

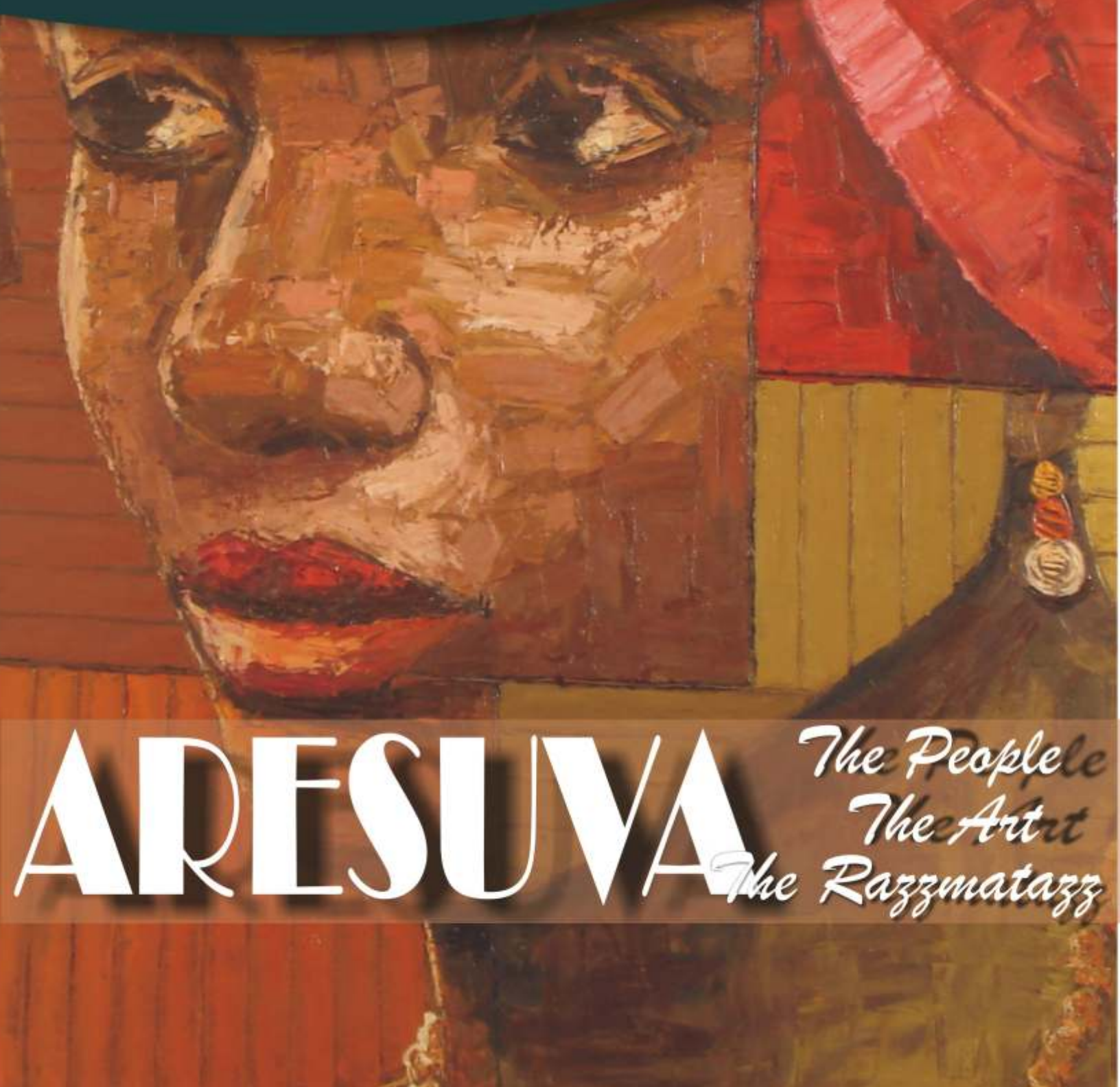


NACD

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NEWSLETTER
13th Edition, Sept.2008

PUBLICATION OF THE NIGERIAN ARTS AND CULTURE DIRECTORY PROJECT



ARESUNA

*The People
The Art
The Razzmatazz*

From the **EDITORIAL** **DESK**

In line with our avowed commitment to bring to you the happenings in the Nigerian arts, culture and tourism world, we promised in our 10th edition a bumper harvest of the African Visual Arts celebration 'ARESUVA'. In this 13th Edition of the NACD Newsletter, we bring to your door-step the stories behind the story of the 'ARESUVA' for your enjoyment. We offer to your delight the highlights of events, arts exhibitions, lectures, and colloquium, that made the news; including a photo splash of who is who during the visual arts celebration. Also contained in this edition, is the activities marking the First Nigerian Art Expo, 'ART EXPO 2008'; **YOU CAN'T ASK FOR MORE.**

As you savour this rich cultural menu, we once again invite you to another cultural extravaganza in the forthcoming Edition; this time, our search light moves to the ancient city of Zaria in Kaduna State, where the NACD Team was on hand to capture all the glamour and grandeur of royalty, marking this year's Durbar festivities at the Royal Palace of **Emir of Zazzau**. This is the display of Nigerian culture at its best.....'Don't be left Out'.

Once again we commend our readers, collaborators and fellow stakeholders world-wide for their objective and constructive contribution, which has propelled us to this height. AS WE CONTINUE IN OUR VOYAGE OF CULTURAL RE-AWAKENING, we enjoin others to be part of this cultural renaissance by making their treasured views known, to enable us serve you better.

.....Nigerian Arts and Culture Directory Project, striving to be the most authoritative source of information on Nigerian Arts, Culture and Tourism Potentials.



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MAIDEN ARESUYVA UNFOLDS

The People, The Art & the RAZZMATTIAZ



L-R: Joe Musa (D-G; NGA), Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN; Minister of Tourism, Culture, Culture and National Orientation, Kolade Oshinowo, President SNA and Prof. Tony Okpe of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

In the 10th edition of the NACD Newsletter published in June 2008, highpoints of the African Regional Summit and Exhibition on Visual Arts (ARESUYVA) were outlined in anticipation of the main event scheduled for opening on 8th September. This was meant to water the ground; this time, prepare the minds of readers for an epoch-making event, the type of which has never been equaled in the History of Visual Arts in Africa. This edition comes as a fulfillment of that promise. Did ARESUYVA actually happen? If it did, what was it like, especially for those who had not the opportunity to attend? These questions and more will be answered for subscribers as the story unfolds.

FINAL PREPARATIONS

Immigration and customs clearances for artists and their works (billed for exhibition at the International Conference Centre Abuja, venue of

ARESUYVA), participants, guest lecturers and major stakeholders from across the globe, flight connections and accommodation arrangements, airport

shuttling, mounting of the exhibition, vetting of corporate sponsors, local

artists and the press are some activities that ensured that members of the Local Organising Committee of ARESUYVA 2008, led by its Chairman, Mr. Soni Irabor, were kept on their toes night and day during the two weeks preceding the event's opening. Others were printing of the voluminous event brochure and programme, printing and circulation of lecture scripts, ARESUYVA caps and T-shirts, reservation of banquet halls, press briefings, hiring of catering services, cultural troupes, anchors and ushers. An emergency secretariat set up for this purpose within one of the halls at the venue was a hub of constant hustling and bustling till the end of the event and even later. These are quite apart from previous arrangements such as registration of artists and inspection tours undertaken by the LOC across Africa, Europe and America for

for stakeholders' meetings. The sheer magnitude of logistics involved in the execution of ARESUVA is nothing short of breath-taking; just imagining the monumental cost implication. To say that members of the LOC and indeed, staff of the National Gallery of Art were stretched to their individual limits is no understatement. Quoting both the Director-General of NGA; Chief Joe Musa and the President of the Society of Nigerian Artists; Prof. Kolade Oshinowo: "ARESUVA came upon us quite suddenly, one day we were planning and the next thing, September was here and most of us have been overworked".

The lobby and the African Hall of the International Conference Centre, beautifully decked out with exotic artworks from the best of African artists, glittered and dazzled on the morning of 8th September as the crowds casually milled around, interacting and exchanging banter. An informed observer would have been jolted to pick out famous names in the art world such as Bruce Onabrakpeya,

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Cross section of participants at the event's opening

OPENING DAY

ARRIVAL! ARRIVAL!! ARRIVAL!!

Nike Okundayo, Prof. Uche Okeke Kolade Oshinowo, and Lemma Guya of Ethiopia (to mention just a few) among the milling crowds. Directors-General and Heads of Parastatals under the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation were all present on the occasion, so were connoisseurs, collectors and critics, the first at the exhibition stands, making good use of the opportunity provided by the lull to carry out an independent assessment of the vast

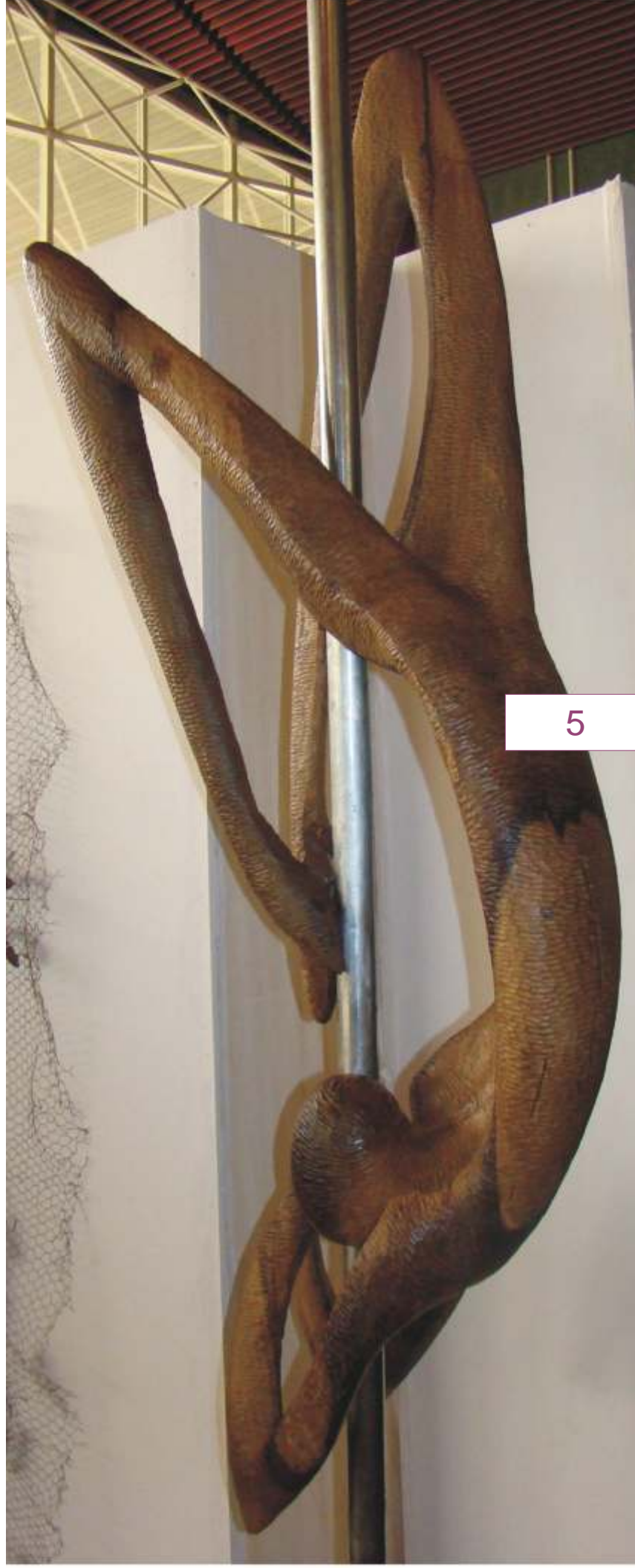
Display. It was the biggest gathering of the visual art family ever witnessed in Nigeria's history.

Just as 11:15am rolled around and people were taking discreet peeps at their wrist watches, the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation; Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN (who was to declare the event officially open) came strolling into the African Hall, closely followed by Dr. Aliyu Idi Hong; the Minister of State for Tourism, Culture and National Orientation.

As the duo took their respective places at the high table, other top officials of Government from the sector were asked to join them. They were Senators, Ministers, Members of the Federal House of Representatives and of course, the Director-General of NGA; Chief Joe Musa. Introduction of special dignitaries continued after which the gathering rose for a special rendition of the national anthem.

A Yoruba wire dancer rendered this in a delightful talking-drum version. Christian and Muslim prayers haven been said, the session switched on to a lighter mode with cultural dance performances, speeches and commendations, launching of the ARESUVA theme song with the message - 'when art meets business, art creates wealth and ARESUVA will provide the medium'. The D-G in his welcome address stated that 'one does not have to be intelligent in order to be creative, doggedness is the spirit behind most achievements'. The opening event eventually culminated in the exhibition, as the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN cut the exhibition tape and led the way. Each artist was given an opportunity to brief the audience on the nature of his works and the message he/she seeks to convey through them.

The day ended with a gala nite of comedy, music, dance and dinner, which offered an opportunity for guests and visitors to unwind after a rigorous day of strenuous activity.





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Guests at the Exhibition

THE BEST

of African Arts

A total of 201 art works were on display at the exhibition, representing the visual art of 16 countries across Africa namely; Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Cameroun, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Benin Republic, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Ethiopia, and artists in Diaspora. Some renowned artists, whose works were on display are Yusuf Grillo, Bruce Onabrakpeya, Prof. Uche Okeke, Tayo T. Quaye, Jacob Jari Farka and Joe Musa, all Nigerians.

Others were Ibrahim Piniang of Senegal, Monica Selelo of Botswana, Zenzele Chulu of Zambia, Lemma Guya of Ethiopia, Midahven Ludovic of Benin Republic, Ray Agbo Claver of Ghana, Juuko Hoods of Uganda and Ray Soko; a London-based Nigerian artist. Some of the art works simply defy description; of the creative echelon to leave even the most hardened critics awed. Some people could be observed cautiously reaching out to them in sheer disbelief, as if wondering whether they were real.

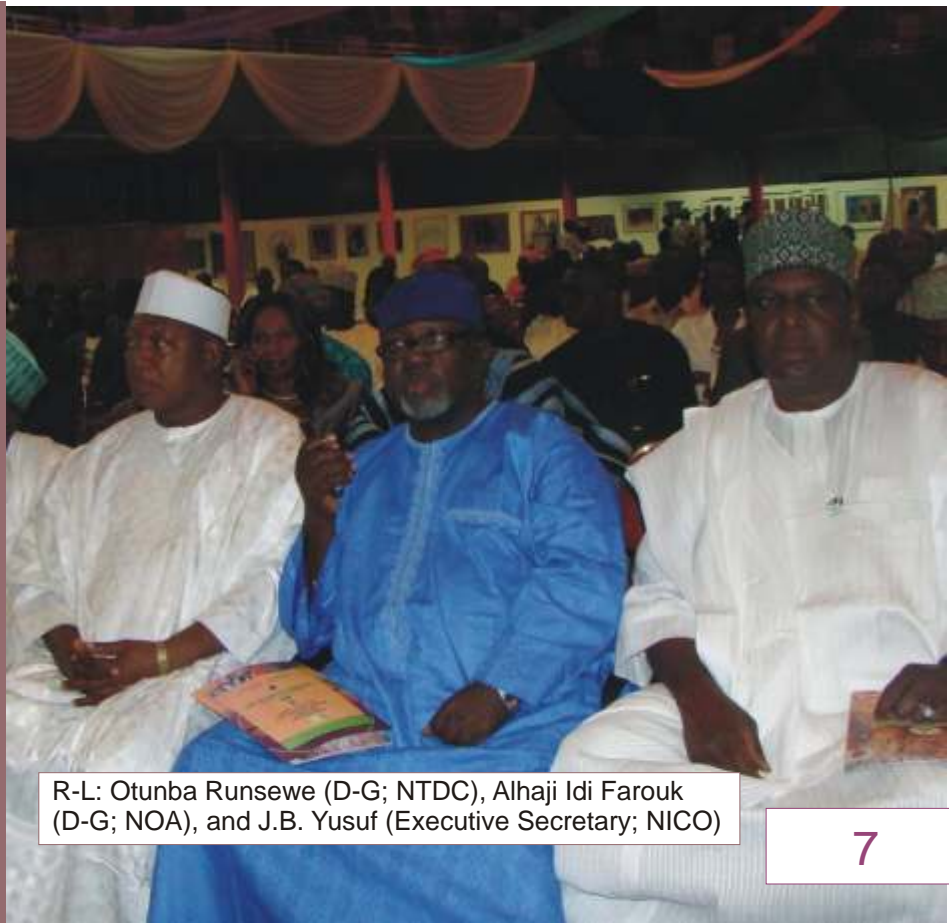
They gave a new meaning to the mixed media art, combining as many as six different media in one single piece. Lemma Guya of Ethiopia specializes in this art form, with wool, fibre, wood, rope, oil, animal hyde and plastic, all impressed on canvas. Originality embraced creativity, showing that African Arts can hold their own anywhere in the world and actually be considered superior.

PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE SECTOR

The quality and range of participation at ARESUVA 2008 tells its own story. It became obvious that Nigerian studio artists and academia in particular, pull a lot of weight internationally. Their presence could be felt in every sphere as they freely imparted their wealth of knowledge and experience to a spell-bound audience.

Profs Ola Olodi of the University of Nigeria; Nsukka, Ikem Stanley Okoye of the University of Delaware; USA, Agbo Folarin of Obafemi Awolowo University; Ile-Ife, Dele Jegede of Miami University, Oxford; Ohio, S.R. Ogunduyile of Federal University of Technology; Akure, Sylvester Ogbeche of the University of California; Santa Barbara, Tony Okpe of Ahmadu Bello University; Zaria, Osa Egonwa of Delta State University; Abraka, Umar Abdullahi Abubaka of Tafawa Balewa University; Bauchi, R.O.M. Kalilu of the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Peju Layiwola of the University of Lagos, Adamu Mbahi of the University of Maiduguri, Kunle Filani of the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, B.K. Olorunkooba of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Frank Ugiomoh of the University of Port Harcourt, Kolade Oshinowo; President; Society of Nigerian Artists and Claudine Pommier of the Arts in Action Society; Toronto Canada, made their homeland proud of all they've achieved.

The political class did not slack as they added colour to the occasion, resplendent and distinguished in flowing danciki, and matching designer caps. Chief Joe Musa led this crop. Besides the two Ministers of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, there was Senator Dahiru Bako Gassol, Chairman; Senate Committee on Culture and Tourism and his Deputy; Senator Yisa Braimoh.



R-L: Otunba Runsewe (D-G; NTDC), Alhaji Idi Farouk (D-G; NOA), and J.B. Yusuf (Executive Secretary; NICO)

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Their counterparts from the House of Representatives were equally present, so were Ambassadors and High Commissioners of Diplomatic missions in Nigeria. Others were Mr. Mwajim Maidugu, CEO; National Council for Arts and Culture, Otunba Segun Runsewe; D-G, Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation; J.B. Yusuf, Executive Secretary; National Institute for Cultural Orientation, Prof. Tunde Babawale; CEO, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, Dr. Ahmed Yerima, Artistic Director; National Theatre/Troupe, Munzali Dantata, D-G; National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism; Idi Farouk, D-G; National Orientation Agency and Numan Danbatta, Permanent Secretary; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation. Members of the Society of Nigerian Artists, Art Writers Association, Gallery Owners Association, public/civil servants, Non-Governmental Organisations, civil society groups, art students, the Organised Private Sector and secondary markets made up the rest of the throng and the result surpassed even what seemed to be the overly optimistic projections of the LOC.

FROM THE SOCIAL VIEW POINT

Socializing formed a considerable portion of ARESUVA. For artists at least, it became a forum for reunion with contemporaries and past acquaintances. Squeals often rent the air and embraces were common-place.

THE WHO IS WHO



Tar Ukoh and Ebele Okeke (Fmr. Head of Service of the Federation)



Prof. Agbo Folarin of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife



J.B. Yusuf



L-R: J.B. Yusuf, Idi Farouk and Otunba Runsewe



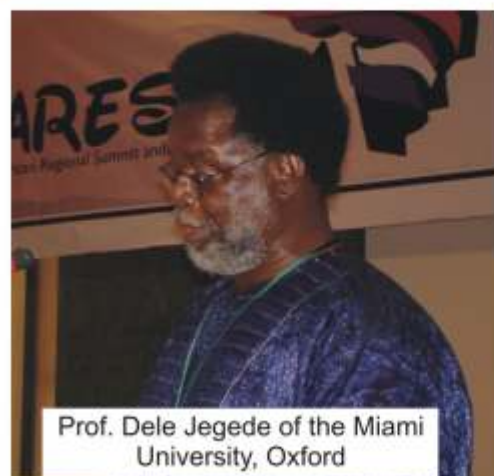
Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN with visiting African Artists



Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN and Senator Gassol



Members of the Diplomatic Corps



Prof. Dele Jegede of the Miami University, Oxford



Chief (Mrs.) Nike Davis-Okundayo



Mr. Maidugu (D-G; NCAC) and Dr. Ayakoroma (Executive Director, Bayelsa State Council of Arts and Culture)

OF ARESUVA 2008



Head, Corporate Affairs,
Oceanic Bank



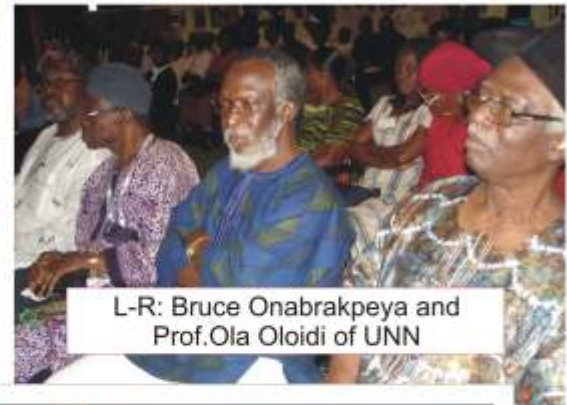
Prof. Stanley Okoye of the University
of Delaware with a tourist



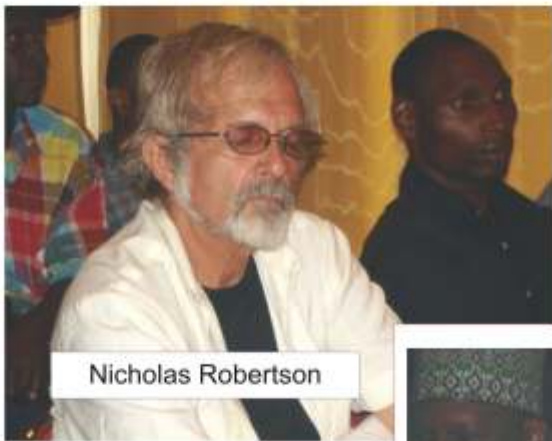
Monica Selelo of Botswana and Diawara
of Zambia



Tar Ukoh and Lemma Guya of Ethiopia



L-R: Bruce Onabrakpeya and
Prof. Ola Oloidi of UNN



Nicholas Robertson



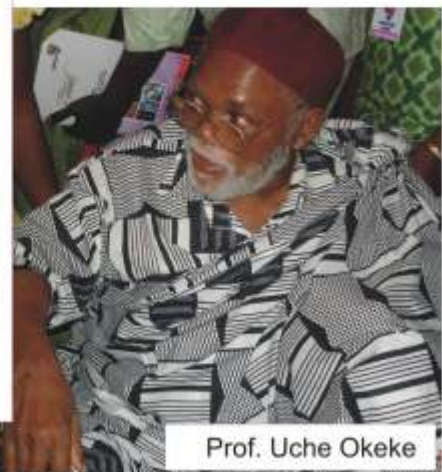
L-R: Soni Irobor, Otunba Runsewe and Munzali
Dantata (D-G; NIHOTOIR)



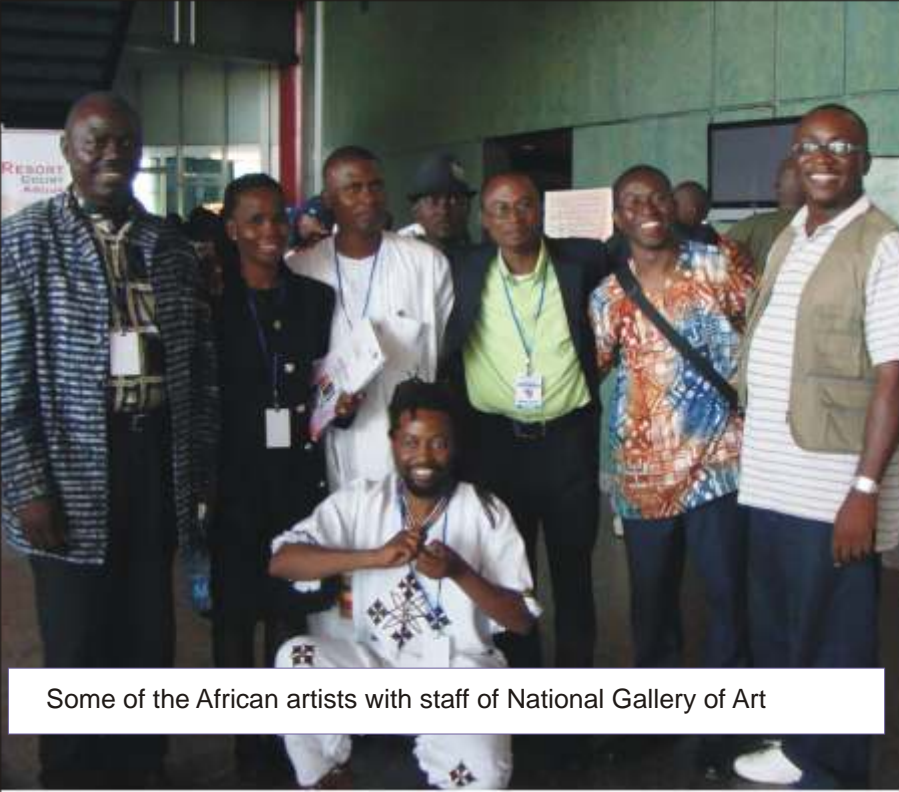
Prof. Tunde Babawale (Director; CBAAC)
and Otunba Runsewe



Claudine Pommier



Prof. Uche Okeke



Some of the African artists with staff of National Gallery of Art

Arts in the Economic Advancement of a Nation (African Space)'. The lecture was all it was touted and more, generating extensive discussions and ensuing others. The passion with which the Professor attacked all issues presented before him soon earned him the nickname 'The Angry Professor'. At the end of this delivery, a thunderous applause followed him all the way to his seat but if the audience thought this was a climax, they were in for a surprise. Clapping, laughing, cheering and sometimes weeping characterized each session as the academic class gave a factual and realistic breakdown of factors constituting the bane of the sector's growth in Africa and the way forward. With power-point slide shows and

audience-participation strategies, they ensured a lively participation. Notable among the subjects discussed were Prof. Stanley Okoye's 'A Critique of the Idea of Art as Luxury: Art and the Architecture of Politics', 'Strictures and Structures in the Nigerian Art Space' by Prof. Dele Jegede and 'Monetizing Nigerian Arts and Cultural Production in the Global Economy', by Prof. Sylvester Ogbecbe.

Questions such as "weren't you in Las Vegas last year?" could be heard as contact addresses and phone numbers changed hands with alacrity. Nigerian food and cuisines were exclaimed at and gist flowed freely.

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Recreational periods, usually evenings saw a lightening of moods as professors,

artists, students, politicians, writers collectors and critics alike shed their business suits and donned jeans and T-shirts, chatting and catching up on the latest news, gathered in loose clusters. Laughter took the place of serious deliberation and social stratification vanished of its own accord. For Nigerians, it was a novel experience seeing their country from the visitors' point of view. As visiting Africans showered praises on everything they laid eyes on, including the food and hospitality of Nigerians, indigenes had cause to re-evaluate their perspective on life in general. According to Diawara, a Zambian art lecturer; "Nigerians often do not realize the extent of their clout from human resources alone and so tend to underrate their position especially in Africa". This statement best surmises the point. For stirring up the course of this perspective change alone, ARESUVA has achieved a lot.



Prince Adetokunbo Kayode SAN, Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation with Dr. Aliyu Idi Hong, Minister of State

PLENARY & DISCUSSION PANELS/ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

Lectures began as scheduled on Tuesday morning and anticipation ran high. Prof. Ola Olodi of the University of Nigeria Nsukka delivered a paper tagged: 'African



Chief Joe Musa and Queen Liz Ben at the Bayelsa Hall

THE BAYELSA STATE HALL

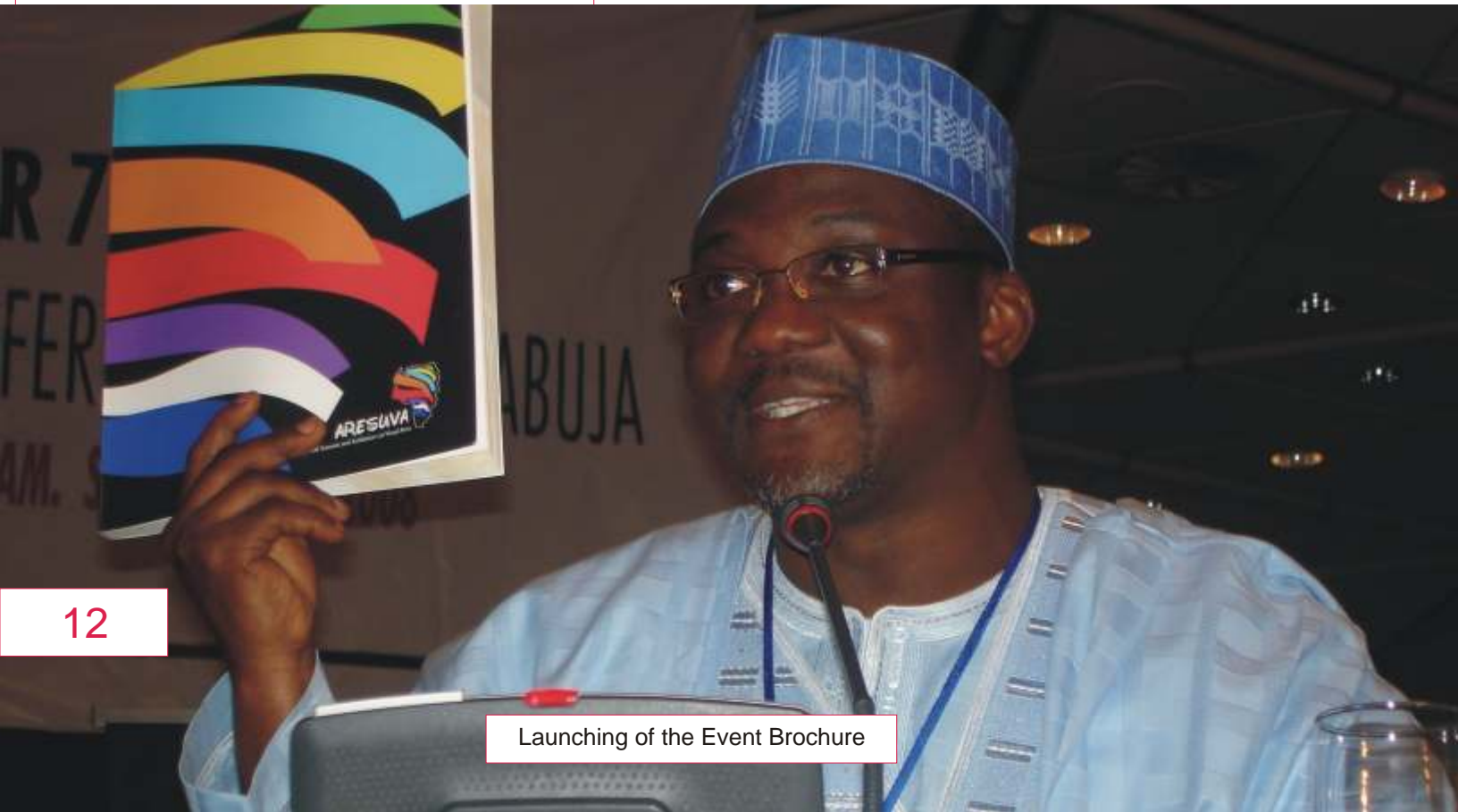
Anyone who has visited the International Conference Centre, Abuja would have noticed other minor conference halls detached from the main building and tucked away in different corners all around the premises. These were all reserved by the Organizing Committee of ARESUVA for the purpose of accommodating any Nigerian State that decides to take advantage of them and set up a separate exhibition for display of its indigenous arts and crafts. It gave local artists an exceptional chance (which they would never have dreamed of otherwise) to be seen and appreciated by the rest of Africa. In his closing speech on Friday 12th September, the D-G; NGA stated that such halls will be made available all over Abuja in subsequent editions of ARESUVA for groups and individuals to occupy and showcase their talents. The first plenary session for Wednesday haven been concluded by 2:00pm, the D-G himself announced that a special treat awaited everyone at

the Bayelsa State Hall. Led by Queen Liz Ben; the Senior Special Assistant to the Bayelsa State Governor on Culture and Dr. Barclays Ayakoroma; the Executive Director, Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture, the gathering was welcomed at the entrance with a cultural dance performance by the popular State's Council troupe. Readers may recall that this same troupe was featured in the 7th edition of the NACD Newsletter which was based on the Project's working visit to Bayelsa State.

During that visit also, a strong collaboration was forged between the Project and the Council which has grown stronger with time. Within the hall itself, art works ranging from paintings, sculptures, textile fabrics and different varieties of crafts abounded, depicting the typical lifestyle of Bayelsa People; many of whose concepts were so witty that they sent the viewing audience into irresistible gales of hilarity. Queen Liz Ben announced at the end of viewing that plans were on top gear for Bayelsa State to take up the hosting of Art Expo Nigeria's next edition. In totality, Bayelsa State proved to be ahead of its counterparts in the drive towards realizing the full potentials of the nation's art, culture and tourism sector.

ENCOMIUMS GALORE

remarks and a guided tour of Abuja's main attractions. Haven commented briefly on vital issues brought up in the course of the event (making light of the most controversial among them), the D-G proceeded on a more serious note: "you all have seen Prof. Uche Okeke all through this event being borne around in a wheel chair, his wife steadfastly beside him". (Prof. Uche Okeke had recently suffered a stroke and could no longer move without aid). "It is notable that



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Launching of the Event Brochure

"Those in favour say ayeee!!!" This from Joe Musa as he raised the bulky ARESUA brochure high, presenting it for the first time to the crowd who chorused after him. The issue under contention: "If I give away this brochure free," he continued, "you all must in return promise to be in ARESUA 2009". One need only imagine the reply that this statement elicited. The 175 glossy-paged, 1ft square catalogue, hosts a good number of the art works exhibited at ARESUA 2008. Visual artists in Africa were fortunate whose works met the selection criteria for appearing in this first edition. It also carried their portraits and brief profiles in both English and French languages. Talk of an unquantifiable mileage! Friday 13th September, the official closing day of ARESUA 2008 was set aside for only two major items: the delivery of the LOC's communiqué along with the D-G's farewell

several speakers at our plenary sessions have made references to him and the indelible mark he has made in the history of visual art in Nigeria. It is on that note that I have decided to set up a 'Professor Uche Okeke Fund' tonight and from my own end, I promise that the National Gallery of Art will fund a complete treatment regime in South Africa for the Professor. We welcome donations from anyone who is moved to support this cause for we must take care of our own".

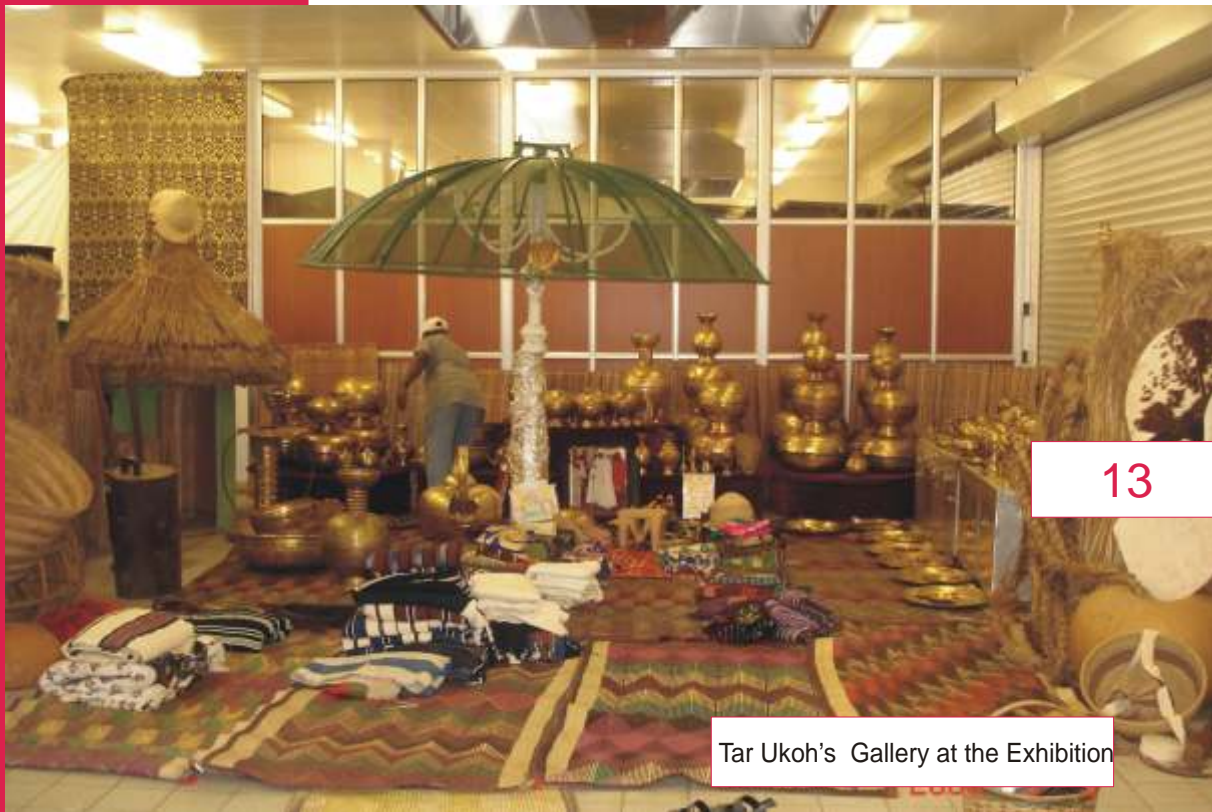
On the spot, donations were made even as many were moved to tears. What an initiative! said they of the idea. No words can really capture the atmosphere pervading the Executive Hall of the ICC at that moment. Suffice it to say that it would haunt participants of ARESUA 2008 for a while to come. Returning once again to his conclusions, the D-G said: "Permit me to introduce a special friend and mentor, a man who has done his best over the years to see that artists are given a fair chance in the scheme of things.

As an upcoming artist, he was very instrumental to my participation for the first time at an exhibition in the U.S. Please join me in welcoming Nicholas Robertson who for twenty years was in charge of the Cultural Desk at UNESCO Nigeria". Nick, could you step up to the podium please?. As soon as this was said, Mr. Soni Irabor (Chairman of the NACD Central Working Committee) who happened to be anchoring that session ran off to the back of the hall and embraced a middle-aged American, bringing him along, seemingly against the man's will. Adding his voice to the D-G's, Mr. Irabor informed the gathering that Nicholas Robertson contributed a lot to the building of his career. "I was to travel to the U.S. for an important mission back in 1986 but was denied visa. Nick came around and spoke on my behalf and my visa was approved. He spoke up for me when I most needed help. Thank you Nick".

The Chairman said this with tears in his eyes, and a rousing round of applause was given to Nick Robertson; all the while peering silently at the audience over the rim of his spectacles. At the end of the D-G's closing remarks, participants were given an opportunity to comment on the organization and content of ARESUVA 2008 as well as proffer improvement tips for subsequent editions. They used this as an avenue to shower encomiums and eulogies on the D-G,

the LOC and the National Gallery of Art. The D-G himself received all the high praise with a smile. For the duration of the event, he was never observed in a fluster. Calmness dictated his every move even as his attention was constantly on demand.

aresuva >



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Tar Ukoh's Gallery at the Exhibition

He directed, encouraged, advised and prompted his team and everyone else whenever necessary. Indefatigable is the only word that describes the man who conceived ARESUVA. If he was ever wearied or exhausted, no one saw it. Indeed the DG is as good as they come, a bottomless well of inspiration to those who have the privilege of working closely with him and sharing his vision. From the NACD Project secretariat, we say: "KUDOS to our hard-working National Coordinator, KEEP DOING US PROUD!"

1st ART Expo Nigeria



In a bid to further provide an enabling environment for the exposure of Nigerian artists globally and create viable markets for their products, the National Gallery of Art (NGA) Nigeria, in collaboration with the Art Galleries Association of Nigeria (AGAN) organised the maiden Art Exposition tagged Art Expo Nigeria. The event which took place at the National Museum, Onikan Lagos from the 27th 31st August 2008 featured artworks by Nigerians brought together by the Art Galleries Association of Nigeria (AGAN), with each gallery presenting artists whose works would best represent its interests at the exhibition.

Many countries all over the world organize Art Expo annually or biennially. They include Art Expo Chicago, Art Expo New York, Art Expo Berlin, Art Expo South Africa and Art Expo Las Vegas. Art Expo Las Vegas for instance, has been consistent for over 29 years now. NGA conceptualized this programme to be an annual event for the visual art sub-sector, akin to the now popular African Regional Summit and Exhibition on Visual Arts (ARESUVA), which has been successfully hosted. By import therefore, private galleries in Nigeria will yearly gather together, the best modern art works from within and outside the country, display same professionally for members of the public to view and appreciate. It is a big market for the visual art. With such a yearly event, which is competitive in essence, it is hoped that the level of art creativity will be further enhanced. The NGA has once again assumed a prominent role in leading the sector's drive towards economic emancipation.

GET ENLISTED!

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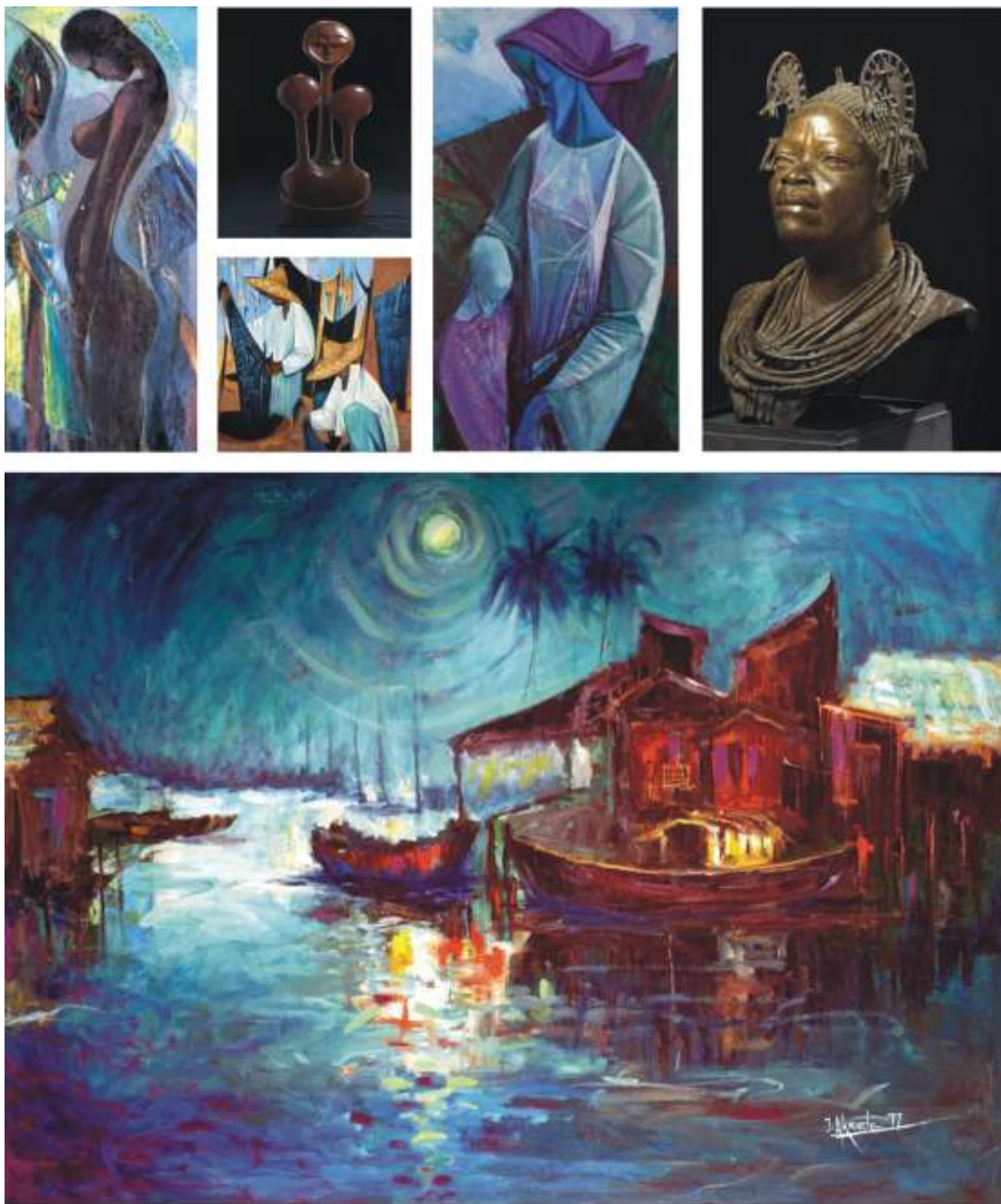


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