

AESTHETIC CODING KEYBOARD CHRONICLES: AN ARTISTIC ODYSSEY FROM JOS PLATEAU TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

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Background: The Creation Process of the "Aesthetic Coding" Series

In the heart of Jos Plateau State, Nigeria, a new artistic movement is emerging, woven from the threads of discarded laptop keyboards and infused with the vibrant spirit of African motifs. As an artist living in this dynamic region, my journey is one of boundless creativity, fueled by a relentless pursuit of innovation and a deep connection to my cultural roots.

At the core of my latest body of work lies a fascination with abstraction, where familiar forms dissolve into a tapestry of symbols reminiscent of ancient hieroglyphics. Each stroke of the keyboard keys becomes a brushstroke, weaving a narrative that transcends language and speaks to the universal human experience.

Drawing inspiration from the rich tapestry of African culture, I explore themes of identity, tradition, and transformation. The intricate patterns and motifs that adorn my creations pay homage to the diverse heritage of the continent, from the geometric designs of West African textiles to the symbolic iconography of ancient civilizations.

However, it is not just the content of my work that sets it apart; it is the medium itself. By repurposing discarded laptop keyboards, I breathe new life into overlooked objects, transforming them into vehicles for artistic expression. The clatter of keys becomes a symphony of creativity, each stroke a testament to the potential for beauty in the everyday.

As I embark on this artistic odyssey, my sights are set on the global stage. I believe that art knows no boundaries, and I am committed to sharing my unique vision with audiences around the world. Through exhibitions, collaborations, and multimedia installations, I aim to spark dialogue, provoke thought, and inspire wonder.

Nevertheless, my journey is far from over. With each new creation comes the thrill of discovery, the joy of experimentation, and the pursuit of the next Eureka moment. From drawing to painting to the use of extraneous materials, my creative spirit knows no bounds. In addition, as I continue to push the boundaries of artistic expression, I invite others to join me on this exhilarating voyage of self-discovery and exploration.

In the end, my hope is simple: that my art will not only captivate the eye but also touch the soul, bridging divides, and forging connections that transcend language, culture, and geography. For in a world that often feels

divided, art has the power to unite us, to remind us of our shared humanity, and to inspire us to reach for the stars.

Introduction

"My inspiration comes from things people have used - there are so many endless delights" El Anatsui

(<https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/el-anatsui-interview-behind-the-red-moon-turbine-hall-tate-modern>)

The "Aesthetic Coding" series is an innovative body of work that transforms discarded laptop keyboards into vibrant, abstract art pieces infused with African motifs, rings, nuts and other accoutrements. This paper outlines the detailed process of creating these artworks, from sourcing materials to the final touches, providing insight into the technical and creative aspects of this unique artistic endeavour.

Sourcing and Preparing Materials

1. Sourcing Discarded Keyboards

The journey begins with sourcing discarded laptop keyboards. These are typically obtained from e-waste recycling centres, computer repair shops, and donations from

individuals. Ensuring a steady supply of keyboards is crucial for the continuity of the project.



Plate I: Acrylic colours, brushes, and keyboard panels are some of the materials used for aesthetic coding paintings.

2. Disassembling and Sorting

Upon acquiring the keyboards, the next step involves sorting them. This process includes removing the keyboard base and other backside knobs and cellophane materials to give a flat backside. The keyboards are then sorted by size, shape, and colour, which allows for greater flexibility and creativity in the design phase for either single-framed work or an assemblage.

Cleaning and Preparation

3. Cleaning the Surface

To ensure the keys are clean and free, of any residues that might interfere with the painting process, they are thoroughly washed. The cleaning process involves soaking the keys in a solution of detergent and water. The keys are scrubbed gently with sable brushes and soft rags to remove dirt, grease, and other contaminants. After washing, the keys are

rinsed with clean water and left to dry completely under the sun (see Plate 1).

Design and Layout

4. Conceptualization and Sketching

With clean materials ready, the creative phase begins with the conceptualization of ideas. This involves sketching out designs on paper or my mind's eyes. The sketches often incorporate African motifs and symbols, inspired by traditional textiles, hieroglyphics, and other cultural elements. These preliminary sketches serve as a blueprint for the final artwork.



Plate II: Preliminary colour layout and lyrical flow.

5. Layout on Canvas

The next step is arranging the cleaned keyboards on African print canvas or board according to the sketched or perceived design. This involves careful planning to ensure that the works are positioned correctly to form the intended patterns and motifs. The layout process is iterative, often requiring adjustments to achieve the desired visual effect.

Painting and Detailing

6. Base Painting with Acrylics

Once the layout is finalized, the keys are painted with a base coat of acrylic colours. Acrylics are chosen for their versatility, quick drying time, and vibrant pigments. The base coat serves as a foundation, providing a uniform background that enhances the visibility of subsequent details.

7. Adding Details with Tulip Colours

After the base coat has dried, finer details are added using Polymark Tulip colours, which

are dimensional fabric, paints known for their bright colours and durability. These paints are used to create intricate motifs and patterns, drawing from the rich visual language of African art. The raised texture of Tulip colours adds a tactile dimension to the artwork, enhancing its visual and physical appeal.

that the design is cohesive and visually striking. Once the adjustments are finalized, the artwork is sealed with a clear acrylic sealer or varnish where desirable. This protective layer ensures the longevity of the piece, safeguarding it against dust, moisture, and UV damage.

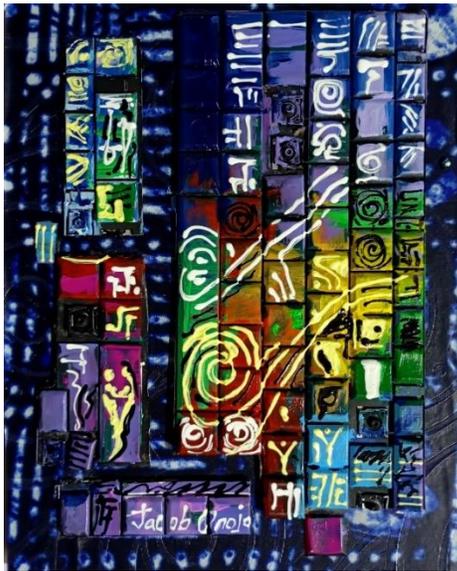


Plate III: A visual narrative on Adire material

Finishing Touches

8. Final Adjustments and Sealing

With the detailed painting complete, the artwork undergoes a final review. Any necessary adjustments are made to ensure



Plate IV: A visual assemblage of various laptop keyboards using hinges to join the panels together.

Conclusion

The creation of the "Aesthetic Coding" series is a meticulous process that combines technical precision with artistic creativity. From sourcing and cleaning discarded keyboards to painting and detailing with acrylics and Tulip colours, each step is integral to transforming everyday objects into extraordinary pieces of art. By repurposing e-waste and infusing it with cultural significance, this series not only creates visually stunning artworks but also promotes sustainability and celebrates African heritage.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, the "Aesthetic Coding" series aims to expand its reach within the global art community. Future projects may explore the incorporation of other discarded electronic components, further pushing the boundaries of what is possible with upcycled materials. Additionally, workshops and collaborative projects could engage communities in the creative process, fostering a broader appreciation for both environmental sustainability and cultural expression through art.

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