

Available literature on traditional African Art virtually ignores women's creative and aesthetic sensibilities in artistic production. When women's traditional African art is mentioned, focus is made within the crafts, giving an impression that crafts are less significant than art forms such as sculpture; which are produced by men. This situation obscures the significance of African women's art in society. Hence, through an in depth analysis of selected women's beadwork from the Kenyan coast, this paper examines creativity, aesthetics, and symbolism in these works of art. The paper is of the opinion that women's beadwork can be placed within the realm of poetic idiophones as found in poetry where the repetition of words, sounds, and rhythm heighten a poem's aesthetic effects and invoke various images in the reader. It is our contention that women's beadwork is a valuable contribution to the stylistic and aesthetic continuum peculiar to the East African coastal strip. Further, using the headwork under discussion, the paper shows the interrelationship between Mathematics and Art and Design demonstrating that coastal women created aesthetically pleasing beadwork using elements and principles of art, and certain mathematical formulas. The paper employs functionalism and formalism theories to interrogate its concerns. The functionalist approach recognizes that the aesthetics in artefacts seek to satisfy psychological, social, economic and cultural needs of the society. Even though the functionalist theory has come under sharp criticism and waned in interest, it is useful when applied to beadwork under discussion. However, since aesthetics is often culture-bound, we need to appreciate functionality within the context of the society or community under discussion. Additionally, the paper utilizes the formalistic theory, which looks at the application of elements and principles of art to achieve a unified formal quality in an art object.