywide. The project was given an official Kiswahili title, *Kazi Mliyotutuma Tumeimaliza* which translates as Mission Accomplished. The local population calls the statues '*Mnara wa Mashujaa*', or the 'Heroes Monument'. In fact, the sculptures were intended to commemorate the victims of the Kagera war as fallen heroes. At present, the monuments symbolise the victory of the CCM government under President Nyerere's leadership as well as the unity of Tanzanians during those difficult times. Besides the statues project, the TPDF, through the Ministry of Defence, proposed the creation of medals for all those who displayed great patriotism and exceptional performance in their service to the country during the Kagera War. In both projects, only three artists were commissioned. These were Raza Mohamed, Hashim Nakanoga and Abbas Kihago. Raza Mohamed, who worked as a designer and book illustrator at the Institute of Education, was also involved in drawing a weekly comic strip in a government newspaper throughout the time of the Kagera War.

Raza's propaganda comics praised the bravery of TPDF soldiers on the frontline and the victory which Tanzania was about to achieve. His comics attracted attention and instilled courage among many Tanzanian young men who volunteered to join the army. Realising Raza's contribution through artistic propaganda, President Nyerere wrote him a letter and bestowed him with the TPDF's Patriot's Medal. Recently, Raza Mohamed contributed the

letter and medals bestowed upon him by President Nyerere to the Arusha Museum to increase its collection of Kagera War objects on permanent display. Raza Mohamed and Hashim Nakanoga were the artists who designed the medals which, according to Raza, were forged in Russia in 1981. Abbas Kihago, with help from his apprentices, was the sculptor who designed all the TPDF soldiers' monuments in the Kagera, Ruvuma, Pwani (Coast), Mtwara, Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions. Apart from the comics, medals and sculptures, the National Museum of Tanzania preserves a painting by Bruno Mchalla which was created in 1985 and portrays President Nyerere at the frontline with TPDF commanders during the Kagera War (Fig.198). During this study, however, it was established that only a few regions have managed to properly preserve TPDF soldiers' statues as valuable historical objects, while others are slowly suffering from a state of disrepair after suffering damage since their installation.



**Fig.198 Bruno Mchalla's painting portraying President Nyerere at the frontline with TPDF commanders during the Kagera War, 1985**  
(Photograph by researcher, October 2015, at the NMT in Dar es Salaam)

### 2.5.1 Abbas Kihago's TPDF soldiers' statues



**Fig.199 TPDF Soldier Monument at the Mashujaa grounds in Songea, Ruvuma region**  
(Photograph by researcher, November 2015)

### 2.6 Chapter Summary

The *Ujamaa* visual arts emerged and flourished because of the state's administrative and financial patronage, specifically the commissions by the ruling Party TANU/CCM and parastatal organisations. There were a few individuals and private institutions that sponsored productions of a number of artworks. Most artworks were produced based on themes and topics limited to the interpretations of the party and its government while providing little room or no platform for social criticism, even though the works of art (Miller 1975:76). Perhaps this could explain why, throughout the *Ujamaa* period, most of the artworks were designed and executed by a few selected artists who served in various government institutions. The assumption is that this saved the government from criticism by artists who could have used their art to channel their dissatisfactions with the socialist administration

and policies. In fact, the leading *Ujamaa* period artists were formerly Makerere-trained artists, with Sam Ntiro and Elias Jengo involved in most of the commissions by the ruling party as well as parastatal organisations. Because of this trend of the same artists being used in different commissions, the artworks they produced are repetitive in many aspects as well. The present study also found that throughout the *Ujamaa* art period, artworks such as the Makonde sculpture, Tingatinga paintings, and crafts production were promoted and encouraged by the ruling Party (TANU/CCM) and some parastatals, i.e. HANDICO. Low reliefs on monuments, paintings and murals were among the favourite public art genres found in government-financed art projects.

Some critics of the visual art scene in Tanzania during the *Ujamaa* period accused the socialist government of lacking a clear policy for the development of the arts sector and, therefore, allegedly, encouraged chaotic artistic inventions in which one could hardly differentiate a naive production from a professional one. The diversity of commissions stemming from state patronage, mostly the ruling party and parastatals, made the art productions difficult to co-ordinate, hence the disorganisation. Whereas the ruling party encouraged to reach the population through the arts, parastatal organisations were preoccupied with financing artistic creations that helped them advertise the services they provided. This kind of state patronage resulted in what Penina Mloma categorised as a ‘puppet art’, as evidenced by the artists’ productions which embodied the politician’s speeches and parastatal CEO’s marketing slogans. Penina Mloma sarcastically commented on this trend when she analysed the situation in the performing arts produced during the *Ujamaa* period:

This poem was composed at the time of a political campaign urging Tanzanians to work hard to save the country’s tottering economy. One can, however, notice the lack of any deep analysis of the



economic situation of the country at the time. The poet does not discuss, for instance, the causes of the economic problems but concentrates on parroting what the President had said earlier. Parrot art is also prevalent in the popular music heard in dancing halls, over *Radio Tanzania* and at political rallies. Miti and Kahamba discovered that out of 186 songs they identified as political songs from *Radio Tanzania*, 34 were on the Party, 20 on the leadership (mainly on Nyerere) and over 52 on Socialism (mainly Ujamaa Villages, the Arusha Declaration) ... (Mlama 1985:15)

Although Mlama does not directly comment on the visual arts, her analysis is relevant to the types of artworks discussed in the different sections of this chapter. The political influences behind the commissions which culminated in the production of arts discussed in this chapter have in a way clouded individual artists' expressions and evaluations of the actual socio-economic and political situations of the environment in which they produced their artworks. From 1967, when Ujamaa was adopted, until 1985, when its collapse became inevitable, artists recorded more success stories than during any other period. This study found only two artworks which critically commented on famine of the 1970s and early 1980s, which struck the majority of Tanzanians on the mainland. Desai's *Hungry Mouths* (Fig.200) and Likonde's *Poor Family* (Fig.201) portray the desperate conditions of the people during *Ujamaa* in their artworks, whereas the stories as reported in the mainstream media were quite to the contrary. On the whole, the *Ujamaa* policies had several setbacks which were never portrayed through Tanzania's visual arts. In her comment on this situation during an interview for this study, Penina Mlama argued that most of the prominent Tanzanian artists were her colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam and avoided the struggles of the people as topics in their productions. She further pointed out that they stuck to their training and only followed their own world's imagination and forgot that art could be used to protest when the government failed to do the right thing. Mlama believes that unlike visual artists, the performing artists

through their poems, songs, music and drama played their roles well by using their artworks to criticise the government and unveil social injustices during the *Ujamaa* period.

A closer look at the present condition of most of the artworks created during the *Ujamaa* period suggests that there is no specific authority which is fully responsible for the conservation of the artworks. Many artworks have not been properly preserved for the continuity of the country's history of the arts of the *Ujamaa* period. Consequently, numerous artworks have dilapidated due to lack of conservation and improper record keeping systems as well. A typical example includes the Kariakoo Market's *Ujamaa* murals by Sam Ntiro in 1973, which were wiped off in Dar es Salaam in the early 2000s, and the unmaintained TPDF soldiers' monuments at the Bukoba and Moshi Mashujaa (heroes') grounds. Also, a container full of stucco portico slabs created by George Lilanga was recently seized at the Dar es Salaam port en route to Germany in a botched smuggling attempt. All these shortcomings attest to how unprotected the remains of the *Ujamaa* artworks are. This however, had not been the focus of this research. The general view is that since the introduction of multi-party politics and the adoption of neo-liberalism, CCM and its government, as well as parastatal organisations which had historically influenced the production of almost all major artworks for public display, have lost interest in continuing commissioning artworks and ensuring their protection for posterity. The population of Tanzanians seems to be ignorant of the artistic developments as well as the presence of historical artworks in their midst, hence the public irresponsibility that has reared its ugly head in the safeguarding of these public artefacts. A general impression here indicates the lack of knowledge which has caused all of these problems threatening invaluable visual arts in Tanzania:

...It is always the architects who advise their clients to include murals on the buildings. The parastatal heads themselves seldom take any



interest in artworks. This is to be expected because aesthetic education had a shaky foundation since colonial days. Colonial rule everywhere showed little or no tolerance for other peoples' expressive aspects of culture such as the visual arts. This legacy seems to have been carried on by national educational planners and curriculum developers because the nation lacks a clear socialist policy on the arts (Jengo 1985:6)

It is therefore observed that if no deliberate measures are taken to increase the public awareness of the meaning and significance of *Ujamaa* period artworks, which are in various places and in many parts of Tanzania, they might all perish, since the number of newly-installed artworks is far smaller than of those which are about to disappear. It has been 34 years since the last major governmental publication to increase the general public's knowledge on visual arts practices was published. This was a book in Kiswahili, known as *Falsafa ya Sanaa Tanzania*, published in 1982 following the *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo*, published in 1979. There have not been any other publications or guidelines which are strategically prepared to address issues pertaining to the visual arts sector in relation to public or rather audience's responsibilities. A few scholars in theatre arts and music have written occasional papers and dissertations on the challenges in their fields, but not necessarily engaging the society as a whole.

Nevertheless, the *Ujamaa* period is the only epoch in which the visual arts were highly produced and promoted on public platforms throughout Tanzania. This was the only period in Tanzania when the government played an active role as the cultural producer. Before the present study, the *Ujamaa* visual arts were never sufficiently researched. For example, the most recent publication by Fadhili Mshana has inadequately accounted for the *Ujamaa* visual arts. The author has provided insufficient evidence for sculpture arts which were produced in line with the *Ujamaa* ideologies, probably because his objectives were confined to

researching the wooden carvings by the *Wazaramo*. Fadhili Mshana's scarcity of works to account for the *Ujamaa* visual arts is found in this comment:

In any case, during this period of Tanzania's social and cultural transformation, art symbols that survived and were utilized include the *kifimbo* which Nyerere carried (Mshana 2009:25)

Unlike Mshana, the present study finds the *kifimbo*'s (symbolic baton) claim to be invalid as an artistic symbol in relation to *Ujamaa* visual arts politics, as it has never attracted anyone's attention as a piece of art. As it has been explained in this study, *Ujamaa* visual art forms and content were very closely linked to socialist politics rather than to local beliefs, which Mshana has associated with his findings regarding President Nyerere's use of the said 'kifimbo'.



**Fig.200 *Hungry Mouths* by B.N. Desai, 1970s, at the NMT in Dar es Salaam**  
(Photograph by researcher, NMT in Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



**Fig.201 *Poor Family* by Henry Likonde, 1983**  
(Maryknoll Sisters Collection, SU art Gallery Exhibition 2013, accessed August 2019)

## Chapter Three

### **The Visual Arts of the Neo-Liberal Economy Era in Tanzania 1985 to 2015**

*“Political and economic developments had repercussions with regard to art”* Agthe, J. 1990

This chapter presents and explains the transition of artistic practices and art promotion institutions from the *Ujamaa* period under state-control to neo-liberal or free market control. It is also structured to expose new practices and diverse aspects of visual art productions and promotion during the Neo-Liberal Economy period, as inspired by private and international organisations dedicated to cultural promotion in Tanzania. The chapter is, therefore, divided into three main sections. These are *The Advent of Visual Arts in the Neo-Liberal Era from 1985 to the 1990s; the Private Sector and the Visual Arts Development since 1985; and International Cultural Agencies and the Promotion of Contemporary Art Forms in Tanzania*. These sections present and describe the role played by public and private agencies in the production and promotion of visual arts in line with neo-liberal economic policies.

#### **3.1 The Advent of Visual Arts in the Neo-Liberal Era from 1985 to the 1990s**

The new visual arts that reflected neo-liberal economic characteristics in Tanzania emerged haphazardly following an impromptu and unceremonious desertion of *Ujamaa* cultural development programmes after the mid-1980s. During this period, artworks were packaged with themes and ideas which displayed untamed artistic freedoms<sup>166</sup>. Diversity in art media usage and increased influences from Western art traditions and techniques in Tanzania emerged during President Ali Hassan Mwinyi’s government, which ended Julius Kambarage

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<sup>166</sup> Increasing artistic freedoms, which involve the breaking of traditional art principles as an indicator of rising of new artistic practices (as influenced by new economic characteristics) is addressed by Elias Jengo in his article titled *Tanzania Traditional Music Instruments through the Eyes of an Artist*, in which he appreciates artworks by Marc Sawaya, Readings in Ethnomusicology: A Collection of Papers Presented at Ethnomusicology Symposium 2013, Dar es Salaam, FPA-UDSM 2013, p.71-79

Nyerere's 24-year reign on 5 November 1985. The new economic and political practices adopted by President Mwinyi's government influenced the alteration of the cultural development policy that Nyerere's administration had set and promoted for two decades. Although in an impulsive manner, it is sufficient to claim that the new Mwinyi's regime lifted the curtain of new artistic productions that contained the neo-liberal economic characteristics such as "*commoditisation*"<sup>167</sup>. To some extent, Mwinyi government's lenient measures on cultural promotion contributed a great deal to the transformation from socialist to neoliberal artistic practices. Nonetheless, new policies such as privatisation, free market transactions coupled with multi-party politics, which Mwinyi's government adopted under the instigation of the Breton Woods—World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) brought Tanzania many changes inspired by neo-liberalism, which gradually replaced previous *Ujamaa* systems in many aspects of Tanzanian life. President Mwinyi promoted the liberalisation of morals, beliefs, and values in social, cultural, political and economic aspects of daily life. His style of leadership advocated for a high level of freedom and 'friendliness' in the handling of official matters, contrary to the conformist *Ujamaa* style, a practice which earned him a nickname "*Mzee Ruksa*", or the "*man who allows everything*". All these measures also provided fertile ground for neo-liberal artistic genres to emerge uninterrupted despite criticism from local art and culture experts, who constantly attempted to remind the government to link the new economic and political system(s) with local culture promotion and development<sup>168</sup>. Unlike the *Ujamaa* visual arts, which, in most instances, were created

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<sup>167</sup> See Kasfir 1999, pp.105-111, Askew 2002, pp.285-88, and Mshana 2009, pp.79-83

<sup>168</sup> In 1985, the early criticism of the cultural policy discrepancies was addressed through two publications by local elites in Tanzania. These were Penina Mlamba's *Tanzania's Cultural Policy and its Implications for the Contribution of the Arts to Socialist Development* and Elias Jengo's *Towards a National Cultural Policy for the Promotion of Art in Tanzania*. Both papers appealed to the government's review of the national culture policy

to complement the activities of the ruling Party and promote African socialism as propagated by Nyerere's government, visual arts during the neo-liberal period took a completely different turn in their content and form. During this period, the national cultural identity agenda was ignored in the process of fostering new cultural productions.

A close review of the modern and contemporary art transformations taking place in Tanzania during this study suggests that most artworks produced after the 1980s were inspired by numerous factors, but economic interest overrode all other factors<sup>169</sup>. Current studies attempt to link cultural production with the nature of economic and political systems in the country (Agthe 1990:76). The advent of neo-liberal economic activities in Tanzania also opened up domestic and international marketing opportunities for producers from different sectors. However, the opportunity for encouraging the production of artworks reflecting the neo-liberal economic characteristics such as consumerism and commodification in both form and content in Tanzania was seized upon and tapped with the help of the Western cultural development partners such as the Goethe Institute, Alliance Française and the British Council, to mention but a few<sup>170</sup>. Only a few private local enterprises existing at that time collected modern and contemporary visual arts to sell outside Tanzania. The activities of the Karibu Art Gallery (KAG), whose business boomed since the advent of neo-liberal economic policies in the 1980s exemplifies this process. During this period, the gallery extended its market to Kenya, Uganda, Germany, the US, and Japan.

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to reform it as well as define it in accordance with the real situation in the people's daily lives, as shaped by different aspects of life during the neo-liberal economic era.

<sup>169</sup>See, Standing, K.: Scoping the Visual Arts Scene in East Africa, British Council, London 2013, p.22

<sup>170</sup> See, Agthe, J. 1990, p. 75. Also, Wendl, T.: Neo-liberalism and Contemporary Art in Africa (Image: Batoul S'Himi) – Berlin HKW - November 2015, pp.5-7. Unpublished paper

According to Origenes Uiso, the owner and managing director of the KAG, his business provided the only reliable alternative to patronage for the majority of small-scale dealers and artists, who had nowhere to sell their products after the closure of HANDICO and other State visual art dealers such as the Tanzania Crafts Council in the mid-1990s. The artists, as producers who earned very little from their artworks before, seized the opportunities presented by free market players such as the KAG and new others, so they produced artworks for commercial purposes<sup>171</sup> in response to the market demands within East African countries and beyond. In an interview, Penina Mloma, the current chairperson of the National Arts Council of Tanzania, affirmed that such freedoms in artistic creativity and production were, to some extent, limited during the *Ujamaa* Era, a period characterised by strict censorship of cultural productions. Several indicators pointing to transformations in art production confirm this view. In fact, the new artworks lacked original thought and valid social comment;<sup>172</sup> instead, they assumed popular aesthetic values to suit audience needs for souvenir and décor objects. The highly-celebrated artworks of a young contemporary painter, Tobias Minzi,<sup>173</sup> serve as a good example of this claim. Minzi's panoramic figurative landscapes are usually reproductions of photographic works<sup>174</sup> such as wildlife scenes and seascapes picked from post-cards and tourism directories (Figs. 202 and 203). His compositions are based on copying from nature and portraying it as “*exotic*” moments<sup>175</sup>. Minzi's paintings, of mostly

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<sup>171</sup> See, Wembah-Rashid 1979, p.8-16

<sup>172</sup> Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield; *Contemporary African Art*, London 1999, p.14

<sup>173</sup> Mwafrika Merinyo's “*Tobias Minzi Hyperrealism Paintings*” article published on the *What is Happening in Dar* (2015), a monthly advertising magazine

<sup>174</sup> A renowned painting of Minzi's portraying wildebeests crossing the Mara river is held up in Merinyo's article as an exemplary master work was fetched from Barcroft Media photo series of 2011. The same work is reproduced by Minzi's colleague, David Kyando, who works with him in their Kamwibastudio, which is established within the Nafasi Art Space premises in Dar es Salaam, See Gosciny, Y. and Jengo, E. *A Concise Study on Contemporary Art in Tanzania*, Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania 2016, p.95

<sup>175</sup> See Standing 2013, p.22

wildlife or figurative landscape(s), are so highly detailed that they suggest that he intends to emulate the camera. His artwork hardly comments on the real life challenges<sup>176</sup> of the teeming numbers of street-children, corruption, gender-based violence (GBV), armed robbery or prostitution, the kind of subject matter which would serve as a platform for commenting on social issues occurring in his familiar surroundings. However, in recent years he has produced some paintings on the maltreatment of urban children. Tobias Minzi's fame caught the attention of some art lovers within Tanzania and abroad when his work *Sign Writers* made the cover page of *Africa Now* and poster forum for contemporary African art exhibition displayed in several European countries in 2008<sup>177</sup>. Diana Kamara's study, *In Search of Identity in Contemporary Painting of Tanzania: A Study of Art in the Life of Thobias Marco Minzi* summarises the nature of topics tackled in most of Minzi's productions in the following extract:

Minzi covers quite a variety of subject matter in his paintings. His collection includes human life such as portraits (Plate 13) and daily activities (Plate 14). He has also been painting wildlife scenes and moments (Plate 15 and 16). Minzi is fond of seascapes and human activities at the beach (Plate 17), Kamara (2014:40)

Similar to his reproductions through painting, thousands of uncritical sculptural products such the *Maasai* warrior figurines and life-size statues by Wamakonde carvers (Fig.204) flooded curio shop shelves intended for tourists in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Moshi, and Zanzibar areas. A comment by a local art lover posted on the How Africa.com BlogSpot on 19 August 2015 aptly summarised the situation:

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<sup>176</sup>"Occasionally, Minzi paints in a semi-abstract style. His work hardly reaches the extreme of total abstraction because his works still show recognisable and yet stylised objects, natural and human features (Plate 5). Minzi developed this style in Dar es Salaam although he could not provide the exact dates. His former works are only realistic paintings," Kamara 2014, p.32

<sup>177</sup>Kamara 2014, p.55



Two weeks ago, while walking through the Mwenge artisan Market in Dar es Salaam, I was saddened by the uniformity of art displayed in hundreds or more stalls available at the market; carvings and paintings made to attract tourists who want to carry a little bit of the Tanzania they liked to look at with them—big five animals, Maasai women carrying pots on their heads, and Maasai men with brilliant red sheets draped on their shoulders, swallowed by a beautiful orange sunset. The same kind of art is seen in Bagamoyo, Arusha, and Zanzibar.<sup>178</sup>

Another indicator which attests to art being a commodity or an economic activity is presented by a recent local research report<sup>179</sup>. The researcher claims that there has been an unusual increase in non-artistic people getting involved in art production, particularly in crafts production, a trend suggesting that art production has morphed into an entrepreneurial opportunity for the jobless regardless of how ill-qualified they were as artists. Nevertheless, an increase in the demand for crafts and art products as commercial goods for the growing market has inspired mass and over-production, which subsequently affected the quality of productions. However, the advent of a market economy in Tanzania had both positive and negative effects on artistic production and promotion. These indicators imply that since the 1980s, art production and promotional activities in Tanzania took a commercial turn by opening up the art sector as a virgin avenue for the jobless to rescue themselves from a critical unemployment problem regardless of artistic requirements such as talent or acquired skills needed to produce artworks. On the contrary, the artistic productions sponsored by international cultural agencies such as the Goethe Institute, Alliance Française, Russian Cultural Centre and the Swiss Embassy since the mid-1990s reveal a revival of proper art productions as such patronage revived and encouraged artistic freedoms and novel creativity.

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<sup>178</sup> See, <http://howafrica.com/is-tanzanias-amazing-tinga-tinga-style-of-paintings-still-trending/> Accessed on 14th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>179</sup> Makukula, D. *The Artistic Inspiration among Contemporary Makonde Sculptors*, Bagamoyo College of Art 2005, Unpublished Diploma dissertation.

In fact, most of the commissioned art projects provided the artist with finances to work freely on burning societal issues such as political corruption or poaching (see, figs.238 and 239). Such works are hard to produce when artists are limited to producing artworks for sale. The development of visual arts reflecting neo-liberal economic characteristics of production in Tanzania is detailed in the subsequent sections of this chapter.



**Fig.202 Ferry by Tobias Marco Minzi 2012**  
(Courtesy of Tobias Minzi Gallery)



**Fig.203 Untitled by Tobias Marco Minzi 2012**  
(Courtesy of Tobias Minzi Gallery)



**Fig.204 The Maasai Warriors figurines by an unknown artist**  
(howafrica.com/, accessed on August 2019)

As stipulated in the World Bank and IMF-derived SAPs<sup>180</sup>, the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies to rescue Tanzania's sinking economy was intended to completely replace the *Ujamaa* policy template, which was perceived to be incompatible with the neo-liberal economic systems. This sudden shift in policy affected both the short and long-term cultural development programmes in art production and promotion by the state. The concentration on the production of crafts as commodities for sale was one of the major impacts of these vicissitudes. The shift in art production objectives also helps to explain the emergence of new market places for the visual arts<sup>181</sup>. The Mwenge Makonde Art and Crafts Centre

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<sup>180</sup> 1.3 THE ORIGIN OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA FROM 1986

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) started in 1986 and were welcomed by the new political leader; it is when Ali Hassan Mwinyi became president after 24 years of the rule of Mwl. Julius K. Nyerere. The new government then adopted a three-year ERP (1987/88-1989/90, the main objective of the ERP was to increase growth rate per capita income and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) target growth of 4.5% in addition to reducing inflation below 10%... <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/economics/structural-adjustment-programs-in-developing-countries-economics-essay.php>. Retrieved on, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2017-FU Berlin Library, Germany

<sup>181</sup> "...As a result of steady economic decline Tanzania's art has lost much of its importance, and many Tanzanian artists live abroad. Tanzania was the centre of two branches of popular art which have developed into much-coveted "market art..." (Agthe 1990:76)

(Fig.205) and the Morogoro Stores' Tingatinga paintings shops (Fig.206) in Dar es Salaam, the Stone Town Arts and Crafts' pavilions at the *Ngome Kongwe* in Zanzibar, as well as the Maasai Crafts Market in Arusha attest to the rising profile of visual art production in Tanzania from 1985 onwards. Ever since, these new visual arts outlets have hosted trade fairs, exhibitions, and festivals in which art exchange is the main activity. The adoption of neo-liberal economic policies in the post-*Ujamaa* period also introduced the notion of financial capital, or money as an indispensable requirement for productivity in all development activities. During this period, traders or businessmen emerged as a new group of economic producers in neo-liberal Tanzania. All these developments also signal a complete replacement of *Ujamaa* as a socio-economic system, in which peasants and workers appear to be the only economic producers. The adoption of neo-liberal policies also strongly went against the founding principles of *Ujamaa*, which state that “*money is not the main prerequisite for development activities*”<sup>182</sup>. Art production and promotion were not left out of this new economic system, which demanded that “*money must be spent to make money*”<sup>183</sup>. In fact, a popular 1990s Kiswahili slogan “*Hapendwi Mtu, bali Pochi yako tu*” or “*Nothing Matters not even Man but his Wallet*”<sup>184</sup> attests to these transformations.

Under such a system, artists needed money to buy essential supplies to produce their art. Thus, ‘Making money’ became a driving force for artists and other personnel in the visual art production sector to survive in this system. The later-detected falling standards in artistic products also increased the recasting and replication of popular Tanzanian modern art genres

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<sup>182</sup> See Nyerere 1967, pp.10-11

<sup>183</sup> Otiso, Kefa; Culture and Customs of Tanzania, New York 2013, p. 105-107

<sup>184</sup> This slogan is very important to explain the social aspect of transformations taking place from *Ujamaa* to neo-liberalism in Tanzania for its contradiction to Nyerere's *Ujamaa* ideology in the speech titled “*The Purpose is Man*”, (Nyerere 1971)

as commodities. Genres such as the Tingatinga paintings, as well as the master Makonde sculpture genres, e.g. the *Shetani* figures and *Ujamaa* poles became mere décor and souvenirs filling art curios and gallery shelves. This trend serves as another clear indicator that artworks were primarily created for sale. These transformations of artistic practice from *Ujamaa* to neo-liberal characteristics complicate the view of economically-inspired productions as either commodities or artworks. The majority of Tanzanians with little knowledge of the arts could not question what was happening to their visual art which, second to the Kiswahili language, is one of the central components of national culture.

Until current research, there were neither local publications nor state reviews to explain clearly these changes and the implication for visual arts development in Tanzania. Sidney Kasfir's *Contemporary African Arts* sheds some light on the emerging debate on these visual arts transformations in Tanzania. She extensively discusses contemporary art production as an economic activity during a neo-liberal economic era. She provides different case studies conducted in Africa, with Tanzania included<sup>185</sup>, to expose the complicated exchange systems involving contemporary African art products, its producers, promoters, and audiences worldwide<sup>186</sup>. At the end, she leaves the question to the producers and consumers of contemporary art to decide by themselves on the suitable answer<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>185</sup> Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield; *Contemporary African Art*, London 1999, pp.109-112

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*, pp.102-123

<sup>187</sup> *ibid*, p.105





**Fig.205 A section of the Mwenge Makonde Arts and Crafts market in Dar es Salaam**  
 (Source: tripadvisor.co.za, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.206 Some Tingatinga Art shops at the Morogoro Stores in Dar es Salaam**  
 (Source: tripadvisor.co.za, accessed on 2019)

Conversely, changes in the objectives of the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO)<sup>188</sup>, a government parastatal created in 1973 to facilitate and promote the entrepreneurial base of small and creative industries, indicates that the days of *Ujamaa* visual arts production as a socio-economic system were over<sup>189</sup>. As appendages of the National

<sup>188</sup>Ishengoma, Esther Kokunywanisa, *Firms Resources as Determinants of Manufacturing Efficiency in Tanzania: Managerial and Econometric Approach*, LIT VERLAG Münster 2005, p.9

<sup>189</sup>ibid, p.10

Development Corporation (NDC)<sup>190</sup>, SIDO and HANDICO, these artistic productions were sometimes linked. It was through SIDO that technical and financial support was organized and provided to HANDICO and other creative industries in the public sector. In the 1990s, SIDO's priority was given to the productive economic sectors, with its main focus directed towards inspiring domestic business and market development. The visual arts sector, which then heavily depended on tourist markets<sup>191</sup> and export, was moderately side-lined from SIDO's beneficiaries' list. For a while, Tanzania has experienced a low local market base for cultural production such as the Makonde sculpture<sup>192</sup> and other artworks, i.e. paintings. Therefore, beginning in the 1990s, the task of inspiring visual arts production and promotion fell in the hands of the Board of External Trade (BET), a non-income generating parastatal under the Ministry of Trade and Industries. Ever since, the BET operations, which were mainly to provide exporters with marketing opportunities and external trade information services, transformed the visual arts, particularly handicrafts, into commercial goods for export and necessitated its inevitable change from *Ujamaa* cultural iconographies to neo-liberal cultural commodities:

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<sup>190</sup>Ibid, p.9

<sup>191</sup> For example, the flourishing neo-liberal art scene in Kenya had long-before commercialised art production and tightly integrated it into the tourism sector. All small and big established art enterprises such as curio shops, art spaces, galleries, and museums are connected to lucrative creative industries' channels, which are closely linked to the booming Kenyan cultural tourism and leisure businesses. Such a good organisation of activities has made it possible for artists and art promoters to earn a living through art enterprises which simultaneously generated revenues and foreign exchange for the government. Unlike their counterparts in Kenya, similar creative enterprises existing in Tanzania for almost three decades were politically established and maintained with very little state sponsorship. Through some parastatal organisations' commissions and later organized cooperatives' production systems (see, the *Ujamaa* Art Patronage in Chapter Two), only a few visual art genres have been promoted to some extent. There were no clearly established interdependent links between visual art producers and other related sectors' activities such as tourism industries. This and many other art sectors' structural flaws left the art production, promotion and distribution channels such as curios, galleries and museums that constitute the creative industry sector largely underdeveloped and dependent on the government's programmes. The revenues generated from the arts sector were continuously small and never attracted serious state investment as it was in the booming mining, trade and communication sectors.

<sup>192</sup>The *EastAfrican*, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, "Why Tanzanian Artists are not celebrated at home"

BET has identified handicrafts as one of the six priority non-traditional sectors for development after Horticulture, Spices, Textile and Garments, Fish and Fish Products and Gemstones (Kianza 2005:6)

All these indicators, scenarios, and other cases presented here reveal the transformation of the state's administration of the production and promotion of visual arts in the country during the transition between the *Ujamaa* and neo-liberal economies.

### **3.1.1 The Government Abandons its Role in Cultural Production**

Perhaps the initiation of the Neo-Liberal Visual Art Period in Tanzania is symbolised by the 1996 privatisation of the Tanzania Handicraft Marketing Corporation (HANDICO), previously known as the National Art of Tanzania Company Limited (NAT). This was the state's biggest arts production and promotion company established during the *Ujamaa* Period (see Chapter Two, p.190). As already noted, since the government's withdrawal from active participation in the production and marketing of art and handicraft products which comprised almost 90 percent of the state's promoted artworks, the local patronage of visual art has been chaotic, complicated and unreliable. Ever since, there has been no clear governmental policy for the development and promotion of the handicraft industry in Tanzania<sup>193</sup>. Prior to its liquidation, HANDICO used to supply its huge clientele of artists with raw materials, worktools, and working spaces to engage in full-time production activities. Under such a patron-artist relationship, an artist did not need to worry about financial capital to engage in production; instead, the artist relied on his talent and abilities to produce compelling artworks, as already explained in Chapter Two, p.302. However, the effects of the 1980s economic crisis, which greatly impacted on the HANDICO's business as well, brought about

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<sup>193</sup>Kianza, Nola, *Report of Handicraft Mission to Tanzania*, Nesa Technologies Corp. 2005, p.14



the company critical financial problems due to low sales and a drastic drop in demand from the domestic and overseas markets. HANDICO, which directly employed more than 105<sup>194</sup> personnel as artists and administrative staff with 300 more freelance artists supplying it with art products from all over the country, operated with huge recurrent losses.

Eventually, HANDICO could no longer meet its administrative costs. This was one of the main reasons behind its inevitable transfer to private management. Yet, even the new investor, the Mikono Handicraft Marketing Company (MHMC) Limited, did not maintain HANDICO's systems, which employed many artisans. Only a few managerial members of staff and artists were retained to continue working with the MHMC. Even the only National Art Gallery (NATG) presented in Fig.132 was closed and its space transformed into a showroom for Mikono products and marketing offices. The majority of artists detached themselves from HANDICO and shifted to small arts and crafts enterprises as freelance artists and art dealers both within and outside Tanzania. This also explains the origin of several of the Wamakonde and the Wazaramo carvers' workshops scattered all over the outskirts of Dar es Salaam beginning in the 1990s.

### **3.2 Shrinking State's Administrative Patronage of the Visual Arts**

Throughout the independence and the *Ujamaa* periods, the Tanzania government played a crucial role in cultural production and promotional activities. This study's first two chapters described how and why various public institutions have, on different occasions, provided administrative and financial patronage for visual arts production and promotion nationwide. The present research results reveal that with the advent of neo-liberal economic systems, the

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<sup>194</sup> Miller, Judith von. D, Art in East Africa, 1975 pp.44-45

Tanzania government has reduced its funding for cultural promotion and administration. The State's arts and cultural development bodies, such as the Department of Arts and Culture within the ministry responsible for co-ordinating arts production and promotional activities in the public sector were badly affected from 1985 onwards. It was also established that by reducing financial support to its cultural administrative offices, the government automatically withdrew from its role as national arts and culture promoter without leaving any sustainable substitute in place. Askew (2005:304) surmises that state agencies responsible for the promotion and development of the visual arts sector during the early years of the neo-liberal economy period, such as the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth and Sports and the CCM through its National Executive Committee were completely affected.

At the ministerial level, arts production and promotion were administered by the Division of Culture under a specific director, who co-ordinated its activities with both state and private partners such as the artists, artist's associations/societies/organisations, investors i.e. the gallery owners, the Bagamoyo College of Arts, and the Butimba Teachers' Training College. Under the minister, the Division of Culture was also responsible for soliciting supplementary funds through aid and grants from donors and other development partners from abroad so that it could help realise cultural development projects<sup>195</sup> in the public sector. An interview with its former director, Dr. Daniel Ndagala, confirmed that before and during his tenure as director, the Division of Culture had never had the sufficient budget for the smooth running of its day-to-day activities.

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<sup>195</sup> See Pruitt (2013), the Nyumba ya Sanaa initiative was realised through arrangements between President Nyerere and his Scandinavian development partners. See the Nyumba ya Sanaa sub-section in Chapter Two of this study

For CCM, the ruling party, most of its cultural promotional projects were realised alongside those by the Division of Culture within the ministry. CCM's National Executive Committee role ensured that state machinery executed its political will in the implementation of national cultural policy through the realisation of envisioned cultural promotional and developmental projects. In other words, CCM indirectly supervised all the government operations because forming a government and administering its operation is legally accepted as a primary obligation of the ruling party. The relationship between the ruling party, CCM, and the state agencies responsible for cultural development in different periods has been either understudied or complicated, hence the many discrepancies<sup>196</sup> in understanding the roles and purposes of CCM and the Division of Culture as agencies which were closely linked and involved in the creation and promotion of a Tanzanian national culture. CCM has occasionally organised some art production projects independently to disseminate its political propaganda and in many instances it has achieved that through the Division of Culture or the Department of Arts and Culture's activities at the ministry. This happened whenever there were nation-wide development campaigns that involved the arts as media.

On the other hand, CCM could not do much when the Art and Culture Department's activities were derailed due to constant reallocations in the search for a proper place/ministry in which it could fit and work conveniently. According to Askew (2002), when the transformations towards neo-liberal policies started in 1985, the Art Department was placed under the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, Youth, and Sports whereas in 1988 it was moved to the Ministry of Labour, Culture, and Social Welfare. In 1991, it was put under the

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<sup>196</sup> Kelly Askew's arguments in *A New Mode of Cultural Production* pp. 284-285 in *Tanzania National Culture in the Age of privatization and Political Pluralism* in her book *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Also see, Askew (2005:305)

Ministry of Education and Culture, where it operated until 2005. These constant reallocations were also intended to cut expenses in the cultural promotion sector, which were at that time regarded as a non-productive and “unnecessary” burden on the national development budget.

When closely observed, there is no single narrative to explain consistently the collapse of the public sector’s administrative patronage of the visual arts. Many reasons associated with problems facing the Division of Culture can be briefly discussed. The 1970s socio-political and economic predicaments within the East African region affected many development plans in Tanzania. The 1978-79 Kagera War between Tanzania and Uganda<sup>197</sup> disrupted good relations between the two countries, which had co-established several cultural exchanges and development projects in the region. Tanzania used to send its artists and cultural activity managers to train at the Makerere University in Uganda and the latter sent its theater artists to train at the University of Dar es Salaam. However, since the conflict began in 1971, so much between the two countries stopped and collapsed. This meant that issues related to the shortage of qualified personnel such as artists, art teachers and cultural production managers remained unresolved. Moreover, Kenya’s intention to withdraw from the East African Community due to what was perceived as Tanzania’s strict socialist-induced tariffs and many other related economic misunderstandings fuelled the slowly-burning fire of ideological differences regarding economic co-operation<sup>198</sup>. Tanzania’s exports, which were already

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<sup>197</sup> The Kagera War of 1978/79 was the main cause for the shortage of funds and change of government plans towards general development in the country from 1980 onwards. Tanzania, which was struggling economically, used internal resources to fight against Idi Amin, drained its little reserve. This forced the government to identify carefully its development priorities with attention primarily given to the economic sector instead of arts promotion and developments. President Ali Hassan Mwinyi’s vision from 1985 onwards was to bring back the crippled country’s economy instead of promoting national identity through cultural production, as it was throughout President Nyerere’s tenure.

<sup>198</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304824716\\_The\\_Challenges\\_of\\_Regional\\_Integration\\_in\\_the\\_East\\_Africa\\_Community](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304824716_The_Challenges_of_Regional_Integration_in_the_East_Africa_Community), accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

sanctioned by Germany and the UK, due to its adoption of socialist policies in 1967, were also losing markets to neighbouring Kenya and Uganda as a result of the collapse of its flourishing agricultural and industrial sectors. In addition, the Tanzania government faced critical financial shortages and had an insufficient budget supply for smooth governance and execution of development programmes as Samuel Wangwe explains:

Towards the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s Tanzania experienced a deep economic crisis in which major macroeconomic variables were out of balance. Inflation was high at around 30%, the budget was in deficit, the balance of payments was in deficit, shortage of goods was widespread and the productive capacities were underutilized following shortages of foreign exchange to finance imported inputs. The crisis meant that growth declined and the capacity to implement the basic social services and various anti-poverty programmes had been eroded considerably. In the absence of growth, basic social services such as education, health and water and sanitation could not be sustained. As a result, access to these services and quality of the services declined (Wangwe 2005:12)

Wangwe (2005) describes a general situation in Tanzania's government budget during the transition from the *Ujamaa* to the neo-liberal economy. Henry Likonde's work titled "*Father is Helping*" in Pruitt (2013:76) and "*A Poor Family*" (Fig.201) in Chapter Two, sums up Wangwe's description. Likonde's drawing from 1984 was perhaps his artistic depiction of the situation in Mtwara, a southern region of Tanzania which was badly stricken by hunger at the time. In this simple polychromatic drawing, Likonde depicts a destitute father, which in this context can be referred to as the government leader of Tanzania, salvaging pieces of cassava to provide food to his family. The wife, who is depicted as unhealthy and sad, reflects the situation of the majority, which was in despair due to overwhelming poverty which has consumed the family (the country) and left it in an unbearable famine. The torn, falling walls of the mud house in the background and the exposed ribs of desperate family members all

converge to depict poverty at a very critical stage. Askew makes the following observation on the consequences of Tanzania's economic crisis:

In July 1998, I interviewed Emmanuel Mollel, then Acting Director of Arts and Language. In a conversation that meandered around the cessation of arts competitions, the laying off of cultural district officers, and the virtual elimination of regional cultural officers (each region is now allocated one cultural officer – a significant drop from the original five or more), a word that cropped up again and again was *ukata* or 'lack of funds'. 'The government's arm', explained Mollel, 'has shortened' (Askew 2005:312).

This extract shows how financial deficiency due to reduced government funding affected the Culture Division's capacity to administer and promote cultural production. Several attempts to rescue cultural production in the public sector from its critical financial problems met a dead-end. During the enactment of the National Lotteries Act No. 24 of 1974, the government decided that a certain percentage of funds generated by the Lotteries Board should be provided to subsidise the cultural sector, as section 11, article (2) of the Act affirms:

The Board may with the consent of the Minister and shall, if so directed by the Minister, utilise the balance of the National Lotteries Fund to finance cultural and sports activities proposed or approved by the Minister for the time being responsible for national culture.

The Division of Culture enjoyed only a short period of funding from the Lotteries Board. During an interview with Daniel Ndagala, it emerged that after 1985, funds from the Lotteries Board were irregularly disbursed and eventually ceased altogether in the 1990s. This particular funding source was unreliable and no longer existed in the early 2000, when the National Lotteries Act was repealed by the Gaming Act No. 179 of 2003, which scrapped the section requiring the Lotteries Board to provide funds to sponsor the development of national culture and sports.

This study also found that the consequences of prevailing financial shortages within the ministry led to an inevitable redundancy of cultural officers (Chart 2.1.) as Askew (2005:312) has aptly observed. However, the ramifications following the redundancy of personnel in administrative duties were deeper than anticipated. From the 1990s onwards, there has been a clear disjuncture between the State's cultural promotion administration at the local and central government levels. A few cultural officers who retained their positions within some regions were no longer linked with their assistants, the District Cultural Officers (DCOs). The Regional Cultural Officers (RCOs) are answerable directly to the Director or the Commissioner at the Division of Culture in the ministry whereas their colleagues at the district level answer to their respective district authorities, specifically to the District Executive Directors (DEDs)<sup>199</sup> who are also responsible for paying their salaries as well as assigning them day-to-day tasks. In other words, the Division of Culture could no longer coordinate and execute its programmes coherently from the ministerial level to the district's offices. The previous links between the DCOs' offices and the Director of Culture at the Ministry, through the RCOs were cut and so was the national arts and cultural development budget. Ever since these changes, there has never been a participatory approach towards cultural production and promotion in a national scope. The district cultural office, which brings together the sector's players from the ward and village level was disconnected from regional and national policy makers at the ministry. The consequences of reduced personnel and the disjuncture of the arts and cultural activities' administrative machinery are still disastrous to this day.

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<sup>199</sup> *Sera ya Utamaduni* (The Tanzania Cultural Policy 1997), Ministry of Culture, Dar es Salaam 1999, p.30

Therefore, having this information (Sections 3.1 and 3.2) on the background of the following discussion, this research presents that, the irregularities and mishaps befalling the visual arts practices in the public sector during the neo-liberal economic periods were caused by poor government intervention in supporting this sector as it was evident during the independence and *Ujamaa* periods, although not much was achieved in the said eras either. The failures of the Tanzania government intervention in this context are briefly explained in the following sub-section: *Retirement of the Pioneers of Tanzanian National Culture*.

### **3.2.1 Retirement of the Pioneers of the Tanzania National Culture**

The retirements of President Nyerere and Sam Ntiro, who were the main promoters of national visual arts and cultural production, significantly contributed to the collapse of State efforts in this sector. In other words, these two represented the aspirations and expectations of the first generation of creators and promoters of Tanzanian cultural and artistic production. Both Nyerere and Ntiro showed their appreciation of the cultural originality of pre-colonial societies whose descendants occupy present-day Tanzania, hence their tireless efforts to restore and improve them for their inclusion in the new national culture. If one deliberates the Sociological Problem of Generations theory to evaluate Nyerere's and Ntiro's contributions to the new Tanzanian national culture by encouraging the heritage and maintenance of the best knowledge, skills, and experiences of previous generations, then a consideration of their conscious and unconscious actions in their roles will help to understand more about their generational orientations (Mannheim 1928:173-175). From 1961, when Tanganyika acquired its independence, the propositions of President Nyerere<sup>200</sup> and Ntiro<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup>See, TANU Ten Years After Independence, TNR 1975, pp. 1-50 and 113-118

<sup>201</sup> Pissarra, 2015, pp.25-27



dominated almost all major national cultural construction projects until the mid-1980s when they retired from public service.

Looking at the role played by Ntiro as an artist, administrator and art educator in the public sector until his retirement in 1983, one realises that his contribution to the establishment of visual arts and cultural promotion sector in Tanzania is enormous. As Mario Pissarra notes<sup>202</sup>, Ntiro's active participation in the (re)formation and co-founding of visual arts and cultural promotion agencies, such as the Society of East African Artists (TSEAA), also known as Community of East African Artists (CEAA), Tanzania Arts Society (TAS), Tanzania Crafts Council (TCC) and Tanzania Society of African Culture (TSAC) has significantly shaped visual art developments in Tanzania and East Africa at large. Between 1965 and 1975, Ntiro was instrumental in the establishment of the Departments of Art at the Chang'ombe TTC and at the University of Dar es Salaam. He also spearheaded the creation of the visual arts' exhibition hall at the National Museum of Tanzania, which accommodated and displayed historical and archaeological collections alone (see Chapters One and Two of this study). After his retirement, almost all visual art based societies, associations and cultural organisations that he co-founded and closely worked with became inactive and completely collapsed. Subsequently, the administrative gap he left was unfilled.

The art and culture projects, which were previously commissioned by the state and its parastatals, diminished as time passed. This confirms that Ntiro was uniquely skilled in attracting and garnering government support in arts and cultural promotion. Elias

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<sup>202</sup> Pissarra, Mario, *Re/writing Sam J Ntiro: Challenges of framing in the excavation of a 'lost' pioneer*, Third Text Africa, Vol. 4, 2015, pp.25-60

Jengo<sup>203</sup> shows that between 1971 and 1981, more than 15 big visual art projects were executed in different regions of Tanzania. Most of these projects were commissioned to Ntiro by the ruling party and several parastatals, including other artists. Between 1983 and 1993, the decade after Ntiro retired from the Civil Service, there were only three commissions for visual art projects. These were the mural paintings funded by the CCM, executed at the Dodoma CCM Headquarters in 1985 (Fig.127), the BoT-Mwanza Branch murals (Fig.142) and the TPDF Soldier's monumental sculpture in the Pwani (Coast) region within the Kibaha Regional offices compound. In attempting to take over and continue Sam Ntiro's legacy, Elias Jengo, as Sam Ntiro's student and colleague in several public offices, registered the Tanzania Cultural Society (TCS), an organization which he co-founded with autodidactic artists such as Raza Mohamed, Festo Kijo, Salum Kambi, Poni Yengi, Aggrey Mwashu, Phidelis Gervace and many others, in the early 1990s. The TCS was intended to inspire more visual arts productions and organize exhibitions and art fairs. However, since its beginning, several serious problems indicated that TCS could not last long. There were meager finances to support its activities, such as renting an office space and coordinating art productions and exhibitions. The society managed to mount only two exhibitions. The first was at the Sea Cliff Hotel in Dar es Salaam and the other was at the Russian Cultural Center in 2000. TCS was theoretically alive, but practically dead by the early 2000s. Elias Jengo is currently struggling to promote the visual arts by linking them with contemporary art practices. In 2001, He pioneered the launching of the East African Art Biennale (EASTAFAB, see Section 3.6.1.1). Perhaps Elias Jengo has assumed the status of the *Father of Miscellaneous Painting Practices*, which surfaced beside contemporary art media in Tanzania. However, there has

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<sup>203</sup> Jengo, Elias The Special Problems of an Artist in a Developing Country, 1985, pp.6-7

never been a replacement that fits Sam Ntiro's hard working spirit, charisma and inventiveness in fostering the visual arts in Tanzanian art developments.

Furthermore, President Julius Kambarage Nyerere's resignation in March 1984 and his subsequent retirement on 5 November 1985 was another big blow to the state-sponsored or sanctioned arts and cultural promotion sectors. During an interview for this study, Dr. Daniel Ndagala, the former Commissioner for Culture, argued that President Nyerere's influence on the country's national arts and culture creation since independence gave life to this sector. Indeed, his recognition and appreciation of arts such as *ngoma*, music, drama, painting and drawing as powerful forms of communication and economic resources in Tanzania were imperative in endorsing the government's administrative and financial support of the sector. On 10 December 1962, President Nyerere created the Ministry of National Culture and Youth to realise nationwide campaigns for national arts and culture creation. Dr. Ndagala said that even the laws and regulations administering the arts and cultural sector enacted in the early 1960s were derived from President Nyerere's views and speeches, which were frequently delivered to explain the importance of creating the national culture of Tanzania<sup>204</sup>.

Besides, Jean Pruitt, a renowned visual arts promoter in Tanzania since 1967 attested to the fact that Nyerere was a keen supporter of the visual arts in Tanzania. Additionally, Nyerere was a humble patron of the Nyumba ya Sanaa [House of Art] Workshop from its beginning in 1972 until his demise in 1999<sup>205</sup>. Thus, President Nyerere's retirement occurred alongside a shift in how the Tanzania government supported cultural development. As Askew

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<sup>204</sup>"Culture is the essence and a spirit of any nation". See, President Nyerere's inaugural speech in chapter one

<sup>205</sup>CCTV documentary titled: Faces of Africa - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, retrieved from:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=HQ6h2Fb0hYc>, accessed at Ethnological Museum's library in Berlin 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017

(2002:284) notes, Mwalimu Nyerere's successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, promoted *Taarab* music more than any other art form of artistic expression in the country from the 1990s onwards. The *Taarab* is a coastal people's modern music influenced by Afro-Arab culture. To show his appreciation of this kind of music, President Mwinyi's rallies and meetings were always preceded by *Taarab* performances (Askew 2002:225-235). Mwinyi is still remembered as a keen admirer of the *Taarab* music, which he is also dubbed *Mipasho*, a Kiswahili word which became a popular substitute for the name *Taarab*.

On the whole, this study observed that President Mwinyi's government did very little to support national cultural promotion, specifically in the visual arts sector, compared to his predecessor, Nyerere. Nola Kianza, who conducted a survey on the handicraft mission to Tanzania, shares this view:

It seems as though NYS achieved much of its popularity due to the support they received from the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. The change in government policies, competition, and lack of support from international donors, have pushed NYS into a critical position; it is now struggling to stay alive (Kianza 2005:8)

When looking clearly at the challenges or rather problems surrounding the visual arts sector in Tanzania, one sees a back-and-forth like trend of events. Apart from the problems of declining support of the pioneers, the visual arts sector remained with so many problems yet to receive proper attention. Until 1984, visual art training in Tanzania was still broadly underdeveloped (Msangi 1987 and Mwenesi 1998). There were only a few primary and secondary schools which offered Fine Arts or Handwork lessons as extracurricular activities in the entire country<sup>206</sup>. There were not enough qualified teachers and studio instructors to offer practical training in schools and colleges with art programmes. The majority of

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<sup>206</sup> See, Msangi 1987, p.65

practising artists were autodidacts with apprenticeship experiences instead of formal training. There was only one exhibition hall at the National Museum of Tanzania and only two art galleries located in Dar es Salaam. As a result, ambitious young artists lacked inspiration and encouragement, which could have been easy if the obvious shortcomings and handicaps had been addressed. Since the 1970s, the Fine Art Departments or sections of the University of Dar es Salaam, Mpwapwa TTC and Butimba TTC enrolled very few art students and, thus, there were many more available art and cultural jobs than available graduates. The general visual art scene in Tanzania looked like “one big bankrupt artist’s studio”<sup>207</sup>. BASATA—as the custodian of the national arts and cultural productions and promotion<sup>208</sup>—neither had established unit(s) / section(s) nor qualified personnel by 1985 necessary for administering the visual arts activities at its headquarters or in regional and district cultural offices. This serious organizational problem prevails to this day and was officially acknowledged by the responsible Minister during the enactment of the 1997 Tanzania Cultural Policy.

### **3.3 Private Media and the Promotion of Comic and Cartooning Arts**

Beginning in the mid-1980s, the visual art scene in Tanzania took a different turn from that practised throughout the *Ujamaa* period. The production, promotion, and popularity of visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, which dominated the art scene in the country after independence, gradually decreased and almost came to a halt. Comic and cartoon arts surfaced and were quickly spread as new visual arts in Tanzania. Unlike painting and sculpture, comics and cartoons were easily distributed and displayed to wider audiences

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<sup>207</sup>A comment recorded during a personal interview with a respondent who preferred to stay anonymous in my references

<sup>208</sup> See section 4 (1) a-i, *Functions of the Council* in the National Arts Council Act number 23 of 1984, p.2

nation-wide through the mass media channels such as newspapers, books, and television<sup>209</sup>. There is no doubt that the changes in the political and economic policies in Tanzania from 1985 onwards influenced the growth and prominence of these visual art genres. The new neo-liberal policies, such as privatisation and free market practices, influenced new ventures in the private media and publishing sectors whereas the changes in political ideology from the *Ujamaa*'s single-party democracy to multi-party politics paved way for an increase in freedom of expression in both the public sphere and mass media. John Lent, who is one of the early researchers to focus on comics and cartooning arts in Tanzania, attests to this claim:

For various reasons, chief of which being the proliferation of newspapers and editor's awareness of the selling features of comic art, cartooning has thrived in Tanzania. The liberalisation of trade in 1986 resulted in private investors pumping money into media development, which after 1992, went hand in hand with the advent of multiparty politics (Lent 2009:225)

The present study treats these developments as factors that explain the growth and promotion of comics and cartoon arts in the post-socialist Tanzania. Besides, the study assumes that Tanzania's high literacy rates in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>210</sup> were other factors accounting for the growth of comic and cartooning arts in terms of local audience consumption.

Unlike paintings, cartoons and comics involve visual images and a certain amount of text in the form of speech balloons or explanatory tags to help viewer(s) or reader(s) easily

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<sup>209</sup> Some TV stations in Tanzania provide display platforms for comic and cartoon artworks. Nathan Mpangala was the first artist to display his socio-political cartoon works through television. His single panel cartoon skits popularly known as "*Mtu Kwao*" (home is where a man heart is found) features two to three minutes display on ITV Tanzania's after the evening news programme. In 2010, another weekly TV programme on puppet show known as "*Pika Bomu*" (Cook the Bomb) was launched on *Star TV* by Robert Mwampembwa who used talented BCA graduates such as Freddy Saganda as the voice artists and sound designers. The programme was criticised as "unauthentic" and uninteresting as it was an idea borrowed from Kenya, where Mwampembwa worked as a cartoonist in that country's media. It hardly received the TV audience expected and finally died a few months after it was launched.

<sup>210</sup> See, The World Development Report 1982, p.25

understand the whole work. The text is also an essential element for message delivery. Indeed, not many people are capable of interpreting artworks. In fact, texts play a complementary role in comic and cartoon artwork's message delivery. Therefore, the huge number of literate Tanzanians provided a big demand for these new artworks. Moreover, the satirical and humouristic characteristics of presentation in cartoons and comics appealed to the majority of Tanzanians' taste in entertainment, which for long had enjoyed oratory alone. When cartoon and comic arts surfaced, they were largely used by many editors as chief medium(s) of presenting political commentaries and addressing society's burning issues, i.e. sex and political criticism previously taboo in the mainstream media. Nevertheless, the absence of TV entertainment contributed to the high demand for comic books and magazines, which substituted for the missing TV entertainment, which had been enjoyed in Zanzibar since 1974<sup>211</sup>. During an interview, James Gayo, a veteran cartoonist and the owner of a popular comic magazine, *Kingo* (Fig.216), told the present researcher that "*comic magazines were the TVs of Tanzania Mainland until 1994, when the first TV broadcast started in Dar es Salaam*". For almost three decades, the comic and cartoon arts in Tanzania have thrived through the informal approaches of training artists through organised workshops and apprenticeship programmes.

### **3.3.1 KYAA and TAPOMA Impact on Comics and Cartoon Arts scene**

A few available works on comic and cartoon arts in Tanzania, such as Packalen (2005), Beez (2006) and Lent (2009) mention the Tanzania Popular Media Association (TAPOMA), as an organisation that spearheaded training for comic and cartoon artists, who dominated the

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<sup>211</sup> See Sturmer, M., 1998, p.295

visual arts scene in Tanzania throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. To some extent, these writers are correct, although they have missed the big and most significant part of the untold story behind many comic and cartoon artists in Tanzania, whose careers were directly or indirectly influenced by activities of the Kinondoni Young Artist Association (KYAA). According to Leif Packalen, TAPOMA was established in 1992 with the primary objective of increasing the skills of cartoonists to create comics in both narrative and short strip form and to liaise with voluntary organisations and institutions to market the comics format as an effective and culturally relevant local communication medium (Packalen 2009:316). TAPOMA was realised through the efforts of Katti Ka-Batembo, an artist based in the Morogoro region and through partial financial support from the Finnish government. In 2001, TAPOMA moved to Dar es Salaam, where more of its member artists resided and worked.

The shift of the association from Morogoro to Dar es Salaam also witnessed a change in leadership with Nathan Mpangala becoming its new leader. Mpangala received his initial art training at KYAA in the early 1990s. This aspect will be exhaustively discussed in the following section on KYAA. Under Katti Ka-Batembo's leadership, TAPOMA was successful in organising training seminars for several of its practising artist members. The seminars focused on the process of creating comics and opened up new opportunities for artists (Packalen 2009:317). With his vast experience while working as an illustrator for many developmental and public education organisations, Ka-Batembo passed his knowledge on to several upcoming artists within the Association and opened up windows for their involvement in many development projects, for example in farmer education materials, campaigns against HIV/AIDS and environmental conservation campaigns, which employed comics as the chief medium of communication. Artists such as Michael Sagikwa, Athumani



Mgumia, William Temu, Collins Mdachi and Henry Likonde were apprentices who benefited from TAPOMA's training and work connections (Packalen 2009:318).

The prominent cartoonist and comic artist, James Gayo, is also acknowledged as one of TAPOMA's founders who helped with training projects and professional advice. International comics artists such as Frank Odoi from Ghana, as well as Tarmo Koivisto and Leif Packalen from World Comics-Finland, professionally nurtured more than 30 artists by forming TAPOMA (Packalen 2009:319). TAPOMA encouraged artists to practise self-coaching and apprenticeship among themselves to improve their skills and strengthen their network. In fact, TAPOMA never constructed classroom for artist training but established a small library with comic books, mainly from the US and Europe, to be used as sources of both inspiration and knowledge (Packalen 2009:317). Although TAPOMA may not necessarily have produced its own artists as new industry talents, it has always helped practising artists to improve their skills and get opportunities for more work. Since the early 2000s, TAPOMA's activities have gradually decreased. When the current researcher interviewed James Gayo, one of the pioneers of the Association, he was unsure about the Association's existence but hesitated to admit that TAPOMA was definitely gone.

### **3.3.1.1 Kinondoni Young Artists Association**

The discovery of the Kinondoni Young Artists Association or Group (KYAA/KYAG) in this study provides access to the untold story of the origin of one of the most significant groups of the second generation of visual artists in Tanzania. Leif Packalen refers to this new generation of artists as "young lions" (Packalen 2005:4). His view is underscored by a

comparison to the first generation of cartoon and comic artists, whom he describes as “conservative”:

Ndunguru and Gregory published their cartoons in a society where it was not the tradition to ridicule elders in any way. This meant that the cartoons and comics were never critical of identifiable public officials (Packalen 2005:4)

Packalen’s (2005) analysis of Tanzanian comic and cartoon artists classifies them in two different generations which have been influenced by the general culture and work environments of different times. The KYAA incubated the majority of comic and cartoon artists dominating the Tanzanian visual arts scene from the mid-1980s until today. Through information collected from former KYAA trainees and its former management team, including Adrian Nyangamalle (interview, December 2016 and February 2017), Nathan Mpangala (interview, December 2016), Rashid Mbago and Peter Ikongo (interviews, December 2016 and March 2017), as well as Ibony Moalin (WhatsApp chat, May 2017), much was revealed about the creators of interesting cartoon and comic artworks long-enjoyed by wide Tanzanian audiences through school books, humour tabloids and magazines, daily newspapers and weeklies, campaign posters, and calendars. All the respondents confirmed that the KYAA, also known as KYAG, began as a small informal-evening art class for talented primary school pupils in the Kinondoni-Mtambani market area in Dar es Salaam sometime in 1979.

Christopher Mwangata, an autodidactic graphic artist and Haliner Wilkomsker, a Danish Volunteer Service (DSV) worker in Dar es Salaam between 1979 and 1980 founded the art class. Christopher worked as a gardener for Ms. Wilkomsker, who appreciated his talent and decided to help him on the condition that Christopher shared his skills with talented

neighbourhood kids after school hours. Ms. Wilkomsker was not an artist but a passionate art lover who provided Christopher and his group of kids with art supplies such as erasers, drawing pencils, papers, pencil colours, drawing books and water colour sets. By mid-1980, Christopher and Ms. Wilkomsker started holding regular evening art class on weekdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The art classes were conducted in the *Tusirudi Nyuma* Tailors Co-operative (TNTC) building. This space for training was freely provided and available for children's art classes every evening when the tailors' activities were done for the day. When it began, the art training project was known to many parents and children in the Kinondoni area as "*Cheza kwa Kuchora*" or "Play by Painting" (PbP). Some of the pioneering children to join the programme were: Moshia Chande, Ibony Moalim, Jackson Ngumba, John Nyoni, Idd Kejo, Douglas Mpototo, Rashid Mbago, Deogratias and Deo Babili (brothers), Adrian Nyangamalle, and two girls, Joyce Joseph and Hilda. From 1983 onwards, the number of "Play by Painting" children increased, thus their name was changed to the Kinondoni Young Artists Group (KYAG), which was officially registered by BASATA in 1990. In 1995, KYAG was expanded and transformed into the Kinondoni Young Artist Association (KYAA) with 25 members. In 1998, DSV financial and art material support ended and, therefore, the Association's management sought to establish a business in visual arts and artists training.

Artist training at the KYAA thrived through the sacrifices and contributions of many unsung heroes and institutions within and outside Tanzania. In 1980, Haliner Wilkomsker's tenure at the DSV in Dar es Salaam came to a halt and she was supposed to return to Denmark. Before leaving the country, she planned to maintain the PbP kid's art project by proposing its inclusion in the Danish Volunteer Service's funded projects in Tanzania, and she

succeeded. Several other Danish and non-Danish volunteers continued to help and develop the PbP programme from 1980 until 1994, when the last DSV co-ordinator for the art programme worked with the kids. The Danish volunteers included Inge Therkildessen (1980-1985), Hadashan and her husband, Christian Romara (1985-1986), Allan Vokstrup (1987-1989), Susan and her husband, Erick<sup>212</sup> (1989-1992) and Karen Rasmussen.

Nevertheless, in late 1980, Wilkomsker connected the PbP kids to two other volunteers to help with professional art training. These were Bhupendra Nathubhai Desai, an accomplished art educator of Indian descent who was teaching fine arts at the Azania Secondary School, and an Englishman known as Mr. Blues, the head of the art programme at the International School of Tanzania (IST), both located in the Upanga area of Dar es Salaam. Desai and Blues organised evening classes in which ten (10) PbP kids were trained in still life drawing, realistic painting and clay modelling at the Azania compound. Desai is acknowledged by Judith von D. Miller as a realistic portrait artist (Miller 1975:85). Mr. Blues taught clay modelling and sculpture. In 1981, only 10 of the PbP founding children group sat for the Adult Education examination and all were awarded certificates in applied arts<sup>213</sup>.

In 1987, Allan Vokstrup, an artist and a DSV co-ordinator for the KYAA art project, taught drawing and painting subjects to new trainees who had joined the group after 1985 and continued to mentor the older trainees (the first group of trainees). Most of the first 10 founding PbP kids, after a long period of training, became trainers and assistant-trainers

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<sup>212</sup> Very little about the names and official identities of these two volunteers was recalled by the informant of their activities at the KYAA during this study.

<sup>213</sup> It was not known which kind of examination the Institute of Adult Education conducted on the Applied Arts for the KYAA children. The institutions which offered formal training on art subjects by 1981 were Butimba TTC and the Department of Art, Music and Theatre at the University of Dar es Salaam.

themselves. This was the case with Ibony Moalim, Mosher Chande, Douglas Mpotu (Fig.207) and Rashid Mbago (Fig.208) who were the best illustrators in the first group of trainees.



**Fig.207 One of the early children's book illustrations produced by KYAA trainee Douglas Mpotu in 1978. Contributed to the NMT's collection by Hemed Mwinchande (Photograph by researcher at the NMT in Dar es Salaam, October 2015)**

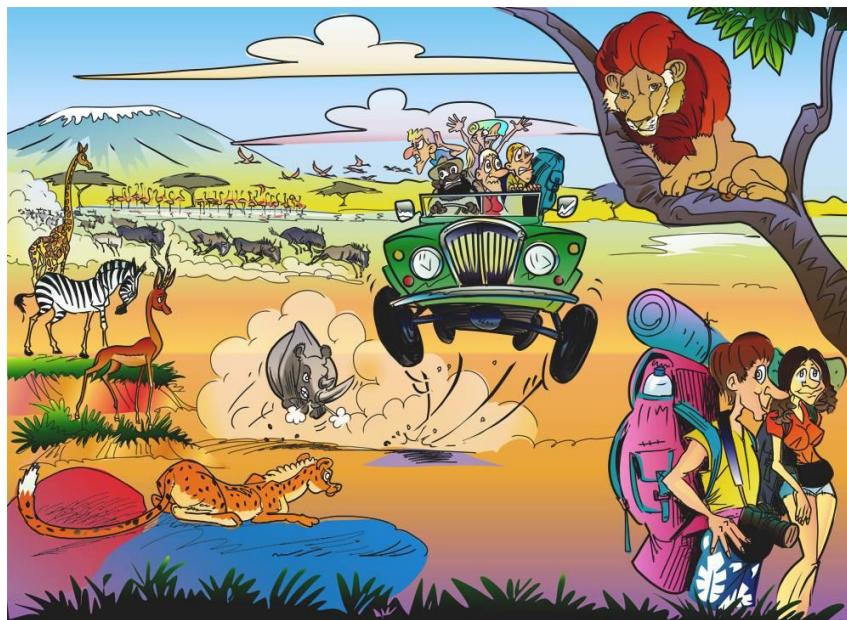


**Fig.208 A poster produced by the Ministry of Health Tanzania/Unicef campaign against Cholera by Rashid Mbago in 2009**  
(Courtesy of the artist, Rashid Mbago in March 2017)

KYAA later allowed children who were successfully trained and capable of producing good artwork to become teachers for the new intakes. The training was structured in three parts: (i) Orientation with art materials and imaginative composition; (ii) Intensive training by trainers or assistant trainers; and (iii) Artwork production under close trainers' supervision. Children learned animal and human anatomy, landscape and still-life drawing. They were also free to copy and influence each other's work as they played and painted. This type of training made KYAA a perfect place for young artists to learn and exchange skills. However, KYAA training, which mostly concentrated on pencil and ink drawing, as well watercolour painting on paper, ended up producing the best graphic artists and illustrators rather than painters or sculptors.

Moreover, the type of arts produced by the KYAA artists had very close resemblance, which might confuse the viewer into thinking that all artworks were created by the same artist. Perhaps, this is an effect of the apprenticeship training method. This view among the trainees

of KYAA is validated by the book illustrations created by the early 1990s trainees such as Paul Ndunguru (Fig.209) and Cloud Chatanda (Fig.210). Ndunguru's dramatic characters and fine-line-drawing genre, as well the choice of warm colours in his works highly influenced the art genres of his apprentices such as Cloud Chatanda and Frederick Maeda. During this study, it was established that, while attending the KYAA, Cloud Chatanda and Frederick Maeda were trained and supervised by Paul Ndunguru who then worked as an assistant trainer.



**Fig.209 Book illustration by Paul Ndunguru in the early 2000s**  
(Courtesy of Paul Ndunguru, October 2015)





**Fig.210 Book illustration by Cloud Chatanda in the 2000s**  
(Courtesy of Cloud Chatanda, October 2015)

The chief respondent in this part of the study, Rashid Mbago, acknowledges Allan Vokstrup as a dedicated teacher and art project manager who helped to realise many developments in the Association. Vokstrup added an entrepreneurship component to the artists' training programmes and planned for the KYAA centre's construction, which was built in the Mwananyamala-Msisiri neighbourhood in the Kinondoni district of Dar es Salaam city in 1990. As a foreigner, Vokstrup's successful work with the locals in developing the KYAA was probably due to his good relationship with Godwin Kaduma, the Director of Arts and Culture in the Ministry of Education and Culture from 1985 to 1993. He insisted on organising exhibition and outreach programmes. Subsequently, pupils from primary schools such as Mgulani, Uhuru Mchanganyiko, Hananasifu, Juhudi at Kinondoni-Moscow, Kambangwa CCM, Mwananyamala and Chang'ombe were involved in Play by Painting projects.

Since its establishment in its own premises, KYAA organised and attended several art exhibitions within and outside Tanzania. Between 1985 and the 1990s, many of the



exhibitions by KYAA were held at the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam. Foreign countries, which hosted KYAA exhibitions, included Denmark in 1985 and 1997; Norway and Finland in 1985; and Germany and Kenya in 1993. In 1996, KYAA organized a four-week workshop for art training at the Bujora Cultural Centre in Mwanza. Following the completion of DVS funding, the Association tried to search for partnership projects with several other international organisations. In 1997 KYAA, in collaboration with the *Mweusi Mweupe* Art Group from Denmark, organised a four-week workshop which was accomplished by an exhibition mounted at the Nyumba ya Sanaa in Dar es Salaam that same year.

An environmental conservation art project funded by the Swedish Embassy in 2001 was one of the successful programmes organised without DSV support. The project involved art training for street-children and those living with disabilities in orphanages and other care centres. The children were gathered from the Dogodogo Centre for street-children, Kurasini and Kigamboni orphanages and the Salvation Army home for children with disabilities. From the early 1990s, KYAA produced hundreds of young and talented artists who went on to work as cartoonists and comic artists in newly-established publishing houses, advertising firms and other art production businesses and projects. The prominent cartoonists and comic artists groomed at the KYAA include Adrian Nyangamalle (the current President of Tanzania Federation of Crafts and Arts-TAFCA), Ali Masoud<sup>214</sup> alias “*Kipanya*”, Geoffrey Mathew, Paul Ndunguru, Cloud Chatanda, Nathan Mpangala, Chris Katembo, Ernest Mtaya, Fred

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<sup>214</sup> Ally Masoud also known as Masoud Kipanya is the current leading editorial cartoonist in Tanzania. He is working with the Mwananchi Communications Limited, the publishers and printers of *Mwananchi* (Kiswahili) and the *Citizen*(English) newspapers in Dar es Salaam. Also see: <http://www.kipanya.de/contact.htm>. Retrieved on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2017

Halla, Frederick Maeda, Godwin Mabuga, Gwalugano Mwakatobe, Zamiri Kidunda, Theophan Nguyeje, Kessy Matata, Khalid Yusuph and Zainab Lweno.

However, from the late 1990s, KYAA training activities slowly deteriorated and ultimately stopped altogether sometime in 2005. There were several reasons for this turn of events. During a December 2016 interview, Peter Ikongo and Rashid Mbago argued that the involvement of KYAA members in individual projects and permanent employment away from the Association reduced its workforce for training programmes within the centre and partner schools. Another reason was that KYAA produced very little money from its visual art sales even when training was provided for free. Moreover, the costs for buying art supplies and maintaining the centre were unbearable; as a result, most of the activities ground to a halt and the building was collapsing due to poor maintenance. In 2010, the KYAA management decided to sell its building at Mwananyamala-Msisiri, which they said was smaller than the institution they intended to build on their new plot in Bagamoyo district. Since its collapse, no other school trains cartoonists or comic artists; only a few individual KYAA beneficiaries provide coaching for young-artists from wealthy families who can afford private tutoring at home.

### **3.3.2 Comics in Tanzania**

From the beginning of the 1980s until 2010, comics became the most popular and dominant visual art form in Tanzania. Coming out as stripe and split pages in several newspapers and monthly magazines, comics provided phenomenal content for new private publishers expecting to prosper in the new business in a country with a large segment of literate audience. The WAMASA (creators and writer of SANI) established by Said M.M. Bawji and

Nicco Ye-Mbajo, HEKO Publishers under Ben Mtobwa and Kajubi Mukajanga, J.S. Commodities LTD under Sabbi Masanja, and the Business Times LTD were among the pioneering publishers of comics when private ventures were legalised in Tanzania. Before 1985, very little of comic art was known to the majority of Tanzanians. This was because of several factors: First, apart from music and *Salaam* (greetings) programmes on the only state medium, Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD), there was no other form of mass media entertainment. In this regard, James Gayo argued that in the absence of TV, comics provided the Tanzanian audience with most of the content that TV currently provides. Unlike South African comics, which were purely political (Lent 2009:229), the comics in Tanzania were 100 percent entertainment-centred content. The pictorial stories mainly consisted of realistically drawn romances, humorous comics and fantasies of a better life in a neo-liberal Tanzania (Lent 2009:227). Secondly, before 1985 the number of newspapers and magazines in which comics were displayed was small and had low circulation numbers, as John Lent notes:

Before 1992, the press was in the hands of the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi and the government, but late 2000, many entities owned the 14 active dailies and 21 weeklies, fortnightly, and monthly publications. Tanzania now leads East and Central Africa in a number of newspapers (Lent 2009:226)

Therefore, the emergence of a private press influenced a boom in comic production and business (Packalen 2009:319). The third factor is that there were very little comics as independent content. From 1978 onwards, when comics art evolved into a specialised visual art genre, produced and consumed independently as non-supplementary content in text-based stories, there were only a few established comic artists. Unacquainted with KYAA activities and several of its unofficial members, Packalen (2009:315) cites John Kaduma and a few

others who came into the comics' art scene at the beginning of 1990s as pioneering comic artists. In fact, there were several pioneering comics artists before John Kaduma appeared and dominated the comic art scene with his works featured in almost all popular comic magazines such as *Sani* and his co-founded magazine titled *Bongo* (Fig.213). In its first comics edition, the *Sani* magazine of 1978 (Fig.211) the leading artist was Nico Ye-Mbajo, whose comic artworks dominated the first and second editions of *Sani*. Philip Ndunguru<sup>215</sup> and Marco Mussa's comics appeared in the third and several other editions published between 1981 and 1985. In 1985, Douglas Mpotu, a former KYAA trainee and apprentice of Philip Ndunguru, took over as a leading artist of *Sani*. This happened when Philip Ndunguru moved to work for the *Kenya Leo* newspaper in Nairobi while David Kyungu moved to Germany to work as a TV producer and Marco Mussa<sup>216</sup> went to France.

The departure of pioneer comic artists was associated with the new market economy. In fact, this study found that most of the artists left Tanzania for "greener pastures" where comics art jobs flourished and were more rewarding. The trend continued until 1992, when Godfrey

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<sup>215</sup> Philip Ndunguru is believed to be the pioneering artist whose creativity had revolutionised the comics art in Tanzania. His debut into the *Sani* magazine surfaced with six interesting characters reflecting ordinary Tanzanian lifestyles in the rural and urban areas. His new characters such as Dr. Love Pimbi—a pimp, Kipepe—the bushman, Mzee Meko—a well-to-do village man, Bob Mazishi—a dubious town trickster, Madenge—a naughty kid and Baba Madenge—Madenge's father, Lodi Lofa—a lousy mechanic and Ndumilakuwili—the fraudster, have inspired many comic artists to develop their own characters too. Philip Ndunguru began his art career as a self-taught artist but in the late 1970s was lucky to meet a Dutch artist working for the Tanzania Cigarette Company (TCC) at Chang'ombe. Together with other aspiring graphic artists such as Patrick Stax, Manju Msita, Moses Luhanga and Marco Mussa, Philip benefited from some training on colour application, anatomy and perspective in drawing and copyright issues from the Dutch artist at Chang'ombe TCC. The artists were also among unofficial trainers who developed the KYAA between 1981 and 1986. Douglas Mpotu, the later leader and influential artists at the KYAA was Philip Ndunguru's apprentice for so long. Most of these artists produced cartoons and comics for the state and the party newspapers such as *Mfanyakazi*, *Mzalendo*, *Uhuru* and the Daily news throughout 1980s and early 1990s (Personal interview, Paul Ndunguru - 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015)

<sup>216</sup> He is believed to be the artists who had inspired and mentored Ali Masoud "Kipanya", the current highly paid East African editorial cartoonist working for the Mwananchi Communications Limited in Dar es Salaam.

Mwampembwa moved to work as an editorial cartoonist for the *Daily Nation* in Nairobi (Packalen 2009:313). Other renowned comics artists who have dominated the comics magazines art scene included James Gayo (*Kingo*), Chris Katembo (*Sani* and *Bongo*), Marco Tibasima (*Sani*, *Bongo* and *Msanii Afrika*), Oscar Makoye (*Msanii Afrika*), Cloud Chatanda (*Kingo*), Ibra Radi Washokera (*Ambha*) and Fortunatus Ndilla (*Tabasamu* and *Bongo*), to mention a few prominent comic artists.



**Fig.211 The first *Sani* magazine edition, cover picture by Nico Ye-Mbajo (1978)**  
(Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

By 1998, there were more than 30 different comics publications<sup>217</sup> (Fig.217) on the market, with *Sani* as the oldest genre and business leader. During its peak in the early 1990s, *Sani*

<sup>217</sup> See Lent 2009, p.226

magazines sold up to 60,000 copies at a price of 600 Tanzanian shillings per copy (Lent 2009:227). In January 1994, *Bongo* came out as a new humour magazine competing with *Sani*, which it emulated in form, characters and storyline formats. As more new, young, and talented artists increased, mostly trainees from the KYAA arrived onto the scene, more comics products including magazines, books, and tabloids were produced by several publishers. Packalen (2009) divided these comics into two categories. The first type comprised humour magazines and classical comics such as *Sani*, which was being produced monthly from the 1990s:

*Sani, Busara, Wowowo, Tembo, Tibasima, Bongo, and Burudani*<sup>218</sup> are magazines that started publishing irregularly during the late 1980s and into the 1990s. They concentrated on robust humour, often directed to a male audience, that is, mostly stories about drinking and chasing women, coupled with crime adventures, fast cars, and high living. Artist John Kaduma's work is a notch above the others in this field, especially his TAMTAMU Book Club pocket comics (Packalen 2009:315)

The second category consists of humour tabloids, which he describes thusly:

The humour tabloids made their impact with the coming of afternoon newspapers in 1997-1998, which contained both cartoons and comics. After some time, it was found that what the public wanted was a weekly newspaper styled on the afternoon dailies. The first to appear was *Dar Leo*, followed by *Sanifu*, published on Fridays with Ally Masoud as comics' editor. *Sanifu* became hugely popular as is still a high seller. *Sanifu* was quickly followed by *Kashehe, Komesha, Awatan*<sup>219</sup>, and *Risasi*, but it seems likely that *Sanifu* and perhaps *Kasheshe* will survive... (Packalen 2009:316)

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<sup>218</sup> There are some slight mistakes on the names of the magazines as Leif Packalen mentions in the aforementioned extract. "Tibasima" (Marco Tibasima alias, *Wocka*) is a name of an artist but *Tabasamu* is the correct name of the comics' magazine he is working with. However, the present research suspects a confusion of information on other magazine's names such as "*Wowowo*" and "*Tembo*" as mentions by Packalen (2009:315) in the same extract.

<sup>219</sup> The correct word is "*Alwatan*", a Kiswahili word borrowed from the Arabic translated into English as the "well-known" or the "prominent"

The colour-printed *Sanifu* was the highest circulated humour tabloid in the country until it folded in the early 2000s. Lent (2009:226) closely observed its market performance and noted that *Sanifu*, with 50,000 copies in circulations (it was nearly 100,000 but dropped as the cover price went up) was the largest humour periodical followed by *Risasi*<sup>220</sup>. Nonetheless, dailies continued to provide spaces for humorous comic strips. By the end of the early 2000s there were over 60 comic magazines and tabloids produced and sold all over the country. The prominent humour tabloid artists included Noah Yongolo (*Sanifu* and *Risasi*), King Kinya (*Sanifu* and *Risasi*) Gwalugano Mwakatobe (*Alasiri* and *Risasi*), Gaston Nnunduma (*Sanifu* and *Risasi*), Nathan Mpangala (*Sanifu*, *Kasheshe* and *Risasi*) and Oscar Makoye alias “*Tolu*” (*Sanifu*, *Kasheshe* and *Risasi*), Samuel Mwamkinga alias “*Sammi*” and David Chikoko (*Sanifu*).

Most of the new works were irregularly produced by several aspiring self-taught artists and unknown publishers. As a result, the comics’ market competition became very stiff and chaotic. Moreover, ethical and moral standards started to slip. Furthermore, the quality of the artworks also took a hit. The less popular comic magazines and tabloids employed more sex-oriented or suggestive stories and drawings to attract young readers and ended up producing soft-porn<sup>221</sup> (Fig.217). In different periods and instances, the government, through the Minister responsible for information and media operations, temporarily and or permanently

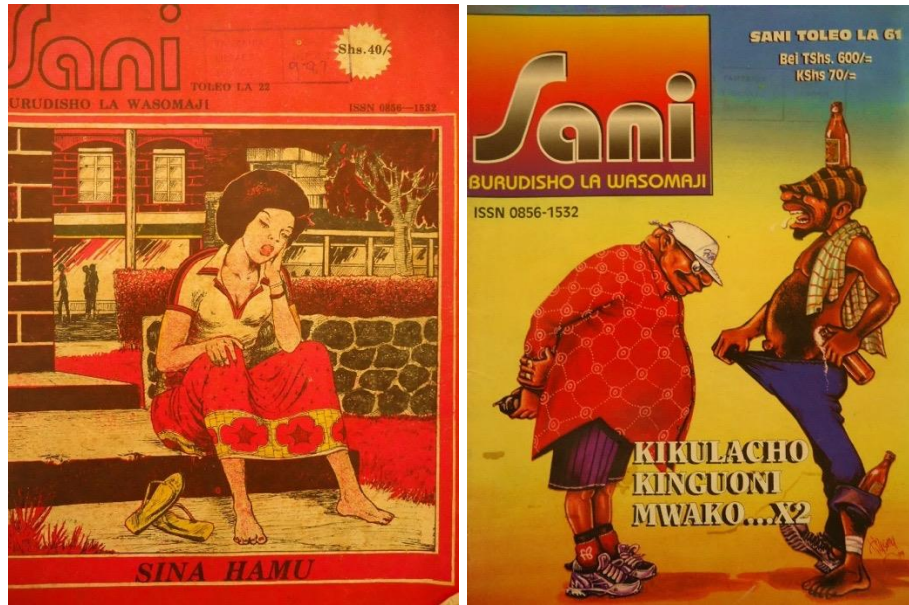
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<sup>220</sup>*Risasi* was another big Humour tabloid which emerged between 1998 and 1999. It was owned by Ali Masoud, the chief artist and comics’ editor for the *Sanifu*. Masoud and several of his colleagues working for the *Sanifu* started their own comics tabloid in order to counter several economic problems they faced with their employer, The Business Times Publishers. However, although *Risasi*’s debut was good and promising, the tabloid died alongside many others in the mid 2000s due to several factors, including unfair competitions and the spread of cable TV in the country (personal interview, Ali Masoud - 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016)

<sup>221</sup> See, Packalen 2009, p.316

banned several tabloids under the controversial Newspaper Act of 1976. Later regular confrontations between the authorities and humour tabloid publishers affected the entire humour tabloid business. Slowly the public developed a negative attitude towards humour tabloids and viewed them as indecent and unhealthy for children and youths. As more TV stations came onto the scene, the TV sets became easily available, with more of the humour comics' audience shifting to TV entertainment, in which local content such as soap operas and American sports programmes such as wrestling provided new entertainment experiences (James Gayo, personal interview - Jan. 2017). It is not clearly recorded when the majority humour tabloids and magazine stopped publishing, but during the present research, in 2015, there were only four regular comics-based publications surviving on the Tanzanian market. These are *Kingo* magazine owned by James Gayo (also its chief artist and editor), which transformed its content to feature more development comics containing short stories and images addressing anti-corruption and HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns. *Kingo* magazine is presently a sponsored magazine distributed for free to sponsors whereas the legendary *Sani* was transformed into a weekly tabloid with a circulation of fewer than 5,000 copies. *Risasi* and *Kasheshe* tabloids are still published and distributed in Dar es Salaam and a few neighbouring areas such as Bagamoyo, Morogoro Municipal, and Zanzibar.





**Fig.212** Later editions of *Sani* magazines, from the left Number 23, cover picture by Philip Ndunguru (1984), and Number 61, cover by Marco Tibasima (the 2000s)  
 (Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



**Fig.213** From the left, 1<sup>st</sup> editions of *Bongo* magazine, cover picture by John Kaduma (1995) and *HEKO* magazine by Ben Mtobwa (1985)  
 (Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



Fig.214 From the left *Kingo* magazine, cover picture by Cloud Chatanda and *TUNU* magazine by unrecorded artist (2000s)  
 (Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

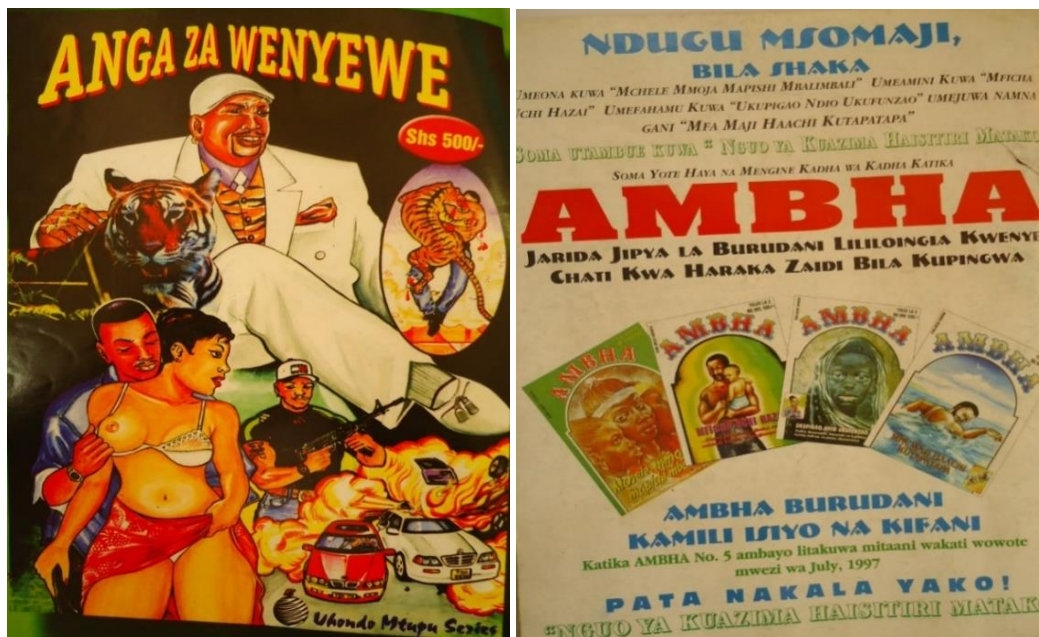


Fig.215 From the left, *Anga za Wenyewe* and *Ambha* magazine's cover pictures by Marco Tibasima (*Ambha*) and other unrecorded artists (early 2000s)  
 (Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

### 3.3.2.1 Cartooning Art in Tanzania

Editorial and humour cartoon strips have for long been published in Tanzania's newspapers. The media and political liberalisations between 1985 and 1995 influenced cartoon works to become important content in the local press. Since 1992, almost all the dailies and weeklies had embraced cartoon strips (Fig.221) in their content packages (Lent 2009:226). Before 1985, cartooning was very minimal in scope and with low consumption in Tanzania. Beez's (2006) paper "*Tanzanian Comic Ancestors*" which explores the genesis of cartoons in the country, briefly introduces Peter Paul Kasembe and Christian Gregory as the pioneers of cartooning art in Tanzania's newspapers. In 1956, Peter Paul Kasembe was the first cartoonist to work with early Tanganyikan weeklies, *Mambo Leo* and *Baragumu*. When he started drawing cartoons, Paul Kasembe's popular cartoon character was known as *Juha Kasembe*, or "*idiot Kasembe*" (Beez 2006:11).

Due to a growing Tanzanian interest in cartoon art, P.P. Kasembe, in 1959, came up with a new character strip, *Mhuni Hamisi* or the "Hooligan Hamisi", adding to his popular strip series "*Juha Kasembe na Ulimwengu wa leo*", or "Idiot Kasembe and the Modern Environment" in English<sup>222</sup>. Paul Kasembe's cartoons were never political but critical social commentaries on urban Tanganyikan lives in the wake of modernity. Through the *Juha Kasembe* character, P.P. Kasembe humorous cartoon incidents and scenarios evolve from the character's ignorance, mistakes, and misfortunes whenever he encounters modern things in a new environment. According to Beez (2006:11), *Juha Kasembe*'s youthful behaviour of hiding his mistakes whenever he blunders and his show-off acts create most of the jokes in

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<sup>222</sup> The word proper translation for the word "*Ulimwengu*" into the English is "world" not Environment as translates Jigal Beez, 2006, p.11

the cartoons. In his later invention, P.P. Kasembe does not change much of the nature of his messages, such as social commentaries, but improves his artwork by making *Mhuni Hamisi*'s strips more realistic and action-adventure funnies. Jigal Beez argues that this development in P.P. Kasembe's cartoons is influenced by the US-based syndicate cartoons<sup>223</sup>:

This style is remarkably different from Kasembe's first naïve 'Juha Kasembe's na Ulimwengu wa Leo' strip. One possible influence could have been the US strip 'Roy Rogers', which appeared in *Baragumu* about 1958 and 1959, printed in the original English with the Swahili translation underneath panels (Beez 2006:12)

Christian Gregory, popularly known for his cartoon character "*Chakubanga*" (Fig.216), was another pioneer cartoonist. Gregory's cartoons were mostly published in government and party newspapers *Mfanyakazi*, *Mzalendo*, and *Uhuru* during the 1970s and 1980s. Leif Packalen records Gregory's cartoon works in 1967, when Tanzania became a socialist state, and, therefore, links his comic strips with *Ujamaa* propaganda:

Chakubanga poses as the ordinary man from the street, at least the way the ordinary man was seen by the ruling party, TANU-having some minor vices such as drinking and chasing women or criticizing corrupt practices in the local administration, but overall, being content with the political system and government and a bit conservative (e.g., when he makes fun of women wearing mini-skirts, Fig.216) [Beez, 2006:13]

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<sup>223</sup> See, Packalen 2009, p.319





Fig.216 Strips of the 1970s *Chakubanga* cartoon series by Christian Gregory (chekanakitime.blogspot.com, accessed on August 2019)

Criticism of *Chakubanga* as a conservative character supporting the ruling party and the government, as highlighted by Jigal Beez in the extract above, is also confirmed by the government's appreciation of Gregory's cartoon works found on page 29 of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth's 1979 book *Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo*, or *Culture as a Tool for Development*. Certainly, Christian Gregory's cartoons were less involved with ridiculing the government and party leaders. In his series of *Chakubanga* comic strips, Gregory had several characters which appeared in confrontations with *Chakubanga*. These include *Chupaki* (*Chakubanga*'s son) and *Mama Chupaki*, *Chakubanga*'s wife. James Gayo admits having been inspired and mentored by Christian Gregory to undertake cartooning as a profession. Gayo also asserts that *Chakubanga* cartoons have inspired many young comic artists such as Philip Ndunguru, Moses Luhanga, and Ted Marealle since the 1970s (Personal interview, 19 January 2017). Gayo's appreciation of Christian Gregory's influence on the second generation of cartoonists such as himself, in the early 1980s, could be attributed to the fact that the cartoon works of this second generation of cartoonists adopted the same conservative approach in the choice of subject matter and manner of presentation.

### 3.3.2.1.1 Cartooning Art during the Neo-Liberal Economic Era

An increase in the number of newspaper publications and freedom of expression in mass media, which came with multiparty politics in 1992, was the foremost reason for the boom in cartooning art in Tanzania (Packalen 2009:309). Cartoons, which appeared in newspapers as editorials and humour strips (Fig.218), provided a secure platform for editors to freely deliver their political commentaries and criticism. The cartoons, which are naturally humorous, were/are purposely employed to ridicule wrongdoers and increase public awareness of government malpractices. In the 1990s, political cartoons in Tanzania addressed issues which could otherwise not get “open” coverage or reportage in the mainstream mass media, such as issues concerning high profile corruption scandals (Fig.220) whereas strips ridiculed societal misbehaviours (Fig.221). The third generation of cartoonists, which emerged in the early 1990s, enjoyed a great degree of freedom of expression against both conservative cultural and political constraints. As Packalen (2009:312) notes, Ally Masoud, Nathan Mpangala and Sammy Mwamkinga are three most outspoken editorial cartoonists in Tanzania to-date. Samuel Mwamkinga’s cartoon “*Zaidi Tanzania 1995*” (Fig.217), or “the best in Tanzania”, is one of the early powerful political cartoons that openly criticised the country’s political set-up as being controlled by the same prominent politicians from the period of independence in 1961 until the reversion to multi-party politics in 1992. Samuel Mwamkinga, popularly known by his artistic name *Sammi*, exploits an incident from the 1995 Miss Tanzania beauty pageant performed in Dar es Salaam’s Sheraton Hotel to create his political commentary. He replaces the beauty contestants with the four foremost candidates in the first post-1990s multi-party presidential race. Sammi compares the first multi-party presidential elections with the 1995 beauty

contest, which attracted criticism because its judges endorsed and selected the winning contestant in spite of the audience's preference.

In the cartoon, Sammi ridicules President Nyerere as the “chief judge”, pointing to the first contestant lining up from the left as an undisputed winner even before the contest began. A closer look at the cartoon reveals that the cartoonist was also criticising several other conservative socio-cultural traditions reflected in the events of the first multi-party elections. Sammi's choice of a beauty pageant contest augurs well with the comparison of the 1995 elections with the prescribed marriage tradition among the majority of Tanzanians. Under such a custom, a spouse has to be approved by elders or parents. A prescribed marriage tradition suggests that couples have no ultimate freedom when choosing who they should marry. During the first multi-party elections, President Nyerere is accused of influencing the choice of the next president despite the preference of his party's high committee. Samuel Mwamkinga's cartoon, “*Zaidi Tanzania 1995*” appeals to cultural and political change in the wake of liberal economic and political practices.



**Fig.217 *Zaidi Tanzania 199*, cartoon published in the *Majira* newspaper, October 1995 (Courtesy of Sammi Mwamkinga, May 2017)**

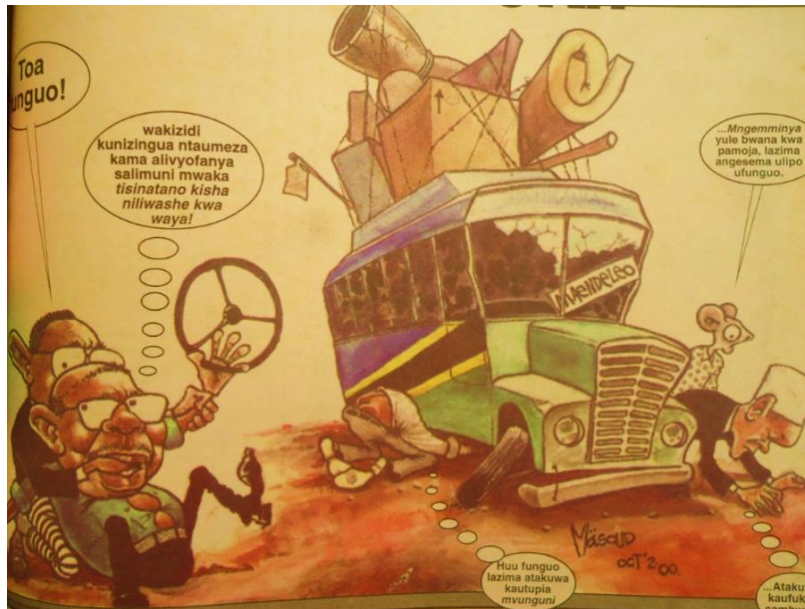
Another factor that stimulated editorial use of cartoons was the availability of many young, brilliant, and talented cartoonists trained at KYAA<sup>224</sup> and abroad. Almost all the cartoonists dominating the cartoon and comics scene in Tanzania were locally-groomed except for Noah Yongolo and Godfrey Mwampembwa, who had acquired their training in Europe (Lent 2009). The first private newspaper to publish regular editorial cartoons in Tanzania was a daily, *Majira* (Times) in 1994. Since 1995, more editors gradually included editorial cartoons (figs.219 and 220), as reported by John Lent's 2009 survey, *Cartooning in Africa*:

At least 23 cartoonists draw for the newspapers, but only five do political cartoons. All dailies, except the government's *Daily News*, have cartoons of some type. The ruling party newspaper *Uhuru* contains a strip, but no political, and Mwananchi and Tanzania Leo each have political cartoon but no strip. The Guardian has three daily strips or gag panels, all drawn by David Chikoko: 'the Flexibles', 'Gwiji' and 'The Haambilikis'. Two dailies each have two strips, *Majira* with 'Nkora' and 'Kingo' and *Mtanzania*, 'Ziro' and 'Bolibo'. Other dailies with Tanzanian strips are *Uhuru*, *Dar Leo*, *Alasiri*, *Nipashe*, and *The African*. Patty Eusebio draws 'Ziro' and 'Silencer' for *Mtanzania* and *The African*, respectively (Lent 2009:226)

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<sup>224</sup> Ali Masoud, Nathan Mpangala, Gwalugano Mwakatobe and Cloud Chatanda were trained at the KYAA in early 1990s





**Fig.218 Editorial cartoon by Ali Masoud “Kipanya”, depicting political conflict between the ruling party and opposition leaders over development (*Maendeleo*) policies, published in *Majira* on 2 October 2000**

(Source: Business Times Limited Library at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)



**Fig.219 A cartoon by Nathan Mpangala depicts the effects of unhealthy diet as causing obesity among women. Obesity is a miserable condition as perceived by the urban community and their spouses, published in a tabloid *Sanifu* in 1999**

(Source: Business Times Limited Library at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

During the 1990s cartooning appeared to be the most appealing form of art through which social commentaries could be freely presented on various political and non-political issues. Prominent Tanzanian artists such as the painter and art educator Elias Jengo also agreed with this assertion:

However, in the visual arts area, cartoon art has been the most significant form of art of social comment. Probably the best cartoon art in Tanzania appeared during the Uganda War period, a factor which should remind Miller that art of social comment springs largely from very acute emotional experiences (Jengo 1985:123)

During an interview, Penina Mlamba, a theatre arts professor and the present Chairperson of the Tanzania National Arts Council, added to Jengo's comment when she argued that *"cartoonists, unlike the painters and sculptors, were the only visual artists who have actively participated in criticism of the country's political situation since the 1980s and the 1990s"* (personal interview, September 2015 in Dar es Salaam). Unlike paintings, murals, and sculptures, cartoon art offers many advantages. Its immediate and serial characteristics of presentation through newspapers made it an effective medium in the multi-party political scene of Tanzania in the post-1990s period. Furthermore, the possibility of adding text, caption or dialogues to the drawing adds a convenient and easy form of message delivery. Besides, the lack of clearly-defined restrictions on humoristic and satirical expressions in Tanzania's Newspaper Act of 1976 allowed cartoonists and editors' hostile commentaries on issues concerning corruption scandals, infidelity, and irresponsibility among top government leaders and politicians<sup>225</sup> (Fig.218).

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<sup>225</sup> President Mwinyi's alleged marriage with an underage scandal was satirised in the *Sanifu* tabloid in 1997 before that, the story was just shared among people gathering in street coffee shops of Dar es Salaam and other parts of the country. Also the sugar importation scandal which caused the resignation of Prof. Simon Mbilinyi as a Minister of Finance in November 1996 was also satirized in humour tabloids such as the *Sanifu* in early 1997 more than it was reported in the mainstream newspapers



**Fig.220 An editorial cartoon in the *East African* portrays President Kikwete “JK”**  
 (Source: [businesstoday.co.ke/](http://businesstoday.co.ke/) accessed on August 2019)

However, despite its successes in promoting freedom of speech and extending the borders beyond textual information delivery, on several occasions newspapers have been held responsible for publishing editorial cartoons and comic strips that the authorities perceived to have defamed or falsely depicted politicians, government officials and prominent businessmen. A most recent example was the government ban issued against the *EastAfrican* newspaper for an “indecent” editorial cartoon (Fig.220) published on 17 January 2015. In the cartoon, a Tanzanian artist, Godfrey Mwampembwa alias “Gado”, whose activities were based in Kenya, ridiculed President Jakaya Kikwete, popularly known by his nickname, “JK”, based on his initials as a corrupt and incompetent leader of the likes Tanzania had never seen before. The cartoon symbolically named and portrayed the President by inscribing “JK” on a pillow upon which a relaxed male figure rests surrounded by a harem. “JK” gets satirized here for allegedly being an irresponsible hedonist who misused the country’s highest office to enjoy his promiscuity, which the detractors claimed distracted him from his

duties as head of state<sup>226</sup>. This cartoon caught the attention of the majority and caused a hot debate. The government was displeased and banned the *EastAfrican* newspaper instantly. In its official statement concerning the cartoon, the then government spokesman, Assah Mwambene, who was also the Director of Information, said

... also took exception to the cartoon in last week's issue of the paper, which he said demonstrated bad taste and disrespect to the person and office of the president. As a result, The *EastAfrican* will not be circulated in Tanzania until the legal issues are settled<sup>227</sup>

What the current study found a little alarming, even though cartoonists may over-exaggerate things in their artworks, was the fact that complaints, or rather, criticism against editorial and humour cartoons as being sometimes speculative, unfair and defaming were expressed by the key player in the promotion of freedom of speech in the mass media. This was observed by John Lent, who quotes Kajubi Mukajanga, the Executive Secretary of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), in the following extract:

These concerns aside, cartooning in Tanzania is free and open, perhaps irresponsibly so, according to one media critic. Writing in *Media Watch*, the newsletter of the Media Council of Tanzania, Kajubi Mukajanga felt that some cartoons breach good taste. He contended that cartoons must be subjected to 'the rigorous ethical code', that 'there is no art for art's sake' because art delivers a message and '(any) artistic creation is a statement of an agenda' (Mukajanga 2000). Mukajanga expresses dismay at caricatures that invented 'things that are not there' and cartoons and strips of a scatological and/ or blatantly sexual nature... (Lent 2009:234)

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<sup>226</sup> "...But the back breaker was the cartoon on President Kikwete in *The EastAfrican* that led to the closure of the newspaper in Tanzania on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015. GADO caricatured the then President half nude, eating grapes from the hand of one of seven well-endowed ladies. Each of these women represented seven weaknesses in Jakaya Kikwete's government". <http://businesstoday.co.ke/the-bold-cartoon-that-got-gado-fired-by-nation-media/> Retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>227</sup>See, Tanzania bans 'The *EastAfrican*' over coverage of govt, registration'. Retrieved from: <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Tanzania-now-bans-The-EastAfrican-/2558-2600522-ydbvagz/index.html>, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

Adding to Mukajanga’s critique, the present research also found Gado’s cartoon (Fig.220) distasteful in its use of female characters—harem—to represent the “seven weaknesses of the JK”. The cartoonist develops his plot and theme based on stereotypical constructions which objectifies women as evil and bad influences on men. Cartoonists are expected to discourage this negative outlook against women. Despite constant criticisms and confrontations, as the ongoing discussions reveal, it is evident that since the advent of private press operations in the 1990s, Tanzania has remained a cartoonists’ heaven (Lent 2009:234; Beez 2006:19). There is no doubt that cartoonists’ work environments are freer in Tanzania than in many countries south of the Sahara. On the other hand, cartoonists are struggling with a number of challenges. Insecure employment and harsh newspaper policies often make their jobs hard. On several occasions, cartoonists complained about editors reproducing their works without offering them any remunerations or acknowledgments. Besides, cartoonists are not directly employed by the newspapers but are instead always treated as freelancers (Lent 2009:235-237). In addition, cartoonists in Tanzania are still struggling for recognition and appreciation in the society in which they work. The general public’s attitude towards cartooning as “unserious”, a little “childish” and something with little significance for a professional career has continued to limit public and professional appreciation of cartooning as a serious genre (Lent 2009:235).



**Fig.221 James Gayo’s Kingo cartoon strip (2017)**  
(Source: [www.lambiek.net/](http://www.lambiek.net/) accessed on August 2019)

### 3.3.2.2 Book and Advertising Art in the 1990s

The 1990s' developments in cartoon and comic art attracted the attention of educational publishers and advertisers as well. In 1991, CODE, a Canadian NGO, founded the Children's Book Project (CBP) in Dar es Salaam with objectives of fostering and cultivating the reading culture among pupils and schoolchildren all over Tanzania<sup>228</sup>. CODE intended to provide educational support by financing the production of locally-grounded reading and education books. Therefore, CBP was established to realise this objective through local education partners. The project was initially fully funded by CODE itself, SIDA, DANIDA, the British Council, Hivos, the Canadian Fund, the Agha Khan Foundation and many others. CBP, which is still operational, organises workshops and training for school teachers and children's book writers to increase knowledge and capacities for the production of children literature and ultimately cultivate readership. In 1992, the first CBP director, Elibariki Moshi, sought to include book illustration training in the CBP's workshops. The early artists included in the workshops were KYAA members such as Ali Masoud, Paul Ndunguru, and Cloud Chatanda. Other artists were Collins Mdachi and Abdul "Marion" Gugu. The first workshop that took place at the British Council in Dar es Salaam focused on training book illustrators and writers, during which Richard Maballa's *Kurwa na Doto*, or "Twins", was illustrated by Paul Ndunguru. Several other children's stories based on Jane Goodall's chimpanzee research (*Watu wa Msituni* or people of the forest) in Tanzania's Gombe forests were published as supplementary books for children in primary schools (Personal interview,

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<sup>228</sup> See, <http://www.readingworld.com/index.php?id+15982>, Retrieved on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the Ethnological Museum's Library in Berlin, Germany



Paul Ndunguru. 3 November, 2015). Since 1991, when illustrators were included in CBP programmes, thousands of fully-illustrated children's books have been published.

From the mid-1990s, Moshi's initiatives at the CBP extended illustrator training programmes to outside Tanzania. In its first programme, Raza Mohamed, a senior illustrator alongside young talents such as Paul Ndunguru, Abdul Gugu, Ali Masoud Kipanya, and Collins Mdachi<sup>229</sup> were sent to acquire advanced illustration techniques and printing technology training at Longman Publishers in Harare, Zimbabwe. In the next batch, Godfrey Semwaiko, Cloud Chatanda and William Temu, the only senior artist from the Mwanza region, also acquired their training in Harare. More training and internship programmes for Tanzanian illustrators were organised by the CBP at Heinemann Publishers and Jacaranda Designs in Nairobi between 1996 and the 2000s.

As a result, when more private book publishers emerged in the early 2000s, it was not difficult to find professionally-trained illustrators looking for jobs. Paul Ndunguru, Cloud Chatanda, Abdul Gugu, Collins Mdachi and Ali Masoud have illustrated hundreds of books for CBP, Mture Educational Books Publishers and the *Mkuki na Nyota* Publishers. Paul Ndunguru and Ali Masoud have worked for several years as official illustrators for CBP publications whereas Abdul Marion Gugu worked for the Colour Centre, and Godfrey Semwaiko for E&D Publishers. John Kilaka is the only Tanzanian artist who benefited from CBP training as both a writer and an illustrator (Personal interview, Demere Kitunga on 8<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> During the early years of CBP engagement with artists as an illustrator, Collins Mdachi, who passed away in 2015, was the only young artist in the group with illustration skills acquired while working with the IDM Mzumbe in-house press at Morogoro. Collins later on resigned from his employment to join Paul Ndunguru and Abdul Gugu to establish their private illustrators' studio at Mwenge area in Dar es Salaam in the early 2000s.

December 2016). Kilaka is originally a painter in the *Tingatinga* art genre. He has written and illustrated several of his own books (Fig.222) in *Tingatinga* art illustrations. However, Kilaka’s children’s books are more popular in Europe and America than in Tanzania. Perhaps this is caused by his 1995 pornographic pictures<sup>230</sup>. In Tanzania, book publishers are generally “very observant” of the behaviour of their partners, as the government is the main client of children’s books, which it purchases for primary and secondary schools.



**Fig.222 John Kilaka’s books translated into German (the 2000s)**  
 (Source: <https://www.baobabbooks.ch/de/buecher/> accessed on August 2019)

According to James Gayo (Personal interview, 19 January 2017), comic artists in Tanzania were also closely associated with the growth of advertising art before the advent of large-format printers and digital technology in the early 2000s. Most of the advertisements were created as comic strips and published in humour magazines and newspapers such as *Sani* (Fig.213), *Kingo* (Fig.216), and *Bongo*. From the 2000s, illustrators have also been hired as storyboard artists in several advertising agencies. International agencies such as USAID, UNICEF, UNDP, Action Aid, Alliance Française, British Council and the Goethe Institute are among the highest-paying advertisers who have solicited illustrators’ services in their

<sup>230</sup>“Untitled”, <http://www.invaluable.co.uk/artist/kilaka-john-n2uj7kkuu7>. Retrieved on 12th June 2017 in Berlin, Germany. Between 1995 and 2010 Kilaka painted a couple of pornographic artworks available online.



local development support projects in Tanzania. The “Fataki Anti-HIV/AIDS Campaign for Youths” (Fig.223) was a successful nationwide poster and banner advertising campaign funded by USAID through the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) in 2007. The posters were drawn by Paul Ndunguru.



**Fig.223 A poster created for TACAIDS by Paul Ndunguru (2007)**  
 (Source: ADSTAR One Case Study Series December 2010, accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.224 From the left, a poster advertising fast “emergency call” services by the Vodacom Company, drawn by Cloud Chatanda for *Kingo* magazine. A comic strip by John Kaduma ad for Masumin Printways Products in *Bongo* magazine (the 2000s)**  
 (Source: National Library of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam, October 2015)

In a nutshell, the advent of comic and cartoon arts, as inspired by private media institutions in Tanzania from the mid-1980s and throughout the 1990s, brought about significant changes in visual arts consumption, and business and visual artists' welfare. Unlike in the *Ujamaa* period, during the neo-liberal era, visual arts patronage expanded and was taken to the individual level, in which consumption expanded and artists earned more income from their works than previously. During an interview, Paul Ndunguru admitted that young artists, like him, have been well-remunerated for every piece of cartoon or comic artwork they have produced. He cited the example of senior illustrators such as Raza Mohamed, who did so much between the 1960s and 1990s but were not properly remunerated by their clients, who were mainly government institutions.

During the *Ujamaa*, visual arts were mainly monuments and murals placed on government and party buildings for public display. During the *Ujamaa* period, art contained 'serious messages' with very little humorous content. In the neo-liberal era, the arts, especially the comics, involved stories directly linked to the everyday lives of the audience. Although the arts were only based on paper prints, especially newspapers, the visual arts during the neo-liberal era engaged the public in all aspects of life such as politics, economics, culture, and education. On the other hand, this era has witnessed very little of visual arts such as painting and sculpture, which had been produced and enjoyed by the public. In fact, a review of the cartoon and comic arts in several southern African countries, with which Tanzania's history of 'contemporary' arts is correlated, reveals that similar factors were observed as main influences behind art developments in these countries as well. John Lent argues that in these countries, comics and cartooning arts developed in reaction to repressive regimes, economic deprivation and public and professional neglect (Lent 2009:219).

### 3.4 Art Galleries and the Promotion of Visual Arts during the Neo-Liberal Era

Since the nationalisation of Mohamed Peera's gallery and curio in 1967, two-and-half decades have passed without outstanding private visual art dealers. The supposedly private dealers such as the Karibu Art Gallery (KAG) established in 1970 and the *Nyumba ya Sanaa* Art Gallery<sup>231</sup> (NYS) were both established during the *Ujamaa* era and survived the period because they operated as co-operative<sup>232</sup> establishments instead of "rigorously" private enterprises. The KAG, established in Dar es Salaam, long operated as a "co-operative" outlet for craftsmen from up-country and for freelance Makonde sculptors. It openly advertised itself as a private art gallery in the 1990s. KAG's support for the *Ujamaa* cultural programmes within its premises has helped it to organise successfully domestic sales and international exports of Makonde arts and crafts in Japan, the US, Germany, and the UK, with little interruptions by the government. On the other hand, the NYS's gallery was acknowledged as a co-operative art shop in which its member artists sold their artworks. Its compliance with the *Ujamaa* policies such as providing talented unemployed youths by engaging them in visual arts business activities earned it trust and close relationship with the government<sup>233</sup>. The diversity of activities such as art sales, training, and artistic co-operation and "national culture" promotion in KAG and NYS makes the categorisation of these two institutions as private art businesses relatively complicated. The galleries were very small establishments. Thus, the only art gallery worth a name until 1996, when it was privatised,

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<sup>231</sup> See, Nyerere Opens Nyumba ya Sanaa, *The Daily News* October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1983

<sup>232</sup> See, Arts and Crafts: A way to Self-Reliance, *The Daily News* July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1975

<sup>233</sup> Mr. Origenes Uiso has received several appreciation letters from the President's office and other public offices concerned with national culture promotion acknowledging his contribution to the arts, culture and the tourism sectors in the country. He was also provided with a huge plot to build his KAG at the Mbezi beach area without difficulty when he applied. Mr. Uiso is an honorary member of the State House Decoration committee. (Personal interview, Origenes Uiso February 2017)

was HANDICO, or the National Art Gallery (NATG) at the IPS building in the Dar es Salaam city centre.

### **3.4.1 Private Art Galleries and the Visual Art Business in Tanzania**

A closer look at the art business through established Tanzanian institutions showed very little progress. Although, currently, Tanzania encourages private business ventures in the arts, only a few local and foreign investors have established visual art businesses. This was critically observed during a survey of the East African visual arts scene, in which the situation in Tanzania was not promising:

There is reported to be a lack of established or respected contemporary galleries in Dar es Salaam. A number of commercial spaces have closed down in recent months, often due to land redevelopment, including Mawazo Art Centre, an initiative of Rachel Kessi, an artist/choreographer based at Nafasi Art Space (Standing 2013:26)

Standing (2013) is referring to the demolition of the Young Men's Christian Association of Tanzania (YMCA)'s building to make way for a new skyscraper project in the centre of Dar es Salaam. In 2002, the YMCA building had provided space for an upcoming and short-lived contemporary art centre, the Mawazo Gallery,<sup>234</sup> closed in 2010 when the YMCA building was to be renovated. Four years before the Mawazo Art Gallery surfaced, the Art N' Frame, established by Muzu Sulemanji, a Zanzibari artist of Indian descent, was the only art gallery in downtown Dar es Salaam. However, as he is an artist himself, Muzu's Art n' Frame displays and sells more of his own artworks, such as paintings and photographs, than works by other artists. To a large extent, his gallery provides framing services more than the

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<sup>234</sup> Mawazo, meaning "ideas and thoughts" in Kiswahili, was dedicated to promoting and advancing contemporary art and artists in Tanzania. The gallery used to display sculptures, paintings, etchings, woodcuts, photography and a selection of local handicrafts. Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017 from: <http://www.wantedinafrica.com/yellowpage/mawazo-gallery/>

occasional orders or offers to sell outsider's artworks from the gallery's collection. During the present study, only a few selected artworks by established autodidactic artists, such as Haji Chilonga, Tobias Minzi, Frederick Kaija and Raza Mohamed were spotted in the gallery's collection. The Art n' Frame Gallery which is located at Msasani, one of the "classy" suburbs of Dar es Salaam, caters for high-profile tourists and foreign art collectors. Another contemporary art gallery operating in a similar specialized routine is the *La Petite Gallerie*, which was established and owned by Yves Gosciny since the early 2000s. The *La Petite Gallerie*, exhibits works by most well-known Tanzanian visual artists (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:114).

Of all the private galleries discussed in this section, the Cultural Heritage Art Gallery (CHAG), established in 2010 at Majengo in Arusha city (Fig.225) is perhaps the most appealing art business institution in Tanzania in terms of its design, programmes, size, general infrastructure and diversity of its collection. Situated in the same city as the East African Corporation headquarters, the gallery assumes its influence on the entire East African region in many ways, as the next paragraphs will show.



**Fig.225 The Cultural Heritage Art Gallery in Arusha**  
(Source: <http://www.culturalheritage.co.tz/> accessed on August 2019)

One of this study's interesting findings was the CHAG's policy or mission devoted to the preservation and promotion of Tanzania's artistic, historical and cultural heritage through visual arts collected for business purposes and those installed in its compound as parts of the gallery's decoration. The gallery's front yard is decorated with life-size sculptures displaying and commenting on the country's rich wildlife, history, and national performing arts culture such as dance and music or the *ngoma*. Close to the main entrance a life-size cement sculpture of the legendary Tanzanian blind drummer, Morris Nyunyusa, popularly known as "*Mzee Morris*" (Fig.226) stands. The sculpture is one of only two pieces<sup>235</sup> created to commemorate the amazingly talented *Mzee Morris*, who used to play 17 drums at once and whose music was used as the national radio (RTD) signature tunes in the news and several other cultural and entertainment programmes from independence until his death in 1999.

Other magnificent sculpture installations include the historical epic displaying Arabian and European slavers boarding a canoe with their consignment of slaves during the slave trade era around Zanzibar Island and the Bagamoyo shores. This artwork is realistic and aesthetically compelling when compared to similar historical sculptures installed in the town of Bagamoyo, in the Caravan *Serai* museum, the slave caravan carrying ivory piece of the NMT in Dar es Salaam and a series of chained slaves at an old Anglican church in Zanzibar. The metal installation depicting Serengeti wildebeest migration (Fig.225) and the cement sculptural imitations of a traditional *Maasai* village (the *Maasai Boma*) are among the great artworks which define the CHAG as an exception. Tania Bale describes its general structure:

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<sup>235</sup> The other artwork on *Mzee Morris* Nyunyusa was a drawing used in the Tanzania Post Corporation's stamps printed in the 1970s and 80s. The CHAG's commission of an artwork to honour an artist is the first activity by a private art institution in Tanzania. *Mzee Morris* is one of a few national heroes to represent Tanzania in hundreds of national and international stages. He is also well-remembered for his stunning performance at the Expo'70 in Osaka, Japan.



The Gallery's exterior is inspired by a drum, shield, and spear; well-known African objects charged with traditional meanings. The spear represents survival and strength as a symbol of masculinity, pride, and prestige. The shield signifies safety and shelter and shelter and represents bravery and identity. The drum is a symbol of maternity and community as well as means of communication and celebration.<sup>236</sup>



**Fig.226 Cement sculpture of Tanzania's blind drummer, Morris Nyunyusa at the CHAG by Kioko in 1996**  
(Photograph by researcher in September 2017)



**Fig.227 A cement sculpture installation depicts Arab and European enslavers with their consignment of slaves aboard a canoe during the slave trade period in Tanzania, at the CHAG by Kioko in 1996**  
(Photograph by researcher in September 2017)

<sup>236</sup> <http://blog.africanartonline.com/post/44729933783/cultural-heritage-art-gallery-in-tanzania> - accessed on 18 September 2017 at FU, Berlin

The CHAG also houses a massive collection (Fig.228) of modern and contemporary artworks made from a wide range of media. The works include photography, bronze, plastic, stone and wood sculptures, paintings, bead and grass works, textiles and glassworks. Some original *Tingatinga* paintings, George Lilanga's *Mashetani* pieces and new Makonde carving genres such as the *Kimbunga* (storm) by Joseph Nyunga 'Stone' and the *Maasai-Ujamaa* pole (Fig.102) are among the great contemporary Tanzanian artworks on display. The gallery walls are elegantly decorated with huge painting exhibits ranging from realistic to abstract compositions. Works by autodidactic painters such as Ibrahim Pandu, Haji Chilonga, Raza Mohamed, Vita Lulengo "Malulu" and Sebastian Frank Lyimo to mention a few, are displayed at the CHAG. An observation on the quality and quantity of artworks exhibited in the gallery produces a feeling of artistic accomplishment in those who have an opportunity to sell or exhibit their artworks in this marvellous art infrastructure in East African region.



**Fig.228 Inside the CHAG with its enormous collection**  
(Source: <http://www.culturalheritage.co.tz/> accessed on August 2019)

However, the CHAG has shown some weakness in its promotion of Tanzanian-produced visual arts. Despite their great numbers and ability to produce good works in the East African region, Tanzanian artists have very limited access to displays and sales within the gallery. Most artworks displayed are brought from Kenya instead of Tanzania. Probably the fact that the CHAG owner, Mr. Saifudin Khanbhai, resides in Nairobi, where he also operates a



number of other businesses, could account for his gallery's collection preference. Besides, the CHAG employs a young Kenyan woman as its curator for the gallery's collection of about 2000 artworks, some of which come from West African countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria and Ivory Coast, to mention a few containing the dominant collections. It was also established that the curator, who introduced herself as Yvonne, had insufficient curatorial experience or knowledge and information about famous Tanzanian artists and their works, which she struggled to explain to the present researcher (personal interview, Ms. Yvonne at CHAG-Arusha September 2015).

All these factors imply that the lack of a good arts and cultural policy to protect local production and counter unfair exchange in the art business is to the disadvantage of Tanzania. National arts and culture promotion authorities, gallery owners, and artists will have to work together to ensure fair competition among the art business players with the CHAG, which is the biggest private art promotional institution in Tanzania. Nonetheless, rigid business arrangements, strict "standards" on the quality of artworks and the habit of working with only a few selected artists were among the hindrances that account for the insufficient inspiration and promotion of visual arts by local artists in almost all surveyed privately-owned art galleries in the Dar es Salaam and Arusha regions. The majority of the artists, even those "highly acclaimed" in Tanzanian art productions, still work in "*a hand-to-mouth*" circle. At times, some of these artists can hardly afford standard-quality art materials such as canvases, acrylics or oils to produce world-class artworks for sale in the bigger, international galleries of Nairobi, Johannesburg or Dubai. With the exception of the KAG, the majority of private art galleries in Tanzania operate as a-go-between for reputable foreign collectors. The services and infrastructure for an art business sector through art galleries as private

institutions are almost non-existent in Tanzania and, thus, do not contribute to the national economy as they do in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Morocco and South Africa<sup>237</sup>.

### **3.5 Western Cultural Agencies and Contemporary Arts Promotion in Tanzania**

Since the beginning of intensive campaigns for national arts and culture promotion on 10 December 1962, the Tanzania government promised and openly declared its intention to borrow and share good cultural developments through collaboration and fair exchanges with other nations. This was clearly stated by President Nyerere during his inaugural speech:

...But, I don't want anybody to imagine that to revive our culture means at the same time to reject that of any other country. A nation which refuses to learn from foreign cultures is nothing but a nation of idiots and lunatics. Mankind would not progress at all if we refused to learn from each other. But to learn from each other's cultures does not mean we should abandon our own. The sort of learning from which we can benefit is the kind which helps us to perfect and broaden our own culture...  
(Mbughuni 1974:18)

For the past five decades, Nyerere's statement has provided the basis for various cultural exchange projects between Tanzania and many other countries. There are so much appreciated visual arts that are fruits of such cultural exchange and collaboration. One can easily see that almost all, traditional, modern and contemporary visual art forms developed in Tanzania after the 1960s result from cultural fusions due to internal and external influences. One example that attests to this view includes the spread of the art of high-backed thrones among the *Wazaramo*, the *Wagogo*, and the *Wanyamwezi* in the nineteenth century as influenced by local trade activities. Recent examples include the birth of contemporary

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<sup>237</sup>See, Africa's 10 Best Contemporary Art Galleries. Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/articles/the-ultimate-guide-to-africa-s-10-best-contemporary-art-galleries/>

Makonde sculpture in the early 1950s, a result of immigrations of *Wamakonde* groups from the Mueda plateaus in northern Mozambique towards the southern regions of Mtwara and Lindi in Tanzania, as argued by Kingdon (1996:56-57). This also includes the birth of the *Tingatinga* square painting genre by *Wayao* and *Wamakua* folk-artists lead by its originator, Edward Said Tingatinga, who is believed to have been inspired by the Congolese painters who had resided in Msasani areas of Dar es Salaam since the 1960s (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:6). Furthermore, when we look at the growth of contemporary artistic practices surfacing in the current visual art scene, we are exposed to the collaborations between Tanzania and several Western cultural institutions that have helped realise countless projects in visual art development. This section will appreciate and describe such influences through educational training and resource support, construction of art training and display infrastructure, commissions, artistic exposure through workshops, exhibitions, residencies, and exchange. Therefore, this particular section in this chapter is intended to explain the selected general and specific Western cultural agencies that have influenced the development of contemporary art in Tanzania since 1985, a period in which Tanzania reopened its doors for cooperation with the West after two decades of closed-collaborations with only socialist countries such as the People's Republic of China, the then USSR and the GDR (Askew 2005:307-309).

### **3.5.1 Miscellaneous Influences from the Western Institutions since the early 1980s/90s**

Before 1985, very little collaboration existed between Western cultural agencies and Tanzania. Miller (1975) acknowledges that the biggest contribution East African countries received from their Western partners was training in the visual arts and exposure through scholarships organised in the UK, Canada, and the US. Until the late 1980s, four Tanzanian

artists and visual art educators benefited from training programmes abroad. These were Sam Ntiro,<sup>238</sup> who was awarded a scholarship for advanced studies at Slades in the UK and Ali Darwish, who completed his doctoral studies at the University of London. Kiure Francis Msangi finished his doctorate degree in the US, and Elias Jengo finished his master's degree in Canada. The latest scholarships on visual art were those granted to J.W. Masanja and Fadhili Sifaeli Mshana, the junior academics from the UDSM's Department of Art, to pursue their master degree studies in the UK during the early 1990s. In 2014, the *Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Tanzania (MoEVT), provided a scholarship to the present researcher, who is also a painter and an art educator from the UDSM, to pursue doctoral studies in art history at the Free University of Berlin. These overseas training projects have, in return, produced visual art professionals who have become strong and influential agents in improving visual art education and administration in Tanzania through research, publications, and inspiration to younger generations.

From the mid-1980s onwards, various European organisations financed projects for visual arts training infrastructure. In 1983, the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), with its aid of 6.5 million shillings, built the *Nyumba ya Sanaa*, a place where famous artists such as John Fundi, George Lilanga and Augustino Malaba promoted and prospered through art (Pruitt 2013). A similar initiative was undertaken by the Danish embassy in 1990, when its development co-operation agency, the SDV, facilitated the construction of the KYAA Centre and art training programmes at the Mwananyamala-Msisiri area of Dar es Salaam.

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<sup>238</sup> Sam Ntiro was the first modern African artist to have his artwork purchased by a US public institution in the 1950s while attending his studies at the University of London. Pissarra 2015, p.25

Training programmes at the KYAA centre produced the majority of prominent Tanzanian graphic artists, currently-working cartoonists and comic artists. In 1996, the Swedish-Tanzania Friendship Association (SVETAN) and Swedish International Co-operation Agency (SIDA) financed Stanislaw Lux to establish and run the Bagamoyo Sculpture Art School (BSAS). The school was basically an NGO with objectives to provide visual arts training for talented jobless youths from all over the country. When he started the school, Stanislaw Lux,<sup>239</sup> who was a professional sculptor, focused his programme on cement, clay and redwood sculpture training. His school introduced a new “Makonde sculpture genre”. His students were trained to create sculptures from a variety of inspirational sources instead of just the usual myths as practiced for many years by the majority of traditional and modern Makonde carvers.

The BSAS introduced and promoted a genre of Makonde sculpture on the *Mkongo*, one of the redwood species in Tanzania. Their sculptures were greatly supported by several Scandinavian organisations campaigning for the conservation of the vanishing blackwood species, which had been massively harvested for the carving business since the 1960s. A few years later, Lux invited several professionals to provide training and organise workshops in textile design and painting. Ndesumbuka Merinyo, the co-director of the *Africa Sanaa*

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<sup>239</sup> Stanislaw Lux was trained as a sculptor in Poland, his home country, before he moved to work and live in Sweden. In the early 1990s he visited Tanzania and resided in Mtwara region, the southern part of Tanzania where he received training in traditional Makonde carving through apprenticeship. Between 1995 and 2001 he worked closely with the UDSM and CHAWASAWATA and, eventually, won the support of SVETAN and SIDA in establishing and running of the BSAS on the shores of the Indian ocean, adjacent to the then Bagamoyo College of Arts (TaSUBa). His school managed to train many modern sculptors working with a variety of media ranging from cement, clay, plastic, red and black woods, etc. However, the school which managed to secure a plot was never built following Lux’s departure back to Sweden due to misunderstandings with the local authorities as well as financial constraints to run the school which heavily depended on grants from donors (Personal interview, Neema Mjengwa 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015)

fashion and designs curio in Dar es Salaam, Godfrey Semwaiko, a graphics designer and TV programmer at the TBC and Mwandale Mwanyekwa, the only and highly celebrated Tanzanian female sculptor of Makonde art, are only a few of the successful artists trained at the BSAS until the late 1990s.

Another collaboration project aimed to boost the promotion and appreciation of the visual arts through the development of skills and infrastructure was started in 1998 by SIDA and the government of Tanzania. According to Msuya (2014:64) in 1998 SIDA disbursed 800 million Tanzanian shillings to initiate the Culture Trust Fund (CTF), popularly known in Kiswahili as the *Mfuko wa Utamaduni*, a project which began its operations in 1999. From the early 2000s, almost all Scandinavian countries, including Norway, Denmark, and Finland were among the major sponsors of CTF activities. In 2000, the CTF established an award for the purpose of recognising and appreciating works of distinguished Tanzanian artists (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:115). The award was known as the *Zeze*, in which a winning artist received the *Zeze* trophy, a letter of congratulations, and a three million shillings' reward. The CTF lasted for 12 years, with only a few visual artists having benefited from its activities. The project was criticised for its controversial funding operations, which made the donors and the government demand a review of its activities (Msuya 2014:66).

Until 2008, out of the thirteen programmes the CTF administered, only three were approved and made operational with full donor funding. During an interview, the respondent, who requested anonymity, accused the CTF management of favouritism, nepotism, and misuse of funds with examples given from what he called “unfair” processes of selection and awarding artists. The *Mfuko wa Utamaduni* project was ended in 2012 (Msuya 2014:66; Gosciny and

Jengo 2016:115). Nevertheless, in 2005 SIDA signed a four-year contract for the period of 2005-09 to execute its 47,5 MSEK grant to finance “*capacity enhancement, technical architectural consultancy assistance and building constructions in making the “National Museum and House of Culture, Dar es Salaam” a facility for the multiplicity of culture in Tanzania*” (SIDA Country Report 2005-Tanzania, 2006:22). This major renovation project of the NMT facility included improving a new art gallery (Fig.25) as an independent part of the permanent exhibition in the main museum building. Since the revival of good political and economic relationships with Western countries, countless grants and aid have been received to help the development of visual arts in the area of the artists and art managers’ capacity-building, training, infrastructures, and connecting Tanzanian artists to global visual arts’ platforms.

### **3.5.2 Influences of the British Council and Alliance Française on the Visual Arts Scene**

The British Council and the Alliance Française are among Western cultural agencies regularly mentioned whenever discussions concerning the promotion of visual arts and contemporary artistic practices in Tanzania arose. During fieldwork for this study in November 2015, the researcher managed to conduct extensive interviews with representatives from both aforementioned cultural agencies in order to collect information on art promotion activities and projects. Mpoki Mwakilasa, the Visual Arts Project Officer co-ordinating in the Dar es Salaam, Pwani (Coast) and Arusha regions was the chief interviewee for the British Council Tanzania. During an interview which kept revolving on the question of activities, successes and challenges faced by the British Council in Tanzania, only a few projects were noted to have been initiated, planned and administered by the British

Council in collaboration with its partners such as the Nafasi Art Space and the Alliance Française in the Dar es Salaam and Arusha regions.

Specifically, this study found that there were no clearly-defined objectives to be achieved, as Mwakilasa declared that the British Council promotes and financially supports all kinds of visual arts practiced in country, though an observation of its past projects revealed that this organization promotes and encourages the adoption of modern and contemporary art as practiced in Europe and the US<sup>240</sup> (Fig.229). Nonetheless, through several British Council programmes, it is evident that they are focused on increasing growth potential in the administrative and technical skills in Tanzanian creative industries through professional training<sup>241</sup>. In the past decade, only two projects were conducted in the visual arts field. The Words and Pictures (*WaPi*) project, executed between 2006 and 2008, involving more than 1.2 million youths in the streets of the entire East African region, was not well-appreciated. The project was aimed at encouraging and inspiring platforms for free expression through cultural means<sup>242</sup>. Mwakilasa claimed that the *WaPi* project in Tanzania inspired an extended project in visual arts training implemented through several selected schools in the Dar es Salaam and Arusha regions in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Tanzania. Besides, it was claimed that several local NGOs involved in promoting visual arts training among young people have been, financially and technically, supported by

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<sup>240</sup> Since the liberalisation of cultural and media activities in Tanzania, the British Council has been instrumental in the promotion of pop culture through music and contemporary art practices in several cities. Evident to this claim are its sponsorships for Hip Hop and Rap music concerts such as the Yo-Rap Bonanza in 1999 in Dar es Salaam. From 2000s, British Council - Dar es Salaam had strongly supported and promoted the graffiti artists such as Mejah Mbuya of the *Wachata Crew*, who currently established their studio at the Nafasi Art Space in Dar es Salaam.

<sup>241</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.or.tz/programmes/arts/creative-industries>. Accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 at the Dahlem-Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.



the British Council since the early 2000s. However, there was no concrete evidence provided to substantiate such collaborations and successes.

Another training project aimed at sharpening the technical skills of visual arts players by the British Council was launched in 2015. It was co-ordinated by Mpoki Mwakilasa and Jan Van Esch, a former Nafasi Art Space's manager. The project was known as "Curating Art Shows"; it was facilitated by Rhea Dall, a Danish curator based in Berlin, also acknowledged for her curatorial practice at the Bergen Assembly, a perennial model for contemporary artistic production and research<sup>243</sup>. It was officially launched on 30 January 2015 and was implemented at the Nafasi Art Space in Dar es Salaam. During implementation, training was split into two phases. The first phase involved about 50 artists in an introductory workshop on curating practices, curating art shows issues, planning, the public and message creation. The second phase involved only a few selected artists at the same venue from 9 - 11 February 2015.

The Curating Art Shows training inspired two of its participant artists to attend advanced workshops in curating organised in the UK and Mozambique in 2016. These artists were Gadi Ramadhani, a self-taught artist popularly known for his bumptious claims as a self-taught 'art curator', and Diana Kamara, an assistant lecturer for textile design at the University of Dar es Salaam. Both artists, who regularly work at Nafasi Art Space, were fully sponsored by the British Council - Dar es Salaam (Mpoki Mwakilasa, interview on November 2015-Dar es Salaam). The British Council reported sponsoring many projects in

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<sup>243</sup> See, Announcement for "Curating the Art Shows", on British Council Facebook page posted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015

collaboration with its partners such as the Goethe Institut, Alliance Française Cultural Centre, and Nafasi Art Space. Thus, it contributed in one way or another to the successes of visual arts promotions in those institutions.



**Fig.229 Graffiti painted at the entrance of the British Council, Dar es Salaam**  
(A photograph by the researcher, November 2015)

### **3.5.2.1 Alliance Française Cultural Centre in Dar es Salaam**

At the Alliance Française Cultural Centre (AFCC) in Dar es Salaam, the chief respondent was Abel Shuma, a local Cultural Programmes Co-ordinator. Unlike the British Council, the Alliance Française's visual arts promotional activities in Tanzania are confined to providing a free, shared and vibrant platform for the artistic exchange of ideas, skills and experiences. This view is substantiated by its construction of a big, modern and fully furnished art exhibition hall (Fig.230) in the AFCC's compound. Shuma asserted that since its opening in 1998, the AFCC has financed and mounted over 100 exhibitions on different visual arts produced by local and international artists. Nevertheless, a closer look at several posters (Fig.232) of the past exhibitions mounted at the Centre shows that the Tingatinga paintings and modern Makonde sculpture (Fig.231), which some writers confuse with traditional

Tanzanian art, received more attention and promotion at the AFCC than other visual art practices in Tanzania, as Kathryn Standing also observed:

Alliance Française also has a presence in Dar es Salaam and is reported to show more traditional programmes of the work (Standing 2013:23)



**Fig.230 Exhibition Hall at the Alliance Française in Dar es Salaam**  
(Source: <http://afdar.com/> accessed on August 2019)

Between 2006 and 2015, a few renowned modern and contemporary artists also exhibited their works at the AFCC. These include Raza Mohamed and John Marou in April 2006, Elias Jengo and Leamon Green in October 2012, and Paul Ndunguru in December 2013. According to Shuma, the Alliance Française is, perhaps, the only Western cultural agency that promotes ‘local’ visual arts in Tanzania. He cited several cultural exchange constraints that have prevented France from using its cultural institution to assimilate Tanzanians into its culture and arts. Shuma said that French, as a language that is not fluently spoken in Tanzania, remained one impediment. In addition, he referred to the lack of qualified French personnel responsible for visual arts and cultural exchange programmes in the organisation. These two constraints made it difficult to organise exchanges and professional training for Tanzanian artists by experts from France as is the case with French-speaking or Francophone

countries such as Senegal. Shuma's arguments explain why for almost two decades, the Alliance Française in Dar es Salaam has directed its attention and focuses towards more French-language training programmes than visual art training programmes. The assumption in this study was that, perhaps, the Alliance Française in Dar es Salaam invested in language training to cultivate a French-speaking community in Tanzania so as to extend and expand collaborations for future cultural exchanges. Although it might have worked to the advantage of the Tanzanian local arts to get more exposure, lack of exchanges in terms of skills and experiences with French experts' contribution remained unhealthy for a young contemporary art scene in Tanzania. Contemporary artists and institutions in countries such as Senegal<sup>244</sup>, Cameroon, and Togo<sup>245</sup> have benefited from their practices through exchanges with artists and other art experts and managed to participate confidently in global visual arts practices and businesses.

Since its opening in Dar es Salaam, the AFCC has worked closely with its partners such as the British Council, the Goethe Institut, the Nafasi Art Space, but with only a few individual artists and private institutions. Recently, the Alliance Française extended its collaboration with the Department of Art at the University of Dar es Salaam. According to Kiagho Kilonzo, exhibitions co-ordinator for the Department of Art (UDSM), the partnership is aimed at providing art students with opportunities to immerse in contemporary art practices and exposure while still in training. The collaboration has had a significant impact on the experience of the students at the Department of Art, which has no professional exhibition

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<sup>244</sup> See, Grabski, J., 2017, p.97, "A Place from Which to Speak"

<sup>245</sup> See, "Aktion Afrika", 2008, p.13

space of its own. As a result of the collaboration, an annual series of exhibitions known as the “Affordable Students' Art Exhibition” was launched at the AFCC in 2012.

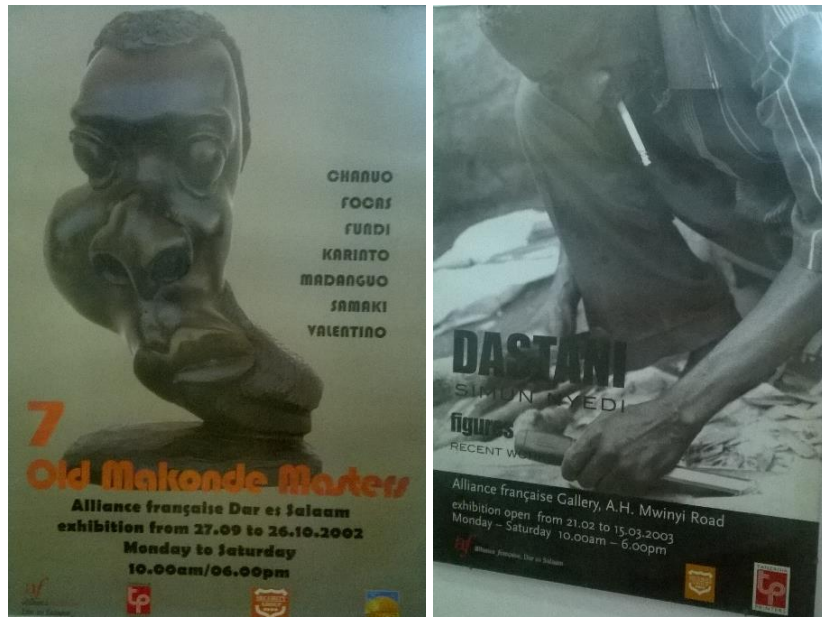
However, the promotion of the visual arts by the British Council and the Alliance Française were also found to bear some inconsistencies. During interviews with respective cultural programme co-ordinators, Mpoki Mwakilasa, who works for the British Council, and Abel Shuma of the AFCC, it emerged that they have neither seen nor read about the Tanzanian National Cultural Policy before. They hardly knew their roles in synthesising the foreign cultural policies of their employers to that of a host country, in this case, the cultural policy of Tanzania. This could explain the incessant complaints from some local Tanzanians that foreign cultural agency activities contribute to the erosion of African morals and values among the youth<sup>246</sup>. Moreover, it was also established that the two officers have not acquired proper training in visual arts promotion and management. This implies that they lack the required knowledge and qualifications to execute their administrative duties as visual arts and culture promoters to the satisfaction of the National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA) requirements, as stipulated by the BASATA regulations and national cultural policy<sup>247</sup>. It is unfortunate that either the managements of the Western cultural agencies or the BASATA authorities are unaware of the long-term ramifications of activities planned and executed by personnel with limited skills and knowledge in the field of arts and culture. Ironically, the remarks given by both cultural programme officers on the activities of their agencies suggested that they doubted whether the foreign cultural agencies they worked with

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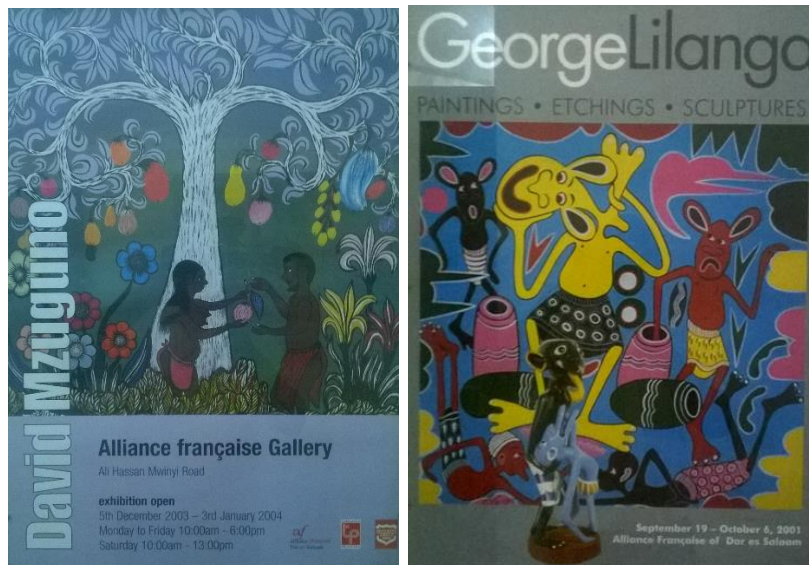
<sup>246</sup> See, Perullo, A., 2005, p.76

<sup>247</sup> See, Tanzania Cultural Policy, Chapter 9: Cultural Activities Administration and Financing in sections; 9.1.5, 9.1.6, and 9.1.7

were determined to help promote and develop local visual arts and artists or impose their cultures on Tanzania.



**Fig.231 Posters of early exhibitions on Makonde Master Sculptors mounted in 2002 and 2003 at the AFCC - Dar es Salaam**  
(Courtesy of the Cultural Programmes Department, AFCC - Dar es Salaam)



**Fig.232 Posters for exhibitions on the Tingatinga painters George Lilanga and David Mzuguno mounted in 2001 and 2004 at the AFCC - Dar es Salaam**  
(Courtesy of the Cultural Programmes Department, AFCC - Dar es Salaam)



### 3.5.2.2 Goethe Institut and the Promotion of Visual Arts in Tanzania

Standing (2013:22) asserts that the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam and Arusha is one of the leading foreign cultural agencies in the promotion and inspiration of emerging contemporary artistic practice in Tanzania. During the present study, six artists interviewed confirmed such involvement of Goethe Institut in the promotion of visual arts in Tanzania. There was also official confirmation from the cultural programme co-ordinator at the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam. Although Goethe Institut's activities in the promotion of the visual arts and cultural activities have been going on in Tanzania since the 1960s (Miller 1975), its contributions to visual art practices have been most influential and fruitful from 2008 onwards, when it reopened after being closed for a decade. The Goethe Institut works closely with several of Western cultural agencies situated in Tanzania.



**Fig.233 Aspiring young artists work on their art skills in a small gallery at the Goethe Institut's Dar es Salaam office**  
(Courtesy of the Goethe Institut, November 2015)

According to Daniel Sempeho, the cultural programme co-ordinator at the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam, his department organises and co-ordinates a wide range of activities intended to inspire and promote more contemporary art practices instead of traditional art:

*As much as the Goethe-Institut deals more or less with the modern and contemporary art. It does also support traditional arts depending on the event or level of support the art requires. This mostly applies to events which do not focus on the visual arts. For example fundraising, workshops, or concerts...*

As stipulated in the masterplan of the German cultural co-operation project “Aktion Afrika” since 2008, the Goethe Institut’s network in Africa intends to “...encourage artistic treatment of the concepts of hybridism, post-colonial experience, authenticity, sexual identity and migration, and encourage a lasting discussion of these within society through the work of artists...” (The cultural work of the Goethe-Institut in Sub-Saharan Africa in Regional Focus: Sub-Saharan Africa, 2008, p.3). A closer look at the concepts of this project shows that the Goethe Institut’s ambition is to bring about or rather influence changes in local African artistic and cultural practices. In the case of Tanzania, the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam encourages contemporary art practices by providing partial funding and display spaces for the artists to mount their exhibitions within and outside the institute’s premises. It also organises training and exchanges or visits for artists and art experts in Germany and the Goethe Institut’s network countries within and outside of Africa. Nonetheless, the support and promotion offered are usually prioritised to artists fitting the Goethe Institut’s perceptions of modern and contemporary art as stated by their Cultural Programme Officers:

*The Goethe-Institut does provide partial support to local artists who show great initiatives and unique taste in their work. How is it done? The centre provides exhibition space, access to regional and international events by paying partial or complete travel expenses. Other forms are to develop training and knowledge sharing opportunities events in which artist are receiving coaching or training in specific*



*artistic skills, for example, we invited Ms. Elyse Fonds (France-Germany) to conduct a workshop for Cartoonists and Illustrators in May 2015, and in another event we organised a Photojournalism Workshop in June 2015 (Daniel Sempheo, personal interview December 2015).*

Since 2008, when it reopened, several contemporary artists based in Dar es Salaam have benefited from the Goethe Institut's visual art promotion programmes. Painters such as Mac Sawaya (Fig.234), and Raza Mohammed (Fig.235), also the renowned illustrator Paul Nduguru, who recently found his passion in the installation art (Fig.242), Vita Malulu (Fig.244) a former signwriter who also trained in fine arts at the BCA, currently upcoming painter of critical political commentaries, and Rehema Chachage (figs.245 and 248) the only known video art practitioner in the country, are practising contemporary artists who have worked and benefited from the institute's programmes executed in and outside Tanzania. Although Raza Mohamed and Marc Sawaya are among the few senior artists who have long-practised modern art, the kind of artworks they create have been consistently defined along the lines of contemporary art practices in form(s), media, and messages. Paul Ndunguru and Rehema Chachage have been involved in several artists' exchanges co-ordinated by the Goethe Institut in collaboration with the Nafasi Art Space in Berlin, Kampala, and Nairobi. The details of the exchange projects they participated in are discussed in the following subsection titled *Nafasi Art Space and Contemporary Art Scene in Tanzania*.



**Fig.234 Marc Sawaya talks to Daniel Sempeho, the Goethe Institut’s Cultural Programme Officer, during the exhibition of his paintings in 2014**  
(Courtesy of the Goethe Institut, Dar es Salaam in November 2015)



**Fig.235 Raza Mohamed talks to aspiring young artists during the exhibition of his paintings at the Goethe Institut compound in 2014**  
(Courtesy of the Goethe Institute, Dar es Salaam in November 2015)

This brief review of the Goethe Institut’s visual art promotional activities in Tanzania illustrates that there is no doubt that it has helped a great deal in inspiring contemporary art practices in addition to reviving socially-relevant visual art practices. Clearly, the Institut’s

emphasis on the promotion of artistic freedom of expression has sparked an artistic reawakening in the production of critical and interesting artworks.

Before they received financial support for their individual projects, the majority of the artists found it increasingly difficult to create artworks that expressed their true feelings about daily life in their surrounding communities. It was even harder for them to produce works that criticise the poor socio-political situation in the country. The moral and material support provided by institutions such as the Goethe Institut, on the other hand, have significantly helped to provide and strengthen a conducive environment for artists to create independently and for aesthetic reason rather than simply being swayed to produce commercial works to make ends meet (Vita Lulengo, personal interview 2 November 2015). Despite occasional controversies due to differences between promoted Western cultural values and artistic approaches in the choice of topics for art production, presentation, and mannerisms, the kind of contemporary art the Goethe Institut promotes has to some extent found its place among local and international audiences in Tanzania.

In early November 2014, the Goethe Institut at Dar es Salaam provided partial funding to Vita Lulengo, alias “Malulu” to exhibit about 16 artworks comprising plastic material sculptures (Fig.244) and several paintings that tackle the topic of the elephant poaching crisis in Tanzania. The exhibition was given a sensitive title, “the *Majangili*”, a Kiswahili word for “Poachers”. The word *Majangili*, in the Tanzanian context connotes villainous behaviour. When people hear it, they associate it with heinous crimes against humanity too. The artworks exhibited depicted sensitive topics that exposed corruption and irresponsibility of both the government and the general public in the war against poaching and ivory businesses.

Some paintings depicted top government and religious leaders as participants in poaching activities. In Malulu's works presidents, cardinals, beauticians are depicted as *Majangili*. Whereas figure 238 paints a general picture of the poaching business in which foreign hunters, tourists, and even the local wildlife security personnel are perpetrators of the illicit hunting enterprise.



**Fig.236 The “Majangili” by Vita Lulengo in 2014**  
(Courtesy of the Vita Lulengo ‘Malulu’ in November 2015)

The exhibition was a huge success based on the discussions which erupted on many social networks such as the Jamii Forum, and Facebook<sup>248</sup>. Not much was seen in the mainstream media such as newspapers, TVs, and radios. There is a possibility that editors deliberately avoided coverage of the *Majangili* exhibition. Usually, in Tanzania, ‘false’ or ‘unfounded’ allegations against top government leaders, either presented in art or in any communication medium are not tolerated by the authorities<sup>249</sup>. Artworks such as the *Red Carpet* (Fig.237),

<sup>248</sup> See, Majangili | poacher: <https://web.facebook.com/events/goethe-institut-tanzania/majangili-poachers-by-vita-malulu/593302450815583/>

<sup>249</sup> The *EastAfrican* newspaper was banned for two years in 2015. Also the measures taken against “unpatriotic” artists have been long explained by the ministries responsible for national culture in several

which the Hamburg Mawingu Collection Gallery (HMC) dubbed “the masterpiece”<sup>250</sup> of the entire *Majangili* exhibition could have led to the closure of the exhibition or attracted a harsh government response against the artist and the Goethe Institut<sup>251</sup>. Fortunately for both the artist and the Goethe Institut, nothing of the sort happened. When the researcher asked the artist why he was never held responsible for his artworks which supposedly marred the reputation of national leaders of Tanzania and China, his reaction was natural and up to the point as he argued:

*My exhibition was mounted in the same week several scandals about elephant poaching scandals in Tanzania were exposed by the local and international media. On the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the BBC, VOA and Deutsche Welle stations that broadcast in Kiswahili exposed that the Chinese delegation that accompanied President Xi Jinping in his March 2013 official visit to Tanzania smuggled loads of ivory products through diplomatic bags during their departure. In that week, the President of Tanzania had a press conference hailing his successful visit to China, a report which was badly criticised by the local press too... So, you can see that it was a perfect time when I mounted my exhibition at Goethe Institut. The atmosphere was laden with ambivalent views on the poaching issues in our country and the manner in which the government was dealing with the allegations which associated its top officials...maybe that is any response that they could have taken could fuel the fire which was already difficult to handle, I hope they accepted my criticism... (Vita Lulengo, personal interview 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015)*

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publications. The oldest document to confirm this is a book titled: *The Utamaduni Chombo cha Maendeleo* 1979, pp. 29-30

<sup>250</sup>“...This second painting by Tanzanian artist Vita Malulu in our ARTISTS PRO WILDLIFE Gallery is probably the most important one which was painted in Tanzania [in] the [previous] years. It has an unequivocal statement that everyone understands. It actually shows the political most responsible persons for the poaching problem, the presidents of Tanzania and China, Kikwete and Xi Jinping. The artist succeeds with one single representation to focus all main aspects of the wildlife holocaust that since some years has taken place in Tanzania”. Accessed from: <https://artistsprowildlife.wordpress.com/> Accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>251</sup> In Tanzania, ex-presidents are legally protected from being held responsible for the “wrongs” committed during their tenures. The Political Service Retirement Benefits Act of 1999 is one of the provisions that are used to hold accountable anybody who accuses former presidents. In several occasions, individuals and media have been punished for accusing or associating ex-presidents with some malpractices. See, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/594bc01b4.html>

The “*Majangili*” exhibition was a phenomenal event in the Goethe Institut’s visual art promotional work in Tanzania. It re-opened opportunities for the visual arts as a medium to address burning societal issues. It also provided more art market opportunities beyond Tanzania. Only a few months after the exhibition, the Hamburg Mawingu Art Collection Gallery (HMC) of Germany bought most of the *Majangili* exhibited works sometime in mid-2015. The *Red Carpet* and the *Majangili* paintings were among the works purchased. Recently the HMC has engaged Vita Lulengo and Omari Chenga in its new project, *Artists Pro Wildlife*. The project promotes contemporary art, particularly paintings and sculptures tackling poaching problems in Tanzania. A big collection of artwork on this subject has been gathered already. Perhaps, the HMC’s project in anti-poaching through the arts is a variant of many others conducted by journalism and environmental protection platforms such as the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)<sup>252</sup>.



**Fig.237 “The Red Carpet” by Vita Lulengo “Malulu” in 2014 at the Goethe Institute**  
(Photo courtesy of the Artist, Dar es Salaam in November 2015)

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<sup>252</sup> See, <https://artistsprowildlife.wordpress.com/> Accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany



Apart from its successes with the *Majangili* show, the Goethe Institut holds a record of inspiring, financing and hosting several art exhibitions tackling topical issues in Tanzania. In 2011, the institute mounted Mwanzo Millinga's photography artworks (Figs.253 and 254) on Albino killings in Tanzania. The exhibition was called "*A Beautiful Desert Rose*". Mwanzo's photography exhibition was a great success. It attracted the attention of many anti-Albino killing campaigners inside and outside Tanzania and eventually made its way to another exhibition in Paris on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011. Also, the 2012 art installation exhibition, "*Mwangwi*" (Echo) by Rehema Chachage, as well as her video art pieces such as "*Kwa Baba Rithi Undungu*" (Fig.246), or "from our fathers we can only inherit the bloodline" and "*Swirl*" tackled sensitive topics such as inheritance and freedom of expression among women in Tanzanian societies. Paul Ndunguru's 2013 exhibition of two life-size paintings, "*Welcoming Him*" and "*Welcoming Her*" tackles topics of cultural change and identity challenges faced by diaspora communities when they return to their native homes after spending many years away.

Almost all of these artists who have produced artworks carrying strong social comments and criticisms admitted that support from, for example, the Goethe Institut made a significant contribution to the successes of their works. Production of artworks containing social commentaries is an art tradition that almost died alongside some of the *Ujamaa* visual artists of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. During its early stages in the 1980s and 1990s, the neo-liberal visual arts scene was inspired by business-minded local "collectors". During that phase, there were very little visual artworks that presented social or political commentary by artists. Since 2008, the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam has encouraged and inspired artists to produce what Wendl (2015:5) calls 'critical artworks' and exercise their freedom of

expression through the arts. It has managed to organise and execute many exhibitions, large and small. The Goethe Institut also provides a regular hangout and platform for young people interested in many other contemporary artforms such as hip hop, acrobatics, and theatre. This is evidenced by several cultural collaboration projects it has influenced between Tanzania and Germany. A good example here is the “*Baba Watoto*” project in Dar es Salaam, which is co-ordinated and managed by local Tanzanian NGOs in co-operation with the Ufa Fabrik of Berlin.

However, during the present study at the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam, a few things were observed as irregularities that might cause unnecessary misunderstandings between the Goethe Institut and the cultural promotion authorities in Tanzania. As already observed in the presentation and analysis of activities of the AFCC and the British Council, the Cultural Programme officer at the Goethe Institut has limited experience in the art and culture fields as required by the Tanzania cultural policy. Mr. Sempeho admitted to holding qualifications in the area of event planning and management in addition to claiming that he had attended some training in curatorial practices (Daniel Sempeho, Facebook chat, 23 June 2017). Tanzanian law requires that the Cultural Programme Officer at the capacity of an organisation such as the Goethe Institut, holds at least a bachelor’s degree in the field of arts or culture as stated here:

*9.1.5. Waendeshaji wakuu wa shughuli za utamaduni katika ngazi za taifa, mkoa na wilaya, watatakiwa kuwa na shahada ya chuo kikuu, utalam katika moja wapo ya fani za utamaduni, mafunzo ya utawala na uendeshaji pamoja na uzoefu wakazi (Sera ya Utamaduni, 1999:30)*

My translation:

9.1.5 Chief Administrators/Managers/Officers for cultural promotion activities at the national, regional, and district levels must hold a bachelor’s degree in addition to having relevant knowledge in one of the



fields of culture, special training in cultural administration and promotion, as well as work experience in the field of his/her activities

A close analysis of the Tanzanian Cultural Policy's provisions reveals that it was devised to ensure the smooth supervision of cultural promotion activities through the use of knowledgeable personnel who could easily understand and interpret policy requirements in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations that protect and encourage sustainable growth of local culture. Moreover, such professional credentials for the job could allow even foreign cultural personnel to adjust to and familiarise themselves with work, local authorities and particularities. The problems that were found at the Goethe Institute were directly associated with lack of relevant knowledge in the administration of cultural activities in accordance with local culture as well as lack of close co-operation between the Cultural Officer and the local authorities in the cultural promotion field in Tanzania. These were evidenced by some incidents that happened in two controversial events planned and executed at the Goethe Institut, Dar es Salaam.

In the first incident, the *Majangili* exhibition, the institute financed and hosted the display of artworks that implicate the ex-President of Tanzania, his family, and his colleague, the President of China and the Chinese Ambassador in Tanzania in the illegal elephant poaching enterprise for failing to take firm action required to curb the scourge. The present researcher found that when foreign cultural agencies promote such types of art which local authorities would not consent to, it implies defiance towards the local culture and values. In this regard, Kajubi Mukajanga, the Executive Secretary for MCT argues: “...*there is no art for art's sake*” because art delivers a message and “(any) artistic creation is a statement of an agenda...” (Packalen 2009:234). Similarly, another incident involved Elyse Fonds, a French-

German artist invited by the Goethe Institut to facilitate a workshop for cartoonists and illustrators. During her workshop in Dar es Salaam, she went around the suburbs of Dar es Salaam City and produced illustrations that portrayed the culture and people of Dar es Salaam as lazy and irresponsible. According to Sempeho, the works sparked arguments between Fonds and some of her local audience, including her workshop participants, who argued that messages in her illustrations “insulted” the local people and their culture. Apparently, Ms. Fonds was unaware that the natives of Dar es Salaam are the *Wazaramo*, whose main income-generating activity is fishing during the night. On the other hand, the *Wazaramo* women also work at night in their small kiosks selling foods, snacks, and tea. During the day, the majority of the *Wazaramo* sleep outside their house verandas only to wake up for work at night.

Elsy Fonds could have easily understood the *Wazaramo* culture in Dar es Salaam’s streets if she had properly been briefed by her host before she embarked on creating artworks that wrongfully accused the *Wazaramo* as being lazy people who sleep during working hours. Unfortunately, this study could not access any of Ms. Fond’s illustrations, as they were reported to be “missing” in the institute’s collection. Perhaps Sempeho’s lack of orientation in the local culture(s) in Tanzania might be the reason behind several irregularities discovered at his Institute during the present study. In one of the interview sessions, Sempeho admitted that he had certainly not seen the Tanzania Cultural Policy nor had he read it before. In fact, he self-assuredly explained: “*We do not need to know the Cultural Policy of Tanzania as the Goethe Institut does not operate under the BASATA or any other local cultural Authority’s regulations but the German Foreign Ministry Office’s programmes in Tanzania*” (Facebook Chat, Daniel Sempeho 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017). Therefore, as explained before in this section, when such mistakes are made, they might trigger serious political misunderstandings

and disrupt all other good things that the Goethe Institut has done to help the contemporary art scene of Tanzania flourish. The local Tanzanian authorities consider defamation against national figures such as ex-president(s) a serious, intolerable and punishable crime<sup>253</sup>.

### **3.6 Nafasi Art Space and the Contemporary Art Scene in Tanzania**

From 2009 until the time this study was conducted, Nafasi Art Space (NAS) in the Mikocheni light industrial area of Dar es Salaam was the biggest operational place in the country where contemporary art practices were formally nurtured and promoted. Professional and upcoming artists who work full-time within the Space and those who regularly visit the centre are helped to advance their artistic skills and talents in various ways. Nafasi Art Space was founded in 2007 by Lars Mikkel Johannessen, a diplomat for the Danish Embassy in Dar es Salaam and was officially launched in 2008 by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, who is also believed to be its sponsor. The Nafasi operates as an NGO<sup>254</sup> initiated by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD) to help Tanzania develop a contemporary artistic platform where diverse and inclusive arts are created, shared and exchanged nationally and internationally.

The Nafasi project started with an emphasis on the promotion of contemporary visual art practices and was gradually expanded to cover a wider range of cultural productions. The entire project and its initial activities were provided with a budget of about DKK 7.4 million (approximately USD 1.1 million)<sup>255</sup>. Until the present study, Nafasi Art Space was mainly

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<sup>253</sup>See, Founders of Nation (Honouring Procedures) Act of 2004.

Also, <https://www.adventurealternative.com/tanzania-laws/> Accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at Berlin, Germany

<sup>254</sup> See, "The NGO-isation of contemporary art in Africa" in Wendl, T. 2015, p.6

<sup>255</sup> See, <http://tanzania.um.dk/en/danida-en/culture>. Accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at Berlin, Germany

funded by the DCCD and a few other international cultural promotion organisations. The Space hosts over 50 contemporary artists in the fields of visual arts, dance choreography, music, theatre, and acrobatics who work within the Nafasi on a daily basis, as a current publication on the development of the contemporary art practices in Tanzania appraises:

Nafasi remains largely in the hands of local artists in residence who support it by paying studio rents regularly. Over 50 local visual, performing, film and video artists benefit this donor funded establishment in which the European Union, the African Art Trust (TAAT), and Hivos, to name only a few, have offered funding. Artists have secured studios at Nafasi and management helps in identifying places for them to exhibit. The Board of Governors is chosen through the secret ballot by the artists (Goscinnny and Jengo 2016:115)

For the past nine years, a number of art publications on visual arts in East Africa have acknowledged the contribution of Nafasi Art Space in the promotion of contemporary art in Tanzania, where such current practices were long-reported to be lacking. Standing (2013), Eastafab (2015), Casey-Hayford (2015), Goscinnny and Jengo (2016) have highly commended Nafasi as an institution that has inspired and promoted contemporary art practices in Tanzania and helped to launch its exposure in East Africa and the world at large. A closer look at the Nafasi Art Space initiative in this endeavour in Tanzania shows that it can be associated with or closely compared to objectives of the *Movimento de Arte Contemporanea de Mocambique* (MUVART) as Vanessa Díaz-Rivas notes in her article, “Contemporary Art in Mozambique: *Reshaping Artistic National Canons*”. The MUVART have set themselves apart from what they consider to be “traditional Mozambican art...” (Díaz-Rivas 2014:160).

### **3.6.1 Implementation of Contemporary Art Practices at Nafasi Art Space since 2011**

NAS began its promotion of contemporary art practices two years after its official opening in 2009. There were several reasons that made Nafasi experience difficulties at the beginning. The location of the NAS is still seen by the majority of its visitors and artists as a little awkward when compared to the formerly renowned visual art centre, the *Nyumba ya Sanaa*, which was located in downtown Dar es Salaam. On the other hand, NAS is located 11 kilometres away from the city centre. It occupies an old abandoned warehouse which they transformed into a 500-metres exhibition hall, 32 booths for artists' studios, a library room, and administrative offices. The centre has two permanent employees, the Project Manager and the Co-ordinator of Activities. These staff members work closely with a committee comprised of several resident artists in the planning, co-ordination, and execution of all artistic and art programmes at NAS. The committee of artists is an advisory body to the management during the selection of artists and artworks to be supported through exhibitions or to be given an opportunity for residency projects (Jan Van Esch – the former Manager at the NAS, personal interview November 2015)

NAS implements its activities in full-swing annual programmes. Contemporary art promotional activities are formally planned and executed on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual schedule. Almost all events resulting from artists' activities are financed by Nafasi Management after a group(s) of artists or individual artist(s) have proposed and applied for support. In its daily operations, the Management of Nafasi oversees the general activities of artistic productions at the centre by ensuring that artists get all the support they need to realise their individual or group projects. It also administers the sales of artworks in Nafasi's gallery. At NAS, artworks are permanently displayed in the main exhibition hall to help artists show

their works as well as market them. The centre is open on weekdays for artists who work daily in over 32 studios within the centre. In weekly programmes, Saturdays and Sundays are properly arranged as the busiest ‘event days’ as the public visits the NAS to see exhibitions, buy artworks, enjoy the music and other shows that are performed there. On the last Saturday of the month, there is an event known as *Chap Chap* Public Art. It involves some kind of curating activity for the visiting public. During the *Chap Chap* Art event, a selected artist leads the visitors through the exhibition while explaining the meaning of artworks, techniques, and media used to create the displayed works. At the end of the tour, visitors or the public audience are allowed to participate in the event by creating small artworks with the artists working at Nafasi. The *Chap Chap* activities help artists to exercise curatorial skills and critical appreciation of the artworks. It also empowers them to think critically and produce a good analysis of the artworks in writing (Rehema Chachage, a former aesthetics advisor at NAS, personal interview 18 January 2017).

Another weekly activity which is conducted interchangeably with the *Chap Chap* Public Art event is called the Artist Hangouts. This also happens once a month whenever there is a guest artist participating in an Artists Residency Programme. In this event, only the member artists of NAS and a few invited guest artists or experts (non-NAS members) participate. This is because the programme is expected to boost the artist’s skills and knowledge. According to the NAS official site, during the hangout event, “...*artists in residence get to know the Nafasi community and share their work and ideas, and we discuss current exhibitions and events. The hangouts are a platform for artists to present and critique work and exchange ideas,*

*plans, and inspiration with others...*"<sup>256</sup>. Jan Van Esch argued that the NAS member artists have learned so much about contemporary art practices and new art forms from over 30 international artists who have been invited and commissioned to participate in Artist Residency<sup>257</sup> projects at the NAS in Dar es Salaam since 2011. In effect, most of the contemporary art forms introduced in Tanzania since the launching of the NAS activities have been highly influenced by guest Artists' Residency workshops (Jan Van Esch, personal interview November 2015). Several Nafasi member artists have also participated in Artists Residency programmes outside Tanzania. These include Vita Lulengo, who worked at the 32° East | Ugandan Arts Trust in Kampala in 2014; Rehema Chachage, Paul Ndunguru and Cloud Chatanda who were engaged at the *Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik* in Berlin in 2016.<sup>258</sup>



**Fig.238 Robert Deveraux of the African Art Trust (TAAT) makes a presentation during his residency at Nafasi Art Space in Dar es Salaam on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014**  
(Courtesy of the Nafasi Art Space, October 2016)

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<sup>256</sup> See, <http://nafasiartspace.org/s/artists-hangout/>. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>257</sup> See, Artists Residency at: <http://nafasiartspace.org/s/artists/air/previous-air/>. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>258</sup> See, <http://urbannarratives.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/2016/11/exhibition-program-ca037f9.pdf>, Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany

Training is another activity through which Nafasi Art Space promotes and encourages contemporary art practices. Training sessions involve artists in hands-on mentoring. Apart from techniques, new media and ways of presenting their works, artists are trained in and encouraged to equip themselves with skills and knowledge in visual arts management, promotion, and marketing as well as integrating or immersing themselves into global artistic practices whenever there are opportunities. Apart from the workshops planned and implemented during the Artists Residency programmes, NAS, in collaboration with its partner organisations such as the African Art Trust, Goethe Institut, Alliance Française and the British Council, has financed a number of short training projects on contemporary art forms conducted by local and foreign professional artists and art experts to train practising and budding artists at Nafasi. The early training programmes include one for the installation art organised and co-ordinated in collaboration with the Goethe Institut and NAS from September to October 2011.

A contemporary artist and art teacher from Germany, Andrea Knobloch,<sup>259</sup> trained a group of Tanzanian artists comprising NAS members, art students from the University of Dodoma and some freelance artists based in Dar es Salaam. His training focused on design, production, and new ways of displaying installation art in his project known as *Global City-Local Identity? Urban Dreamscape*. His training laid a strong foundation for most installation artists who practiced in Dar es Salaam.

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<sup>259</sup> See, Urban Dreamscape project in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
[https://web.facebook.com/pg/goetheinstitut.tanzania/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10150409118203108](https://web.facebook.com/pg/goetheinstitut.tanzania/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10150409118203108), accessed on August 2019



In a recent training project, the British Council, in collaboration with the NAS, co-sponsored Gadi Ramadhani and Diana Kamara, who are both member artists at Nafasi, to participate in an art curating course training held in London in January 2016<sup>260</sup> (Mpoki Mwakilasa, personal interview November 2015). Besides training projects, the NAS Management encourages artists to acquire more knowledge and skills pertaining to contemporary art practices through increasing reading. Recently, it also invited and facilitated a trained British librarian, Ms. Sarita Mamseri, to open a small library stuffed with a substantial collection of contemporary art books and other published materials. The library is popularly known as the Bookstop Sanaa. It is set in one of the compartments within NAS' main building to inspire artists to learn from real examples as practised by acknowledged contemporary artists in the US, Europe, and West Africa, which most of the library's collection has covered (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:115). According to Standing (2013:25), the Bookstop Sanaa also promotes contemporary art practices through its organised art education talks and workshops for the NAS' member artists and the students from the Department of Fine and Performing Art at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Since 2011, when the NAS launched full-swing training programmes for artists, visual arts marketing has been among the significant components of several training projects at the centre. At NAS, visual arts marketing strategies and techniques for artists have been consistently trained via Creative Entrepreneurship Classes (Standing 2013:23). A string of classes has been conducted by profiled artists and art marketing experts at Nafasi since its launch in Dar es Salaam and in several other contemporary art platforms in Kampala,

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<sup>260</sup> See, <http://www.recreativeuk.com/critics>. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

Uganda, and Nairobi, Kenya. The Nafasi Art Space, through its collaborations with the KLA ART<sup>261</sup>, the 32° East | Ugandan Arts Trust both located in Kampala and the Kuona Trust in Nairobi, has continually sent its member artists to marketing training regularly planned and executed by partner organisations (Vita Lulengo, personal interview November 2015).



**Fig.239 Andrea Knobloch with his installation art trainees during his workshop conducted in September 2011 at Goethe Institut, Dar es Salaam**  
(Courtesy of Daniel Sempheo - Goethe Institut Dar es Salaam, October 2016)



**Fig. 240 Bookstop Sanaa Art Library at the Nafasi Art Space**  
(Source: <http://www.bookstopsanaa.org/>)

<sup>261</sup> See, <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/kla-art-uganda/>. Accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

The last component in the discussion of NAS concerns promoting and encouraging contemporary art practice in Tanzania. It has to do with art exhibitions. This is boldly acknowledged on NAS's website:

Almost 500 metres of gallery space inside and much more outside is available for artists to show their work. We host solo and groups shows from local and international artists. These exhibitions give artists an opportunity to promote their work and educate and increase public awareness for the contemporary visual art scene in Tanzania. Nafasi celebrates cross-cultural dialogue and welcomes East African artists to exhibit and stimulate exchange and growth<sup>262</sup>

At Nafasi Art Space, the exhibition constitutes the best way of promoting contemporary art practice because it serves two major purposes at once. First, the exhibitions serve as exposure platforms for artists and their works. Second, through exhibitions, NAS creates and develops a contemporary visual arts audience. With regard to audience development, Kathryn Standing argues:

While continuing to encourage the buying of art, there is an opportunity to increase public knowledge and understanding of range of work made by artists, lasting and ephemeral, and to promote discussion of its non-monetary value (Standing 2013:4)

The present researcher concurs with Kathryn Standing's view that audience development at Nafasi Art Space has been fostered through the use of its exhibition events, which are complemented by the audience-artists' interaction event such as the *Chap Chap* Public Art, already discussed in this section. Besides, exhibitions by foreign artists at NAS have stimulated new ideas among local artists, influenced skills and knowledge exchanges which ultimately have been captured in new artwork. From 4<sup>th</sup> May 2013 until 13<sup>th</sup> March 2016, over 60 exhibitions on different kinds of visual arts have been mounted at NAS through solo

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<sup>262</sup> See, <http://www.nafasiartspace.org/exhibitions-2017/> Accessed on 7th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

and group shows by Tanzanian, East African, South African, American, European and Asian artists<sup>263</sup>. Exhibitions cover the biggest portion of the NAS' annual programme. The member artists get strong recommendations and priority in exhibitions. In fact, this is basically a huge open studio where artists work on a daily basis and people/art lovers can regularly visit different artists in studios and buy art at good prices, thus making it one of the ways through which artists distribute their artwork. All these aspects support the conclusion that an exhibition hall at NAS is an invaluable facility for artists in Tanzania (Rehema Chachage, Facebook chat 22 June 2017).

### **3.6.1.1 Nafasi Arts Space and the EASTAFAB Collaboration**

An emerging collaboration between NAS and EASTAFAB marks a new beginning of an all-inclusive and merged art promotions in Tanzania. Before NAS emerged, EASTAFAB had since the early 2000s provided the only platform for visual arts exhibitions in Tanzania. EASTAFAB is a local NGO specialising in organising and co-ordinating visual arts exhibitions and artists' promotions as its main objective (Goscinnny and Jengo 2016:115). It is more experienced than Nafasi and has established a large network of artists in the East African region since 2003 when it mounted its first exhibition at the National Museum in Dar es Salaam (Goscinnny and Jengo 2016:114). In fact, its inception has been quite revealing as the following excerpt illustrates:

According to Goscinnny and Jengo (2016:114), the idea of forming the East Africa Art Biennale Association (EASTAFAB) was conceived by Yves Goscinnny, a Belgian expatriate staff who had worked in Tanzania as a mining analyst and who owned the 'La Petite Galerie' at the Oysterbay Hotel shopping arcade, and Elias Jengo, who participated in the first Johannesburg Biennale in 1995. The Association came into being in January 2003 and the first Biennale was held in November 2-22 of the same year in the National Museum. It is registered by the National

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<sup>263</sup> See, <http://www.nafasiartspace.org/exhibitions-2017/> Accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

Arts Council (BASATA) and arranges art exhibitions after every two years, Although the majority of artworks exhibited are collected from the East African region, international artists have often been welcome as the EASTAFAB catalogues from 2003 to date show. All donors, most of whom are international agencies, embassies and local companies of foreign origin, have supported the EASTAFAB generously since its inception. Among notable donors are UNESCO, the Germany Embassy, the Embassy of the United States of America, Danish Embassy, the European Union, the Royal Belgian Embassy. The vision of the association is to promote art and artists residing in the region. The catalogues are sold to individuals as well as organisations at home and abroad. But each donor gets three free catalogues while the National library gets five copies during each Biennale (Gosciny and Jengo 2016:114)

There is not much that can be appreciated from the activities of the EASTAFAB apart from its exhibition activities. Unlike Nafasi, EASTAFAB has neither training nor residency programmes in its artists' promotions package. Moreover, it is also still struggling to find reliable sources of funding and a permanent space for ensuring the existence requisite activities as Kathleen Standing notes:

The Biennale is not well enough conceived or managed to attract the support of the Goethe-Institut which, as in Kenya, is an important player in promoting the contemporary visual arts here (Standing 2013:26)

Since 2013, EASTAFAB started collaborating with Nafasi when its sixth exhibition was mounted at the NAS which was also one of the sponsors. This collaboration reopens another window of opportunities for the 'traditional arts' in so far as painting and sculpture promotion alongside the contemporary art practices are concerned. However, contemporary art exhibition activities at the NAS have been a bit complicated by its newly-established collaboration with the East African Art Biennale (EASTAFAB). Unlike NAS, which is confined to the promotion of contemporary art practice alone, EASTAFAB has for long also promoted more traditional and modern art than the contemporary art practices. This partnership implies that NAS will have to extend its margins beyond the contemporary art

promotions. Since last year (2016), EASTFAB has secured an office space in Nafasi Art Space compound, a sign that it intends to become a part of NAS which currently has reliable sources of funding and space for regular promotions of artists' activities. It is currently under the leadership of Kiagho Kilonzo, a graphic artist and art educator in the Department of Art of the University of Dar es Salaam. Yves Gosciny and Elias Jengo serve as advisors and board members in the association.



**Fig.241 An Installation Art Exhibition mounted at the NAS in 2016**  
(Source: <http://nafasiartspace.org/s/wp-content/uploads/Inside-hall-960x600.jpg>)

### **3.6.2 NAS's Success Stories in the Promotion of Contemporary Art Forms**

This section presents and discusses the success stories of NAS activities since 2011, when its programmes began in Dar es Salaam. Some few selected examples of artworks in the contemporary practice context, that were inspired and promoted at Nafasi are presented in this study. Indisputably, in only five years (2011-2016) of promotional support, Nafasi Art Space has tremendously contributed to realising and linking Tanzanian contemporary art practices with the global art platforms as Gus Casely-Hayford notes:

...This part of Dar es Salaam has been transformed by recent growth. And in almost every area of cultural production new facilities and new creative figures are emerging with innovative ideas and an international focus. Nafasi is in many ways part of that phenomenon. These are artists

who do not produce the brightly coloured tourist-art of Tingatinga nor is their work obviously derivative of Tanzania's first internationally celebrated artist, George Lilanga. The art made at Nafasi could find space in a contemporary London or New York gallery, and an unknowing visitor might have difficulty in identifying the origins of the creator... (Casely-Hayford 2015:292)

Casely-Hayford's (2015) remarks confirm the attainment of Nafasi's objectives. In fact, recently artworks by contemporary Tanzanian artists such as Paul Ndunguru, Rehema Chachage, Vita Lulengo, and Cloud Chatanda have been equally displayed and appreciated in various global platforms<sup>264</sup> besides those of their colleagues from South Africa, Nigeria, and Uganda, where contemporary art practices have been highly advanced. Before 2011, very little of the Tanzanian visual arts were created, displayed and shared in new media and technology, in contrast with the current situation. Contemporary artworks such as Installation, Video, Performance and Photography Arts were unknown to the majority of artists, locally-trained art scholars and the general public in Tanzania. The present study shows that these new visual art forms are no longer alien to practising artists and audiences of visual arts in the country, as will be discussed in sub-sections 3.6.2.1 to 3.6.2.4.

### **3.6.2.1 Installation Artworks and Projects by NAS Artists**

Since its inception through a series of big and small training workshops, installation art is currently among the popular contemporary art genres produced by most of the member artists working full-time within the NAS compound. This study establishes that Andrea Knobloch's 2011 "*Global City - Local Identity?*" installation art workshop during his residency project commissioned by Nafasi and Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam was a "game changer". Three NAS artist members, who participated in the workshop, are engaged on consistent basis in

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<sup>264</sup> See, <https://www.theafricanartstrust.org/grants-supporting-developing-contemporary-east-african-art.php>, Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

passing on their experiences and newly-acquired skills to their colleagues through monthly programmes, the *Chap Chap Public Art* and Artists Hangouts held at Nafasi. In addition, since 2014, several installation art projects and productions have been created and realised at Nafasi. Also, Paul Ndunguru, Vita Malulu, and Rehema Chachage have since 2014 been the leading installation artists participating in many local and international exhibitions with their new artworks.

In November 2014, Paul Ndunguru created his first major installation piece, which was titled “*My Building Blocks*”<sup>265</sup>. The piece was exhibited at the Kampala Train Station lobby during the KLA Art14. The work is presently displayed on the Nafasi compound grounds. Ever since, Ndunguru has created many installation works and even got an opportunity to exhibit at the Goethe Institut and the AFCC in Dar es Salaam. Although he has no specific theme, he claims to produce from his life’s experience particularly his family, which comprises a renowned writer father and an outstanding Tanzanian cartoonist brother. Paul Ndunguru’s recent installation art piece titled “*Cold Feet*” (Fig.242) addresses issues of African and Arab immigrants crossing the Mediterranean enroute to Europe. The piece’s idea was developed in Dar es Salaam and was exhibited during the *Simulizi Mijini/Urban Narratives* programme that involved 10 international artists at *Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik* in Berlin in April 2017.

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<sup>265</sup> See, <http://startjournal.org/2014/11/art-by-bayaaye-for-bayaaye/> Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany



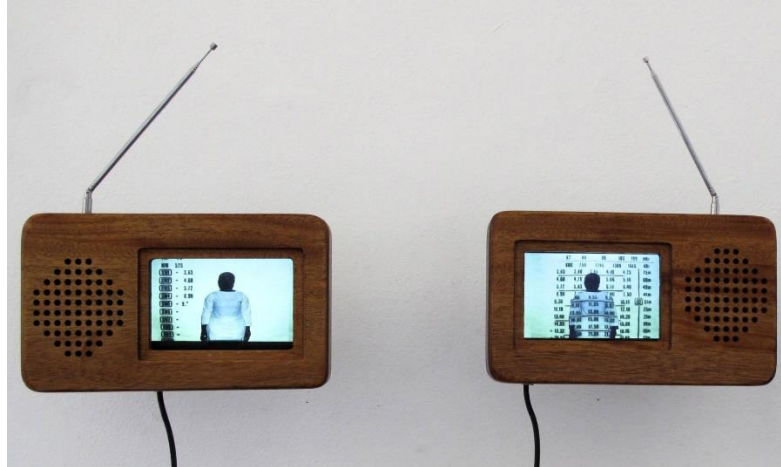


**Fig.242 “Cold Feet” installation piece by Paul Ndunguru at the ZK/U Berlin**  
(Source: <http://urbannarratives.org/en/art/cold-feet/> accessed on August 2019)

Rehema Chachage, who has a background in contemporary art from South Africa, was more familiar and exposed to the practice than the rest of the installation artists at Nafasi. Her works are confined to “Gender” and “Identity” themes. Among her famous installation works is “*Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu*” (Fig.243), which she first created as a video art piece and later adapted to a performance and installation piece in 2012. The online Saatchi Art Gallery<sup>266</sup> displays three other installation works by Rehema including “*Mwangwi*” (echoes), “*Dira*” (Visions) and Untitled (Pace). Recently, she exhibited at the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam and at the *Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik* in Berlin, Germany in April 2017, the same project that involved Paul Ndunguru and Cloud Chatanda. Rehema Chachage was also instrumental in bringing installation art to the public during its inception in the early 2010s.

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<sup>266</sup> See, <https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Installation-Mwangwi-Echo/373707/214413/view>. Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany



**Fig.243 Kwa Baba Rithi Undungu Installation by Rehema Chachage at the NAS**  
([www.saatchiart.com/](http://www.saatchiart.com/) accessed on August 2019)

After realizing that the new arts at Nafasi were mainly enjoyed by artists instead of the public, which barely knew of Nafasi, she applied the experience of contemporary art sharing methods she had acquired while studying in South Africa:

...*Beauty Salons and the Beast* is a brainchild of two artists—myself, Rehema Chachage, and Jan van Esch, who also happens to be on the management team for Nafasi Art Space, the only existing contemporary art centre in Dar es Salaam. The idea developed in response to a trend that we have noticed: that attending art exhibitions is not really a tradition for most Tanzanians. Hence, not enough locals (as compared to the expatriate audience) attend art exhibitions and other cultural events taking place in galleries and cultural centres in the city. As organisers of maybe more than 50 percent of these exhibitions, we often find ourselves wondering where this Tanzanian public is, and in what ways we can make it possible for them to access the art and the artists. After much brainstorming, we concluded that perhaps the only effective way to reach more of the public would be to borrow from the ‘*Infecting The City*’ methodology and experiment with ‘pop-up’ art exhibitions in public spaces that draw a big concentration of Tanzanians. We say, ‘If they won’t follow the art, let the art follow them;’ and we are on a mission to follow our audience wherever they may be...<sup>267</sup>

The *Beauty Salons and the Beast* was a one month long multimedia art project planned and produced by nine artists based at Nafasi Art Space. The installations and other artworks

<sup>267</sup> See, *Beauty Salons and the Beast* organized by Rehema Chachage and Jan van Esch from: <http://apexart.org/exhibitions/chachage-esch.php> Accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

produced during this project were displayed from 7 February until 7 March 2015 in beauty salons and barbershops in the streets of the Msasani suburbs in Dar es Salaam City<sup>268</sup>. Vita Lulengo was one of the artists who displayed their installation artworks. Vita's productions, including paintings, drawings, and contemporary sculptures tackle the subjects of immorality, corruption (Figs. 238 and 239) and injustice. In the *Beauty Salons and the Beast* project, Vita Lulengo's installation featured the theme of immorality, which he appropriated from a controversial strip dance performance known as the "*Baikoko*," invented by popular *Ngoma* groups in Tanga and Dar es Salaam regions. The work was titled "*Kanga Moko*" or "dressed in only a piece of Kanga wrapper".

Malulu's installations have already been exhibited in some East African and European countries. During his 2014 one-month residence project at the 32° East | Ugandan Arts Trust in Kampala, he worked on several installation pieces, which he exhibited and curated within the campus. From 20 to 23 June 2014, he exhibited three installation pieces at the Circle Art Gallery, which mounted a group exhibition titled "East African Encounters". In April 2015, he exhibited his famous piece titled "*Feasting Time*" (Fig.244) at the University of Dar es Salaam Art Exhibition. The event was intended to cultivate and enhance the capacity of the university community and students' appreciation of visual arts. The exhibition was planned and mounted in the collaboration between the UDSM's Department of Art and Nafasi Art Space. In October 2016, Malulu participated in a group exhibition after his residence at the Nordisk Kunstnarsenter Dale (NKD) in Norway. Between 2013 and 2016, Vita exhibited several of his installation works at Nafasi, the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut in

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<sup>268</sup> *ibid*

Dar es Salaam (Vita Lulengo, Facebook Chat- June 2017). Nonetheless, installation art remains a relatively very new practice in Tanzania regardless of its striking similarities to sculpture arts. Rehema Chachage and Jan Van Esch, who both are ex-Nafasi administrators and member artists, assert that, although the installation art, as promoted by the NAS, has not spread beyond Dar es Salaam, the impact it has left among those who had attended the actual shows and those who have seen it through the media and the internet would not die soon. They are optimistic that it would continue and inspire more budding artists outside the spotlight.



**Fig.244 “Feasting Time”, Malulu’s installation at the UDSM in April 2015**  
(Source: *The Daily News* 22 – 27 April 2015)

### **3.6.2.2 Introduction of Video Art in Tanzania**

Videos found their place into Tanzania during the late 1980s. In those days, not many people could afford a TV set and its video player. Many people could see videos in street halls which a few entrepreneurs introduced to many Tanzanian towns. Video shows in most parts of the

country were popularly known as *Vibanda vya Video* or the *Vimkandala*<sup>269</sup>, for which show organisers charged viewers an entrance fee of between 50 to 100 shillings. Although the video content was alien to the majority, the video experience in Tanzania surfaced with a different taste because of its connection to the local storytelling culture that involved the translation of Hollywood and Bollywood films into the Kiswahili language<sup>270</sup>. The majority of Tanzanians are now familiar with videos. But video art is an entirely new thing.

Unlike the action or drama videos that most of the local audiences were familiar with, video art consists of short-skits of repeated shots of still or moving pictures, sometimes with text as subtitles or audio in the form of narration. With somewhat awkward plots, complex narrative angles and without clear plots or actors, the video art practice has been very hard even for Tanzanian art scholars to comprehend, let alone absent-minded local audiences. In 2011, video art was introduced at Nafasi Art Space in Dar es Salaam. Its pioneer is Rehema Chachage, a local contemporary artist based in Dar es Salaam. According to her curriculum vitae supplied to the present researcher, Rehema studied Fine Art at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town in South Africa from 2006 to 2009. She specialised in performance, video, and installation art practices and interventions.

Before she joined the Nafasi Art Space, very little of her contemporary artistic practices were known because of limited platforms for training, production, and art exhibition (Rehema Chachage, personal interview February 2017). NAS provided her with opportunities that she enjoyed while studying in South Africa. At Nafasi, she managed to access soft grants to buy

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<sup>269</sup> See, [issambura.blogspot.com/2011/04/facets-of-vimkandala-to-average-film.html](http://issambura.blogspot.com/2011/04/facets-of-vimkandala-to-average-film.html) Accessed on 11th November 2017 at the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, Germany

<sup>270</sup> Krings, M. 2009, pp.154-162

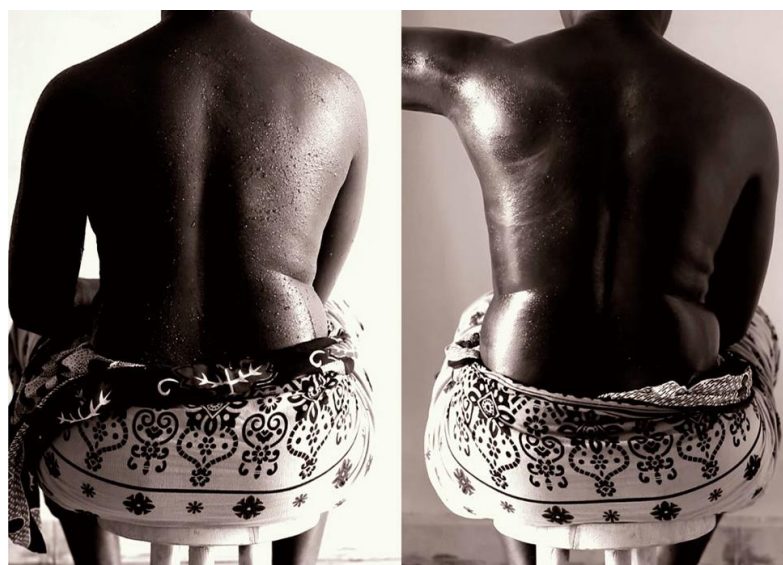
art materials and even rent cameras or pay for studio charges when she wanted to use advanced equipment to edit and refine her video art production. Rehema Chachage was the only practising video artist in the country when this study was being conducted. As the only trained contemporary artist in that field, the Nafasi management assigned her the task of inspiring upcoming and other professional artist members at NAS to engage in video art production. In 2011, she organised periodic training sessions known as *Video Art and Performance with Rehema Chachage*. In 2014, she extended her artist training to a programme called *Kuta-na Sanaa*, which she implemented through a foundation she initiated within the Nafasi Art Space. She contends that this programme is:

*... dedicated to new developments in contemporary art in the country and exists as a platform for the dissemination and exchange of ideas and knowledge around contemporary art practice. It is set to encourage experimental practice and exchanges from both emerging and established artists as well as exchanges between local artists and international artists, expanding their networking opportunities and introducing, encouraging and assisting [where needed] them to a lot more opportunities out there [local and international] that would put them and, eventually, Tanzanian contemporary art in the global art arena (Rehema Chachage, CV-Relevant Work Experience, 2014)*

Rehema's training and performances have inspired Diana Kamara, another upcoming contemporary artist trained in Fine Arts at the UDSM who also works at Nafasi. Diana, who has featured in Rehema's new video/performance art piece titled *Letters To...* (Fig.245) as a model and subject of performance has yet to produce her own works (Rehema Chachage, Facebook chat 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Besides several minor projects with Diana Kamara, the *Kuta-na Sanaa* intervention inspired a paired residence project involving a Kenyan contemporary artist based in Ethiopia, Wanja Kimani and Diana Kamara. During this project designed and supervised by Rehema

Chachage, Wanja and Diana collaborated to produce a video art piece titled “You Won’t See Her”. A piece that addresses issues against and for woman personalities in African societies while trying to look for answers to a question that asks if it is possible to look at a woman without looking at things around her, i.e. service and beauty. The work was first exhibited at the NAS in August 2014 and later at the Circle Art Gallery<sup>271</sup> in Nairobi. Rehema Chachage’s video art experience might have inspired the animation and music video arts which have recently surfaced at Nafasi and the addition of video to the packages of contemporary arts practised at NAS.



**Fig.245 “Letter To...” video art by Rehema Chachage in 2015**

(Source: <https://rehemachachage.co.tz/letters-to-2016/> accessed on August 2019)

Until 2011 when she started to work full time at the Nafasi Art Space, Rehema had only two major video art pieces, which she produced during her studies at Cape Town. These were “*Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu*” (Fig.246) a work that tackles the sensitive topic of women’s rights and inheritance conflicts among children of the same father. Another work is titled

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<sup>271</sup> See, <http://www.circleartagency.com/web-gallery/concerning-the-internal/diana-kamara-and-wanja-kimani-you-wont-see-her-video/> Accessed on 13th July 2017 at the FU-Berlin, Germany



“*Whirl*”<sup>272</sup>, which carries the theme of individual freedoms. Perhaps the *Whirl* video connotes Rehema’s personal experience as a foreign African student in a largely white-based university in South Africa. The “*Letter To...*” (Fig.245) is a new video/ performance artwork that she created in 2015 while working at Nafasi in Dar es Salaam. Since 2010, Rehema has mounted several solo and group exhibitions at the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam. Her affiliation with Nafasi has significantly helped her get exposure to international contemporary art platforms. In 2012, she participated in the Dak’Art African Contemporary Art Biennale in Dakar, Senegal, and in 2013, her video artworks were exhibited at the 18<sup>th</sup> International Contemporary Festival Video Brasil and in 2016 at the Cape Town Art Fair<sup>273</sup> to mention but a few.



**Fig.246 “Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu” video by Rehema Chachage March 2012**  
 (Source: <https://rehemachachage.co.tz/kwa-baba-rithi-undugu/> accessed on August 2019)

<sup>272</sup> See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZkw0AEzel4&index=2&list=PLCE9620B7E51D86ED>. Accessed on 13th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

<sup>273</sup> See, <http://www.zku-berlin.org/de/residencies/251/> Accessed on 7th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany



### 3.6.2.3 Performance Art Comes to Tanzania

Another NAS success story is the introduction of performance art. This was achieved through training workshops and a series of performances in several places in Dar es Salaam during April 2012. Nafasi Art Space invited and financed Rasheed Olaniyi Akindiya, alias “Akirashi”, an interdisciplinary Nigerian artist resident at the Nafasi from February to April 2012. During his residency, Akindiya organised several workshops involving professional artists such as Rehema Chachage and many other upcoming artists. Akindiya’s shared extensive experiences with new art media and technology, energy and ideas during the workshop overwhelmed his colleagues at Nafasi, who felt highly motivated and inspired to follow his lead in contemporary art practices.

At the end of his residence, Akindiya, with the help of several Nafasi-based artists, performed in several places in Dar es Salaam. In both pictures (Figs. 249 and 250) taken while Akindiya was performing, his audience is perplexed by the actions and appearance of the performer. In all his performances, which he called the “*Ufahamu*” a Kiswahili word for “insights”, Akindiya is clad in white calico cloth, the way the *Waswahili* of Dar es Salaam coast prepare their dead for funerals. His performance character appeared like a shrouded corpse walking in the streets (Fig.247). Such a sight is rare in Dar es Salaam, where dramatic art is best understood when played on the stage, in many instances before an informed audience. However, as no written report was made to evaluate the impact of the performances by Akindiya, it was difficult to comment on the audience’s reactions after the performances; so one has to interpret the photographs taken during the performances. The present study found that Akindiya’s work left behind a direct positive effect on Nafasi’s contemporary art promotion activities. Although Rehema Chachage was trained in the performance art field,

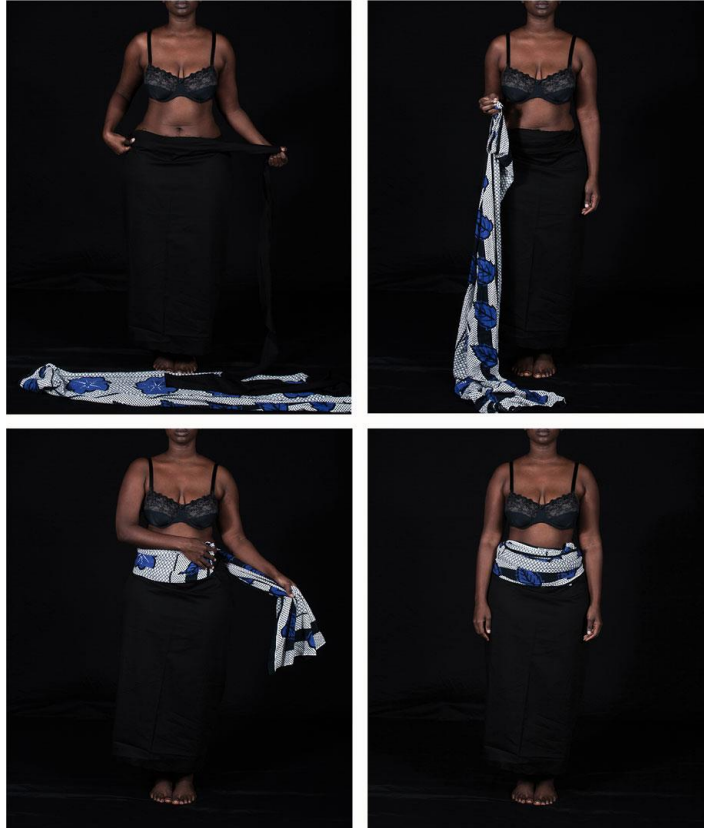
she had hardly practised her skills through productions as she did after the arrival of Akindiya at Nafasi. Therefore, the present research assumes that Akindiya's performances have in a way influenced later performance art productions and shows at Nafasi Art Space and other areas in Dar es Salaam.



**Fig.247 Akindiya performing in the streets of Mikocheni area in Dar es Salaam**  
(Courtesy of Nafasi Art Space, November 2015)



**Fig.248 Akindiya performs at the *Mdigrii* grounds of the UDSM main campus**  
(Courtesy of Nafasi Art Space, November 2015)



**Fig.249** Rehema Chachage’s photos of the *Mlango wa Navushiku* (*Navushiku’s Lineage*) performance displayed at the Circle Art Agency (Gallery) in Nairobi in 2012  
(source: <http://www.circleartagency.com/> accessed on 2019)

#### **3.6.2.4 Photography Art as a New Contemporary Practice in Tanzania**

Since 2014, Nafasi Art Space began promoting photography as a new genre of contemporary art practice in which artistic expression and creativity are the focal components. This was accomplished by financing and hosting training workshops as well as through providing work space for two upcoming local autodidactic photography artists, Nicholas Kelvin Mwakatobe and Richard Magumba (Rehema Chachage, Facebook Chat - 22 June 2017). Before 2014, photography was constantly practised as a form of art, but its significance was seen in its documentary functions instead of artistic expressions or creativity. Okwui Enwezor and Octavio Zaya note that in Tanzania, photography has long been employed to

capture and record portraiture, reality, and representation. These two writers reveal that in Tanzania, photography was operational since the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century:

...A.C Gomes, for instance, established a studio in Zanzibar in 1868 and opened a branch in Dar es Salaam later on... (Enwezor and Zaya 2013:52)

In his latest publication, titled the *Culture and Customs of Tanzania*, Kefa Otiso also discusses photography as one of the visual art genres that have long been practised in Tanzania:

Photography is a key artistic medium in Tanzania. As in many parts of the world, Tanzanian photographers make use of film and digital cameras. Tanzania has many accomplished photographers. While some are employed by the country's major media houses and corporations, many more are self-employed. Because of economic, training and equipment-access constraints, most of the country's amateurs and professional photographers are males like Javed Jafferji of Zanzibar. In addition to photography, Jafferji is also a film producer. Nevertheless, there are a few professional female photographers like Mefakii Diwani Jumbe of Tanga. She, among other purposes, uses photography to advocate for women's issues (Otiso 2013:112)

Both sources affirm that photography had long existed in Tanzania and been used as an artistic medium for a long while. However, very limited information about its purposes of production and functions are explained, as the last two sentences in the text by Otiso illustrate (2013:112). The writers have essentially argued that photography in Tanzania is mainly employed for its documentary and journalistic functions. All these ideas add to the present study's finding that, perhaps, Nafasi Art Space is the pioneer of artistic photography promotion in Tanzania, that in its new practice, photography does not only serve the purpose of documenting events such as concerts, parties, festivals, weddings, or moments in people's chores, but also as a medium of artistic expression in their surrounding environments as well as their creative skills in making visual images with light, using the camera as a brush.

Between 2010 and 2015, Nafasi Art Space, in collaboration with its cultural promotion partners, has worked hard to organise several events that involved planning, financing and hosting training and exhibitions of photography artworks in Tanzania. The Goethe Institut, in collaboration with Nafasi, mounted an exhibition of artistic photographs by Mwanzo Lawrence Millinga<sup>274</sup> in 2010. The show, which the photographer called the “Game of Death”, displayed more than 50 photographs depicting the hard life of young miners of Mererani, the world’s only place which produces Tanzanite gemstones. The photos were taken as part of a photojournalist’s assignment from 2004 until 2008. They were never published by the mainstream media as they were deemed as “unusually posed and creatively taken” (Personal interview, Mwanzo Millinga-10 November 2015). This was a blessing in a disguise for Millinga, who had just found out that his work fit the category of art photography better than journalistic photography. Mwanzo gives all his photography projects dramatic titles which provide his audience a cue for his work’s meaning. His young miners’ photograph collection was named the “Game of Death” collection. Five selected young miners of the game of death photographs were exhibited for the first time in a show curated by Simon Njami at the Noorderlicht Photofestival in 2009<sup>275</sup> at the Akerkhof in the

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<sup>274</sup> Mwanzo Millinga has been currently practising as a contemporary artist in the photography field. He started his photography career as an autodidactic photographer who served as an events photographer at Songea, his hometown in Ruvuma region in the mid-1980s and a few years later he moved to work in Dar es Salaam in the early 1990s. From 1994 to 2001 he was apprenticed and trained as photojournalist in a newsroom. In 2000, he became the chief photographer for the Business Times LTD, the publishers of the *Majira* newspaper. From the 2001 until 2003 he has lived, trained and worked as a photojournalist with the *Sorvis Kommunikasjon AS* in Norway and the *Degen Nyheter* newspaper in Sweden. His Young Miners photo collection was published in the MDG’s “New Stories” by the World Press Photo Foundation in 2008. Upon his return to Tanzania from the Scandinavia, he established his private photo agency, the Frame Tree Media Trust (FTMT) Co. LTD at Dar es Salaam. At present, Mwanzo Millinga who holds a master’s degree in Mass Communication works as a communications consultant, a freelance photojournalist as well as a photography artist.

<sup>275</sup> See, <http://www.noorderlicht.com/en/photofestival/human-conditions/exhibitions/ordinary-pain/photographers/#mwanzo-lawrence-millinga>. Accessed on 13th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

Netherlands. In 2010, the photographs were exhibited at the Goethe Institut and later between 2011 and 2012 at Nafasi, the British Council and the Alliance Francaise in Dar es Salaam.



**Fig.250 “Young Miners” photographs taken at Mererani by Mwanzo Millinga in 2004**  
(Source: <http://www.noorderlicht.com/> accessed on August 2019)

In 2011, a collaborative project between the Nafasi Art Space, the Goethe Institut and the Alliance Française allowed Mwanzo Millinga to mount another photography exhibition titled “A Beautiful Desert Rose”<sup>276</sup>. The exhibition tackled the subject of the horrific Albino killings<sup>277</sup> which made headlines in Tanzania and abroad from the early 2000s until the late 2010s. In this project, Mwanzo Millinga visited the Kabanga Centre, a camp in Kasulu district in Kigoma region designed to protect the Albinos who had been freed from being hunted and violently killed by their superstitious fellow countrymen. At the camp, he took photographs of Albinos with the intention to give them an opportunity to express themselves in pleasant photographic images (Figs. 251 and 252) in contrast with the gruesome pictures that were frequently published to report the killings in the press (Mwanzo Millinga, personal

<sup>276</sup> See, <http://mwanzomilinga.blogspot.com/2012/05/>. Accessed on August 2019

<sup>277</sup> See, Jean Burke, Theresa J. Kaijage & Johannes John-Langba (2014) Media Analysis of Albino Killings in Tanzania: A Social Work and Human Rights Perspective, *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 8:2, pp.117-134, DOI: 10.1080/17496535.2014.895398. Accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

interview 10 November 2015). According to Mwanzo Millinga, the gruesome photographs of the Albino killings in the press were scary and distasteful and he thought photography art could do better:

*Therefore, I made a wooden frame that I painted red on one side and black on the other. I told my subject that the frame symbolised a life in a restricted environment. The black colour means your future is uncertain, while the red colour means that your life is in danger. And I let them decide on how they decide to hold the frame before I took the pictures... (Mwanzo Millinga, personal interview 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015)*

The results of the project were a huge success nationally and internationally. Mwanzo managed to take many beautiful photographs that do not only express the inner feelings of the Albinos as victims of heinous crimes, but also depict them as beautiful people who have aspirations and good dreams for their future like anybody else. The Albino photography collection was mounted for its first exhibition at the Goethe Institut in 2011. In the same year, Alliance Française in Dar es Salaam, in collaboration with Nafasi and Goethe Institut managed to link Mwanzo Millinga with the organisers of the *Paris: Photoquai, 3<sup>e</sup> Biennale des images du monde!* or the Paris: Photoquai, 3rd Biennial of the images of the world, for him to participate in this world class exhibition mounted and curated by Françoise Huguier at the Eifel Tower in Paris in September 2011<sup>278</sup>. After the exhibition in Paris, “A Beautiful Desert Rose” exhibit also appeared at Nafasi Art Space and Goethe Institut in Dar es Salaam in 2012.

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<sup>278</sup> See, <http://www.reveil-fm.com/index.php/reveil-fm.com2011/10/15/1776-paris-photoquai-3e-biennale-des-images-du-monde>. Accessed on 13th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany





**Fig.251 “A Beautiful Desert Rose” photo collection by Mwanzo Millinga, 2008**  
(Source: wavuti.weebly.com/ accessed on August 2019)



**Fig.252 “A Beautiful Desert Rose” photo collection by Mwanzo Millinga in 2008**  
(Source: wavuti.weebly.com/ accessed on August 2019)

As a successful local photojournalist and photography artist, Mwanzo Millinga has facilitated several training workshops in Tanzania. In 2014, he was financed by Nafasi Art Space to facilitate a workshop aimed to inspire and train upcoming photography artists. His training discovered young talents such as Nicholas Kelvin Mwakatobe and Richard Magumba, who are also provided with studio spaces in the Nafasi compound. In 2015, he was invited by the



Goethe Institut to facilitate a workshop in photojournalism (Daniel Sempheo, Personal Interview-December 2015)

However, the successes of NAS in the promotion of contemporary art practices have never been without ups and downs in their manifestations and appreciation by the public and artists. During an interview, for example, Jan Van Esch indicated his displeasure with the little progress that the artists at NAS have made in transforming their arts into contemporary practice. He openly criticised their practice as “static”. On the other hand, artists complained that Jan’s mentorship consigned them to mere “copying”. In one of the interviews with artists, Vita Lulengo, alias “Malulu” provided some candid evaluation of the situation, which has been substantively reproduced here due to its comprehensive insights:

*The contemporary art practices are culturally bound. Although some of its theories can be universally shared, much of it has to be looked at with open mind. Contemporary art is an evolution of a practice in a particular area, that the experiences it produces and embraces can be different from one place to another. It is never the same practice wherever it appears as Mr. Jan would prefer it to happen at NAS the same way it happened in the Netherlands, where he first saw it. Therefore, the activities at Nafasi should observe this fact and open up for localised developments than imposing the ones that have happened in the US and Europe. For example, in Norway, I saw a contemporary artist mounting a pile of garbage as a piece of art for exhibition in a reputable gallery, and made an interesting story about it to explain his ideas. I was surprised, this artist was famous for his work and he was highly appreciated.*

*Here in Tanzania, especially in Dar es Salaam that is not possible. Garbage belongs to the garbage dumps. And in those areas with poor services, heaps of garbage are everywhere and people could look at it with disgust. There is no way you can take the same garbage and mount into an exhibition to convince a majority of Tanzanians that the garbage is a work of art that you are presenting to them. Most people will think you are getting insane. But to the Westerners where garbage is a ‘rare sight’ even in ordinary people’s settlements and streets, it’s sighting in a gallery or studio or even a museum might raise awe and anxiety. People will come and ask questions about it. What is happening? Or what is this? They will ask you like that...*

*Here, at Nafasi Art Space, our foreign artistic mentors have continually criticised some of us as stagnant in our practices. From their Western art orientation as a point of reference, they think our art does not reflect the contemporary art practice which they know and would aspire to see. They pushed us to ‘copying’ the practice as it happens in Europe and America. Even when they invited contemporary artists to come facilitate and inspire us, they don’t expect us to work with the facilitators to realise our contemporary art practice but, instead, they expect us to follow the facilitators’ examples and treat them as canons in our new practices.*

*Maybe it could have worked if they invited practising contemporary artists from our neighbouring African countries such as Kenya and Uganda where the practice started a little earlier than here in Tanzania. I mean, the cultural difference between Western artists and us is so huge; it will take ages to equal them or beat them at their own game. They are far already. Recently, they have opened a small library in Nafasi so that we can learn the practice in the publication available there. That too is yet another challenge, as the majority of the artists here are half-educated and self-taught. You need a certain level of education to read and understand most books that Ms. Sarita provides in her library. Nevertheless, the books are written in the English language. Not many of us are conversant with that language either.*

*My point is that we can adapt the contemporary practice in our surroundings if we have feelings with the things we are doing. It is impossible for me to please an imaginary audience whose needs in art I do not understand. Although we get many clients from abroad, still our local market keeps us afloat through regular sales we make to them. The kind of art our local market needs is that which they can understand and identify with in one way or another (Personal interview, Vita Lulengo-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015).*

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

This particular period was characterised by activities of a new generation of artists, the non-conformist youths calling themselves “*Kizazi kipya*” or the “new generation”. There is no evidence that either the past two post-independence governments or the ruling party directly influenced their manifestations; however, there is massive evidence showing that they got their support and inspiration from Western countries. Much of the artworks produced during

this period depict a clear objection of artists as political propaganda promoters, despite an intensive one-party politics orientation, which most artists in this period acquired throughout their primary and secondary education<sup>279</sup>. Although practised by a big number of academically detached players, comics and cartooning art practices in Tanzania since the 1980s vividly display engagement into social protest and socio-political expressions as witnessed in other parts of Africa by Okwi Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu when they assert:

The 1980s, we emphasise again, were remarkable for consolidation of diverse political and economic forces, not least of which are internally generated and proxy wars, rampant military and civilian dictatorships, fragile democratic systems, decline in national earning power, and austerity measures forced upon states and citizens by conditionalities of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The result was the proliferation of unstable societies and para-state networks, plunging human development indices, and the so-called brain drain or immigration in significant numbers of the continent's intellectual elite. In addition to economic crises, the spread radical Islam, anticipated by the founding of Al-Jihad in Egypt in 1980, signaled new strategies of oppositional politics and repressive governance in the region. In South Africa, the attempt by the apartheid regime to muzzle the resistance movement in the mid-1980s, amped up its brutal security measures and declared a state of emergency. These exacting conditions occupied, more than ever before, the critical attention of artists who, like their compatriots witnessed the unfolding drama of late-twentieth-century Africa with all but total loss of faith in the nation-state for progressive collective and individual subjectivity (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009:30)

In some kind of a 'soft' approach, most of the Tanzanian artists have since the mid-1980s created and presented their works as 'silent speeches' addressing various issues on poor governance and unreliable social services delivery for the public. In fact, they consciously

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<sup>279</sup> Tanzania's education curriculum in different levels includes political subject(s) classes. The *Siasa* which is translated into the English as politics and later on known as Civics was among subjects that pupils and students learned at schools during the *Ujamaa and Self-Reliance* period. The subjects, apart from the general knowledge delivery were intended to prepare young party cadres known as *Chipukizi* in Kiswahili language.

and unconsciously rejected the 'traditional role' of artists as authorities' mouthpieces, supposedly passed into their hands by the older generation of artists from the immediate post-independence and the latter *Ujamaa* periods. The surrounding socio-cultural, economic and political conditions during the neo-liberal economics period compelled artists in Tanzania to evolve into critical practices. As Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu (2009:30) proclaim, "*It is often that art, in imitating life, can mirror the world more clearly than a simple recounting of events*". As such, the visual arts in Tanzania, the cartoon artworks in particular, have been manifestations of such a development since 1985.

On the whole, contemporary artists in Tanzania, beginning from the 1990s, played other roles as well besides creating art. For example, one may find works of political critiques, cultural activism, even humanitarianism and civic rights advocacy among these artists. With their heavy dependence on the funding projects from the Western countries sponsors, artists' activities as social or cultural activists or political critics, are sceptically appreciated by the government and some 'conservative elite'. Sometimes, their critical artworks are criticised as 'inauthentic' or mere 'puppetry' inspired and influenced by their Western patrons. Indisputably, the essence of artworks and the visual artists' generation emerged during the neo-liberal economic period in Tanzania pose several puzzles that call for further research.

Although the early independence and *Ujamaa* generation of artists saw the joining of hands with the government in the struggle to decolonisation cultural production practices<sup>280</sup>, the younger generation of artists succeeding them had different agendas and aspirations. They used their arts as tools of public engagement in the post-independent politics. In consequence,

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<sup>280</sup> See, Mbughuni, 1974, pp.30-1

visual arts became effective mediums for socio-political commentaries, cultural activism, and civic identification. The typical examples of such forays in the early political cartoon artworks include ‘*Zaidi Tanzania 1995*’ (Fig.217) by Samuel Mwamkinga ‘*Sammi*’ and ‘*Maendeleo*’ (Fig.218) by Ali Masoud ‘*Kipanya*’. Nonetheless, the recent sculptural installations and paintings by Vita Lulengo ‘*Malulu*’ depict his activism in the promotion of civil rights for participation in the political processes, and rights for the marginalised groups to get a good education and health services. In fact, *Malulu*’s artworks such as ‘*Majangili*’ (Fig.236) and ‘*Red Carpet*’ (Fig.237) confirm his activism against large-scale elephant poaching that has struck Tanzania.

Another contemporary artist whose artworks depict roles other than artistry is Rehema Chachage. Her feminist protest and women rights activism is evident in different levels pertaining to how she problemizes her issues. Her legendary video artwork, ‘*Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu*’ (Fig.246) and her performance art piece ‘*Mlango wa Nashivuku*’ confront and question established male-dominated systems in land ownership rights in addition to proposing a paradigmatic shift in the process of “assigning” gender roles among women and men in contemporary Tanzania. Similarly, the photographic artworks of Mwanzo Millinga depict his ‘humanitarian’ standpoint in the presentation of traumatic experiences encountered by others through photo-journalistic and artistic approaches. Mwanzo’s major projects are ‘*Young Miners*’ that captures images showing hardship and suffering of child-miners at Mirerani, a Tanzanite mining area in Arusha region, Tanzania (Fig.252) and ‘*Beautiful Desert Rose*’ featuring a series of photos depicting the tragedy of Albino killings in many parts of the country since the 2000s. These photographic representations indicate that contemporary artists went over the fences not only to depict the beauty and to complement government

policies but also assumed active roles in holding the authorities and public institutions accountable for negligence and poor social service delivery.

However, art as silent speeches to criticise the conservative systems, injustices, social and political problems was very nominal in Tanzania. Unlike in Nigeria, Senegal and Kenya as Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu (2009) illustrate, in Tanzania, poor art education systems for artists and the public, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, is probably the main reason that has limited artists' critical thinking abilities that would otherwise enable them to engage in critical practice as part of their artistic representations. In fact, the critical artistic practices as witnessed in Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal was a product of good art education, artists' self-awareness and commitment to public service as observed by Okwi Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu:

The manifestation of art as critique of social and political in the postcolonial state, as shown in the examples of Nigeria, Senegal, and Kenya, depended on artists' commitment to an engagement with their local visual publics. Contemporary art within African public sphere thus constituted a mode of social transaction, or more precisely a vehicle for participating in debates about governance and popular sovereignty, and self or communal representation within a field of complex and competing symbolic representations and communications (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009:32)

Indeed, the critical artistic practices were also far better and active in the Kenyan art scene in the 1980s and the early 1990s than in neighbouring Tanzania. This was because, the artistic movements such as *Sisi Kwa Sisi* that translate into English as 'For Us, By Us' (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009:32) in Kenya were formed and pioneered by educated artists whose knowledge and skills enabled them to employ their art as 'silent speeches' to express their social and political opinions against oppressive and suppressive practices as the following statement surmises:

However, despite the relatively few artists produced by Kenyan universities, there existed a thriving art scene supported by the country's thriving robust tourism industry and by the galleries originally established by white settlers. As with contemporary theatre, Sisi Kwa Sisi evolved out of the decision of university-trained artists, critics, and activists to side-track the established gallery system, which was notorious for its indifference towards works with socio-political content. Sisi Kwa Sisi organised outdoor exhibitions, and thus succeeded in taking art to the streets, which all but alienated the artists from the settler-owned art galleries. Sisi Kwa Sisi thus fulfilled its organisers' objective of using art as an effective means of communicating with the underprivileged populations, but also as social and political critique (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009:32)

Unlike in Kenya, in Tanzania the 1980s visual art activities were dominated by autodidactic artists whose engagement in the art enterprise was only meant to secure the much-needed jobs to support their daily lives. This tendency is evident in the 1980s art practices of the Tingatinga and the Nyumba Ya Sanaa artists as presented, analysed and discussed in chapter two of this study. This is also true about the activities of the TAPOMA presented in this chapter. At least, similar to the critical role of contemporary theatre pioneered by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo in Kenya, was the Paukwa theatre group in Tanzania. The group was constituted by UDSM's academics and theatre scholars whose stage performances featured among others, the group members' published plays addressing "failures of the *Ujamaa*" and rampant social and political mismanagements. The critical theatrical performances of Paukwa include "*Kaptula la Marx*" or "Karl Marx's Shorts", and the "*Wakati Ukuta*" or "Time is a Wall". Unlike in Kenya, educated visual artists in Tanzania seldom engaged in critical productions that exposed and critiqued the shortfalls in governance and poor social service delivery by the state. During an interview, Penina Mlama, one of the founders of the Paukwa Theatre, commented:

Educated visual artists, with exception of cartoonists in our country have neither participated in the liberation struggles for independence, nor in

the socio and political commentaries during the postcolonial chaos in the 1980s. They have been reluctant to exercise their 'inactive elite jobs' in the public offices, while poets, actors, dancers and musicians, as well as fiction and non-fiction writers were head-on tackling the government's inefficiency unaccountability in their creative works (Personal Interview, Penina Mlama September 2015)

Nevertheless, since the early 1990s, as explained in the comics and cartoon arts sections in this study, there was some progress that was registered in Tanzania's visual art in terms of the politics of engagement with prevailing political and social issues. Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu (2009:31) attest, not all the artists were active in that course of action when they say, "*to be sure, not all artists in Nigeria were engaged in this overt political works*", similarly was the situation in Tanzania. The cartoon artworks published in private press, on the other hand, appeared as 'bitter whips' against corrupt politicians, irresponsible government leaders, and public institutions that positively augmented the opposition politics agenda of holding the authorities accountable. Nonetheless, as the neo-liberal economic period in Tanzania was characterised by commercialised productivity, the majority of visual arts were also created for commercial purposes by individual artists, groups and companies whose purposes for production were strictly to make money. Like their counterparts in the newly-emerged '*Bongo Flava*' (modern popular) music genre industry, the young generation of visual artists during this period joined the race of producing art so as to become local celebrities and mint money to achieve fame, popularity and affluence<sup>281</sup>. Some artists at the Nafasi Art Space have embraced this ambition and it is evident in their activities, as they work hard to be part of everything that has artistic bearings. In fact, their profit-orientation has made many of them multi-talented artists who try out many things. As such, it is not surprising to find a painter

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<sup>281</sup>See Reuster-Jahn and Hacke 2011, pp.6-10



who also claims to be a musician, a writer, a video artist, or a model, as well as cinematographer and art director. In short, the two generations of artists explored and described in this study experienced different influences as well as aspirations in the pursuit of excellence, success, and artistic prowess in their practices.

In his theory, the Sociological Problem of Generations, Karl Mannheim describes this phenomenon in the extract below:

...Another fact, closely related to the phenomenon just described, is that any two generations following one another always fight different opponents, both within and without. While the older people may still be combating something in themselves or in the external world in such fashion that all their feelings and efforts and even their concepts and categories of thought are determined by that adversary, for the younger people this adversary may be simply nonexistent: Their primary orientation is an entirely different one. That historical development does not proceed in a straight line—a feature frequently observed particularly in the cultural sphere—is largely attributed to this shifting of the “polar” components of life, that is, to the fact that internal or external adversaries constantly disappear and are replaced by others (Mannheim 1928:177-78)

In other words, there was an obvious failure of smooth exchange and continuation of national visual arts production between the first and second generations of artists in Tanzania. The second generation of artists that emerged in Tanzania two decades after independence was not directly confronted by the effects of cultural oppression that the former had experienced in their heyday. Nonetheless, the visual artists’ generation during the neo-liberal economic period lacked the unity or organisation, which could have guided their activities by professional ethics, rules, and regulations. Throughout the Independence and the *Ujamaa* periods, the first generation of Tanzanian artists and cultural promoters worked in organised institutions (TCS, TSEAA, CEAA, TSAC and TCC etc.) that governed their course of actions as well as their thought formation. Artists in the neo-liberal period, on the other hand,

worked individually, even the small organisations they tried to form could not last for five years. This is evident by the failures of the KYAA and the TAPOMA, the only influential visual artists' organisations that have existed during the neo-liberal economy period, as discussed in Chapter Three. A review of the contributions of the present local visual arts enterprises as well as Western cultural agencies to the promotion of visual arts in Tanzania shows a wide range of opinions, as the following comment illustrates:

While policy-makers are doing little for the arts, various talented artists are also committing murder to their craft by succumbing to the demand for 'tourist art'; others fall into the donor-funded art trap, allowing their creativity and point of view to be restricted by the donors' agenda<sup>282</sup>

From this comment, it can be deduced that lack of professional and committed administration of artistic development during the neo-liberal period, as in the *Ujamaa* period, is the main reason behind the present situation, which has left the visual art scene of Tanzania in an uncertain state. However, the advent of the neo-liberal economic scene brought about many opportunities, as well as new challenges to Tanzanian creative industries. Indeed, the visual art sector has witnessed significant growth and positive changes in its production and promotion. In fact, there has been a gradually increased intervention from the private sector and international cultural promotion agencies, which has rejuvenated contemporary art practices with wide interests beyond commercial interests. In consequence, new developments have emerged in Tanzania's contemporary art as manifested by new forms of self-expression coupled with extended platforms for public display. There has also been

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<sup>282</sup> See, [www.howafrika.com/is-tanzanias-amazing-tinga-tinga-style-of-paintings-still-trending/](http://www.howafrika.com/is-tanzanias-amazing-tinga-tinga-style-of-paintings-still-trending/) Accessed on 13th July 2017 at FU-Berlin, Germany

continuous progress in contemporary art practices that introduce Tanzania to a global art platform, as Kefa Otiso points out:

Tanzania has many contemporary art forms that have largely arisen in response to the country's evolving sociological, economic, political, and aesthetic realities. Most of these new art forms have come about due to the country's contact with external forces including Arab, Portuguese, German, and British colonial forces. Since independence, the country has also increasingly come into contact with the larger global world that has influenced its art by, for instance, introducing it to external art traditions and techniques... (Otiso 2013:105)

## **Section II: Conclusion**

This study has delineated a concise historical account of the development of visual arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, video, installations and performance art in Tanzania. It covers six decades of two generations of artistic evolutions, movements and new creations in Tanzanian visual arts. Using sociological and art historical lenses, the study analysed visual arts and artistic developments as socio-cultural activities taking place alongside political and economic life aspects. In particular, this study focused on revealing the influences that Tanzania National Cultural Policy and institutional support have had on visual art developments in this East African country. Through massive textual and pictorial analyses in all its three chapters this study affirms that, in Tanzania visual arts have continually stimulated and developed as a result of efforts of individual artists and art associations, activities of local and international institutions as well as the Tanzania government's 'guidelines' and patronage. Conversely, as a specialised genre, visual arts in many cases were and still are inadequately researched upon and recorded to provide a reliable account in Tanzania as a region within East Africa. Perhaps this study is the only research ever conducted in the country to provide an inclusive narrative on the development of a wide range of visual art genres. From the early 1960s to 2015, when visual arts particularly drawing, painting and sculpture, have been formally taught in some schools and diversely practised by communities, so much has happened but very little has been recorded and documented. Until the present research, only a few local and foreign art educators have researched upon and published some reports on the visual arts and artistic developments in Tanzania. Subsequently, the present study unveils and adds a lot of new information to an

existing literature corpus on Tanzanian visual arts and, perhaps, sets a new trajectory for more research to commence.

In the first chapter, the study findings reveal that the Tanzania government, under a close supervision and support of its first president, consciously pioneered the restoration, preservation and promotion of its local arts and culture nationally and internationally by involving experts available at that time in a collective approach. In assessing the contribution of the human resource factor in the development of visual arts in Tanzania, this research was informed by the Sociological Problem of Generations theory aimed to guide its readers' understanding of several historical, cultural, political and economic events which happened in a specific time and location in relationship with the people involved. In these closing remarks, particularly in the review of Chapter One's findings, I find it pertinent to comment on how the visual arts' sector was established by reviewing the way its administration was formed and briefly look at the essence and origin of its founding ideologies. This is important because much of the later developments evident in Tanzanian visual arts were in one way or another influenced by the foundation laid by its pioneers during the independence period. The 1960s events such as the abolishment of chieftaincy, and interdiction of the then infant-multiparty activities (which were accused of being complicit as 'colonial puppets', religious 'extremists' and 'tribalists') by putting into place a single party government, reflects strongly President Nyerere's ambition aimed to 'create' a 'new generation'<sup>283</sup> or a socio-cohort free

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<sup>283</sup> As an educated and very intelligent individual, President Nyerere was probably aware of Karl Mannheim's theory and might have applied it somehow somewhere in his approach to building a new united nation free of sociological problems, commonly experienced in many newly-independent African states. Tribalism and religious extremism consumed several West and Central African post-colonial states, and dragged them into violent civil and political conflicts. The Biafra War of 1968 in Nigeria is perhaps an event which sent a very important message to many African leaders of newly-independent nation-states. In many of his writings, President Nyerere confirms that his formation and adoption of the *Ujamaa*, which other termed an African Socialism version, was intended to create and cement an idea of a homogeneous and secular society free of ethnic and religious divisions

from religious, family, kinship or blood-related individuals as explicated in Karl Mannheim's theory. In simple terms, through the Sociological Problem of Generation Theory lens, President Nyerere's government through socio-cultural and socio-political approaches influenced some kind of a homogeneity among Tanzanians by exploiting their shared experiences as determined by their lived time, location, culture and class<sup>284</sup>. In the context of 'national visual arts' development, President Nyerere managed to spur collective action in the national scale by identifying, empowering and utilising talented individuals, who comprised professional artists, art educators and non-artist civil servants<sup>285</sup> to help his government by spearheading the development of visual arts and cultural institutions tasked with restoring, synthesizing, creating and promoting the Tanzanian visual arts and local culture at large.

The 'official' nationwide visual arts and cultural promotion projects in Tanzania began after the establishment of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth and the National Museum of Tanzania in the early 1960s, while people in their localities continued with the production and promotion of cultural activities besides their basic chores without necessarily depending on or receiving any direct support or guidance from the authorities. As discussed in Chapter One, these two institutions undertook central roles in overseeing all activities concerning national arts and culture in the production and promotion processes. On a noteworthy scale,

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<sup>284</sup>... According to Mannheim, social consciousness and perspective of youth reaching maturity in a particular time and place (what he termed "generational location") is significantly influenced by the major historical events of that era (thus becoming a "generation in actuality"). A key point, however, is that this major historical event has to occur, and has to involve the individuals in their young age (thus shaping their lives, as later experiences will tend to receive meaning from those early experiences). See, Mannheim 1928:176-182, 186

<sup>285</sup> Albert Chagula, Bibi Titi Mohamed, Joseph Nyerere, Chadiel Mgonja, Moses Nnauye, Mirisho Sarakikya and Daniel Ndagala were among several non-artist civil servants who headed several public arts and culture promotion institutions and helped to push forward the developments of this sector with remarkable successes in their activities.

the Ministry of National Education also collaborated with the aforementioned institutions to promote visual arts and culture through arts training in a few selected schools and colleges. During this period, most of the visual arts activities were steered by a group of elites comprising of formally trained-artists who were, perhaps, personally known to President Nyerere during their studies at the Makerere College in the 1940s and 1960s<sup>286</sup>. Sam Ntiro, the leading artist during the independence period was appointed High Commissioner for Tanzania to the UK. The appointment made him the first visual artist from entire Anglophone Africa to hold such a lofty position. Upon his return to Tanzania, he was again appointed to serve as a Commissioner for Culture in the Minister's which ministry office in 1967. Ntiro was the first formally trained artist to graduate at Makerere in 1947. Perhaps, Ntiro's appointment as a high commissioner to the UK was meant to extend the promotion of Tanzanian visual arts and national culture on international platforms through an artist who could practically do it better than any other during that particular period. Among many other successes in his service to the Tanzanian visual arts' sector, Sam Ntiro is credited with being a pioneer of tertiary art education and the father of the *Ujamaa* painting genre. Sefania Tunginie, another graphic artist trained at Makerere, was appointed to work at the Butimba Teachers' Training College (TTC) as its Principal in Mwanza in 1967. Tunginie introduced fine art courses training for primary and secondary school teachers who were then sent to teach in public schools all over the country. He trained most of the art teachers who served in public schools since the 1970s until the early 1990s while working at Butimba TTC. Kiure

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<sup>286</sup> Since 1937 when it was started by Margaret Trowel, the Makerere School of Art hosted and trained most artists in the East African region which was then under the control of the British colonialists. Almost all Tanzanians who served during President Nyerere's reign received their tertiary education at the Makerere College which was specifically established to serve the British colonial staff in East Africa.

Msangi, the ‘master’ woodcut-print-artist became the Headmaster of Iyunga Secondary School at Mbeya where he introduced fine arts and technical drawing as hobby-courses for talented and interested students. Another brilliant painter and designer, Jeremiah Kabati, became the first African Headmaster of Tabora Secondary School where he was later joined by Elias Jengo to introduce fine arts teaching in the mid-1960s. Abdullah Farahani and Wazir Juma were among first the Tanzanians to study art at Makerere; they were assigned to teach and administer in their respective institutions. Farahani worked at the Nkrumah TTC in Zanzibar whereas Wazir Juma worked first at Tanga Secondary School. Similar teaching and administrative positions were covered by trained artists and visual arts scholars in many parts of the country.

As administrators in their respective institutions, these artists inspired many other young talents who later became renowned artists in Tanzania as already discussed in Chapter One (see *1.4.2 Community of East African Artists-CEAA*). Nevertheless, the Ministry of National Culture under the influence of Sam Ntiro, as Commissioner for Culture, hosted three art associations within its premises. The Ministry offered free workspaces such as offices and conference halls, also access to communication services such as the use of its postal address and telephone communication. The Tanzania Art Society (TAS), the Community of East African Artists (CEAA) and the Tanzania Crafts Council (TCC) have for many years operated from the Ministry’s building in Dar es Salaam until 1980s when they ceased activities. In addition to the Ministry’s activities, The National Museum of Tanzania (NMT) worked closely with both individual artists and art organisations in the implementation of visual arts and local culture promotion projects. Between 1964 and 1966, the NMT collaborated with the Kibo Art Gallery under Elimo Njau to mount the only exhibition that



brought together in the same show most of the pioneering East African artists to display their works and exchange experiences at Kilimanjaro and Dar es Salaam regions in Tanzania. In the 1970s, intensive art and culture promotion activities by the National Museum of Tanzania were inspired by young non-artist scholars with great passion in visual arts curating and documentation. These were John Wembah-Rashid an anthropologist, and Felix Masao an archaeologist.

The configuration of arts and culture administration during the early independence days reveals that visual arts were administered by an organised generation of ambitious young men entrusted with responsibilities to bring about changes in the Tanzanian visual arts practices. Through the lenses of Sociological Problem of Generation's Theory, this kind of organisation of institutions, manpower mobilisation and administrative approaches reveal some kind of an established and shared 'social consciousness' built over a span of years of shared life experiences. In a newly-independent Tanzania this 'social consciousness' was popularly known as the '*Umoja*' or unity. However, despite successes in establishing the visual arts sector with a promising future in its administration and strength of its new institutions and agencies, the visual arts of the independence period had several shortcomings which emerged during its maturity stage. Amongst many, poor communication and co-operation between established institutions to promote visual arts was a devastating drawback. Findings show that, there was limited co-operation between key institutions that were expected to lead others in the mission to create and promote new national visual arts in the country. The National Museum of Tanzania and the Ministries of National Education and National Culture and Youth, had no clearly planned and shared nationwide projects or programmes which would actively involve all the active artists and cultural producers. A

clear indicator of this problem was the lack of connections of activities as described in Chart 2, National Archives Division and National Culture and Antiquities Division: Current Organisation. Apart from the TCC, other active visual arts societies and associations such as CEAA and TAS did not succeed in registering artists outside prominent art regions such as Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Arusha. These shortcomings and many others presented in different sections of Chapter One of this study left the visual arts activities in the hands of a few professionals who alone could not realise all aspired changes as pronounced by President Nyerere in his inaugural speech in 1962. Looking at the failures of the visual arts of independence period, some critics of arts developments in this particular period argued that, the ‘top-down’ approach applied by authorities demanded that politicians, scholars or elites and only professionally-trained artists lead the promotion of visual arts development in Tanzania. This was the main cause of problems as visual arts before this period had developed freely with only limited influence of its patrons.

Wrapping this study’s findings as presented in Chapter Two, I look at the successes and failures encountered in Tanzania’s visual arts development during the *Ujamaa* era against the background of policies of administration and patronage practices of this particular period. The Visual Arts of *Ujamaa* constitute the most significant era in the visual arts history of Tanzania where social, cultural, political and economic activities emerged to incorporate visual arts promotion as part of the national development agenda. As this period arose in the course of maturity of the Arts of Independence period, it must be acknowledged that, the Visual Arts of the *Ujamaa* period were still dominated by activities of the same institutions and generation of artists who were previously actively involved. This is an important point to note since this research also assesses the contribution of visual arts development as

influenced by only two generations of artists and art promotion institutions of the post-independence period. The only difference one sees in the visual arts practices between those in the Independence and of the *Ujamaa* periods was on the scale of production, promotion and patronage by the State. Unlike the former period, the *Ujamaa* period enjoyed massive government support through the ruling Party (TANU/CCM), parastatals and private institutions' patronage. As presented in Chapter Two, the *Ujamaa* era was laden with monuments, life-size sculptures and murals which were created and displayed on government and party buildings in many parts of the country. Apart from increased productions of art for public display, the period also saw a boom in other visual arts businesses particularly on the Makonde carvings and the Tingatinga paintings. This was also credited to the Tanzania government's initiatives to indigenise visual art activities through the 'nationalisation' policy. Perhaps, the establishment of new visual arts promotion institutions such as the National Art Gallery (NAT later on HANDICO) in 1970, the Tingatinga Arts Co-operative Society (TACS) in 1972, the Art Department at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1975 and the Nyumba ya Sanaa Arts and Crafts Centre (NYS) in 1979 marked the pinnacle of success of the *Ujamaa* period.

Nonetheless, the successes of the Visual Arts of the *Ujamaa* period were short-lived. The visual arts business boom came to a halt in the late 1970s. Several causes can explain the downfall of artistic and cultural activities that had flourished just a few years earlier. The Kagera War of 1978/79 and the economic recession which struck many African economies since the mid-1970s were among the main causes of the dwindling business in the visual arts which earned the artists a lot of money and added to government's coffers. But when observing the factors which were closely associated with day-to-day practices of the visual

arts' management, two causes were discovered to have contributed immensely to the letdowns experienced in visual arts sector during the *Ujamaa* period. The first cause had to do with the serious ideological problem which was evident in the approaches adopted towards the creation of a national culture through artistic productions. This problem was observed in relation to the side of management of visual arts institutions which was divided into two groups. There was a group of prominent artists and art institutions' managers who believed that the creation of new Tanzanian visual arts should focus on appropriating only 'original' African artistic traditions of the past generations while wiping-off everything that was associated with the colonialists' cultural practices. Another group insisted that the new Tanzanian visual arts should take a 'cultural synthesis' approach that allows for a 'careful' selection of acceptable foreign artistic traditions and practices that can be borrowed and incorporated in the process of creating new Tanzanian visual arts and culture at large. Perhaps, President Nyerere's call<sup>287</sup> for the revival and adoption of pre-colonial cultural practices into the new national culture when he pronounced the establishment of the Ministry of National Culture and Youth was the source of misinterpretations by his assistants as hinted by Daniel Ndagala (see Chapter One of this study). The emerging ambivalence left a clear division of the key players such as artists, administrators and policymakers to accept the view that visual arts development plans and activities by different institutions and agencies were unconnected in many stages of production and promotion. Yet, it should also be noted that, with more than 120 ethnic groups and an area covering 945,087 km<sup>2</sup>, assembling individuals to form a concrete group, in the context of this study, a generation of Tanzanian visual artists with similar attitudes or intellectual capabilities for the purpose of creating a new visual

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<sup>287</sup> For the first time, the national culture creation through revival of past cultural traditions in its wider sense was proposed by Julius Nyerere during his Presidential Inaugural speech on 10 December 1962

culture was an ambitious project which needed enough time and a lot of resources to accomplish. Karl Mannheim's theory explicates the complexities in the process of a concrete group formation thusly:

...The generation unit tends to impose a much more concrete and binding tie on its members because of the parallelism of responses it involves. As a matter of fact, such new, overtly created, partisan integrative attitudes characterizing generation units do not come into being spontaneously, without a personal contact among individuals, but within concrete groups where mutual stimulation in a close-knit vital unit inflames the participants and enables them to develop integrative attitudes that do justice to the requirements inherent in their common "location" (Mannheim 1928:187)

From Mannheim's comment, it is apparent that the cohort of visual artists operating during the *Ujamaa* period was not yet a concrete group with a clearly established collective agenda. The divisions in their perception of their tasks in cultural creation, unshared plans and contrasted activities show that this generation of artists needed more time together so that they could exchange and share ideas on their tasks and responsibilities. While exploring another possible reason for failures in erecting a sustainable visual arts sector during the *Ujamaa* period, the present study focused on exploring the visual arts administration-transition problem. As the pioneers of the independence and *Ujamaa* visual arts periods comprised the same generation of artists for over two decades, there emerged a feeling of 'normality' in their practices. The kind of visual arts they produced were so unchanged that the audience always expected to see freshly-executed murals, monuments and statues on walls and surroundings of the parastatal's or ruling Party's buildings. This was a period when visual arts were produced in a normal routine-like process. This kind of production occurred in the absence of young artists ready to take over from the pioneers to continue the creative spirit's vigour as evident from the previous period. It emerged that the older artists who had for so long led the visual scene also administered several public and private institutions for

visual arts promotion and had, paradoxically, not prepared their successors. The vacuum they left behind after their retirement was evident in the early 1980s. In this regard, the study findings indicate that the retirement of President Nyerere in 1984, which was preceded by that of Sam Ntiro in 1983, was a big final blow which sealed a total collapse of the Visual Arts of the *Ujamaa* period. The Tanzanian visual arts scene was back on its feet in the mid-1990s after almost a decade of silence. The *Ujamaa* period's generation of artists could not pass on their activities' heritage to their succeeding young generation of artists. Thus, the Sociological Problem of Generation Theory helps to explain on how a failure of generational transition can lead to a stagnation in the process of cultural production:

...In contrast to the imaginary society with no generations, our own—in which generation follows generation—is principally characterised by the fact that cultural creation and cultural accumulation are not accomplished by the same individuals—instead, we have the continuous emergence of new age groups. This means, in the first place, that our culture is developed by individuals who come into contact anew with the accumulated heritage. In the nature of our psychical makeup, a fresh contact (meeting something anew) always means a changed relationship of distance from the problem of generations is only one among those upon which it has a bearing...object and a novel approach in assimilating, using, and developing the proffered material. The phenomenon of 'fresh contact' is, incidentally, of great significance in many social contexts; the problem of generations is only one among those upon which it has a bearing (Mannheim 1928:171)

In reviewing the third and final chapter of this study, the focus was on the formation of the new generation of artists who took over the visual arts scene in the late 1980s and displayed their activities from the 1990s and the early 2000s to the present time. Briefly, the study findings show that the second generation of Tanzanian visual artists whose activities are presented in Chapter Three of this study titled: *The Visual Arts of the Neo-Liberal Economy Era in Tanzania 1985 to 2015*, emerged free of the influences of a previous generation. There

is very little evidence in artworks and publications to attest to a smooth transition of generations of artists from the *Ujamaa* period to the Neo-Liberal Economy era.

This new cohort of artists with very little artistic heritage in their infant careers pioneered the grounding of contemporary visual arts practices some of which had never been experienced before in Tanzania. This was possible due to the vacuum of artistic activities and proper art promotion management since 1985 and intervention of foreign support. As demonstrated in numerous sub-sections of Chapter Three of this study, the visual arts of Neo-Liberal Economy era encompassed several peculiarities never experienced in the previous generation of artists practices. The contemporary artworks, unlike the previous ones, displayed an extreme secularism in their themes and topics, liberal ideologies, diversity in use of art media and display techniques. These unorthodox characteristics of Tanzanian contemporary arts were associated with political and economic liberalization which brought changes in all life aspects in many African countries since the mid-1980s.

Indeed, the new visual art practices in Tanzania were largely promoted by three new institutions. These were the Kinondoni Young Artists Association (KYAA), the Tanzania Popular Media Association (TAPOMA) and the Nafasi Art Space. Since 1985 the KYAA and TAPOMA were involved in media arts promotion through training of artists who later worked with various private mass media outlets which boomed as a result of political and economic liberalisation of the 1990s. During this period, illustrations, comics and cartoon artworks dominated the Tanzania visual arts scene through print media such newspapers, books, and magazines. The Nafasi Art Space emerged in 2008 with the mission of inspiring new ways of producing and present visual arts in the global platforms. Besides traditional visual art forms such as painting, drawing and sculpture, Nafasi introduced novel ways of

artistic creativities through training, exhibitions, residence and exchanges programmes. This study presents findings on new art forms such as video, installation and performance arts as new visual arts genres practiced and massively produced by young Tanzanians. Perhaps, Nafasi filled the visual arts activities' gap left by the Nyumba ya Sanaa (NYS) which collapsed alongside the *Ujamaa* period.

Nevertheless, since its emergence, the Visual Arts of the Neo-Liberal Economy Era in Tanzania seemed to be unsustainable. This can be justified by the weaknesses of the foundation on which it was established. However, in the context of this discussion in this conclusion, two weaknesses emerge. The first weakness is the disorganization of its founding artists who identify themselves, as the *Kizazi Kipya* or the new generation. The visual artists, who comprised a cohort practicing contemporary arts in Tanzania during this particular period, was not formed on an established social consciousness but as a mere similarity of the concomitant needs in their artistic practices. The young artists were in dire need of workspaces, a reliable supply of art materials, motivation and inspiration. The KYAA, Nafasi and TAPOMA which began their activities as non-profit organisations gathered and provided them with all aforementioned needs on condition that the visual artists had to work within the institutions' frameworks in which arrangements on the distribution of benefits and profits earned were made and agreed upon between the visual artists and their host institutions' management. Therefore, when studying the generation of visual artists who practised during the neo-liberal Tanzania scene, this study established that not only did the artists lack a clearly defined and shared 'social consciousness' but they had also not established a concrete group that could identify them as a cohort with a definite agenda in their visual arts practice.



In this regard, Karl Mannheim's assessments can be used to paraphrase this view in the following extract:

...The most important point we have to notice is the following: Not every generation location—not even every age group—creates new collective impulses and formative principles original to itself and adequate to its particular situation. Where this does happen, we shall speak of a *realization of potentialities inherent* in the location, and it appears probable that the frequency of such realizations is closely connected with the tempo of social change. When as a result of an acceleration in the tempo of social and cultural transformation basic attitudes must change so quickly that the latent, continuous adaptation and modification of traditional patterns of experience, thought, and expression is no longer possible, then the various new phases of experience are consolidated somewhere, forming a clearly distinguishable new impulse, and a new centre of configuration. We speak in such cases of the formation of a new generation style, or of a new *generation entelechy* (Mannheim 1928:189)

It is apparent that the artists who practised through the KYAA, TAPOMA and the Nafasi were individuals without a relevant heritage of visual arts practices from which to draw shared traditional pattern of experiences and basic attitudes that could, otherwise, help to formulate a social consciousness and eventually a concrete group. A good example to attest to this point can be made from the collapse of the KYAA. In the mid-1990s, the KYAA lacked proper administration after its foreign managers left Tanzania. A few former trainees who took over administration of the association were tasked with continuing its activities. Instead, in what is associated with egoistic attitudes, they divided the KYAA properties among themselves and sold all its equipment. KYAA was the institution, which trained and groomed most of the comic and cartoon artists who have dominated the Tanzanian media arts to-date. The second weakness revisited on the unsustainability of visual arts promotion during the neo-liberal period because of its financial dependence on donor-funded programmes. This is well explained in the experiences of the Nafasi Art Space. Nafasi's premises rent, salaries of managerial staff and all programme expenses depended heavily on

donor funding. Realising the danger of this system, Jan van Ersh, Nafasi's former manager, sought to establish another source of funds by charging a small fee from each artist allocated with a workspace in the Nafasi facility at Mikocheni. He also introduced several programmes that invited the public to visit Nafasi and buy artworks to accord the artists more income and collect some revenues from sales too. All these developments helped to keep Nafasi afloat but they were never enough. Since 2015 Nafasi's promotion had been slowly declining with some programmes coming to a halt. Moreover, its former manager moved to Germany and several founding artists left Nafasi premises to open their own enterprises elsewhere. This study found that some donors reduced their funding to help other programmes in other activities. With the gradual decline of Nafasi Art Space's visual arts promotion, the future of the visual arts practices remains largely uncertain as there is no other institution promoting arts as Nafasi had done.

On the whole, since 1962 when official programmes were ratified to promote visual arts in Tanzania, the trend has been one of back-and-forth progress, which raises serious questions about its stability and continuity. This study unveils several underway challenges which can be learned in an attempt to determine an optimistic future for Tanzania's visual arts. When looking at how the visual arts' promotion programmes and policies have been implemented from 1961 to 2015, the present research shows that the key players such as individual artists, art associations and societies, museums, gallery owners, art collectors, researchers, educators and training institutions were not properly connected in their regular activities, hence the resultant fragmented and unsustainable visual arts' landscape in Tanzania. In this regard, collaboration among the visual arts promoters is imperative primarily because none of the players in Tanzania's visual art enterprise is self-sufficient. After all, an artist will always

prosper if he or she can easily access the art galleries, art collectors and museum services; likewise, galleries and museums function perfectly because of the collaboration they receive from art critics, scholars and freelance exhibitors and partner art organisations. Indeed, the entire visual arts enterprise in Tanzania was set to work in a vicious cycle of a system of art promoters since its inception in the 1960s and throughout the post-independence era. Nonetheless, lack of consistency and other discrepancies hindered its implementation during the ensuing developments as described throughout this research, which ended up disrupting it. This notion is evident when explaining the failures of the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT) in the 1970s. Its non-artistic management could not withstand the criticism by art scholars from the Art Department of University of Dar es Salaam, who constantly questioned its promotional programmes and dismissed it as suppressive and unprofessional. In response to this criticism, the NAT management silently shunned soliciting professional advice or dealing with artworks produced by formally trained artists, particularly those at the UDSM, and instead focused as matter of choice on working with non-academic artists such as the Tingatinga and the Makonde carvers. This incident was clearly captured by Jengo (1985) as cited in the National Arts of Tanzania (NAT) – The HANDICO section, in chapter two. The present study established that the problem of unrealistic networking programmes among visual arts promoters was neither noticed nor cleared to prevent its prevailing ramifications in the sector. However, some findings in this study show that during the Arts of Independence and the Neo-Liberal periods, a few links were made possible between two or more key players whenever one of the aforementioned art promotion entities needed support from the other to meet its objectives. The results of such connections were enticing but short-lived. Good examples of this aspect can be drawn from the collaborations between the Kibo Art

Gallery (KAG) and the National Museum of Tanzania (NMT), when KAG borrowed some collections from the NMT to mount its first exhibition involving artists from the East African region at Kilimanjaro in 1964, as well as the collaborations between the Kinondoni Young Artists Group (KYAG) and the Tanzania Institute of Adult Education in Dar es Salaam (TIAE), when the KAG sought to officialise its visual art training programmes through the TIAE's accreditation<sup>288</sup> in the 1980s.

Uncertainty on the future of Tanzania's visual arts enterprise as reflected in the lack of proper structure of interactive activities is obvious as key visual arts promoters such as the National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA), the National Museum of Tanzania (NMT), and the Art Department of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), to mention just a few public institutions established for that purpose, have not yet done enough to secure the visual arts sector's sustainability. This trend appears to be associated with the negligence of the public institution's services. By the virtue of its establishment, BASATA's operations rely heavily on the activities of every active individual artist, artist' groups and art promotion organizations. It was startling to find out that, BASATA did very little to help the Nyumba ya Sanaa (NYS) dodge its dubious closure in 2012. Chapter Three's findings in this study show that, since 1972, the NYS had groomed hundreds of young artists to master and achieve success in their art careers. Their creations helped to enhance and promote the image of Tanzanian visual arts abroad and earned the government millions of forex and cultural

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<sup>288</sup> The Institute of Adult Education is a social parastatal organisation under the Ministry of Education and Culture. It was established under the Act of Parliament No. 12 of 1975, with the major objectives of providing and promoting adult education in the country. The Institute offers training to adult educators, administrators, and other personnel. It co-ordinates adult education activities, offers advisory and consultancy services to organizations and individuals, and offers mass education both through face-to-face and distance education. It also conducts research and evaluation on adult education programmes

reputation. It was the NYS that produced the renowned contemporary artists such as George Lilanga and John Fundi. Therefore, taking its collapse for granted is an alarming indicator that arts promotion's authorities need to improve its activities to ensure the sustainability of the visual arts sector in the country. Similar to this incident is the present uncertain condition of the NAFASI Art Space whose precarious financial situation is associated with poor policies and administrative support it gets from the local authorities responsible as pointed by its former manager, Jahn Van Ersh. In this regard, BASATA should not only focus on collecting revenues such as registration and annual operations permit fees also taxes from its partners such as the NAFASI but also prepare a more supportive agenda in order to keep this internationally well connected and leading initiative prospering and thus make it sustainable.

Likewise, when looking at the role of the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam, almost similar challenges were observed. The existing Museum's programmes have hardly helped to stir and encourage local visual arts' activities. Exhibition hall charges are too high for local freelance artists and exhibitors to afford. During interviews at the NAFASI, it was confirmed that only a few established artists who can secure sponsorship(s) may access NMT's exhibition facilities and services. Besides, since the early 2000s, the NMT has been lacking professional art curators who would have helped find better ways to engage local artists and exhibitors in the Museum's programmes and projects to benefit both parties considerably. While looking at the Art Department of the UDSM and other training institutions such as UDOM and TaSUBa, the main problem remained to be strict academic qualifications for enrolment of talented aspiring artists in its training programmes. Unfortunately, the majority of the promising and talented artists often lack such formal education and qualifications to enable them to enrol for training in new art production

approaches, technology and entrepreneurship. Contemporary art practices require that an artist be conversant with global art platforms in terms of media for artistic productions, marketing, display and exchanges. At present, doing art while unacquainted with the aforementioned basics on the contemporary art landscape is very difficult. Such a scenario is uninspiring and promises little for Tanzania's visual arts. It could have been possible to overcome these challenges through organising tailor-made programmes, art residences and training workshops. However, with strict curriculum and schedules, there is little hope that training institutions such as the UDSM and UDOM will rescue the situation soon. This is evident as none of the aforesaid public institutions responsible for visual arts promotion has adopted and implemented the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)<sup>289</sup> to-date. The transition from the *Ujamaa* to the Neo-Liberal economic better politics from the early 2000s prompted the Tanzania government to seek and identify PPPs as viable means to addressing effectively the constraints of financing, managing and maintaining of public goods and services. The approach has yielded significant successes in reviving the economic sectors that have collapsed such as agriculture, mining, trade and tourism back to their hey-day glory; however, this has generally not been the case for the increasingly neglected arts and culture sector. With all these challenges unattended to, it is, indeed, difficult to see Tanzania's visual arts take-off to the next level under the public sector's promotion programmes alone.

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<sup>289</sup>The concept of PPP entails an arrangement between the public and private sector entities whereby the private entity renovates, constructs, operates, maintains, and/or manages a facility in whole or in part, in accordance with specified output specifications. The private entity assumes the associated risks for a significant period and, in return, receives benefits and financial remunerations, according to the agreed upon terms. PPPs constitute a co-operative venture built on the synergy of expertise of each partner that best meets clearly defined public needs through the most appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards... (URT 2009, p.ii)

On the other hand, there is still hope that goodwill development co-operation partners such as international organisations and foreign embassies will continue with their good work of promoting Tanzania's visual arts through cultural exchange programmes, education scholarships, art projects funding and exhibition sponsorships. As already presented in several sections of this study international organisations such as NORAD, DANIDA, DCCD, SIDA, Goethe Institut, Alliance Française, the British Council, UNESCO, UNICEF, the Russian Cultural Centre and the Chinese cultural initiative, for example through the Confucius Institute, to mention the most active partners, have for many years engaged in developing and implementing a wide range of local culture development projects, including visual arts promotions, through partnership with individual local artists, art organisations and public institutions in Tanzania. The 9<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 photography exhibition on Aviation and Cosmonautics with a focus on Yuri Gagarin images, organised by the Russian Embassy at the University of Dar es Salaam<sup>290</sup> and the Tanzania Embassy in China through the BASATA co-ordinated art exhibition during the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo from 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Changsha city, Hunan province, are good indicators that international support and co-operation in cultural promotion between Tanzania and its partners will continue to thrive.

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<sup>290</sup> See, [https://web.facebook.com/481869681863314/posts/aprili-9-2019-viongozi-waandamizi-wa-ubalozi-wa-urusi-nchini-tanzania-walihutubi/2333759700007627/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/481869681863314/posts/aprili-9-2019-viongozi-waandamizi-wa-ubalozi-wa-urusi-nchini-tanzania-walihutubi/2333759700007627/?_rdc=1&_rdr) Retrieved on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, at the UDSM

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## Appendix

### Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die Arbeit in allen Teilen selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Alle Teile, die wörtlich oder dem Inhalt nach aus fremden Arbeiten entnommen wurden, wie etwa Textstellen, Zeichnungen Skizzen oder andere bildliche Darstellungen, sind als solche kenntlich gemacht.

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