

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

'Senior Citizen': Ironic Depiction of West Africa's Herder-Farmer Crisis in a Conceptual Ceramics Exposition

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Abstract

This paper proffers an art-speech of the farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria from the standpoint of the conceptual ceramic's exposition. Using the figurative construct of 'senior citizen' and the visual art form of conceptual ceramics, this paper creates a sort of metaphorized analogy that depicts an allegory of Nigeria's perennial farmer-herder crisis scenario, where the wellbeing of the citizenry appears to have been subordinated to those of the herders and their herds. The uncommon ceramic art approach that negates traditional production methods has been explored in this study to interrogate the outlined concerns. This process includes the pinching of plastic clay, placing it in the palm, rolling the clay with both palms into a stick-like shape, placing the stick at the foot of the fingers, tightly compressing the clay by closing the fists, and finally releasing the clay to reveal the product. This style that has been termed fragmented clay palm press terracotta on canvas proved effective and fluid enough to achieve the essence of this study. The intriguing situation of Nigeria's socio-political metaphor vis-à-vis the prevailing farmer-herder conundrum is explored in an attempt to foreground the existential irony that this awkward situation portends.

Keywords: art form; conceptual ceramics; farmer-herder crisis; senior citizen

Introduction

The monumental clash between farmers and herders across West African regions is disturbing. This has led to wanton destruction of lives and properties and has turned many into internally displaced persons (IDP). Ugwueze *et al.* (2022) assert that the "herder-farmer conflict over grazing land occurs mostly in the sub-Saharan African countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mali, Tanzania, Kenya and Chad – where the conflicts have been both chronic and endemic". Issifu *et al.* (2022) note that environmental condition modification is detected as a leading problem for human security in the recent time period. Climate change has jeopardized the citizenry through conflicts that have to do with disagreements over the possession of land resources for the survival of humans and livestock. Eke (2020) argues that the discussion about herder-farmer troubles has so far been narrowed to issues such as structural and climatic causes, but a study on another factor which is the third influence, indicates that fragmentation is occasioned by agro-investors is on the rise. Bamidele (2020) disclosed that the most worrisome trend is the failure and inability of authorities to come to the rescue for sustainable solutions to the problem between the Fulani herders and the farmers who are in claim of their ancestral lands. The crisis is too detrimental to lives and properties to ignore. This is the driving force for this study.

The drive for a saner society where the lives of humans are accorded the right privileges and guaranteed security is the basis of this article. As events of all kinds unfold in the society, activists look for channels to make their opinion known so as to reach the relevant stakeholders. Artists are also stakeholders in their own right as their medium of expression becomes their voice. This makes the artist not to be seen as a creator of beauty alone but one that can contribute to societal discussions through their medium. Aesthetics alone as the traditional purpose of visual art works is no longer rational in the modern world, full of topical issues that beg for interrogation through as many critical channels possible. According to Loraine (2017), minimalism through conceptualism used to

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process art from the late sixties to early seventies produced a third group of artists and a new kind of political activist who believed creativity to be an essential tool in any kind of radical struggle. The struggle for a more mutual relationship in societies that are multi-ethnic and multi religious, especially in the case of Nigeria, is the concern of this study through visual means of conceptual ceramics.

Also, according to Patricia (2018), art expression is not only a method of knowing and making meaning but also a form of communication when words do not convey the totality of the human experience. Several literary reports and documentations exist in respect to communal clashes between herders and villagers around the African continent, trying to bring to the attention of authorities concern for redress. Also, visual artists have joined in the crusade to represent these issues in visual forms that can be seen as an alternative to reporting and interrogating social issues. In the same vein, Bautista Urrego and Parra Toro (2016) underscore that thinking about art only as a physical object is to dehumanise a tool that provides its audience with diverse ways to understand the nature of human beings through a profound experience of analysis and criticism. The power of the arts to move out from the comfort of art for art's sake has been canvassed here and this is what this article all about; by engaging the ceramic medium in ways that does limit the medium to just 'cups and plates' into a realm of discussion through the medium. He (2022) concludes that with the continuous development of society, new things are bound to replace the old things and people must carry out self-mediation to awaken themselves to be liberated from old enslavement. In context, other than the traditional purpose of visual arts, known mainly for aesthetic functions, this also includes ceramics which commonly known for their domestic usage. This study leverages the social commentary strength of conceptual ceramics to make a statement regarding the bias on the burning issue of herder-farmer conflict which has brought about the 'senior citizen' status to undeserving elements of society to the detriment of human inhabitants.

The crises in Nigeria, occasioned by disagreement between farmers-herders, is one that needs to be re-emphasized over and over again to draw the attention of the concerned authorities. In doing this, different media, which also includes fine arts media, have also been employed but not in the uncommon manner of ceramic manipulation in this study. The concern here, therefore, is to interrogate the farmer-herder crisis in through a terracotta on canvas medium that proffers a unique creative perspective. The word 'Senior Citizen' has been borrowed to sarcastically refer to the preferential treatment for cows that should be accorded to humans, as portrayed in the conceptual ceramic artwork in this article. In actualizing the aim of this study, the following objectives are in consideration: Manipulating clay in uncommon, fragmented hand building fashion capable of portraying the concern of this article; exploring elements of the cattle-herder conflict with the fragmented terracotta pieces on two-dimensional surface; proffering artistic interpretations in the form of formalistic and contextual analyses. With the forgoing objectives. The following accompanying questions came to mind: how can the concern of this study be captured in clay or ceramic format; in what form can the idea of cattle be represented to capture the essence of this enterprise; and how can the ceramic art venture make meaning to the concern of this article?

Conceptual Inclinations and the Symbolism of the Senior Citizen

A citizen is a legally recognized and patronized member of a state. In the republican tradition, a citizen is entitled to certain rights, privileges, duties, and obligations (Mclean, 2003). Democracy places a premium on the rights of the citizenry. Among such rights sits the right to have one's life, liberties, and livelihood safeguarded. Attainment of these rights are core to the objectives of governance in a democratic system (Okoli, 2003). The term 'senior citizen' literally refers to elderly persons, especially those who have meritoriously retired from public service. They constitute a generational category that expectedly require special governmental and family care, support, and patronage. They are formally entitled to pensions and are often exempt from certain civic duties and obligations. The notion of the term 'senior citizen', as applied herewith, is figurative and nuanced, hence, it needs to be situated. As a figurative construct, it denotes shades of meanings which can be appreciated from different literary standpoints. First, it is a satire, depicting the apparent rare entitlements of herds as 'co-citizens' in the Nigerian socio-ecological space. Secondly, it is an awkward analogy of how herders and their herds have become privileged compatriots, with special entitlements in contemporary Nigeria. Thirdly, it highlights a metaphor of life in Nigeria where much value is placed on the lives of herds over (and above) those of the citizenry. Such an ironic scenario presents the imagery for a visual art form that spotlights the allegory of Nigeria's farmer-herder crisis and the related experiences, where the wellbeing of the citizens has apparently been subordinated to those of roaming livestock/cattle. Depicting this arcane situation through the medium of visual and conceptual ceramics and expository art-speech forms the point of departure in the present discourse.

This article is based on two main concepts. First, it finds conceptual footing on the idea of Art as Peace Building, which is illustrated in the assertion of Marshall (2014) who claims that “as our world increases in complexity, the arts have an increasingly vital role to play to set the stage where peace is possible, and violence is prevented”. The trending unfortunate violent occurrences between herders and farmers in some African societies, and more precisely in Nigeria, has taken a different dimension that causes every reasonable individual to worry. The herder–farmer conflicts are common in Africa and have increased in recent years. In Nigeria, for example, casualty figures rose 3000 percent between 2010 and 2016, with reports suggesting approximately 2500 deaths in 2016. Two years prior, 1229 people were killed, while only 80 deaths were reported between 2010 and 2013 (Eke, 2020). No doubt, society is complex and there are diverse interests. Just as Marshall has recommended, the ceramic art of this study redirects the attention of authorities and stakeholders to this situation through visual means.

Secondly, the article is based on the concept of ‘art as critique of bad governance’. In this respect, Okoro and Odoh (2013) note that “no people can successfully fight bad governance and achieve sustainable progress if they do not first of all rise up to its true situation -calling things their real names”. In their article titled; “Art as a Critique of Bad Governance in Nigeria: Some Examples”, paintings were used as tool to criticize the negative side of governance. In the context of this article, from 2020 to 2022, the situation of the herder-farmer crisis has assumed an alarming state to the extent that governments allegedly become indifferent and decides to look the other way in defence of the herders. The posture of complacency by authorities concerned has invariably afforded the herders and their cows a senior citizen status that cannot be touched or reprimanded irrespective of the gross malfeasances that have become inimical to the lives of human inhabitants. Aside from portraying elements of this crisis through the ceramic medium, this article also critiques bad governance for a failure to do the right thing at the right time, which has further encouraged the crisis to not abate. A scenario of placing premium on the welfare and lives of beasts of burdens (cow) by democratically elected government above the welfare and lives of electorates is the situation of concern that this study wishes to cross examine via a juxtaposition of conceptual ceramics and political science perspectives. Loraine (2017) asks and clarifies, what, then, is the difference between collaboration and participation? According to Loraine, artists have acknowledged the complex set of overlapping relationships involved in each, while proposing collaboration as the equal involvement of individuals through 100 Reflections in the project’s content, concept, and ownership, who share the logistical, conceptual, and creative decisions. Participation is seen as not requiring a large demand from those involved, leaving the responsibility for the project with the lead artist. A studio-based approach that centers around the creation of the stylized or abstract conceptual ceramic art form as a vehicle for interrogating the issue in question and a political science approach of analyzing this issue has unearthed the expectations of this study. Wiebke and Wünsche (2016) and Loraine (2017) see abstract art as an expression of freedom and democracy and use it as a political tool to counter both National Socialist propaganda as well as socialist and Stalinist politics. Secondly Loraine’s idea of artists as political activists who use creativity as a radical tool gives reliable backing to this study.

The manner of clay manipulation here and what it represents is categorized under post-modernism in the creative medium of ceramics. Steven (2010) in Okewu (2022) opines that postmodernism views art as a socially constructed entity, requiring the viewer to look beyond the formalist, compositional qualities of a work, decode its symbolic imagery, and expose its embedded cultural assumptions. The ceramic style here is postmodernist because it has gone beyond traditional ceramics into a conceptual realm. Conceptual ceramist language lies in clay manipulation which the artist uses to create visual imageries to contribute to societal discussions. Through the medium of clay, famous ceramic artists like Onuzulike (2004), Echeta (2013), and Savaş (2012) have also become political activists by producing works that are aesthetic and topical enough to speak to society. The aesthetic perspective of an artwork is subjective. While the artist executes his works based on conceptuality, an onlooker could be carried away by beauty. However, the conscious drive by ceramic artists to move towards the realm of social relevance through their art form has been on the front burner for some time now. This has led to an interrogation of different societal issues that encompasses anything from socio-political to humanistic issues. It is at the point where artists take on society issues via their works to contribute to societal discussions.

Methodology

When an idea is to be molded into an artwork, the design in the mind is also determined by materials and techniques. In other words, the result should be imagined in the beginning (Güler and Başığit, 2011). In fulfilling the objective of “manipulating clay in uncommon, fragmented hand building fashion capable of portraying the concern of this article”, a studio-based approach of research was adopted in the formation of the artwork for

interrogating the concerns of this paper. This was made possible by traditionally preparing secondary clay by drying, slaking, sieving, dewatering, and kneading raw clay. These processes were carried out to improve the plasticity and workability of the clay. This enhanced the handling of clay in the uncommon fashion of hand building. The hand building technique of ceramics production adopted in this context negates the conventional modes of hand building in the ceramic's specialization. It is called clay palm press. It is a process that involves the palms of the hand as they press mold and churn out the basic material medium for expression (see figures 1 to 8 for the process). This process was kick started by pinching malleable clay (See figure 1). This stage is important because by pinching the clay, one can determine the quantity of choice for uniformity and the capacity the palm can conveniently carry for further operation. This is followed by placing the pinched clay in the palm in readiness for rolling to form a clay stick (See figure 2). Both palms were used to roll the wet plastic clay in between the palms, thereby forming it into a slim stick-like shape (see figure 3). This was followed by making sure the rolled stick-like clay was strategically placed at the foot of the fingers (See figure 4). The clay at the foot of the fingers was tightly compressed in between the palm in a closed, tight fist manner (see figure 5). The product of compressing the wet clay between the palms is the transfer of the palm patterns imprint on the clay (See figure 6). This process took less than ten seconds to achieve, with each unit transferring the palm imprint to wet clay. This was repeatedly done until the desired fragmented quantity was achieved.

This uncommon process of ceramic production negates traditional ceramic production methods but is very germane and fluid enough to interrogate social concerns in this study. The fragmented clay palm press was subjected to proper drying and firing at a temperature of 1200°C in a gas kiln to be converted into ceramics, in this context called terracotta. With a scientific perspective, Pivinskii *et al.* (2016) explains that during the firing of up to 1200°C, chemical reactions range from classical sintering accompanied by material compaction to secondary mullite formation. This was what took place during the firing of the fragmented clay forms. Converting the fragmented clay into terracotta resulted in a rock like hardness for the effective exploration of the material on any surface by using glue. This would not have been possible without firing. Afterwards, open air reduction firing with sawdust was also carried out on the kiln fired terracotta. In essence, this resulted in a different tonal gradation of terracotta colors for the sake of achieving variety, just as Srilomsak *et al.* (2014) affirms by noting that open air reduction firing results in a range of colours, from black fired and red fired to dark brown. The objective, "exploring elements of cattle-herder with the fragmented terracotta pieces on two-dimensional surface", was achieved by first rendering the idea in thumbnail sketch to serve as guide (See figure 10 below). Afterwards, a frame stretcher was made, and a synthetic fabric material was stretched on it. This served as a platform for exploring and gluing the terracotta pieces in a patterned way to reflect the initial drawing of the idea. Apart from the terracotta figurines, pieces of broken clay pot were also used. Using different tonal shards of broken pot (See figure 9) as well as the fragmented terracotta figurines created the effect of breaking the monopoly of clay palm press figurines. Exploring palm press terracotta on a two-dimensional surface (canvas) was made possible with the help of top bond adhesive glue. This glue was suitable for this purpose because it turns transparent when dried and leaves the work neatly finished. The trio of fragmented terracotta pieces, shards of broken pots, and a stretched canvas became the medium used in executing the artwork that represented a stylized cow or bull figure with flowing rhythmic lines.

Farmer-Herder Crisis and the Nigerian Socio-Political Irony

The farmer-herder crisis refers to the conflicts between settled crop growers and migrant pastoralists. The root of the crisis is the contestations over land-based agrarian resources, namely farmlands, graze-lands, and fresh water (Okoli, 2014). The farmers consist largely of various native communities in Nigeria's vast rural countryside, while the herders comprise almost exclusively of the nomadic clan of pastoralists that are predominantly Fulani (Olayoku, 2014). The origin of the crisis predates modernity. Prior to its contemporary complications, crop farmers and herders have had disputes and skirmishes arising principally due to rangeland/farmland trespasses. Such conflicts were then resolved through local mechanisms that involved the mediatory interventions of traditional authorities (Okoli, 2018). To find a longer lasting solution to the crisis, the Nigerian government has in the past undertaken the creation of grazing reserves and routes in order to guarantee safe and peaceful relations between the agrarian parties. Nowadays, the crisis has become rather complicated and aggravated, with a multiplicity of actors, interests, and stakes involved. The adversities of climate change and armed violence in the West African Sahel tends to have engendered outcomes that have made the competition between farming and herding groups more grievous and fatal. In recent years, the crisis has been characterized by immense arms bearing, militancy, and criminal impunity, leading to dire humanitarian consequences. It is estimated by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) that no fewer than 8,343 persons have lost their lives in the crises between 2005 and mid-2021

(Oluwola, 2021). This is in addition to hundreds of thousand that have been forcefully displaced, also as result of the crisis.

Nigeria's farmer-herder crisis has been an irony of ironies. The crisis has been associated with some signs and outcomes that highlight the country's damning national existential metaphors. The first is the irony of citizenship. The herders are predominantly of the Fulani migrant (nomadic) tribe, who emigrate from places as far as the Sahel. Unlike the settled Fulani, they practice transhumant pastoralism (Okoli, 2015). They wander from place to place in search of pasturable fields in order to graze their cattle. The movement is both seasonal and cyclical and is mostly intensive in the savanna plains of northern and central Nigeria (Abbas, 2012). Nowadays, the movement is also becoming more pronounced in the coastal hinterlands of southern Nigeria. In their pastoral sojourn, the nomads encounter natives in their various settled communities. With these indigenous populations, they have had some dialectical relationship over the years. Originally, the relationship was largely cordial and symbiotic, with isolated skirmishes over farmland/rangeland trespasses (Okoli, 2018). In recent years (since the 2010s), however, the relationship has transformed into one of high stakes, contestations, and hostility. The herders have become more politically conscious, assertive, and territorial. Through their pan-identity organization, called the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), they have canvassed and lobbied for a privileged entitlement in the Nigerian rural agrarian sector. Today, the herders are not merely asking for grazing routes and fields, they are also asking for privileged agrarian entitlements and also 'protected territories' – a colony where the rights, privileges, and value systems of theirs can be better protected in a sort of special citizenship arrangement.

The next is the irony of governability. The Nigerian state appears to have been on a dangerous trajectory of recession. Its governability quotient has abysmally diminished over the years. While the state exists in apparent abeyance and absentia, the government tends to wallow in gross inertia, lacking in the requisite coercive competencies to enforce the will of the state (Okoli, 2023). As a result, there exists swathes of un(der)governed spaces within the country's territorial sphere, where violent non-state actors (VNSAs) engage the state in competitive contests. Disparate groups of terrorists, insurgents, militants, bandits, and mercenaries wield near absolute power in the various contested spaces that dot Nigeria's vast rural and forested landscapes. The virtual ungovernability of the Nigerian territorial jurisdiction has created a veritable pretext for criminal impunity among the VNSAs, who have capitalized on the prevailing security cum governance deficits to hold the citizenry to ransom. It is in such context that the apparent perennialism and intractability of the farmer-herder crisis in the country can be properly conjectured. In the absence of the authoritative and coercive influence of the state in much of Nigeria's distant hinterlands, mechanisms for mediating and moderating agrarian contestations are almost non-existent. Consequently, farmers and herders alike are inclined to resort to self-help strategies in seeking resolutions to their differences and disputes. In places such as Zamfara and Kebbi, the attempt by the settled farming communities to defend themselves through the instrumentality of local vigilantes caused backlash in the emergence of Fulani militants and mercenaries who fought in defense of the herders (Bagu, 2017). It is this dynamic that transformed farmer-herder conflicts into a sort of Hausa-Fulani mutual militancy, and this constitutes the roots of the apocalyptic phenomenon of banditry in that context. Lastly, there is the irony of identity faultline. Although nearly all herders are Fulani, it does not logically follow that all Fulani are herdsman. Only the nomadic Fulani are, essentially. Similarly, inasmuch as most Fulani and most herders are Muslims, there are, nonetheless, some percentage of non-Muslims among them (Okoli, 2018). Whilst the nomadic Fulani constitute a monolithic socio-ethnographic category, the crop farmers do not. In fact, among the crop farmers are Hausa, Zulu, Birom, Nupe, Jukun, Tiv, Agatu, Idoma, and a host other native ethnicity.

However, the farmer-herder crisis has, more often than not, assumed delicate ethno-religious binaries and complications in various spatio-temporal contexts. Being opportunistic and dynamic, the crisis has sometimes explored and exploited an extant faultiness of identity in its contemporary manifestations. In parts of Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, and Kebbi states where adherence to Christianity is not common among the indigenous populace, the crisis has been vitally ethno-communal in nature, pitting native Hausa against the Fulani (Mbah, 2021). However, in Central Nigeria where there is a significant concentration of Christian populations, the crisis has been both ethnic and religious implications. The ethno-religious coloration of the crisis in such a context has fueled the narrative to the effect that herder militancy is a ploy to further the jihadi agenda, aimed at undermining Christianity in the area (Bagu, 2017). This narrative has gained credence and traction in the light of the apparent selective nature of most instances of herder attacks wherein communities that are predominantly Christian are targeted. Conversely, the herders view any attacks on them by the natives as a calculated attempt to undermine their collective survival and livelihoods. The rising and audacious herder violence in Nigeria, and the seeming lethargy with which

the government has responded to it, has fueled a widespread narrative that the present Fulani-dominant federal government is tacitly supporting the marauding herdsmen in their treasonable onslaught against the indigenous peoples of Nigeria. This thinking resonates with a 'jihadisation' or 'Finalization' narrative, which has gained currency and traction in Nigeria's present national security discourse.

Formalistic and Contextual Analysis

"Artistic production and evaluation of artwork are two separate things. The form-content relation in art is generally an analysis on the artwork" (Güler and Başıoğlu, 2011). The third objective of this study, "proffering artistic interpretations in form of formalistic and contextual analyses", was carried out by describing and interpreting the art work, thus, in this instance, formalistic analyses explains all aspect of the artwork as rendered. The conceptual ceramic artwork interrogating the concept of the senior citizen (See figure 11), identifiably, is a composition of terracotta palm press figurines and pieces of broken pots explored on canvas. Canvas is traditionally known to be associated with painters using acrylics or oil paints, expressing ideas on the surface. However, in this instance, the tradition has been broken through the use of fragmented terracotta pieces on canvas. Terracotta pieces, as could be noticed on the artwork, has a unique and coarse textural appearance due to the imprint of the tight fist clay that was pressed and produced. According to the initial rendering in the thumbnail sketch (See figure 10), palm press terracotta has been used to illustrate and represent on canvas the head of a ferocious looking bull that seems to be putting on a senior military ceremonial cap. Also, hanging down the artwork at both bottom ends are medals, like projections that could be likened to medals of honor usually displayed on the chest of ceremonial outfits of senior military officers. Fragmented palm press terracotta lines are contrasted in white, crossing each other in the background of the representation to create linear and rhythmic effects. The artwork is in varied tones of terracotta, ranging from off-white, brown, actual brown, dark brown, to black. The different shades of browns which created variations and an aesthetic finish in color are all a result of different heat exposures in the kiln during firing. While the dark brown and black shades are a result of open-air reduction firing afterwards.

Contextually, the head of a fierce looking bull, as presented in the artwork, with all the attributes of the cap and emblems akin to a senior officer, implies, in the context of this article, an untouchable entity. Ironically, despite the atrocities committed by herdsmen, because they possess cows, the government of the day, especially in Nigeria, has pretentiously looked away to the detriment of the lives of human inhabitants. The act of deceit and the fact that government lacks the willpower to decisively deal with the situation has left society at the mercy of herdsmen and their cows, resulting in wanton destruction of lives and properties and chasing away people from their ancestral homes, creating Internally Displaced People (IDP) situations in some parts of the country. The special preferential privileges they enjoy under the government has caused them to be referred to as senior citizens. In the area of peace building, this study has used an uncommon ceramics creative means to reiterate and impress on authorities the disservice they are undertaking by not paying critical attention to the crisis brewing between the farmers and herdsmen. By implication, this study is calling for decisive action that will amount to lasting peace. In the aspect of bad governance, the fact that there is such a term as "farmer-herdman crisis" in the first instance is a pointer to bad governmental decisions and policies that have empowered both parties in the crisis with authority to act lawlessly without reprimand. This has been made bare by the 'senior citizen' status the herdsmen have assumed, as presented in this study through the symbolic representation of a ferociously looking bull head in this conceptual ceramic enterprise (see figure 11).



Figure 1: Pinching plastic clay



Figure 2: placing the pinched clay in the palm



Figure 3: rolling the clay in between palms to form a stick



Figure 4: placing the rolled clay stick at the foot of the fingers



Figure 5: Tightly compressing the clay within palm imprint



Figure 6: Releasing and revealing the pressed clay



Figure 7: Drying the green wares



Figure 8: Arranged in the kiln for 1200°C firing



Figure 9: Shards of broken pots ready for exploration



Figure 10: Thumbnail sketch



Figure 11: "Senior Citizen", Terracotta on Canvas, Okewu Jonathan, 130cm / 83cm, 2021

Conclusion

Nigeria's farmer-herder crisis has posed a grave threat to national security in the country. The crisis has elicited an avalanche of scholarly and political interventions, yielding a corpus of episteme on salient aspects of the subject matter. Extant studies on the crisis have focused more on plain narratives rather than artistic imageries. They have been overly dominated by accounts that seek to describe and explain rather than to depict and illustrate. In this study, ceramic artistic imageries depicting a super-citizen positionality has been used to illustrate the privileged status of the herding clan in Nigeria, where the wellbeing of the citizenry appears to have been subordinated to those of the herders and their cattle. In their contestations with crop farmers, the herders have manifested a sense of superiority and entitlement through their privileged citizenship. They appear to have enjoyed the tacit protection of the national government, which has often rationalized, downplayed, and dismissed their destructive activities. Using a mix of conceptual ceramic exposition embellished with analogical metaphor, the study offered an artistic narrative that depicts the ironic scenario of the farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria, wherein the herders tend to have assumed a privileged citizenship status that accords them much state patronage at the expense of others. Such an awkward scenario highlights the irony of Nigeria's national life, characterized by a sundry of absurdities and oddities.

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