

# Blazing Century 1:

Creative Interventions on the Margins of Two Worlds –  
Studio-Based Art and Connective Social Practice



Appendix 1: PhD Catalog 2022

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**BC1: DRILL (2009 - 2010)** was conceived as a practice-based research project involving interlinked creative workshop initiatives, site installations, and experimental participatory performance actions. The project involved the active participation of one hundred local youths, mostly ex-militants, ex-cultists, and fishers, in two crucial marginalized oil-producing locations and fishing settlements - Ibeno and Bonny - in the Niger Delta. BC1: Drill was developed in partnership with the Prince Claus Fund for culture and development in Amsterdam. The project aimed to generate community dialogue and truth through actions and objects that seek to redefine critical spaces for reimagining alternative forms of artistic practice that promote transformation, collaboration, and inclusion. On the one hand, it does this by mediating between two worlds: studio-based work and social practice and facilitating immediacy of social exchange between marginalized local community youths and privileged oil and gas workers. And on the other hand, it does this by trying to retain the processual visual aesthetic structure and sensorial effects of the work evolution.



**Figure 1** Wilfred Ukpong, Main Participants, BC1: Drill, Ibeno, Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2010

Link - **BC1: Drill**: <https://orientationtrip2010.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/prince-claus-fund-in-turkey-nigeria-and-mali.pdf>



**Figure 2** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: Drill, Oil and Gas facility, Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2010



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**Figure 7** MEND, Niger Delta Militant, 2010



**Figure 8** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: Drill, Oil and Gas facility, Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2010



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**BC1: COMPOSING A CAUSE (2012 -2014)** was a meditative socially-engaged sonic experiment that involved sound-making workshops and studio-based sessions. The process combined a series of field and studio recording series by setting up community encounters with individuals, local traditional musicians, academically trained musicians/artists, and a young European musician to create speculative narrative soundscapes and scores that reflected on participants and communal experiences. The project aimed to develop an abstraction of narrative soundscapes and scores firmly based on participants' socio-cultural experiences and test the process of sound and music making as a catalytic space to "provoke social relations" and promote a cause for change in the Niger Delta. It did this by proposing alternative ways of using sound and making to interact between the environment, humans, and non-human objects across different spatial spaces and temporalities.



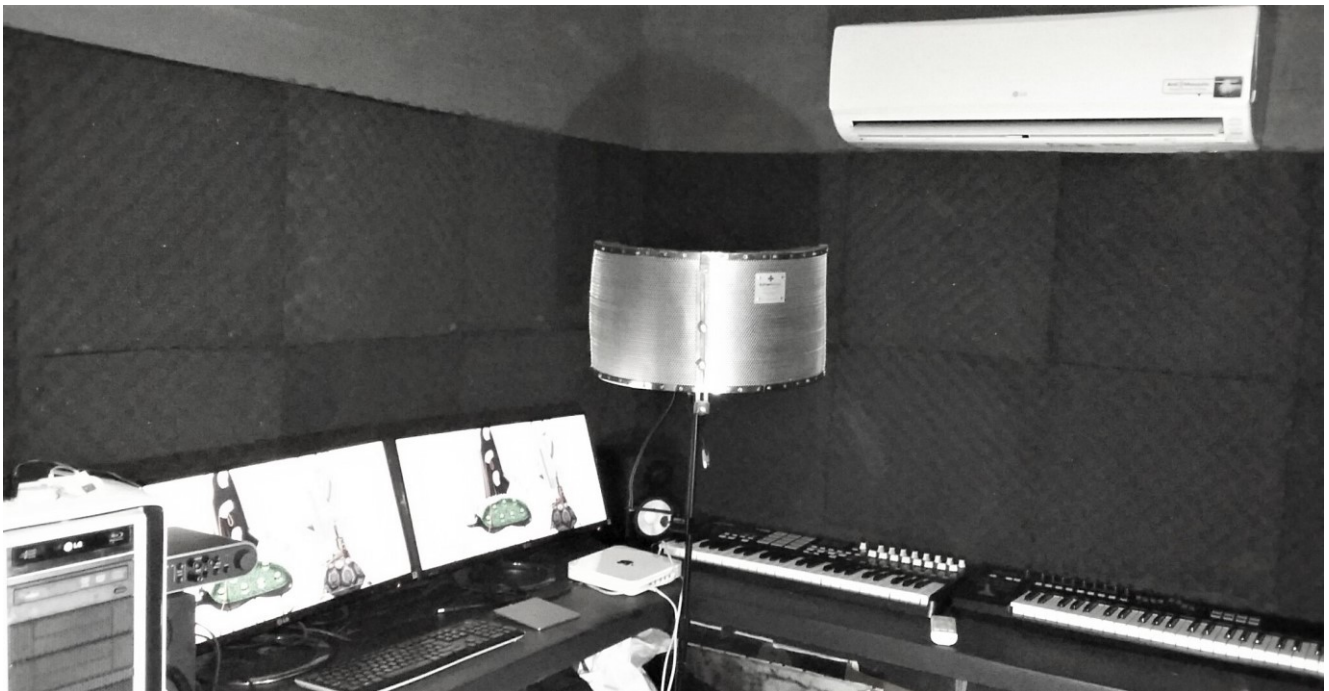
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**Link - Composing A Cause:** <https://autograph.org.uk/events/composing-a-cause>

**Link – EARTH SOUNDS:** <https://vimeo.com/641594886>



**Figure 11** Wilfred Ukpong, Sound/Music Recording Session for BC1: Composing a Cause, Eket, Nigeria, 2012



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**Figure 14** Hugo Trump, Blazing Century Studios, Groningen, the Netherlands, 2013

**BC1-NIGER-DELTA/FUTURE-COSMOS & FUTURE-WORLD-EXV (2015 – 2019)** was an interlinked art-photographic and art-film project conceived and developed alongside four creative workshops with young people from the marginalized oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. These projects aimed to experiment with art-photographic and art-film making process/products both as a studio-based work and social practice that responds – in forms of participatory art and visual activism - to challenging socio-political and environmental issues of the region. The two interlinked projects are characterized by a "mediating third term" through a process that ensures the capacity to communicate on two levels—to participants and spectators – with disturbing and pleasurable experiences. Within the context of image production, this mediating third term allows the viewer/reader to see the image as a catalytic and embodiment of agency.



**Figure 15** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: Niger-Delta/Future-Cosmos Installation, Fotofest Biennial 2020, Houston, USA

**Links:** <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2020/mar/27/artists-of-africa-and-the-diaspora-in-pictures>  
<https://preview.houstonchronicle.com/art-exhibits/fotofest-stirs-up-global-ideas-with-african-15129570>



Figure 16 Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: Niger-Delta/Future-Cosmos Installation, AF/Mike Adenuga Centre, Lagos, 2020



Figure 17 Wilfred Ukpong, FUTURE-WORLD-EXV, film still, 2019



Figure 18 Wilfred Ukpong, FUTURE-WORLD-EXV, film still, 2019



Figure 19 Wilfred Ukpong, FUTURE-WORLD-EXV, film still, 2019



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**Figure 26** Wilfred Ukpong, fishing community in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 27** Wilfred Ukpong, fishing community in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 28** Wilfred Ukpong, discarded pneumatic rubber fender salvaged into film prop, Niger Delta, 2016



**Figure 29** Wilfred Ukpong, FUTURE-WORLD-EXV, film still, 2019



**Figure 30** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: Niger-Delta/Future-Cosmos film Screening, AF/Mike Adenuga Centre, Lagos, 2020

**Links - Reviews on BC1: NIGER-DELTA/FUTURE-COSMOS and FUTURE-WORLD-EXV**

[https://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/remote\\_event\\_view?id=19131](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/events/remote_event_view?id=19131)
<https://eu-admin.eventscloud.com/website/2065/video-art-and-africa/>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/gallery/2020/mar/27/artists-of-africa-and-the-diaspora-in-pictures>  
<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/02/09/sharing-tales-of-oil-blood-and-hope/>  
<https://www.sunnewsonline.com/wilfred-ukpong-interrogates-travails-of-niger-delta/>
<https://guardian.ng/art/visual-arts/changing-niger-delta-narrative-through-arts/>
<https://thenationonlineng.net/french-nigerian-artist-questions-niger-deltas-future/>
<https://arteasy.com.ng/sharing-tales-of-oil-blood-andhope/>  
<https://www.vogue.com/article/wilfred-ukpong>
<https://guardian.ng/tag/wilfred-ukpong/>



**Figure 31** Wilfred Ukpong, Film Award Night, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria, 2018

Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy in Nigeria, Regine Hess; artist and filmmaker, Wilfred Ukpong, who won the Golden Film Award with his film, Future World in Eco-Tourism category, organized by the Internationale Tourisms Borse-Berlin Film Festival, Germany, in March 2018, and Mr. Wolfgang Jo Huschert, President of German Film Producers Association, at the formal presentation of the award to the artist by Nigerian Ambassador to Germany, Yusuf Maitama Tuggar... in Abuja

**Links – Reviews on Film Award: FUTURE-WORLD-EXV Film Award**

<https://guardian.ng/art/with-future-world-niger-deltas-challenges-receive-global-attention/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7N6FXGu6Q4>

**BC1: THE RETURN OF THE OBJECT (2015 – 2017)** was conceived as a series of disruptive performance interventions that explored and tested the role of objects as a mediated social agency in international art venues. This project was developed through a series of public interventions initially tested and scoped during the 56th International Venice Biennale, before the 2017 FNB Joburg Art Fair, and at the Zeitz MOCAA opening in Cape Town. This experiment aimed to develop a critique of 'commodified' and 'non-social' art objects through a developing interest in "*mediating* objects" that ranged from inter-subjective encounters with performance artists/actors to engaged props used during these events. Here objects exist beyond the realms of commodification assigned to contemporary art objects. Within the context of "*mediating* objects," an active viewer or audience is forced to focus on the object's capacity and potential to exercise agency. This very act of presentation or engagement underscores the characteristic that exemplifies the practical means of creating and sustaining human relations.



**Figure 32** Wilfred Ukpong, Objects Installation, Engineering Fabrication Yard, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, 2017

**Link - Review on BC1: The Return of The Object:** <https://guardian.ng/art/from-niger-delta-ukpong-hits-south-africa-with-blazing-century/>



**Figure 33** Wilfred Ukpong, , BC1: THE RETURN OF THE OBJECT, performance art intervention at the Zeitz MOCAA opening in Cape Town, South Africa, 2017



**Figure 34** Wilfred Ukpong, , BC1: THE RETURN OF THE OBJECT, performance art intervention at the Zeitz MOCAA opening in Cape Town, South Africa, 2017



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**Figure 36** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: THE RETURN OF THE OBJECT, performance art intervention at the Zeitz MOCAA opening in Cape Town, South Africa, 2017



**Figure 37** Wilfred Ukpong, Objects Installation, Blazing Century Studios, Eket, Nigeria, 2016



**Figure 38** Hans Eworth painting of Mary Tudor, 15 Century



**Figure 39** Wilfred Ukpong, Costume Design, 2009. Lorient , France



**Figure 40** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: THE RETURN OF THE OBJECT, with Theaster Gates at a performance Intervention during the 56<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition Venice Biennale, 2015

**BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE (2017)** is a two-part *social-art workshop* process that explored creative ways to enable young people (artists, creative and cultural practitioners) in Nigeria to become aware of their social-artistic capacities. The project aimed to promote creative visions and activities that shape environmental interventions and social artworks that could become forms of social enterprise. The impetuses for the conception of this project were based on a background interest in extending conceptual frameworks in the social sculpture practice developed by German conceptual artist, scholar, social critic, and activist Joseph Beuys. Furthermore, to extend the strands of connective aesthetics, a concept conceived by American artist and art critic Suzi Gablik. It does this by facilitating a paradigm shift in working perspective among youth participants to become social agents. The explored working models prompt participants to new ways of working while boosting their capacities for imaginative thought and creativity towards sustainable and humane forms of development in their future practice. This experiment has shown that 'art' – in the sense of the term used in contemporary social sculpture- can emphasize creative actions that support active engagement in shaping one's life and society.



**Figure 41** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 42** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 43** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 44** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017



**Figure 45** Ejagham (Ekoi) Janus Mask Nigeria



**Figure 46** Ejagham (Ekoi) Janus Mask Nigeria



**Figure 47** Wilfred Ukpong, *FUTURE-WORLD-EXV*, film still, 2019



**Figure 48** Ejagham (Ekoi) Headdress, Nigeria



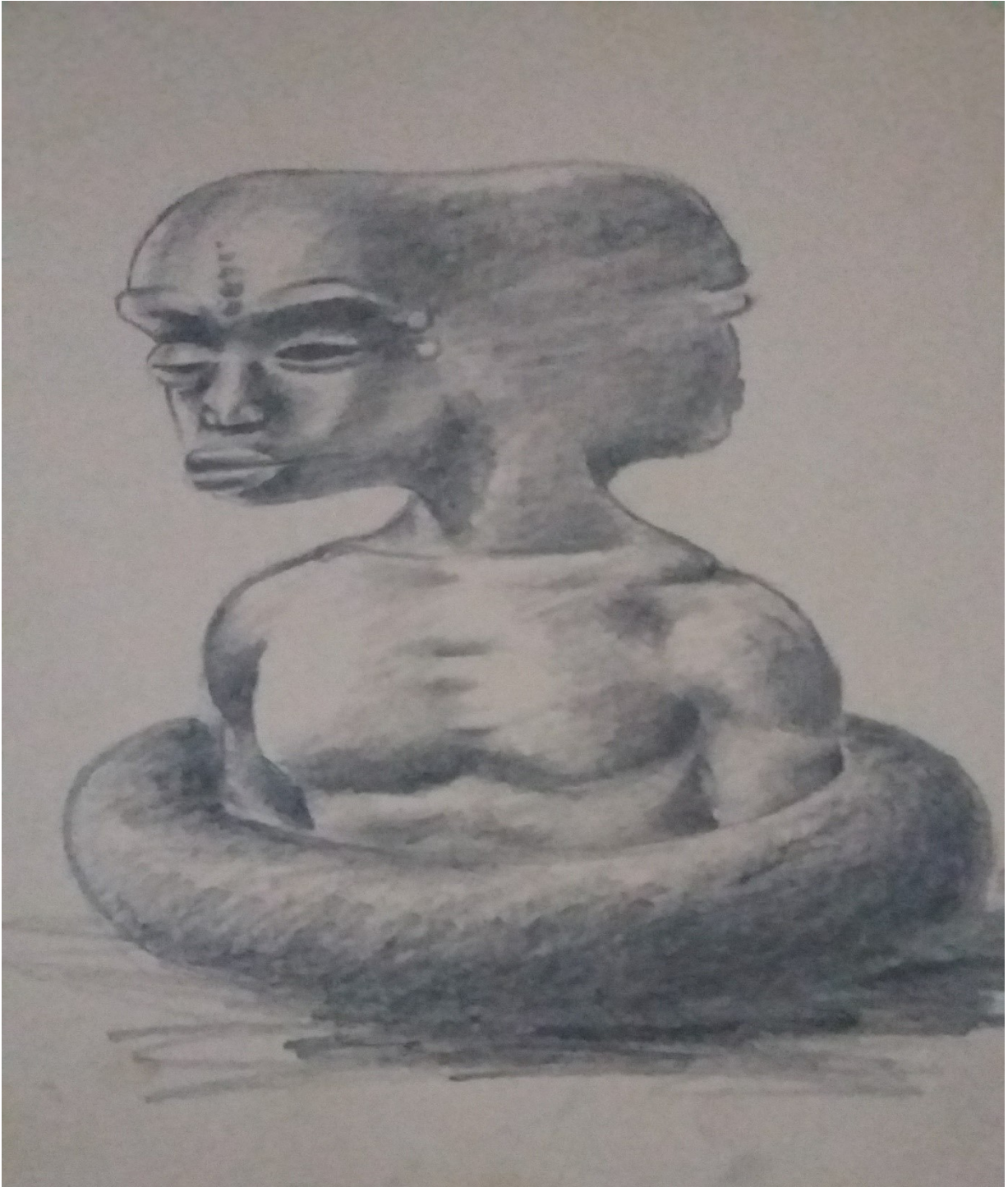
**Figure 49** Ejagham (Ekoi) Headdress, Nigeria



**Figure 50** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: ND/FC, 2017



**Figure 51** Wilfred Ukpong, BC1: ND/FC, 2017



**Figure 52** Wilfred Ukpong, Future-bond 2, drawing during BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017

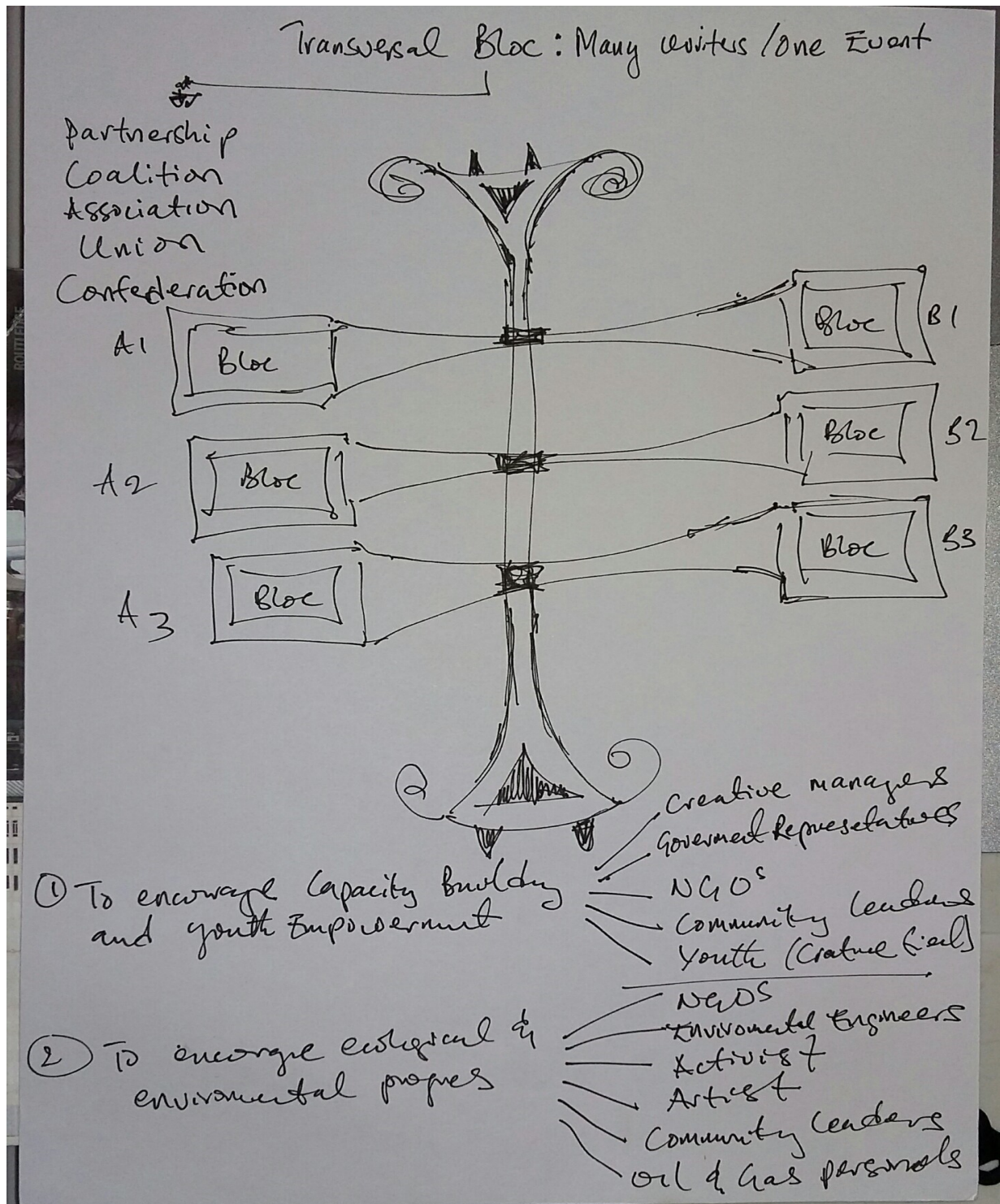


Figure 53 Wilfred Ukpong, Drawings and notes on my Journal during BC1: YOUTH OF NIGERIA AS ARTISTS OF THE FUTURE, Nigeria, 2017



**Wilfred Ukpong, Photography - BC1-ND-FC: The Advent of the Visionaries – A Screen to Behold, 2017**

*A message from the Visionaries on "Blazon Century 1: Creative Interventions on the Margins of Two Worlds"*

*Wilfred Ukpong (our bonded companion), we strongly persuade you to be "One" and at the same time be the "Other" and inhabit the margins that build on two distinct worlds. Be courageous and safeguard when the worlds seem conflicting, and rejoice when the worlds seem efficiently collaborative, productive, and manifesting into "something." That bears a double ontological semblance to an old artwork called "Janus" or to a new socially engaged artwork, which you called "Blazing Century 1". Let this evolving "creative intervention" be wholly and tended towards an engaging intentional purpose, though precarious and sometimes atypical, like an offspring of two separate worlds. Believe and be committed, for this mediated "something" will evolve in your favour and for the benefit of the "other" and will direct your current paths to a just, humane, viable and sustainable future world.*

Wilfred Ukpong, written reflection - in my journal – on the above photograph, 2017