

PHOTOGRAPHY AS A VISUAL ART OF STORYTELLING: AN EXAMINATION OF NARRATIVE DIMENSIONS IN KELECHI AMADI-Obi'S WORKS

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Abstract

This paper delved into the profound impact of photography as a visual art of storytelling, particularly through the lens of Kelechi Amadi-Obi. This study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing content analysis and visual interpretation tools to explore Amadi-Obi's creative expressions and their role in uniting Nigeria's peoples. By examining his body of works, including portraits, landscapes, and conceptual pieces, this study elucidated how photography serves as a powerful tool for cultural representation and dialogue. Drawing on the ethos of Narrative theory, which explores how stories are structured and understood, this paper examined the intersection of art, culture, and identity, and how it all contribute to a deeper understanding of photography's role in shaping social cohesion and fostering intercultural dialogue. Amongst other findings of this study, Amadi-Obi's photographic narratives capture the essence of Nigeria's cultural tapestry, celebrating its diversity while emphasizing shared experiences and aspirations. Through his lens, viewers are invited to engage with the multifaceted narratives of Nigerian life, transcending stereotypes and prejudices. In conclusion, this paper underscored the significance of visual arts, particularly photography, as a catalyst for unifying Nigeria's peoples, fostering empathy, and promoting a more inclusive and harmonious society. Kelechi Amadi-Obi's creative expressions serve as a testament to the transformative power of art in transcending boundaries and building bridges across diverse communities and are recommended for individuals and institutions.

Keywords: Photography, Visual Art, Storytelling, Examination, Narrative Dimensions.

Introduction

Photography is the process of forming stable or permanent visible images directly or indirectly by the action of light or other forms of radiation on sensitive surfaces. Defined in a similar light, photography is the art of capturing light with a camera, usually via a digital sensor or film, to create an image (Cox n.p). In the words of Cox Spencer, an astute writer on photography, photography is the art, application, and practice of creating durable images by recording light, either electronically by means of an image sensor, or chemically by means of a light-sensitive material such as photographic film (454). Photography is often defined as the artistic and technical practice of capturing light using a camera—either through digital sensors or traditional film. As Spencer aptly describes it, photography is both an art and a scientific process of producing durable images by recording light, whether electronically or chemically. This dual nature makes photography a unique blend of creativity and technology. It enables us to preserve moments, explore unseen realities, and communicate across cultures and generations.

Historically speaking, photography is an old-time invention of man that has passed through several phases and stages to what is obtainable in contemporary times. Colour photography as we have it today, started to become popular and accessible with the release of Eastman Kodak's "Kodachrome" film in the 1930s. Before that, almost all photos were monochromatic – although a handful of photographers, toeing the line between chemists and alchemists, had been using specialized techniques to capture color images for decades before.

Traditional photography uses the action of light to cause changes in a film of silver halide crystals in which development converts exposed silver halide to non-sensitive) metallic silver. Following exposure in a camera or other device, the film or plate is developed, fixed in a solution that dissolves the undeveloped silver halide, washed to remove the soluble salts, and dried. Printing from the original, if required, is done by contact or optical projection onto a second emulsion-coated material, and a similar sequence of processing steps is followed. Digital photography captures images directly with an electronic photo sensor.

Most relatedly, photographs, which are products of photography, play a central role in every aspect of formal and informal storytelling. Thus, one of the most common and enjoyable uses for photographs is to share stories about experiences, travels, friends and family. Almost everyone has experience with this form of storytelling, which ranges from the exchange of personal reminiscences to family and cultural histories. The World-Wide Web can facilitate the sharing of such stories in digital form, and has inspired a movement towards “digital storytelling” (Balabanovic, Marko, Lenny Chu and Gregory Wolff 5). As aptly captured in the foregoing, the function or role that photography plays can vary depending on the predetermined goal or objective of the photographer. In other words, it is totally dependent on what the photographer is set to achieve at the end of the photographic session. For example, documentary and news photographers capture images for the purpose of providing detailed account of actual events, while hobbyist photographers aim to capture life moments with their families and friends.

Moreover, photography has been equally utilized, right from time immemorial, as a visual tool for storytelling. In photography, storytelling is usually called a photo essay or photo story and it is a rather common practice. If you read magazines like National Geographic, one will surely see some great examples of storytelling many times. To put it simply, it is a way for a photographer to tell a story with a series of photographs or even single photograph sometimes. In case of a series of photographs, images are ordered in a specific way and manner with the aim of affecting the viewer's emotions and intellect. This study is thus predicated and anchored on the foregoing. In other words, the researcher is interested in studying how that photography as a visual art is a veritable tool for storytelling separate from moving images otherwise called movies. This is totally against the backdrop of many people's presumption, that photographs are merely used for keeping beautiful memories. However, even in this, what they usually fail to understand is that even those same photographs that they keep for memories tell their stories of time past.

Photography: A Tool for Visual Storytelling

Visual storytelling is a powerful communication tool that transcends language barriers and engages viewers on an emotional level. It combines elements of design, narrative, and visual composition to convey messages in a compelling and memorable way. The concept of visual storytelling has to do with using video, pictures, symbols, colours, and words to communicate ideas, illustrate information or express relationships visually. According to Walter, Ekaterina and Jessica Gioglio:

Visual storytelling is about making complex information easier to understand. Compelling visuals grab people's attention. It takes many forms and appears in many media. Some familiar forms include video, animation, charts, graphs, maps, diagrams or timelines. It tells a story with visuals. It can tell “how many?” “when?” or “where?” It can show trends over time, compare elements or reveal hidden patterns (20).

Visual storytelling has not been an overnight sensation, but instead it has been the result of a continued evolution of social media platforms, along with user and organizational behaviors. Research indicates that consumer interest in visual content is not necessarily just a preference; it is actually easier and faster for humans to process. The right picture can go further than just telling your story visually; it can make

you feel emotions, evoke memories, and even make you act differently. Humans are wired to process visuals differently than text and to respond differently to pictures than to words (Walter and Gioglio 21-22). For the fact that human beings are “visual species,” visual communication or storytelling thus exerts an unquantifiable amount of influence on human beings. No matter what form it may take, it makes the same kind of impact. To this end, it is necessary to add up that, visual storytelling takes many forms and appears in many media.

Some familiar forms include video, animation, photographs, charts, graphs, maps, diagrams or timelines. It tells a story with visuals. It can tell “how many?” “when?” or “where?” It can show trends over time, compare elements or reveal hidden patterns. It is not the same as graphic design, film-making nor is it only about making something aesthetically pleasing. It's not about branding, style, making a glossy product or something that looks “corporate.” Visual storytelling is not just a matter of making text pretty or entertaining, but of shaping understanding and clarifying meaning. Kristijan Mirkovski et al. in their well-researched article, “Visual Storytelling for Improving the Comprehension and Utility in Disseminating Information Systems Research: Evidence from a Quasi-Experiment” define visual storytelling in yet another relevant perspective:

Visual storytelling is the telling of a story enhanced via the use of visual media (e.g. photography, graphics, illustrations and video) and aural media (e.g. music, voice and sound effects). Visual storytelling can invoke an innate, physiological and reflexive response in the form of receiver engagement and empathy. Visual storytelling can: (1) facilitate organizational learning (2) increase information generation and collaborative engagement and track the development trajectory in cognitively-demanding research disciplines and (3) improve the visual memory capacity and writing skills of students (5).

In their study, they investigated how text and visual versions of four different stories influence individuals' interest and affect, emotional engagement, recall of information, ability to summarize main points, judgments of story quality and opinions about content matter. Their results show that interactions between the aural and visual components of stories told through photographs lead to higher interest, affect and emotional engagement and improved ability to summarize main points, judgments of story quality and opinions about content matter. A large portion of the human brain is devoted to image processing, visual interpretation and synthesis (qtd. in Mirkovski et al.5).

Visual storytelling can evoke emotions, drive deeper engagement and cause more profound changes in behaviour. It can also help promote self-understanding, expression and communication of difficult-to-conceptualize issues. In order to develop and implement a successful visual storytelling strategy, storyteller must focus on many elements. But among all of them, the most important is the storytelling itself. All of the successful visual storytelling examples prove that the content's storytelling element is as just as important as the use of the visuals. Even it would not be exaggeration having a story is more than visual itself. That is the reason why the researcher has placed focus on what storytelling is first.

In these digital times, how relevant is the old adage, “a picture is worth a thousand words”? It is an adage that is familiar to all photographers in their pursuit of the art. With photography flooding the Internet, it is easy for our eyes to glaze over as we scroll down the feeds of our social platforms. Photos are reduced to meaningless eye-candy and some photographers just focus on creating content with no real story behind the images. It is a bleak reality, but the old adage that connected photography to storytelling may no longer be relevant in today's world. Discussing the challenge of the absence of stories in most photographic works, Christopher Quyen in his article, “The Art of Storytelling” asserts:

Anyone can take pictures, and most consider themselves photographers, but just how do you become an amazing storyteller? Regardless of genre, stories are inherent in photos.

But with billions of images flooding our world, most photos are reduced to eye-candy with no real substance to them. So, what makes a photographer a storyteller? (Quyenn.p).

However, New Mexico-based, fine-art photographer, Jennifer Thoreson says that photography, as a medium, is inherently storytelling. In her words, "It is just woven into the process of making a photograph. Each image has a narrative quality that is full of information and can tell the viewer a lot of interesting things," (qtd. in Quyenn.p). So how then do we tell better stories through photography? It all starts with understanding photography and how stories are told with photography. The art of storytelling through photography is not a new concept. However, the debate over whether or not photography possesses the narrative structure that is central in storytelling has culminated into a new concept called, "Narrative photography." This concept is put forth by its proponents to distill all arguments that stories cannot be told through photography.

Thus, narrative photography is the idea that photographs can be used to tell a story. David Campbell stated that, "the event is not what happens. The event is that which can be narrated" (Campbelln.p). "The Narrative Photography Competition" in Portland, Oregon describes the concept of narrative photography thus, "The power of narrative, or story telling is at the foundation of much of photography. Photographers are creating complex and descriptive moments in time. Contemporary photographers are crafting and documenting new forms of a visual short story" (<https://www.photocompete.com>). Examples of narrative photography include the work of Gregory Crewdson, and Steve Giovinco, (Steve Giovinco: stevegiovinco.com) both graduates of the Yale School of Art, Department of Photography. In the works of the photographer under review, KelechiAmadi-Obi, the researcher finds narrative dimensions, as shall be analyzed.

Methodological Approach and Theoretical Underpinning

This study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing content analysis and visual interpretation tools to explore Amadi-Obi's creative expressions and their role in uniting Nigeria's peoples. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Texts can be defined broadly as books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theater, informal conversation, or really any occurrence of communicative language. The choice of the works of one of the most renowned Nigerian photographers, KelechiAmadi-Obi was made as they were perceived to be most significant in unifying Nigeria's peoples. Some of his notable photography works are analyzed to show what stories they tell and to depict how photography is utilized as a visual tool for storytelling and in the process unifying the diverse peoples of Nigeria. By examining his body of works, including portraits, landscapes, and conceptual pieces, this study elucidated how photography serves as a powerful tool for cultural representation and dialogue.

For the purpose of this paper, Narrative Theory was found relevant and thereby adopted. Narrative theory, developed by Walter Fisher, attempts to understand both the role that narratives play in particular cultures at particular times and the shaping effects that a culture's assumptions and beliefs have on the development and evaluation of narrative as such. Narrative theory in this more limited sense according to Kent Puckett, "names a more and less coherent intellectual tradition that works explicitly to understand the general rules of narrative alongside the many particular forms that narratives can take" (Kent 3). According to American Psychological Association Dictionary, Narrative Theory is "a theoretical approach to the study of narratives and their structures. Narrative theory emerged as a branch of literary studies..." (n.p).

Narrative theory is based on the concept that people are essentially storytellers. Storytelling is one of the oldest and most universal forms of communication and so individuals approach their social world in a

narrative mode and make decisions and act within this narrative framework (Fisher 255). To this end, narrative theorists draw not only on literary studies but also on ideas from such fields as rhetoric, (socio)linguistics, philosophical ethics, cognitive science (including cognitive and social psychology), folklore, and gender theory to explore how narratives work both as kinds of texts and as strategies for navigating experience. Narratives of all kinds are relevant to the field: literary fictions and nonfictions, film narratives, comics and graphic novels, hypertexts and other computer-mediated narratives, oral narratives occurring during the give and take of everyday conversation, as well as narratives told in courtrooms, doctors' offices, business conference rooms—indeed, anywhere.

Ultimately, Narrative theory, which explores how stories are structured and understood, is crucial in this paper study. Through his photography, Amadi-Obi weaves visual narratives that capture the diverse cultures, traditions, and identities of Nigeria's peoples. His images function as visual stories, employing composition, lighting, and subject matter to convey complex social and cultural messages. By analyzing his work through the lens of narrative theory, we can understand how his photographs not only document but also construct and communicate narratives that bridge different communities, fostering a deeper connection and understanding among Nigeria's diverse population.

Kelechi Amadi-Obi's Biographical Background

Kelechi Amadi-Obi (born December 29, 1969) is a Nigerian creative photographer, painter, artist and the publisher of Mania Magazine. His work in photography and visual art has earned him international renown featuring in many international exhibitions including Snap Judgment: New Position in contemporary African Photography, International center of photography New York (2006). He has been described as one of Nigeria's groundbreaking celebrity photographers who has "helped put Nigerian photography on the world map." Vogue calls him "a major force in the creative scene in Nigeria." Born in Owerri, Imo State to the family of Justice Sylvester Amadi-Obi, a high court judge, and Mrs Theresa Amadi-Obi, an educationist, Amadi-Obi is the sixth of seven children. He attended Library Avenue Primary school, Umuahia, Abia State, and went to Government College Umuahia for his secondary education. His university education was at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he studied law.

He obtained his law degree in 1992 and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1994. While on campus, he floated a small company which he named De-Zulu. Later, he grew more interested in the art of photography and eventually, after long years of practice, became a founding member of the Nigerian photography collective Depth of Field, which had as one of its members, TY Bello who would also go on to be a successful photographer and musician. Amadi-Obi in an interview with Onebello, a fashion magazine, when asked why he dumped law for photography, said the choice wasn't between photography and law, but between photography and art. He said he had always been an artist right from childhood. His works have been exhibited at the Lagos Photo Festival, Didi Museum, Rele Art Gallery, and other places.

Kelechi Amadi-Obi's Art

A dexterous painter and photographer, Kelechi Amadi-Obi studied to become a professional Lawyer, however things took a turn when his passion for the Arts lead him to pursue a career in Photography and Painting. He boasts of a vast portfolio in Fashion, Corporate Adverts, Architecture, Places, People and Painting photography and has worked closely with major fashion houses and the media in Nigeria as well as notable celebrities including OluchiOrlandi, OjyOkpe, Jay jayOkocha, Richard Mofe-Damijo, P Square, Omotola. JaladeEkeindeTufaceIdibia, Genevieve Nnaji, Asa, DBanj, Uche Jumbo and Nike Oshinowo-Soleye.



PLATE 1: Photograph of Kelechi Amadi-Obi)
Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

His unique style, mastery, aesthetics and creative lighting in his paintings which have been reinvented in his photography has resulted in dynamic oriented works of arts for his clients. Kelechi Amadi –Obi has received numerous awards and accolades including the 2004 St.Moritz Style Award for Photography. Also, some of his works have been featured in exhibitions within and outside Nigeria, including 2006 “Snap Judgement” – New Position in Contemporary African Photography, International Centre of Photography, New York, USA, 2005 “Depth of Field” South London Gallery, UK, 2004 “Lagos” Ifa Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany, 2003 “Transferts” Africalia, Brussels, Belgium. In August 2012; his work 'Whispers from the Sahara' was exhibited and auctioned at the prestigious Didi Museum in Lagos

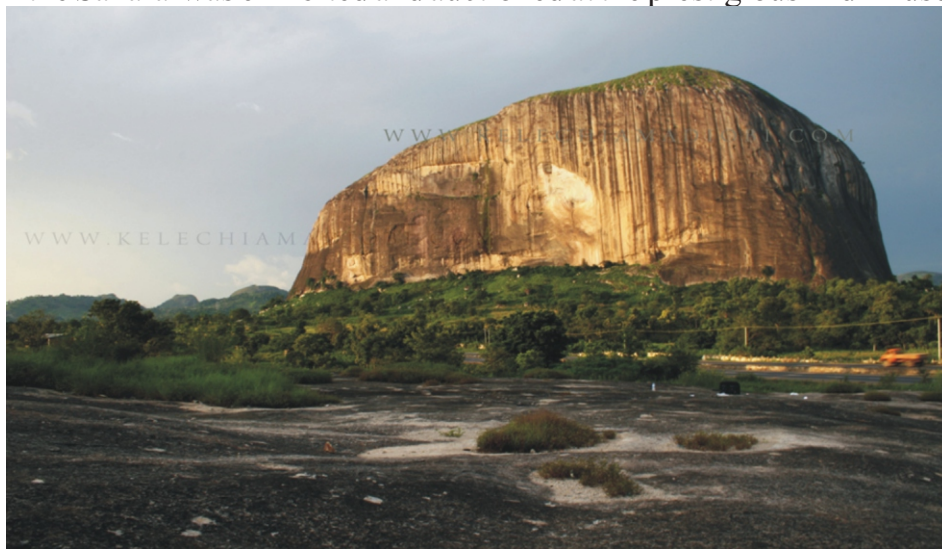


PLATE 2: Amadi-Obi's Photograph of Zuma Rock
Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

The photography of the famous Zuma Rock is one of KelechiAmadi-Obi's portfolio in places. This Rock has several stories attached to it, and capturing it therefore indicates an intention to be part of the telling of its story(ies). Zuma Rock has natural contours on the surface which depict the image of a human face with a visible mouth, eyes, and nose. The natives of the community believe the face represents the deity and ancestral powers protecting and governing the affairs of the community. The Gwari people also acknowledge the rock as a gateway for the afterlife. It is believed that when people die, their spirits go to the rock. There is no precise account pertaining to the origin of the rock. However,

Zuma Rock is said to have been first located in a thick forest by the people of Zuba in the 15th century upon the instruction of their soothsayer. The Zuba people named the rock, “Zumwa”, which means “the place of catching guineafowls” upon finding out that there were many within the forest.

At their arrival in the forest, they settled around it and constructed settlements, and later discovered the spiritual representation of the rock as a powerful deity. They turned to worshipping and offering sacrifices to the rock to protect them and keep them safe from evil. Over time, the people of Gwari used the rock as a defense and hideout against invading neighboring tribes and external forces. Another yet interesting myth suggests that the Zuma Rock sits on a very large expanse of underground water. It is believed that if the rock is pulled down, there will be an outburst of water which will submerge an unimaginable land area. The famous Zuma Rock features on Nigeria's 100 Naira currency bank note. It is twice as high as the Uluru Rock in Australia – it is also higher than the height of Nigeria's popular Aso Rock and Olumo Rock put together, and more than four times as high as Nigeria's tallest building, NECOM House.

Amadi-Obi's Photograph of Durbar Festival Display

The Durbar festival is an annual religious and equestrian celebration in several cities of Nigeria including Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zazzau, Bauchi and Bida. The festival marks the end of Ramadan and also coincides with the Muslim festivities of Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitri. It begins with prayers, followed by a colourful parade of the Emir and his entourage on horses, accompanied by musicians, and ending at the Emir's palace. Durbar festivals are organized in almost all cities of northern Nigeria and has become a major tourist attraction. In Northern Nigeria, the practice dates back over 200 years.



PLATE 3: Amadi-Obi's Photograph of Durbar Festival Display

Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

Historians say the "Hawan Daushe" (Mount of Daushe) was introduced to Kano during the reign of Muhammadu Rumfa in the 1400s. During and after the Fulani Jihad horses were used in warfare to protect the Emirate. Each noble household was expected to defend the Emirate by forming a regiment. Once a year, the regiments would gather for a military parade to demonstrate allegiance to their ruler, by showcasing their horsemanship, readiness for war, and loyalty. Another undocumented source says Durbar festival was introduced to Nigeria by colonial administrators with political objectives in mind. The word “Durbar” is of Persian origin and it was first linked to ceremonial assemblies marking the proclamation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of colonial India in 1877.

In Nigeria, the events then were ceremonial in nature, the first Durbar was held in 1911, subsequent ceremonies were held in 1924, 1925, 1948, 1960 and 1972. The ceremonies linked together pre-colonial aspects of martial display, colonist created assemblies and celebrations of important events in Northern Nigeria. The Durbar festival featured prominently in the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture sometimes also known as FESTAC 77. Since FESTAC, the colonial origin was gradually phased out and the events were linked with pre-colonial traditions such as the importance of horses for military purposes and ceremonies in the Bornu Empire and the ceremonies of 'HawanSallah' and 'Hawan Idi'.



PLATE 4: KelechiAmadi-Obi's Photograph of Lagos Traffic

Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

Lagos is one of the most congested cities in the world. 40 per cent of cars in Nigeria are registered in Lagos. Commuters spend at least three hours in traffic each day. Traffic congestion leads to many problems for the residents of Lagos. For example, the fatal accident rate in Lagos is 28 per 100,000 people. This is three times greater than in most European cities. Also, air pollution is over 5 times greater than the recommended limit.

Lagos metropolis is a major city in Nigeria. It is the commercial nerve of the country. In the economic development of the country, the traffic situation in Lagos contributes greatly to it. The locations of many industries are all over the nooks and crannies of the state. Many imported goods come into the country through Lagos metropolis either via the seaports or airports. If the traffic snarl-up on the Lagos roads persists, this could result in loss of investment through relocation of industries, loss of revenue accruable to the state from company taxation and other payable taxes and discouragement of foreign investors from investing in the economy.

There is a high delay in travel time within the metropolis. Survey such as this is needed to identify the areas and causes of unnecessary delay on travel time often encountered in the metropolis. For instance, a distance that should take 25 minutes, sometimes take endless number of hours on the road. This is as a result of bottlenecks at various intersections on the road. Traffic situation in the Lagos metropolis contributes adversely to the environment. There are a lot of emission and effluence that pollutes the environment resulting from the vehicles on the road. Drivers and commuters are stressed when faced with congestion during closing hours within the metropolis. They spend endless numbers of hours in traffic. Thereby reducing their number of hours required medically for a healthy living. These are amongst several other issues.



PLATE 4: Amadi-Obi's Photograph of The Erin-Ijesha Waterfall
Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

A waterfall is a natural downfall of river water down a cliff. It is a tremendous cascade of fresh water flowing down high cliffs into a larger river or sea. You should know that waterfalls are excellent spots for social entertainments such as parties, picnics, video and photo sessions, academic investigations, etc. Actually, Nigeria is blessed with gorgeous waterfalls and you have to visit them at least once. What is more, some of them are situated within your state or the neighboring states so you do not have to worry about travelling too far. These days, one of the perfect places for relaxation is a waterfall. Our country is rich in amazing and unique waterfalls. And here is Kelechi's story of one of the top 10 waterfalls in Nigeria—The Erin-Ijesha Waterfall.

The Erin-Ijesha Waterfall is also known as Olumirin waterfall which means “another deity”. This natural waterfall is situated in Erin-Ijesha town of Osun State in the South-Western part of Nigeria. This waterfall is along the Efon Ridge along the Ilesha-Akure expressway, and within the community axis of Erin-Oke, Erin-Ijesha, and Erinmo. The spectacular thing about this waterfall is that it is an assemblage of 7 distinct waterfalls falling alongside one another from the top cliffs of the rock, cascading down into a pool of river that runs into canopies of lush vegetation.



PLATE 5: KelechiAmadi-Obi's Photograph of a Patriot
Source: www.kelechiamadiobi.com

Love for one's country is a primordial affection that does not hinge basically on anything substantial, simply an intangible essence with no physical substance, yet vicariously glorious. I once read this statement in an opinion piece of a daily newspaper and it has stuck with me ever since. The writer in that article was asking if Nigeria deserved our patriotism, explaining that Nigeria, over the years, has had a deficient and decadent political class and leadership elite that robbed the nation of its well-deserved chance to sport among its peers and superiors as an eminent member of the comity of nations, both in terms of development and prosperity for its citizens. It is a well-known fact that, most of the developed countries of the world today attained greatness, partly as a result of the patriotism shown by their citizens. Unfortunately the level of patriotism of Nigeria citizens is low. Without mincing words, this has contributed negatively to the development of the country.

Lack of patriotism cuts across tribe, religion, age and status, that is the reason you see the Igbo queue behind and defend a national thief who is an Igboman, The Hausa and Yoruba do the same when someone from their tribe is caught stealing the nation's resources. It is not only with the leaders but also the followers. Patriotic followers can check the excesses of unpatriotic leaders, but in the Nigerian situation the followers turn a blind eye and claim to mind their own business, which is funny, when they usually are not known for minding their own business. However, for a strong nation to emerge out of the country, patriotism is necessary. This is what we see in the eyes of the young boy holding the Nigerian flag gallantly, which is a reflection of patriotism. And for the fact that he is a young child, it clearly shows that the photographer is saying there is hope for the younger generation—the hope that they would turn to be more patriotic and put the country in the right place where it belongs.

Narrative Dimensions in Kelechi Amadi-Obi's Photography

Kelechi Amadi-Obi is one photographer who boasts of a vast portfolio in Fashion, Corporate Adverts, Architecture, Places, People and Painting photography. As diverse and dynamic as he seems to be; one thing is clear about his art—the storytelling factor. This is to say that his photographs communicate a lot of strong messages. His photographs have behind them subjects or objects that are attached to very great stories. The above selected pictures are just but a sample amongst his wide collection of photos, and the study picked only these because of a want of space and time. The analysis is strictly based on the stories that Kelechi Amadi-Obi's photographs tell. Focus here was not on the quality of photos or the technical and compositional specifications. With the above analysis, it sends a strong message to other photographers that, the camera in their hands is such a great instrument to generate and tell stories that can significantly impact on their society.

It is no longer just about picking a camera, aiming, focusing and shooting just any image, subject or object before you. There is the need to carefully choose images that have great stories tied behind them. Kelechi Amadi-Obi has always used his camera as an instrument of storytelling. He tells the kind of stories that have significant impact on the society. The Zuma Rock photograph has so much to talk about the tourist sights of Nigeria, the same with The Efe Waterfalls. The Durbar Festival display shows the right cultural heritage of the nation. Whereas the photograph of Lagos traffic dreadlocks discusses one of the nation's challenging situations, the photograph of the young patriot gives hope for the nation.

Photography is of course, not the same as cinema, and it is also not the same as literature. It is a medium in its own right and should be taken on its own merits and demerits; on what it itself can and cannot do. But reviewing narrative theory in these two fields in relation to photography can be an enlightening starting point for understanding the narrative specificities of photography, for seeing the things it holds in common and the places where it goes its own way. As a follow-up to this piece, what photographers should consider, would be asking how the particular traits of narrative in cinema and literature can help them understand some of the shared characteristics of photographic narratives, and also recognize the things that make it entirely a unique medium of visual storytelling.

Storytelling through photography is alive and well as long as people want to tell their stories to the world. It is simply the world that has changed around storytelling. So, in a way, every photographer is a storyteller, but knowing how to flesh out your story is something else entirely. Photographers today must make a conscious effort as to how they tell their stories, crafting it in ways so that it both creates a narrative that is compelling and connects with audiences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has explored the powerful role of photography as a visual art form capable of profound storytelling, focusing specifically on the creative expressions and narrative dimensions of Kelechi Amadi-Obi's photography. Through an examination of his diverse body of work, including photographs of Zuma Rock, the Durbar Festival, Lagos traffic, and the Erin-Ijesha Waterfall, alongside portraits reflecting Nigerian patriotism, the study has demonstrated how Amadi-Obi utilizes his lens to capture and communicate significant narratives about Nigerian culture, identity, and social realities. By applying narrative theory, the research elucidated how these images function as visual stories, bridging diverse communities and fostering a deeper understanding of Nigeria's multifaceted society.

The analysis revealed that Amadi-Obi's photography transcends mere documentation, instead crafting compelling narratives that resonate with viewers on both emotional and intellectual levels. His images of iconic landmarks like Zuma Rock and the Erin-Ijesha Waterfall not only showcase Nigeria's natural beauty but also evoke the rich history and cultural significance associated with these sites. Similarly, his depiction of the Durbar Festival captures the essence of Nigeria's cultural heritage, while his photograph of Lagos traffic serves as a poignant commentary on the challenges facing the nation's largest metropolis. The photograph of the young patriot holding the Nigerian flag offers a symbol of hope and a call for greater national unity. Ultimately, this paper underscores the importance of recognizing photography as a potent tool for visual storytelling, capable of shaping perceptions, fostering empathy, and promoting social cohesion.

The study recommends that photography education should emphasize the narrative aspects of the art form, encouraging photographers to consciously craft stories with their images. Further research should explore the works of other photographers who effectively utilize visual storytelling to impact their societies, enriching our understanding of photography's potential to transcend boundaries and build bridges across diverse communities. To this end, we recommend that, the aspect of photography as a visual art for storytelling should be featured prominently on the teaching curriculum of schools where photography is taught, learned and practiced; photographers should study the various elements and principles of storytelling particularly with photography and tell stories with their art; other researchers should identify other photographers whose photographs tell a lot of stories.

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