Exploring coconut tree as an alternative wood carving material

Title: Exploring coconut tree as an alternative wood carving material
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Abstract: Wood carving has been practiced in Ghana using conventional wood species such as Odum, Sese, Kyenkyen, Ebony, Mahogany and others but due to the increasing depletion of these conventional wood species as a result of over exploitation leading to scarcity of the raw materials they provide, there is now the ardent campaign that non–conventional wood species such as mango, neem and coconut are good alternative wood carving materials (Masera, n.d.; Okrah, 2002). The shift to these non–conventional wood species will help salvage the conventional wood species and the carving industries. This study explored the use of coconut tree as an alternative wood carving material. The researcher focused on 25 year old hybrid and 30 year old tall varieties for the production of relief carvings. The researcher employed qualitative and quantitative approaches of research to carry out the study using semi–structured interview and observation to collect the data. From the findings, processes, tools and equipment used for woodworking are the same used for processing and working with the coconut tree. The spiky nature of the grains of the coconut wood makes carving difficult and uncomfortable without protective gloves for the hand and goggles for the eyes, the carver can be harmed by split pieces. The quality of work produced was found to be like that of the conventional wood. The researcher recommends that Ghana Education Service (GES) should encourage schools in the coastal towns of Ghana to harvest, process and use the senile coconut trees standing in plantations for woodworking. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts should encourage the nation’s wood carvers in the coastal towns to harvest,process and use the over-aged coconut trees for wood carving and other related use

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