



The Use of Sculptures to Augment Naming of Buildings in Honor of Heroes and Heroines in Ho Polytechnic, Ho, Ghana

Adja-Koadade Mokpokpo¹



¹Industrial Art Department, Ho Polytechnic

Abstract

It is important to celebrate our heroes and heroines, who in diverse ways, bring development to nations, peoples and places. These important personalities should be identified and acknowledged by the beneficiaries of their labor, and be given the due recognition. It is in light of this that Ho Polytechnic, now Ho Technical University, decided to label the names of her heroes and heroines on the various structures in honor of their contributions towards the success of the Institution. The main aim of this study is to create the awareness that three dimensional or relief sculpture, could be the appropriate ways of keeping visual records of renowned personalities, or important historical figures of an Institution, instead of only graphical representations of their names on buildings. The main tools used in this research were interviews and the internet to identify and ascertain the facts about the Ho Polytechnic's heroes and heroines. The study stressed the use of busts and relief sculptures to portray images of the heroes and heroines of the Ho Polytechnic which is backed by their concise histories.

Keywords: Graphical representations, Heroes, Ho polytechnic, Reliefs and in-the-round sculptures.

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1. Introduction

The memories of the past and the present, as experienced by a researcher, depend on great minds, and many important events and places of great commemoration. It is in light of this that Ho Polytechnic in the Volta Region, Ghana, decided to name her important halls of the institution to remember and appreciate the immeasurable contributions many have offered to uplift the image of the institution. It is normally said "a country which does not honor her heroes is not worth dying for." In light of this the names of these heroes and heroines are graphically, printed in perishable inks on walls that fade away within a period of time. The question normally asked about these labeled walls is whether only the graphical representations of these important persons' names on walls can play their effective roles in society. There are many ways by which memories of the past could be recorded. Books are vital tools for information which assist in keeping records of peoples, places, events, etc. for development. Records also are kept by means of stories in the news papers, photographs in places such as museums, archives, offices and private homes. These sources of keeping records, though reliable, could easily be destroyed by fire, bad weather condition, termites, and other adverse conditions. Recently, the internet has become the most reliable source of keeping information, which cannot do with three dimensional visuals, but can only keep records of two dimensional images. Moreover, these records favor only the computer literate society, pushing others to the background.

Other ways of keeping records are by the use of signboards, billboards, building surfaces and places of interest on which records could be graphically developed in three ways. These include text only (words without pictures or photographs), visual only (picture or photograph) and text and visual (words with pictures or photographs). All the three ways could be understood by the learned society since they could read and write. However, visual only could be of benefit for the uneducated society. Therefore, if memorable pictures are to be made to be beneficial to the two levels to the societies, text and visual pictorial symbols should be made.

Jenks (1995) points it out that "...we daily experience and perpetuate the conflation of the 'seen' with the 'known' in conversation through the commonplace linguistic appendage of 'do you see?' or 'see what I mean?' to utterances that seem to require confirmation, or, when seeking opinion, by inquiring after people's 'views'. This narrative of the increasing importance of the visual to contemporary Western societies is part of a wider analysis of the shift from pre-modernity to modernity, and from modernity to post modernity". For example, Mirzoeff (1999) said "it is often suggested, or assumed -that in pre-modern societies, visual images were not especially important, partly because there were so few of them in circulation. This began to change with the onset of modernity. In particular, it is suggested that modern forms of knowledge depend on a scope regime that equates seeing with knowledge". Jenks (1995) for example, makes this case in an essay entitled 'The centrality of the eye in western culture', arguing that 'looking, seeing and knowing have become perilously intertwined' so that 'the modern world is very much a "seen" phenomenon'. (www.sagepub.com, 20th May 2015).

Stafford (1991) a historian of images used in the sciences, has argued that, in a process beginning in the eighteenth century, the construction of scientific knowledge about the world has become more and more based on images rather than on written texts. Jenks (1995) suggests that it is the valorization of science in Western cultures which has allowed everyday understandings to make the same connection between seeing and knowing. However, that connection was also made in other fields of modern practice. Mirzoeff (1998) proclaimed that 'the postmodern is a visual culture'. However, in post modernity, it is often argued, the modern relation between seeing and true knowing has been broken. He further suggests that post modernity is ocular centric not simply because visual images are more and more common, or because knowledge about the world are increasingly articulated visually, but because we interact more and more with totally constructed visual experiences. Thus the modern connection between seeing and knowledge is stretched to breaking point in post-modernity; seeing is a great deal more than believing these days. Mirzoeff (1998) expresses that perhaps visual images of various kinds have always been important, and to all sorts of societies. (www.sagepub.com, accessed 20th May. 2015).

Is it possible for someone perfectly know a personality or identify a place through reading or narration? It is obvious that history of human beings and places could be presented through stories to be read in books, magazines and other graphical sources, nevertheless on wall surfaces nor on other surfaces. This research suggests some ways of representing important figures and places of interest in order to be better remembered in the society.

1.1. Meaning and Importance of Bust

A bust is a sculpted or cast representation of the upper part of the human figure, depicting a person's head and neck, as well as a variable portion of the chest and shoulders. The piece is normally supported by a plinth. These forms recreate the likeness of an individual. These may be of any medium used for sculpture, such as marble, bronze, terracotta or wood. A similar term, bust, is a representation of the upper part of an animal or mythical creature. Sculptural portrait heads from classical antiquity are sometimes displayed as busts. However, these are often fragments from full-body statues, or were originally created to be inserted into a pre-existing body. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bust_%28sculpture%29). Bust provides proper documentation of historical heroes or heroines, whereby their true representations could be viewed in three dimensions or in reliefs with their brief histories engraved on plaque beneath them.

1.2. Representing Images of Prominent Persons in Three Dimensional (3-D)

Over the years history portrays the images of many prominent personalities in varied dimensions. Some through photographs, paintings, relief portraits on walls. The most prominent ones are the sculptures detached from any background to stand on their own. This allows the observer to turn around them for identification, since the sculptor portrays almost the exact resemblance of the image of the personality involved. In this vein, those who know the personality could admit the actual resemblance of his/her three dimensional image. However, those who do not know could figure out the hero concerned.

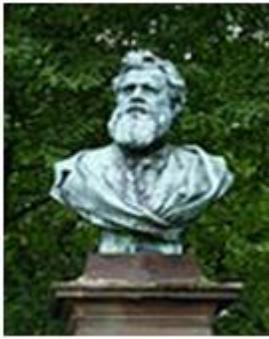


Plate-1. Viktor Nessler (Alfred Marzloff (bronze, 1890s)



Plate-2. Jeanne Granier (Francis de Saint-Vidal late 19th century)



Plate-3. Bust of Maximiliano I of Mexico and Carlota of Mexico at the Museo Soumaya



Plate-4. Napoleon II of France at Six Months, (Alexandre Brachard and Jean-Jacques Oger, after Henri-Joseph Ruxthiel biscuit porcelain, 1811)

Fig-1. Busts of some World's Heroes

Historically, Fig.1; (Plate 1-4) above show the busts of some important world heroes which are clearly presented sculpturally and exhibited at vantage points in the world. Sculptors may depict the true resemblances of heroes in the form of busts, and viewed by others who may be familiarized with the personalities involved. Most of these busts have their names and concise histories, graphically engraved on their pedestals, which help the observer to read about the personalities sculpted. In contrast, names graphically written on walls could do little in familiarizing with just the names of the heroes.

There are many of such examples in various Institutions in Ghana, which sculpted their heroes in three dimensions. The notable among them include Kwame Nkrumah University of science and Technology, University of Ghana, University College of Education, Winneba, Second Cycle Schools, and others. Fig. 2, Plates 1-4 below are some examples of sculpted busts in Ghana.



Plate-1. K. L. Purser (4th Headmaster of Kpando Sec. School)



Plate-2. D. Hooton (1st Principal of Kpando Tech. Inst.)



Plate-3. Very Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo (Fmr. Moderator, E. P. Church)



Plate-4. Mr. L. A. Banini (a Fmr. Headmaster Mawuli School)

Fig-2. Busts of some educationists in Ghana

2. Methodology

Some distinguished fellows, teaching and non-teaching staff were used as the population for the study. Random sampling was employed to select some of the staff who have knowledge in the history of Ho Polytechnic. They comprised thirty five (35) workers consisting 23 male and 12 female with between five (5) and twenty (20) years' working experiences. This constituted 20 teaching and 15 non-teaching staff, whose views were solicited through interviews with structured questionnaires to find out the historical facts about the heroes and heroines, who are graphically presented on the structures of the Polytechnic, in honor of their contributions to the Institution. Halls on which names of some heroes are captured graphically, are presented with their photographs including some yet to be honored. Descriptive method was employed to describe the heroes and heroines and their contributions to teaching and learning globally. The internet was also used as secondary source for acquiring some historical facts about the heroes/heroines captured in the research. This paper has suggested other ways by which memorable names could be presented in naming the halls of the Polytechnic.

3. Results and Discussions

Some heroes of Ho Polytechnic and their Brief Histories



Plate-1. Mr. James Y. Vodzi



Plate-2. Dr. George Afeti



Plate-3. Professor Frank Obed Kwami

Fig-3. Plates 1-3, Description of some heroes and heroines of Ho Polytechnic selected for the study

Mr. James Y. Vodzi, (Fig.3: Plate 1), was the Principal of Kpando, Anloga and Ho Technical Institutions respectively. He worked assiduously, leading the transformation and raising the standard of the Institute. Finally, in 1986, under his able leadership, the Ho Technical Institute was converted to the great Tertiary Institution, Ho Polytechnic. His ultimate vision for the Ho Polytechnic was to establish an educational complex comprising a Pre-School, Basic, Junior and Senior High Schools as well as the Polytechnic. At the time of leaving the Polytechnic, the pre-school, basic and junior high schools had been established.

His name is labeled on the wall of the boys dormitory, (Fig. 4: Plate 1) below, in honor of the immense contributions he made towards the good standing of Ho Polytechnic.

Dr. George Afeti, (Fig. 3: Plate 2), the Executive Secretary of the National Inspectorate Board and Chief Inspector of Schools in Ghana and Chairman of the Technical Committee that is developing a roadmap for converting some of the polytechnics in Ghana to technical universities. Dr. Afeti has taught at universities and polytechnics in France, Nigeria and Ghana and served on many education committees and agencies, including the National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board of Ghana, and the Council of the Ghana Institution of Engineers. He is a vocational and technical education consultant to the African Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and UNESCO. He drafted the African Union Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy for Youth Employment in Africa. Dr. Afeti has written and published widely on technical and vocational skills development and differentiation and articulation within the higher education systems of Africa. A trained mechanical engineer, Afeti was educated at the University of Paris in France and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. He is a former Secretary General of the Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa and a former Rector of a Polytechnic Institute. <http://www.aaionline.org/bios/Professor Dzesi/>. He succeeded the late Mr. Vodzi. During his tenure as the principal, and later upgraded to the position of the Rector, the Polytechnic saw a tremendous change in infrastructure developments. It was through his efforts that the Polytechnic Auditorium and F. O. Kwami Block were built. In his honor, the greatest hall of the institution is named after him. Fig. 4: Plate 2 Below.

Professor Frank Obed Kwami, (Fig.3: Plate 3), was a Scholar, Engineer, Inventor, Educator, Author and Administrator. Professor Kwami joined the staff of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi in 1969, and by 1992, he had become Head of Mechanical Engineering Department (1972 – 1982); Dean of Faculty of Engineering (1974 – 1982); Pro Vice Chancellor (1982); Acting Vice Chancellor (1982-1984); substantive Vice Chancellor (1984 – 1992). The specific and significant contributions he made to knowledge were in the areas of Mechanical Engineering Design in the field of Fatigue Strength and Load Capacity of Machine Elements and Components. <http://www.knust.edu.gh/about/knust/past-vcs/fokwami0>. He was appointed as the first Chairman of Ho Polytechnic Governing Council. He greatly assisted Professor George Afeti in the development of the institution. Due to his hard work and dedication, he was re-appointed for three-four year terms; the only person, in the history of the Polytechnic, who was appointed three times, between 1993-2005, as Chairman of Ho Polytechnic Governing Council. Considering his dynamism in his fields of endeavors, there is no doubt that the Polytechnic Council Decided to name the new Administration Block after him. Fig. 4: Plate 3 below.

3.1. Heroes Captured whose Photographs could not be traced

Acolatse was a gifted and devoted languages Lecturer, who devoted most of her precious times teaching English Language in the Institution. Many students who studied under her, received awards for being the best English students. She died in 2009. The Girls' Dormitory of the Polytechnic is named after her in honour of her contribution to the success of academic excellence in the institution. Fig. 4: Plate 4 below.

Esther Nukulenu was one of the first and long term serving council members of Ho Polytechnic. She served during the time when Dr. George Afeti was the Rector, and Professor F. O. Kwami, the council chairman respectively. She also contributed immensely to the development of Ho Polytechnic. In recognition of her contribution to the development of the Institution, the Demonstration Restaurant of the Polytechnic is named after her. Fig. 4: Plate 5.



Plate-1. Vodzi Block

Plate-2. G. M. Afeti Auditorium

Plate-3. Plate 3: F. O. Kwami Block

Plate-4. Acolatse Hall

Plate-5. Esther Nukulenu Demonstration Restaurant

Fig-4. Plates 1-5, Halls named in honor of some heroes selected, using graphical representation on walls

4. Challenges

Some are of the view that sculpture is expensive and would not be easy for an institution, which needs a lot of resources for the upgrading of teaching and learning, to mobilize funds for such a project. However, this paper is not in line with such challenges, simply because, there are many important factors that contribute to the advancement of an institution such as Ho Polytechnic. Among them include, infrastructure, beautification of the institution's environment through mounting of important arts such as sculptures and keeping such records in the institution's archives. These market the institution globally as a reputable establishment.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The Polytechnic should be recommended for honoring her heroes and heroines. However, the method used, seems not to be appropriate. The true identification of someone does not lie in graphical representation of any personality as it is viewed on the walls of the Institution. The findings of this research, finally suggest the sculpture of either In-The-Round, or relief, should be made to supplement names of personalities graphically exhibited on halls of the Institution. These should be mounted at the front of each hall which could be the best way of honoring heroes/heroines of the Institution. The sculptures of the renown personalities installed at the front of the appropriate halls of the Institution, would serve as morale booster to those who are due for them. It would be cheerful when the beneficiaries are invited to witness to their sculpted images established at the front of the halls, most importantly, on the days of inauguration and in the presence of many important guests. This would also show the sense of patriotism, demonstrated by those involved; a good example that many would emulate for the building up of the good name of Ho Polytechnic.

The researcher recommends that the heroes of the Institution, should be honored by mounting their busts, with concise histories, at vantage points in the Polytechnic. Also, their miniature busts, with their concise histories should be kept in the Polytechnic library or archive, for the accessibility to researchers who would like to know the history of Ho Polytechnic. The researcher also recommends that embossing names of such personalities in walls, could also be an alternative and better way of recording the names of the Heroes/heroines of the institution.

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