

## Art and Architecture of the Owa's Palace in Ilesa, Nigeria<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** *The paper examines Ilesa palace's architecture and the artistic objects within the old palace ('afin') constructed around 1079 AD, including the courtyards ('akodi') within the palace. Data was sourced from field work, oral interviews and relevant literature. Purposively selected photographs of the 'Afin' are used in discussing the deplorable state of the architecture, royal paraphernalia and art objects, and thus raises the question of their sustainability and relevance for future generations. The study reveals the dilapidation of the old palace and courtyards were caused by the ravaging effects of urbanisation, poor maintenance attitude and indifference of the royal court to the historical/cultural values embedded in the art and architecture of the Ijesa nation. Of what benefits is urbanisation to the culture and history of a people if the memories of their past fade into oblivion, and their monuments and historical places of pride are neglected and endangered? The paper posits that the neglect of the indigenous arts and heritage architecture in Nigeria has become a natural phenomenon. Therefore, despite the benefits of modern architecture and urban development, elements of culture like art and heritage architecture should be sustained for future generation and entrenching cultural identity.*

**Keywords:** Art, Heritage Architecture, Owa's Palace, Ilesa, Cultural Values

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### I. Introduction

In most cultures and throughout the ages, socio-political, cultural and religious ideals are expressed in art forms and radiate from them. In Africa and the Yoruba nation in particular, art and leadership are closely related and dependent on each other. From the ancient times to the modern era, art and architecture have been used to portraying excellent ideals and deeds, in relation to royalty, leadership, spirituality and power (Cole 1991:12). Ideals such as beauty, youthfulness, military conquests, leadership, diplomacy, community harmony and wisdom are reflected in the naturalistic figures, emblems and treasures of royalty across Africa. Invariably, these cultural ensembles form the paraphernalia of kingship and authority in Yoruba land, Ilesa inclusive. Ilesa palace, in this study, is classified into two: old and new. The old afin (a heritage building) is the socio-cultural, judicial and political centre of the Ijesa kingdom, while the new palace (a modern structure) serves as the reception and residence of the present Owa Obokun, Oba Adebisi Aromolaran. The new building is also the administrative centre of the Owa's palace.

Art and architecture are two inseparable entities that underscore a people's uniqueness and their cultural environment. The type of building or structure available in a culture is determined by the values and specifics people attach to living and living styles; it relates to sex, age grade, status and function of the individual concerned in a society. Art is the pivot on which culture rotates; and indeed, it is the vehicle that projects the totality of a people's way of living. Architecture as a cultural phenomenon, is "the totality of a people's built environment and therefore includes simple as well as complex structures" (Vlach, 1976). The art and architecture of the Owa's palace (and those adorning major roads and streets in Ilesa) could therefore be said to reflect the socio-cultural development of Ilesa as a city-state and the dynamism of the Ijesa people in general. Ogundiran and Williams (1992) assert that Ilesa palace is a unique, monumental cultural heritage building constructed by Owa Atakunmosa, and the second largest (form and size) in Yoruba land, second only to Owo palace. However, the present state of the palace (including the cultural artefacts) raises the question of its sustainability and cultural relevance for future generations. Ojo (1968:3) corroborates this view stating that "not much of the traditional architecture remains due to environmental changes, urban development and social sensitivity of the Yoruba", including the Ijesas.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an enlarged version of a seminar paper (a field report) on art and architecture in Ilesa, and it specifically focussed on the Afin Adimula built around 1079 AD by Owa Obokun Adimula Oluwase. The fire incidence of July 21, 2007 in which a portion of the new afin went up in flame, and the fact that the old afin including the akodis are unaffected by the inferno that engulfed the palace, justify the need for this study.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Cultural heritage, including visual arts and heritage architecture, is being eroded gradually under the guise of modernity and urban development and a taste for modern architecture; hence, the abandonment of the old structure. But there is the need to preserve and document the memories of our cultural past, for it is crucial to shaping our future and identity. Literature that discusses the architectural history of Ilesa is scanty; however, Roderick (2006), Osasona (2005), Adepegba (1995), Ogundiran & Williams (1992), Vlach (1976) and Ojo (1968) take a generic view of Yoruba architecture, of which Ilesa palace is a part. Likewise, the literature on Ilesa visual art history is almost non-existent as the available art forms are treated by scholars as part of palace architecture or royal ensemble. Ojo's (1968) view that much of Yoruba art could be seen in their architecture corroborates the above assertion. However, many of the previous studies did not address the disreputable state of the art and architecture in Ilesa and the need to sustain these heritages for the future. More so, the fire incident of July 21, 2007 which engulfed a portion of the Owa's palace, and the fact that the old palace is still intact, including its ancient historical sites makes the present study very relevant, thus ensuring that the royal artifacts and the original traditional apparatus in Ijesa kingdom remain sacrosanct and filling the gap in previous studies.

### 1.2 Ilesa Cultural History

Ilesa is a Yoruba city-state located in the south-western geo-political zone of Nigeria, in the Yoruba Hills and at the intersection of roads from Ile-Ife, Oshogbo and Akure, which fall within Latitude 8.92°N Longitude 3.42°E. Ilesa, the capital of Ijesa kingdom and one of the larger Yoruba towns, was founded in the early 16th century. The city is situated in between the larger regional centres of Oyo and Benin, around the upper reaches of the Osun, Sasa and Oni rivers (Peel 1979). It is bounded in the south by the forest of Oni valley, in the north by Imesi-Ile, in the west by Osu and in the east by the Ekiti country. Located in the centre of two Ijesa Divisions (present Obokun and Atakumosa Local Government Areas), Ilesa is the metropolitan city of the Ijesa people. It is a classic example of a celebrated Yoruba town with a "crowned head"; it is ruled by a monarch bearing the title of Owa Obokun, Adimula of Ijesaland. The foundation history of the Ijesa people is similar to the "form of a dynastic migration from Ile-Ife, the sacred centre of Yoruba mythology". Peel (2002) asserts that Obokun, the youngest son of Oduduwa Olofin volunteered to fetch sea-water to cure his father's blindness. However when he returned, he discovered that his father had given his elder brothers all the crowns and treasures; hence, there was nothing left for him except a sword "ida ajase" (sword of conquest) which his father gave him to wage war against his enemies.



**Plate. 1:** A view of Owa's Palace.  
Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

Ilesa is not the first capital city of the Ijesa kingdom, but became the administrative headquarters during the reign of Owaluse around 1079 after he conquered Owa Obokun Adimula Owari who had earlier overthrown him in a mutiny and banished him to Oyo. After the conquest, Owaluse and his followers migrated to Ilesa and "settled at the Western end of Okesa ridge, where the land opens and rises slightly. This place is the present site of Oja'ba - king's market and the Afin – palace" (Peel, 2002). According to the Risawe of Ilesa (also the minister of justice and cultural historian of Ijesa kingdom), Ilesa city has been in existence for over nine hundred years (Adefioye Adedeji, Personal Communication, 2007). The city's structure is determined by two elements: Owa and Ijesa people; and the focal point is the 'Afin' palace. The 'afin'<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1) It is the main palace; although, there is a new palace complex built for the Owa as a result of development in urban architecture is situated within rectangular 51 acre grounds, surrounded by a high mud-brick wall which contains the residence of the Oba, his personal staff and all manner of clients and dependants. The graves of the royal

<sup>2</sup> It is the main palace; although, there is a new palace complex built for the Owa as a result of development in urban architecture.

ancestors and the most potent shrine of the gods - the judicial and political centre of the kingdom - are within the palace structure. Seven roads radiate from the Afin and extended to the frontiers of the kingdom. In addition, the communal structure is derived from two coordinated principles: spatial arrangement by quarters and a political hierarchy of titles, both of which focus on the Afin. The chiefs' palaces are also arranged in similar pattern (Peel, 2002).

As it obtains in many Yoruba city-states, Owa is the political and spiritual head of Ijesa kingdom. The supremacy of the Owa as the High Priest and Chief Accounting Officer of Ijesa kingdom, is evident in the numerous and gorgeous festivals he patronizes annually. The Owa participates in many festivals and ceremonies that feature rituals, music and dance to honour and propitiate ancestral spirits of ancient cults. Artistic objects are used in these festivals because of their cultural relevance. In this regard, the Ijesa artist (like 'Osunmu' wood carvers and 'Asinde' bead makers) produces art works that enrich the community and affirm the prestige/authority of the royal household. Sometimes, the art objects are used to venerate the spiritual powers behind the terrestrial biosphere. Any authentic traditional art in Africa can never be divorced from the sociological context of the people; hence, complex ideas especially on socio-religious issues were communicated through art objects, visual codes, nuances and other creative patterns that are easily understood by members of the community (Cole 1990). Motifs that are relevant to the cultural environment are employed, against the background that the artist has capacity for recognizing the use/meaning of various artistic elements. Thus, the artist adapts them in various art works as befitting visual language that could be read by members of the community.

## **II. Owa's Art and Paraphernalia**

The designs and motifs on royal structures and paraphernalia are strictly connected with the ceremonial purposes within the social system of Ijesa land. However, the symbols and patterns on the structures and on the arts/artefacts are linked with the people's past, legends and myths. The present study focuses on the structures and art forms/objects found in the old palace. The Osunmu clan - a socially-recognized art lineage in Ijesa land - was responsible for the carvings used in religious rites and the wooden pillars used as supports and embellishment to the palace architecture (Lisa Emese, Personal Communication, 2007). Thus, in reference to African cultural past, Gardener (1972: 509) observes that "ancestor worship was a powerful discipline for the Negro mind; it encouraged a respect for tradition which accounts for the continuance of fixed and traditional styles in sculpture". Modernity and change as inevitable occurrences have profoundly impacted Yoruba social structure, and if not handled with caution, the desire to blend with the ever-changing pattern of the modern world could be a menace. The most affected are the traditional artists whose creative products are a reminder of the artistic heritage of the Yoruba. Most of the indigenous artists are no longer practicing due to dwindling patronage. Their works are of little relevance to the changing social climate of contemporary Africa. Ajiboye & Ijisakin (2010), in affirmation, submit that foreign religion and ideals are largely responsible.



**Figure 2:** Beaded Royal Staff (*Opa Ase*) and Beaded Walking Stick (*Opa Ileke*)  
Photographed By: M. O. Fajuyigbe (2007)

The royal paraphernalia are cultural objects that symbolise the authority of the Owa and present him as the royal father and the arch-priest of his people. Owa's art collections include ancestral and religious symbols, royal paraphernalia, and wood carvings that embellish the palace structures. These paraphernalia include the beaded crown, beaded collar, embroidered regalia, beaded staff, walking sticks, sculpted throne, ceremonial

stool, flywhisk, beaded foot-rest and pillows. The art pieces are executed in two- and three-dimensional forms. The two-dimensional forms include murals (wall decoration, shrine painting, relief sculpture and carved door, etc.), while the three-dimensional, executed in varied materials, include pottery, textiles, wood and metal sculptures. For easy understanding and identification, the pieces are classified according to materials and supposed functions within the context of the palace activities.

### 2.1 Beads

Beads are the main material used by the 'Asinde' (bead makers) in making objects of prestige for kings, chiefs, nobles and the rich in Yoruba land. The beaded objects found in the old palace consist of Owa's staff of office, walking stick and foot rest. The 'staff, a symbol of authority, is a long, pointed stick, with a miniature crown at the top (figure 2). The colours of the beads range from green, blue, red, yellow and white to black, and they are arranged round the elongated piece of wood wood in different lines and shapes to create harmonious and complimentary patterns/motifs. The craftsmanship employed in making the beaded objects shows the Yoruba artist's inventiveness and colour sense. For instance, the foot rests are richly decorated with symbolic motifs, masks, and flora/fauna. The handle of the walking stick resembles a bird which makes it easy for handling, and enhances the king's physical carriage.

### 2.2 Wood

In the wood category are carved objects such as doors, windows, pillar-posts, stools, chairs and thrones, drums, Arabic tablets and women ladles. The carvings are endowed with varieties of symbolic motifs: crowns, lizards, birds, kneeling figures, etc. Of special interest is a carved door (figure 3) showing different panels that suggest activities in and around the palace. For instance, at the door's top left, an ifa priest holds opele divination bead and attends to an emese – palace guard, followed by a chief in flowing agbada, complete with abeti aja cap. Other scenes reveal the Oba with opa ase and his royal guards (middle left); women attending to domestic chores like cooking, pounding and grinding (below left); the oba in traditional Yoruba posture blesses a kneeling figure carrying a baby on her back and also carrying another in her arms while an elderly man looks on (below right).

There is also a panel (top right) showing a woman in a sitting posture (probably a queen) carrying a baby on her laps while a guard with a gun and female attendants wait on her. The pillar posts (figure 4) at the main courtyard (akodi) feature an equestrian figure (a testimony to the military prowess of the ancient Ijesa kingdom) and an emese holding a cudgel to ward off intruders. Pillar-posts are common features in Yoruba palaces; they are used primarily for supporting the roofs covering the balconies and walkways. However, most of these carved posts have been replaced with iron poles (due to decay caused by termite infection), while some were plundered and sold to foreign collectors. Beier (1976) sheds more light on this unpatriotic attitude, borne out of naivety, greed and little understanding of the cultural/historical essence of these carved objects.



**Figure 3:** Elaborately decorated carved door with various palace scenes

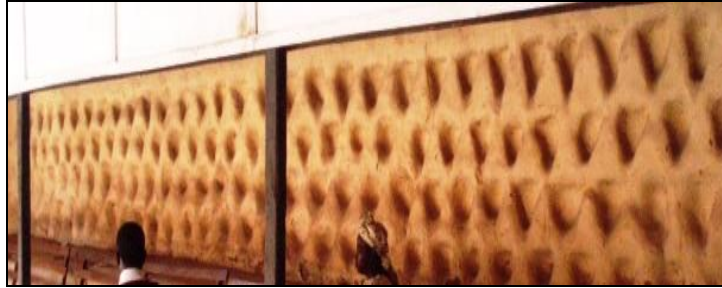
**Figure 4:** Carved pillar posts

Photographed By: Michael Adeyinka Okunade (2007)

### 2.3 Metal, Stone and Vegetable Materials

The artefacts in this category are Ogun sword and gongs (agogo). The sword of Ogun located at Eyin-Ropo courtyard on a raised platform is similar to the royal sword of Benin. The sword is about 2.8ft in height with a curvilinear tip while the handle is wrapped in white signifying its religious relevance. The gongs are located in a shrine in one of the courtyards. The shrine is dedicated to Sanponna (Yoruba god of smallpox) who

is believed to have spiritual affinity with gongs. The gongs (six pieces) are of various sizes and designs. The tallest is about 1ft while the shortest is about 8.5 inches.



**Plate 5:** Hollowed pattern on a long-extended corridor at Oke-Emese courtyard.  
Photographed by: Michael Adeyinka Okunade. (2007)

The palace artefacts in stone are very few. The only piece worth mentioning is a flat, foot-shaped stone (about 1ft). Some unidentifiable linear and dotted lines are impressed on both sides of the object, and the edges. The purpose of this stone object is not known as no satisfactory explanation could be given by the palace attendants. Certain African art pieces are made of ephemeral materials because of their symbolic functions and are expected to be replaced as they deteriorate by reason of use. In this category are animal horns (ase – life force); hand fans (abebe) made of leather, rope and feathers; a raffia cap and masquerades costume. These costumes, kept in a wooden box, had undergone serious decay.

#### **2.4. Murals**

In Yoruba artistry, murals and mosaics are created for functional and aesthetic purposes because according to a Yoruba proverb *bi a se n kun ara ogiri, ni a n d'aso fun orisa*, “as we paint the wall, so we clothe the deity”. Literarily, shrine paintings are meant to enrich the physical abode of the gods/deities, accentuate the spiritual clime, and affect the worshippers positively. As note earlier, several altars and shrines in the palace are dedicated to various gods and deities. Since the Oba has no religion, he is considered ‘the father of all’. An example of murals at the Owa’s palace is a hollowed and elevated wall painted in white, orange and brown colours (figure 5).

### **III. Owa’s Palace Architecture**

Owa’s palace - the old *afin* in particular - features several courtyards (*akodi*), verandas, porches, impluvia, drainage, rooms, roofs, doors and expansive gardens. The old palace structure is traditional in design, and the cultural artefacts referred to here are found in the old palace. The recent palace structure, located to the left side of the main entrance, is modern in design. Very little changes are noted in the old palace at Ilesa; sometimes, tourists are filled with awe and admiration, gazing at the architecture that is about seven centuries old. Walls, in some courtyards, remain as naked as they had been from primordial time. Its grandeur has seriously diminished due to a lack of maintenance culture (figure 6). It is therefore crucial to challenge all stakeholders about the need to salvage the situation without necessarily obliterating the evidence of rich cultural cum artistic heritage of the Ijesa people.



**Plates: 6, 7 & 8:** Abandoned structures and dilapidated courtyards.  
Photographed by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

Expansive gardens are peculiar to Yoruba palaces. Traditionally, the people attached great importance to garden design; hence, they built elaborate gardens for their deities, kings and chiefs (Falade, 1990). Ilesa palace is endowed with large and very expansive gardens and surroundings. Vlach (1976: 50) succinctly observed that “the palace is an intricate, almost labyrinthine of rooms and courtyards, often decorated with



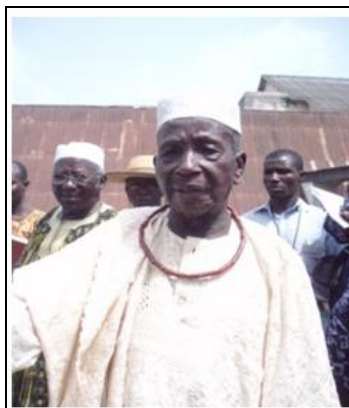
sculpted doors, walls and house posts". The courtyards are many, numbering about fifty; while few of the courtyards are still intact, many have become dilapidated and several have collapsed completely (figure 7 & 8). About 50% of the palace courtyards, gardens and surroundings are in this state. This state of negligence is most probably because the slaves who were used in maintaining the cleanliness of the palace surroundings are no longer available. The courtyards' doors are made from a large plank in purely traditional style; and the doors are fixed to the wall with hinges made by the local blacksmith. The palace is divided into several courtyards, each containing living rooms and special rooms. For instance, the Ode-Royin courtyard has a sacred apartment called 'osanyin' room where the king-elect is expected to observe a vigil, prior to his coronation. Also, at Ode-Odu courtyard, a room is dedicated for the safe-keeping of Owa's paraphernalia.



**Plate 9:** Oke-Emese Courtyard  
Photographed by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

The major courtyard among those that are still intact includes Oke-Emese (figure 9). It is the main akodi as well as the reception cum administrative centre of the monarch. Others are Odi-Koto, Eyin-Ropo, Ode-Odu, Ode-Yanrin and Ode-Royin. The courtyards are arranged not necessarily in order of spatial magnitude, but according to their cultural relevance to the palace. The numerous courtyards were a necessity because of the large retinue of the Owa. According to Lisa Emese, Chief Alebiosu (Figure 10), as required by tradition, the king is expected to cater for the large ensemble of emese, including their wives and children; and also a number of visitors. The Lisa Emese is the head of the court officials, and he is directly responsible for the Owa's welfare and the city's domestic chores. He is the living analyst on all court matters – including the art and architecture of the old palace. Most of the data collected on the field were either corroborated or refuted by him.

Each courtyard includes verandas or corridors (arranged round the courtyard) serving as walkways without necessarily crossing the lawn. The verandas (Figure 11) are covered with iron roofing sheets to shield users from rain and sun, and situated between the rooms and the impluvia. The roofs are fashioned after the colonial style, steeply-pitched and hipped, rest on the pillars supporting the impluvia. The impluvia were originally water gardens, with holes in the ground through which rain water passes to an underground drainage system.



**Figure 10:** Lisa Emese, Chief Alebiosu  
Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

Oke-Emese is the biggest and largest of the courtyards. It is the reception of Owa and the venue of all important meetings, ceremonies and conferment of chieftaincy titles. The Owa usually is the chairman of these cultural events; sometimes, the Risawe, also the Prime Minister of Ijesa land takes charge in acting capacity.

Like many of the courtyards, Oke-Emese (literally royal messengers' quarters) is rectangular-shaped with very large corridors. The roof-covered corridors are arranged in a line round the entire courtyard, leaving a smaller rectangular space in the middle. The high roofs are supported with carved posts or pillars. At the centre of the courtyard (which also houses the administrative office of the emese) is a raised platform called ara'lu. The ara'lu (figure 12) is the site where coronation rites are performed for newly-appointed chiefs. The courtyard immediately after exiting Oke-Emese is Odi-Koto. At the centre of Odi-Koto courtyard is the shrine of Ogun, the main deity associated with the palace. In fact, an old sword on an elevated platform called 'opo' in Ode-Odu courtyard presents Ogun as the arbiter whenever communal disputes are brought before the Owa.



**Plate 11:** A stretch of corridor/veranda at the Oke-Emese Courtyard

**Plate 12:** Ara 'lu (the elevated white platform)

Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

#### **IV. Findings and Observations**

A graphic overview of the 'Afin' especially the courtyards (except 'Oke Emese') and the surrounding gardens reflects the utter neglect and degradation to which the palace has been subjected. It is indeed a sad picture of the nonchalant attitude of 'modern' people towards maintenance culture and heritage. The traditional institutions, as custodians of culture, have lost focus regarding their responsibilities. Changing tastes and living styles of the Ijesa people, added to the allure of modernity have caused people to only hold on to their cultural heritage tenuously. How else can one explain the dilapidation and shameful state of some of the palaces in Yoruba land, particularly Ilesa? Oba Adesoji Aderemi in the 'Preface' to Ojo's "Yoruba Palaces" (1966: 3) laments that "it is regrettable that none of our ancient palaces remains unimpaired today throughout the country. ...the damage has detracted very much from their natural beauty and awe-inspiring grandeur". The palace courtyards and gardens are unkempt, clustered with creepers and invaded by bushes, and weeds (figures 13 - 16). Some of the structures have become dilapidated to the point of collapse. A tale of architectural decadence in royal palace, sheer neglect of cultural/artistic heritage and poor maintenance attitude.

Although Ilesa is a classical Yoruba city and modern metropolis of taste and fashion, it cannot boast of an established art tradition. The well-articulated architectural designs, symbols and motifs adorning most of the buildings in Ilesa city, are a testimony to the people's industry. Even the walls surrounding the palace area have been defaced by posters and handbills.



**Figure 13 – 16:** Architectural decadence in royal palace.

Photograph by Michael Olusegun Fajuyigbe (2007)

The traditional arts such as carving, pottery, embroidery, bead making and brass casting are almost non-existent. Few practitioners are still on their jobs, while most have turned their once lucrative and culturally relevant professions into pastime. This might be due to lack of steady patronage. Even royalty, which ought to

be the custodian and chief patron of these arts, does not see the need to commission new works. In other words, the services of the traditional artists are no longer required except, on few occasions.

It was also observed that visual art has not been given attention at the Owa's palace (unlike other Yoruba palaces, such as in Oyo, Ijebu, Osogbo and Ile-Ife), where there are works of historical and socio-cultural value. Ilesa palace could have been more beautiful, if more visual arts - environmental sculptures and murals in particular, illustrating the heroic deeds of past leaders and cultural values peculiar to Ijesa people - are sited at strategic locations. Aesthetic is not all about a beautiful building; it is the totality of the effects of the beautiful (as observed in the environment, nature and creative products) on the environment and the people's psychology. Generally, Ilesa has more architecturally-significant buildings than art.

The old palace could not boast much of a thriving art tradition that is all-encompassing, both in the past and even now. However, the architectural edifices (with the icons and patterns), adorning the city of Ilesa testify to the economic achievements of the people through trade and cross-cultural influences.

## **V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The paper so far has taken a graphic look at the state of arts and architecture at the Owa's palace and the overall assessment is not favourable. Definitely, there are shortcomings like negligence regarding the roles of palace attendants, the royal house and the government of Osun State with respect to safeguarding its cultural monuments. The need for a positive maintenance culture, cultural pride, renaissance and adaptation of traditional art forms becomes imperative. It is important to inculcate in palace attendants (the emeses) and those responsible for the management and preservation of the palace to imbibe the culture of maintenance. Maintenance culture is a positive attitude at sustaining and preserving what already exists, such that it is able to sustain human activities and life generally (Fajuyigbe, 2007) since the natural environment determines the quality and sustainability of human activities and life.

Modern technologies are a development of traditional technologies; hence, our traditional architectural approach and style should not be relegated or undermined, as is common in new palace buildings in Yoruba palaces. Most of our traditional architecture and their embellishments have stood the test of time, with respect to materials and design. The structures could be upgraded without losing their traditional essence or Africaness. Despite the overwhelming effects of modernity and constancy of change, there is the need to cultivate a conscious passion for the values and cultural heritage that are indigenous to Yoruba people. This is cultural pride - pride in the language, arts and architecture, pride in the manner of dressing, and general ways of living peculiar to the descendants of Oduduwa. Development is good only if it makes people more culturally-sensitive, and if it authenticates a people's heritage for posterity.

Promotion of artistic creativity can create sustainable futures that will not compromise distinctive cultural values peculiar to a people. The traditional arts should be resuscitated (like it happened during the Renaissance in Europe, characterised by the rebirth and sustenance of the Greco-Roman arts and ideals). The traditional arts like carving, bead-making, brass/bronze casting, etc., should be revived, and developed by infusing latest technology and encourage as occupation alternatives to business and white collar jobs. Such products should be utilized in the service of kings and promotion of Yoruba culture.

The inferno that razed a portion of the new palace building on Saturday, July 21, 2007, for instance, could have been averted if all hands were on deck. The present state of the old afin could be rescued from total collapse and renovated without tampering with its original design, and thus making it a tourist attraction that can generate revenue for its regular maintenance. The architecture of the palace structures and layouts of the courtyards, porches, impluvia, undergrounds, etc, should be studied and adapted by landscape artists, as well as architects, planners and professionals in the building industry. This ultimately will enhance the emergence of a "modern indigenous" building culture and royal architecture.

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