

## The Aesthetics and Educational Significance of Public Sculptures at Mankessim

Theophilus Kwesi Mensah (Phd)<sup>1\*</sup>, Ebenezer Kow Abraham<sup>1</sup>, Charles Newton<sup>2</sup>, Efua Egyirba Enchill<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of Creative Arts, University of Education, Winneba. P. O. Box 25, Winneba – Ghana.*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Art Education, University of Education, Winneba*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Art Dong-A University, Busan-South Korea*

**\*Corresponding Author:** *Theophilus Kwesi Mensah (Phd), School of Creative Arts, University of Education, Winneba. P. O. Box 25, Winneba – Ghana.*

**Abstract:** *As the traditional headquarters and paramountcy of the Fante ethnic group of Ghana, Mankessim is replete with rich history, culture, and traditions that cannot be overlooked. Consequently, this historical community's historiography and anthropological reception have been instantiated and objectified with several public sculptures. This article is premised on the truism that public statues automatically become social properties and allow the public to evaluate, interpret, or ascribe meanings that may differ from the artistic intent. Drawing on descriptive case study design, we examined the aesthetics and the educational significance of the public sculptures in Mankessim. Apart from observation, a sample of 16 participants including three art teachers, three students, four residents of Mankessim, two traditional sculptors, and four traditional leaders were selected through the purposive sampling technique for interviews. The study underscores the multifaceted role of public sculptures: they bridge aesthetics, cultural memory, and education. The study a deepened effort to enhance aesthetic literacy and promote engagement with these sculptures. This knowledge will contribute not only to mere appreciation of public sculptures but also to the preservation of collective wisdom and values of a people.*

**Keywords:** *Aesthetics, Posuban, FanteAsafo groups, Oson, Odapagyan, Obrumankoma, NananomPowmu.*

### 1. BACKGROUND

Along the Accra-Cape Coast highway lies Mankessim, a busy trading Fante community in Ghana, West Africa. The community is replete with rich history, culture, and traditions. A spectacular one among these is that of the narrative of the three legends. History has it that Obromankoma (whale), Odapagyan (eagle), and Oson (elephant) made a historic journey with the settlers of Mankessim but along the way, Obromankoma and Odapagyan died, were embalmed and brought to the present-day Mankessim where they were buried at a sacred grove known in the Fante dialect as NananomPowmu (Asante & Adjei, 2015).

Some of these unique legends, beliefs, histories, and traditions of Mankessim are objectified in the visual arts. The study zeroed in on only the monumental sculptures of Mankessim concerning their aesthetics and educational significance. Public sculptures are typically monuments, memorials, or other constructed aesthetic forms placed in public spaces to convey specific or general information. The sculptures of Mankessim seem to have a direct bearing on the origins and the rich history and culture of the people of Mankessim and so the sculptural repertoire adds to deepening the cultural heritage of the Mankessim traditional area.

In light of this, it must be noted that sculptures positioned in public spaces automatically become social properties, allowing the general public to evaluate, interpret, or ascribe the piece a meaning that may differ from the creators' ideology Bellentani and Panico (2016). Scarpaci (2016) pointed out that every relic has a story so when people embrace them, they frequently ascribe meanings that were not necessarily intended by the artist. The researchers are of the view that, for people to understand and appreciate public sculptures, the true meaning and purpose must be readily accessible especially, in an

environment where people generally seem to care less about the arts. We reckon that people must receive adequate public education and learn to show an aesthetic attitude towards them.

According to Perry (2012), a deeper grasp of aesthetics has the potential to change how people react to their environment. This is because aesthetics could alter how people see the world around them. By inference, it is reasonable to assert that when aesthetics is deeply ingrained in a community, that community would unquestionably change for the better, and chaotic physical settings would give way to orderliness, peace, and beauty. Additionally, a person's reaction to an outdoor sculpture may change if they have a stronger aesthetic enlightenment.

Some scholars like Asante et al. (2015); Doughan(2012)& Ross (2007) among others, have written expansively about the philosophical and historical aspects of some of the outdoor sculptures in Mankessim, however, what is missing is the establishment of their aesthetics and educational significance. For this reason, this research aimed to fill a significant scholarly gap by exploring and subsequently putting forward the aesthetics and educational significance of the outdoor sculptures of this historic area. We vouch for this study to contribute not only to the field of sculpture but also, to broader cultural understanding. By unraveling the layers of meaning within these monumental artworks, an appreciation of the interplay between public art, history, and community would be revealed.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The aesthetic theories of emotionalism, formalism, imitationalism, and instrumentalism served as the foundation for this study's theoretical framework. In his essay *Aesthetics in African Art: Implications for African Theology*, Bongmba (2009) argued that for one to appreciate aesthetics in African art, an individual need to contemplate the function of an art object as well as the theories of beauty. This suggests that it is difficult to delineate African aesthetics using just one aesthetic theory. Therefore, the researchers settled on the aforementioned theory as the direction for this investigation. This theory encapsulated every aspect necessary to address the intricate nature of the aesthetic judgment that distinguishes African art. In this instance, the researchers were guided to investigate the physical qualities, techniques, moods, notions, contexts, and meanings that were memorialized in the public sculptures of Mankessim.

The contextual meanings of public sculptures are mostly influenced by culture. Culture is a key concept in anthropology that refers to a broad range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human civilizations (Goodson, 2017). Goodson further explained that the cultural foundation of societies is composed, among other things, of the people's attitudes, belief systems, way of life, and religious and social customs. Most of the time, Indigenous people uphold, appreciate, and hold in high regard these attitudes, beliefs, and practices transmitted in both intended and unintended ways from one generation to the next.

Just as in Mankessim, certain aspects of culture or histories cherished by societies are concretized in the arts, especially in public sculptures to serve as a memorial to the people. In every culture, there are both overt and covert sides, the overt aspects of culture generally have a direct bearing on material culture. The biggest *posuban* in Mankessim is home to a number of intriguing sculptures that help people appreciate the beauty of some of their customs and beliefs while giving the public a glimpse into history and aesthetics. Additionally, by paying close attention to the objects, particularly the public sculptures located within Mankessim, one can surely gain insight into Mankessim's cultural environment.

Labi (2019) observed that the *posuban* is a traditional sanctuary that also serves as a monument and it is one of the identity markers of the Fante asafu in southern Ghana (Aggrey, 1978 as cited in Mensah, 2009; Labi, 2018). Labi (2019) opined that *Posuban* is an excellent example of the intricate layering of several aesthetic and conceptual influences. In the confines of this paper, the study focused on the sculptural renditions found at the site of the largest *posuban* in Mankessim, hence the interest was premised on sculptures but not *Posuban* in general.

Monumental sculptures are structures built to impart dominant meanings to certain locations or spaces. Once monuments are installed, they become social entities, and the meanings the public assigns to them can be at odds with the creators' ideologies (Bellentani & Panico, 2016). To fully enjoy and appreciate public monumental sculptures, they must put on an aesthetic attitude. Shih

(2020) described aesthetics as a branch of philosophy that examines ideas like beauty, ugliness, the sublime, and the weird. Since early aesthetic concerns about African art were viewed through the prism of a formalistic aesthetic canon that ignored Afrocentric aesthetics and dealt with Eurocentric thematic and contextual lenses because it deviated from their creative canon of what should be called art, this allowed for the negative labelling of African art (Essel & Acquah 2016). By inference, if conceptions and values determine what is considered ugly and beautiful, people from various cultural backgrounds may view beauty and ugliness in many ways. For instance, what an Asian may find attractive or ugly, and repellent may not be perceived in the same manner by an African. The truth is that Africa has a sense of beauty, African aesthetics provide important aesthetic insights that reflect the prevailing concepts and standards of artistic creativity, criticism, and evaluation that are communicated directly or indirectly in many different forms of oral tradition. Other frequent African phrases that convey a sense of beauty are intertwined with what is customarily regarded as respectable, appropriate, and deserving in Africa (Njiofor, 2008).

Herder's philosophy of aesthetics was explored by Zuckert (2009), who noted that aesthetics is concerned with the sensible representation or perception of objects. He furthered that it is the sensible aesthetic features of objects that engage our sensible reasoning skills. To have an engaging aesthetic experience, aesthetic appreciation must awaken our senses and the dynamism of our healthy imagination. In other words, when one experiences the arts through the senses, the experience must be compelling enough to pique the mind's interest and induce a contemplative state that may result in a sound admiration and appreciation of the experienced objects.

Art education can foster various intelligences, stimulate multiple solutions to problems, and develop multiple varieties of literacy, according to Bates (2000) as mentioned in Adu-Agyem & Osei (2009). Yang (2013), cited in Shin (2020), noted that we can develop higher levels of aesthetic intelligence if we can teach students how to appreciate the beauty of life in their surroundings through aesthetic education and several teaching techniques to improve their aesthetic experience. He further explained that doing this can help kids become more aesthetically literate and motivated to continually notice and appreciate beautiful things, enabling them to grow into global citizens.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

In gathering and evaluating the data for this study, the researchers used the descriptive case study approach of the qualitative research inquiry. The goal of qualitative research is to increase or broaden an understanding of how things have been and are now in our social reality. In a situation where the research question deals with exploring how people experience things, and their views, or investigating a novel area where concerns or issues are not yet understood, qualitative inquiry is preferred (Hancock et al., 2001).

The qualitative research approach was an appropriate research paradigm since the study sought to understand how people view the public sculptures of Mankessim in terms of their aesthetic characteristics and educational importance.

The population for this study consisted of the people of Mankessim. The target population for the study consisted of Art teachers, Art students, residents, local artists, and Traditional leaders of Mankessim.

The accessible population from which samples were drawn for the study was based on; five (5) Art teachers, five (5) art students, eight (8) local artists, eight (8) residents, and six (6) Traditional leaders.

Purposive or judgmental sampling was chosen because it allowed the researchers to make informed participant selections depending on participant characteristics. We used this sampling strategy because we believed that different groups of people would have varying levels of understanding about the topic at hand. The sample size for this study was sixteen (16), which consisted of three (3) art teachers, three (3) art students four (4) residents, two (2) local artists, and four (4) Traditional leaders of Mankessim.

We relied on a semi-structured interview guide and observation to collect the primary data for the research. Secondary data was mostly sourced from the internet. Data collected by the researchers was analyzed through visual and thematic analysis. The researchers first transcribed and coded the responses from the respondents which was then analyzed and discussed thoroughly to achieve the objectives of the study.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to bring out the aesthetic qualities of the public sculptures and highlighted the educational significance of the sculptures respectively.

##### Description of Mankessim's Monuments

Mankessim's most significant sculptures are located in two key areas - the main roundabout in Mankessim (Figure 1) and the *Posuban* of the KyiremAsafo Company at Obrom (Figure 2), near the police station. There are twenty distinct public sculptures of varied sizes. Some are life-sized and others are heroic-sized sculptures at these locations.

The depictions at the main Mankessim roundabout featured six distinct sculptures. Three out of the six sculptures were symbolic animalistic representations of the three great warriors, thus Obrumankoma (whale), Odapagyan (eagle) and Oson (elephant). The remaining three sculptures were erect male figures clad in traditional warlike costumes and accoutrements. The colours of these sculptures were arbitrary colours of shades of gray and gold.



**Figure 1.** A Grid of the Sculptures at the Mankessim Roundabout.

(Source: Field Research, 2022)

At the second location, the sculptures were found at Mankessim's largest *Posuban*. Mankessim is home to several *Posuban*, however only the Kyirem Number Two Asafo Group's *Posuban* depicted sculptures.

Twelve human sculptural figures, seven animal figures, five cannons, a coat of arms, two modelled clocks, and a figure at the very top, painted in black and white with seven heads, fourteen eyes, and fourteen antlers, known as *Enyanyakra* and believed to be a god, were all visible when the *Posuban* was carefully examined. The monument was painted in a variety of subtle colours, including red, yellow, blue, and green.



**Figure 2.** A *Posuban* with Multiplicity of Sculptures. (Source: Field Research, 2022)



### Aesthetic qualities of Public Sculptures of Mankessim

Per the data collected, the study highlights the aesthetic qualities of the figure below:



**Figure 3.** *Statue of an Elephant. (Source: Field Research, 2022)*

The cast cement statue of an elephant was one of several sculptures that were delightfully displayed and stood magnificently on a pedestal at the "centre" of Mankessim. Standing majestically while facing north, with its trunk extended, ears raised, and tail softly resting on its right hind leg, radiated the strength and majesty of the elephant, bringing to the mind of the onlooker its defensive nature. Its aura exuded the same bravery and strength as the mythological legend the monument honoured. The iconic heroic sculpture, which redefined the "centre stage" with identity, culture, and beauty, was about nine feet tall and was a direct representation of nature, devoid of any form of abstraction in terms of form or anatomy. However, the colour deviated from nature because this figure was covered in intriguing gray metallic paint. The traditional leaders made it clear the colour choice for Mankessim's sculptures had nothing to do with the people's beliefs and customs, making the decision arbitrary.



**Figure 4.** *Statue of an Eagle, known as Odapagyan.*

*(Source: Field Research, 2022)*

The sculpture of the eagle symbolized the legendary Odapagyan. With its claws extended and wings spread wide, the sculpture, which stood a little over eleven feet tall, fixed a fierce stare at the observer. Suggesting an eagle in the wild that was prepared to launch an attack. The sculpture's intricate form, posture and finishing made it come to life, inspiring awe in the onlookers. The sculpture's bodily posture evoked the vigour, strength, and power that the eagle displayed throughout its wild expeditions.

The fierceness that accompanied the warlike nature of the historical giant that this figure represented was carefully portrayed in the sculpture. The sculpture's symmetrical balance and majestic gold colour made it engaging enough for one to contemplate.



**Figure 5.** *Symbolic Representation of Obrumankuma.*

*(Source: Field Research, 2022)*

Figure 5 pictured the portrayal of Obrumankuma (whale). This sculpture looked more like a dolphin than the animal it was meant to portray, the whale. The delicately posed figure, which had its fins up and its lower torso bent close to the tail, could not help but to awe observers. Standing magnificently on a three-foot-tall, dark plinth was the cast cement sculpture of Obrumankuma, one of the three legends of Mankessim. Unlike Oson and Odapagyan, Obrumankuma exuded a feeling of peacefulness and relaxation. The sculpture was finished in gray with white eyes and fins, which added to its serene appearance. Other sea creatures, painted in the hue of the "whale," such as crabs, shrimp, turtles, shellfish, and fish, could be seen at the base of the tail. The indigenous people believed that because the whale was the largest and most powerful animal in the ocean, it could easily overcome any challenge that came from the water.



**Figure 6.** *Statue of the Three Legends.* *(Source: Field Research, 2022)*

Unlike the symbolic animalistic representations highlighted previously, the three legends facing the southern part of the community were depicted as human-like heroic conquerors. The figures were arranged in a straight line. The characters made eye contact with the audience and brandished swords in their right hands, signalling to the audience that they were not just regular people but powerful warriors. The hard, robust, and powerful appearance of the cast cement figures gave them a sense of seriousness and reinforced their warlike attitude. The characters were dressed in traditional garb with appliques that imitated the costume used by warriors in combat. The figures' feet were decorated with royal traditional footwear, a style that was typical of the footwear worn by ancient leaders, and were finished in a golden hue.



**Figure 7.** *A Traditional Leader.* (Source: Field Research, 2022)

Figure 7 depicted a courageous male standing figure with the scale of judgment in the right hand and a little, spherical, gold-like object in the left hand, symbolizing a traditional means of localized adjudication. The figure is depicted wearing a traditional headdress and a gold medal while dressed in a traditional gown-like costume covered in black spots of various colours, including white, yellow, and red. He had heavy limbs and unrelaxed facial muscles depicting an unfriendly mood. According to traditional leaders, the colours of the figure had no special significance; as a result, the choice of colour was arbitrary. The sculpture's overall calmness portrayed a traditional leader in a position to serve the public justly and fairly. The modelled cement figure memorialised a strong traditional priest who once lived and arbitrated misgivings between parties in Mankessim. Some respondents opined that he was in the business of punishing offenders but before he carried out any type of judgment, he weighed the offender's level of spirituality.



**Figure 8.** *Two Sculptures in Action.* (Source: Field Research, 2022)



Figure 8 above depicted two human figures in action, a vulture, a lion, a shrine with many heads, and a cannon. To the left were two human figures dressed in what appeared to be traditional attire. The modelled cement characters had black and white patterns running through various shades of green on their costume. The figure in front was seen pointing a gun-like object at a birdy figure while the second figure stood behind and taps the shoulder of the hunter-like figure. The action depicted a hunter on a hunting expedition who ecstatically aimed at his prey, but the action—swiftly intervened by the second figure, prompting him to the realization that the target was a scavenger thus not meat for consumption.

It must be noted that no Ghanaian culture values the meat of sculptures as edible enough. This explains why the hunter was advised not to shoot. According to the traditional leaders, this sculptural narrative implies that, the person who prompts you to stop a potentially injurious or wasteful action is trustworthy or your true friend but the person who encourages you to continue any action that could have serious repercussions is your enemy and for that matter must be avoided in any way.

Thus, in order to avoid making poor decisions, one must learn to be watchful and cautious in their daily decisions as well as those in their social circle. Additionally, the sculptural composition emphasized the importance of keeping our brother's interests in mind when making both individual and group decisions.

Right in front of the left side of the aforementioned figures was a seated cement figure of a lion that was painted randomly in gray and red and had its mouth wide opened. The posture and mood was terrifying enough to send a caution to elements within its jurisdiction. The sculpture of the lion in question was a portrayal of one of the god, Obo Yaakwa's guardians. A drum-like item with multiple heads that resembled a shrine was next to the lion's figure. Here the indigenous belief system of the people of Mankessim was expressed as a result of this representation. They have faith in the gods' abilities to protect them and grant their requests, as well as their ability to deliver. A white-painted cannon that indicated the presence of Europeans among the Fantes could be seen at the lower right corner of figure 8.



**Figure 9.** Shows Four Figures with Different Guestures. (Source: Field Research)



Figure 9 presented a tiled photo of four distinct figures in various poses. The bare chested caryatid male adults' figures exuded masculinity. Pieces of what looked like covering made of black and yellow material were fastened to the waist and groins of the partially clothed figures. The modelled male cement figures were drenched in a random palette of grays. Each displayed a different posture with the finger pointing to the ear, mouth, and eye while standing upright and being very attentive. Contemplating the sculptures help those who encounter query and ponder the message it carries thus honesty, trust, and hard labour.

According to mythology, the god Obo Yaakwa gave the four caryatid figures the responsibility of carrying the edifice because of their lethargy and laziness. Knowing their propensity for being lazy, Obo Yaakwa outsmarted them by promising them work without revealing the nature of the work. However, when the four figures received the work, one pointed to the eye and asked, "Do we see the nature of work given?" while the other asked, "Do we hear the type of work given to us?" The third figure with the hand poised to speak continued, "The deity is dreadful for giving them such a hard task." They were told to get to work because their own carelessness and slothfulness had caused their predicament. The final figure wondered in awe. This advances the salient values of the society. The saying "The devil finds occupation for the idle hand" states that most societal vices would be reduced were people actively engaged in modest work. Because labour is one of the factors advancing, local communities would likewise prosper.

The sculptural composition suggests that individuals should not blindly trust to the point where they accept every offer without conducting the necessary background checks to verify the legitimacy of such offers. People must learn from these sculptural narrators since they have been fooled by others' tricks in the past by failing to exercise due diligence.



**Figure 10.** *Two Headed Sculpture Sandwiched by Two Wild Animals*

*(Source: Field Research, 2022)*

Figure 10 displayed a spectacular sculpture with two heads sandwiched by two wild animals. The sculptures were mainly finished in red, yellow, blue, white, and gray hues. The main character, a god by name Obo Yaakwa, was depicted with two human-like heads and was seen seated atop a leopard-like wild beast that appeared to be ferocious, protective and alert of any impending danger. Obo Yaakwa had colorful braces over its bare breast. He wore a large gold necklace, a gold bracelet, and a gold crown, with the physic suggested male figure

In addition to having an instrument plaited all over with small projections in his left hand and a sword-like tool in his right hand, he was seen wearing two widely extended wings at the back that suggested his capacity to fly. A snake-like form that expanded and curled around the two-headed figure's waist was rested on the animal's head. The sight of this sculpture is intriguing enough to attract and sustain attention of onlookers. The figure's aura implied a god who was concerned with bringing about proper punishment for summoned offenders.

Obo Yaakwa had five guiding animals; in addition to the leopard he rode, he also had a sculpture of a bullock with two horns and wide-open eyes on his left side. Its rough textured body was painted with short gray and white strokes. The animal figures expressed unity, solidarity, and support for the god ObonYaakwa. A white bird figure perched on one of the head of the modelled wild animal. An elegant sculpture, modelled in cement and completed in gray could be seen on the right side of Obo Yaakwa. The statue, which stood about two feet tall, was a mini replica of a gigantic elephant. The other two guiding animals were models of wild lions. The traditional leaders revealed that the god in question never walked alone without these protective animals.

Three human figures, two wild animals, a sculpture with seven heads (a god by name Enya Nyakwa), and a Ghanaian coat of arms were found on the first and top floors of the posuban. The three moulded cement figurines, who were equally finished in gray with patches of gold colour, stood upright, stiff, and attentive with a sword in each, iconised Oson, Odapagyan, and Obrumankoma. The left hands remained stiff at the sides while the heads stared straight ahead. Their costume was embossed in yellows, whites, and grays, while the swords they brandished were completed in gold.

There were two sculpted cement animal sculptures with antlers that resembled those of an antelope positioned at the top of the posuban. These statues, which were both completed in gray, were placed between the seven-headed sculpture and the Ghanaian Coat of Arms. There was a black and white speckled cement sculpture right behind the coat of arms. The sight was intriguing enough to stir up some questions and evoke feelings of amazement. The seven-headed figure, according to the traditional leaders symbolised a god by name Enya Nyakwa. This god was characterised by seven heads, fourteen antlers, fourteen spectacular with spots of black and whites finishing. This figure depicted a powerful god who was able to observe and recognize the perpetrators of different crimes and punish them accordingly regardless of where the criminal found themselves.



**Figure 11.** *Captures the Sculptures at the First and Top Floors of the Posuban*

*(Source: Field Research, 2022)*

## **5. EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PUBLIC SCULPTURES OF MANKESSIM**

With regards to the educational significance of the public sculptures of Mankessim, All the respondents, agreed that public sculptures serves to remind the community of the past. They believed

that it connects people to their ancestors and provides them a sense of identity. However, history could be lost if not maintained and taught to the future generation, thus it is crucial to concretize historical events and figures in sculptures in order to help keep the memories of these people and events alive.

It is important to highlight that when people first encounter public sculptures, their curiosity is aroused and they are forced to pause and contemplate what they have seen. Anyone who comes across public sculptures is constantly reminded of the message the sculptures convey. The history of the people is largely influenced by their cultural and traditional philosophies. Therefore, public sculptures reveal a great deal about the cultural origins and some of the societal beliefs. The well-known mythology, for which Mankessim is well-known and upon which the sculptures of Mankessim were founded, teaches the populace about their respective histories and cultural origins, which ties them together as one people.

Some of the respondents also expressed the opinion that Mankessim's public sculptures, particularly those in Kyirem Number Two Asafo Company's Posuban, teach the general public moral values and discipline. Some of these sculptures imparted discipline and moral principles. For instance, one can see an older figure holding a circular yellow object in his left hand and the scale of justice in his right palm in figure 7. Anyone who contemplate this sculpture comes to learn the prominence of being unbiased, fair, balanced and equity of the law. Beyond the broad concept of equity, one learns to examine important factors carefully before passing any form of judgement.

Figure 8 emphasized the need of being mindful and frugal over wastefulness and stresses the need for people to use caution while making judgments on a daily basis. The same sculpture also teaches us that those who encourage others to act in ways that will have negative effects on them are enemies to their wellbeing, whereas those who encourage others to refrain from acting in ways that could have negative effects are true friends.

It was also emphasized that contemplation of the sculptures remind the public the need for one to adopt a work-focused mind-set. Moreover, the young generation learn discipline by learning to listen and following instructions since they had been taught about the significance and sacredness of the grounds (the posuban at Obrom) people did not trespass though the place was not physically walled off. Some of the respondents raised this idea, believing that by staying entirely off the premises until allowed, people were able to control themselves to stay out of trouble and this helped to mould the child or youth to be somewhat in charge of themselves.

One respondent mentioned that the public sculptures encouraged mindfulness. As mindfulness involves paying close attention to and being fully present in the moment. According to Kabat-Zinn (1994) as cited in Ahmed et al. (2017), mindfulness is defined as paying non-judgmental attention to the present moment. Similarly, Naik et al. (2013) emphasized that mindfulness requires intentionally and consciously controlling your attention as opposed to letting it wander. Public has the propensity to arrest and sustain attention of viewers for an extended period of time thereby promoting mindfulness and concentration.

## **6. FINDINGS**

Firstly, it is worth noting that major public sculptures are strategically positioned at two major locations at Mankessim, thus the main Mankessim roundabout and Kyiremno.2Asafo Company's *Posuban*, at Obrom near the Mankessim Police Station. The study revealed that aesthetics can influence or shape how people perceive the immediate environment. However, when people have little to no aesthetic knowledge, it becomes a challenge for them to appreciate what is perceived, in this case, the public sculptures of Mankessim. The study revealed that the aesthetic knowledge and appreciation of the people of Mankessim for public sculptures was relatively low.

Again, the study revealed that some figures teach moral values and principles that seem to be lost in today's society but are really needful. Furthermore, public sculptures inform the general public about the histories and cultures of the people. It also serves as either teaching aid or reference materials to both academics and non-academics who pursue their interest in this field.



## 7. CONCLUSION

Given the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made: the strategic placement of major public sculptures at prominent locations such as the Mankessim roundabout and the Kyirem No. 2 Asafo Company's *Posuban*, highlights the deliberate effort to shape how people perceive their immediate environment. However, the study reveals a challenge: when individuals lack aesthetic knowledge, their ability to appreciate these sculptures diminishes. This underscores the importance of art education and fostering a deeper understanding of aesthetics among the public.

Public sculptures serve as more than mere decorative elements; they embody narratives and moral lessons. In a society where certain values may seem lost, these sculptures become custodians of timeless principles. By engaging with these figures, community members can reconnect with their cultural heritage and draw inspiration from the stories embedded in stone and metal.

Historical and Educational Significance: Beyond aesthetics, public sculptures act as historical markers. They narrate the past, conveying stories of bravery, resilience, and shared experiences. As teaching aids, they offer a tangible way to explore local history and culture. Both scholars and curious individuals benefit from these sculptures, using them as reference materials to deepen their understanding of the community's identity.

In summary, the study underscores the multifaceted role of public sculptures: they bridge aesthetics, cultural memory, and education. Moving forward, efforts to enhance aesthetic literacy and promote engagement with these sculptures will contribute not only to their appreciation but also to the preservation of collective wisdom and values of Mankessim.

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#### AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



**Ebenezer Kow Abraham** is an artist-scholar based in Winneba, Ghana. His passion for sculpture and drawing is complemented by a keen interest in curating and research within the visual arts. Trained at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, he has been consistently present at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), facilitating lectures on Drawing, Sculpture, Research Methodology, and Art Education Seminars at the undergraduate level since 2021. Currently pursuing a PhD in Art and Culture at UEW, he is also engaged in critical thinking and writing about sculpture, art education, and contemporary art.



**Dr. Theophilus Kwesi Mensah**, a distinguished Ghanaian artist and educator, studied Painting and Sculpture at the University of Education, Winneba (2002-2006), specializing in Painting for his final year. He also earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Painting and Sculpture (2007-2010) at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Dr. Mensah pursued a PhD program in Art and Culture at the University of Education, Winneba, graduating in 2018 from the Department of Music Education. His artistic achievements include commissioned works such as the Aboakyir Monument, the Unity Monument in Winneba, and the twelve busts of the founding clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in Elmina, Cape Coast. With over two decades of art education experience, he fosters respect, discipline, and a passion for learning in multicultural environments.



Charles Newton is an Art Educator and an artist. He holds a Bachelor and a Master of Philosophy Degree in Art Education from the School of Creative Art, University of Education, Winneba. He currently teaches IGCSE and A-Level Art and Design in a Cambridge International Education partner school in Accra, Ghana.

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