

**STRONG TOWER ACADEMY, IKORODU,
LAGOS.**

WEEK: 5TH WEEK NOTE

CLASS: JSS 2

SUBJECT: VISUAL ARTS

**TOPIC: CALABASH DECORATION & LEATHER
WORK**

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CALABASH DECORATION

Calabash grows as gourds freely on our villages. Gourds are fruits of a plant not very much different from cucumber. It grows out of rubbish heaps at the outskirts of villages. They are rarely grown as economic crops. They are in varieties especially in shape and size.

When fully ripe, gourds change colour like mangoes from green to yellow ochre and can then be plucked and converted to use. The bigger and wider gourds are called Calabash after treatment. Plenty of sunshine helps the drying and transformation from seed to Calabash without much hazzard.

Decorating Calabash

The cuticle or outer skin of the Calabash could be a scraped before decorating. It could be left alone. Each creates its own effect. Designs on the calabash are determined by the shape

These could be intricate, geometric, abstract and natural in form. They could be bold and simple. The calabash could be painted in any colour before the patterns are formed on it. The patterns could be incised into the calabash with knife designed for this purpose, this is known as engraving. Areas could be scraped leaving patterns to form a relief. Patterns could be incised with hot iron- a form of scorching or burning.

Uses or Functions of decorated calabashes

Carved, painted or decorated calabashes function in various ways which include:

1. Used as part of domestic home utilities for food bowls, trays, drinking cups, flasks for water, palm wine, milk, contortions, etc.
2. Extraneous materials like cowries' shell, beads, seeds or coins are sometimes used to decorate calabashes for special spiritual and ceremonial purposes.

3. Some musical instruments are made through this process, for example; 'Sekere'(rattle) among the Yoruba and the 'Goje'(violin) among the Hausa
4. They serve as gift souvenir to celebrants of important occasions like wedding, birthday and other festive periods.
5. Used as decorations for our living rooms, reception halls, etc by hanging them on the walls and corners or by placing them at conspicuous locations
6. They form part of costumes for masquerades you n some African communities.

LEATHER WORK

Leatherwork is the production of productive and functional objects mainly from hides and skin. Hides and skin come from animal skins; **hides** from bigger animals while **skin** is from smaller animals.

Animals such as cows, camels, elephants, etc provide the hides, and skins are obtained from goats, sheep, antelopes and small reptiles.

Processing and treating of leather

The process of curing and treating leather is called **tanning**. The tanning process is universal. The basic steps in preparing hides and skin requires scrapping away of the fatty layer under the skin. The hair in most cases is removed. The skin is then washed and

dressed. The washing is done by rubbing in oils. E.g egg yolks, brain and liver of cattle. Some may use salt and alum. Tanning, a chemical agent forms a bond and preserves the skin. The use of vegetable matters like tree barks tend to colour the skin e.g bark of a park tree tends to go e a dark red.

Used for Leather

1. It is used for handmade leather goods like cushion, briefcases, bags, toys, money purse, shoe, cosmetic containers, leather book cases, etc
2. It is sometimes sewn round charms and worn as armlets, waist bands, etc.
3. Dressing of horses before mounting, especially during Durbar(Northern Nigeria).

In Nigeria, leatherwork is mainly produced in the Northern part of the country as a result of abundance of code, sheep, camel, etc.

Decorating leather work

Some several techniques are use in decorating leather. These include painting with knives, brushes, dye/ batik, appliance, incasing and embroidery. The tanned leather is worked on by a group of Craftsmen usually in small groups.

The leather is dampened with damp sand and allowed to remain for some hours

To make the leather more pliable, it is rubbed with a smooth stone. Patterns are sketched on the surface of the skin with a knife or incision. After individual parts have been decorated, seams are joined by gluing with millet paste.

Holes are made with an awl for stitches, and lacing is used to join parts . Most of the designs on the leather work are usually geometric triangles, sequences, lines, bands, etc.