



Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: VISUAL ARTS  
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: HOW DOES THE WORK OF YINKA  
SHOWIBARE ILLUSTRATE THE CHANGING ROLE OF  
AFRICAN ART IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

**Candidate's declaration**

*If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.*

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 11/12/2008 ✓

IB Cardiff use only:

A: 4081 B: \_\_\_\_\_ ✓

## Supervisor's report

The supervisor must complete the report below and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

This is one of the best extended essays I have ever read. The light it throws on the new role of African art in a global society is both well researched and profound in its insights. It is the kind of essay one would like to see more often in the context of international education, as it highlights the highly nuanced and complex role of art in a multi-cultural context. All aspects of this essay are outstanding.

JP

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent  hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 5.1.09

Candidate Number:

Essay Title: *How does the work of Yinka Shonibare illustrate the changing role of African Art in a Global Society.*

Criterion	Level awarded	Key phrase	Comment
A	2/12	cultural diversity of artworks.	Placed in an appropriate context
B	2/12	melange of multiple experiences	Globalization issues are addressed
C	3/14	Art as a form of opera.	Interesting commentary
D	4/14	due to 'globalization' art is a form of	movement break of territorial artists regardless of ethnicity available to look at pop culture
E	4/14	Shonibare: 'it is all about excess & indulgence'	
F	3/14	Shonibare probes relationship of good + evil.	
G	3/14	Shonibare - represents an objective mirror	
H	2/12	use of 'constructed signifiers.'	
I	4/14	—	V. Well presented
J	2/12	Cogent & well expressed	
K	4/14	V. Good.	
Total	33		
Overall Level			
Comment			

Thursday, December 11, 2008



## Extended Essay

Candidate Nr:

Word Count:3600

Subject: Art HL

Supervisor:

# How Does the Work of Yinka Shonibare Illustrate the Changing Role of African Art in a Global Society

Image Reference:  
[http://www.vlisco.com/Cms/CmsData/Images/Information/40\\_31e7b07f-4673-4cf8-bfa4-a58a7d9265fb.jpg](http://www.vlisco.com/Cms/CmsData/Images/Information/40_31e7b07f-4673-4cf8-bfa4-a58a7d9265fb.jpg)

December 11, 2008 11:49 AM



## Abstract

Previously, art used to be a vehicle through which the artist communicated a message or an event from his cultural and personal point of view. These messages were often mono-cultural. However, in an era of globalization and travel, the borders and barriers of ethnicity, social and cultural identity has changed radically and the conditions under which art is now made has changed, a change that allows artists of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds gain recognition. Yinka Shonibare is one of these artist. **The question is how does the work of Yinka Shonibare illustrate the changing role of African art in a global society?**

To answer the research question, I examined two of Yinka Shonibare's most notable pieces (*Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Odile and Odette*) in order to illustrate the changing role of African art in a global society. Both primary sources and secondary sources were used to investigate this research question. Primary information was collected from an interview in BOMB Magazine on the internet, while secondary information was taken from reviews, exhibitions, catalogues, critiques and commentaries.

Due to his mixed background Yinka Shonibare is able to construct hyper-real situations. His work does not contain a natural signifier, instead it contains many possible constructed ones. I believe that this attitude of objectivity is vital because this way, Yinka Shonibare is able to appeal to a far-reaching audience, keeping them engaged in the situations at hand. In this way he has changed the role of African art in globalization from being merely an artistic influence or direction, to becoming an important global platform from which complex issues are broadcast.

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Image Reference:

[http://petersearle.com/images/yinka\\_shonibare.jpg](http://petersearle.com/images/yinka_shonibare.jpg)

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## Introduction:

Before the turn of the century, European based art was dominant in the world of art. Now, due to the globalization, emphasis is placed on the cultural diversity of artworks. This puts art that was once ignored in the spotlight, an example of this is African art. However, traditional African art made its mark on Western culture a century ago when Picasso first discovered African masks. Now a thriving contemporary African art scene exists in the art world dominated by artists like William Kentridge, Kendell Geers and Yinka Shonibare, whose two works (*Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Odile and Odette*) will be the focus of this essay.

What is interesting to note is the importance of *Un Ballo in Maschera* in an ever changing global art scene. Previously, art used to be a vehicle through which the artist communicated a message or an event from his cultural and personal point of view. These messages were often mono-cultural. However, in an era of globalization and travel, the borders and barriers of ethnicity, social and cultural identity has changed radically and the conditions under which art is now made has changed causing a break in the homogeneity of Western Art as well as African art as I will show in Shonibare's work<sup>1</sup>. This change now allows artists of different backgrounds to be recognized and heard. Yinka Shonibare is one of these artist. **The question is how does the work of Yinka Shonibare illustrate the changing role of African art in a global society?** But in-order to understand the increased role of African Art one needs to look at the nature of globalization.

According to Vicki Rendal, "*The globalization theory consists of the belief in the significance of communication and economical integration, transcending national boundaries and, incorporating all the world into a social system.*"<sup>2</sup> Of course there are

<sup>1</sup> Schöllhammer, Georg. "Art in the Era of Globalization" The Global 500, Edition Selene, 1999  
[http://www.republicart.net/disc/mundial/schoellhammer01\\_en.htm](http://www.republicart.net/disc/mundial/schoellhammer01_en.htm)  
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<sup>2</sup> Rendal, Vicky. "Globalization Theory"  
[www.multimodality.org.uk](http://www.multimodality.org.uk)  
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multiple aspects to this theory. Two important aspects to highlight in the context of art are that: *“Due to increased promotion of mass-culture, through mass-media, information technology and the education of mass-consumption, the formation of counter-cultures advocate the reassertion of national and local culture.”*<sup>3</sup> Secondly, *“In contrast to some globalization theorists who view the globalization of mass-culture as an opportunity for enterprising and adaptable people for investment and employment, other globalization theorist criticize such global capitalism as exploitative of peoples resources.”*<sup>4</sup>

The impact of globalization on art has brought with it a new vocabulary such as: hybridity, multiculturalism, trans-nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and post-colonialism<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, art and artists that originate from non-western countries have gained both sudden and unexpected attention. An example of this is African art.

### **The African Art Context:**<sup>6</sup>

African art is defined as art from Africa or art from the African diasporas, which is art of Africans outside of Africa such as the art of African Americans. Traditionally, there are four main themes that prevail in African art, which are: emphasis on the human figure, visual abstraction, emphasis on sculpture and emphasis on performance art. In African art, the human figure is the primary subject matter. African art tends to be visually abstract

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<sup>3</sup> Rendal, Vicky. "Globalization Theory"  
[www.multimodality.org.uk](http://www.multimodality.org.uk)  
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<sup>4</sup> Rendal, Vicky. "Globalization Theory"  
[www.multimodality.org.uk](http://www.multimodality.org.uk)  
December 11, 2008 12:05 PM

<sup>5</sup> Hjort, Mette. "The Work of Art in an Age of Diversity and Globalization," Aalborg University  
[http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol\\_4/notesbio.htm](http://www.uqtr.quebec.ca/AE/vol_4/notesbio.htm)  
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<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia.com "African Art"  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_art)  
December 11, 2008 12:06 PM



