

Contemplating Art Workshops as a Vehicle for Border Crossing and Creative Tourism

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Abstract

This paper explores the history of artistic migrations, focusing specifically on art workshops and their capacity to facilitate African artists' cross-border tourism. Drawing from constructivist approaches to border studies and a historical approach to qualitative enquiry, this paper identifies three pivotal events in history that led to the establishment and use of art workshops as tools to facilitate migration and cross-cultural engagements amongst artists. Colonisation in Africa is one of such events. The second is the creation of the Triangle Network of workshops in New York in 1982 by Sir Anthony Caro and Robert Loder. The third is the *Grenzganger* (Border Crossing) Initiative which came after the fall of the iron curtain in 1991. The paper argues that in addition to art workshops being a space for creative stimulation, art workshops can also facilitate legal cross-border tourism, migration and the exchange of ideas between artists through cross-cultural and transnational engagements. The paper established that as artists cross borders, their creative skills and cultural histories also relocate and intermingle with the cultures and histories of other artists and artistic productions across the world. This implies that art and artists serve as vehicles for the transference and cross-fertilisation of experiences, histories, creativities, ideas, and skills across borders.

Keywords: Cross-border migration; border crossing; Africa; colonisation, art workshops

Introduction

In January 2022, Patrick Gavia, a YouTuber, produced a documentary titled *The Violent Path of Francis Ngannou | UFC Fighter Documentary*. The production paints a captivating and somewhat disturbingly "heroic" picture of Francis Ngannou's ordeals across the borders of Cameroun, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, Spain, France and the United States of America where he became a Mixed Martial Art (MMA) champion. Determined to be a fighter someday, Francis left Cameroun for Europe by road in 2012. Of all the borders that he crossed illegally, the Moroccan border into Spain was the most challenging.

Francis Ngannou's story is one out of millions of untold stories of ugly illegal migration encounters. Hofmann et al. (2020:1) argue that "international migration is shaped by a variety of factors, each of which needs to be understood individually but also in a complex system of interconnectivity and mutual dependence." People migrate from their home countries for different reasons which range from tourism, war, limited economic opportunities, search for higher education opportunities to persecution on religious and cultural grounds. Evidently, migration is a complex necessity for human survival. Regardless of the motivation for migration, this paper seeks to discourage illegal border-crossing. Illegal migration routes should never be an option to consider by any individual or group. Thus, with reference to three

historical accounts, the paper conceptualizes art workshops as a legal means for African artists' tourism and migration across borders.

This paper looks at the history of artistic migrations, focusing specifically on art workshops and their capacity to facilitate legal border-crossing for artists. In the context of this paper, the term “art workshop” does not refer to the space in which an artist produces his/her work. Rather, it connotes a collaborative and interactive platform, on which artists come together as peers, regardless of age, gender, social status and professional qualifications, to share ideas and (or) produce art for a specified period. Forster and Kasfir (2013:1) see workshops as “any group of artisans, large or small, who not only share a workspace but, in most cases, also draw on it as a stable framework of communication and learning governed by the acknowledged expertise of one or more senior members of the group.” Although the authors' definition of workshops carries some colonial undertones, they conceptualise a workshop as a group or a gathering of people as opposed to a physical workspace where artists gather. Consequently, art workshops can be seen as an organised gathering of artists and stakeholders in the creative industries for a certain period of time, for art's sake.

In literature, discourses about art workshops in Africa have almost always been about their potential to stimulate creative activities and facilitate artistic engagements (Kasfir & Forster, 2013; Savage, 2014). Studies on art workshops like Elebute and Shagaya (2016), Hassan (1995) and Ijisakin (2019) have their focus on issues such as tracing the historical evolution of African art and its transmutation into modernism; art education, as well as an appreciation of African indigenous creativity and aesthetics. Authors such as North (2009) touched on art and cross-border exchanges. However, North's focus is on the creative and cultural exchanges between Europe and Asia. Therefore, there is an observed gap in literature, in the specific recognition and conceptualization of art workshops as a viable legal option for physical tourism and migration for artists in Africa. Aligning with Thomas Nail's (2016) Theory of Borders, the constructivist approach to border studies, as well as a historical approach to qualitative enquiry, this paper identifies three pivotal events in history that led to the establishment and use of art workshops as tools to facilitate different dimensions of migration and engagements amongst artists across cultures. Colonization in Africa is one of such events. The second event is the creation of the Triangle Network of workshops in New York in 1982 by Sir Anthony Caro and Robert Loder. The third event is the *Grenzganger* (Border Crossing) Initiative which came after the fall of the iron curtain in 1991.

The theory of borders

Although borders have caused tension between countries, especially in the context of transnational migration, they remain essential as markers of territorial sovereignty. Perhaps to understand how essential borders are, one might need to imagine a world without borders. To imagine this kind of world is to picture a situation where there are no boundaries to human flow and political jurisdictions. Essentially, the sovereignty of independent states will cease to exist, ultimately leading to a one-world government, which also has its peculiar complexities. So, borders are agents for physical, economic and political separation.

For the sake of human sustenance, border-crossing is almost as important as the border itself. This inevitability of human movement within and across borders is what Thomas Nail recognizes as kinopolitics in his Theory of Borders. “Kinopolitics”, Nail (2016) explains, “is the theory and analysis of social motion: the politics of movement...Societies are always in motion: directing people and objects; reproducing their social conditions (periodicity); and striving to expand their territorial, political, juridical, and economic power through diverse forms of expulsion.” Nail explains further that to unpack the dynamics of social motion, there are three essential concepts to consider, which are flow, junction and circulation. For the

purpose of this paper, I appropriate the ‘flow’ concept which Nail (2016:26) articulates thus: “Flows...are not controlled by blocking or stopping them, but rather by redirecting or slowing them down. The effects of border walls, for example, are not as much about keeping people excluded or included as they are about redirecting movements and changing the speed and conditions of crossing...The control of flows is a question of flexible adaptation and the modulation of limits. Accordingly, the politics of movement is first and foremost defined by the analysis of continuous movement, changes in speed, and the redirection of flows.”

Similar to the flow concept, workshops do not block or stop the movement of artists across borders, instead, they adapt to the diverse border crossing policies of different sovereign territories offering artists opportunities to legally cross borders. Thus, art workshops control and redirect the flow of artists across borders through the flexible adaptation to and the modulation of territorial limits. However, there is a limitation to Nail’s framework within the context of this paper. This is because Nail’s kinopolitics and the flow concept only focus on the movement of individuals within and across physical border structures such as fences, walls, cells and checkpoints. In recognition of such limitations, Nail (2016:10) argues that “there can hardly be one grand theory that would be valid for all borders. Such a theory is not problematic because the borders are unique but rather because of the complexity of borders and bordering.”

To account for the other forms of border-crossing involved in art workshops, the paper also appropriates an admixture of frameworks. On one hand, the paper aligns with the flow concept, which offers explanations for the physical cross-border movements of artists. On the other hand, it leans towards the constructivist strand of border studies which looks beyond the physical structures of borders such as fences, walls, rivers, and cells. Sendhardt (2013:26) states that the constructivist perspective “understands borders as dynamic cultural processes...In other words, this strand of theory no longer views borders as something given or natural. Borders are always subject to political contestation and change...Borders are understood as manifestations of social practices and discourses that may be simultaneous and overlapping.”

In this approach, borders are not thought of in the physical sense alone. To construct ideas and understandings on borders and bordering, it is required that we look beyond physical structures of demarcation to the metaphorical, cultural, and historical constellations of barriers, demarcations and separations. Becker (2017:17) opened her seminal paper *Speaking to the Wall* with two quotations by Donald Trump and Victor Konrad. The quotations summarise the physical and the constructivist understandings of borders. While Trump referred to physical borders which he planned to erect to separate the US territory from Mexico’s geographical limits, Konrad considers borders and their implications in a metaphorical sense, which is succinctly constructivist. Constructivist scholars such as Novak (2017:850) regard borders as “historically contingent and multi-dimensional human fabrications, which appear, disappear and differently materialise depending on the place-specific experiences and engagements of those living near, or crossing, them.” There is an inferred flexibility to borders in this approach, which fundamentally contradicts the main attribute of physical borders, namely their rigidity, tangibility as well as realism.

To further establish the intangibility of constructivist ideas on borders, Novak (2017:850) sees borders as an unending process, which is fluid and “constructed in everyday life by a variety of social agents”. Fundamentally, the constructivists identify borders as the relationship between places and people and everything that happens in-between. When people and places are mentioned, contextuality is often referenced. The constructivist approach to borders and bordering relies on the contextual manifestations and consequences of bordering. To speak of the context of borders and border crossing is to consider history, culture, experience, socio-political actors, identities, metaphors, and the cogent intangibilities that construct the borders, the migrant, and the basic cause and effect of the act of crossing borders.

Progressing from the territorial nature of physical borders, and in line with the constructivist approach, the paper identifies other non-physical borders such as creative borders, language borders, and cultural borders, that surround the artists as individuals and as active participants in art workshop processes. The paper also examines the artist's flow across the multi-dimensional borders identified in the workshop space.

Art workshops and colonialism in Africa

Before the colonial era, artists' guilds and traditional artisans' workshops already existed in Africa. Such workshops range from the early historic potter workshop of the ancient cultures in the Nile valley to the Senoufo traditional sculptors' group in Northern Côte d'Ivoire, and the *Igbesawan* guilds of bronze casters and wood carvers, in the Benin Kingdom. This crop of workshops was operated as a corporative group, comprising people of certain skills. Workshops during this period mainly thrived on the transfer of knowledge and skills from a master figure to a novice, usually children of the members, through an apprenticeship system (Adewumi, 2019). As a result, certain families and clans were known for specific creative skills such as carving, blacksmithing, weaving, and leatherwork, just to mention a few. Emeji (2001:102) concurs that "through the apprenticeship system traditional artists, designers, craftsmen, etc. were introduced to art instruction very early in life, as art also served as a family trade... Sometimes, art practice at the community level seemed to be a 'special' gift from God to some families. This talent was passed on from parent to child, one generation to another."

Adepegba (2007:24) explains further that "often, a son of a carver learns carving, just the same way it is done in other professions like blacksmithing and carpentry. That is why a particular profession is said to be a family profession as it is passed down through apprenticeship." The Fakeye family, known as a family of carvers in the Southwestern region of Nigeria, is a typical example in this case. Although the precolonial workshops thrived uninterruptedly in the production of art and artists in Africa, they were, however, not considered as probable means for border crossing and migration. This was mainly because the precolonial aim of artistic production in Africa was to facilitate social, cultural, political and religious necessities within indigenous communities. There were significantly few factors that would have motivated cross-border migration at the time. All forms of artistic productions mattered, but they mattered most to their community of production. Thus, the indigenous arts of Africa and the artists did not need to cross borders because most artistic needs of Indigenous African communities were met by the artists within such communities.

This remained the case until the advent of colonialism. The colonial incursion into African borders and its resultant interruption of the dominant social structures such as the apprenticeship system inspired Oloidi's (1986:108) comments that "traditional Africa, before the influences of foreign cultures, had a highly structured system of art education that was very effective in ensuring the continuity of its age-old art and culture. This was the apprenticeship system which was intended not only to train or produce a creative, skilful person but also to prepare a mind, wholly and dutifully, for all aspects of moralistic living. In other words, the apprenticeship was not divorced from a total education of the talent, mind and personality of the apprentice."

As a result of the colonial interruption, "the important (traditional) wood-carver, Bamgboye," in the words of Beier in Oloidi (1986:111) "for instance, had no more apprentices." Art workshop was recognized as a significant operational tool by the colonizers (mostly Christian missionaries in this case) during the colonial era in most parts of Africa (Bridger, 2009). Among several probable reasons for adapting the art workshop as an operational strategy, two major reasons stood out: the first being the colonizers' recognition of the social and religious importance of art to the African society. The second reason was the

pre-existence of organized groups in form of artisans' guilds and workshops, which represented a social power structure, with the potential of impacting the colonial agenda positively or otherwise, depending on how it was handled.

Morton (2013) referred to these kinds of workshops as 'modern' because they interrupted and adapted what was already in existence in precolonial Africa. Morton (2013:39) further argues that "Africa's first modern art workshop began in the mid-1920s at Grace Dieu Mission near Pietersburg, South Africa." In Morton's account, Grace Dieu was not originally created as an art workshop centre. It was an Anglican mission school, founded in 1907, which later metamorphosed into a teacher training college. Interestingly, Oloidi (1986) offers an account of similar missionary activities, dotted by the establishment of mission schools in Nigeria which started from the 1840s to the 1900s. This was about the same period that the Grace Dieu mission school was established in South Africa. This exemplifies the initial colonial strategy for "inculturation", according to Constantini in Bridger (2015:108) which led to mental colonization in Africa.

In these schools, including Grace Dieu, the teaching of art was never the focus. "The popular subjects taught in these early schools", Oloidi (1986:110) laments, "were those sufficient to give...the ability to read and understand the Bible and carry out evangelical duties." Oloidi goes further to identify singing, scripture, prayers, reading, spelling, writing, ciphering, catechism, and arithmetic as examples of the teaching focus of the early colonial school programmes in Africa. However, a gradual progression towards a vibrant carving activity started in Grace Dieu Anglican mission school when S. P. Woodfield who was the principal from 1924 to 1939, hired a full-time carpentry instructor, Wilson Lokwe, to teach carpentry within the pre-existing handwork curriculum of the school. In 1925, Edward Paterson, who later became an exponential figure in the establishment of art workshop centres in other parts of Southern Africa, was a young teacher at Grace Dieu (Morton, 2013). Paterson in Morton (2013:40) recalls, "one day a pupil in the carpentry section brought me a stool he had made. On impulse, I said it could be much better, and drew for him a design on the top and showed him with a chisel how to go about carving it in depth. From that moment there was a riot in interest and soon it became the habit to carve in bas-relief furniture of all sorts— then church furniture and crosses, etc. By the end of the year, it was well-established—Sister Pauline CR, a nun taking over."

In the foregoing account, Edward Paterson recalls how he indirectly initiated the first colonial art workshop effort in South Africa. He later migrated to other parts of Southern Africa such as Zimbabwe, (then Southern Rhodesia) where he established the Cyrene workshop. In Zhou's (2017:68) opinion, "Cyrene was a workshop designed by Paterson to implement the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement. His students created a distinctive painting and sculpting style that was profoundly decorative and short on perspective and anatomical realism." The Serima workshop, established by Father John Groeber in 1948, was another colonial-missionary construct in Zimbabwe, on the Southern region of colonial Africa. The impact of these colonial figures whom Morton (2013:39) refers to as the 'European Founders', was also recorded in the western part of colonial Africa. In 1947, Reverend Father P.M. Kelly of the African Mission Society established the Oye-Ekiti workshop.

Expressing his perspective on what led to the Oye-Ekiti workshop, Oloidi (2011) explains that the detrimental effects of colonialism and the Christian evangelistic activities on the wood carving tradition in Ekiti became evident to some Catholic priests in the late 1940s. "The church finally realized that not all the Ekiti, and therefore Yoruba wood images were idols, that many of these figures served only political, social and aesthetic functions" (Oloidi, 2011:12). As a result, in 1946, Father Patrick Kelly who was the Provincial Supervisor, came up with the idea of creating art workshops as informal art schools, where the Yoruba carvers

would be able to practise. This was in response to the Catholic church's resolve to adopt Yoruba carving tradition as part of its liturgy with the aim of “helping a person, through artistic expression, to figure out how to be both a Christian and an African at the same time” (Oloidi, 2011:12). Consequently, a cross-pollination between Christian Bible stories and the distinct wood carving style of the Yoruba in Ekiti began to emerge.

Several indigenes of Ekiti, men and women alike, were conscripted into the workshop as woodcarvers and weavers, among others, to help realise the evangelistic agenda of the Catholic Church through the production of Yoruba Christian art. Outstanding among the members of the workshop were three individuals whom Carroll had chosen specially for their experience and skill in carving. They became the leading and most documented among the members of the Oye-Ekiti experimental workshop. George Bandele, a renowned carver from Osi-Ilorin was one of the trio. The second was Lamidi Olonade Fakeye. He was a Muslim from a carving lineage. He had signed up for a three-year apprenticeship under Bandele at the Oye-Ekiti workshop. The last was Bandele's aged father, Areogun, who carved some wooden illustrations for the Christian mission; fusing the precolonial carving tradition of the Opin-Ekiti with the Eurocentric biblical tales as told by the missionaries (Bridger, 2009).

In relation to this, Adewumi (2021:35) avers that “just like the Serima workshop in Zimbabwe, the operational approach of the missionaries at the Oye-Ekiti workshop, entailed the telling of biblical tales and accounts to the carvers, such as Bandele (also written as Bamidele) and Lamidi Fakeye, and the latter's production of carvings, that were based on the biblical stories they had been furnished with, accordingly.”

This constructivist border-crossing between the Yoruba wood carving tradition and the Eurocentric biblical narrations gave rise to the visual and conceptual hybridity of the two symbolic territories. Resultantly, “...the Virgin Mary was portrayed as a Yoruba woman in traditional *buba* and Wrapper. At times, she was given facial marks or carved, mounting baby Jesus on her back. One figure showed her pounding yam with well-plaited hair when Angel Gabriel appeared to her” (Oloidi, 2011:12).

Another significant workshop effort in colonial Nigeria was the Osogbo workshop. Although it was not a colonial-missionary initiative, it, however, had “European Founders” at the forefront of its operations – Ulli and Georgina Beier. However, the Osogbo workshop could not have been created independent of the theatrical exploits of Duro Ladipo. In the opinion of Pemberton III (2002:117) “many found a context in which to affirm tradition in a non-traditional way” in Duro's theatre.

The vision and commitment of Ulli Beier, as well as Duro Ladipo's activities in the region, led to the creation and recognition of the Osogbo art workshop. Ulli Beier was an Austrian who crossed the European borders into Africa in the 1950s, to join the Faculty of Education at the University College, Ibadan (Now University of Ibadan). Fascinated by the cultural diversity and the creative sensibilities of young people in colonial Yorubaland, Beier founded the Mbari Writers Club in Ibadan in 1961. Another branch of the Writers Club was planted in Osogbo in 1962. The Mbari writers club also attracted people whose major interest was in visual arts. Thus, the creative activities of Duro's theatre and Beier's club in Osogbo, gave the two a shared stake in the advancement of the Osogbo informally trained artists (Okeke-agulu, 2013; Pemberton III, 2002).

More so, Okeke-agulu's (2013:156) submission on the establishment of the Osogbo workshop is that the Osogbo club and by extension the Osogbo workshop, “grew out of two converging circumstances, Duro Ladipo's need to establish an independent theatrical space for his increasingly successful plays and choral productions; and Beier's decision, at the completion of the 1961 inaugural Ibadan workshop, to initiate a similar program for young artists unencumbered by what he thought were strictures of formal art training.” In 1963, Ulli

and his wife Georgina, in collaboration with Jacob Lawrence and Denis Williams co-organized a series of experimental workshops in Osogbo. “It was the impact of these workshops and the subsequent close working relationship between Georgina Beier and aspiring painters that created the phenomenon known as the Oshogbo Artists” (Pemberton III, 2002:118).

At this point, it is important to note that although the underlying motivations and intentions of these missionaries and European founders’ activities in Africa have been met with diverse criticisms by scholars such as Kirumira and Kasfir (2013); Okeke-agulu (2013); and Oloidi (2011), their workshop activities also facilitated the emergence and recognition of the artistic productions of workshop participants across borders.

As the indigenous African artists crossed borders, their art also did. This validates the constructivist view of borders as a variety of fluid social agents and human activities within and across borders. The likes of Lamidi Fakeye, Twin Seven Seven, the Shona Sculptors of Zimbabwe, and Samuel Songo of the Cyrene workshop, have all toured several countries around the world and attained some level of recognition for their artistic dexterities as a result of their affiliations with these workshops and by implication, their founders. Referring specifically to the Cyrene case, Adewumi (2021:35) opines that “workshop was a springboard into the artistic world, as most of the students who passed through the workshop centre, such as Samuel Songo later built on their creative foundation from Cyrene and became the exponents of modern art in Zimbabwe.”

Apart from the physical borders that they crossed through colonial workshops, artists also crossed the limitations that their time and space placed on their creativity and imagination, into a world of different artistic possibilities and liberation. This takes a cue from the constructivist understanding of borders and cross-border movements as Novak (2017) explains. The workshop gave the artists a voice and a chance (fair or not) to compete with other artists around the world. In fact, Rufus Ogundele was likened to Picasso at some point, a comparison he found derogatory because according to the Osogbo artist, “I never saw Picasso's work when we started with Georgina, and I was told it was he who was influenced by African art. Then what sense is there in saying that I, an African, produce work which resembles the man who has copied African art? That's nonsense: Rufus is Rufus” (Pemberton III, 2002:118-119). Nonetheless, Rufus’ participation in the workshops, like several other artists, created an opportunity for creative tourism, crossing international borders and exposing his art and himself as a creative producer, to a wider context.

The activities of the European founders in Africa and outside Africa at the time offered the artists’ works a chance to cross borders and extend the reach and recognition of the artists. For instance, Zhou (2017:71) holds that “one of Songo’s sculpture, *The Prodigal Son*, earned Songo the Silver Trophy for the best work of art at the first African Eisteddfod and the Cup for Sculpture.” Zhou also adds that *Time Magazine* also featured an article on the power of Samuel Songo’s sculpture. Twin Seven Seven’s works were widely accepted as well. Twin, who had hardly imagined his works being sold, started selling after an exhibition of the Osogbo artists’ paintings organized by Ulli Beier at the Goethe Institute in 1966 (Pemberton III, 2002:122). Still on Twin’s works and the borders they crossed, Pemberton III (2002:122) further states that, “he had three exhibitions at the Goethe Institute in Lagos, and the Wolfords arranged for his paintings to be shown throughout the United States: at the Corcoran Gallery, the Radwick A Gallery, the Pittsburg Museum of Natural History, the Otis Art Center Los Angeles, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. In time, his work would travel to England, Canada, Germany, Holland, Japan, and Spain, and he would be invited to attend openings and give lectures.”

These artists’ oscillatory flow across physical and constructivist borders was a necessity in the formation of their creative paths and identities, both individual and collective. The colonial workshops did not only facilitate different dimensions of border-crossing, but also

fostered cross-cultural interactions in the amalgamation of different cultural nuances in their operations and creative output, such as the Oye-Ekiti carved images. Ultimately, the workshop initiatives in colonial Africa contributed to African art and artists' tourism around the world, influencing and being influenced by other artists from different parts of the world.

The triangle network

There are two main figures in the creation of the Triangle Network of workshops namely Robert Loder, an English art collector and Sir Anthony Caro, an English sculptor. Sometime in 1982, these two had dinner together in New York (Savage, 2014). It was during this meeting that the idea of creating an artists' community was birthed. Quoting Loder, Savage (2014:8) writes "Tony was concerned about something very specific, which was that artists, when they left art school, were deprived of stimulus and connections. He had this idea that by bringing twenty-five artists together in one place for two weeks, you could replace that sense of community." The workshop experience would be a space for artists to push and perhaps break out of their creative boundaries, outside the comfort of the studios and daily routines in a two-week encounter.

After thinking back and forth over the idea, it was decided that the borders of the U.S., U.K. and Canada would form the 'triangle'. "The Triangle Arts Trust, of which I became Chairman in the UK," Loder (2014:12), clarifies, "was established to coordinate the workshops and raise funds to develop what became known as the Triangle Network." In that same year, twenty-five artists were invited across these three borders for the first workshop which was held in New York. As a result of the creative engagements and the opportunity for border-crossing provided by the workshop, the number of participants soon grew beyond twenty-five; then the triangle borders soon got expanded. The expansion of the borders soon created a huge network of workshops across Africa.

This network culminated in a structurally constructivist trend in the way artists came together to interact and exchange ideas. As artists participated in the workshops, they felt an urge to create a similar platform of engagement in their own countries. The urge to recreate the experience (the migration of experience), which was supported by the Triangle Art Trust's agenda to expand the reach of the workshops, led to the creation of different versions of the workshop across Africa. The first version of the Triangle workshop to be held in Africa was the Thupelo workshop in South Africa. It was organized in 1985 by South Africans, David Koloane and Bill Ainslie, who were, in the words of Loder (1995:26), "the first participating artists from outside the 'triangle' of USA, Canada, and the UK". Loder (1995:26) explains casually that "they came over in 1984, and in 1985 the first Thupelo Workshop took place in Johannesburg." In other words, their creative tourism from South Africa to New York in 1984 which was a facilitated participation and 'indoctrination' by the triangle workshop, gave birth to Thupelo, the first African offspring of the Triangle Art Trust. Soon, Pachipamwe was created in Zimbabwe in 1988 by Tapfuma Gusta.

This replicative trend continued and ultimately led to the spread of the Triangle workshops across Africa. Veryan Edwards and Steve Mogotsi from Botswana, who had attended the second Pachipawe in 1989, for instance, returned to Gaborone and started the Thapong workshop in 1989. Similarly, Tonie Okpe from Nigeria attended the 1993 Shave workshop in the U.K. His friend and colleague, Jacob Jat Jari also attended the 1997 version of the same workshop. In 1999, they both came together and started the Aftershave workshop, with the support of Jerry Buhari and Adele Garkida (Adewumi, 2021; Loder, 1995).

Kirumira and Kasfir (2013:118) attest to the huge influence of the Triangle workshops in Africa in their expression that in the years that followed the creation of the Triangle workshop and then the Thupelo in South Africa, "more than eight hundred artists have taken

part in Triangle-sponsored workshops in fourteen African countries, making them by far the most widespread and heavily attended workshops for contemporary artists...” This evidently testifies to the contribution of workshop initiatives such as the Triangle Network to facilitate the process of legal border crossing and creative tourism for artists from Africa. This is not to say that African artists were not allowed across borders prior to this. However, the stringent cross-border policies and restrictions of some sovereign territories around the world pose a major challenge to the ease of mobility across borders. The implication of this is that underprivileged African artists, who do not have the means to meet the tough immigration requirements installed by their countries of destination, would most likely be denied the opportunity to cross such borders. In such situations, an invitation and in some cases, a travel grant from an organization such as the Triangle Art Trust would definitely ease the immigration process for African artists.

Through Robert Loder and Sir Anthony Caro’s workshop initiative, a broad network of workshops were created across borders; facilitating the flow of artists into and across different physical and cultural territories in Africa and beyond. Despite their sceptical perspective to the intentions of Robert Loder in creating the Triangle Network, Kirumira and Kasfir (2013:118) still acknowledge that “the Triangle workshops have encouraged the globalization of artists through working groups, virtual and physical mobility in new physical environments, improving artistic skills, and engaging broader causes through discussions. Without the ability to access networks, most artists live in ignorance of global cultures or have a superficial outlook on how other artists experience and express issues within their local contexts.

In addition to the physical borders that the participating artists crossed, the Triangle idea also crossed borders and influenced all creative territories it reached in line with the constructivist fluidity of borders. Racial and cultural borders were also crossed during the various workshops, through the multi-racial participation opportunities and the cross-cultural interactions among the participants. New understandings of different cultural and creative contexts were formed, creating a space for contextual integration and appreciation.

The *Grenzganger* (border crossing) initiative

Before the fall of the iron curtain, crossing the borders between the Soviet Union and other socialist states was almost an impossible task. However, the fall of the iron curtain, which had separated the Soviet Union from Western Europe from the end of World War II in 1945 to the end of the Cold War in 1991, changed the border-crossing situation. Sendhardt (2013:22) notes that “From the 1990s onward, the character of the Polish-Ukrainian border changed dramatically, “from a border of alienation to an ‘open’ border”.” Resultantly, a border that had served as a structural and symbolic restraint against flows across borders, had now become “a zone of contact enabling new forms of political, economic and cultural cooperation across the border” (Sendhardt’s, 2013:22).

It was during this period that the *Grenzganger* initiative was birthed to facilitate artistic flows across these post-war borders. *Grenzganger* was a ten-year international sculpture project, initiated by Aldemar Schiffkorn (1945-2010). It was held every year between 1991 and 2000. The ten-year *Grenzganger* sculpture project was created to provide a platform for border crossing and cross-border interactions for artists in Germany, Austria, and Czech Republic. Okpe (2000:149) states that “the project... thus became a symbol of unity, interrelationships, neighbourliness, integration, and points where artists from all over the world, were invited to live and create art together.” Referring to his pivotal role in the conception of the *Grenzganger* sculpture project, Schiffkorn (1999:89) explains that “at that time, I founded the Office for International Cultural Relations in the Province of Upper Austria. Immediately after the revolution, we laid the foundation stone for today’s cordial cultural relations with our northern

neighbour with the *Grenzganger* exhibition in October 1990 in Prague... The symposium was characterized by the demolition of the iron curtain that had taken place shortly before and the feeling of the newly won freedom. The hermetically closed borders in the north and in the east had also limited the artistic encounter. A whole generation of artists hardly had the opportunity to exchange ideas across borders...The first sculpture symposium strengthened the participants' feeling of having found lost or forgotten friends.

The crises in the region at the time had made intra-regional creative integration impossible for European artists within the region. It also posed a major discouragement for international creative tourism for artists outside the region including Africa. The first *Grenzganger* sculpture symposium, according to Schiffkorn (1999), was organized by Anna Kocourkova, Tomas Kus and Jana Zemanova, alongside the significant efforts of Czech artist Eva Roucka in 1991 in Lenora, Czech Republic. Under the sponsorship of the Office for International Cultural Relations in the Province of Upper Austria, which was founded by Schiffkorn, the symposium was organized in commemoration of the opening of the iron curtain and the new freedom it represented. It was during this symposium that Schiffkorn, in a "post-revolutionary spirit of embarkment, proposed that the sculptors' symposium should be held alternately in Bohemia and in Upper Austria, to give it a broader base. It should thus, become rooted in the Bohemian woods, a European cultural scene, rich in tradition." As such, sculptors were invited across borders for two weeks, every year, to encounter one another and freely create expressive sculptures in wood.

It is in relation to the foregoing that Okpe (2000:150), avers that "the symposium preached freedom of expression within the limits of materials and equipment provided." The workshops are often located in culturally and materially vibrant regions, to facilitate creative inspiration as well as contextual exploration and appreciation. Ultimately, most workshops both in Europe and in Africa, seek to create an experience of cross-cultural integration and appreciation while art is being created or discussed.

The *Grenzganger* participation soon spread beyond the initially designated European borders into Africa. Consequently, contemporary African artists such as Tonie Okpe had the opportunity to cross the European borders severally, to participate in the *Grenzganger* initiative. Okpe's invitation to participate in the *Grenzganger* project succinctly exemplifies the power of networking on such creative platforms. As Okpe explains, he met Aldemar Schiffkorn during his participation in the 1995 edition of the International Steel Sculptor's Symposium in Riediersbach. During this meeting, Schiffkorn, who was the initiator of the *Grenzganger* sculpture project, revealed that he had had an African from Senegal participate in the *Grenzganger* project, and he wanted to expand the African participation. Thus, it was this encounter that led to Okpe being invited to participate in four editions of the *Grenzganger* sculpture project in 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2000, respectively (Personal Communication, 2019).

To sum up, the *Grenzganger* initiative created a legal platform for artists' mobility across borders. It also became a space for the integration and appreciation of different creative and cultural contexts. The inclusion of African artists within its operational scope created a space for multi-racial conversations, which, from a constructivist point of view, enabled dialogues across creative and cultural lines. It also helped the participants form intercontinental networks which significantly impacted their careers as full-time artists and art educators. The artworks created during these creative engagements also have the propensities to increase tourists' attractions to the region.

Conclusion

To sum up, Nail's (2016) flow concept has aided the objective of this paper to locate artistic migrations and tourism across borders between Africa, Europe, and other territories around the

world. Similarly, the constructivist approach has shed light on the multi-dimensional implications of the artists' border crossings in and outside Africa. As the artists cross borders, their creative skills and cultural histories also relocate and intermingle with cultures and histories of other artists and artistic productions across the world. This way, the art and artists serve as vehicles for the transference and cross-fertilisation of experiences, histories, creativities, ideas, and skills across borders. Viewed conversely, as observed in the case of the *Grenzganger* sculpture project, art and artistic initiatives also serve as vehicles that facilitate the physical migration of artists from one country to another. Thus, art and creative initiatives such as art workshops serve as platforms for artists' international mobility and tourism.

Having established the propensity of art workshops to facilitate migration and tourism in this paper, it is, therefore, important to encourage stakeholders in the creative and tourism industries in Africa to explore the possibilities of funding more art workshop activities, as a strategy to boost intra-African tourism. The exposure of the cultural uniqueness of African communities to a wider audience is one of the potential benefits of such investment to the tourism sector. The public art pieces created during these workshops would also attract visitors and community members, thereby creating a safer environment for business activities. The works of the artists who participate in the workshops would reach a wider audience, thus positively impacting their individual creative careers.

The anthropological dimension to art workshops offers artists the opportunity to encounter and experience other peoples' cultures, philosophies, histories, arts, natural resources, etc. thereby bridging multifaceted gaps. Understanding different cultures brings about an appreciation of the specificities of those cultures. In the opinion of Fitzsimmons et al. (2019), a broad and intimate understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural systems leads to innovation. As ideas are transferred and incubated, the worlds of the artists broaden and so are their horizons of creativity. This points specifically to the display of creative innovations during these workshops as seen in Ulli Beier's initiative in Osogbo. Some of the sculpture symposia were organized to create public sculpture gardens in different territories. A good example of this is the biennial sculpture symposium of the municipality of Comblain au Pont in Belgium, where the stone sculptures produced during the engagements were installed in an open-air sculpture museum. Thus, as recorded by Comblain au Pont (2022), between 1995 and 2006, a total of sixty (60) sculptures have been produced in the workshops and installed in the Open-air Sculpture Museum. Resultantly, this Open-air Sculpture Museum has attracted and keeps attracting several visitors to Comblain, boosting the tourism economy of the municipality in the process. This way, the workshops serve as agencies for boosting tourism and internationalising artistic works. As a consequence of these workshops/symposia, works of different artists continue to travel around the world, even when the artists are no more.

Art workshops also facilitate a temporary separation between artists and their daily struggles for survival. They provide outlets for artists to blow off steam, refresh their creative minds and temporarily migrate from their families, familiar territories, and psychological borders, into unfamiliar contexts, to incubate ideas and explore alternative sources for creative innovations, and push their creative boundaries. Through art workshops, professional networks and relationships are fostered. Oftentimes, such networks translate into research collaborations and career development. Unfortunately, initiatives such as art workshops, which rely mainly on the physical interrelation and cross-pollination of ideas among participants, have suffered a serious setback in recent years.

As a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has virtually put an end to physical interactions, all forms of cross-border interactions have been put on hold. Some art workshop organizers have been forced to curate virtual versions of physical creative interactions. As laudable as these efforts toward exploring alternatives are, they simply cannot replace the

physicality of engagement that the art workshop offers. This is because the anthropological approach to art workshops exposes artists to different and accidental opportunities. Given the gains of the physical art workshop which has the potential to contribute immensely to the rejuvenation of the tourism industry, this paper recommends that the physical model of artistic engagement should not be totally abandoned for the virtual options. This is considered important as both art workshops and tourism thrive on physical interactions and cross-border mobility.

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