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The exchange agreement between UW-Parkside and Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, is being funded by both institutions and the U.S. Information Agency.

The programme was established through the connections of Lillian Traeger, professor of anthropology who has researched in Nigeria for years and travelled extensively in the country.

Obafemi Awolowo University, a 25,000-student campus on the western edge of Nigeria, is situated on a large parcel between a rain forest and a savannah. Agbo Folarin is the second Nigerian faculty member to visit UW-Parkside. No UW-Parkside faculty have taken part in the exchange yet but several have expressed interest. Traeger said the exchange will have benefits for faculty and students.

'They have a highly qualified set of faculty,' she said. The exchange gives students exposure to different perspectives and benefits the University 'just in terms of expanding our knowledge.' GR

BACK IN IFE:

The campus of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife is well regarded among Africa's most beautiful campuses. It derives its beauty not only from the serene driveway that ushers the visitor through a distance of about two kilometres from the gate to the main campus. The buildings still stand as masterpieces of modern architectural design. Above all, there are the sculptural works and murals found all over the campus which make a statement about the tastes of the founding fathers of this monumental community.

We drove into the campus on a sunny day, late for our appointment with Agbo Folarin. The appointment had been booked by Lillian Traeger, a lecturer from the University of Wisconsin - Parkside.

We had to pay a price for coming late, thanks to a flat tyre in the course of the Lagos-Ife trip. After a long wait, we finally located him; it was as if he was the one that had been late for the appointment. He fusses over us, sympathising with us over the journey's slight misfortune.

Then Agbo Folarin insisted we must have something to eat. The pounded yam at the buka (bamboo-shed restaurant) just behind the Fine and Applied Arts Department building was a finger-licking affair. Then we got down to business.

This was not to be another long session of interview discussing the theory and practice of arts. It was a tour session in which Agbo Folarin took us round the campus showing us his works which constitute a large portion of the monuments that make the campus a vast permanent exhibition ground.

The first was in 1973. It is a metal mural in front of the Students' Union Building. It is a melange of themes, a trend we were to find in a lot of Agbo Folarin's works. The mural is about protest, which symbolises students' unionism. As Agbo Folarin put it, 'Unionism is always about protesting about treatment of students by the government or by the university authorities.'

There are representations of different sports. The building also houses the administrative offices of the sports complex of the university. There are the footballer, the netballer, weight-lifter and people in different forms of
physical exercises all built into Folarin's work here.

An observable tendency in Folarin (all his works are sculptures) is a bent towards storytelling. An aspect of history is more often chronicled.

At the University Hall, a gigantic mural is titled *The Ife Story*. It portrays the Yoruba creation myth with focus on the cradle of a race in the historical city of Ile-Ife. The individuals who migrated to found the Yoruba nation are the heroes of this work. This is the work that *New Currents, Ancient Rivers*, a book published by the Smithsonian Foundation on contemporary African art exhibited.

A visit to the University Conference Centre is effectively an entrance into the world of Agbo Folarin's creativity. There we encountered such works as *Faces at the Conference*. This procession of about twenty faces has something to say about an average conference. 'It tries to satirise conference goers,' as Folarin put it. 'Conference goers always wear masks - an invisible mask though,' he remarked.

Doning a wig is an overbearing image which we are told represents the Nigerian aristocracy. He is flanked by two intellectuals. The generalissimo at the centre also has another follower behind him, a praise-singer archetype. He is the proverbial paid piper imbibing the tunes of his payer.

And there is the ever-present bored Jonah who is dosing away a little distance from all the surrounding hullabaloo.

Also on doors at the Centre are *The Story of Iyamopo* which presents the Yoruba mythological spirit behind the success of women's

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commercial endeavours and The Story of Ibeji. The latter presents one of the most popular of Yoruba beliefs which is that twins are special spiritual beings that must be revered. This myth is skilfully depicted in a brass work of many faces. There is also The Story of the Sango Priest, a devotee of the Yoruba deity of thunder and lightning.

There are others of the sculptor's works all over the campus of Obafemi Awolowo University such as a larger-than-life metal sculpture of Hezekiah Oluwasanmi, the university's second vice-chancellor mounted in front of the University Library named after him.

If going through the campus says something about Folarin's prolificity, what about visiting his home at the University Quarters? Chairs are hewn out of wood trunks, stools are made of teaks, all over shelves and book stands are sculptures not to talk of the walls. He has an impressive collection of other artists' works too.

Another quality of the newsletter which he was determined to retain was its editorial independence. As if to repudiate the suspicion that could be harboured that the publication went off the streets due to financial problems, Shitta says he never had real financial problems publishing it. Rather, the only problem he had was with editorial matter, which did not always come in from contributors as scheduled, and which made him sometimes violate the date of publishing.

'It is true that at a time I needed assistance with adverts because I was not getting the type of advertisers I needed to help the newsletter. Since editorial materials were not coming in as scheduled and as advertisers wanted to see the publication on its publishing date, I needed advertisers who were patient enough to tolerate the shifts we sometimes had to make and who really cared for their corporate image,' he explains.

According to Shitta, direct financial assistance in the form of grants or monetary gifts from companies or individuals would compromise his editorial independence and put him under obligation to such 'sponsors'. 'I don't need that sort of assistance beyond advertisements that would appear in the paper and leave no weight on my conscience.'

Shitta plans to re-launch the publication 'within a month,' after re-adjusting to the arts scene. But not before fulfilling a condition, which is the concurrent publishing of a directory on Nigerian artists, a document which he has long planned and is almost ready for publishing.

He looks forward to the launch with optimism as the climate in which he used to publish has changed considerably from the days he used to encounter problems with typesetting. He now sets the pages on a personal computer he recently purchased for the purpose. But he hints that the cover price, which had changed from an initial 50 kobo in