

Construction Art at its best

The artists were this time round not building house; they were making sculptures from construction materials such as bricks and wood. This form of art has come to characterize the works of Dr Lilian Nabulime and Prof Andrew Burton from the University of New Castle. The exhibition, which opened on July 16, 2015 explored the use of local materials such as brooms, wood and brushes as well as working with local artisans.

Both Dr Nabulime and Prof Burton draw their inspiration from exploring materials and transforming these into sculptures. Their work investigates human relationships across culture, linguists and international boundaries. It aims to draw attention to the value of making by hand.

In the exhibition, Prof Andrew Burton, who creates temporary sculptures which reflect the part of the world he is in at the time and he spends a lot of time discovering materials, techniques and craft from each place he visits, made magnificent art pieces from wood, rubber and sisal.

Prof Burton said he loves working with communities everywhere he goes. In Uganda, he worked with Dr Nabulime and broom makers in Mulago, while in India, he worked with women in the community to make Bithooras for a craft show. Bithooras are structures (which look like houses) made from dried cow-dung shaped into cakes and decorated with intricate designs.

“There’s no ‘value’ to these designs – the Bithooras are broken down almost as soon as they’ve been made so that the cow-dung cakes can be used as fuel,” Prof. Burton said.

The Bithooras have no commercial value and are done for the sole purpose of pleasure and beauty.

Burton is also interested in working with bricks and a lot of his work is a manifest of this. He has worked with brick makers in India as well as graffiti artists who turn the bricks into beautiful art pieces/ walls. “The bricks are used to build structures that look like archeological remains.

He tickled the minds of researchers present to think of recycling materials and also considering the use of disposed material to make art pieces, instead of waiting to buy expensive material.

Burton has made scriptures that look like a bee hive after observing the way bees live, while on a visit to India.

He showed the staff members from the College of Engineering, Design Art and Technology and other academicians present the various artifacts and sculptures he has made. He said he is interested in things like glasses, bricks and traffic which he showed to the attendants in a power point presentation.

He noted that he has done many of his sculptures in India, Netherlands, New Castle, Korea, Canada, London and India as an evidence of recycling.

He further appealed to the College to organize for residence accommodation for foreign students willing to travel to Makerere University to work with CEDAT students and lecturers on workshops and exhibitions of the same nature about their innovations in the art field.

Dr Nabulime noted that, “raw materials for the work of art that Prof. Burton engages in are free and in abundance”.

She called for signing of an MoU with the University of New Castle to help other students to benefit from the partnership.

In her speech, she expressed gratitude to Prof Burton for making her feel at home while she was at the University of New Castle as a student.

The exhibition, which features different sculptures made from wood will be open until August 1, 2015.

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