

Exhibition: NCMM, German Institute Showcase *Nigeria, 100 Years Ago*

Contrary to strongly held views by Eurocentric critics that Nigeria and Africa in general, was in a dark age until the coming of Europeans, photographs at the ongoing exhibition, titled 'Nigeria 100 Years Ago Through The Eyes of Leo Frobenius And His Expedition Team' at the Cyprian Ekwensi Centre for Arts and Culture Abuja, shows that Nigeria had an organized society with a rich culture some 100 years ago.

The exhibition, organised by the National

Commission for Museums and Monuments in collaboration with the Frobenius Institute, Goethe, Universitat, Frankfurt, Germany, has photos of Adamawa architecture, Yoruba art, Nupeland material culture, Tiv and Jukunland art amongst other exhibits.

According to the Director-General of National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Yusuf Abdallah Usman, "The commission considers this

commemoration significant as it provides us the opportunity to take a look at Nigeria's cultural past, albeit through the eyes of a German ethnologist, Leo Frobenius, who was specially inspired by our cultures, defended same to be as genuine as the cultures of other continents at a time when the western world thought we had no history."

Usman further said that through the exhibition of Frobenius's archival materials, Nigerians have at their disposal,

invaluable documentation of life in several Nigerian societies as they existed 100 years ago.

He said the intention of the exhibition "Is to make this pictorial testimony, coming from a time when pictures were extremely rare to the Nigerian public" while reiterating the Commission's readiness to continue to play its role in using the universal "language of its collections to create and develop international understanding, within a world in which some parochial people talk of

clash of civilizations; instead of seeing the unity in diversity."

Dr. Richard Kuba from Goethe Universitat said the pictures were archival materials found in the German Institute, which they decided to return to Nigeria in line with understanding they have with NCMM.

"From our findings, Nigeria was a developed country culturally even 100 years ago and I wonder if the culture is still as varied even though I know the cultures still exist," Kuba said, while

urging the federal government, through its agencies to preserve the nation's heritage objects.

Pledging the support of the National Assembly through laws to galvanise the culture sector, Chairman, House Committee on Culture and Tourism, Hon Kanayo Oguakwa, said the exhibition will help sensitise Nigerians "on the importance of cultural heritage and promotion of our cultural industry, by encouraging the local communities to revive them. ■"