

Twins Seven-Seven: The Glocal Framing of an International Artist in Memorial Pages

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Abstract

On 16 June 2011, the foremost Nigerian visual artist, Taiwo Osuntoki, popularly referred to as Twins Seven-Seven, passed away. His passing, as is common with personalities of that nature, elicited some interesting memorials across the world. Family members, close friends, admirers, art collectors and colleagues in the art community in Nigeria and across the globe flooded the art space with glowing tributes, lauding an iconic figure whose works were known to reflect the embodiment of Yoruba folklore, mythology, spiritual, ghostly and invisible worlds. This article draws on a descriptive analysis of memorials in selected local and international print media and academic outlets (journals). The intention is primarily to identify and examine some of the memorials and then engage them in ways that help to understand how Twins Seven-Seven's image was conceived in global as well as local contexts. Given his complex and multipersonality, we ask how memorials shape the meanings that could

be associated with Twins Seven-Seven's life generally. Lastly, the paper is a fitting tribute to one of Africa's greatest postcolonial artists, whose passing now marks more than a decade.

Keywords: Twins Seven-Seven, Memorial, Ulli Beier, Yoruba, Visual artist, Yoruba folklore.

Introduction

Following the death of Prince Taiwo Bamidele Olaniyi Oyewale Oyekale Aitoyeje Osuntoki, popularly referred to as Twins Seven-Seven (used hereinafter), on 16 June, 2011, a handful of riveting memorials appeared on several traditional and online platforms across the world in honour of the life and works of one of Nigeria's finest visual artists. From the late visual artist's family members, friends, admirers and critics to collectors and colleagues in the art community in Nigeria and across the globe, glowing tributes lauding a figure whose works reflect the embodiment of Yoruba cosmology and mythology flooded the art space. Twins Seven-Seven was a renowned artist of international repute and because his works, particularly his paintings, were of a different artistic brand altogether, he was highly coveted throughout his lifetime. From 1964 when he was discovered by the German-born culture and art patron, Ulli Beier, his paintings shortly after appeared in international exhibitions in the United States of America (USA), Germany, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, Italy, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Japan, Holland, France, Finland, Spain, England and, of course, his home country, Nigeria.

No one was left in doubt about his rare talents which gave him national and global recognition while he became a subject of scholarly interest among Western, Africanist and Nigerian scholars (Mundy-Castle & Mundy-Castle, 1972, pp. 8-13; Jegede, 2000; Pemberton, 2002). It explains why when his passing was announced in 2011, many with whom Twins Seven-Seven had influenced in one way or the other and had had close interactions or encounters, put up fascinating memorials in his honour. In this paper, we examine some of these memorials drawn from selected local and international newspapers and academic journal outlets. The texts in these mediums are examined in ways that provide a deeper understanding of how Twins Seven-Seven's image was conceived both in global and local contexts after his passing. Given his complex and multi-personality, we ask how memorials shape the meanings that could be associated with Twins Seven-Seven's life generally. The paper pays a

fitting tribute to one of Africa's foremost postcolonial visual artists, whose passing marks more than a decade today.

Twins Seven-Seven: Early Beginnings

Twins Seven-Seven was born on 3rd May 1944, in Ogidi, Ikimu, Kabba Province, in present-day Kogi State, to Aitoyeje Osuntoki from the Agbeni Compound in Ibadan, and Mary Osuntoki from Ogidi. His grandfather, Osuntoki Olugbesan, also known as Bale Olosun, was the first Otun Bale to be installed Bale of Ibadan. He reigned between 1895 and 1897 (Akinyele, 1946, pp. 13-14), while his grandmother (paternal); Morenike Apeshigidibarin, was a wealthy circuit trader. Twins Seven-Seven spent his childhood in Kabba, most of which was with his renowned itinerant trader mother, having lost his father at the tender age of seven. He enrolled for his primary school education in Ogidi and later spent a year from 1960 to 1961 at the Teacher Training College in Epimi near Ikare in present-day Ekiti State (Beier, 1999). He expressed aversion to Western education because school, in his view, taught uninteresting subjects. This notwithstanding, he easily passed all his exams to the surprise of his peers. In 1962, he opted to travel to seek a job with the Runke Concert Party, a theatre company financed by the Sudan Interior Mission.

Feeling disillusioned, he left the job to form a performance group where he performed different tricks on stage and subsequently encountered some medicine hawkers whom he approached to work as a dancer. This job eventually took the young Twins Seven-Seven to several cities in Lagos, Benin City, Kano, parts of eastern Nigeria and finally Osogbo. On his way to perform at the Pax Hotel in Osogbo, he often passed by the Mbari Mbayo Club, Osogbo, set up by the dramatist and playwright, Duro Ladipo, Ulli Beier and South African writer, Ezekiel Mphahlele, in 1962 (Oyelami, 1982, pp. 85-87). One night out of curiosity, he stepped into the club to see what was going on, changing his life forever. Ulli Beier (1967, pp. 45-48) recounts that Twins Seven-Seven gate-crashed a farewell party organised at the Mbari Mbayo Club for his friend and British scholar, Michael Crowder, who was leaving Nigeria for Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone (*50 Years of Osogbo Art*, 2017). Unmindful of his embarrassing character, Twins Seven-Seven danced with unflagging resolve to the rapt attention of guests and onlookers. Drawn by his colourful shirt made from handwoven Okene cloth with trousers to fit, Ulli Beier offered to pay him a monthly stipend of £3 on the condition that

he promised him to remain in Osogbo. This singular gesture prepared the path for an enduring relationship between the pair.

To commence this new partnership, Ulli Beier assumed Twins Seven-Seven would fit into the Duro Ladipo Theatre Company but this proved difficult because the two men could not work together (Personal communication with Chief Ifayemi Elebuibon, 2021). Twins Seven-Seven, therefore, discontinued his affiliation with the theatre. He later formed a band that played across Osogbo. By this time, he was a regular face in town and popularly recognised as a dancer and singer. Artist, Georgina Beier, conducted an experimental art workshop in August 1964 in which Twins Seven-Seven participated (Oyeweso, Yemisi, & Raheem, 2023). Although several new talents were discovered at the end of the workshop, Twins Seven Seven was exceptional. While others seemed comfortable working with brushes and broad strokes, he was said to have used the thin stick of a broom and ink to produce drawings of several fascinating etchings (Beier, 1967). This unique painting style transitioned him into a successful artist which inadvertently pushed his dance and music career behind him. Given his gregarious nature and insatiable lust for diverse creative experimentations, Twins Seven-Seven soon cast aside his paintwork and embraced other creative endeavours that included business, music, band leadership, politics, and dance. For the next decade or so after a string of success and fame, his artistic career suffered tremendously, following some distractions and personal adversities one of which almost led to his death.

To Begin at the End is to Begin in Sorrow

The above heading is an excerpt from the first line of Emeritus College Professor of Folklore at Indiana University Bloomington, United States of America, Henry Glassie's (2012) memorial on the late visual artist. Of all the memorial texts examined in the paper, Glassie's remain by far the most rigorous and thoroughly extensive. The text did not only capture the late visual artist above what he artistically and humanly represented but also painted an image of human departure and struggle for presence all tied together. In Glassie's view, Twins Seven-Seven's life exuded "spontaneous shapes with intricate patterns bound for infinity" (2012, p. 8). This moving memorial was stimulated by the friendship Glassie and the late artist developed, following the latter's exile in Philadelphia, in the United States of America, in 2000. Glassie would subsequently publish a biography on Twins Seven-Seven in 2010, the second of such.

Glassie's illustration of the beginning of an end in sorrow is deep in meaning yet expresses the meaninglessness of life on the verge of death. He speaks in his memorial of the torturous pains his friend, Twins Seven-Seven, experienced for seventy-two days on admission at the local hospital (Glassie, 2012). On his hospital bed, Glassie noted, the artist was unable to move and only communicated by blinking his eyes until he eventually passed on the morning of 16 June, 2011, from a reported case of stroke. Glassie takes the reader down memory lane but in a strictly different context. His discussion on Twins Seven-Seven's family ties, his Yoruba names and their meanings lead us to explore themes around survival and home calling of a personality connected with a uniquely rich family history who desired to unravel that misty past unaccomplished by his forebear.

The memorial later shifts attention to Twins Seven-Seven's birth names such as Taiwo, Bamidele, Olaniyi, Osuntoki and finally, Ibeji Meje Meje, which provide details on each based on their symbolic meanings and how these names shaped all of Twins Seven-Seven's life engagements and artistic transactions. As it is often a custom among the Yoruba, names are generally ingrained with meanings that are linked either to historic events, particular subjects or objects, and great personalities. For Twins Seven-Seven, having such a collage of names makes it all the more symbolic. As Glassie points out, Twins Seven-Seven was named Taiwo to indicate a first-born, junior twin. His father named him Bamidele because he desperately hoped the artist would at least survive him and one day return to settle in their ancestral home of Ibadan. He was named Olaniyi which tells of a history of ambitiousness and glory in wealth in the family and Osuntoki (Osun is worthy of praise), a name associated with a former military king of the city of Ibadan, configuring in Twins Seven-Seven's imagination a reincarnation of his great-grandfather. The visual artist's filiation, no doubt, earned him from birth a place among future kings of Ibadan, although this life ambition did not materialise.

Glassie moved on in the memorial to the 1980s to explain moments of twists and decline in Twins Seven-Seven's life. He narrates an accident which almost claimed the artist's life in July 1982, triggering a series of unfortunate personal setbacks. An artificial iron hip was placed in his body which caused him to be bedridden for eighteen months. He lost some of his wives after the accident while his dancing career was finally over due to a damaged leg. The cataclysmic experience silenced him into a very long decline. However, Twins Seven-Seven, unknown to

defeat, bounced back after a while. The narration from descent to triumph in Glassie's memorial leaps to the 1990s when Twins Seven-Seven's miraculous recovery was said to have reached its peak after three chieftaincy titles were conferred on him in Ibadan and Ogidi. Triumph, however, came at a price. According to Glassie (2012):

Success came coupled [along] with distress, with social obligations that pulled him away from painting, with constant demands on his status and finances, with troubles at home, troubles with the police, with armed robbers, trouble in the vexed sphere of politics... [Being] overwhelmed, he escaped to America in [the year] 2000.

Faced with the constant threat to his well-being, Twins Seven-Seven moved to Philadelphia, United States of America, a familiar territory. He was welcomed to the warm hospitality and support extended to him by his friend and dealer for many years, Harriet B. Schiffer. Although he settled down as a hopeful immigrant, this, too, proved problematic. Embroiled in several difficulties, Twins Seven-Seven soon met with George Jevremovic described by Glassie as the founder and principal of the vast emporium, Material Culture based in Philadelphia. Between 2005 and 2008, Twins Seven-Seven, as the memorial observed, entered into robust creativity in Philadelphia but this new experience did little to satisfy his inordinate ambition to be king back home where he returned in June 2008.

For a very long time, Twins Seven-Seven had nursed the ambition of becoming the *Olubadan* (the title of the king of Ibadan) and regaled in the euphoria of being referred to as Osuntoki II. Incidentally, his uncle, Chief Busari Odunoye Osuntoki, who was the Mogaji (compound head) from Olosun Compound in Ibadan, passed on some three months before Twins Seven-Seven relocated to Nigeria, paving the way for him to contest the position in preparation for the *Olubadan* seat. Fortuitously, he was selected the Mogaji by family members with a date set aside for his investiture by the reigning *Olubadan* as was the tradition. The investiture was, however, stalled due to several postponements. Undeterred by the setback, Twins Seven-Seven returned to Philadelphia in 2010, to hold what would be his very last exhibition.

Twins Seven-Seven was, no doubt, a figure that was strongly committed to Yoruba belief. Despite his Muslim/Christian background, he chose a different religious path that was both radical and oppositional,

creating a culture that borrowed much from the outside but retained the vitality of local tradition. Catapulted into his Yoruba worldview and heavily influenced by folktales heard as a child back in Ogidi, Twins Seven-Seven conjured images from the animal world and turned them into meaningful material art. Glassie (2012) indicates that he used animals to expose moral problems and argue for critical self-awareness. Beyond animals, he also imagined pictures of spirits and deities which explains why the Yoruba divinity, Osun, is often punctured as a major theme in his paintings. Similarly, he produced self-portraits that explain internal and external situations in his life. Although Glassie's memorial text, as he informs readers, is composed in sadness, there is a feeling in that message that derives a joyous end for Twins Seven-Seven as a visual artist whose excellence in art, as he puts it, should remain as his legacy. Arguably, that verdict remains true a decade after the artist's passing.

More than a Flourish

Quite a few important Nigerian personalities hardly ever appear in *The New York Times* memorial or obituary pages but when they do, it tells of the influence such personalities wielded across global landscapes in their lifetime. Some of these personalities include Buchi Emecheta (Nigerian novelist), Jim Wiwa (father of dissident environmentalist and playwright, Ken Saro-Wiwa), Chinua Achebe (novelist), Sani Abacha (Nigerian dictator) and, of course, Twins Seven-Seven (visual artist). Explaining how such personalities qualify to enter its obituary pages, the newspaper states that "if you made news in life, chances are your death is news, too" (McDonald, 2022). The newspaper goes on to say that it has no formula, scoring system or strict checklist to carry out the task even complaining about space and staffing limits confining it to publishing typically three obituaries per day. Its obituary editor concludes with the terse statement: "we seek only to report deaths and sum up lives, illuminating why...those lives were significant [since] the justification for the obituary is in the story it tells" (McDonald, 2022).

Undoubtedly, as products of the Osogbo Art School which Georgina Beier conducted, the death of any of its prominent members, particularly one of its most talented, was certain to draw instant attention from both the local and international media. Twins Seven-Seven's memorial written by *The New York Times* obituary reporter renowned for documenting obituaries of global figures, William Grimes, portrays something of a triumphalist and defeatist life all bound together. From a

general assessment of Grimes's memorial on Twins Seven-Seven, it appears that the writer had very little grasp of who the late visual artist was in his lifetime. This explains why much of what was memorialised in the publication relied heavily on a press statement by Schiffer announcing Twins Seven-Seven's death and the biography by Henry Glassie, both of whom, as indicated earlier, were close acquaintances of the late artist. It is also possible that Grimes had read several other materials to reach some of the conclusions in his memorial such as the interview granted by the artist in the *Baltimore Sun* in 2001. Notwithstanding these concerns, Grimes's (2011) memorial presents Twins Seven-Seven to the global readers of the newspaper in glowing terms and his artistic oeuvre as one that evoked the world of Yoruba folklore and religion.

Like Glassie, the content in Grimes's memorial on the artist provides details on his early life and describes the circumstances that created the nickname, Twins Seven-Seven. It also explains how his dance skills earned him a dance spot with a travelling medicine party which sold Superman Tonic. Grimes informs readers about the crashed party in 1964 and how the event subsequently cemented a lifelong friendship with the Beiers. The memorial mentions a few events that launched Twins Seven-Seven into the limelight. For instance, after a successful exhibition of his work in Osogbo, the late artist was said to have moved to Lagos and London where more of his works were exhibited. The memorial thereafter shed some light on the artist's life in Philadelphia, where Grimes says he experienced a turbulent period occupied by lots of drinking and gambling (Grimes, 2011). He found a job as a car park attendant at the art emporium, Material Culture, which would eventually help to rejuvenate his career following his chance meeting with its founder, Jevremovic. As part of that career rebound was a 1989 exhibition of his work at the Pompidou Centre in Paris while in the year 2000 alone, the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian, respectively, opened exhibitions featuring his works. Grimes reveals that part of this renewed career success was Twins Seven-Seven's nomination as UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2005 (UNESCO, 2005) which quickly boosted his image and gave him new international visibility (Grimes, 2011).

In the early part of Grimes's memorial, he mentioned the fact that Twins Seven-Seven came from a princely background and would have been installed as chief of his clan, the Osuntoki, had he not taken ill. Although brief, Grimes's memorial was silent on the meanings that could be derived from Twins Seven-Seven's adaptation of Yoruba folklore in his

paintings. However, while Grimes claims that these paintings illustrate village scenes, animals and deities, there was no sufficient explanation of how they relate to the artist's worldview. While this concern was later resolved but this was after drawing attention to an excerpt from Glassie's work: "He [Twins Seven-Seven] turned back to tradition [drawing] on Yoruba sources to figure out an escape from tradition into modernity" (Grimes citing Glassie). Most importantly, this was the core value of Twins Seven-Seven's paintings often try to express by filling in outlines and borders with jewel-coloured patterns based on traditional textiles (Grimes, 2011).

Compared to Glassie's memorial, Grimes does not come close since virtually all the details about the life of Twins Seven-Seven had been discussed by the former except for a few lines that were also extracted from known sources. Nonetheless, *The New York Times* memorial on Twins Seven-Seven was crucial in that it paved the way for readers across the world who were unfamiliar with the artist and his vast array of paintings to know about his contributions to the development of contemporary African modernism and global art generally. The memorial serves as a reminder of the glorious decades of artistic flowering that witnessed the rise of African artists such as Twins Seven-Seven whose paintings were often ranked shoulder above others and dotted the international art landscape.

A Journey to the Pantheon

Moving on to the local, the first point of reference is the *Vanguard* newspaper renowned for its strong regional perspectives on national issues (Ibelema, 2022). That a memorial was published by the newspaper in question on a figure like Twins Seven-Seven may not be unconnected with the immediate and shocking reactions of prominent Nigerians, particularly members of the art community, to the announcement of the Osogbo-based visual artist's passing. Coincidentally, Ulli Beier who was Twins Seven-Seven's mentor had also passed on two months earlier. The loss of two cultural icons and aesthetes would not have eluded the Nigerian mainstream media as some potentially appealing news to report and publish. The memorial was jointly written by the newspaper's Arts Editor, McPhilips Nwachukwu (now late) and reporter, Japhet Alakam. Like Grimes, the two reporters drew, in most part, on statements credited to both the Osun State government, Osun State, southwest Nigeria, and

Nike Okundaye-Davies, former wife of the artist, to erect a portrait of Twins Seven-Seven's life and times.

Expectedly, given that Twins Seven-Seven was based in Osogbo for most of his life, it was not a coincidence; therefore, the state government immediately released a statement after the artist's death became public knowledge. In its memorial (or statement) quoted by Nwachukwu and Alakam, the Osun State government described Twins Seven-Seven as a leading figure among great artists the state had produced and considered him an accomplished artist who won laurels as an individual for his country, Nigeria and the African continent at large. Regretting the timing of the artist's death, the statement reveals that the people of Osun State were consoled that he [Twins Seven-Seven] left behind a legacy that will always inspire others to excel (Nwachukwu & Alakam, 2011). On the other hand, Nike Okundaye-Davies, in her memorial, similarly excerpted by the *Vanguard* reporters, described Twins Seven-Seven as a multi-talented figure, an African hero and the best of his generation on the continent. A thorough assessment of the memorial reveals the usual dialectics (like earlier memorials) such as the artist's early life, his encounters with the Beiers and how he became a successful visual artist, his forays into other creative enterprises, his solo and group exhibitions in several parts of the world and finally, his recognition by UNESCO as Artist of Peace in 2005.

Beyond these, however, the memorial, straightforward as it were, recognised, albeit concisely, the inherent connections or intersecting lines between Twins Seven-Seven's works or paintings and what it considers as his Yorubanness which are the crucial attributes gained from the material and abstract use of Yoruba myths, history and culture by the artist. As the memorial suggests, Twins Seven-Seven had engaged with the entire creative process [that] went further to adding more indigenous input into the documentation and preservation of his Yoruba classic (Nwachukwu & Alakam, 2011). Also, the memorial affirms how the artist's works capture the totality of the Yoruba worldview, creating an independent universe full of people, animals, gods and plants. John Pemberton III (2002) illustrates this point aptly in his description of Twins Seven-Seven's art as a radical juxtaposition where old and new materials aggregate towards the perception of personal life occurrences, creating several stories within a story without losing track of an abiding viewpoint.

An interesting aspect of the memorial is its brief mention of Twins Seven-Seven's involvement in the murky waters of Nigerian politics, particularly between 1978 and 1984, which, at the time, influenced his other

creative engagements. As rightly indicated in his biography, Twins Seven-Seven had taken to music abandoned earlier after his newfound fame as a visual artist. He released his first two records in 1971 and a few others in subsequent years, all of which explore social and political themes (Akyeampong & Gates, Jr., 2012). At other times, these records presented a critical assessment of Nigerian politics but as the artist once confessed, a good number of the records had strong connections with traditional religion (Beier, 1999). The memorial summarised this view with the argument that Twins Seven-Seven's paintings and all other creative ventures he embarked on together gave him a peculiar image as a famed and globally accepted artist (Nwachukwu & Alakam, 2011), a submission that remains valid even after his passing more than a decade after.

Meaning in a Memorial

What are the meanings that could be derived from the types of memorials discussed in the paper? A question such as this is crucial, given that memorials are often brief and usually project the positive side of a deceased life in ways that paint an image of human impeccability. Except for Glassie's text, the memorials above are what can be referred to as indirectly representational. By this, we mean memorials with very little grasp or understanding of who and what Twins Seven-Seven embodied and the totality of what he represented artistically. This explains why virtually all the memorials in this study, and again except for Glassie's, focus essentially on Twins Seven-Seven's life as a visual artist although he transitioned between this profession and several other creative ventures throughout his life for which more would have been known about his diverse artistic and creative skills. Glassie's (2012) text was also guilty of this inadvertence but he must also be applauded for pointing it out as a passing comment. As indicated earlier, the paper notes that Twins Seven-Seven, beyond his career as a visual artist, was also a businessman, musician, bandleader, politician and dancer. He was not involved in all of the above creative engagements at the same time because each engagement came at a time when he felt the urge to take up fresh challenges. Glassie (2012) points this out clearly when he notes:

During the 1960s and 1970s, when his style consolidated, he was distracted by his simultaneous success as the lead singer in a popular band. The wreck in the 1980s and the chieftaincies in the 1990s interrupted the flow of his art, but he knew moments of high productivity late in both decades.

The above quote may give the impression to keen readers that between the 1970s and 1990s, Twins Seven-Seven attempted fresh challenges each time the opportunity presented itself and when pursued with the necessary vigour, often encountered setbacks. This remains a very valid line of thought in light of the published biographies of the late artist and his testimonies, even as this context may not have been obvious to Glassie when he penned the memorial. The 1980s was a period of despondence for Twins Seven-Seven which did not only interrupt his art but almost appeared to have been a closed chapter for his artistic career. The 1990s did not fare better although it was a period that could be said to have paved the way for a return to local prominence at least.

In terms of the artist's local image, the *Vanguard* newspaper memorial, while identifying the usual personage of Twins Seven-Seven as, for instance, progenitor and one of the original artists of the Osogbo Art School and the most illustrious original and creative artists among others, also captured the links between his artistic adventures and Yoruba background. As is commonly known, Twins Seven-Seven's paintings draw upon Yoruba cosmology and mythology (Yusuff, 2021). These images are further explained in the *Vanguard* newspaper memorial as part of a talent that employs human construct to tell a much deeper story. Although no further explanation was given, what the memorial, perhaps, aimed to do was to put into context cosmo-mythical agencies as a very important concept of the Yoruba worldview. This was the idea behind Twins Seven-Seven's paintings which had virtually no attributes whatsoever with foreign concepts of art. His inspiration to paint was derived from occurrences, encounters and experiences within his immediate environment which explains why all his works are finely detailed with powerful narrations of the everyday.

Conclusion

The effort in this study is two-fold and that is to identify some of the memorials written on Twins Seven-Seven after his passing and to examine them within the context of the content these memorials portray about the artist. While this has been critically demonstrated, it is important to emphasise that the memorials examined in this paper, except one, were narrow in scope and restrictive which gives the impression of a single personality as against the multi-personality that Twins Seven-Seven exhibited in his lifetime. For instance, Twins Seven-Seven's sobriquet demonstrates that he was a figure with both a complex and multi-

personality. Unlike the stage names adopted by most artists, the term, *Twins Seven-Seven*, is considered one of the artist's *oriki* (praise name) with meanings associated with survival and triumph from a succession of mortality of seven sets of twins born to his mother. This complexity also arises from the fact that apart from being born an *Ibeji* (twin), he was also an *Abiku* (spirit child) and a *Dada* (a reincarnation of Banyani, elder brother of Sango) (Beier, 1988) put together. It is this threefold spirit identity, as Ulli Beier calls it, each connecting at every point in *Twins Seven-Seven's* lives that often 'provoked' his reactions and response to issues. But most importantly, it is this identity that has played a much more meaningful, deeper and spiritually intense role in *Twins Seven-Seven's* paintings which reflect a great sense of detail and rare creativity for which he was and still is known globally. Some of the titles of his paintings support this conclusion: *The Dream of the Abiku Child; Rainbow Wealth Goddess; The Spirits of My Reincarnation Brothers and Sisters; Elephant and Mr. Baboon in a Far Away Discussion Imagination; Kissing Birds* among others.

Grimes's memorial text on *Twins Seven-Seven* may have been written by drawing inferences from second-hand sources, yet it has also helped to stamp the image of the late artist on the international mainstream as a formidable global artist of repute. Although his reputation as an internationally acclaimed talented visual artist is not in doubt, what these memorials have succeeded in doing is pushing *Twins Seven-Seven's* artistic production, within the framework of the folklore, religion and worldview of the Yoruba, a step forward to an international audience who often crave the deeper and symbolic meanings of the diverse themes in his artworks. In the same vein, Nwachukwu and Alakam draw *Twins Seven-Seven* closer home but to other regional localities or sites that may have little or no awareness about the artist in his lifetime or may only know him by reputation or through his artistic works. Glassie, on the other hand, provides a robust memorial which was not unexpected, given that he was a confidant and close friend of the late artist. His mastery and understanding of Yoruba deities and myths for which he used to construct images of *Twins Seven-Seven's* birth and to connect his death at the same time, helped keen observers to draw inferences in terms of where the late visual artist belonged in his belief, what he stood for as an artist and the legacies he hoped to leave behind after his passing. As Glassie (2012) suggests, "[his] works...leave[.] us to recall an exhilarating moment in the history of art...[that] will endure. That we still speak of that image of endurance in the history of *Twins Seven Seven's* art, and a decade after his

passing makes that quote...valid not only in the present but also in the future.”

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