



# CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADIRE FABRICS FOR CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA INTERIOR DESIGN

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## ABSTRACT

*In Nigeria today tie- dyeing is very famous among the Yoruba which it is known as Adire. The most outstanding area is Abeokuta where it is still in practice. Other areas are Ibadan, Osogbo, Oyo, Maiduguri, Zaira and Kano. However, wedded wrought iron and production with local household needs is traditionally and culturally a way of life in Nigeria and some other African countries. It is the collection of different fabrics together that make those symbols that have been collected from various groups which are presented artistically through patterns of fabric decoration and design. Meanwhile, this study will examine the Cultural Significance of Adire fabrics for Contemporary Nigeria Interior Design; Interviewed with interior designers, interior industries will be conducted and asked about their journey so far in the industry.*

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between design and production is the planning and execution of a conceived idea or plan. The plan should anticipate and compensate for potential problems in the execution process. Design involves problem-solving and creativity. In contrast, production involves a routine or pre-planned process. Textile design associates itself with the making of creative, stylish, and contemporary designs. It requires special skills to create innovative designs. The core areas of textile designing involve the following: designing fabric by using different techniques comprising printing, weaving, ornamenting fabric, print technique, tracing embroidery and colour detailing, providing support to the clients to visualize the design, and helping the clients correct samples while executing prototypes.

"Upholstery" according to the Columbia Encyclopaedia (2010) is a general term used to describe household fittings, hangings, curtains, cushions, and covers. It also refers to stuffed, padded, and spring-cushioned furniture, such as chairs and sofas, or to the usually decorative materials and fabrics that cover them. Maxin (2010), explains that, in textile upholstery, fabrics, plastics, leather, and synthetic leather serve as furniture coverings. The appearance of upholstery fabrics is the most visible indication of fashion and quality, and nothing has a great effect on the look of upholstered furniture than the fabric

designs. Moreover, upholstery fabrics need to be attractive and also make the furniture comfortable and durable.

A pre-study conducted proves that plastic, synthetic leather, leather, and machine-woven fabric designs have flooded furniture upholstery in Nigerian homes and offices. These dyed fabrics are produced with designs under the foreign influence which lack the creativity and meaning of African identity. Some of these fabric designs from the point of view can be created with hand-woven skills locally to serve the same purpose of furniture decoration.

Albers (1974), adds that with only a few exceptions all fabric constructions are elaborations or combinations of the basic weaves. Regarding Albers' statement, is of the view that, some upholstery fabric designs can be dyed locally to suit furniture decoration. Given this, the project seeks to construct rot iron chairs design and produce dyed fabrics to discover innovative upholstery fabric designs and to encourage the use of locally made upholstery fabrics.

## A brief history of Adire Fabrics

Tie-dye (Adire) is a process under textile dyeing which is the oldest way of coloring textile materials. Tie-dye method is known as resist dyeing techniques; which simple means certain areas of the fabric materials being protected from dye solution



by either folding, sketching, tying, with raffia thread or twine to create light patterns on dark background.

Tie-dye is a process of resisting dyeing textiles or clothing which is made from knit or woven fabric, usually cotton; typically using bright colors. It is a modern version of traditional dyeing methods used in many cultures throughout the world. Tie-dye" can also describe the resulting pattern or an item that features this pattern. The earliest surviving examples of pre-Columbian tie-dye in Peru date from 500 to 800 AD. Their designs include small circles and lines, with bright colors including red, yellow, blue, and green. Shibori includes a form of tie-dye that originated in Japan. It has been practiced there since at least the 8th century. Shibori includes several labor-intensive resist techniques including stitching elaborate patterns and tightly gathering the stitching before dyeing, forming intricate designs for kimonos. Another shibori method is to wrap the fabric around a core of rope, wood, or other material, and bind it tightly with string or thread. The areas of the fabric that are against the core or under the binding would remain undyed.

Tie-dye techniques have also been used for centuries region of West Africa, with renowned indigo dye pits located in and around Kano, Nigeria. The tie-dyed clothing is then richly embroidered in traditional patterns. It has been argued that the Hausa techniques were the inspiration for hippie fashion. Plangi and tritik are Indonesian words, derived from Japanese words, for methods related to tie-dye, and bandhna is a term from India, giving rise to the Bandhani fabrics of Rajasthan. Ikat is a method of tie-dyeing the warp or weft before the cloth is woven.

### Statement of Research Problem

A survey on the upholstery market reveals that dyed fabrics have not been exploited in furniture upholstery. Although dyed fabrics have been used for table covers, rugs, and other textile purposes, their applications in upholstery furniture coverings are limited because of developments and complexities in modern woven upholstery fabric designs. It is believed that, as the knowledge of dyeing is extended, there will be an increasing demand for dyed textiles. This set the platform for the study to produce innovative woven upholstery fabric designs on the broadloom mainly for local consumption.

### Objectives of the Research

The production of upholstery designs with dyed fabrics as the artistic and creative skills gives symbolic meaning and identity to locally made furniture in the Nigerian market. The philosophical importance of the research is therefore to change the perceptions of dyed fabrics, and their limitations and to encourage the attitude of explorations into the various traditional art practices.

- i. To identify fabric suitable for upholstery chairs.
- ii. To produce and identified a desirable pattern for upholstery in contemporary times.
- iii. To assess the suitability of locally made upholstery designs.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the needs of man is clothing .without clothing every man will be naked .considering the age we are in today, it is expedient that man must put on clothes for a covering. The making of cloths is under textile which is a branch of applied art.

Textile is an interwoven or non-woven fabric made by the interlacing of textile yarn through a mechanical process. The word textile was derived from the Indonesian word textile. Meanwhile, textile is divided into two major parts –structural design and surface design .structure design deals with wearing, knitting, etc while surface design deals with dyeing- tie-dye, batiK, and the other printing. the main focus of this project is to look into how dyed fabrics can be used as end-use on rot iron chairs.

Textile design is not the same as textile production, although textile designers would benefit from working with various fabrics and materials. Textile designers create designs on textiles and they use fabrics, cloth, and upholstery to fashion a wide range of products. Textiles are the basis of linens, bathing products, fashion, interior design, and furniture. And, textiles have grown up to branch out into installation art Furthermore, Textile designers plan and develop patterns, knit and weave construction, prints, textures, and illustrations for fabrics and other materials that require the development of patterned surfaces. They plan the way a fabric looks and performs. They design the structure of the fabric and make decisions about appropriate yarns, colour use, surface patterning, texture, and finishing.

Textile designers develop fabrics used in furniture, soft furnishings, clothing, vehicles, and products such as luggage. They can apply the same skills to the development of patterns for wallpapers, laminates, and patterned plastics. They design fabrics to satisfy marketing and manufacturing requirements. They balance aesthetic and functional aspects; they consider the nature of yarn types, thicknesses, weights, and textures to produce fabrics to cost and production constraints.

Seymour (2002), believes that a design does not have to be new, different, or impressive to be successful in the marketplace, but it must fulfill a need. He, however, explained that the processes of designing do lead to innovative products and services. Textiles span many categories of human want and need. Modern manufacturers distinguish apparel textiles for the body from the coverings of walls and furniture. Hand-made cloth supplies equally varied domains. Schneider (1987), also opined that Within each domain, some fabrics meet practical demands while others communicate meanings or express artistic taste.

Dziers (2006), states that Textile designing is the creation of stylish and contemporary designs. Again, it requires special skills to create innovative designs. Given that, the understanding derived from these authorities will assist in creating challenging fabric designs that will serve both aesthetical and functional purposes for upholstery fabrics.



## 2.1 Types of Decorative Dyeing Techniques

Aside from the variations in dye compositions, there are a wide variety of decorative dyeing techniques to be found in West Africa. The Yoruba people of the south of Nigeria are very well known for their intricate and very decorative dyeing techniques. Until the 1960s, when synthetic dyes were introduced, natural indigo had been the only dye used by the Yoruba. Being nude is an abomination and synonymous with madness in Yoruba culture. Wearing clothes is very closely related to Yoruba identity.

The dyers take certain steps prior to the actual dyeing process in order to achieve a particular pattern in the (finished) dyed cloth. Yoruba people are known to produce two types of dyed textiles: amure, the totally-dyed and adire, the patterned or resist-dyed cloth – the adire, coined from Yoruba words adi (to tie) and re (to dye) is the one I'll focus on in this introduction, as it would take another full article to go through all the different techniques.

- i. **Adire oniko, or the tied resist technique:** This is basically the same technique as the one we in the

western world refer to as batik or sometimes simply tie-dye, except the Yoruba method is made only from natural indigo. Dyers fold the cloth to make a larger pattern and then tie it together with various components like stones, twigs, and sticks to create the desired pattern.

- ii. **Adire alabare, or the stitch resist technique:** This is a much more intricate process, depending on the time and effort put into the stitching pattern. Once again, the dyers fold the cloth to achieve larger and symmetrical patterns. Then they add the stitching with a raphia thread, resisting the indigo dye, traditionally sewn by hand to create all sorts of detailed patterns in the cloth. After the dyeing process, the stitches are removed with a sharp blade to reveal the pattern. Bear in mind that the cloth used is similar lightweight shirting material, which makes this process both difficult and time-consuming as the artisan has to be careful not to rip the finished cloth in the process. You can see stunning examples of both these techniques.



**Plate 1,2 and 3: this shows different method that can be adopted during the processes of making Adire and Adire Eleko which is Resist Techniques.**



**Plate 4,5 and 6: the end use of Adire with Chief Mrs Nike Okundaiye it also used as upholstery for interior design.**

## 2.2 Significance of Dyed fabrics on Modern African Interiors Design.

The need of man has given rise to the making of craft works based on the availability of raw materials within that environment. Man needs clothes to put on, chairs to sit on, etc. In recent times, as a result of development in creativity, cane – chairs were made in an executive form to serve as furniture settees. Based on this development, furniture fabrics were used as upholstery. The purpose of this project is to emphasize the need to use tie-dye as upholstery on the chair to make it purely traditional and to portray our cultural values, thereby creating

the difference between other chairs made from wood, from that cane.

- i. **Economic Value:** The production of tie-dye and chair gives a country foreign earnings as most white would rather prefer using African designs Nigeria to be precise, the Government realized a lot of taxes on these creative works of art, hence textile industries are being taxed as well as the workers. The establishment of textile industries and provision of sites for the production of the seat and other craft works will help in the provision of job opportunities for skills workers,



young school leavers, and other craftsmen who may not be able to establish on their own but need to work to meet end – means until they become self-reliance. According to former President O. Obasanjo, he said that there is no job opportunity than the importation of foreign clothes our homemade clothes which can be on his dressing.

- ii. **Social Value:** The production of Adire fabrics has been in existence for a very long time. In the past, the goods were exported in exchange for slavery people did not value tie-dye fabrics as a dressing code for special occasions, but during the Kampala war, there was bound in the importation of textile materials. Major General Gowon traveled to Uganda for peace stalk, on his way back, batik print was introduced and it was named Kampala. These development made Nigerians know the value of batik since then, textile pint has been used or served as dressing for outings e.g for a marriage ceremony, burial, naming ceremony, etc. for instance the president's dress code is Adire, Kampala, plain guinea with beautiful embroidery, also many Nigerians and foreigners now derived pleasure putting on Adire / Kampala.
- iii. **Domestic Value:** Since the awareness of textile print tie–dye series of workshops has been done by some competent contemporary artists such as late Professor Solomon Irein Wangboje, Dr. Bruce Onobrapkpeya, and Chief Mrs. Nike Okundaye and many others. These workshops both in Schools, Churches, and other gatherings have been able to train some housewives, youths, and many people who are interested in learning and developing their vocational skills in other to be competent and self – reliance in the society in which they belong. The knowledge gained is being used for the beautification of their home for the family dressing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Having made this research on the Cultural Significance of Adire fabrics in Contemporary Nigeria Interior Design the suggestions are as follows;

- i. The government should help make provision for raw materials at a very low rate by encouraging the states through the provision of funds where such materials are grown.
- ii. The ministry of education should plan its curriculum in such a way that, textile should be taught extensively in secondary so that the trained artists can be self-reliant in all aspects of art and craft.
- iii. Also, the parent should encourage their children to have deep knowledge and pick up an interest in art and craft as an aspect of fine and applied arts where one can be self-employed.

- iv. Finally, members of society should endeavor to appreciate works of art by patronizing the products of such crafts as Adire.

## CONCLUSION

Craft is an aspect of creating; with this research, one could see that apart from drawing and painting, art evolved into many other activities. In conclusion, it is important to note that textile artist is more creative and lucrative people. Therefore, there should be originality in their work, and should always portray African culture which is more unique to differentiate us from the foreign product. This development will make the citizens and foreigners embrace our day today artworks as well as promote our cultural heritage. Meanwhile, Adire was introduced into exterior decorations which are being used in Ministries, Schools, Parastatals, hostels, and some other places. Adire fabric is used as window blinds, table covers, cane seats at the reception hall for a wedding, and uniforms both in schools and in the churches i.e choir. Adire is the end-user on cane chairs are as decorative chairs for sitting of guests in the house and other public rooms .some are specially woven in elegant form for special people like the newly crowned winner of beauty pageant e.g Miss Nigeria or other Intercontinental competition, wedding chair for couples at reception.

In a submission, the use of Adire fabrics as an upholstery cover for interior decoration in contemporary days has gone towards extinction with the use of Adire as an end-user on the chair which portrays the uniqueness of our tradition and culture which makes it different from the foreign style of making furniture. It will also create awareness that Adire is not just made for clothing but can serve other functions depending on the craftsman and the need of the society.

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