

TOURIST ART: A PRIME PHASE OF SIRIGU ART

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ABSTRACT

The nature of Sirigu's art and its reputation as a major artistic community in the upper east region of Ghana; its decorative murals, basketry and pottery have attracted global admiration through a sense of cultural amusement, distillation and imprint of memories derived from tourists. The study presents, in sections, the findings regarding the indigenous knowledge and the dexterity of the indigenes towards the viability of tourist art in Sirigu. It explores the current development of tourist art in Sirigu, where metaphoric mural images on the walls are being transferred onto a variety of pottery, basketry and fabric canvas used as tourist art products. Tourists who visit, invariably purchase lightweight miniature art products in addition to the education received through the wall paintings, exhibits and narrations of cultural mythologies. The exploratory methodology adopted, used primary data collected through field research, observations and interviews with stakeholders on the development of tourist art. These were recorded using note-taking, voice recordings and picture taking. The information derived were complemented with secondary data collected through literature search. The highest level of realisation for sustainability was that the raw materials used in Sirigu tourist art, were organic in nature, obtained from the environment and locally processed. The study indicates that the pursuit of tourist art has potential to yield economic derivative and set the path in promoting its cultural identity through the expression of the indigenous art. To maximise the economic benefits, the research indicates a further exploration of the dissimilar characters of art which requires further development to ensure active and sustainable tourism art. The study also suggests the incorporation of such indigenous crafts into formal training so as to encourage inquiry, diversity in the learning of indigenous artwork, design and engineering to provide employment avenues relevant to self, and the community.

Keywords: Tourist art; Sirigu; cultural tourism; metaphoric mural images.