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Module: Post Photography
Project
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The Water Fountain and its Visitors



Mr. Jones Trace and his family viewing the water fountain (pseudonymous)
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Long shot of the fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Long shot of the fountain taken from across the road

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Right view of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Left view of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo

Fred Ritchin in his book "After Photography" talked about the "Most Photographed Barn in America" where lots of people go to photograph. I have not been to the barn, however, I have seen a natural setting in Coventry that also attracts individuals photographing the place and themselves. This natural setting is a water fountain at the busy City Centre, just in front of the British Heart Foundation and close to the Methodist Central Hall. I cannot really explain what attracted me to join other "photographers", or "camera operators" or "site viewers" to photograph the water fountain or photograph those photographing and those watching the fountain. Maybe, because I love natural settings and the fountain is an epitome of a natural habitat. I think that the pouring water also contributed as water signifies life and water is a friend to everyone.



Angle view of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Left view of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Left view of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Close up shot of the water fountain

Photo by: Victor G. Banigo

Having listened to professional photographers like David Campbell, Fred Ritchin, Stephen Mayes, Lars Cuzner, Marcus Bleasdale, Dhalia Khamissy, Jonathan Worth in a Post Photography class in Coventry University, I felt it will be rewarding to practice what I learned from them and as such, the basis for my visit to the fountain.

A significant lesson from those lectures was the issue of privacy and trust. Prior to my study, I took photographs without informing those I photographed. But before my first open shot at the fountain, I informed the two ladies sitting behind the fountain of my project. I also seek the consent of others I saw watching the fountain and a few others photographing themselves. Some of them agreed to be included in the study while others decline. I was amazed by how one Ucheowaji photographed himself and the fountain and I asked if I could have a conversation with him and he agreed.



Ucheowaji Ogbologugo photographing himself at the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



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Ucheowaji Ogbologugo, a Ph.D research student of Civil Engineering in Coventry University, dark in complexion, about 5 feet, did not start photographing at his adult stage. When he was much younger he enjoyed watching wrestling on television and his favourite fighter was Hulk Hogan. So, he decided to do a sketch of Hulk Hogan and to his surprise all his friends appreciated the drawing. His friends started describing him as someone who could draw very well. Ucheowaji still remembers those childhood moments as special in his life stage. However, he cannot lay his hands on some of those pictures; perhaps, because they were analogue photographs eaten by ants.



Abdulmuiz Abid, 3 viewing the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Abdulmuiz Abid, 3 viewing the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Abdulmuiz Abid, 3 viewing the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Abdulmuiz Abid, 3 viewing the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo

But not all Ucheowaji's childhood photographs are lost as he recalls of one significant picture. During a Christmas season, he was photographed in oversized clothes and whenever he views the picture he smiles because it makes him appreciate where he was and the progress made. Ucheowaji also has pictures taken with his father of blessed memory which reminds him of the great moments he shared with his loved father before his departure.



Caroline Smith running across the water fountain (pseudonymous)
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Caroline Smith running across the water fountain (pseudonymous)
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Ucheowaji Secondary School days from 1996-2002 at the Niger Delta Science School, Rumuola Port Harcourt was remarkable season in his life as he improved in his drawings and had lovely times with his peers. Whenever he views a parting picture taken during their final examination, he gets attracted by their uniform: white shirt on a white trouser with a blue tie and it reminds him how the significance of those colours influenced them. They were neat, innocent, peaceful and free to associate with their mates. But his graduation ceremony photograph that hangs on the wall in his room is a reflection of God's mercies that saw him through the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, in the midst of secret cult clashes. The picture is also a reflection of the regular burning of candle and countless moments in the library that placed him on first class honours.



Rees Platt, 10 walking across the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Rees Platt, 10 walking across the water fountain
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Rees Platt, 10 walking across the water fountain
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Nigerian graduates from institutions of higher learning: universities, colleges of education and polytechnics are mobilized to serve the nation in the National Youth Service Corps. Established in 1974 by General Yakubu Gowon, the scheme seeks to foster unity and instil discipline and the spirit of self-reliance among Nigerian youths as they are drawn from their states to serve in the various 36 states of the federation. Ucheowaji who hails from Rivers State was mobilized to serve in Borno State in March 2010. He took some photographs with his friends during the service year and those pictures are memories of the interaction he had with different friends from diverse cultures.



Irene Akpojise photographing the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Irene Akpojise photographing the water fountain
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Irene Akpojise photographing the water fountain
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Irene Akpojise photographing the water fountain
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Unlike most people who studied photography in school, Ucheowaji acquired the skill by viewing pictures taken by professional photographers and practicing the lessons. He has covered several occasions for his relatives and friends, not on business grounds but as public relations. One of such occasions is the coverage of his friend Mr. Sekibo Dede and his wife on their wedding day 22nd of November 2014 where one of the portraits turned a masterpiece. The portrait was not only appreciated by his friend but was enlarged, put in frame and placed in his living room. Ucheowaji believes that the portrait can enter in any world's photography competition and attract a prize. Like the photographing of the fountain, Ucheowaji takes photographs of places he visits and those pictures reminds him of the features in those places.



Mr. Jones Trace and his family viewing the water fountain (pseudonymous)
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Little Cynthia playing with the water being carried by her dad Mr. Jones Trace (pseudonymous)
Photo by Victor G. Banigo



Little Cynthia playing with the water being carried by her dad Mr. Jones Trace (pseudonymous)
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Mr. Jones Trace drops Cynthia (pseudonymous)
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo

Besides photographing people and places, Ucheowaji loves to be photographed too. On the first day of January in this year he went to a studio with his fiancée and took some shots. One of the photographs they took is a portrait which he is using as his profile picture on his School Account, Facebook Page and LinkedIn Account.

Photography means a lot to Ucheowaji and he sees it as “life”. He believes that the digital age has transformed photography and provided the avenue for photo sharing. One photo social media he admires so much is the YouTube where he watches educating and inspiring videos. Photoshop taught him how to design pictures while ANSYS improved his structural design.



Open shot on the sleeping water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Open shot on the sleeping water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Close up shot on the sleeping water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo



Close up shot on a warning at the water fountain
Photo by: Victor G. Banigo

However, Ucheowaji has some resentment about the digital culture. He is uncomfortable with the spate of manipulation of photographs. He said "I have seen some photographs of some celebrities that had been manipulated to give a false impression of them. It is really bad to do so. I feel reputation is very important in one's life and career."

Mr. Ucheowaji also detests how people use their smartphones to photograph without seeking consent from their subject. He has witnessed some incidents where the subject that was photographed is a victim of an accident and felt sad over the ethical relations. He wonders if our digital devices are actually mediums for communication and building relationships or tools of dissociation. Moreover, he wonders why his fellow youths copy mediated lifestyles displayed in videos and television shows, advising that we should be natural because those we copy online hardly appear that way in real life.

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