



## Research Article

© 2021 Tolulope Ijisakin et al.

This is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Received: 7 September 2021 / Accepted: 24 October 2021 / Published: 5 November 2021

# Creativity and Beaded Aesthetics: Thematic Analysis of the Beadworks of David Herbert Dale

Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin

Olusegun Jide Ajiboye

Foluso Modupe Abejide

Idowu Folorunso Adeyanju

Department of Fine and Applied Arts,  
Obafemi Awolowo University,  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/mjss-2021-0059>

## Abstract

*In traditional Africa, beads function as adornments, as designation of royalty, and in many activities that have to do with commerce, religion, and healing among others. The use of beads has however found its ways into modern artistic expression. Literature abounds on the traditional use of beads, whereas there is a dearth of literature on creative usage of beads in contemporary Nigerian art. This study therefore examines creativity in the beadworks of David Herbert Dale. Data were collected through oral interviews with David Herbert Dale and relevant key informants such as art connoisseurs and gallery owners. This study relies on the theory of aesthetic response and functional theories of art; it also adopts the visual analysis approach to evince the aesthetics and deconstruct the contents of the beadworks. The paper argues that the beadworks of Dale are visual chronicles of historical, religious, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of Nigeria in particular, and Africa as a whole.*

**Keywords:** Traditional Africa, Beadworks, art, David Herbert Dale

## 1. Introduction

Africa has a very rich and colossal heritage of ingenious creative enterprise especially in music, dance, drama, historical narratives, and of course, in the visual arts. Nevertheless, there remains a yearning gap in the research on creativity in Africa. This study examines creativity in the beadworks of David Herbert Dale; it relies on the thematic underpinnings to analyse and bring out the aesthetics in the beadworks. Creativity is the propensity to come up with new ideas that could be used in proffering solutions to problems, in communicating with others, entertaining the general public, or, in expressing emotions or ideas such as in the visual arts. To be creative, Franken (1994) argues that one must be able to engage issues from a novel point of view; and, that the uniqueness of coming up with original ideas to proffer alternative solutions to problems is linked to basic qualities of reasoning.

These qualities include adaptability to new situation, understanding how to cope with rigours, new challenges, and unpredictable circumstances among others.

In addition, creativity is about generating useful and unique ideas to create novel and worthwhile products (Mumford 2003, Sternberg 2011, Amabile and Pratt 2016). This study investigates creativity and the uniqueness of the thematic underpinnings in the beadworks of David Herbert Dale.

Relying on the Systems Model of Creativity, Csikszentmihalyi (2013) explains creativity to be a process of changing an existing situation dramatically, especially for an improved and more pleasant situation. Csikszentmihalyi further argues that creative people express unusual thoughts, with fresh perceptions and insightful judgments; they make important discoveries that change the usual ways of doing things, such people as Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Bounarotti, and Pablo Picasso. "Others have seen what is and asked why. I have seen what could be and asked why not"; this assertion by Pablo Picasso<sup>1</sup> further describes creative individuals' thought processes. Creative individuals tend to have a lot of energy, but are also often quiet; they alternate between imagination and fantasy, yet very realistic; they can be very passionate, yet extremely objective about their works. Can it be said that David Dale intrinsically possesses any or most of these characteristics? This study provides a more useful understanding on the creative energy of David Dale, and how this is appropriated by analysing the thematic content of his beadworks.

The secret to mind blowing creativity is imagination, a channel through which new ideas, inventions and discoveries spring forth (Mulukom 2018). Weisberg (1993) provided an extensive investigation on the characteristics and development of creativity, the study compared "ordinary" in relation to "creative" thinking, and examined the processes that led to significant high-tech innovations, scientific breakthroughs and magnificent works of art. Weisberg argues that the creativity of the "genius" is deeply rooted in the same thought processes that underlie day-to-day activities. Notwithstanding, to be a creative genius one needs to "Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist"<sup>2</sup>. This study examines the extent to which David Dale has learnt the rules and navigates through them in the production of his creative beadworks.

Beads are diminutive objects, usually globular and could be made with materials such as clay, paper, wood, plastic, glass, and other apposite elements. Beads are in a wide range of beautiful colours, they are usually pierced for a thread to pass through and connect one with many others. Beads have been a very significant part of sub-Saharan culture for centuries. They have been commonly used in making jewelries; and have featured prominently in royalty among Africans, as a symbol of power and authority, in spirituality and religious obligations, in traditional medicines, viable in economy as currency, and as a vehicle of cultural and artistic manifestation (Ijisakin 2006, Ijisakin 2020). Despite considerable evidence of bead production and usage<sup>3</sup> in the distant past among Africans, beads rose to prominence in Africa following the contact with traders from Europe and the Mediterranean (Ijisakin 2012).

Among Africans, beads have featured prominently in proverbial and figurative visual languages to express ideas, feelings, or sentiments. Elaborate use of beads is a distinctive attraction in the paraphernalia of royalty among the people of Owo and Benin in Nigeria. The Masai of East Africa, as well as the South African Zulu and Xhosa people have also produced fascinating works in beads (The Museum Rietberg, 2018). The propitious characteristics of beads and its associated socio-cultural history probably explain why some artists express themselves in beads (Gittlen, 2018). For instance,

<sup>1</sup> See Pablo Picasso's works as discussed by Baldassari, Doschka, & McCully (2000)

<sup>2</sup> This quote is attributed to Pablo Picasso. See <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/558213-learn-the-rules-like-a-pro-so-you-can-break>

<sup>3</sup> On cultures that have produced and used beads among Africans, see Eluyemi (1975, 1976); Fagg (1980); Euba (1982); Drewal, Pemberton, & Abiodun (1989); Aremu (1990); Drewal and Mason (1998); Ijisakin (2004, 2006, 2012, 2020); Simak, Dreibelbis, & Dubin (2010), and Babalola (2017).

some of the Nigerian artists that have creatively experimented with beads include Jimoh Buraimoh<sup>4</sup>, Nike Okundaye, Eytayo Tolulope Ijisakin, Yinka Adeyemi, David Osevwe, Felix Ekeada, and David Herbert Dale.

## 2. On David Herbert Dale

David Herbert Dale (b. November 22, 1947; d. August 6, 2019) was born in Kano, Nigeria by an English father (Charles Ernest Dale) and a Nigerian woman of Itshekiri extraction. Dale had his early education between 1951 and 1960 at Groombridge, Kent in England; and at Guildford Grammar School at Surrey, England (1961-1963). He later attended St. Gregory's College in Lagos, Nigeria. Dale started as early as age seven to lay a very solid foundation towards becoming a reputable international artist as he won several awards even at the early stage of his artistic career. In 1967, Dale worked briefly with the Federal Ministry of Communication, Lagos, before going to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, to study Fine Arts. He worked as Manager of Advertising at the City Group, Lagos, in 1971. Dale began to experiment with beads, having been inspired by Chief Adebayo Adeleke, the founder of the City Group; he produced his first beadwork titled: "City Group, Peacock" (244 by 336 cm) in 1974. Dale worked at Akrel Advertising, Lagos, as the Art Director between 1977 and 1984; and taught Visual Communication in the Department of Architecture, University of Lagos, before his adventure into full-time studio practice in 1984.

Dale was at the Ori-Olokin Art Workshop in then University of Ife, (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife). He served as the graphic arts consultant to the African Architectural Technology Exhibition at the celebration of World Black and African culture tagged: "Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77)" which held in 1977, in Lagos, Nigeria. Dale has featured in more than 70 solo and group art exhibitions<sup>5</sup> in Nigeria and abroad. He was among the nine great achievers of the "Living Masters", an art exhibition held in Lagos in 2007. Dale received the First Class Star Award from the Humane Education Institute of Africa, Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania for his exceptional contributions and pacesetting role in contemporary art of Africa. Dale was a recipient of the 1987 International Graphic Triennale (*Intergrafik '87*) award in East Germany. In 1992, Dale won the Diamond Publication's bronze medal for his contributions to the visual arts in Nigeria. Dale featured in the "Nigerian Artists: a Who is Who and Bibliography" published by the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, London. He won the 2003 "Man of the Year" of the American Biographical Institute, USA. David Dale has perfected his artistry in more than twenty-three visual arts media among which his beadworks are outstanding. David Dale's beadworks which constitute the fulcrum of this research can be found in the collections of many art connoisseurs and public institutions around the world. This study investigates David Dale's beadworks with a view to appreciating the creativity embedded in the works and to enable a better understanding of the thematic thrusts of the beadworks.

## 3. Methodology and Theoretical Approach in Engaging David Dale's Beadworks

For the purpose of this study, data were drawn through field investigation; oral interviews<sup>6</sup> were

---

<sup>4</sup>Jimoh Buraimoh is celebrated as the foremost contemporary artists in Nigeria to experiment with beads. His works explore African philosophy, and are highly motivated by the Yoruba practice of embellishing crowns and royal accouterments with beads (Ijisakin 2012).

<sup>5</sup>Some of these art exhibitions include "Operation PUSH Expo" held in Chicago in 1972; "Deep Etchings" at Ori Olokin Cultural Centre, Ile-Ife, 1973; "Modern African Art" held at Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York, 1973; "FESTAC '77", Lagos; "the Nucleus" Lagos, 1981; "Art for VIPs" held at British Caledonian VIP Lounge, Gatwick Airport, London, 1985; "the Works of David H. Dale" (solo), Stockholm, Sweden, 1990; and the "Update" (solo), Lagos, 2007.

<sup>6</sup>One-on-one interview was conducted with David Herbert Dale on Saturday, August 28, 2010, in his home at No. 52, Adebola Street, Suurulere, Lagos; also with Dolapo Atekoja; and with Omo'ba Yemisi Shyllon, a gallery owner and founder, Omoba Adedoyin Shyllon Art Foundation (OYASAF), Lagos; on August 29, and September 17, 2010 respectively. The duo of Atekoja and Shyllon has a rich collection of David Dale's beadworks.

conducted with David Dale, lovers of his works and art gallery owners. The obtained data were used in contextualizing and analyzing the beadworks. Photographs of the beadworks were used for critical appraisal while secondary data were collected from the literature. This study relies on the theory of aesthetic response as argued by Lopes (2018), and functional theories of art as argued by Lamarque (2018). These theories refer to aesthetic as a phenomenon in which a particular artwork radiates or provides aesthetic experience. In this, nature can be seen as beautiful to the extent of producing aesthetic experiences, but nature alone does not have the ability to produce such experiences; hence, there is need for an intention through an agency or an artist to bring out such aesthetic experiences. According to Beardsley (1982), an artwork is a composition of elements that could give an encounter with a significant aesthetic experience, or that is typically designed with such capacity. In this regard, artists arrange the elements of their works with a view to achieving such aesthetic purpose, though not all artworks may be able to achieve such aesthetic experience. To engage with the beadworks of David Dale, this study adopts the visual analysis approach which addresses the beadworks' formal/visual elements such as colour, line, texture, and size. It also includes contextual interpretations of meaning<sup>7</sup> embedded in the beadworks. Visual analysis aims at recognizing and understanding the visual elements the artist employs in creating his work. In using the visual analysis approach, this study employs descriptive and formal analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the beadworks. Despite the fact that description is an important aspect of formal analysis, there is need to further contextualize the descriptions of the formal elements in an art piece (Barnet, 2014); this is to enable a better understanding of the works of art.

#### 4. Thematic Analysis of David Dale's Beadworks

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research tool which is very flexible in identifying and interpreting themes, and meanings within the data (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997; Braun & Clarke 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey 2012). The themes in David Dale's beadworks can be categorized into: religious, economics, social and political.

##### 4.1 The religious themes

The religious themes are "Peace" (Plate 1), "Peace be onto this House" (Plate 2), "Peace in the Wilderness" (Plate 3), and, "In the Spirit" (Plate 4). Peace is an inevitable factor for development which is highly sought after across generations and cultures. Peace is a calm and quiet state, serenity, without anxiety, state of friendship, freedom from conflict and the absence of violence or war. The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 after the World War II, it is an international organization of countries which aims at promoting peace around the globe. This is done by encouraging good inter-country relations, and seeking cooperation in solving different challenges around the world, as well as encouraging respect for human rights. Olive branch and dove are recognized worldwide as symbols of peace; this is evident in the Holy Bible (Genesis 8:6-12) where an olive branch was brought by a dove to Noah as a sign that the flood has abated. Also the spirit of God manifested in dove-like manner upon Jesus Christ, who is also known as the Prince of Peace, when He was baptized by John the Baptist. On the importance of perfect peace, Jesus Christ in the Holy Bible (John 14:27) affirms that "Peace I leave with you, my paece I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

---

<sup>7</sup>Erwin Panofsky (b. 1892–d. 1968) was a German art historian and an influential figure of the 20th-century art history conducted intensive research which left a profound impact on the development of art history. Panofsky developed iconology, a method of reading works of art which focused on the formal contents to unravel historical underpinnings of works of art. Panofsky argues that the analysis of a piece of art could not merely depend on literary sources which may not be always available; but that investigation should be according to the different historical conditions and the background in which the artist produced his works, as well as the themes/subject matter and other elements represented in the work. See Panofsky (1955) and (1972).

In “Peace” (Plate 1), stylized images of doves are depicted flying towards the right side of the beadwork. The symbolic dove is creamish white, with more pronounced wings, and it holds an olive branch in her beak. The head, body and feathers of the dove were naturalistically depicted in limited, but very effective outlines. The head and frontal part of the white dove are represented as shadowy forms which occupy the frontal and upper part of the work to create the visual illusion of movement. One of the shadow doves is in dark green colour; another one is orange, while two others are brown. At the lower part of the beadwork is an inscription “PEACE” written in black against a white background.

“Peace be onto this House” (Plate 2) has a composition of a white dove that holds an olive branch in its mouth. This dove which is depicted flying towards the right has its wings stylized in elongated triangles, and in various shades of green. The tail feathers of the dove are formed into numerous symbolic white rays implying divine glory. At the lower part of this beadwork is “Peace be onto this House”, a common salutation pronounced by visitors on entering a house. This suggests that the visitor does not have any evil intention towards the household being visited; hence, the visitor anticipates a warm welcome by the host. The right side which the doves in Plates 1 and 2 are flying towards implies a state of good functioning, good relations, progress and development, moral justification, and correctness.

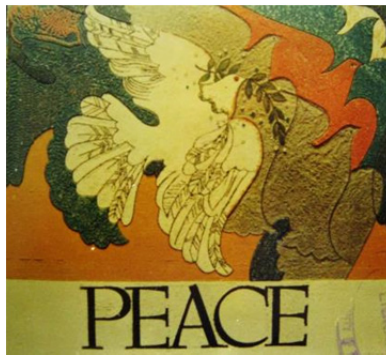


Figure 1: Plate 1 “Peace” (1985)



Figure 2: Plate 2 “Peace be onto this House” (1994)

“Peace in the Wilderness” (Plate 3) shows a field with a zebra standing, a leopard in a reclining position, and two crowned-cranes. There are three rows of stylized leaves similitude of the United

Nations logo. Bright shining sun is also shown in the beadwork. The atmosphere in this beadwork is peaceful, with much happiness, the subjects depicted seems to have good interpersonal relationship, despite the fact that they are animals that would not naturally co-habit. Even the bright shining sun smiles at them. It is pertinent to note that wilderness usually refers to an environment, circumstances, or people that make someone feel bewildered, overwhelmed, depressed, or deserted. However, with this beadwork Dale has been pungent in expressing “Peace in the Wilderness”; the need for human race to live together without any form of bickering, animosity, religious intolerance, or racism has also been emphasized.

In Nigeria, it is a common phenomenon to see people along the beaches praying, or performing one spiritual activity or the other; Dale’s beadwork “In the Spirit” (Plate 4) is a reflection on this practice. The work shows three people, one of them bends a little, while the other two raise up their hands as they pray for the other one. The skyscrapers at the far end of the work suggest that the scene is along a beach in the metropolitan city of Lagos. The term: “In the Spirit” is commonly used among charismatic Christians to denote a circumstance in which someone falls into celestial realms, having encountered the power of the Holy Spirit. Csordas (1997) has observed that in the charismatic religious circles, resting in the spirit can be used to demonstrate divine power, or the faith and devotion of the Christian faithfuls in consecrating themselves to be able to commune with God so as to receive divine healing and other spiritual blessings.



Figure 3: Plate 3 “Peace in the Wilderness” (1994)



Figure 4: Plate 4 “In the Spirit” 1996

#### 4.2 The economic themes

The economic themes are “Yoruba Cloth Market” (Plate 5), “Story of Cowries” (Plate 6), and “Caravan” (Plate 7). The “Yoruba Cloth Market” is a typical open market scene where buying and selling of rich Yoruba textile is in progress. The dressing style of the traders is that of the Yoruba; the women tied their head gears, they wear *buba* (blouse), and tied their *iro* (wrappers) up to their chest

regions. On the right side of the beadwork, the women displayed their merchandise. The first woman seems to have convinced the man in front of her to buy her goods. The man, who stands on the left side of the work facing the women, has bundles of seven different colourful fabrics on his head, the man obviously wants to buy more. The second woman on the right side is also showing a textile material to the man, with the intention of convincing the man to also buy from her. The designs at the background of the two women in the foreground, and the headgears the women tied suggest that the fabrics they sell are the rich woven Yoruba textiles of *Aso-Oke*. A third female cloth seller is shown on the same row after the second seller; the positioning of this third woman at a distance heightened the perspective of the composition of this beadwork. There is also a vague impression of buying and selling in the background. The usage of warm and cool colours such as light brown, yellow ochre, gray and different tones of indigo is complimentary, and creates a vibrant “Yoruba Cloth Market” scene.

“Story of Cowries” (Plate 6) is a composition of landscapes, seascapes, and figures. The beadwork is a representation of the period when cowries were legal tender. Cowry is commonly used to describe a group of invertebrate sea creatures such as snails and molluscs; cowry may also be used to describe only the shells of these creatures. The porcelain nature of cowries makes it so pleasant to behold and to touch.

According to the Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary (2021), “porcelain” is an Old Italian word (*porcellana*) used to describe cowrie shells due to the similarity of their translucent look. Cowrie shells have also been used for ages as currency across the world, especially in Africa. At the time the slave trade was flourishing, a huge amount of Maldivian cowries were brought into Africa (Hogendorn and Marion 1986); cowry shells were also worn as jewelry, used in age-grade societies, as charms, as symbols of fertility, womanhood, and good fortune (Boone, 1986).

The main focus of this beadwork is cowries which are being used by two men in their business transaction. The men are dressed in *Babariga* (beautifully embroidered robe) with caps well fitted on their heads. Hausa men of northern Nigeria wear *Babariga* to indicate their piety as Muslims, their wealth, and their high social status. One of the men is seated counting his cowries; the second man was standing and holding strings of cowries. It seems like the standing male figure was making payment in cowries to the seated man; the standing male figure is dressed in *Babariga* of various shades of yellow ochre. The seated male figure, who is dressed in bluish *Babariga*, has brown sacks which contain cowries placed on the ground in front of him.

Two big cowries are illustrated at the middle part of the picture, near the edge of the right side of the work. A short historical note on cowries is written in brown beads, under the two big cowries. Right above the two cowries, we have the depiction of three camels, two of which have riders mounted on their back. A schooner is stationed at the back of the standing figure, on the upper left side of the beadwork. The Camels and the schooner which are means of transportation at that time, implies that the Trans-Saharan trade flourished to the extent that people came from far and near, both on land via caravans of camels and by sea via schooners. Cowries were the legal tender in the Trans-Saharan trade. A mollusk is also represented in the beadwork, this is to affirm that cowries are found inside the sea, and produced by snail-like sea creatures such as mollusks. Different scenes are depicted in the work without any misplacement. Dale’s dexterous use of space and depth in the “Story of Cowries” is unique and remarkable.

“Caravan” (Plate 7), shows a group of people with a train of camels crossing the desert. The main figure in this beadwork is a man with black turban tied around his head, exposing the face; he also wears a black *babariga*, a black trouser, a cream blouse, and a pair of slippers; the man is playing the role of a camel-puller. There are two other noticeable figures in this beadwork, one is shown at a distant right side wearing a black apparel, and also performing the role of a camel-puller; the other is shown behind the third camel from the right side, wearing a black cap, light blue shirt, and a black trouser. The camels in this caravan are in three files, although two files are much noticeable; the camels are in black, brown, cream, and yellow ochre colours, and they all carry cargoes. The sky is in different shades of blue and yellow ochres. The terrain of the desert is pleasantly designed in

curvilinear manner by the wind that blows in the desert; the wind which will soon blow away the footpaths of the caravan and make the knowledge of the caravan route exclusive to the specialists.

The word “Caravan” usually refers to merchants or pilgrims organized into cluster groups so as to assist one another while travelling through the deserts especially in Africa and Asia. Animals that are usually used for these long distance journeys include the camel, donkey, and the South American llama. A caravan could be between eighteen (18) and one hundred and fifty (150), or more camels, arranged into about eight or more files, with a camel-puller that controls each file. As shown in the beadwork, the camel-puller controls the first camel of his file by a rope tied to a peg and attached to the camel’s nose; other camels in the file are led in a similar way, following the one in front. In the caravan, one or two people are in charge of preparing food; further, one of the camel-pullers must be someone with vast experience, and there must be a caravan master on whose shoulder the overall welfare of the caravan rests.



Figure 5: Plate 5 “Yoruba Cloth Market” (1980)



Figure 6: Plate 6 “Story of Cowries” (1980)



Figure 7: Plate 7 “Caravan” (1999)

#### 4.3 The social themes

The social themes are “Mother and her Child” (Plate 8), “In the Country” (Plate 9), and “As the Evening Falls” (Plate 10). The following Yoruba philosophical aphorisms probably inspired Dale in the production of “Mother and her Child” (Plate 8). *“Iya ni wura iyebiye ti a ko le fi owo ra”* (Mother is so precious like gold, she is highly invaluable); *“Oosa bi iya ko si...”* (There is no deity like the Mother...); *Iya ni wura, baba ni jingi, ojo ti iya ku ni wura baje, ojo ti baba ku ni jingi omo wo’mi* (Mother is golden, father is as precious as a mirror, the gold is destroyed on the day the mother dies, the child’s mirror is



lost in water on the day the father dies). The priceless of a mother cannot be overemphasized; they are more valued than gold. A mother is a woman that becomes pregnant, carries the pregnancy through, gives birth to child/children, and nurtures the child as a parent. A mother can also be a woman different from the biological parent, as far she plays the major role of raising the child. A good mother looks after her children with great care and affection. In this work, the mother is depicted drinking water from a white bowl, this is contrary to the conventional portrayal where mothers are often depicted breastfeeding baby, or with the baby strapped at the back, or held close to the mother's chest. The work shows the child held standing in between the laps of the mother; the child's attention is focused on something outside the viewer's range, the child also feels secured with the mother whose eyes, also gaze on the child, obviously for protective reasons.

"In the Country" (Plate 9) emphasizes the dramatic aspects of nature with beautiful streamscape, flourishing trees, and brilliant sky. It is one of the biggest beadworks of Dale, measuring 161 by 305 centimeters. The work shows the countryside, an environment in a condition relatively unaffected by human activity. There is a hut on the right side with a woman cooking with fire wood. In the ecosystem, organisms and their environment constantly interact, this interaction usually affect the organisms and may change the natural course of the environment. Some of these human-induced changes include deforestation, and environmental pollution that lead to global warming. With the calmness expressed in this beadwork and the absence of human-induced destruction of the ecosystem, Dale is advocating ways of reducing the negative impact of human activity on the natural environment.



Figure 8: Plate 8 "Mother and her Child" (1986)



Figure 9: Plate 9 "In the Country" (1997)

“As the Evening Falls” (Plate 10) is the largest beadwork of Dale measuring 244 by 406 centimeters. Evening refers to the part of the day between afternoon and night, when daylight begins to fade as the sunset, and before bedtime; it could also refer to the final part of a period of time, especially somebody’s life or a historical era. This beadwork depicts a small countryside community in a riverine area. It brings to mind the poem “It is a beauteous evening, calm and free”<sup>8</sup> by Wordsworth; and, “Now the day is over”<sup>9</sup> by Baring-Gould. As the evening falls, people are returning home after the day’s work, to have a good night rest and re-invigorate for the next day’s activities. Two boats are seen on the river, the boats serve as a means of transportation and fishing business. There are three people in each of the boats, the boats on the far right side is already at the shore, while the other boat at the centre is rowing back home. The architecture is majorly made of wood and thatches; and there are human activities going on in the environs. This thick forest settlement is devoid of topsy-turvy and industrial pollution that characterize the urban settlements and metropolitan cities. The effect of light as the sun sets gives a reflection of the timbers and architectures on the river; this gives the beadwork a dramatic effect. The shades of green that pervade the whole work imply productivity, agriculture, success, and bubbling of life.



**Figure 10:** Plate 10: “As the Evening Falls” (1994)

#### 4.4 The political themes

The political themes are “African Child” (Plate 11), “Refugees (African Tragedy)” (Plate 12), and “Durbar” (Plate 13). The “African Child” brings to mind the International Day of the African Child which is celebrated across the world since 1991 on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June every year. According to Clifford (2009), the day is in memory of innocent children and adults that were violently killed while participating in a protest known as Soweto Uprising in South Africa on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976. The protesters were demanding improved quality education and the need to be taught in their native language. The subject depicted in this beadwork is a young African girl seated in a beautiful garden, her hair is plaited, she wears earrings, and heavily beaded necklace; she also wears ornaments on her wrists and arms. The young girl also ties a beautiful wrapper on her waist. One would think the girl is focusing on the lamb beside her, whereas the young African child has gone deep in thoughts, probably thinking on how to get quality education, protection, and a guaranteed future. Symbolically, the lamb serves sacrificial purposes, for instance in Christendom, the “Lamb of God” Jesus Christ was crucified to save humanity from eternal damnation. Thus, the lamb beside this “African Child” seems to offer herself as a sacrifice that would guarantee a brilliant future for the “African Child”.

<sup>8</sup> “It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free” was written in 1802 by William Wordsworth (b.1770–d.1850). See *Interesting Literature* (2020) for more details.

<sup>9</sup> “Now the day is over” was written by Sabine Baring-Gould (b.1834–d.1924) in 1865, it was first published in *The Church Times*, on February 16, 1867, and was given in the *Appendix to Hymns Ancient & Modern* in 1868. See [https://hymnary.org/text/now\\_the\\_day\\_is\\_over](https://hymnary.org/text/now_the_day_is_over) for more details.

With this beadwork Dale emphasizes the dire needs of children across the continent for quality education, good health, and the need to be protected from physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and other social problems such as child marriages, child labour, child trafficking, and enlisting children to fight in wars and communal clashes. There is also the need for concerted efforts to deal with the problem relating to child survival, protection, development, and maternal mortality; reduce the rate at which children drop out of school, and improving on the standard of education. These are very good decisions which require strong political commitment, and capable of ensuring a worthwhile future. Genuine appreciation of the African child will be achieved only when their voices are loud enough to the extent of investing in their collective future.

"Refugees (African Tragedy)" (Plate 12) expresses the burden that Dale bears concerning the dreadful situations refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa find themselves. Refugees refer to a race or group of people forced to abandon their place of abode because of a well-founded fear of cruelty or unfair treatment; as a result of their ethnic origin, religious beliefs, wars, nationality, human rights violations, political differences, social segregation, as well as other disturbances. Disturbed person(s) flee their homes to seek shelter and protection elsewhere; local and international organizations accommodate them in camps designated for refugees until there is solution to the crises at home. However, some countries are skeptical to accommodate refugees so as not to aggravate ethnic, religious or economic crises; and to also avoid tensions that may threaten bilateral relations with the refugees' country of origin. This beadwork in silhouette is a reflection on the aftermath of the unfortunate genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The work shows a group of refugees moving towards the same direction, some carrying loads on their heads, shoulders, or their back; some pulling camel with loads, some sitting on cart driven by cow. Some of them have their babies strapped at their back, while some hold their children. The flight to safety is not the end, but the beginning of their harrowing experiences. Refugees in Africa are so enormous to the extent of raising global concern. Of significant importance is the protracted political and ethnic rivalry among the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi, especially the one in 1994 which led to many people being massacred and several thousands becoming refugees in neighboring countries. The Boko Haram terrorists, Fulani herdsmen and other bandits terrorizing northeastern Nigeria and elsewhere are worrisome occurrences that could lead to refugee problems.

"Durbar" (Plate 13) is in commemoration of the annual festival held in different parts of northern Nigeria especially in Bida, Kano and Katsina. The festival which is a tourists' attraction dates back to hundreds of years ago when the northern Emirates used horses at war, at that time, various subjects of the emirate contributed military units to defend the Emirate. Occasionally, the military units display their war skills and loyalty to the Emirate during a parade known as Durbar. Nowadays, Durbar is celebrated in honour of important dignitaries at the peak of the Muslim festivals such as Id-el Fitri and Id-el Kabir. Onlinenigeria (2011) has observed that Katsina Durbar is the most impressive of all the contemporary Durbar festivals. The Durbar starts with prayers from outskirts of the town, and then the horsemen in different groups would proceed with pomp and pageantry to the public square at the frontage of Emir's palace. After all the groups have assembled, then the Emir and his entourage would arrive. The festival continues as different groups take their turn to show their skills as the horses race at full gallop across the square, the swords of the horsemen also glitters at they flash through the rays of sun. The parades often stop abruptly and the horsemen would raise up their swords to salute the Emir, this is known as *jahi*. The last and most profound horse parade is that of the Emir and his entourage, including the Emir's guard known as the *Dogari*. Consequently, the Emir, his chiefs and other dignitaries go into the palace for a banquet that is usually accompanied with drumming, dancing, and singing; while a small band performs fascinating side attractions known as *shadi*.



Figure 11: Plate 11 “African Child” (2005)



Figure 12: Plate 12 “Refugees (African Tragedy)” (1994)



Figure 13: Plate 13 “Durbar” (2006)

## 5. Conclusion

By and large, this study has enabled better understanding and appreciation of creativity in the works of David Dale. The study found the beadworks of David Dale to be naturalistic in form, the compositions are very good, and the diverse subject matter focuses on contemporary cosmopolitan genre. The thematic analysis further expounds the aesthetics in the beadworks; the themes reveal Dale's thoughts, ideals, as well as reaction to his African environment. Dale's proficiency at transforming the historical beads in an unconventional manner into a medium of expression; and his thematic choices has become the hallmark of his studio practice that gives credence to the reputation he enjoyed in art circles.

Dale's beadworks reveal dexterous handling of the elements and principles of design. Beads of different colours are combined, while oil colours are often used to paint on relevant sections of the beadworks where exact needed colour of the bead is not available. Dale also crushes beads to create an enthralling effect in his beadworks.

Despite the English blood in David Dale, his African connection through his mother is not jettisoned. His schooling in Nigeria further opens his African personality to the peculiarities of the continent; this has eventually influenced his creative use of beads. His expressions are glimpses into the aesthetics of Nigerian culture as can be seen colourfully painted in “Yoruba Cloth Market” and

“Durbar”. Dale captures African economic culture in the “Caravan” and “Stories of Cowries”. Dale in “The Refugees” encapsulate some of the challenges in Africa, he aptly suggests “Peace” as a panacea for a beautiful future. Dale’s themes identify topical issues and the contents of the beadworks extol the culture and beauty of the African continent. Dale’s beadworks are pictorial testimonies to the richness of African culture as well as visual history for future Africans. With the foregoing, one can aptly argue that Dale has taken beads beyond the traditional and conventional use in fashion, body adornment, object of trade, as a symbol of spirituality, or, and royalty to an ingenious level of artistic expression. This is done through awe-inspiring and intricate arrangement of beads with themes that speak volumes about the African social-political and cultural environments.

## References

- Amabile, Teresa M. and Pratt, Michael G. (2016). "The dynamic componential model of creativity and innovation in organizations: Making progress, making meaning". *Research in Organizational Behavior*. 36: 157-183. doi:10.1016/j.riob.2016.10.001.
- Aremu, P. S. O. (1990): "The Bead Works of Jimoh Buraimoh as Compositional Patterns of Spiritual Reality", *Nigeria Magazine*, Vol. 58, Nos. 1 and 2, January-June, 1990
- Babalola, Abidemi Babatunde (2017). "Ancient History of Technology in West Africa: The Indigenous Glass/Glass Bead Industry and the Society in Early Ile-Ife, Southwest Nigeria" *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 48(5) 501-527.
- Baldassari, Anne; Doschka, Roland; and, McCully, Marilyn (2000). *Pablo Picasso: metamorphoses of the human form: graphic works, 1895-1972* (Roland Doschka ed.) New York: Prestel.
- Barnet, Sylvan (2014). *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*. (11 edition) London: Pearson
- Beardsley, Monroe C. (1982). *The aesthetic point of view: selected essays*, ed. by Michael J. Wreen and Donald M. Callen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press
- Boone, Sylvia Ardyn (1986): *Radiance from the Waters: Ideals of Feminine Beauty in Mende Art*; Yale: Yale University Press.
- Braun, Virginia; Clarke, Victoria (2006). "Using thematic analysis in psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3 (2): 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp0630a.
- Clifford, Cassandra (2009): "International Day of the African Child" <http://children.foreignpolicyblogs.com/2009/06/16/international-day-of-the-african-child/> Accessed on Saturday, April 30, 2011
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (2013). *Creativity - Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. Harper Perennial
- Csordas, Thomas J. (1997): *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.247
- Daly, Jeanne; Kellehear, Allan; Gliksmann, Michael (1997). *The public health researcher: A methodological approach*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press. pp. 61-618.
- Drewal, Henry John and Mason, John (1998): *Beads, Body and Soul: Art and Light in the Yoruba Universe*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.
- Drewal, Henry John; Pemberton III, John; and Abiodun, Rowland (1989): *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of Africa Art and Thought*. New York: the Centre for African Art in association with Harry N. Abrams Inc., Publishers.
- Eluyemi, Omotoso (1975): "New Terracotta Finds at Oke-Eso, Ife", *African Arts*, Vol. IX (1). pp. 32-33.
- Eluyemi, Omotoso (1976): "Ife Traditional Art and Craft Industries: investigation into their origin and development" in Akinjogbin I. A. and Ekemode G. O. (eds.) *The Proceedings of the Conference on Yoruba Civilization*. p. 328.
- Euba, O. (1982): "Of Blue Beads and Red: The Role of Ife in the West African Trade in Kori Beads", *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, Volume II, Nos. 1 and 2. Dec. 1981 -Jan. 1982. pp. 115-120
- Fagg, W. (1980), *Yoruba Beadwork: Art of Nigeria*. New York: Rizolli.
- Franken, Robert E. (1994). *Human Motivation*, 3rd ed. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company pp.394-396
- Gittlen, Ariela (2018). *Artists Turning Beads into Spellbinding Works of Art*. Retrieved August 10, 2019, from <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-6-artists-turning-beads-spellbinding-works-art>
- Guest, Greg; MacQueen, Kathleen; Namey, Emily (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications. p.11.

- Hogendorn, Jan and Marion, Johnson (1986). "The Shell Money of the Slave Trade", African Studies Series 49, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
- Holy Bible King James Version (2003): (Genesis 8:6-12); (John 14:27); U.S.A.: Jet Move International.
- Ijisakin, Eyitayo Tolulope (2004). "The Pride in Beads among the Yoruba of Nigeria", Journal of Arts and Ideas, 7, 84-94. Ile-Ife: Department of Fine Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University
- Ijisakin, Eyitayo Tolulope (2006). "Visual communication with beads: an appraisal of the works of Jimoh Buraimoh", Egghead, 1, 12-15. Journal of the Department of Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Nigeria)
- Ijisakin, Eyitayo Tolulope (2012). "Afro-Cultural Imperatives in the Bead Paintings of Jimoh Buraimoh";The African Symposium: Journal of the African Educational Research Network, <<http://www.ncsu.edu/aern/TAS12.1/TAS12.1.htm>> Virginia Union University, U.S.A. Vol. 12, No.1, pp.29-45.
- Ijisakin, Eyitayo Tolulope (2020). Of Beads and Beaded Artistry: A Paradigmatic Study of the Beadworks of David Herbert Dale. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 9(5), 67-77. <https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2020-0086>
- Interesting Literature (2020). A Short Analysis of William Wordsworth's 'It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free' <https://interestingliterature.com/2020/02/analysis-wordsworth-beauteous-evening-calm-ree/> Accessed on 22 July, 2020
- Lamarque, Peter (2018). Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: The Analytic Tradition, An Anthology. Stein Haugom Olsen (eds.), Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lopes, Dominic (2018). Aesthetics on the Edge: Where Philosophy Meets the Human Sciences, Oxford University Press
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2011): "Porcellana" Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/porcelain?show=0&t=1313180795> Accessed on Friday, 27 August, 2021.
- Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary (2021). "Porcellana" <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/porcelain>. Accessed on Friday, 29 August, 2021.
- Mulukom, Valerie (2018). "The secret to creativity - according to science" in The Conversation <https://theconversation.com/the-secret-to-creativity-according-to-science-89592>
- Mumford, M. D. (2003). "Where have we been, where are we going? Taking stock in creativity research". Creativity Research Journal. 15 (2-3): 107-120. doi:10.1080/10400419.2003.9651403.
- Onlinenigeria (2011): "Festivals in Nigeria" <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/festivals/> Accessed on Monday, 23 May, 2011.
- Panofsky, Erwin (1955). Meaning in the Visual Arts: papers in and on art history. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books
- Panofsky, Erwin (1972) Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (Icon editions). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Simak, E., Dreibelbis, C., and Dubin, L. S., (2010). African Beads: Jewels of a Continent. Africa Direct
- Sternberg, Robert J. (2011). "Creativity". Cognitive Psychology (6 ed.). Cengage Learning. p. 479.
- The Museum Rietberg (2018). Bead Art from Africa: the Motta's Collection (Ed. Michaela Oberhofer). An art exhibition of beadworks from South Africa and other regions in Africa, shown at the Museum Rietberg in connection with the Zurich Festival 2018 from 7 June to 21 October 2018. Retrieved August 10, 2019 from [https://rietberg.ch/files/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2018\\_6\\_e\\_mm\\_perlkunst\\_gesamt.pdf](https://rietberg.ch/files/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2018_6_e_mm_perlkunst_gesamt.pdf)
- Weisberg, Robert W. (1993). Creativity - Beyond the Myth of Genius W H Freeman & Co; 2nd edition