The Yorùbá Blues
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Nigeria

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UK

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Duncan Clarke from Adire African Textiles
Introduction

Before the development of synthetic dyes in the mid-nineteenth century, dyes were extracted from natural sources such as plants, animals and minerals (Areo and Kalilu, 2013). Indigo is one of the oldest known plant dyes (Goodwin, 2003). It has been used as a dye for thousands of years with each region of the world developing its own dyeing methods, beliefs, even religious ceremonies, as part of the process (Prideaux, 2007).

In Nigeria, there are over 250 ethnic groups speaking as many indigenous languages. The three most dominant are Hausa, in northern Nigeria, Yorùbá in the south-west and Igbo in south-eastern Nigeria (Findlay, 2018). All three have strong indigo dyeing textile traditions but the activity is most dominant amongst the Yorùbá, who make up approximately 21% of the population. The Yorùbás are “masters of the indigo-dyeing process. They also have the most varied methods of applying resist to cloth” (Gillow 2001, p.70).

Indigo dyeing amongst Yorùbá people falls into two categories: the total-dyed cloth, aṣò aláró, in which the whole fabric is immersed and dyed completely in indigo and àdìrẹ, which involves creating patterns on the fabric through a variety of techniques before dyeing the cloth (Areo and Kalilu, 2013). Àdìrẹ was first produced on factory milled cloth in the late nineteenth century by people in Yorùbá towns, in particular, Abéokuta, Ibadan and Òṣogbo in southwestern Nigeria (LaGamma, Giuntini, 2008). Prior to this, the patterns were made on locally made handwoven fabric called kijipa (Simmonds, Oyelọla and Oke, 2016, p. 11).

The literal translation of the word àdìrẹ is to tie and to dye, a description of the original and oldest resist pattern making technique. Today the word is used in Nigeria to describe all resist dyeing techniques, including fabric dyed with synthetic dyes (Oyelọla, 2010).

This report focuses on indigo dyed resist textiles. Resist dyeing involves using techniques and materials to form patterns on fabric, which prevent the dye penetrating the fabric. When the resist material is removed the pattern is revealed.

Àdìrẹ cloth incorporates intricate patterns and complex symbols which reflect indigenous Yorùbá society, providing a valuable insight into Yoruba religion, culture, folklore and history. The patterns are passed down through generations with the cloth functioning as clothing and a means of communication, especially for Yorùbá women, because originally àdìrẹ textiles were made entirely by women. “The importance of àdìrẹ as a medium of communication and expression for women should not be understated” (Okundaye 2016, p.7).

Cloth is often neglected in art historical studies, sometimes seen as a domestic craft rather than an art form (Renne and Agbaje-Williams, 2005). “The contributions of the African continent to the history of textile use and decoration have been neglected” (Triplet and Triplett 2015, p.7) and when cloth history “is told it is rarely from an African perspective, let alone by an African voice” (Spring 2012, p.33).
UK Collections

A Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship, to southwestern Nigeria from February 2017 until April 2017 to study àdìrè provided an opportunity to hear the African voice.

It was the voice of Nigerian artists, scholars, curators, the teachers and apprentices who keep the tradition alive, the patrons who make a conscious decision to wear àdìrè and the highly skilled Yorùbá àdìrè artisans who make the cloth.

My travel Fellowship reflects my personal interest in indigenous indigo dyeing traditions and my own creative practice in natural indigo dyeing.

The travel Fellowship research began in the UK with a visit to museums housing large àdìrè collections. These include the British Museum, the Economic Botany collection at Kew Gardens, the Horniman Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and the Victorian and Albert Museum. The collections comprise mainly unworn àdìrè pieces. One of the main collectors was Jane Barbour, an English woman whose husband’s teaching at the University of Ibadan took her to Nigeria (the Guardian, 2017). Barbour began researching and collecting àdìrè cloth whilst living in Nigeria from 1962 until 1972. (Puccinelli, L 1997)

UK publications on African textiles that include àdìrè cloth are based on the UK museum collections but as the collections comprise mainly older textiles there is a limited analysis of contemporary àdìrè textiles. Barbour wrongly reported the decline of àdìrè making (Simmonds, Oyelọla and Ọkẹ, 2016) but this position seems to be the one adopted by UK textile history publications as àdìrè cloth incorporating newer techniques is largely missing from the research (Gillow, 2016; Sandberg, 1989). The Yorùbá voice, especially the àdìrè maker's voice is also missing from the discourse, how the practice has evolved with new techniques and patterns and how local circumstances and international challenges have impacted designs and production.

During one of my research visits, a group of textile enthusiasts enquired about the textiles. The collections staff member responded that I was researching cloths from Africa. She looked to me to offer a further explanation and I added that they were textiles made in Nigeria within the continent of Africa. I briefly explained the stages in the complex process of resist dyeing and that the Yorùbá artisans use bird feathers as a quill to draw these detailed patterns on the cloth. I explained the patterns reflect Yorùbá culture and proverbs. My efforts were in vain because the group thanked me for my time in presenting the “primitive cloths”. That comment continues to bother me as does the lack of diversity in museum collections staff.

The need for more diversity within museum workforce is a long discussed topic but without significant change. Men still dominate senior positions and the percentage of black and minority ethnic staff and people with disabilities are lower than in society. Curators, exhibition staff and collections care specialists in museums are much less diverse than those in other roles (The Museum Consultancy, 2015).
During the research trip at Pitts River Museum, I noticed one of the Benin Bronzes in a display cabinet. The Benin Bronzes were made by Edo artisans, the indigenous people of pre-colonial Benin Empire, now located within Nigeria between the 15th and 16th centuries. They comprise several thousand commemorative brass plaques and sculptures which were looted from the King’s palace by British forces during the Benin Expedition of 1897. They were subsequently given to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and many were sold to museums around the world. Today, there are calls for the bronzes to be returned to Nigeria (Ancient Origins, 2018).

The display in Pitts River is problematic, so little said about the context of the pieces within Edo history and culture. Rather the interpretation seeks to justify the removal of the objects from the Benin Kingdom. It makes for an unpleasant visit.

The largest collections of Benin Bronzes is held by the British Museum and the Ethnological Museum in Berlin. The British Museum intends to host a summit along with other museums to discuss the return of pieces for a permanent display in Benin City, Nigeria (Mtshali, 2018).

Museums àdìrẹ collections provide some cloth names using Yorùbá words but the English meanings and Yorùbá tonal marks are sometimes missing and this makes pronunciation and interpretation difficult. Tone is important in Yorùbá language. Consonants and vowels have very different meanings determined by the midrange, low or high tone (Everyculture.com, 2018). Pitch is indicated by the tone marks. Some words have similar spellings but with tonal marks, they can have very different meanings.

(University College London, 2018). The Yorùbá word for indigo dye is aro but it can also mean furnace, sadness and a bean storehouse depending on where the tonal marks are placed (Fakinlede, 2006).

Yorùbá words in this report have been written with tonal marks using the Yorùbá alphabet with the Yorùbá Modern Practical Dictionary (Fakinlede, 2015) and Encyclopaedia of the Yoruba (Falola and Akinyemi, 2016) as a guide with support from my Fellowship interpreter Mayowa Kila. There is still much work needed to ensure the words are written correctly and I apologise for any unintentional errors.
Lagos

In Nigeria Lagos was my first stop, a meeting with Chief (Mrs) Nike Davies-Okundaye, one of the most prominent àdìrẹ practitioners. Chief Nike was brought up amidst the traditional weaving and dying practice in her native village of Ogidi-Ijumu, Kogi State, in Western Nigeria. She began weaving at the age of six and was introduced to àdìrẹ textiles, indigo dyeing, weaving, painting and embroidery by her aunt and great-grandmother, one of the leading cloth weavers in her community. (Nikeart.com, 2017).

Chief Nike is a remarkable lady. She has taught àdìrẹ workshops, exhibited internationally and created four art centres in Nigeria which offer free training to artists in àdìrẹ making and other art forms including sculpture and performing arts. She is the owner of the largest art gallery in West Africa, The Nike Art Center Lekki, Lagos, Fig.1 which houses over 7,000 artworks (Nikeart.com, 2017). She now plans to open the first textile museum in Nigeria.

Chief Nike introduced me to her personal collection of àdìrẹ cloths and we spent some time discussing the pattern meanings. After my rather formal UK research visits. It was exciting to touch the cloths and explore the patterns in a more fluid spontaneous way. I had seen some of the cloths within museum archives but my discussions with Chief Nike brought the pieces to life. She explained the meaning of a cloth called Òrẹ Mérin (Fig. 2) as four friends. The pattern represents the close friendship amongst women comprising four different patterns, that are “so close they speak with the same voice” (Okundaye 2006, p.25).
The pattern also illustrates collaboration amongst women from different generations and the formation of cooperative unions to promote their trade. Fig. 3 shows the detail of one of the four Òrì Mérin patterns called wire, representing metal fences symbolising protection of the inner spirit (Davies, 2014).

Àdírẹ ọgbọ designs were originally created on two pieces of plain white cotton approximately 2.3 metres long and each length was painted or stencilled with cassava paste on one side only. After the fabric was dyed with indigo and the paste resist scraped was off, the two pieces were joined together lengthwise to make a wrapper, a traditional item of Yorùbá dress.

We also spoke about Sún Bèbè Fig. 4 (Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2018). Chief Nike says the design, which means put your beads on calls on Yorùbá women to wear waist beads, bèbè as a celebration of female beauty. Traditionally Yorùbá women wore strands of beads around their waist beneath their wrapper to emphasise their curves and many still wear them. It is believed the beads have the power to arouse sexual desire (Falola, Akinyemi, 2016, p. 46).
Fig. 5 (Museum of Fine Art Boston, 2018) shows Olókun, a hand-painted âdirẹ resist patterned cloth found within most UK museums. Olókun is a Yorùbá salt water, (seas and oceans) deity (TheYoruba, 2017). The pattern is still made in Nigeria and illustrates the intrinsic connection between âdirẹ and indigenous Yorùbá spirituality. The full design consists of abstract patterns and creatures such as birds, lizards, crocodiles (Oyelọla 2010). These patterns are mostly generated from proverbs and popular sayings, important events and sometimes coined from songs and prayers.

The floral motifs on Olókun include the leaves of the cassava plant, Fig. 6, which are regularly picked and added to stews. The tubulars are an important staple in the Nigerian diet and the main ingredient in the paste used to make starch resist patterns. Cassava a drought-tolerant crops, capable of growing on marginal soils the plant thrives in tropical climates, surviving when many other crops fail. Cassava is one of the most important staple food in many sub-Saharan African countries.
The stylised pattern of cassava leaves Fig 7. (Museum of Fine Art Boston, 2018) called ẹwé ẹgẹ reflects the plant’s character, representing resilience and the ability to withstand adversity. (Renne and Agbaje-Williams, 2005, p.235). There is a proverb attached to the design, “slanting does not kill a cassava plant” (Carr 2001, p.33). This speaks to the way the plant grows and because in areas of heavy rainfall it is best planted in a slanted position.

Another design in the Olókun cloth Fig 8 (Museum of Fine Art Boston, 2018) shows the pattern olókọtọ, which translates to spinning top, originally made from snail shells. The pattern is interpreted as the cycle of life and speaks to the Yorùbá belief that life is one continuous circle of birth, death and reincarnation and rebirth (Areo and Kalilu, 2013). This belief is reflected in festivals such as Ègúngún, a masquerade representing deceased ancestors (Falola and Akinyemi, 2016).

In her book, Okundaye (2016) explains the Yorùbá meanings of the titles of over thirty àdìrẹ cloths and patterns. She also writes pattern names with Yorùbá tonal marks which is helpful both for pronunciation and interpretation.

These hand drawn resists textiles are called àdìrẹ ẹlẹko. Traditionally corn starch was used to create the patterns applied freehand with small feathers before being dyed with indigo. The artisans now use cassava starch known as láfún (Oyelola 2010).

The cloth shown on the cover of this report is called ori mi pé often explained in English as my head is correct. Chief Nike explained the meaning as I am wise and says the cloth is often used by a woman to assert her intelligence, especially when she feels she has been taken advantage of.
Abéòkuta

My next stop Abéòkuta is just over 100 kilometres from Lagos and is home to Ikotu market one of the largest àdùrẹ making centres in Nigeria. The Yorùbá are the major ethnic nationality in Abéòkuta.

I took the train to avoid the busy roads. The train was old, most definitely in need of investment, but clean and comfortable. The slow journey through rural villages and towns filled with palm, cocoa and banana trees, sugar cane, bamboo, yam and cassava fields provided an important context for the inspiration behind the àdùrẹ cloths.

I arrived in Abéòkuta just before sunset and crossed the railway track with my suitcase as instructed by the helpful train staff who even negotiated a reasonable price for my taxi to the hotel.

It took several visits to build relationships with the àdùrẹ makers in Abéòkuta. They were initially uneasy about talking to me complaining that, “Western” researchers exploit their knowledge and skills without acknowledgement or payment. Others spoke about designers photographing their patterns, reproducing them digitally claiming them as their own designs. I had to prove my knowledge of indigo dyeing and pattern showing examples of my work.

Singer treadle sewing machines were introduced into Nigeria at the beginning of the twentieth century inspiring a new machine stitched resist cloth (Gillow, 2016). This sped up production time so makers could meet the increased demand for àdùrẹ. It also marked the arrival of men into a previously female-dominated textile practice (Areo and Kalilu, 2013).

Machine stitched àdùrẹ still appears to be carried out entirely by men. Gâniyü Kàrímù (Fig. 9) entered the profession as an apprentice, learning his skills and all the patterns and meanings from his predecessor, who he says has now passed on. He still uses a treadle sewing machine and although he does not use a light, nor a tape measure, every fold and stitch placement is remarkably accurate.

Kàrímù referred to the pattern in (Fig 10) as Daniel. Fig. 11 shows Etí, which means ear. The cloth serves as a warning about the harmful consequence of malicious gossip and warns the community not to act upon what they hear (Okundaye 2017). Fig. 12 shows the pattern sugar cubes which is still being produced in Abéòkuta. Fig.13 is called ćešun, something pushed up (Simmonds, Oyelola and Oke, 2016). Fig.14 is called Gbetan, meaning rooted. Figs.15 -16 show other machine stitched patterns.

An extraordinary range of patterns is produced using this seemingly simple method. All are given names reflecting Yorùbá culture but more research is needed to find more pattern names and meanings.
One of the patterns referenced in African Textiles (Gillow 2012, p 75) is described only by the technique of production. The same cloth, (Fig. 17) which is still made in Abéôkuta is known by local àdiré makers as Ègbà lé wà which translates to we remain or we exist in Ègbàland (Kàrimù, 2017). The cloth references the history of the Ègbà, a Yorùbá subgroup in Abéôkuta, which means under the rock. The city located below Olumo Rock was founded around 1830 by Ègbà refugees who hid within the rock’s caves during civil wars that followed the collapse of the Oyo empire. They hid to protect themselves from being sold into the transatlantic slave trade (Davies, 2014).

The cloth provides a visual link to Ègbà descendants in a town called Abéôkuta in the parish of Westmorland Jamaica. Yorùbá, most likely Ègbà indentured servants arriving in Jamaica in 1841 named the town it after their homeland in Nigeria. Their descendants, known as Etu and Nago people have preserved their Yorùbá heritage in rituals and thanksgiving Etu & Nago: The Yoruba Connection, 2003). The connection is an important one, worth exploring further given researching ancestry for Jamaicans of African descent is almost impossible. As Guy (2011) points out “the dispossession caused by the slave trade means that ancestral links have been lost or buried”.

Fig 17
The stencilled àdirẹ cloth patterns are said to have originated in Abéokuta and freehand àdirẹ élẹko from Ibadan. Both were produced from original freehand drawings. In Yorùbá land the àdirẹ élẹko cloths are traditionally made by women and stencilled cloth by men (Gillow 2001).

Stencils (Fig. 18) were originally made from tea chests linings but are now made from rectangular pieces of zinc. The process of stencil making with a small chisel is labour intensive but once the stencil is made it allows for much quicker cloth making.

Fig. 19 (The British Museum 2018) shows the detail of a stencilled cloth of a king wearing a crown. The full cloth is shown in Fig. 21. The traditional rulers of Yorùbá towns are called ọbas, a tradition traced back to Ilé-Ifẹ, an ancient Yorùbá city in south-western Nigeria, which is seen as the origin of Yorùbá people. Oduduwa was the first ọba, and successive ọbas are organised through lineage and those with a direct link to Oduduwa are entitled to wear beaded crowns, especially the conical beaded crowns with veils (Falola, Akinyemi, 2016, p. 47).

Birds appear on many crowns referencing the king’s ability to mediate between the secular world and the spiritual one. Birds are also said to represent female power, reinforcing that the ọba cannot rule without the cooperation and support of the women in his community.

Repeat patterns in the cloth design Fig. 21 suggest the interconnectedness of all life and the balance needed to sustain it (Hamillgallery.com, 2017).
The cloth is also an important historical record. It includes the words ogun pari or war is finished with the date 1970. This references the end of the three-year Nigerian Civil War between independent Nigeria’s new government and the Igbo people in the southeast. The war began with the secession of the Igbo occupied the southeastern region on May 30, 1967, when it declared itself the independent Republic of Biafra. The conflict is seen as a consequence of European Imperialism cutting up West Africa to create arbitrary administrative boundaries disregarding pre-colonial divisions of hundreds of different ethnic groups divided along the lines of cultural, religious and linguistic differences (Hurst, 2018).
I continued my journey to Ìbàdàn by train, a very busy route which starts in Lagos and travels overnight to Kano in Northern Nigeria. Some of the older passengers had facial tribal marks. Historically Yorùbá people and other ethnic groups had tribal marks for a number of reasons including spirituality, to enhance natural beauty and to identify a child in their family lineage and or ethnic group. The marks were especially important during civil wars and the transatlantic slave trade as they helped to reunite members of the same family (Odunbaku, 2012). There is an older hand stitched àdìrẹ cloth called ilà meaning tribal marks (Fig. 22) which speaks to this aspect of Yorùbá culture. There is also a local Ìbàdàn proverb which reflects this. “If we get lost, that we may find ourselves is the reason Ìbàdàn wear marks” (Falola, Akinyemi, 2016, p. 67).

Ìbàdàn dùn (Fig.23) is one of the most well known àdìrẹ hand painted designs. The pattern is named after the city where it was produced and translates as Ìbàdân is sweet or Ìbàdán is a happy place. The cloth takes its name from one square, which features four spoons representing the pillars of Mapo Hall, built in 1929 by Welshman Robert Taffy Jones as the main administrative centre under British colonial rule. The Hall was historically used to imprison tax evaders.

There are still many artisans making hand-painted àdìrẹ cloth. Maryam Akinyemi of Aduni Art (Fig 24) is one, she remembers her father and grandfather singing a song about Mapo Hall. “Payment of taxation has come, our fathers were the first to pay, the idiots and lazy ones who have not paid are in detention in Mapo” (Observe Nigeria, 2017). There is, of course, another side to the story of these onerous taxes including the impact on the àdìrẹ economy. The Bluest Hands (Byfield, 2002) documents this important perspective.
Indigo is not water soluble and must undergo a series of processes before it can be used as a natural dye. It is a complex process requiring specialist knowledge.

Natural dyes are classified as either adjective or substantive. Most dyes are adjective which means they need a mordant, a substance that helps to bind the dye to the fibre. Substantive natural dyes are those that do not require a mordant. Indigo is a substantive dye which is released from the plant leaves through a process of fermentation (Blue Castle Fiber Arts, 2017).

Indigo refers to many different plants of more than one botanical family. Indigofera species and Philenoptera cyanescens, formally known as Lonchocarpus cyanescens are both used by the Yorùbá. The dye called elu is prepared from young plant leaves which are moistened with water and pounded in a wooden mortar. The crunched materials are then covered for several days to ferment. After about one week, the fermented leaves are moulded into small balls that are sun-dried or that are sold to local dyers Fig 25.

The dye solution is prepared by extraction with an alkaline solution made from filtered wood ashes which is mixed with the indigo dye balls. The mixture is stirred carefully and left for several days to ferment. When the liquid turns a yellow-green the mixture is ready for dyeing Fig 26. One of the interesting aspects of Yorùbá indigo dye practice is that very little water is used in the process, which is very different to more Western approaches where the cloth is cleaned and rinsed before, during and after the process.

In 1897 chemists from Germany created synthetic indigo from coal. Caustic soda was later introduced as a strong alkali solution to convert the indigo for dyeing. This sped up the dye process but threatened the viability of the natural dye process and there were complaints from traders and customers that the caustic soda caused the cloth to rot (Adedotun Amubode, 2009).

I spent some time with Professor Olusegun Oke, one of the editors of the 2nd edition of Adire Cloth in Nigeria (2016) discussing the alchemy of indigo dyeing. His background in lecturing and research with specialist interests in chemistry and indigenous technologies for transforming materials into useful products led him to take an interest in indigo dyeing.
As a natural indigo dyer, I share his position that “chemically produced dye can neither match the natural product for the richer quality of its blue nor its superior lightfastness. (Simmonds, Oyelola and Okẹ, 2016, p. 36)

The current indigo dyeing practice in Nigeria is mixed and mostly small scale low tech. There are dyers known as alaros who still use natural indigo. Some use synthetic indigo but combine it with natural indigo in an effort to achieve the rich blue of natural indigo. There are those who use synthetic dye with sodium hydroxide, (caustic soda) because it is a much quicker process. However, they complain the caustic soda burns their skin. They are increasingly concerned about other health risks from inhaling the dye and caustic soda. The local communities around dyeing areas feel textile dye waste is polluting local water systems. Nigeria also as other pollution issues to deal with related to the oil industry.

The pollution caused by the global textile industry is a growing international concern. The industry uses millions of gallons of water every day and waste is not treated to remove pollutants before being released into the water system. The wastewater usually contains toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde, chlorine, lead and other heavy metals that can lead to serious health problems. (Fibre2fashion.com, 2018).

The Citarum River in Indonesia is considered one of the most polluted rivers in the world. Over 200 textile factories line its river banks. The dyes and chemicals used in the industrial process including lead, arsenic and mercury amongst them are released into the water, changing its colour and giving the area an unpleasant odour and impacting the health of the 5 million people living in the river basin (Yallop, 2018).

Russell (2011) encourages fashion and textile designers to consider the complete design process from concept to production and explore ways to lessen the negative environment impact of production. This approach needs to be embedded within the fashion and design curriculum.

Textile and dyeing activities are regulated in Nigeria. The Àdírẹ Dyers’ Association, set up 1926 (Afolabi, 1981) still exists but it is now called the Àdírẹ Kampala Association and covers all textile making activities. The association is well recognised and has branches throughout Nigerian southwestern states. It sets out the rules of textile production, how the production space must be maintained and cleaned and when traditional rituals should take place (Abeokuta Museum Team, 2017). I was asked to consult Association members before I spoke to àdírẹ makers to reassure them that I was only documenting and sharing knowledge on indigo and pattern making and that I had no intention of copying indigenous àdírẹ patterns.

This issue of cultural appropriation was raised recently by the Yoruba, a society, cultural blog and language school with nearly 16,000 followers. They provide examples of àdírẹ designs being “borrowed” and commodified into luxury goods without consequence (The Yoruba, 2018). Examples include Dutch owned Vlisco fabric group replicating àdírẹ patterns on printed fabric outside Nigeria, reintroducing them back into the West African market (Ade-Salu, 2018). JanSport is an American brand owned by VF Corporation, one of the world’s largest clothing companies. Their backpack Fig. 27 called Hensley blue indigo àdírẹ has no explanation of the meaning of the àdírẹ patterns included in the design.
Osogbo

The indigo dyeing activity itself reflects the deeply religious expression of Yorùbá people. In Yorùbá mythology, Iya Moopo is considered the patron of all female crafts trades and childbirth. She is the deity linked to indigo dyeing as she is the owner of indigo dye (Oyenyi, 2015). All dyers cease their dyeing activities every sixteenth day in order to respect and offer sacrifices to her (Kalilu and Areo, 2017).

In Osogbo, my last stop I visited a wonderful sculpture dedicated to Iya Mopoo, created by Susanne Wenger and Adesisi Akanji. Over 10 meters high and 25 meters long it is located within the Òṣùn-Óṣogbo Sacred Grove, a sacred forest situated along the banks of the Òṣùn river just outside the city of Osogbo. The grove, designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 2005 is seen as a symbol of identity for all Yorùbá people. In traditional Yorùbá-land each village used to have its sacred grove, an area reserved for the celebration and worship of traditional deities. The 75 hectare Sacred Grove is the probably last example of its kind (UNESCO, 2017). The Adunni Olorisha Trust was established in 1998 to preserve and promote the grove.

Abélà is the Yorùbá word for candle wax, which arrived in West Africa within the last fifty years. Àdiré alabélà describes a newer àdiré technique of resist dyeing where wax, is used to create patterns (Renne and Agbaje-Williams, 2005). Although the technique is new àdiré makers still incorporate the older patterns with new designs.

The Nike Center for Art and Culture, Osogbo offers àdiré training and other art forms free of charge to Nigerians.
The centre, established in 1983 has trained over 3000 Nigerians who now earn a viable income from their skills (Nikeart.com, 2018).

I met some of the students who are taught the traditional Yorùbá àdùrẹ motifs and meanings reflecting contemporary societal issues. They are also encouraged to create new designs to respond to new materials, techniques and technology.

I had a wonderful time in Nigeria, the people were so hospitable and welcoming it was sad to leave because I felt as if I was leaving old friends. My only regret is that I simply ran out of time. I wanted to meet more of the older àdùrẹ makers and deliver the workshops requested by Chief Nike and collaborate with some of the artisans but I hope to return.

Since leaving Nigeria and sharing information about my trip through talks I have pondered the àdùrẹ makers concerns around cultural appropriation.

In 2015 French fashion designer Isabel Marant and another French company, Antik Batik were accused of plagiarism for their embroidered blouses. They were almost identical to the traditional huipil blouses worn in Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, a town in Oaxaca inhabited by the Mixe indigenous group, Fig 31. Oaxaca’s congress responded by declaring the Mixe community's traditional designs and language as Intangible Cultural Heritage in line with UNESCO guidelines (Varagur, 2018). The protected status is not legally binding but recognises that the designs are unique to, and originate in, Mixe culture.

UNESCO originally used the term cultural heritage for physical buildings, monuments and objects but it now includes traditional crafts, festivals and living expressions passed down through generations such as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals, indigenous designs and knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

Whilst intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalisation. an understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life (UNESCO, 2018).

Perhaps it is time for indigenous Yorùbá àdùrẹ patterns and process to be classified as intangible heritage.
• Diversity within Museums

The lack of diversity within museum workforce is a long discussed topic without significant change. The Arts Council’s Culture Change toolkit (2017) sets out clear guidelines for developing diverse talent, workforce and leadership. It would be helpful if museums provided regular updates on their progress in addressing the diversity themes outlined in the toolkit recommendations.

• UK àdiré collections

Most of the àdiré collections held within UK Museums are not on display, therefore not accessible to the general public. Museums should consider alternative opportunities to showcase the collections perhaps through talks, workshops, publicised tours and online articles with images. The three editors of the newly updated book Adire Cloth in Nigeria (2016) could be invited to give a talk. Their knowledge and experience of àdiré span several decades during colonial and independent Nigeria. With their UK connections, I expect there are times when they are all in the UK at the same time.

• New collections research

Museums should review their approach to new collections research. Research proposals are usually made by a member of Museum staff and a member of academic staff at a UK University. The process generally does not allow for applications directly from potential students. The lack of diversity in museums is also a characteristic of higher education as black and minority ethnic staff continue to be underrepresented at senior levels (Adams, 2018). I wonder about the fairness and transparency of the research approach for potential researchers whose collections interests may differ from those of museum staff.

• Teaching about textile pollution

UK universities with textile and fashion courses should teach students how to carry out environmental risk assessments of potentially polluting aspects of their practice or supply chain especially those considering overseas manufacturing. This will raise awareness of the impact of textile waste and help them to consider their responsibilities as new designers.

• Intangible cultural heritage

Intangible cultural heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity, especially with globalisation. Universities teaching fashion and textile design should promote an understanding and respect of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities.

• Cultural appropriation

The debate over cultural appropriation and intellectual property is an ongoing issue in the fashion and textile industry. Universities and colleges teaching fashion and textiles should include classes on cultural appropriation, perhaps adopting policies and standards with clear definitions on the difference between appreciation and appropriation. Marketing specialist Papallo and Youth Programs Director DeWald from the National Conference for Community Justice a nonprofit human relations organisation provide some excellent practical resources on this subject (Papallo and M’Liss DeWald, 2018).
References


Afolabi, „The àdìrẹ industry in Abeokuta”, B.A. University of Ibadan, 1981.


Galieu, B. (2017). Interview with Mayowa Kila and Lucille Junkere, 2 April


Fig. 1 Junkere, J. 2017 Nike Center for Art and Culture. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 2-3 Unknown. Òrì Ìrìrì four friends àdìrè cloth. [image] (Lucille Junkere’s own private collection).


Fig. 9 Junkere, J. (2017) Gàníyù Kàrímù. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 10 Unknown. Machine stitched àdìrè cloth Daniel. [image] (Lucille Junkere’s own private collection).

Fig. 11 Unknown. Machine stitched àdìrè cloth Etì. [image] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).


Fig. 17 Junkere, L. Machine stitched àdìrè cloth Daniel. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 18 Junkere, L. (2017) Àbẹ́ọ́kuta stencil. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 19, 21


Fig. 22 Junkere, L. Hand stitched àdìrè cloth Tribal marks. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).


Fig. 24 Junkere, L. Mayam Akinyemi. [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).
Fig. 25 Junkere, L. *Yorùbá indigo balls.* [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 26 Junkere, L. *Yorùbá indigo dyeing* [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).


Fig. 29 Junkere, L. *Heated wax.* [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

Fig. 30 Junkere, L. *Adìre alábélà cloth.* [photograph] (Lucille Junkere's own private collection).

**G l o s s a r y**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>abēlā</th>
<th>candle wax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adé</td>
<td>beaded crown</td>
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<tr>
<td>àdịrɛ</td>
<td>Indigenous Yorùbá indigo dyed resist textiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>àdịrɛ ɛleko</td>
<td>resist dyed cloth with patterned made using starch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>àdịrɛ alabēlā</td>
<td>resist dyed cloth made with patterns made using wax</td>
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<td>alaros</td>
<td>dyers</td>
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<td>aro</td>
<td>indigo dye</td>
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<td>asọ alárọ</td>
<td>total dyed cloth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ègbà lé wà</td>
<td>we remain or we exist in Ègbàland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egúngún</td>
<td>Masquerade representing deceased ancestors.</td>
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<td>ẹleṣun</td>
<td>something pushed up</td>
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<td>ọba</td>
<td>king</td>
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<tr>
<td>ogun pari</td>
<td>war is over</td>
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<td>olókọto</td>
<td>cycle of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olókun</td>
<td>Yorùbá salt water, (seas and oceans) deity</td>
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<td>Ọrẹ Mérin</td>
<td>four friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ori mi pé</td>
<td>my head is correct, I am wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sún Bèbè</td>
<td>put your beads on</td>
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