

The National War Museum, Umuahia and its Annex as Galleries of Artistic War Historiography in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed the possibility that museums could stand as galleries for artistic historiography in organizations and countries, with the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex (Ojukwu Bunker) in perspective. The specific objectives of the study were: (i) to find out the predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies, (ii) to ascertain the extent to which the museums are rich in artistic historiography, and (iii) to foster approaches by which both museums could be made stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria. The cross-sectional and historical research designs were combined for the study. 140 respondents were treated to the purposively designed questionnaire. The findings showed that the museums in view are credible galleries of artistic data for heritage studies and that to a large extent; both museums are rich in artistic historiography. The National War Museum, Umuahia, and its annex are reliable reference points for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Museums, Photo-sense, Artistic historiography, Purposively*

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Background to the Study

The National War Museum is located at Ebite Amafor, Isingwu, Umuahia North Local Government Area in the current Abia State of Nigeria. Its Annex is located at Ugwuachara, specifically at the former residence of Dr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara, former premier of the Eastern region of Nigeria (1959-1966). The museum houses the Armed Forces gallery covering pavilions for the Army, Air Force and Navy at the museum, as well as relics of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. The traditional warfare gallery shows relics of precolonial traditional warfare.

Museums are sheltered facilities where artifacts are preserved for future reference or consultations. Today there are very many types of museums, from one clime to another. Definitions of museum are dependent on the kind of materials being exhibited in particular. In other words, museums do not only store and show artifacts, fossils, art or archaeological findings. Porter and Alexander (2007) defined museum is an institution that cares for (conserves) a collection of artifacts and other objects of scientific, artistic, cultural, or historical importance and makes them available for public viewing through exhibits that may be permanent or temporary. Oziogu (2012) defined Museum as “An institution, building or room for storing, preserving and exhibiting artistic, cultural, historical or scientific objects.”

Levinson (2003) stressed that “Art is a vehicle for the expression or communication of emotions and ideas, a means for exploring and appreciating formal elements for their own sake, as mimesis or representation.” It would not be out of place, also, to refer to museums as the exhibition houses for art, culture and history. Museums in their concrete cataloging and preservation of visual culture are, by every stretch of imagination, educational institutions. The design and exhibition implications of housing tangible and intangible history are the indices for appraising museums as galleries of artistic historiography.

Oziogu (2012) asserted that the term, museum is “Derived from the Greek word *Museion*, which means, abode of muses. Muses were the daughters of Zeus, the king of the Olympian deities. Since they were very good at singing and dancing, they helped men to forget their sorrows and anxieties through these activities.” Findlen (1994), expatiated thus: “Hence, *Museion* came to be associated with a place where man's mind found rest and aloofness from day-to-day affairs of life. Early museums began from private collections by wealthy individuals, families or institutions of art, of rare or curious natural objects and artifacts. These are often displayed in the so-called wonder rooms or cabinets of curiosities. The oldest such museum in evidence was the Ennigaldi-Nana's Museum, dating from C.530 BC and devoted to Mesopotamia antiquities.”

During the pre-historic age, cave paintings and stone etchings were among the first noticeable works of man-made art, in which his deeds, interactions and desires were documented. There were also pendants, amulets and anklets, worn along, as mankind ventured through the early occupations of hunting and agriculture. The art culture of pre-historic Africa was made tangible in such activities as body painting, tattooing, mud architecture, hair styling, wood carving, fabric weaving, land border marking, and the fabrication of agricultural and hunting

tools. Global civilizations, in the words of Levinson (2003), “Encompass momentary and unforeseeable shifts in a people's traditional administration, worldview and acculturation.” The import of the statement is that as long as art traditions continue to evolve, their preservation approaches also mutate, even, sometimes, unpredictably. It is sufficient to say that from the cradle, the preservation of the historio-cultural legacies of mankind, Africa and Nigeria alike, was encapsulated in his artistic tangible storage culture. The concept of what is today, known as museum, was not known to Africa in its cultural cradle, but there were, ab initio, many approaches to preserving artifacts and historiography in very artistically executed and historical sequences.

Contemporary Contestations about Museums

From the original intents of housing artifacts and historical materials, the purposes for establishing museums have become multifaceted. The question of what or not, should be preserved, remains debatable among scholars, especially the enthusiasts of traditional and modern religion. To some members of the modern theological schools of thought, relics of masquerades and shrine objects are not supposed to be preserved; they should be burnt and forgotten, as they are considered objects of pagan worship. Likewise, some enthusiasts of traditional religion frown at the idea of bringing masks and replications of gods into museums for public viewing, instead of keeping them in shrines for consultation and divination. Both sides of religion are usually not in support of establishing mask and effigy art museums, but for different reasons.

In a modern sense, however, museums are classified beyond the preservation of artifacts and ethnological materials. Marstine (2008) posited that theorists call for the transformation of the museum from a site of worship and awe to one of discourse and critical reflection that is committed to examining unsettling histories with sensitivity to all parties. Museums have varying aims (Findlen, 1989), ranging from serving researchers and specialists to serving the public. The continuing acceleration in the digitization of information, combined with the increasing capacity of digital information storage, is causing the traditional model of museums, as static "collections of collections" of three-dimensional specimens and artifacts, to expand to virtual exhibits and high-resolution images of their collections for perusal, study, and exploration from any place with internet access. The position of Findlen (1989) is probably strange to some traditional peace and conflict resolution experts who frown at preserving war relics because they believe that such tangible preservation are capable of evoking emotions among retired war generals, amputees and other victims of war, thereby reigniting bad blood among former warring parties, which is capable of proposing another war, for retaliatory reasons.

But there is a category of museum tourists who believe that visual learning about a country's experiences is the only way for those who did not experience a certain history to experience it in a contemporary logic. This is where art comes in. Artistic war historiography refers to the preservation of war relics and history in artistically attractive ways. So, in the event that a museum is not meant to shelter art and artifacts, whatever the museum is meant for could still be attained, using artistic methods, as the National War Museum, Umuahia and its Annex,

exemplify. Museum services in Nigeria serve as a major source of conservation and preservation of its cultural heritage. It is a truism that Nigeria in Africa is endowed with great cultural heritage, which needs to be adequately documented. Evidence of this can be traced to the production of Nok terracotta, Benin bronze casting, Ife terracotta and Igbo Ukwu Art, which justify the fact that Nigeria had ancient civilizations that competed with the Romans and Greeks, but which did not come to limelight until the 1890's when the British soldiers invaded the Benin kingdom and some of the art treasures were looted. Against this backdrop, an effort to safeguard the sanctity of this heritage made Kenneth Murray intensify efforts at establishing a museum of art and antiquity at Jos in 1943 (Oladumiye and Adediji, 2013).

Art historians and educationists believe that the preservation of relics or their illustrations could make learning about a country's historical bearings a lot more impressive. Such directly tangible and visually oriented approaches to learning, not only help to quicken historiographic knowledge transfer, they could also dissuade young people from indulging in activities capable of igniting another war. In effect a museum is not a house of fetish religious findings, neither is it an extension of a shrine. The purpose of establishing each museum determines what is housed within. However, when a museum is not directly about art and culture, the contents of such a museum always relate to artistic historiography.

Art in Museum Education

Museum, from the didactic perspective of Hooper (2008), is an institution that can offer an educational experience across a wide range of variables and in relation to a wide range of institutions and organizations. "The meaning of museum education is that museums provide a learning situation in which the visitors experience learning." From the foregoing, it is deducible that there is a generation of thinkers who understand museums as vital non-formal aspects of extracurricular education, and this is a fact. Faleti (2017) acknowledged that "In the classroom, educators can present information to students in many ways, whether via lecture, video, or readings. Field trips can not only entertain; they also serve as a supplement for materials discussed in class."

Museum education is a specialized field devoted to developing and strengthening museums' roles as public institutions. The purpose of museum education is to enhance the visitors' ability to understand and appreciate museum collections. In terms of education, going to a museum can bring what is taught in schools to life, by seeing artifacts or paintings for example (Tezcan and Akmehmet, 2007). Museums engage and educate the community. Museum exhibits, inspire interest in an area of study, item, time, or an idea - but there is more going on in museums concerning education than one might think. Schools rely heavily on museums to enhance their curriculum (Mena, 2010). In contemporary art and cultural education, formal school systems don't suffice in providing pedagogies that are required, excursions and tourism are complementary. Art museum learning, according to Mena (2010), "Opens students up to new ways of seeing, experiencing and connecting to themselves, others, and the broader world. Students who visit museums often develop an appreciation for cultural organizations and are more likely to use museums as a resource for life-long learning in the arts." In visiting non-formal art educational institutions, like museums, knowledge could be acquired by

interrogatory and investigative approaches, other than the circular approaches available in institutions of art and heritage learning.

Faleti (2017) avers that museums are one such location that is constantly visited by students, and for good reason. The importance of museums for students lies in the fact that it helps to enrich their learning in various fields, gain experiences in a new environment, and provide a unique setting for educators to teach students a wide range of topics. Stiner (2006) posited that students who have difficulties learning at school could turn out to be quick learners in museums, since intelligence and senses are used in all possible ways in museums, just as Douglas (2008) averred that museum education is a veritable tool to promote education and impact positively on humankind.

If children are learning about *Igbo Ukwu*, for example and they visit an exhibition full of roped bronze and clay pots, they are more likely to find it interesting and want to learn more about it. Research also shows that those who have had firsthand experience of such information are more likely to retain it in later life. Museums can then be an extremely valuable source of creativity, particularly organizations such as art galleries or photography exhibitions, as many people find they are inspired and subsequently want to try such activities themselves (Tezcan and Akmeahmet, 2007). In fostering a future for museum education, Bond (2006) posited that museums of the future will engage with their visitors in the museum, with the physical spaces outside of the museum and with virtual audiences they build around specific subjects. Museums in the future will have to respond faster to social and economic change.

The Problem

The obvious misconception of museums as houses that shelter forgone and moribund materials is widening the gap in contemporary heritage studies. The non-inclusive educational approach in curricular design, especially at the primary and post primary school levels, is yielding more credence to the suddenness which faces tertiary students when archaeological; heritage and cultural studies glare them in the face. The need, therefore to establish reliable contemporary trajectories of heritage art, history and archaeological resources cannot also be over-emphasized, for students and other researchers alike. Regrettably, traditional art relics, heritage sites and museums in Nigeria are managed quite minimally. Some once functional and educationally resourceful museums are now left to rot away while their artifacts are carted away in reckless expeditions. It should be noted that even in recent years, artifacts and objects of cultural value were being stolen from shrines and customary museums by indigenes who in turn, sell them to foreign buyers for big money. This is reminiscent of the carting away of rich Nigerian art works by the British colonialists at the turn of the *civilization* of Africa. The spate of modern Christianity, and the bastardization of artifacts as fetish and evil, also made a leeway for the generational erosion of art and cultural values in Nigeria. The gaping challenges therefore prompted the undertaking of this research.

Methods and Materials

Research Design

This study is first of all, a mixed-methods research, meaning a combination of the qualitative and quantitative study designs. Specifically, the cross-sectional and historical research

designs were combined for this study. Wang & Cheng (2020) acknowledged that cross-sectional studies are observational studies that analyze data from a population at a single point in time. Unlike other types of observational studies, cross-sectional studies do not follow individuals up over time.

Cross-sectional studies look at data at a single point in time. The participants in this type of study are selected based on particular variables. Cross-sectional studies are typically used in developmental psychology, but they are useful in many other areas as well, including social science and education (Cherry, 2025). In addition to being an observation-based research, cross-sectional research is used to study different variables in one group or different groups at the same time. Its data collection is done without manipulating variables and at a single spot in time, not over an extended period. It aims to identify characteristics, conditions and associations by observing and analyzing them. Cross-sectional research is suitable for establishing subsisting evidence. It is not used to determine cost and effect.

On the other hand, historical research permits researchers to study past events that precede and affect the present while systematically investigating their information or data sources. According to Spilackova (2012) historical research builds on identification, analysis and interpretation of old texts. Constructing old texts is one of the functions of hermeneutics. It is a scientific method which seeks to understand a text and to interpret it to other people. When interpreting, it is important to know historical connections and the context of the text being under study. Only in this way it is possible to understand its parts. Berg (2012) posited that historical research, sometimes referred to as historiography, means investigation of elements from history, while Hendl (2005) clarifies that historical research is one of the basic approaches of qualitative research.

In the context of this research, the frequency of attitudes from tourists visiting the National War Museum, Umuahia and its Annex was meant to determine whether the relics on display could suffice for art historiography. Since cross-sectional research could either be conducted quantitatively, qualitatively or by mixed-methods, this study specifically used the cross-sectional mixed-methods approach because of the human population involved. The qualitative aspect of the study was mainly embedded in the historical analysis of illustrations and photo data, meaning the museum contents. The quantitative aspect rests on cross-sectional assessment of the respondents' data frequency and its discussions.

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to assess the grounds upon which the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex could stand as galleries for artistic historiography in Nigeria. The specific research objectives were:

- i. To find out the predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies.
- ii. To ascertain the extent to which the National War Museum and its annex are rich in artistic historiography.
- iii. To foster approaches by which both museums could be made stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Accordingly, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies?
- ii. To what extent are the National War Museum and its annex rich in artistic historiography?
- iii. By what approaches could both museums be made stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria?

Scope

The study was carried out in Umuahia, Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria, precisely at the National War Museum, Ebite Amafor, Isingwu, Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State and the National War Museum, Annex, at the former residence of late Dr. Michael Iheonukara Okpara, at Ugwuachara. Areas of coverage include historical contents, systems update, cataloguing structure, artifacts content, war relics, people-orientation ethics, as well as modalities for enhancing materials on ground. Also interrogated were the circumstances that warrant or repel museums as resource for art and heritage studies.

Instruments and Procedure for Data collection

The first instrument for the study was the Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Questionnaire (GA-WH-Q), designed for information polling. It was distributed and returned both physically and online. Section A of the questionnaire contained the Participants' initial Demography, meaning the initial population distribution records of the participants under the indices: Age, Marital Status, Residence, Vocation and Purposes for visiting. Data under this section were for the records, not calculation of any sort. The Section B of the questionnaire contained the 3 research questions, addressed with 10 answer options under each, making a total of 30 rows for polling responses in the Likert-like format of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Data collated under this section were converted to percentages, prior to discussion. See Appendix 1.

The second instrument was the Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Picture Plate (GA-WH-PP), an image capturing frame, for relevant photographs, prior to analysis. Some of the GA-WH-PPs are designed to contain single photographs while others contain more. See Appendix 2. The third instrument was the data frequency and percentage translation table, Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Frequency Percentage Rating Table (GA-WH-FPRT), used to distribute findings, as pertained to each of the research questions. It was a tripartite framing of the questionnaire, with subsections under each of the response boxes, for percentage conversion of data frequencies. See Appendix 3. The fourth instrument was the Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Participation Eligibility and Convenience Sampling Chart (GA-WH-PE-CSC), designed for inclusion and exclusion eligibility, as well as population convenience sampling tool. See Appendix 4 and Table 1.

Data were analyzed using the direct percentage conversions in the order of: (SA) Strongly Agree; (A) Agree; (D) Disagree; (SA) Strongly Disagree. This was done not just to ascertain

whether or not a respondent agreed with a given line of option or answer, but to know in what category of affirmative or non-affirmative stance he or she stood. A total of 228 questionnaires were distributed to staff of the museums and visitors, and all were returned.

Population and Sampling

Initially, there were 45 museum staff that showed interest in participating in the study, 183 were museum tourists and other visitors met at different times in both museum compounds. When all 228 questionnaires were returned, it was discovered that 88 of them did not meet up with the participation eligibility criteria which also formed the basis for convenience sampling. The convenience sampling method was chosen because it is a convenience-based non-probability sampling technique which provides for participants selection based on availability. As the name implies, convenience sampling is performed based on factors like: limited resources, time constraint, distances and economic limitations involved in field work. Also, in convenience sampling, research participants are selected based on their willingness to participate or accessibility. From 228, the sample size population for the study was 140 based on the participation eligibility criteria, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1: Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Participation Eligibility and Convenience Sampling Chart (GA-WH-PE-CSC)

Non-eligibility clauses ►	Age		Incomplete data		Multiple ticks per box		Multiple and late returns		Sample size, by Convenience	
	Below 13 yrs	Above 80 yrs	Empty single boxes	No choice b/w optional boxes	Ticking more than once in a box	Ticking more than one box in a row	Mistakenly given more than one questionnaire	Returned after collations have been made	Voided	Approved
Initial population										
228	4	-	13	6	25	9	7	24	88	140
Summary: Initial Population - 228; Failed eligibility and sampling test - 88; Sample size – 140										

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

Analysis of Initial Demographic Data

Data elicited from the Section A of the questionnaires show the distribution of indices under: Age, Marital Status, Residence, Vocation, and Purposes for visiting. All the respondents were within the stipulated participation age bracket of 13-80 years old. There were 35 singles and 105 married participants. 42 were resident in Abia State while 98 lived outside. There were 92 students, 18 civil servants, 30 self-employed and no business man among the participants. 19 of the respondents visited for journalism purposes, 76 for educational research, 45 for recreation and excursion, and none for content creation purposes. For the participants' initial demography, see Table 2.

Table 2: Participants' Initial Demography

Age (13-80 accepted)			Marital Status		Residence		Vocation				Purposes for visiting			
Below 13 yrs	Above 80 yrs	Within 13 - 80 yrs	Single	Married	Abia	Non-Abia	Students	Civil servants	Self employed	Businessmen	Journalism	Education al research	Recreation and excursion	Content creation
-	-	140	35	105	42	98	92	18	30	-	19	76	45	-

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

Results

Table 3: Percentage rating of data on the predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies (n=140)

	Predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
1	Geographical locations of the Museums	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (9.3%)	127 (90.7%)
2	Contents of home-made war crafts	132 (94.3%)	8 (5.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3	Access to military security	7(5%)	2 (1.5%)	20 (14.3%)	111 (79.2%)
4	Library sections for scripted and photographic history	125 (89.2%)	10 (7.2%)	5 (3.6%)	0 (0%)
5	Relics of civil war events	130 (92.8%)	10 (7.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6	Artistic documentation of traditional warfare materials	112 (80%)	28 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7	Horticultural decoration of museum buildings	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (2.8%)	136 (97.2%)
8	Evidence of civilian acculturations	8 (5.6%)	13 (9.3%)	18 (12.8%)	101 (72.1%)
9	Preservation of Mummified dead bodies	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	140 (100%)
10	Documentation of sectional civilizations	0 (0%)	6 (4.4%)	4 (2.8%)	130 (92.8%)

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

The second phase of data analysis borders on calibrations of responses collated from the respondents and their percentage conversions. The spread is in tandem with the order of the research objectives, as shown on Tables 3.

Data spread on Table 3, under the first option column shows that *geographical locations of the museums* do not make the museums veritable as information pool for art and heritage studies, with 127 respondents (90.7%) out of 140 strongly disagreed, and 3 (9.3%) disagreed. None accented in the affirmative. The second option; *contents of home-made war crafts* had a whopping 132 respondents out of 140 strongly agreeing. This translates to 94.3% of the

population. 8 respondents (5.7%) merely agreed and none responded in the non-affirmative. *Access to military security* had 111 (92.2%) respondents who disagreed strongly, reflecting that it is not a reason for museums to become information pools for art and heritage studies. 20 (14.3%) disagreed, 2 (1.5%) agreed and 7 (5%) strongly agreed. On the *creation of library sections for scripted and photographic history*, 125 (89.2%) strongly agreed. 10 (7.2%) agreed, 5 (3.6%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed. Keeping *relics of civil war events* was well accepted with 130 (92.8%) strongly agreeing and 8 (5.7%) agreeing. None responded negatively.

Artistic documentation of traditional warfare materials was also well accepted, with a population of 112 (80%) having strongly agreed and 28 (20%) agreed. No participant equally responded negatively. Horticultural decoration of museum buildings was not accepted; 136 (97.2%) strongly disagreed and 4 (2.8%) disagreed. *Evidence of civilian acculturations* was not well accepted with 101 (72.1%) having strongly disagreed and 18 (12.8%) disagreed. However, 13 (9.3%) agreed and 8 (5.6%) strongly agreed. On *Presentation of Mummified dead bodies*, all 140 respondents (100%) strongly disagreed. Documentation of sectional civilizations had 130 (92.8%) strongly disagreeing and 4 (2.8%) disagreeing. However, 6 (4.4%) merely agreed.

Table 4: Percentage rating of data frequency on the extent to which the National War Museum and its annex are rich in artistic historiography (n=140)

	The extent to which the National War Museum and its annex are rich in artistic historiography	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
11	There are no more traces of heritage contents in the museums	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (7.2%)	130 (92.8%)
12	The 2 museums are only rich in Igbo heritages	20 (14.3%)	15 (10.7%)	5 (3.6%)	100 (71.4%)
13	The 2 museums bear rich national heritage contents	100 (71.4%)	5 (3.6%)	35 (25%)	0 (0%)
14	Socio-cultural preservations in the museums are just scientific	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	52 (37.2%)	88 (62.8%)
15	The 2 museums are too few to reckon with	60 (42.8%)	33 (23.6%)	7(5%)	40 (28.6%)
16	Children and infancy-related cultures are lacking	28 (20%)	12 (8.6%)	50 (35.7%)	50 (35.7%)
17	Storage of intangible cultures are not digital enough	112 (80%)	18 (12.8%)	2 (1.5%)	8 (5.6%)
18	Art exhibitions are not being hosted regularly	40 (28.6%)	40 (28.6%)	50 (35.7%)	10 (7.2%)
19	The 2 museums are more of war museums than art but artistic historiography is obvious	130 (92.8%)	10 (7.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

Data on Table 4 reveal that option 1, which states that *there are no more traces of heritage contents in the 2 museums* was generally rejected, with 130 respondents translating to 92.8% having strongly disagreed and 10 (7.2%) disagreed. None responded in the affirmative. The second option which states that *the 2 museums are only rich in Igbo heritages* was not also accepted. 100

(71.4%) strongly disagreed, 5 (3.6%) disagreed, 15 (10.7%) agreed 20 (14.3%) strongly agreed. The third option which states that *museums in the 2 museums bear rich national heritage contents*, 100 (71.4%) strongly agreed, 5 (3.6%) agreed, 35 (25%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed. The fourth option states that *Socio-cultural preservations in the museums are just scientific* had 88 respondents (62.8%) having strongly disagreed and 52 (37.2%) merely disagreeing. None responded positively. The fifth option which states that *the 2 museums are too few to reckon with*, had a near-even distribution of data, with 60 (42.8%) strongly agreeing and 33 (23.6%) merely agreeing. However, 40 (28.6%) strongly disagreed and 7 (5%) disagreed.

Table 5: Percentage rating of data on the approaches by which both museums could become stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria (n=140)

	Approaches for the National War Museum and its annex in Umuahia to become stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria?	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
21	Preservation should be in pictures more than artifacts	4 (2.8%)	6 (4.4%)	60 (42.8%)	70 (50%)
22	Preserving myths and legends in modern contents	2 (1.5%)	2 (1.5%)	16 (11.4%)	120 (85.7%)
23	Patronizing artists and preserving contemporary art	70 (50%)	20 (14.3%)	20 (14.3%)	30 (21.4%)
24	Digitizing the museums for enhanced internet accessibility	50 (35.7%)	40 (28.6%)	40 (28.6%)	10 (7.2%)
25	Repainting the buildings with attractive colours	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	140 (100%)
26	Employing graduates of science and technology disciplines	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	140 (100%)
27	Keeping to analogue cataloguing and preservation	13 (9.3%)	7 (5%)	20 (14.3%)	100 (71.4%)
28	Encouraging tourism by employing well-trained curators	70 (50%)	36 (25.7%)	14 (10%)	10 (7.2%)
29	Making mural paintings around the museums	8 (5.7%)	2 (1.5%)	90 (64.2%)	40 (28.6%)

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

On the option that states that *children and infancy-related cultures are lacking in the 2 museums*, 50 (31.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed apiece, giving the negative responses a cumulative of 100 respondents. On the positive response scale, 28 (20%) strongly agreed, while 12 (8.6%) agreed. The ninth option which states that *the 2 museums more of war museums than art but with artistic historiography* was well positively responded to, with 130 (92.8%) having strongly agreed and 10 (7.2%) merely agreed. No one disagreed at all. The 10th option which states that *the main museum is more encompassing*, a replica of data distribution on the ninth option occurs, with 130 (92.8%) having strongly agreed and 10 (7.2%). Again, no one opted for the non-affirmative.

Data on Table 5 shows that in considering the approaches by which both museums could become stronger resources for Peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria the first option which suggests that *preservation should be in pictures more than artifacts* had 70 respondents out of 140 (50%) strongly disagreeing while 60 (42.8%) disagreed. A paltry 6 (4.4%) agreed while 4 (2.8%) strongly agreed. This makes it a rejected option. The next option which suggests preserving myths and legends in modern contents had 120 (85.7%) having strongly disagreed. 16 (11.4%) disagreed while 2 (1.5%) agreed and strongly disagreed apiece. *Patronizing artists and preserving contemporary art* had 70 (50%) strongly supporting that it is a good consideration point. 20 (14.3%) agreed and disagreed apiece while 30 (21.4%) strongly disagreed. On the option of *digitizing the museums for enhanced internet accessibility*, 50 (35.7%) strongly agreed, 40 (28.6%) agreed and disagreed apiece while only 10 (7.2%) strongly disagreed. This is an accepted option.

On *employing graduates of science and technology disciplines*, all 140 respondents (100%) strongly disagreed. On *repainting the museum building with attractive colours*, all 140 (100%) respondents strongly disagreed. On *keeping to analogue cataloguing and preservation* 100 (71.4%) strongly disagreed, 20 (14.3%) disagreed, 7 (5%) agreed while 13 (9.3%) strongly agreed, making it an unacceptable option. *Encouraging tourism by employing well-trained curators*, 70 (50%) strongly agreed, 36 (25.7%) agreed whereas 14 (10%) agreed. Only 10 (7.2%) strongly disagreed. Amazingly, *making mural paintings around the museums* had 40 (28.6%) strongly disagreeing, 90 (64.2%) disagreeing, 2 (1.5%) disagreeing and only 8 (5.7%) strongly disagreed. On the option of receiving visitors only in Nigerian languages, 120 (85.7%) strongly objected and 10 (7.2%) disagreed and agreed respectively. This makes it a rejected option.

Discussion of Findings

Data available justifies that the National War Museum and its annex in Umuahia do not have artistic historiography credence because of their (i) geographical locations, (ii) access to military security, (iii) horticultural decoration of the museum buildings, (iv) evidence of civilian acculturations, (v) presentation of mummified dead bodies, and (v) documentation of sectional civilizations. However, the museums have significant levels of artistic historiography because of the following indices; (i) contents of home-made war crafts, (ii) creation of library sections for scripted and photographic history, (iii) availability of relics of civil war events, and (iv) artistic documentation of traditional warfare materials.

On the second interrogation, which bordered on the extent to which the National War Museum and its annex are rich in artistic historiography, the following points were rejected: (i) there are no more traces of heritage contents in the 2 museums, (ii) the 2 museums are only rich in Igbo heritages, and (iii) children and infancy-related cultures are lacking in the 2 museums. The following indices got near mid-range responses; (i) The 2 museums bear rich national heritage contents, (ii) socio-cultural preservations in the museums are just scientific, and (iii) the 2 museums are too few to reckon with. Therefore, while the near-even responses mildly qualify, the rating was mainly upon the following; (i) the 2 museums are more of war museums than art, but they have artistic historiography, and (ii) the main museum is more encompassing.

Regarding the approaches by which both museums could become stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria, the following options were rejected: (i) preserving myths and legends in modern contents, (ii) employing graduates of science and technology-related disciplines, (iii) keeping to analogue cataloguing and preservation, (iv) repainting the museum buildings with attractive colours, (v) making mural paintings around the museums, (vi) preservation made in pictures more than artifacts, *and* (vi) receiving visitors only in Nigerian languages. The following options were accepted; (i) patronizing artists and preserving contemporary art, (ii) digitizing the museums for enhanced internet accessibility, and (iii) encouraging tourism by employing well-trained curators.

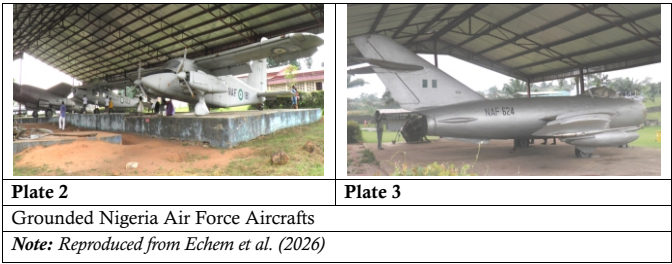
Pictographic Data

The following photographs of selected museum contents were taken to buttress the qualitative aspect of the study. The respondents however had on sight experience of the relics.



Plate 1
The National War Museum, Umuahia
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>

Plate 1 evokes cold shivers as a visitor walks into this edifice. In the building are different departments of the museum; curatorial, gallery, bunker, heritage, monuments and outdoor exhibition.



Plates 2 and 3 shows some of the aircrafts were used to execute the war by the Nigerian troops. Heavy bombardments were executed by these aircrafts that are now moribund. NAF 102, 181, 624 and others are exhibited at the museum.

	
Plate 4	Plate 5
Ojukwu bucket also known as <i>Ogbu n'Igwe</i>	The Biafran Navy Patrol Craft
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

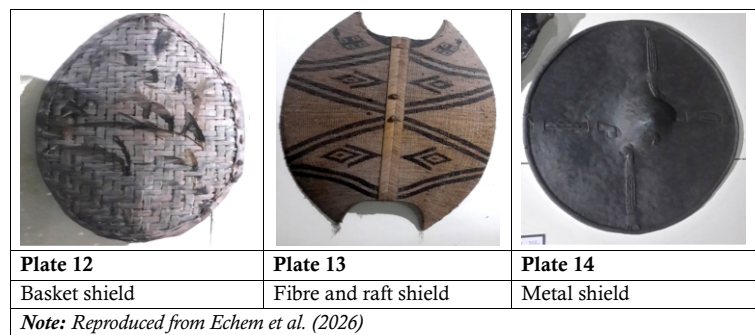
Plate 4 shows the Biafran weapon of mass destruction, *Ogbu n'igwe* (Mass killer), created by Biafran engineers. It was famed beyond Africa for its exploits. Plate 5 shows the Biafran ship constructed by the Ministry of Works and Transport and then handed over to Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle by General Alexander Ogbemudia who was the Minister for Transport. The navy preferred to call it 'Patrol craft' instead of ship. It ran on speed boat engines and was named NNS Bonny.

	
Plate 6	Plate 7
Biafran ferret crafts	
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

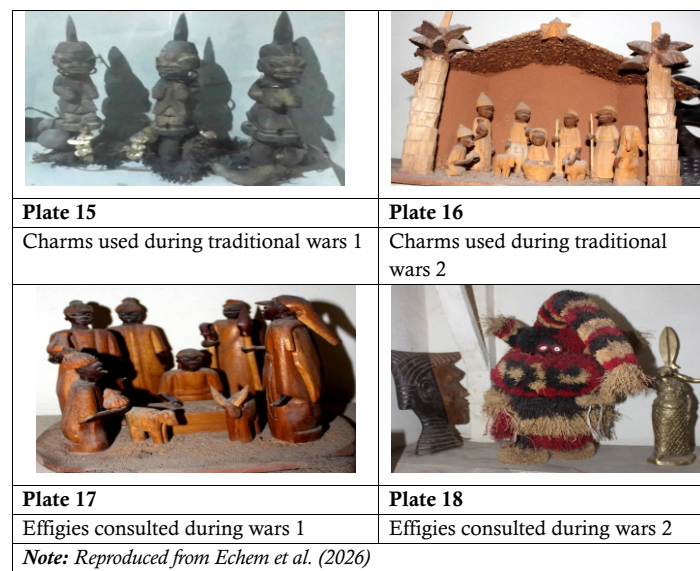
Plates 6 and 7 reflect the ferrets. The creativity and ingenuity of Biafran engineers was well displayed when the craft was finished.

	
Plate 8	Plate 9
The Biafran Bazooka	Biafran armoured tank 1
	
Plate 10	Plate 11
Biafran armoured tank 2	Biafran armoured tank 3
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

The Ferrets and the Bazookas were mainly man-propelled rocket launchers. Both Biafran and Nigerian sides had them. Plate 8 shows one of them, as owned by Biafra. Plates 9, 10 and 11 show the armoured tanks constructed by the Biafran military engineers. When the first one without nuzzle was constructed, there was a need to improve on it with the insertion of nuzzle for efficient missile launch. The second, nuzzled one was constructed and it was still criticized for not being able to spin on its own axis. Next, the third and rotating launcher was constructed.



Plates 12, 13 and 14 reveal some traditional armaments preserved in the museum. The locally crafted shields were weapons of traditional warfare in Igbo land. Metal smiths' men had to develop the metal version after the vulnerability of the woven ones became more obvious in the course of many communal wars.



Traditional and communal wars in Igbo land are not bereft of divinations and use of charms. Warriors were either taken to shrines for oath taking and fortification or given pendants and body marks that signify protection and power. In some places, night masquerades were part of camouflage attacks. Pendant and effigy art is a vital aspect of art-in traditional Igbo warfare.

	
Plate 19	Plate 20
Den guns used during traditional wars	Local spears and arrows
	
Plate 21	Plate 22
Local spears and arrows 2	Charmed pendants worn by lead warriors
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

Spears and arrows used during local were not as common as cutlasses and den guns. Expectedly charmed, some of them have jagged edges for flesh tearing or hooking, as shown on plates 19, 20, 21, and 22. Such local 'rockets' are better launched by skilled warriors.


Plate 23
The Radio Biafra Transmitter
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>

The defunct Biafra Republic was not lacking in information dissemination. The above is the radio transmitter used in Umuahia, (though moved from Enugu). The implication is that Biafran journalists were working under protection while the war raged.


Plate 24
The National War Museum, Annex, Umuahia
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>

The metal gate and the oversetting cement entablature in nature. The annex is the former house of late Dr Michael Okpara which he donated to Biafra for administrative purposes, and later converted to a museum, commonly called the Ojukwu bunker, because of the

subterranean structure within. The bunker houses mainly, civil war memoirs in photographs and illustrations.



Plates 25 and 26 show the busts of two prominent Biafran figures in front of the building: Gen. Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, former Biafran leader, and Dr Michael Iheonukara Okpara, former premier of the Eastern region of Nigeria. Till date, Ojukwu's bust immortalizes the war general, even as the National War Museum, Annex is named after him as *Ojukwu bunker*. The statue of Dr Michael Okpara, situated beside that of Ojukwu, is an appreciation by the government of Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, ex-governor of Abia State, to the family of the late Dr. Okpara who actually donated his house to the government of Biafra as administrative building, after the fall of Enugu. The gift paved way for Umuahia to become a substantive capital thenceforth.

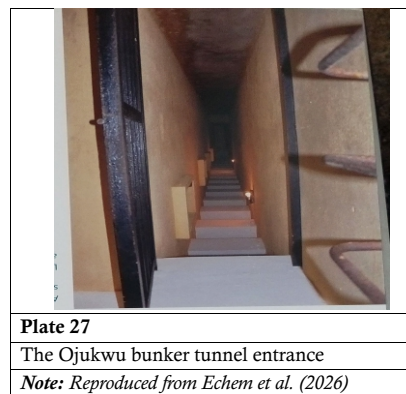


Plate 27 shows the entrance to the tunnel, a dangerous alley designed for camouflage and safety. The groovy entrance mystifies the body as one walks through. It is reminiscent of escape from imminent danger through the only way possible: *the hard way*. Characterized by narrowness and downward moving stairs, it evokes both fear and safety.

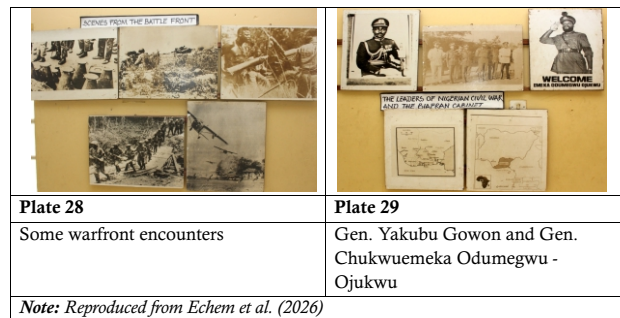
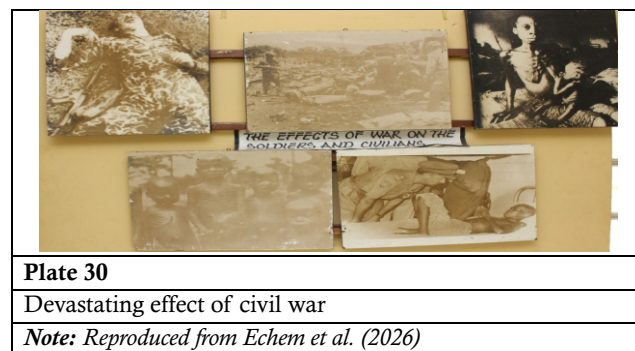
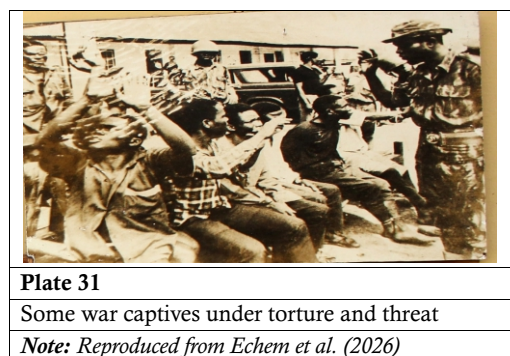


Plate 28 shows some scenes the from battle front. The bravery of those who took the photographs while the battle raged, (journalists or soldiers) must be commended. Plate 29 shows relics of wartime photographs of the two leaders. General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and General Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu of Biafra. Under each picture is the map of their countries, and in-between them is a photograph of soldiers, likely taken before the war, during peacetime.



Effects of the civil war were so devastating that hunger and sickness became obvious weapons. Images on Plate 30, apart from documenting the gory effects of war are aimed at dissuading war mongers from calling for another war. The attached inscription shows that both soldiers and civilians were casualties of the war.



Civilians on both Nigeria and Biafra sides were not spared the harshness of soldiers anywhere they met, especially when captured during the war. Apart from offences, as shown on Plate 31,

the captives were either spies, conspirators or those trying to flee from war services. At some point, young men were conscripted into the army for want of fighters.

	
Plate 32	Plate 33
Soldiers on camouflage mission: civil war memoirs	Solders punishing a captured civilian offenders
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

Plate 32 shows one of the camouflage strategies used for day and night engagements during the war. Palm fronds and leaves were among the scarce camouflage materials used. They were used to cover military trucks, soldiers' hideouts and even individual places of hiding. Plate 33 shows some prisoners of war or those trying to escape military services being punished. A lot of people became conspirators with enemy camps, for food and money, due to hunger and starvation.

	
Plate 34	Plate 35
Negotiation for ceasefire 1	Negotiation for ceasefire 2
<i>Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)</i>	

At some point senior ranking officers began to make frantic efforts to stop the war. Plates 34 and 35 show clips of meetings. Such meetings were not easy to convene at that time; angry nerves had to be calmed, at least.

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All the authors made inputs to the research, from ideation to conclusion. No aspect of individual contribution was regarded inferior to the others. The manuscript was read and approved by all the authors in no particular order.

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Conflict of Interests

There was no conflict of interests confirmed by the authors.

Ethical considerations

The authorities of the understudied museums were consulted, and permission obtained before the commencement of the studies. Also, the questionnaire respondents, being selected museums staff and visitors were informed, and their consents, obtained, prior to sending of the questionnaires.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Questionnaire (GA-WH-Q)

QUESTIONNAIRE									
SECTION A									
PERSONAL DATA									
Instruction: Please provide the needed information by filling out the corresponding space or ticking [✓] appropriately. Only persons within 13-80 years are eligible to participate.									
Gender:	Male		Age:	[write]	Residence:	Abia		Marital status:	Single
	Female					Non-Abia			Married
Vocation:	Student		Civil servant		Self-employed		Business		
Purpose of visitation:	Journalism		Educational research		Recreation and excursion		Content creation		
SECTION B									
Instruction: Please, study the statements under each subsection, before responding. Also tick appropriately to give answers to each option. Tick [✓] in the appropriate column to the right of the option which corresponds with the degree to which you accept or reject the statement under consideration.									
Predominant factors that qualify the National War Museum, Umuahia and its annex as galleries of artistic data for Nigerian heritage studies					Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
1	Geographical location of the Museums								
2	Contents of home-made war crafts								
3	Access to military security								
4	Library sections for scripted and photographic history								
5	Relics of civil war events								
6	Artistic documentation of traditional warfare materials								
7	Horticultural decoration of museum buildings								
8	Evidence of civilian acculturations								
9	Preservation of Mummified dead bodies								
10	Documentation of sectional civilizations								
The extent to which the National War Museum and its annex are rich in artistic historiography									
11	There are no more traces of heritage contents in the museums								
12	The 2 museums are only rich in Igbo heritages								
13	The 2 museums bear rich national heritage contents								
14	Socio-cultural preservations in the museums are just scientific								
15	The 2 museums are too few to reckon with								
16	Children and infancy-related cultures are lacking								
17	Storage of intangible cultures are not digital enough								
18	Art exhibitions are not being hosted regularly								
19	The 2 museums are more of war museums than art but artistic historiography is obvious								
20	The main museum is more encompassing								
Approaches for the National War Museum and its annex in Umuahia to become stronger resources for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria?									
21	Preservation should be in pictures more than artifacts								
22	Preserving myths and legends in modern contents								
23	Patronizing artists and preserving contemporary art								
24	Digitizing the museums for enhanced internet accessibility								
25	Repainting the buildings with attractive colours								
26	Employing graduates of science and technology disciplines								
27	Keeping to analogue cataloguing and preservation								
28	Encouraging tourism by employing well-trained curators								
29	Making mural paintings around the museums								
30	Receiving visitors in Nigerian languages								

Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)

Appendix 2:

Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Picture Plate (GA-WH-PP)

Image
Plate Number:
Title:
Note: Reproduced from Echem et al. (2026)

Appendix 3:

Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Frequency Percentage Rating Table (GA-WH-FPRT)

S/No	Research Objective statement	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
	Answer options or guides				
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)					

Appendix 4:

Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Participation Eligibility and Convenience Sampling Chart (GA-WH-PE-CSC)

Table 1: Galleries of Artistic War Historiography Participation Eligibility and Convenience Sampling Chart (GA-WH-PE-CSC)										
Non-eligibility clauses ►	Age		Incomplete data		Multiple ticks per box		Multiple and late returns		Sample size, by Convenience	
Initial population	Below 13 yrs	Above 80 yrs	Empty single boxes	No choice b/w optional boxes	Tickin g more than once in a box	Tickin g more than one box in a row	Mistaken ly given more than one questionn aire	Retur ned after collati ons have been made	Void ed	Approv ed
Summary:										
Source: Echem et al. (Research 2026)										