

The Authenticity of Today's Tingatinga Art

Kiagho B. Kilonzo

Abstract

This study analyses the authenticity of Tingatinga style in the Tingatinga Painting School and explores factors that influenced the stylistic evolution of the first and second generations. The term "school" in this context refers to a group of artists who deploy a similar style in their work and not an educational institution. The study compares and contrasts the styles of the two generations of Tingatinga paintings in terms of their form and content. Specifically, the study explores whether the present-day Tingatinga paintings are authentic in addition to analysing the factors that account for stylistic changes. Such information is of immense interest to scholars, museum curators, art collectors, tourists and gallery owners at home and abroad. The findings indicate that the changes that occur in Tingatinga art constitute a stylistic evolution in response to cultural change in society. One should not expect, for instance, a Tingatinga painter who flourished in 2011 to paint like the one who flourished in 1968. For any art to have an intensive communication it has to change with time and adapt to prevailing cultural aspects. These changes, however, do not render the arts unauthentic, although for many years, there has been a tendency to treat art produced by informally-educated Africans as authentic. It is, therefore, possible that the authenticity of Tingatinga paintings, in the eyes of western patrons, originates from this attitude.

Introduction

This article attempts to analyse the authenticity of Tingatinga art produced by a new generation of Tingatinga painters. It begins by introducing the Tingatinga School of Painting, giving a concise history of the founder of the style and explores how the Tingatinga style was founded. This will go in line with the analysis of the term "Folk Art" and art of the "self-taught artists". The article then provides a critical analysis of the form and content of first and second generation Tingatinga paintings to determine its authenticity. It also

examines the influence of patronage on Tingatinga paintings.

What is the Tingatinga School of Painting?

The Tingatinga School of Painting is a contemporary *folk art school of painting* founded by Edward Said Tingatinga (Fig. 1) in 1968. The school is currently located at Oysterbay's Morogoro Stores shopping centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. A *school of painting*, according to the western art tradition, is a group of artists creating artworks with a similar style. For example, the New York school represents the artists who adopted a style known as abstract expressionism or action painting that was popular in the 1940s and 1950s in the United States. *Folk art*, according to Kilonzo (2014), applies to works made by individuals with no formal academic training in art, and often with little or no formal education. In fact, the term has been misinterpreted to mean sub-standard artworks. Folk artists, therefore, are artists with no formal training in art. The works they produce often do not copy nature, although sometimes they glorify it. Tingatinga paintings are good examples of folk art as Nahimian (2008) asserts: "In Tanzania, art scholars started to study the Tingatinga paintings movement, which produced a form of folk art in the late 1970s, after the death of the founder of the movement, Edward Saidi Tingatinga."

Most of today's Tingatinga painters at Morogoro Stores create artworks in a similar style by copying art forms from one another. Such painters can, therefore, be categorised as *self-taught artists*, which according to Kilonzo (2014), are artists who receive their art knowledge from books around them or from observing artworks of other artists. The self-taught Tingatinga painters include Gayo Peter, Hemed Mbaruku, Rashid Chombo, Mbwana Sudi, Abdallah Chimwanda and Agnes Mpata.

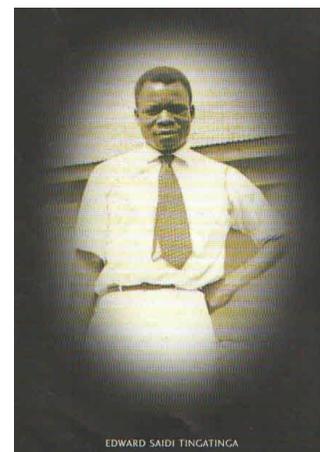


Figure 1: Edward Saidi Tingatinga

(Source: Tingatinga-the popular paintings from Tanzania)

A Concise History of Edward S. Tingatinga

Edward Saidi Tingatinga was born in Namochelia, currently known as Mindu, Masasi in 1932 near a village called Nakapanya. Masasi is one of the six districts in Mtwara region. Other districts in the region are Nanyumbu, Tandahimba, Newala, Mtwara Rural and Mtwara Municipality. Mtwara is located in the southern part of Tanzania. It is bordered by Mozambique to the south, Ruvuma region to the west, Lindi region to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east (Fig. 2). Tingatinga's father was a farmer, who belonged to the Ngindo ethnic group whereas his mother belonged to the Makua ethnic group. Tingatinga went to Mindu Mission School where he completed Standard IV. For some economic reasons he did not continue with his education. By then, Mindu was a village called Namochelia, located in Tunduru district in southern Tanzania.

At the age of 25 in 1957, Tingatinga left his home village and went to work as a sisal labourer in Tanga region, which is located on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Some of his relatives also joined him in Tanga before Tingatinga moved to Dar es Salaam, a major commercial city of Tanzania, in 1960 (Fig. 2).

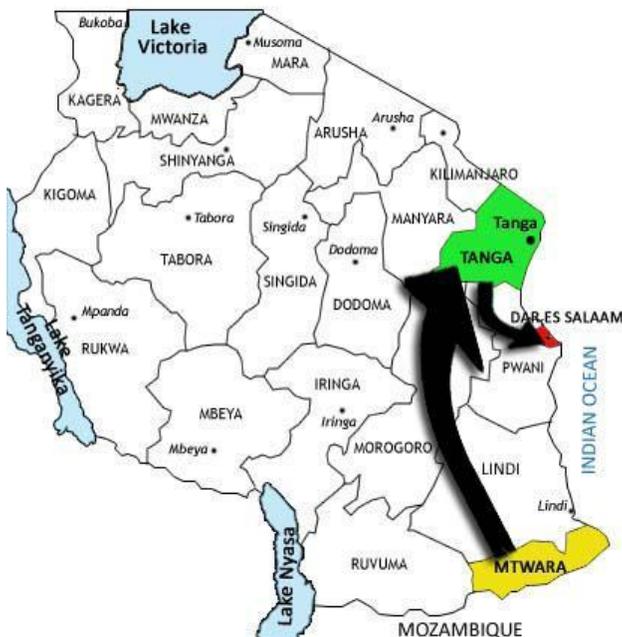


Figure 2: Map of Tanzania-Tingatinga route from Mtwara to DSM through Tanga

(Source: <https://www.google.co.tz/politicalmapoftanzania>)

Tingatinga left his sisal labour in Tanga, according to the present author's personal interview held in 2008 with Omary Abdallah Amonde (Fig. 3), due to a decline in sisal prices worldwide, owing to the introduction

of synthetic fibres such as nylon. Indeed, according to Hartemink, "since the 1960s sisal production had dramatically declined in Tanzania due to decreasing world market prices and management problems at the plantations." Many sisal estates were either closed or left unattended to during that time. Upon his arrival in Dar es Salaam, Tingatinga was hosted by his cousin, Salum Musa (Mzee Lumumba) who worked as a cook for George Pollack at Msasani. Tingatinga's behaviour impressed Mr. Pollack and he hired him as a gardener at his residence. According to Gosciny (2003, p.28) "at the very same place he was hosted he started working as a gardener". When George left the country, Tingatinga and his cousin moved from Oysterbay to Msasani-Mikoroshoni where Tingatinga began to sell fruits to earn a living.

Since Tingatinga was also involved in handcrafting activities, he spent his free time making baskets and designing table mats and bed-sheet decorations. He tried to apply the same decorations on the hardboard material by using enamel paints. That marked the beginning of his painting.

A strong bond that Tingatinga had with his relatives, who then became his first students was reflected when he invited them to Dar es Salaam in the late 1960s and started teaching them how to paint like himself. The first Tingatinga School of Painting, therefore, initially comprised a nucleus family.

Tingatinga, who later in 1970 got married to Agatha Mataka, was also active in Makonde traditional dance. In fact, he played the xylophone in the group. His fame in the dance group led him to join the Tanzania African National Union (TANU) youth league, which was a political wing of the then ruling party. Through the league, Tingatinga secured a job as lab attendant at the then Muhimbili Medical Centre (MMC) in Dar es Salaam, currently Muhimbili National Hospital. He used his free time to paint at home. He had rented one room and stayed with his family. His wife, Agatha and nephew, Omary Amonde used to take his paintings to Morogoro Stores Shopping Centre at Oysterbay and sold them to expatriates who went there for groceries. According to Mture (1998, p.31), Tingatinga's standard of living improved when he quit his regular job at the MMC and began to paint fulltime for the National Art Company, where he sold most of his paintings at a better price. He was introduced to the National Art Company by one of his customers

who appreciated his works and thought Tingatinga deserved to work for the company.

Tingatinga died in 1972 after being shot by a police officer during a car chase in a case of mistaken identity. The police thought they had been firing at a gate-away car filled with bandits.

According to Mtire (1998, p. 32):

One Saturday night in 1972, Tingatinga met his untimely and tragic death. They were three people in [a] Volkswagen Beetle speeding away from a police patrol car along Independence Road, now Samora Avenue, in Dar es Salaam. The police had mistaken it for a get-away car used by robbers. They fired several shots at the car, one bullet got Tingatinga. He died on his way to the hospital.

This tragic death was reported the following day in newspapers and the nation realised that Mr. Tingatinga was prematurely dead. However, that was not the end of his school.

Establishment of the Tingatinga School of Painting
Tingatinga's abrupt death was a blow to his students. They had no option but to continue doing what he did best. They continued to paint and sell their paintings at the minimum price to people who came to for groceries at Morogoro Stores Shopping Centre. Initially, the students who were involved in this business, according to Mtire (1998, p.31), included Kasper Henrick Tedo, January John Linda, Adeus Mandu Mmatambwe, Abdallah Ajaba and Edward's youngest brother, Simon George Mpata.

Although non-family members were initially barred from receiving painting lessons from the school, they later joined the training. These apprentices include Mohamed Chalinda, the late Damian Msagula and George Lilanga. Tingatinga's youngest brother, George Simon Mpata, was not ready to accept new recruits in the school because they could not paint like Tingatinga. He claimed that their paintings contained some disparities that violated the original Tingatinga style. In fact, he was so steadfast with his objection to their joining the school that broke away from the group. He moved to Nairobi, Kenya, where he opened his personal painting studio, and painted for the rest of his life. While in Kenya, Mpata challenged the group by painting the same style that was left by Tingatinga.

Most of these new recruits were inspired by, for example, African nature and urban life. They were just benefited from the training that exposed them to the techniques and then got inspirations from various life-styles. According to an interview with Goscinnny (2015), once they were trained in the Tingatinga techniques of painting, each student followed his/her own inspiration.

At the beginning, these students were not competent enough to paint at the level of Tingatinga, and, thus, could hardly sell their paintings. As a result, some of them could not continue painting and decided to return to their respective villages and do farming instead. Those who remained behind continued to paint and sold their paintings at minimal prices. After quite a long time of hardships, Salum Musa (Mzee Lumumba) came up with an idea of establishing and registering a society in a bid to alleviate the difficulties they were facing economically. These students welcomed the idea. To honour the founder of their painting style, they registered a society called Tingatinga Partnership Society in 1989, which had about 20 painting artists. According to Mturi (1998, p.33), after registration the society was chaired by Omary Abdallah Amonde, who was seconded by Saidi Chilamboni as deputy chairman. The Tingatinga Partnership Society managed to secure a title-deed of a place where they used to work, under a bamboo tree. Moreover, some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and art lovers made donations to facilitate the building of a permanent structure for these artists to work and store their paintings. A year later, in 1990, the Tingatinga Partnership Society morphed into the present Tingatinga Arts Co-operative Society.

The First Generation of Tingatinga Painters and Authenticity

The first generation of Tingatinga painters produced the early Tingatinga paintings. Their painting style flourished between the late 1960s and 1970s. Painters, who emerged during this period, include Edward Said Tingatinga (the founder of Tingatinga style), and his students, namely, Simon George Mpata, Kasper Henrick Tedo, Ajaba Abdallah Mtalila, Adeus Mandu Mmatambwe, Omary Abdallah Amonde and January John Linda. Other artists such as Abdul Mkura also flourished during this period. Tingatinga has been evolving from one stage to another in different times (Kleiner *et al.*, 2001, p. xxxv).

The term 'style', according to the *Oxford Student's Dictionary of English* (2007) is the way that something is done. Art style is defined by *free dictionary* (2015) as art movement, a group of artists who agree on general principles. Kleiner *et al.* (2003) categorises style into different groups, such as period style, regional style and personal style.

The term 'authentic' according to Dutton (1994, p.1) is 'real', 'genuine' and 'true'. Philosopher J.L. Austin calls the term authentic a 'dimensions word' whose meaning remains uncertain until the dimensions of its referent being talked about is known. To make it clearer, Dutton (*ibid.*) exemplifies a 'Mwai' dance mask from Korogo village in New Guinea by saying that, for it to be ideally authentic, the mask should be carved by Korogo for the purpose of attaching it to the headdress and dancing in a local Korogo ceremony. In this analysis, Dutton associates the Korogo ceremony to ritual activities. Therefore, Korogo masks were primarily made for ritual purposes aimed at fulfilling certain social functions. Tingatinga paintings, on the other hand, were not primarily painted for ritual purposes.

Tingatinga painters presented their emotional and intellectual contents in certain *form*. They used hardboard panels rather than canvas by applying a single colour and blank backgrounds. A term *form*, according to Zelanski and Fisher (2002, p.536) refers to the mass or volume in a three-dimensional work or the illusion of volume in a two dimensional-work. Kleiner *et al.* (2003, p. xxiv) refer to *form* as an object's shape and structure, either in two dimensions or three dimensions. Two dimension objects could be a figure painted on a flat surface such as canvas or hardboard whereas three dimension objects could be a statue carved from a piece of wood or marble block.

Tingatinga used enamel paints to paint on a 2 by 2 feet hardboard panel, which in this case is a two-dimension format. According to Gosciny (2003, p.32), one day Tingatinga went to a hardware store and bought a few cans of enamel paint of different colours, a couple of brushes, a bottle of thinner and a sheet of 4 by 4 feet ceiling board that he had to cut into 8 square pieces of 2 by 2 feet. He brought the material home and started doing his first painting for sale. The enamel paints are liquid oil-based colours, which need several hours to dry once applied on the surface and usually ends up with a shiny finish. For better results, the colour should be dissolved in thinner or kerosene before painting. After painting,

the brushes are also washed using thinner or kerosene. The hardboard panels are those used by carpenters for house roofing (ceiling boards), which are rough on one side and smooth on the other.

Tingatinga painted on the smooth side of the hardboard because it made the colour shine as Figure 3 illustrates. The perished parts on the edges of the frame in Figure 3 suggest that, it is a wooden frame nailed to the hardboard panel. The artist used flat brushes for backgrounds since they could apply a wider surface as evidenced in Figure 3. The clean white background is smooth and shiny to reflect appropriate application of flat and wide brushes. Tingatinga used round brushes for details and silhouettes. Again, in Figure 3, there are smooth lines around the eyes, nose and ears, which reflect a careful and proper application of the round brushes. It seems the artist used the edge parts of brush feathers to paint accurately such tiny brownish lines. Tingatinga and his students used such material simply because of their reliability. The oil paint, hardboard panels and brushes could easily be found in any hardware store.



Figure 3: Edward Saidi Tingatinga. Tingatinga painting (Source: trueafricanart.com)

Historical settings of Tingatinga painters influenced them to recreate wildlife emotions, ideas and stories. The content in their paintings, in most cases reflected the life experience that they had gone through. *Content*, according to Zelanski and Fisher (2002, p. 534) is the subject matter of a work of art and the emotions, ideas, symbols, stories, or spiritual connotations it suggests. To understand what is

going on in a work of art, one should initially try to grasp the content (*ibid.*). The content in any work of art is subject to various interpretations depending on personal perception. Indeed, audiences perceive contents based on their emotions, life experiences, beliefs and cultural backgrounds. And so do the artists. Contents are usually influenced by artists' cultural background and historical settings. Tingatinga painters, for example, painted from the memory of what they saw in the area where they grew up. They were born and grew up in rural areas in southern Tanzania, and thus they possibly used to see wild animals and birds around. Cahill (2001, p. 33) suggests that for the painting to be authentic, the practice of making it, which includes the brush strokes and lines should best describe its functions. Silbergeld (2001, p. 33) elaborates that the original artist, which in the case of this paper, is Tingatinga and his students, is primarily concerned with depicting something. The paintings of Tingatinga artists reflect the naturalism that was pursued and grasped. In fact, the content of most of Tingatinga paintings focuses on the flora and fauna; each animal is a subject of the painting (Fig. 4).

Apart from the historical settings, which influenced Tingatinga into drawing wildlife subjects, Tingatinga art customers, who were mostly from Denmark, Norway, Italy and Finland, preferred such kinds of paintings. The Danes, Norwegians, Italians and Finns saw the freshness of the Tingatinga vision of life, which were peaceful, rustic rural life, harmony with African nature and approach to daily appreciation of natural beauty.



Figure 4: Edward Saidi Tingatinga. Tingatinga paintings
(Source: trueafricanart.com)

Tingatinga was a mentor to his students. They adopted his style of painting wildlife themes. The contents of their paintings reflected the wildlife emotions, ideas and stories. At the beginning, these students painted single figures of animals and birds on each piece of the hardboard. The authenticity of these students' paintings seems to be uncertain just as it is with the Korogo mask carved by a non-Korogo native. Dutton (1994, p. 2) argues the authenticity of a mask carved by the non-Korogo carver who got married to native Korogo woman, and who was influenced to embrace Korogo culture. The non-Korogo carver (husband) got his mentorship from native Korogo carvers who share the culture with his wife. Some of his wife's relatives would claim that his masks were not like those produced by old Korogo craftsmen.

However, among all the Tingatinga students, Simon George Mpata's paintings were like the ones produced by the founder because they exhibited most of the founder's characteristics (Fig. 5). Mpata did not change the founder's style as manifested by two paintings presented in Figure 5. Mpata's painting on the right carries most of the characteristics evident in Tingatinga's painting on the left. Both artists used single and plain colour in the backgrounds. Both paintings do not show other objects in the background such as the ocean, mountains or the sky except a tree in Mpata's composition. In each drawing, there is a single figure of wild animal, which seems to be a hyena. The hyenas in both compositions are painted with black skins but for their dots. Tingatinga's hyena has white whereas Mpata's has yellow dots. Both hyenas' dots appear in large size on their bodies and small on their legs and face. A slight difference is seen where Mpata does not give a breathing room of his dots and makes them too dense whereas Tingatinga gives them a space from one to another. Whereas Mpata's dots extend to the ears, Tingatinga's extend to the paws. Both of these hyenas seem to be in a calculated slow motion indicated by the closeness of their front and back legs, which seem to be floating and not even touching the ground. Both hyenas are facing the viewer on the left side with friendly and sympathetic faces, suggesting that they are not getting ready to attack at the moment. In actual fact, both painters appear to paint the spotted hyena in contrast to a striped hyena.



Figure 5: E. S. Tingatinga and S. G. Mpata. Characteristics of Paintings

(Source: trueafricanart.com)

The Second Generation of Tingatinga Painters and Major Stylistic Changes

The second generation of Tingatinga painters' styles includes those that were produced after the death of the founder, Edward Saidi Tingatinga in 1972. After his death, his students began to train other people in his style. These people who were trained came from different parts of Tanzania. There were many new students whose origin was not Mtwara. This transmission of knowledge from one person or generation to another resulted into major form and contextual stylistic changes. The idea of accepting new students, however, was against the founder's wishes in his time, as Nahimian (2008) contends. As a matter of fact, Tingatinga might not have entertained the changes that occurred after his death, which eventually alleviated his stylistic characteristics from their original design to a new presentation. These contextual changes occurred gradually and the process took time to unravel and become noticeable. Among these changes involved the application of colour and presentation of images. There was also a significant transformation from painting on the hardboard to the canvas.

The end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s marked the beginning of German patronage. There was a strong rumour that German collectors wanted to see a game reserve kind of compositions in Tingatinga paintings. It was against this rumour that Tingatinga painters had to get rid of the single animal figure composition and moved into two or more animal figures. These compositions were named *Mbuga za Wanyama* in Kiswahili, which means game reserves. Figure 6, a painting by Abdellehamani Hassani, exemplifies the *Mbuga za Wanyama* paintings. The two leopards in the painting reflect the idea of getting away from single figure compositions. Moreover, the Tingatinga paintings of the second generation presented semi-realistic

figures. According to Abdallah Saidi Chilamboni, in his personal interview with the author, customers had begun to make funny jokes about the weird Tingatinga figures by saying they did not look like real animals. Although they ended up purchasing the paintings that they made fun of, painters were not comfortable with such crude jokes and thought they might lose those customers in future. Gradually, they began to get away from unrealistic presentation of their images.

Although the change did not happen overnight, the speed of change depended on each artist's speed of learning the new style. The leopards in Figure 6 reflect the transformation, especially the leopards' noses and stomachs. The noses are presented in greyish, a real colour of leopard's nose. The leopard figures are also presented in a variety of colours such as red, black and white in their eyes, grey noses and ears, black skin, yellow dots and sprayed white on their bellies. On the other hand, the first generation painters did not use several colours on their animal figures. The white sprayed stomachs have been tinged with the idea of mixing colours. At that time, the Tingatinga Society had begun to get recruits with some formal education. These recruits came with the skills of mixing colours that they acquired from their formal schools. They used to see their teachers using chalk of different colours for more elaboration and better appearance of images and maps. When these recruits joined the Tingatinga Society, they just applied the same technique of mixing chalk of different colours into paintings.



Figure 6: Abdellehamani Hassani. A New Style of Tingatinga Painting (Photo by the author)

Big Tingatinga Revolution

The late 1980s and beginning of 1990s witnessed a big evolution in Tingatinga paintings. It should be remembered that most of Tingatinga painting customers came from abroad. These customers wanted to purchase paintings and travel with them to their home countries. The idea of using canvas rather than hardboard panels was, therefore, introduced. According to Abdallah Saidi Chilamboni (interview, 2015), one day, a customer named Denis brought a canvas from Europe and gave few Tingatinga painters to try working it. The painters found working on it easy and they worked very well. Subsequently, on another day Abdul Amonde Mkura bought a piece of light cloth and started working on it. He firstly framed it and poured some wheat porridge on it. He painted a first layer of red oxide, and then used sand paper to smooth it. He then painted the second layer of red oxide and smoothed it in the same way to get a fine surface. He lastly painted a Tingatinga composition on it. Other Tingatinga painters liked the idea and began to do their paintings the same way. That marked the beginning of using canvas for Tingatinga painters. The artists sold more of their canvas paintings than those that were done on hardboard panels. Customers preferred that kind of painting style because they could roll and travel with them easier.

However, that idea could not be sustained any longer because customers began to complain that the paintings were getting cracked during the winter season in Europe. The idea of using wheat porridge and red oxide layers, as the background was, therefore, not appropriate to the customers. In consequence, the Tingatinga painters decided to resort to their old style of enamel paints but this time on heavy pieces of cloth; they began painting their backgrounds using enamel colours.

Most of the latest characteristics of Tingatinga paintings are evident in *Wildlife* of Abdallah Chilamboni (Fig. 7). The three figures of the lion, birds and flowers appearing as one composition reflect the *Mbuga za Wanyama* ideology, which insists on compositions to have several animal figures instead of a single animal figure as in the traditional Tingatinga drawings of the first generation. The colour application is finer and better mixed than the first generation painting style. The white spray-like white colour on the lions' stomachs, feet, cheeks, and around the eyes is sharp at the edge and gradually merges into brown to reduce the use of

single solid lines, which were dominant in the first generation painting style.

Likewise, the backs are painted with sharp dark brown at the edges and gradually the dark brown colour merges into light brown, again to reduce the use of single solid lines. The body parts, such as legs, fingers, noses and mouths are defined by clear solid lines, which is the backbone of Tingatinga style from its start. From the first generation of Tingatinga paintings, lines were used instead of shading to clearly define the edges. The new Tingatinga style seems to introduce *shading* though the edges on images that are still defined by solid lines. The eyes are neatly painted by a careful use of the brush to get yellow-brown corneas and pupils, brown-black irises and eye lids, and that is certainly a real colour arrangement on lion eyes. Other details such as the eyebrows can also be seen very clear and almost on their reality. The painter spent time to show the hair details with some lighted and shaded areas. The background is also a blend of various spray-like colours that merge.



Figure 7: Abdallah Saidi Chilamboni. *Wildlife*. 2015 (Photo by the author)

When these painters of the second generation felt that they were comfortable with their new style of painting, they began to go beyond animal subjects and attempted to paint compositions of daily life activities. The compositions that were powerful at that time included landscapes and people engaged in their daily activities such as hunting, farming, spiritual world and healing, which includes traditional doctors' activities (Fig. 8).

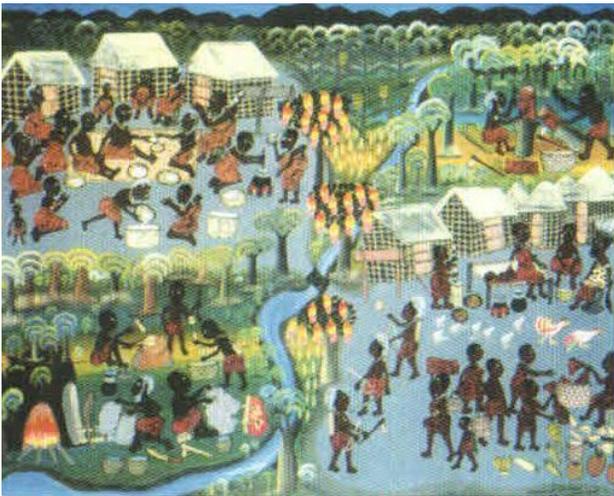


Figure 8: Mohamed Wasia Charinda. *Wamakua/People from the South* 1994.

(Source: Tingatinga-Tingatinga Cooperative Society.)

Wamakua/People from the south (Fig. 8) was painted by Mohamed Wasia Charinda in 1994 to show *Wamakua* (People from Makua ethnic group)'s lives and their daily economic activities. On the top right of the painting there are people chopping a tree into small pieces of wood and removing its bark to make bark cloths. During a personal interview with the painter, it was established that the idea was to show the production of bark cloths, which the *Wamakua* used to wear many years ago. On the bottom right, there is a bark cloth business as vendors sell the bark cloths. In the middle right there is a *Sultan* (traditional ruler) seated in front of few beautiful and decorated huts and accompanied by two men who seem to be his bodyguards. The scenario suggests he is in his palace. In the middle bottom part of the painting, there are people with weapons, who represent *sungusungu* (guards). Under *Wamakua* culture, *sungusungu* were responsible for making sure the village was secured from enemies all the time. In the bottom left there are smelters making iron tools. The artist here alludes to the Iron Age period when many societies in Africa had discovered a technique of making various iron tools. *Wamakua* were also ardent in the making of such iron tools.

The beginning of the 2000s saw Asian countries such as Japan and China begin to purchase Tingatinga paintings in large quantity. Asians were in love with busy paintings. They were interested in seeing different kinds of figures in one composition such as cars, people, trees, and animals. Just as it has been happening previously, painters did what their customers desired. This was the time

when Tingatinga painters came up with a style of producing extremely busy compositions. These paintings were so busy in composition that an observer could barely see the background.

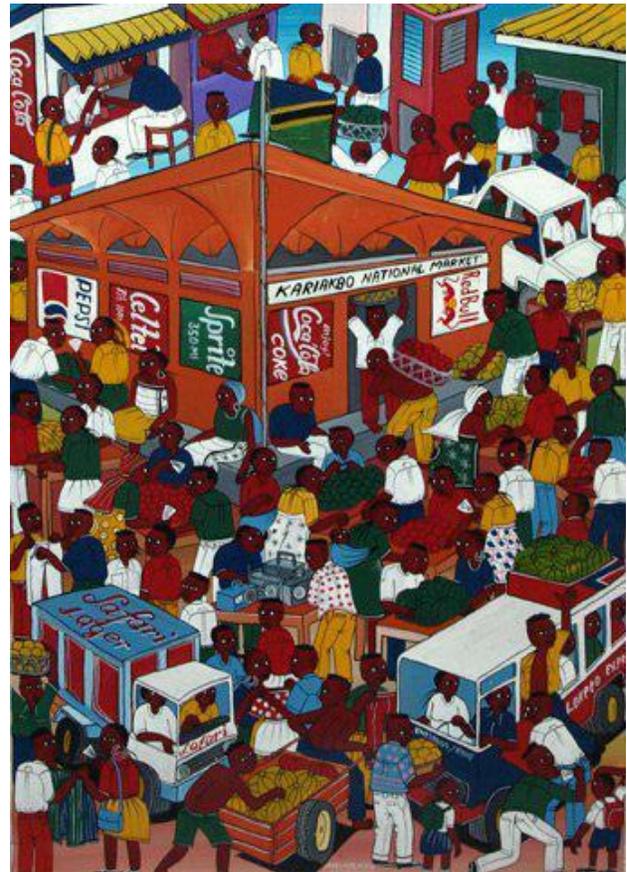


Figure 9: Maurus Michael Malikita. *Kariakoo National Market*

(Source: trueafricanart.com)

Maurus Michael Malikita is one of the painters whose paintings flourished during this period. Malikita has a unique painting style that differs from the rest of Tingatinga painters. During a personal interview, he said started to paint in the Tingatinga style in 1988 using the same style that all Tingatinga painters used. He was taught by Saidi Mandawa though he was not comfortable with his style. He was mostly inspired by urban life and people in their daily economic activities. A couple of years later in 1990 he tried a composition that represented the urban life and narrated a story. One of his customers liked his work and encouraged him to paint more of that kind because they were unique and different from other Tingatinga paintings. Many Tingatinga customers were attracted by his style and the market of his painting style emerged. He trained other painters such as Issa Mitole and Rashidi Say who appreciated his new style and those who wished to learn it. His painting titled *Kariakoo National Market* (in Fig. 9) is a good example of this style. It has an extremely

busy composition, which represents a real scenario of the day-to-day activities associated with the ever busy Tanzania National Market, Kariakoo. Indeed, it is one of the busiest markets in the country. In the painting, there are people emerging out of the market door with baskets filled with fruits while few others have their banana and mango fruits displayed on the table outside the market. On the top left there is a couple of kiosks selling light drinks. A person in a blue shirt and white pants seems to be sitting comfortably on a tall chair suggesting that he is getting some drink.

These major changes in the style prompted the present author to investigate whether the Tingatinga paintings of today are still authentic. The western art historians seem to change easily the way they view authenticity of oil paintings. For instance, they changed from seeing authenticity from the fact that a certain icon had produced these paintings, to seeing styles and aesthetic properties as products of the hands of particular masters (Cahill, 2001, p.23). The masters of Tingatinga art style are the founder and his students, and the paintings that they produced are their products. In such a context, would the westerners, therefore, see the authenticity of Tingatinga art from a certain icon with certain functions' point of view? Or would they look at it as a product of the hands of Tingatinga masters?

Concluding Remarks

The authenticity of today's Tingatinga painting styles is something that needs explanation. The changes that occur in Tingatinga art from the first to the second generation of Tingatinga painters should be regarded as an evolution within the style, which responds to cultural change and socio-economic demands as well as tastes of the customers or patrons. Any art needs personal and cultural values to communicate intensively. Since any culture in the world changes with time, the arts from any ethnic group also tend change with the prevailing cultural aspects in these ethnicities. The changes, however, do not render the arts to be unauthentic. Dutton (1994, p. 6) quotes Sidney Kasfir when she says, "by rendering as somehow inauthentic all later art, it fails to acknowledge the possibility of cultural change. This notion of authenticity treats pre-European-contact tribal art as existing in a 'timeless past' ". Kasfir here contends that African tribal arts had been evolving even before the arrival of colonialism, when documentation of the changes began to be on the westerner's records. European

collectors, according to Dutton (1994, p.9), have in the past been too far willing to use the term 'authentic' to disparage contemporary tribal arts while praising old, pre-colonial art. Thus it is futile to expect a Tingatinga art painted in 2011 to look like the one painted in 1968. In fact, Silbergeld goes a step further by arguing that no one would imagine the possibility of accurate reconstruction of the 2001 tablets brought down the slopes of Sinai a thousand of years ago (Silbergeld, 2001, p.35). He also insists it might take a miracle to reconstruct the entire artistic structure of China constructed a thousand years ago, which is based on a handful of undisputed works.

Scholars such as Cahill suggest that application alone of creativity skills cannot be used to judge the authenticity of an artwork. According to Cahill (2001), "brushwork alone, apart from its representational function, is just about useless as a criterion for judging authenticity" (p. 21) In other words, one should separate the practice of making an artwork from what that artwork articulates. Silbergeld (2001, p.32) suggests that Cahill's statement should not be taken literally, as it means more than what it says with a broader critique of the whole intuitive approach to judgment.

Another explanation revolves around the notion of authenticity and informally educated African artists. For many years, art produced by informally educated Africans had been considered to be authentic. For example, according to Pigozzi, "The education or better the non-education of African artists is so much part of their work. They are totally innovative and non-derivative" (Magnin, 2005, p.11). Another example comes from Kasfir (1999, p.78) who quotes Ruth Schaffner of the Gallery Watatu in Nairobi who believed that "academic instruction spoiled the innate creativity of African artists." The implication here is that only non-Africans deserve to have academic art instructions. Our last example comes from Ishengoma (2012, p. 2) who quotes Fosu (1986, p. 49) writing on Pierre Lod's domestic servant using the following statement:

One day (he saw Ossali) painting away on an old nautical chart with knife like silhouette of ultra marine and turquoise birds painted with all the superb simplicity of line that is found in African art. The next day, in vermilion in black, he painted Palm trees against black background. There was no getting away from it; I had to find another boy, for Ossali had turned a painter.

Viewed from this perspective, it is possible to say that the authenticity of Tingatinga paintings in the eyes of western patrons originates from this kind of attitude. Such attitude is further revealed by Ishengoma (2012, p. 2) when he writes: “to Lod and some other westerners, African art depends only on raw feelings and therefore does not need to go through a (useless) process of training. Any work from Africa that invests the minds and shows signs of intelligence is ignored and/or rejected.” This is supported by Jengo (2008, p. 15) who writes, “Africa cannot be an island reserved for the creation of artworks that rupture academic standards through neo-primitivism that offers the spectacle of a laughing Africa.” As a form of folk art, Tingatinga painting style should be regarded as such. However, as a form of folk art, Tingatinga painting style should be respected as a distinct School of Painting that was founded by a local mentor, namely Edward Saidi Tingatinga, whose followers come from various ethnic groups in Tanzania. The school has provided employment to a number of primary school leavers. It has also put Tanzania on the world art map for over 40 years.

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Kiagho B. Kilonzo, Ph.D
Department of Creative Arts,
University of Dar es Salaam
E-mail: kiaghokilonzo@gmail.com
kiaghokilonzo@udsm.ac.tz

