

The fluidity of life in the art piece 'Let it go': Capturing the essence through movement and texture

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Abstract: The study addressed the importance of movement and texture in postcolonial art and examined the connections between literary elements and personal experiences, as well as cultural belonging through reconsidering both the canonical and the avant-garde practices of the twentieth century art. It aimed at showing how there is a reflection of the dynamism in the aspect of life by these factors within a Ghanaian existence narrative of arts. The conceptual work "Let it go" is primarily based on the concepts of liberty and mobility, and the meaning of grains in the wood and metal as the tendency of the life while the changes happen around. Thus, the work reproduces this slight fluidity in the creation of contexts within which the materiality of a thing can be felt to have its own freedom. Silver has a crucial function in this creation first through surface reticulation that involved making use of heat to master an emotive metallic sheen. Some of the movement explorations are conducted through anticlastic and synclastic forming wherein the curves go in two different and the same directions respectively. This aspect reveals even more the yin-yang duality which is the nature of life itself- the dynamics of our existence in work and play.

Keywords: Anticlastic, Postcolonial, Reticulation, Synclastic, Texture

1. Introduction

Ghana as a culturally rich country got their samples right from people, and landscapes, which was most original and resilient in theme. The conflict of numerous cultures and the beautiful natural world sum up life, telling the audience how stories include experiences of spheres and transitions. In this regard, such elements of freedom, cheerful movement, and creative expression are a reflection of the fact that life goes on, despite adversity (Essuman et al., 2024).

The images of Canvas Ghana that depict the fabric and forms in relation to movement themselves convey humanity in all its figurative senses. The rolling hills or the active markets are ample testimony to the fact that the occupants have learnt to hold out despite all odds. Such is the bond between the land and its denizens, stressing the fact that beauty is not reflected in the victories but in the struggle (Tschakert et al., 2013; Adom et al., 2024). Osman (2020) opines that the art processes derived from these territories and performativity highlight the possibilities of life, and the ways the people and communities engage their trajectories, as well as the troubles and triumphs that sculpt their existences. In the long run, therefore, this type of narrative firmly underlines that life continues, and prospers, and grows, as does the art it spawns. In the project, "Let it go," I draw from the inspiration derived from Ghanaians and the terrain, to depict the inherent creativity and strength underlying our story. The colorful and lively societies, as well the various and variable terrain provide basis for the portrayal of the notion of liberating movement and the unearthing of life events even amidst adversities and transitions.

These rooms are diverse in their textural depth and forms and tell stories of the struggles and survival, which is part of human experience. Such a connection means that true beauty lies not in victories only, but in a struggle through a more difficult time. Including all these elements into my work, I appreciate the parallels of life and the way people and communities are building their path, rising and thriving despite trials and pleasure, which accentuates that life goes on and art created based on it also.

2. Synclastic and anticlastic forming

There are two concepts in the forming of the materials namely synclastic forming and anticlastic forming which is useful in the metal forming industries especially in shaping of sheets metal and other similar products. It is important that design, manufacturing and engineering personnel comprehend these terms since they explain how materials can be bent or formed. Synclastic forming is when in two directions a surface being curved in the same way (Harvell, 2016).

This means that the material has to bend always inwards or outwards, and form a surface which has a fixed radius of curvature. An example of synclastic forming is formation of a bowl that has dome like curve in all directions. This type of forming is typically used where strength and structural ability are a factor as the continuous curvature reduces stress concentrations on the material surface (Jiang et al., 2025). Stress-forming techniques wherein the tool pushes the material against a die include deep drawing, spinning, and other inferences to synclastic shapes. While anticlastic forming involves bending a surface in convex ways along two directions which are perpendicular to each other (Storch, 2007).

This leads to one dimension for itself being bent upwards while the other dimension is bent downwards giving a look similar to a saddle. Anticlastic surfaces may be more articulated and can produce specific optical characteristics in design. Anticlastic forming is best illustrated in architectural shapes like arches or hyperbolic paraboloids where curvature is both aesthetic and functional (Jiang et al, 2025). In the context of anticlastic forms, specific molding processes such as bending and rolling are employed.

Synclastic and anticlastic forming is applied in many areas, automotive, aerospace and architecture to name but a few. Knowledge about the difference between these two types of forming enables the designer or engineer to use right kinds of forming processes in forming particular shapes and structures and comes with the right appearance that is required in a certain product.

3. Surface reticulation in metals (Silver)

According to Mei (2000), surface reticulation is the process of providing a surface pattern on a material to meet the design requirements of the objective by changing the surface form of the material with the help of various methods. In the case of silver, surface reticulation is an interesting technique that decorative as well as sets out the properties of silver. The general procedure of surface reticulation involves subjecting the silver layer to a certain amount of heat making the metal surface to look melted.(Xue, 1992). Silver is also versatile since in the course of melting, one can manipulate the surface by melting some parts of the silver or applying pressure, so as to give it some relief. This can produce a number of different effects ranging from simple patterns or almost woven fabric to those that are boldly loud. In silver reticulation one of the techniques that people use often is the use of a torch, which in a controlled manner fuses selected areas of the surface.

Careful heating puts the spreader in a position where many raised and recessed areas can be made to provide a visually appealing and physically stimulating pattern. An example of the use of light and shadows is observing the actual texture of the surfaces of an artist's work; the art piece will thus appear more interesting than a flat piece of work.

Reticulated silver can be adorned on jewelry, trinkets and functional utensils to name but a few. For instance, jewelry such as reticulated silver can be used in making special earrings, pendants or rings since the textures provided would make the jewelry more conspicuous (Jovanovic, 2012). The surface patterning also makes a contribution to how they illuminate a given piece, and touches of glint or gleam adding appeal. Also, surface reticulation can be used hand in hand with other technique for example engraving technique or stone setting technique to come up with more complicated and pleasing designs.

The characteristic of reticulated silver is that it can be carved into almost any style and design that the artisan desires, so workmanship can vary with every piece. In conclusion, the current paper sought to establish the fact that surface reticulation in silver is an interesting technique, which gives the silver objects an added aesthetic quality and identity.

4. Emphasis on conceptual foundation (Let it go)

The citizens of Ghana and the Ghanaian terrain are staples of great inspiration to me, more so in 'Let it go'. This artwork depicted in Plate 1 symbolizes life and how people go through difficulties and transitions. Noticing the grains in the material that I am using at that moment I realize that our lives are the curves and bends for which we gracefully dance if not for the imperfections. It is called each grain and this is why I try

to find some tissues that would come from them and I always follow the negative as the dictate of natural beauty of the grains. Inherent in my art work, different strategies are applied with the aim of strengthening the haptic quality of each grain. Layering and carving are the salient elements in my practice because they give spirit back to the items I use. By so doing, I give the observer and the artwork a moment that symbolizes common appreciation of beauty in the world.

Both of us submerge ourselves into viewing nature, not meticulously and superficially omitting minor details. The possibility of the interaction of the light affecting the silhouette of my work creates a kinetic movement of vibrations and strengthens the intensity of the environment. Water is also one of the elements that my thoughts are obsessed with and at the same time which I try to depict in my artworks. Rivers are similes for the flowing of the great and powerful ocean and gives gentle and powerful emotions of happiness and calm. Such natural forms help me think of life as a never ending process of regeneration. And when it comes to the reflection of the glass surface of water, I start thinking and start developing a conversation with myself and the surroundings. In my artwork, my focus is to show how water moves and interacts when artificially created powerfully through transitions of color. Some aspects have drawn my interest about water, here are some of them: because it is a constantly driven process which shapes the environment.

I would like to echo this flexibility in my work, showing that in life everyone transforms. By adding dynamics and transition components to works, I am not only able to make people think about themselves and the environments they live in, but also provide aesthetic gratification. This connection to nature and the experiences of humanity is what I believe my artwork should mean. In 'Let it go', I would like to express hope, meaning that no matter what happens in our life, there is always something beautiful in it. The techniques, pallets and shapes in my art work help remind the viewer that the human story is but a chapter in a never ending book. As the grains of sand and water move and evolve, does life. If we open the imperfections and uncertainties, we will be able to accept the situation.

Finally, I aim for the observer to take a moment and consider what he is seeing; so he can appreciate the artwork. It is my desire for my viewers to feel and touch with nature and with them for a while through my art. The bold textured layers prompt touch, engaging a discourse that is multi-sensory and experiential (emotional). Along with nature, fluidity, and an overall exploration of human experience, I plan on staying true to my subject matter that is Ghana landscapes and its inhabitants. Every single work that I make is a testament to the strength and vitality of life and it becomes my desire to see people who come across this work engage in a discourse that challenges reminiscence of their own existence. The nature of the phenomenon we witness in trying to analyze particularly 'Let It Go' then is such that it ceases to simply be media art; it is narrative of an experience where, together, we are all part of this incredible life dance.

5. Emphasis on working techniques (Let it go)

When looking into working techniques for the artwork "Let It Go" we can discuss synclastic and anticlastic forming translating to form a spiculum, also twisting of the wood for grains and waviness and surface reticulation on silver. All these elements combined play their part in the structure as well as visual support of a given work. Synclastic and anticlastic forming are among the critical metal forming processes that are used to achieve intricate and richer forms. Synclastic forming is used to bend in the same way from each side of the metal to form a hollow such as, a bowl. It can also be employed to come out with graceful forms suggestive of the themes of that image of 'Let It Go'.

Unlike the anticlastic forming which produces designs that have opposite contours and as such gives more complex and sharp looks. Thus, the use of both synclastic and anticlastic techniques allows creating the opposition between the two aspects of the notion: to let go and to hold on. Winding a wooden piece is another potent procedure, which may be applied to work on the representational vista of the piece. When wood is finished, the artists have the ability to manipulate it in curves that look very much like grain flow and the wavy forms are natural. This technique is not only increases the hardness, roughness and decreases the flatness of this piece but also gives a notion that the piece is alive and in perpetual motion. The twisting can depict the process of the letting go, depicting how experiences which impose upon the individual over space-time can change him or her gradually.

Adding another layer of surface reticulation on to the silver surface creates another challenge in the artwork. This technique consists in making the surface of the metal look like that it has been through some sort of wear and tear or melted. The patterns that are created can give off hints of time and the beauty of

repair, which supports the concept of 'let it go' in the piece with coloration (blue-green). In other words, when using all these techniques, the artist will be in a position to produce diversified textured work forms that will create an appeal that will attract the viewer's attention.

Conclusively, the working techniques for 'let it go' include synclastic and anticlastic forming for wood and twisting of the same material and on the other surface reticulation on the silver. Both approaches enrich the general conceptual context of the artwork and make it possible to study in the given way; the artist will be able to explain the idea of leaving and transitions idealistically.



Plate 1: 'Let it go' art piece

Source: Freeman Osabutey Tetteh (2024)

6. Conclusion

Therefore, "Let It Go" is an enlightening conceptual artwork, which warrants that people make the best of their lives, life's changes or transformations. The use of the textures and the different colors along with the universally imbedded themes of nature incorporated in the artwork act as calls for viewers to analyze and draw parallels of their reality and existence as a transitory entity. By emphasizing and embracing the things that make us grow and change, we are not only going to know that we are at peace with ourselves and the world. Finally, this piece calls everyone into solidarity around the concept of resilience and the perpetual waltz of living; permitting the self to surrender to the tide.

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