

HISTORICAL IMPERATIVES OF ART IN ARCHITECTURE: THE ONDO EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Art is an integral part of the African society. It usually reflects in all aspects of life, especially in the architecture. Some residential buildings in Ondo reflect traditional and Bahia motifs. Art in Ondo Community in Ondo State, Nigeria gives breathe to traditional and modern architecture. Ondo architecture is elaborately decorated with artistic representations that reflect traditional African motifs as well as modern symbols. Some of the artistic elements are reminiscences of the Afro-Brazilian freed-slave returnees from Bahia. These experiences were translated into visual representation as a memorial. The thrust of this paper is to identify and analyse the artistic elements that are embedded on some of the residential buildings in Ondo during the early 1920s and 1940s. The essence is to reflect on the influence of colonization and the euphoria of new building designs brought by Freed-slave returnees on the art experience for historical preservation. Detailed information is provided on the artistic concepts and the symbolic meanings attached to them. Data were collected through field studies, photographs were taken and analysed using the descriptive approach. Oral interviews were conducted to ascertain the value of the motifs; using key informants. Relevant literature was also consulted. It was discovered that the motifs reflect the philosophy of the society as the 'new design' motifs were blended with traditional motifs and that many of the buildings are going into extinction as they are being demolished to give room for 'modern' development. It is hoped that government would acquire some of the buildings as monuments.

Keywords: artistic element, Ondo architecture and symbolism