

TRASH ART - Computer Art

By Lisbet Mogensen

A comment on the article: Ghana vs. E-waste: Relevance of E-waste Legislation in Ghana

By Joel Agbesinyale



A few years ago, no one would imagine computer waste being transformed into beautiful and amazing artworks, but this is what Anthony Tetteh Blankson, known as T.T. Blankson, from Takoradi in Ghana, does. The artist lives near a rubbish dump with lots of electronic waste, or he, like many other people, was choked by all the trash filling large areas near the cities. Sometimes a big fire was lit to remove some of the trash, resulting in dark smoke, ghastly smelling, swirling around the area, probably very toxic.

I have been traveling in Ghana for many years visiting artists, and I have seen and experienced this phenomenon in several places in the country, in Accra, the main capital, in Kumasi, Takoradi, Tema and many other places. And everywhere you are choked by all the rubbish. Something is getting better: in some places – at very few places - plastic and smaller sorts of trash have started to be collected. Thats very good.



T.T. Blankson, Ghana: Computer Screen Artwork, 15 pieces of laptop Screens, 2020

The artists I met in Ghana and still cooperate with in my gallery, are all very concerned about the trash. Not only trash from electronic equipment, but trash in common. T.T. Blankson also works with rubbish from other

industries using waste to create beautiful artworks. Many other artists transform plastic, rubber, and jute sacks into amazing pieces of art.

In Ghana there is a long tradition for working with waste of all sorts. Many artists call themselves climate-activists, but it is also a sort of necessity, as most artists in Ghana are very poor, and it's rather expensive to buy traditional materials for creating art.



T.T. Blankson, Example of a laptop screen with batik and painted patterns.

The purpose of trash art is to find aesthetic potential in rubbish, and then you can create an image, like T.T. Blankson does, when he weaves, cut screens and keyboards from laptops together with pieces of batik to create beautiful pieces of art.

With art you create a feeling, a mood, a fascination, a relation or association to people or events. Trash can be transformed into gold and magic, as Michael Thompson wrote in his book: *Rubbish Theory*. The creation and destruction of value. Some people might be repelled, others feel attracted, and some see a purpose with an artwork made of trash.

In a world filled with rubbish and the big contrast between how the richest countries and the poorest countries in the world handle their rubbish, it might be a very good idea to make art out of rubbish – also in the western countries as this will minimize the amount of rubbish. But of course, this absolutely isn't enough.

In Europe and the western countries there is a long tradition in art history for working with objects from our daily life and unprepared materials. It started in the beginning of 1900, with Cubists like Picasso and Braque, and the Dada-movement, later with Duchamps, Manzoni and in Denmark Christian Lemmertz – among many, and I think trash art will continue to be created in the following years. It's a sort of time phenomenon because of the way we have been living for too many years.

Lisbet Mogensen, owner of Galley LM in Viborg. The Gallery exhibits and sells trash art by artists in Ghana and South Africa. See more on: www.gallerylm.com

Examples of other pieces of artworks made of trash.



Art made from eggshells and acryl, by Lanto Azasime



Under my skin. Plastic, a part of us, by Anita Cudjoe

