

"My Sculpture, My Life": An iconographic study of the contemporary Ghanaian sculptor, Isaac Opoku-Mensah

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Abstract: There is little information on Contemporary Ghanaian artists in the form of literary presentations and documentation. Isaac Opoku-Mensah is one great personality whose contribution to the development of Ghanaian sculpture and the field of bust sculpture deserves to be recognized, celebrated, and studied. This is a biographic study that focuses on his profile and contributions to academia as well as his sculptural art technique. It looks at some of his creative works, the techniques he used, and his influence on his students and the next generation of sculptural artists. The qualitative research design was used to conduct an iconographic analysis of three specific sculptural pieces as part of an empirical artistic study. Research instruments such as in-depth interviews, observation, and photography were utilised to gather the required data for the study. The paper also appreciates Isaac Opoku-Mensah's sculptural pieces through Erwin Panofsky's iconographic analysis, which has three levels: pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, and iconological interpretation. The findings among others indicated that there were detailed interpretations of the *busts of three murdered Judges, a cocoa farmer, and academic graduands* which aimed at comprehending the images' visual elements and performing a formal analysis of its physical manifestation, followed by an iconographic analysis in which the images were linked to a known story or recognizable character, and finally, an iconological analysis in which the meaning of the artefacts was determined in relation to its social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Keywords: Artist biographic studies, Contemporary, Ghanaian, Iconography, Isaac Opoku-Mensah, Sculpture

1. Introduction

The history of the development of contemporary sculptural art in Ghana will be incomplete without the record of the massive contribution of a sculpture gem, Isaac Opoku-Mensah. Documentation of both indigenous and contemporary artists has received scant attention in Ghana. The works and philosophical implications of the selected contemporary sculptors are documented in the form of textual evidence and images, which is important in the preservation and promotion of cultural values and knowledge (Hall, 1997). Sculpture, according to Garner and Vercoe (2002), is traditionally the art of producing representations through chiselling, carving, casting, or modelling. Sculpture nowadays refers to any three-dimensional art. Sculptors, according to Hall (1990), are

artists who frequently deal with hard materials such as marble, glass, metal, wood, or stone to create three-dimensional works of art such as statues. They can also make use of materials such as fabric, clay, gold, or rubber. The task of a sculptor is to carve or assemble the material into the desired form. When it comes to who is who among Ghanaian contemporary artists, the spotlight has traditionally been on well-known names. Students of Ghanaian art history are quick to name a lengthy list of renowned painters, sculptors, and art historians such as Ato Delaquis, Ablade Glover, Offei Nyarko, El Anatsui, Amon Kotei, Kwami Amenuke, Kojo Fosu, and Kofi Setordji, among others. Nevertheless, Isaac Opoku Mensah's sculptural works are highly rated comparable to the works of accomplished contemporary Ghanaian artists. The purpose of this paper is to document in academic print, the personal profile of Isaac Opoku Mensah, revealing his skills, creative prowess of his artistry endeavours for large readership, and contribution to the literary depository of African art and culture.

2. An overview of contemporary sculpture in Ghana

Carving (the removal of material) and modelling (the addition of material, such as clay) were the traditional sculptural techniques used in sculptural production in Ghana during the modernism phase of Ghanaian art. However, in the contemporary phase of Ghanaian art, there has been almost complete freedom of materials and processes. Carving, welding, and modelling techniques, as well as moulding and casting, are now used to work with a variety of materials. Reliefs and free-standing figures and forms are common in contemporary sculpture. Carving, modelling, casting, welding, construction, and assemblage are some of the techniques used to create the sculptures (Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku & Baffoe, 1991). Art forms created in the twentieth century became infinite due to the advent of new means and materials for creating sculpture works; sculpture in the contemporary sense denotes a complete break from how it existed in the past in terms of tools and materials; sculpture in the contemporary sense denotes a complete break from how it existed in the past in terms of tools and materials; sculpture in the contemporary sense denotes a complete break from how it existed in the past in terms of tools and materials. Chambers (2012) believes that sculpture can be anything, but not everything can be sculpture, and that it takes an artist to make it happen, focusing on sculpture works to study some of the fundamental themes that contemporary artists use in their practice.

Artists pushed boundaries and paved the way for much imaginative advancement in sculpture beginning in the mid-twentieth century, resulting in rapid changes and significant improvements. Today, the sculpture is defined not only by its media and form, but also by the artist's creative concept, the space used, and the installation techniques used. Beginning in the 1950s, new materials and processes were introduced, according to Finkelstein (2015). Some of the new approaches that were embraced and practiced included welding metal, using found objects, and recombining industrially constructed parts. Wood, wax, ivory, metal, plaster, concrete, clay, and fiberglass, as well as traditional casting or modelling procedures, are among the materials used in the creation of modern sculpture. Tucker (1992) provides few descriptions of modern sculpture because it is more concerned with its being than with its development, with how it is rather than how it came to be there because it is self-contained. Contemporary sculpture disregards the materials and processes used in its creation, as well as the entire being that the artwork represents. Instead, it focuses on the process of creating the artwork and the creative mind behind it. As a result, Tucker claims that contemporary sculptors are more concerned with "making and the object made" than with the materials used to create the piece. The physical aspect of the artwork receives little attention; instead, the focus is on the procedures involved in its creation and completion.

According to Tucker, Géricault, Préalut, and Daumier were contemporary sculpture pioneers, and their works exhibited modern sculpture characteristics (Sofiali, 2011).

3. Theory of Erwin Panofsky's iconographic analysis

This paper focuses on Erwin Panofsky's iconographic Analysis theory because it allows for a more in-depth analysis of each figure's lines, colours, subjects, and background, as shown in the figures below. In this regard, Erwin Panofsky emphasizes the importance of content, intrinsic meaning, symbols, and themes in the visual arts (Panofsky, 1974). In his artworks, Erwin Panofsky emphasizes the interpretation of symbols, the subject image, image, illustration, and semiotics. Furthermore, the study focuses on the meaning and formalism in Isaac Opoku-Mensah's artworks, which are divided into three levels: pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, and iconological interpretation. The purpose of this level in a pre-iconographical description is to allow the observer to see all aspects of the object or image that is formed by the configuration of colour, lines, and volume. The majority of the time, these configurations are automatically identified as objects and events. The factual meaning of a visual object refers to this identification. Panofsky referred to these factual and expressional meanings as primary or natural meanings.

Artistic motifs are forms in a work of art that have this type of meaning. Artistic motifs and combinations of these compositions are linked to themes or concepts in the study of iconographical analysis (secondary meaning). This is accomplished primarily through the use of literature from the period in which the work of art was created. Images are created when motifs are thought to refer to any of these themes and concepts, and stories and allegories are made up of images. In the narrower sense, Panofsky calls the study of images, stories, and allegories iconographic analysis; later scholars simply call it iconography (Schneider-Adams 1996). The iconological interpretation is Panofsky's final level of meaning (intrinsic meaning or content). He claims that all visual arts have underlying principles that reveal a nation's, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion, all of which are unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work (Panofsky 1939 as cited in Meijer, 2011). Iconological interpretation is the process of determining the image's true meaning by determining how the signs/symbols/images reflect the underlying principles or period in which it was created. He goes on to say that these fundamental principles underpin motif selection and presentation, as well as the creation and interpretation of images, stories, and allegories and that they even give meaning to the formal arrangements and technical procedures used. A work of art thus becomes a symptom or a reflection of something external to it in this light. Iconographic analysis, as defined by Panofsky, is the study of the intrinsic meaning of art, later referred to as iconology.

4. Research methodology

This paper examines Isaac Opoku-Mensah's sculpture works, including the busts of three assassinated Judges, the cocoa farmer, and academic graduands. The qualitative research design was used to conduct an iconographic analysis of three specific sculptural pieces as part of an empirical artistic study. Qualitative research, according to Borg and Gall (1989), is a field study in which the researchers attempt to understand the situation's reality by studying all elements in the setting. This approach was used by the researcher to help him collect a large amount of data from a small number of artefacts through observation and interview to obtain the needed data. The descriptive research method, which is categorized as a qualitative method, was used to conduct the study. In-

depth interviews, descriptive observation, and photography were the main tools employed to gather data for the study. To decipher the factual description of representations, conventional meaning, and intrinsic or content meaning of symbols and images under consideration, the researcher decided to use the elements of these artefacts by making detailed figures of lines, forms, shapes, colours, main subjects, as well as the background of each figure, as presented. Three sculptural artefacts from Isaac Opoku-Mensah's archive were used as the study's population. The sample for the study was chosen using a method called purposeful sampling. The result necessitates a detailed interpretation aimed at comprehending the image's design elements and performing a formal analysis of its physical manifestation, followed by an iconographic analysis in which the image is linked to a known story or recognizable character, and finally, an iconological analysis in which the meaning of the artwork is determined in relation to its social, cultural, and historical contexts.

5. Results and discussions

Profile of Isaac Opoku- Mensah

Opanyin Kwasi Opoku-Mensah and Madam Adwoa Frimpomaa of Mpraeso Kwahu of blessed memory gave birth to Isaac Opoku-Mensah. He is married and the father of five children, three girls, and two boys. He was baptized into the Catholic Church but afterward joined the Ghana Apostolic Church. Mr. Isaac Opoku-Mensah grew up in Mpreaso-Kwahu, where he attended Roman Catholic Primary and Middle Schools before moving on to St. Peter's Senior High School in Nkwatia-Kwahu, where he completed his Ordinary Level secondary education from 1973 to 1978. Between 1978 and 1980, he attended Winneba Senior High School for his sixth form. In 1980, Isaac enrolled in a degree program at KNUST's College of Art, where he specialized in sculpture. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Art Education in 1985. Opoku-Mensah then pursued a Master of Arts degree in African art and culture, graduating in 1992. He earned a Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (PGDTLHE) in 2012 from the University of Education, Winneba. Since 1992, he has been teaching at the University of Education in Winneba. Isaac Opoku-Mensah was the Head of Department at the Department of Art Education (UEW) from 2012 to 2014. He is currently on contract at the same institution following the expiration of his retirement age. He has trained over two thousand people to become sculpture teachers and to attain creative sculpting skills. Such ideas and efforts have relevance to education and development in the nation (Opoku-Mensah, Personal Communication, 20/08/2021).

Professionalism and artistic experiences

He completed three months of National Service at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism under Dr. Ben Abdallah after finishing his degree program in 1985, and the remaining twenty-one months as a Teaching Assistant at the Sculpture Division, College of Art, KNUST until 1987. In September 1991, he started working as an Art Tutor at Swedru Senior High School. While still at Swedru Senior High School, he became a part-time tutor at the Sculpture Section, Art Education Department of Specialist Training College (STC) after the death of his sculpture tutor, Mr. Adogla. From September to December 1991, he taught at Ejisu Secondary Technical School. In January 1992, he joined the faculty of Specialist Training College and later became a lecturer at University College of Education Winneba, which later became the University of Education Winneba. Vincent Akwetey Kofi, Julio Gonzalez, and the French sculptor Auguste Rodin are his mentors because they influenced his artistic style with their inspiration from natural shapes and forms, as well as other distinguishing features in their works. Mr.

Agbenu, a talented sculptor and his former art tutor at St. Peters Senior High School, was instrumental in encouraging and motivating him to work harder as a young artist (Opoku-Mensah, Personal Communication, 20/08/2021).

Tools, Materials, and Techniques employed by Isaac Opoku-Mensah

Gouges, chisels, his hands (thumb and fingers), spatulas made of wood and metal, a hacksaw, cutting wire, and a brush, as well as clay, wax, bronze, brass, cement, P.O.P, wood, fibreglass, resin, hardener, and accelerator, are the most common tools he uses. Gouges are his favourite wood carving tools, which he uses to create fine texture and enhance the natural aspect of the art piece. He gets his tools and supplies from local blacksmiths and hardware stores, and he makes his spatulas from discarded bamboo. Among the techniques he uses are the cire-perdue and P.O.P methods for modelling and casting. A parting agent (oil or liquid soap) is applied to the edges and within the mould sections after final detailing the modelled piece and taking P.O.P moulds. He then assembles the moulds and connects them with the binder's wire before filling them to the brim with concrete mixture. It allows the slurry to harden before using his chisel and mallet to chip out the P.O.P mould. He then sands, sprays, and polishes the cast after it has dried.

Personal philosophy of Isaac Opoku-Mensah

"My sculpture, my life," says the artist, referring to God as the first sculptor who created man in his image. God, like him, believes in perfection. Because God is his first role model, he believes he must follow in his footsteps. As a result, his sculptures are geared toward bringing life to statues, as evidenced by the careful bringing out of details with his modelling tools to bring life to statues. This implies that he believes in realism and that his sculpture should "vibrate" his audience at all times. This explains why the majority of his sculptures are portraits (Opoku-Mensah, Personal Communication, 20/08/2021).

Challenges faced by Isaac Opoku-Mensah

In an interview, Opoku-Mensah disclosed that 'it's difficult to combine teaching and sculpture production at the same time.' He also intimated, "If you're not tactful, you'll end up being a jack of all trades and master of none." When you do two things at once, your attention is divided, making it difficult to focus on one. Most sculpture educators face this challenge because the desire to practice has always been there; however, because the artworks they produce are mostly commissioned works, it also generates income. The income generated is sometimes used to purchase tools and materials, pay bills, support the family, and other miscellaneous expenses. His daily routine as an art educator has included researching new ideas, writing articles, teaching his students, and performing other office duties. This keeps him from becoming a full-time sculptor because his professional career is teaching, and combining it with sculpting is exhausting. When commissioned for a project, he is occasionally unable to meet deadlines because sculpture is a time-consuming process that necessitates meticulous attention in order to produce a good finished product that meets customer expectations. As a result, 'he is torn between working as a sculptor and teaching in a school setting. This creates the fear of mastering none if he doesn't focus on one, especially since both financially support him to alleviate the burden of financial issues' (Opoku-Mensah, Personal Communication, 20/08/2021).

5.1. Iconographic analysis of the busts of three-murdered Judges



Figure 1: The busts of three-murdered judges by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Pre-iconographic phase

The monument above is significant in commemorating the victims of the murders of three High Court judges on June 30, 1982. Mr. Justice Kwadwo Agyei Agyepong, Mr. Justice Fred Poku Sarkodie, and Mrs. Justice Cecilia Koranteng-Addow are the three members of the court. In front of the freestanding sculpture, the artist also places a ceremonial brass bowl. Isaac Opoku-Mensah is the artist's name. All of the figures were placed on a granite pedestal made of cement polished with tiles that featured individual biographies and a summary of the circumstances surrounding their murders. Alternating slabs with high-end finishes alternate with tiles incised with the judges' brief biographies. The busts are framed by a curved colonnade, which symbolically represents God's justice of the land and the architecture of Ghana's Supreme Court. The three figures who bear a striking resemblance share a similar point of view, with their heads raised slightly above eye level. Isaac Opoku-busts Mensah's of the three assassinated judges were cast in cement, finished in bronze, and detailed to provide an excellent aesthetic effect.

Iconographic phase

The bust is mounted on a plaque pedestal and was cast in bronze using the *cire perdue* method. The bronze sculpture was expertly crafted, with a strong sense of resemblance and human expression, making it an excellent monumental piece. All of the judges wear a judge's robe and a short bench wig to represent their respective professions. A granite headstone with inscriptions sits between the pedestals. In addition, the artist places a ceremonial brass bowl in front of the busts, symbolizing the eternal flame of the murdered judges' souls. Modelling and casting using the *cire-perdue* and P.O.P methods were used by the artist. A parting agent (oil or liquid soap) is applied to the edges and inside the mould sections after giving the modelled work final detailing and taking moulds in P.O.P. He then assembles the moulds and secures them with a binder's wire before pouring the concrete mixture to the top. Before using his chisel and mallet to chip out the P.O.P mould, the mixture is allowed to settle and harden. He then lets the cast dry before sanding, spraying, or polishing it. Fiberglass was used to finish the piece, which was then painted bronze. A curved colonnade serves as a backdrop to the busts, symbolically representing God's justice of the land and the Supreme Court of Ghana's architecture. This

curvature also creates a central focus in front of the busts, where the crime's pain and sin are symbolically collected, atoned for, and carried away into the earth's depths. Pillars with the inscription 'Martyrs of the Rule of Law' stand behind the busts.

Iconological phase

Three High Court judges were assassinated in cold blood at the Bundase Military Range in the Accra Plains on June 30, 1982, leaving an indelible mark on Ghana's history. According to reports, the three renowned Ghanaian icons were all killed after being kidnapped at night by unknown assailants. The three High Court judges were martyred, and their deaths are commemorated in Ghana every year on Martyrs Day, the anniversary of their deaths. The monuments in the Supreme Court building's forecourt serve as a constant reminder of the qualities required of a judge. "My sculpture, my life," says the artist, referring to God as the first sculptor, who created man in his image. This implies that he believes in realism and that his sculpture should "vibrate" his audience at all times. This explains why the majority of his sculptures are portraits. By carefully using his modelling tools to pay more attention to detail in sculpting the portrait busts, the artist seeks individual resemblance to be closer to contemporary sculptures. The three figures who bear a striking resemblance share a similar point of view, with their heads raised slightly above eye level. Though the artworks were technically excellent, the style is similar to Donatello's early Renaissance works. Donatello depicted the human body's dignity in realistic and dramatic detail. Donatello was a Renaissance sculptor from Italy. Born in Florence, he studied classical sculpture and used it to create a complete Renaissance sculpture style, which he introduced to other parts of Italy during his periods in Rome, Padua, and Siena. The bust of Niccolo da Uzzano, Saint John the Evangelist (1408-1415), bust of Saint Rossore, and Head of a Child are just a few of his works.

5.2. Iconographic analysis of the work titled: A cocoa farmer



Figure 2: A Cocoa Farmer by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Pre-iconographic phase

A cocoa farmer harvesting cocoa is another eye-catching sculpture by Isaac Opoku-Mensah. The seven-foot statue behind the administration block at Swedru Senior High School has agricultural connotations for the role cocoa farmers played in raising funds from cocoa to help establish the first Ghana Education Trust (GET) Secondary School, which was founded by Ghana's first President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, in 1958. The human figure holds a cutlass in his quest to harvest cocoa from a matured cocoa tree that has produced fruits in the form of seven elongated pods, although its face is unknown. The artist used the cocoa farmer as a model to show how the Ghanaian farmer's contribution has enabled the current generation to receive a quality education at Swedru Senior High School. The artist's attention to detail is astounding, as he depicts a farmer dressed in a white shirt and trousers, wearing his rubber boots (wellington boots), sitting on a terrazzo pedestal plaque. The trouser is finished in a lustrous bronze glaze that matches his hat and reflects light at every contour shift, demonstrating Donatello's St. Mark's exquisite drapery treatment. The work was a well-executed, historical, and contemporary depiction of the human figure. Clay was used to creating the commissioned work, which was then cast in cement.

Iconographic phase

The life-size sculpture is modelled after Michelangelo's David in a contrapposto pose. He depicts the body's natural counterbalance by bending the hips in one direction and the legs in the other, resulting in a powerful stance that has been sculpted in an idealistic way to show volume and balance. The artist uses the P.O.P. and cement or concrete casting methods for modelling and casting. A parting agent (oil or liquid soap) is applied to the edges and inside the mould sections after giving the modelled work final detailing and taking moulds in P.O.P. He then assembles the moulds and secures them with a binder's wire before pouring the concrete mixture to the top. The mixture (cement and sand) is reinforced with iron rods and allowed to harden before he uses his chisel and mallet to chip out the P.O.P mould. He then waits for the cast to dry before sanding and spraying it to perfection. Personally, the farmer's stance appears to be strong, and he has a straight face that makes him appear focused due to his steady gaze on the cocoa he is harvesting, much like any farmer checking the yield of his crop on a hot sunny day. As he grabs a ripe cocoa pod with his left hand and tries to harvest with his right hand holding a cutlass, the concrete veins and knuckles seem to pulse with anticipation.

Iconological phase

Mr. Kojo Botsio, then the Trade and Industry Minister, established Swedru Senior High School (SWESCO) on June 28, 1958. According to the report, SWESCO was the first Ghana Education Trust (GET) secondary school, founded in 1959 by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana. As part of a national policy to provide more second-cycle institutions across the country with the same architectural designs to provide quality education and instil values and good moral character in students, as well as empower them to be responsible citizens after school. The magnificently sculpted cocoa farmer figure stands a few meters from the school's main entrance, in the middle of a V intersection with one path leading to the administration and the other to the Assembly hall. In March 2009, this seven-foot concrete casting was purchased and installed. The school's generous 1989 year group raised funds to bring this great artist's work to the school. This figure commemorates the school's funding, which came from Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's first cocoa proceedings

and the toil of a cocoa farmer who sacrificed his cocoa plantation on which the school now stands. The artist creates the most mesmerizing examples of pure mastery while adhering to his philosophy of "My sculpture, my life." Opoku-Mensah is seen as the quintessence of Auguste Rodin-style sculpture in the hands of the skilled sculptor. Auguste Rodin, like Opoku-Mensah, approached sculpture in a realistic style, aiming to bring life to his works by capturing the viewer's attention, which appears to be very important in traditional sculpture because it is rooted in realism. His technique and sense of formalism are comparable to those of the 19th-century Impressionists.

5.3. Iconographic analysis of the work titled: Academic graduands

Pre-iconographic phase



Figure 3: Academic graduands by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

The iconic image above depicts a massive monument with two (2) academic graduands towering over three sets of professional statues, each representing the nation's services provided by the graduate school of Nuclear and Allied Sciences. Professor E.H.K. Akaho, the then-Director General of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, unveiled it in 2011. Academic grandmothers facing each other with both hands rose to hold an interlacing rode, a nurse in uniform holding an injection syringe, a welder in a protective goggle holding a torch and an electrode, and a farmer with a hoe around his left shoulder is among the figures. Each figure is placed on its own concrete plinth, which is connected to the main pedestal, which is set in a beautiful circular pond. By carefully using his modelling tools to pay more attention to detail in sculpting the portrait figures, Isaac seeks out individual resemblance to be closer to modern sculptures. The three life-size figures each have a different point of view, depicting various personalities engaged in various activities. The works are modelled in clay and cast in bronze

using the cire perdue or lost-wax technique, with finely detailed details such as depressions on the face to give it a more natural appearance, and hand-finished to enthrall viewers.

Iconographic phase



Figure 4: Academic graduands by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

On a concrete circular turntable base, the finely bronze skin academic graduands found at the apex of the monument stand. Opoku-Mensah creates an 8-foot statue of scholars (male and female) from the Graduate School of Nuclear And Allied Sciences in academic regalia, holding an interlacing rod with their arms stretched apart. The artist pays close attention to detail and how corresponding proportions are executed flawlessly, scrutinizing the relationship between the various body parts. Each is given special attention to proportionate balance, and before casting, he uses his modelling tools to establish surface quality as well as repeating folds to define drapery.



Figure 5: A Nurse by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

One main character is depicted as a full life-size statue on each side of the plinth, representing the services the institution provides to the nation. The artist depicts a nurse in a contrapposto stance, demonstrating the movement of a syringe being prepared for medication injection. The artist did a great job capturing the resemblance of a nurse as seen in our daily lives, with her uniform nicely executed as she gazes at the syringe. The 8-foot figure is elevated above the ground because it stands on a higher pedestal that allows it to be seen from all sides. Opoku-Mensah stirs the mind as well as the passions with the physique of a true African woman by focusing on how he brings out the body contours and how they relate to one another.



Figure 6: A welder by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

A male welder in a helmet, wearing protective goggles and holding a torch and an electrode is another bronze cast figure on a separate plinth. According to ancient principles (contrapposto), the male figure is shown with his right leg engaged and his left leg relaxed, as the torso twists slightly due to the position taken by the legs. The right arm is held to the side while the left is raised. As the artist makes good use of his modelling tools, his pose suggests movement and energy, which is what makes the works so successful. The human form is realistically expressed in detail to capture all resemblances to meet customer demands, demonstrating a strong sense of physical permanence through the activity he engages in.



Figure 7: A Farmer by Isaac Opoku Mensah

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

A young farmer is depicted in motion in the final bronze figure. The farmer stands in a wide stance, his back foot turned to the side and his front weight-bearing foot pointed straight ahead. As the farmer's muscles tense and twist with sharp drapery, the uneven "skin" enhances the curvature of his muscles, making his trouser appear uneven. As he begins his journey to his farm, the farmer's face is turned down. Modelling, P.O.P casting, and the lost wax (indirect) method were all used by the artist to create all of the metal figures. A parting agent (oil or liquid soap) is applied to the edges and inside the mould sections after giving the modelled work final detailing and taking moulds in P.O.P. The inner surface of the moulds is then lined with beeswax, which is applied by brushing or in the form of rectangular pieces that the artist finger-pressed on the moulds. The wax tubes and gates were then created and attached to key positions on the wax model for pouring the molten metal. With the help of metal rods and chaplets, the entire model was then covered with many layers of sand, cement, and powdered fired clay (grog), and the wax core was fastened to the outer clay investment mould. The wax-invested model was heated to remove all of the wax, resulting in a hollow matrix between the wax core and the outer sand investment, into which the molten metal was finally poured to produce the final bronze cast. The tig welding method is used to join the new bronze cast moulds together. It involves holding a long bronze welding rod in one hand while creating an electric arc with a tungsten electrode torch in the other. Argon gas serves as a shielding gas, assisting in the transfer of heat from the electrode to the bronze while also protecting the welded area from oxygen, which can cause problems. The joined areas are then levelled, sanded, and polished with the grinding machine.

Iconological phase

Professor E.H.K. Akaho, the then-Director General of the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission, unveiled the artefact in September 2011 to commemorate the commissioning of the monument for the graduate school of Nuclear and Allied Sciences University's human resources development. The Ghana Atomic Energy

Commission (GAEC) and the University of Ghana (UG), in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), founded the university in 2006 to combat the growing threat of nuclear knowledge loss in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The school currently has five academic departments that offer twelve accredited Master's and Doctoral programs, as well as a five-month IAEA postgraduate Education Course (PGEC) in Ghanaian Radiation Protection. The massive sculpture on the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences (SNAS) campus, which serves as a mouthpiece, reveals the services the institution provides to society after imparting great knowledge to their students so that they can become resourceful to society. The artist's five figures appear to share a set of characteristics that run through them. The contrapposto figures stand on one straight leg and let their arms fall in opposite directions to create a natural-looking twist in the torso. Not to mention the artist's mentor Auguste Rodin, who appears to have influenced the artist's artistic style as he begins his sculptural journey in "The Walking Man." Rodin creates a bronze statue of Saint John with his body balanced and his right arm extended as a counterweight to his hips' contrapposto turn. Rodin, like Isaac Opoku-figures, Mensah's was interested in representing movement in his statues.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in front of the Supreme Court building of Ghana depicts three bronze busts glittering in the African sunshine. These are statues of judges that were murdered for their jobs. The attack took place in 1982, a time of instability and military control. Every year on June 30th, the memorial ceremony is held in front of the Court and the three statues of murdered judges. A cocoa farmer harvesting cocoa is another eye-catching sculpture by Isaac Opoku-Mensah. The seven-foot statue is located at the administration block of Swedru Senior High School in the Central Region of Ghana. According to the literature, SWESCO is the first Ghana Education Trust (GETFund) secondary school, founded in 1959 by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of the Republic of Ghana. The artist used the cocoa farmer as a model to showcase how the Ghanaian farmer's contribution has enabled the current generation to receive a quality education at Swedru Senior High School through the contributions of the GETFund. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) is a public trust set up by an Act of Parliament in the year 2000. Its core mandate is to provide funding to supplement government efforts for the provision of educational infrastructure and facilities. The paper also touched on the massive monument of two (2) academic graduands towering over three sets of professional statues, each representing the nation's services provided by the graduate school of Nuclear And Allied Sciences. One of Isaac Opoku-Mensah's major contributions is the transmission of knowledge to younger generations.

Since 1992, Opoku-Mensah has assisted several people in gaining knowledge and skills related to the teaching and practice of sculpture through formal and informal education. Through research and publications, he has contributed his vast knowledge to the advancement of education. Among his literary contributions which he co-authored with other researchers include *Voyage of Excellence; Pan-African artistic reflections in Kwame Nkrumah memorial park; Dress Fashion in Feminist and Child Rights Campaigns in Ghanaian public sculptures of the 1990s; Public-Private Partnership: The unanswered calls of the Ghana National Museum and Soapstone Carving Assemblage*. Students' ways of working and thinking have been broadened as a result of this, as well as their ability to develop creative problem-solving skills and communicate thoughts and ideas through the creation of sculptural figures. The authors have recommended that art scholars and students should be encouraged to undertake extensive biographic studies of other Contemporary Ghanaian sculptors in varied techniques such as

carving, construction, assemblage, installation, and fiberglass among others, and appreciate the meanings, philosophies, media, themes, and values of their artefacts.

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