

# C&

PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL ART  
FROM AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES



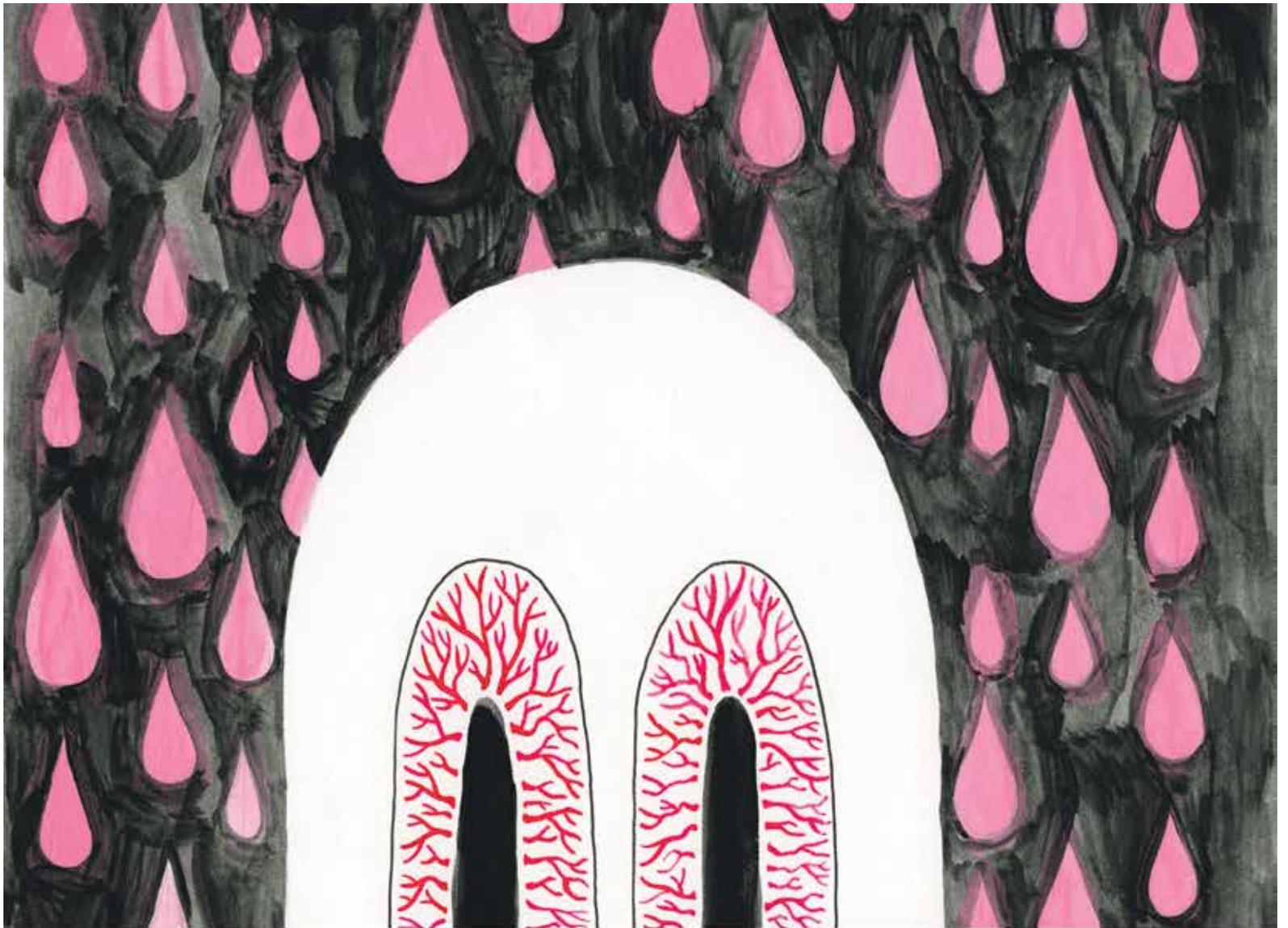
Kapwani Kiwanga, *Study for Flowers for Africa: Senegal*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist

Center What?

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Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Fear Drawing* (detail), 2008. Courtesy the artist, James Cohan Gallery, New York and Hales Gallery, London

# TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK

## SKIN AND BONES, 20 YEARS OF DRAWING

MARCH 26 – JUNE 28, 2015

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SALON STYLE

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Welcome to the third print issue of Contemporary And (C&), our biggest to date. The first issue was launched exactly one year ago during the 11th Dakar Biennale and significantly extended the form and purpose of our online art magazine, contemporaryand.com. Together, the online platform and the print issues represent and embody different ways of narrating the story of contemporary art from African perspectives, a story without a single history or center.

In this issue we talk to artists, curators and academics about alternative routes of communication: cartographies of migration and shifting political borders introduce our focus on migration, whether through the immersive work of Nigerian sound artist Emeka Ogboh, or the presence of the migrant in the multimedia work of Guy Wouete and Serge Alain Nitegeka. We listen to photographers documenting young people who have left their home countries under difficult circumstances, drawn by the expectation of a better life.

During the past few weeks, our own center was Lagos, where we had the amazing chance to hold our first critical writing workshop together with a smart group of instructors and over 30 young art critics from Nigeria. Since then, many of them have already become part of our global writers' network and will cover the art world from Nigeria on our behalf. So we do need centers. But those centers can be everywhere and nowhere, depending on where you choose them to be.

### *The Editors*

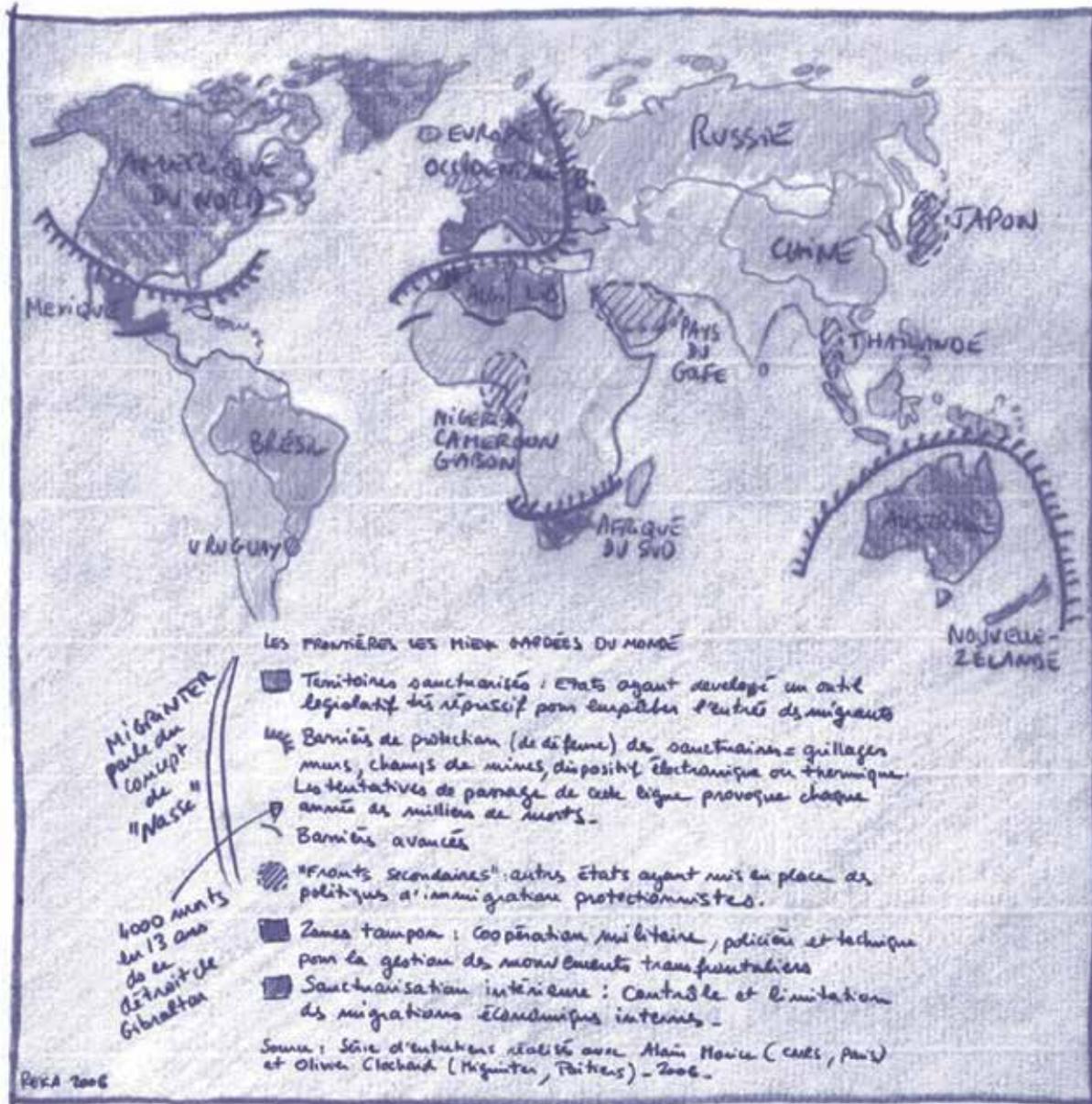
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The maps of **Philippe Rekacewicz** show how the phenomenon of migration relates to the issue of political borders. They are not “finalized” maps, but rather rough drafts whose provisional character attests to the nature of the border itself: ambivalent and paradoxical (it divides as much as it unites). Borders are difficult to map out: first the maps respond to the question of “where” and then they permit us to understand “what,” to understand how human communities organize and produce their territory to the detriment of their neighbors.

Behind  
Every  
Map,  
There  
is  
a Person

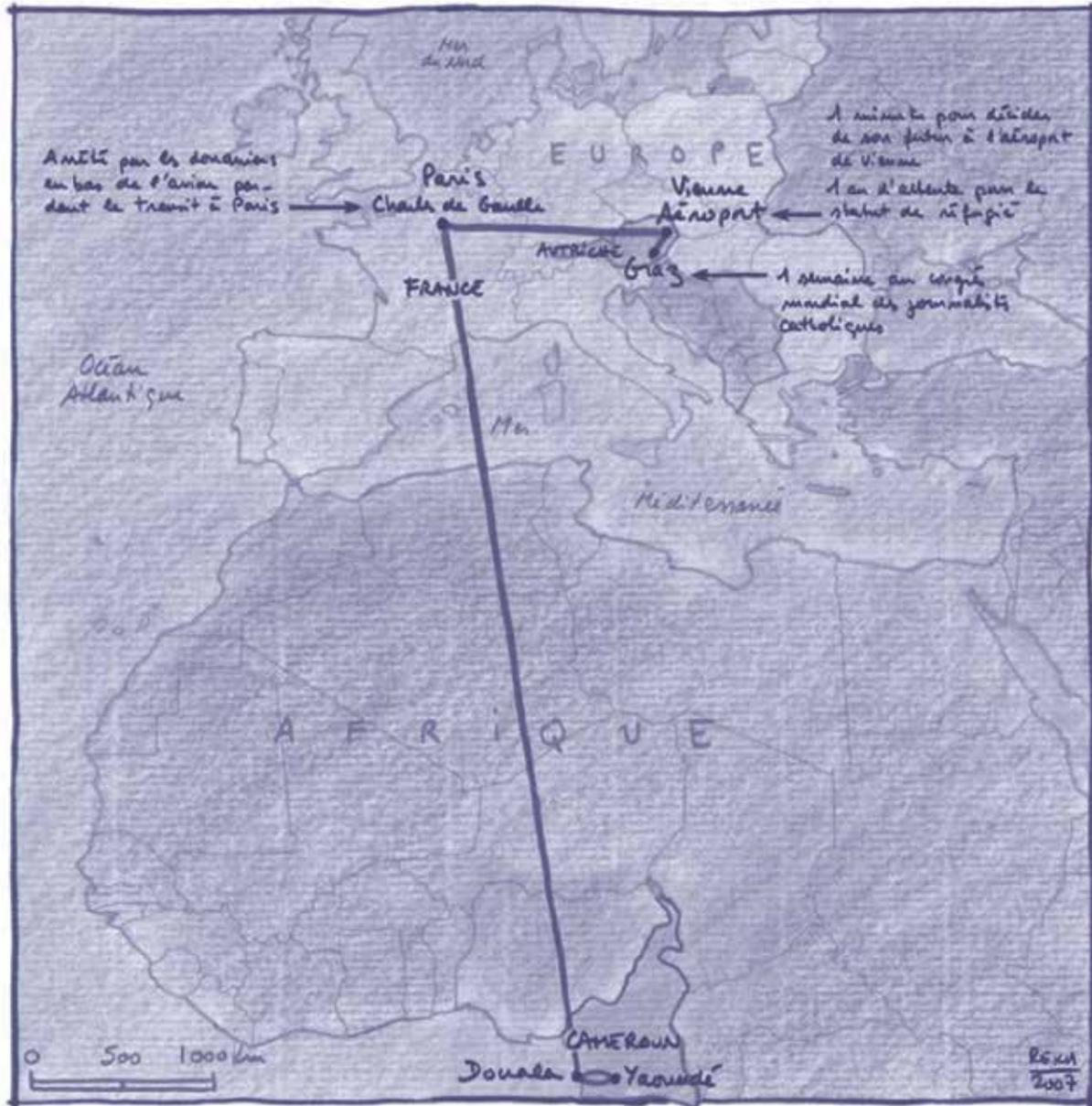
*Behind every map, there is an intention. A map is born of an idea; it is an intellectual construction before being formalized into the sketched draft, the sign of that first cartographic intent. Once they are printed, the political maps of the world – those depicting the complex networks of lines that symbolize borders – create the illusion of a world that is perfectly carved up into units of life, into regions and countries. They have an air of harmony about them, and they give the borders a sense of permanence. However, borders are inscribed into the landscape in a myriad of ways: they can tower up as thick, insurmountable barriers, or they can be practically nonexistent. Between these extremes, there is an infinite number of variations. And these virtual lines shift in time and space whenever history unsettles the world.*





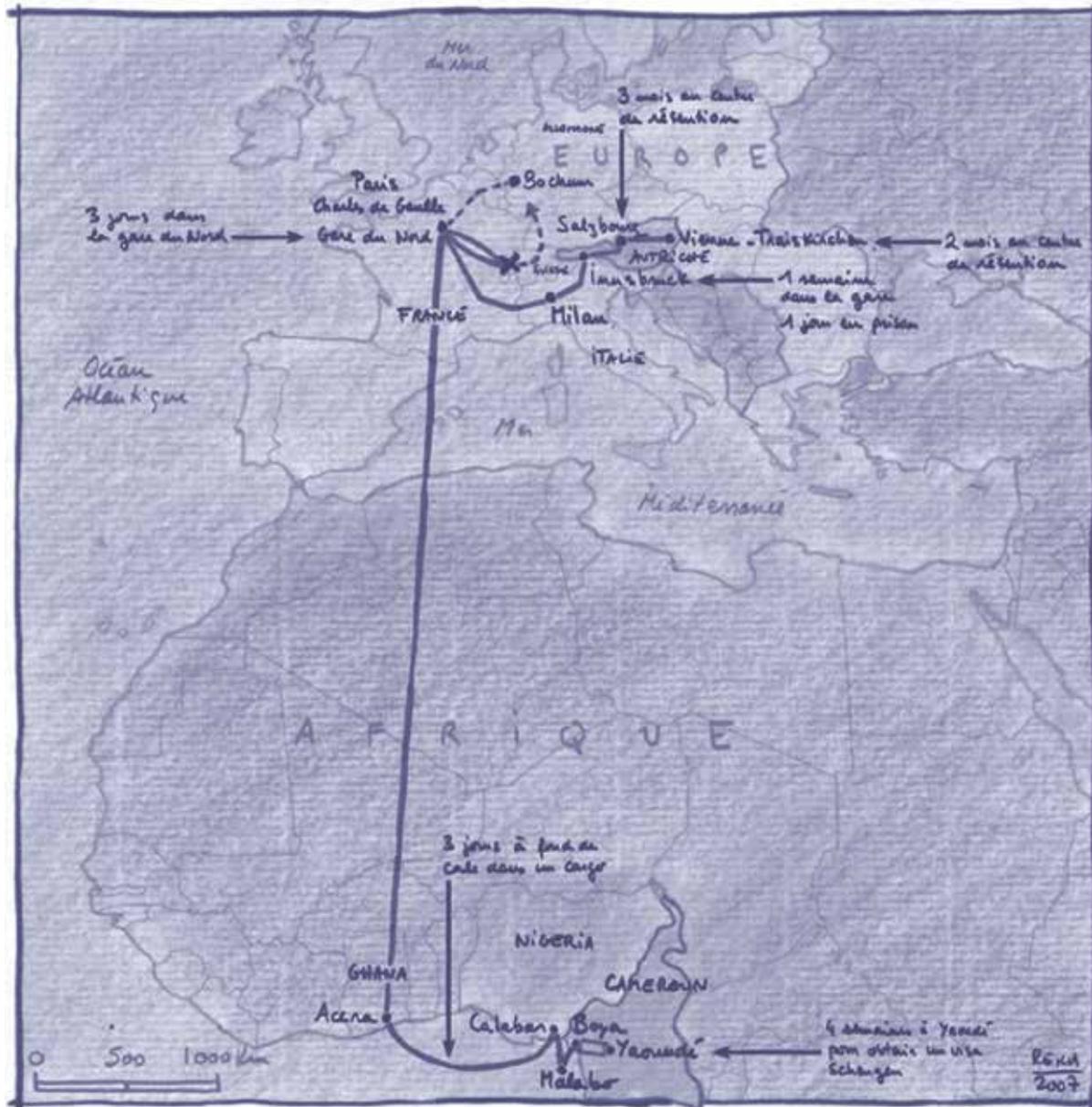
SANCTUARIES OF THE RICH

The wealthy reinforce their borders, set up ever more insurmountable barriers and walls, and adopt a strategy of war in order to ward off "threatening invaders." Through the domino effect, a few other large countries such as Brazil, China, or Russia put an interior "sanctuarization" into place in an attempt to radically limit the economic migration of those in poor regions toward zones of strong economic development.



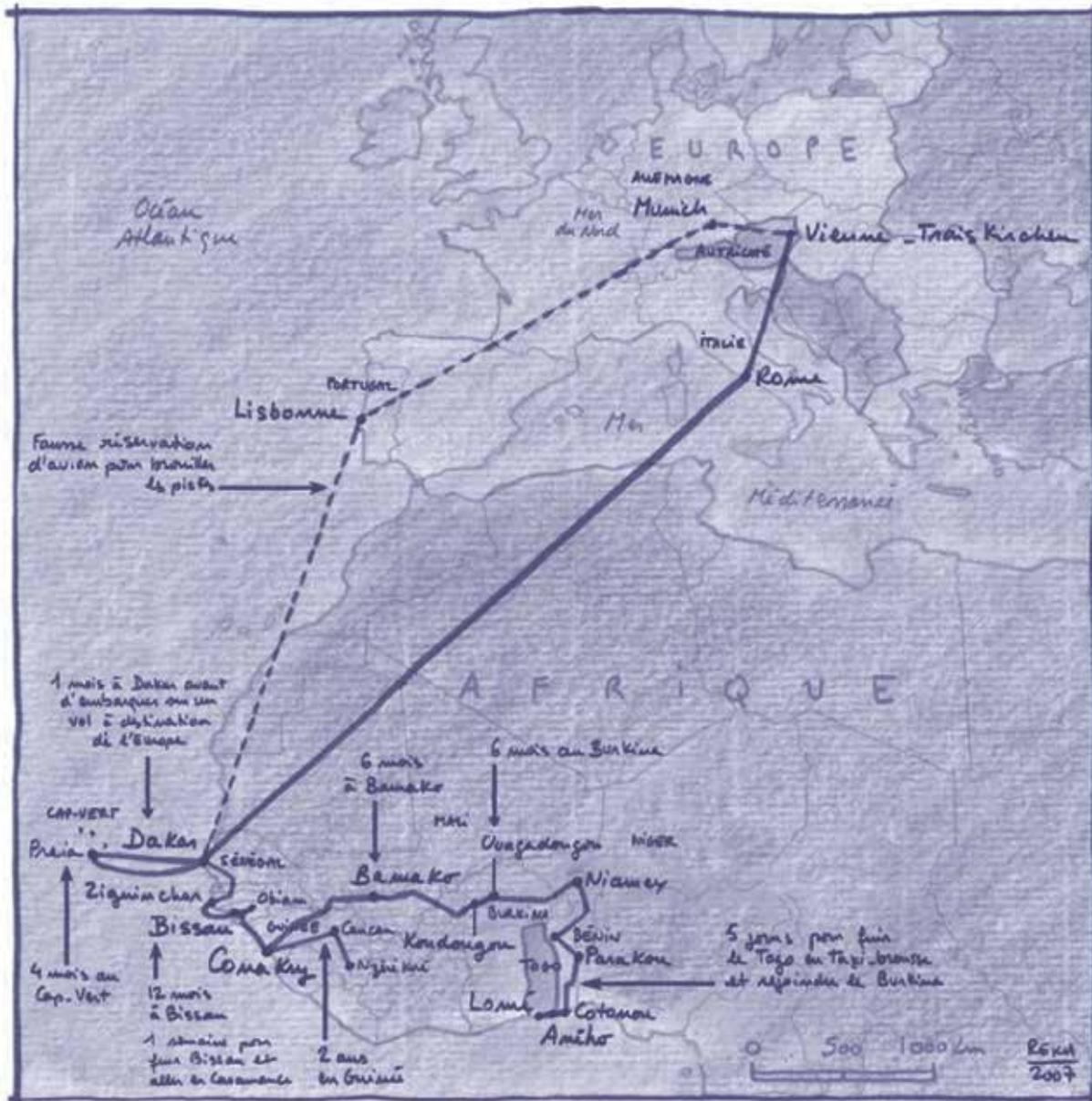
DJEWE

It was the start of a nightmare. Djewe's plane was due to leave in half an hour and he had not been through the security checks yet. He had three minutes to decide his future. He had the option of not seeing family and friends for years, losing his job, but being sure of staying alive, or he could go home and risk death behind bars. He decided to miss his plane and went back into the city to find the center of asylum seekers. It took him a year to prove to the Austrian authorities, with their endless trick questions, that his life would be in danger in Cameroon. Though he was helped by the Catholic seminary, his application was turned down. He appealed and finally was granted asylum.



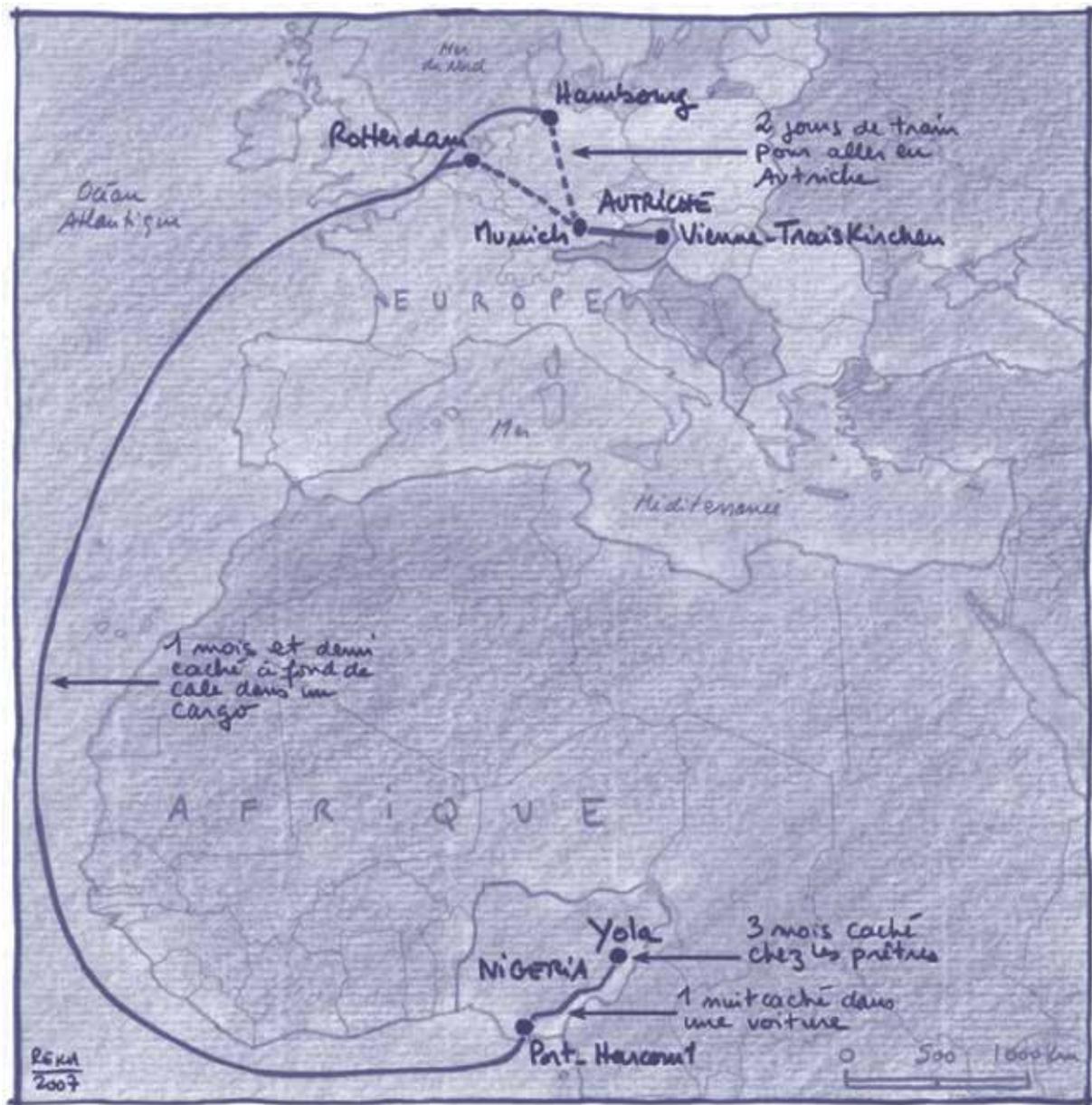
## DANIEL

Things started to go wrong in Paris, where a series of mishaps prevented Daniel from reaching Bochum. The ticket office in Paris sold him a train ticket to Germany via Switzerland rather than Belgium. With no visa Daniel was turned back at the Swiss border. Back in Paris he tried again, but was sold a ticket for Italy, which he thought was on his way. He spent two days at Milan station in a state of confusion and then headed for Austria. He eventually arrived in Innsbruck, having walked the last few kilometers without his bags, which he had sold to pay for his ticket. After a week in the station and bitterly cold nights in a stadium, he was persuaded by a passerby to turn himself in to the local police.



GABRIEL

Gabriel had to leave Conakry in a hurry, driven out by racketeers, moving to Guinea-Bissau and working for Brazilian missionaries for a year. He led the youth wing of President Kumba Iala's Social Renovation Party until the military coup in September 2003. He was arrested and held in an army prison for a month. One day the prisoners were taken out to the bush and Gabriel realized that, by some extraordinary coincidence, he was close to his native village. Knowing the area very well, he was able to give his guards the slip. He swam across an estuary and walked 40 kilometers back to Bissau.



## MARCUS

Marcus has no clear memory of his arrival. There was a big port, rain, and thousands of containers. It must have been somewhere big, perhaps Rotterdam or Hamburg, because he slipped through unnoticed. A man, who barely spoke, took charge of him, traveling by train to Vienna, via Munich. There someone else took over, accompanying him to the camp at Treiskirchen, where the police told him he was in Austria. "It was bitterly cold," he said, "and the camp is certainly not the happiest place in the world, but when I got there after an exhausting journey, it felt warm. I could eat and sleep, but above all I was allowed to stay with no threats of any sort." c&

# “We have to test the premise that nations no longer matter. I think it’s historically inaccurate.”

C& in conversation with **Okwui Enwezor**, director of the Haus der Kunst in Munich and artistic director of *All The World's Futures*, the 56th International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, on the topography of the Giardini, the Global South, and the idea of a fading center.



**C&** It might sound a bit sappy, but do you believe in the power of an art exhibition as a transformative event able to appeal to what Willy Brandt once called our “*Weltvernunft*” or “world reason”? By us, we mean all the players involved from visitors to artists to curators.

**Okwui Enwezor** Well, I do not know whether I want to ascribe that level of seriousness to exhibitions. But of course, exhibitions do speak to us, even though we might not register it immediately. There are some exhibitions that have meant an incredible amount to me, that were provocative on many levels, that I still struggle with and

am still thinking about, and that are still intellectually enriching and culturally challenging. So exhibitions can do that. They can be transformative in an epistemological sense. But you should think more about what an exhibition could be.

In Venice, I am fundamentally interested in having an exhibition that is substantive, but without diminishing in any way the experience of the show. An exhibition is always fundamentally about experience: physically, visually, intellectually. So what I want to propose is that it is natural for an exhibition to have ambitions, and for the public to grasp what

the propositions for an exhibition are. In the case of the Venice Biennale, we have to wait and see.

For the Biennale, I have been really thinking mostly about the question of residue, the idea of the topography of the Giardini as a space of residue. Thinking about that notion of the residual, the accumulation of histories going back 120 years. What I really begin to see is

Above:  
Steve McQueen, still from *Giardini*, 2009.  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Thomas Dane Gallery, London



the aspect of residue playing a very important role in regard to the Biennale's notion of the Garden of Disorder. Residue will cast a shadow on objects that you are confronted with before you even go into any of the spaces of the exhibition, which is the Giardini with all the pavilions.

In 1907, the first national pavilion constructed in the Giardini was the Belgian Pavilion. And imagine in 1908, the year after, King Leopold was stripped of the Congo Free State. The Congo was the first global scandal of the twentieth century.

And remember that in 1909, when the British pavilion was constructed, Great Britain was still known as the empire on which the sun never set. So it is about the residues of history and a general picture of the incredible instability in the world. Looking at the Biennale and the Giardini as a construct says a lot about the history of nations, their aspirations, the end of empires... so many things.



Le Gaggiandre dell'Arsenale (2010).  
Photo: Giulio Squillacciotti © la Biennale di Venezia 2013

Opposite:  
Okwui Enwezor © Lydia Gorges

**C&** What do you think of the proposition of artists deconstructing the idea of nations, for example by founding a Johannesburg or Manchester Pavilion outside the Giardini to underline how outdated this whole notion of nations is?

**OE** I think we do have to test the premise that nations no longer matter. Because I don't think it's quite true. And I think it's historically quite inaccurate. However, in the Giardini the history of nations is a fairly recent one. It's a construct and it's taking a shape that organizes the way in which we think about power relationships, territory, and politics. Nigeria is one example. Last year was the hundredth anniversary of the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern parts of the country that was then called Nigeria, a sheer invention of the British colonialists. But Nigeria, of course, was still celebrating the centenary of the formation of the nation. So they just have their narrative, they have their myths, they have their creation stories.

**C&** Everybody is talking about the economic and creative "South-South" connections now. The twenty-first century has been called the age of the Global South. You have worked on that topic in the past. What do you think that "South-South" interest actually means? Are we moving towards a more balanced art world? What opportunities, challenges, and risks does this development present in your view?

**OE** Well, in my opinion it's very hard to say. The way we are thinking about it is less territorial than geopolitical. The distance between Brazil and Nigeria is not very great, but it takes a long time to get to

Nigeria from Brazil. So we have to deal with the sheer pragmatic question of moving from one location to another. It is therefore also about the distance that separates the South from the South.

This question was broadened in 1955 at the Bandung conference, which was a kind of South-South alliance, and of course also in Belgrade in 1961, where the Non-Aligned Movement met. So these were moments of enlarging the projection of the South's geopolitical ambitions. I think that we can return to that question today, but to what end? What does that propose, the South-South, the relationship of that axis? The South can also be the agglomeration of some aboriginal places. How does that reproduce any kind of access? Because it is all about access. It is about the powers of nomination and decision, and about who possesses and who processes those powers. I think this is what absolutely needs to be fought for: the geopolitical institution of alliances.

**C&** Thanks to your work on projects such as documenta or *NKA*, to name just two, it must be a relief to you that now, with the upcoming Biennale, you are so beyond this whole talk about a truly global exhibition. There's no need for you to point out that at least 50% of the artists included are non-Western, as you did that already around 15 years ago. The idea of the center has started to fade.

**OE** It is not just me, I think it's all of us. Our magazine *NKA*, for example, has never been about Africa as an identity but about

the right to create a disciplinary space, a space for writers, thinkers, artists, and historians who reflect on the disciplinary development of contemporary African art. Speaking of the idea of the global exhibition, when I was appointed artistic director of documenta 11 in 1998, we were at the height of the so-called "Golden Age of Biennales." Making a proposition to de-territorialize documenta was a proposal to de-provincialize it. When I look back and think about the early laments of trying to make that project happen, and the large quantity of serious skepticism, I remember that there was a critic for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* who assured us that it was going to be a disaster... And it was a difficult task because documenta belongs to Kassel, it is rooted there, it is a special place. But I think the agenda of the global in this sense was a disciplinary question and not just geographical and geopolitical.

And that is to say that within the discipline of art, there are artists who create from so many different impulses but they don't all need to go London to get these impulses. They, too, are challenged to present.

To make an international exhibition in Africa, not an exhibition that plays with the expectations of what most people think is Africa, good artists need to take up that challenge. People tend to forget that my approach and my practice are disciplinary and that it is contemporary art. I have worked with contemporary artists of my generation from all over the world since the very beginning. But I think there is this narrative that Africa is not contemporary or international. Having said that, I think that our work to come will involve a disciplinary stage that we have to take up from an intellectual commitment towards contemporary African art. ca

**Stacy Hardy**, Cape Town-based writer and associate editor of the pan-African journal *Chimurenga*, opens the discourse of memory and memorial culture to notions of basic human experiences through the media of architecture and sculpture.

# A Brief History of Monuments



In a dry, sun-baked landscape, an army of men work silently. A small-walled house, made of hardened mud bricks, comes crashing down. Stone, mud, clay: patiently, one by one, they demolish the old Sufi shrines in Timbuktu. The task seems never ending. As the author Teju Cole reminds us: “It takes a lot of work to silence silent objects.”

Combatant Mboua Massock has spent a decade campaigning to tear down a colonial-era statue depicting a French marshal, still standing in Douala after more than 50 years of independence.

“There are hardly any statues that do not seek to turn back time,” tweets Achille Mbembe. “Colonial effigies testify to this mute genealogy.” Long-lasting domination, it seems, leaves inscriptions on subjects’ spaces of dwelling, as well as indelible traces in their imaginary.

Tired of demanding action, Massock finally took matters into his own hands in 2001. Armed with a weight, he repeatedly smashed the French marshal’s effigy in the face. But the marshal was cast in bronze and only his nose suffered, so that now it appears out of joint.

Time is out of joint in the Congolese writer Sony Labou Tansi’s 1979 novel *Life and a Half*.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Compacted Distance*, 2014, inkjet print on matte paper. Courtesy of the artist

In the book, an imaginary nation is haunted by the ghostly presence of its dead leader who refuses to disappear. The new autocratic regime attempts to silence him through a trial by fire. Monuments and works of art are burned. Tons and tons of books. In the end, the censors burn everything they lay eyes on because they don’t have time to read (and most of them are illiterate).

*“There are hardly any statues that do not seek to turn back time,” tweets Achille Mbembe. “Colonial effigies testify to this mute genealogy.”*

Can a book be a monument? A year before his death, Labou Tansi said in *L'Autre Monde*: “I do not know what cracks in the edifice, what holds, what leaves, what remains, what pouts, what lies, what betrays... I want the edifice. Whether it spurts into the sky, each word being a stone, a mark in the monument, endless labyrinths, that is what creating is.”

Time is also out of joint in South Africa. Since the end of white supremacy in 1994, the official names of places have hardly changed – cities, townships, squares, boulevards, and avenues have kept their old names. Even today, one can head to one’s office via Verwoerd Avenue, named after the architect of apartheid, then go out to dine in a restaurant situated on John Vorster Boulevard (1970s prime minister) and drive along Louis Botha Avenue (1910s prime minister).

In his body of work *Balumuka* [Ambush] (2010), the Angolan artist Kiluanji Kia Henda photographs an open-air transit zone in Luanda, one that has metaphorically and physically become a cemetery for numerous monuments that have throughout history found their way into pillars across the country. Amidst the occupants of this graveyard of history is a statue of Queen Nzinga Mbande who ruled Angola in the 1600s – she stands sternly in the enclosed yard, ironically juxtaposed against some of the main figures of colonialism, including Luis Vaz de Camões, Dom Afonso Henriques, and Pedro Álvares Cabral. Colonial monuments in African cities “represent... the very anti-model of how a community might relate to its dead,” says Achille Mbembe. He proposes:

In every African country we establish a careful inventory of all colonial statues and monuments. These we shall collect in a single park, which will serve as a museum for generations to come. This pan-African park-cum-museum will serve as colonialism’s symbolic grave on our continent. Once we have performed this burial, let us... promise never again to erect statues to anyone at all. Instead, let us build everywhere libraries, theatres, cultural centers – all the things that from this day forward will nourish tomorrow’s creative growth.

Back in Douala, a monument to liberty spurts into the sky. Unlike its counterpart in New York, this Statue of Liberty is built out of a labyrinth of discarded objects: old tires, mufflers, rusted conveyor belts, broken light bulbs. “Liberty is not something that can be imposed or expected to last,” its creator, Joseph Francis Sumegne explains. “It is a precarious thing, a product of constant assemblage, of the most heterogeneous elements – and yet, it holds the world aloft.”

On May 25, 2006, Angola launched Icarus 13, the world’s first space mission to the sun. According to the astronauts, the sun (like Warhol’s Vegas), “has the most beautiful night.” Their journey is documented by the artist Kiluanji Kia Henda in another of his works, *Icarus 13* (2008). Henda’s images for the project are in fact state buildings in Luanda. To portray the *Icarus 13* spacecraft, Henda shot a photograph of António Agostinho Neto’s incomplete Russian-built mausoleum in Luanda. The “Astronomy Observatory” is another unfinished structure, this time a cinema from the colonial era, and the setting of the launching scene is actually an image from celebrations that erupted when Angola’s national football team qualified for the 2006 World Cup.

Near the beaches of Luanda, the Russians are building a grand mausoleum to honor the remains of the Comrade President. It is 1980, a year after Neto’s death. In the city people are whispering: houses, they say, will be exploded to make space for the mausoleum, and everyone will have to leave. Could the children of Luanda steal the Russians’ dynamite and save their homes, asks the Angolan author Ondjaki in his new novel, *Granma Nineteen and the Soviet’s Secret?*

The African Union’s new conference and office complex has been built on the site of Ethiopia’s former central prison, officially called Akaki, but known in Ethiopia as Alem Bekagn or “farewell to the world.” As such it is also a cemetery. In France, Jean Baudrillard tells us that all the monuments are mausoleums: the Pyramid, the Arche de Triomphe, the Orsay Museum, the Grande Bibliothèque, cenotaph of culture. And this is not to mention the Revolution, a monument in and of itself, as Louis Mermaz tells us: “The Revolution is not on the agenda in France today because the great Revolution has already taken place.”

There are, it seems, two types of forgetting: either through slow or violent eradication of memory, or via the advancement of spectacle, the passing of historical space into the space of propaganda and advertising.

“There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument,” Robert Musil famously wrote, exhorting monuments to “try a little harder, as we must all do nowadays!”

The Mansudae Art Studio is a North Korean organization primarily dedicated to the idolization of the Eternal President of the

Republic through public works. Since the 1970s, it has also been constructing major monuments, statues, and governmental buildings in countries across Africa, including Senegal, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Angola, Rwanda, Ethiopia, DRC, Tanzania, Mali, and Chad.

In 2010 the company completed the 53-meter tall African Renaissance Monument commissioned by the Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade. Built on a hilltop outside Dakar, the towering statue provoked widespread protests. Critics described it as an “economic monster” representative of the “macho sexism of African authoritarian rulers.” For the Korean providers laboring to complete these works at the Mansudae Art Studio, many of them graduates from the nation’s top art academies, it is a utopian vision, based in the long tradition of Socialist Realism, that they hope will give voice to the dreams of the people of Africa. <sup>ca</sup>

*This text is an excerpt from Stacy Hardy’s opening lecture “A Brief History of Monuments” at the international Future Memories conference in Addis Ababa in September 2014. The entire essay is available on the newly launched online publication Future Memories in English, French, and German: future-memories.org.*

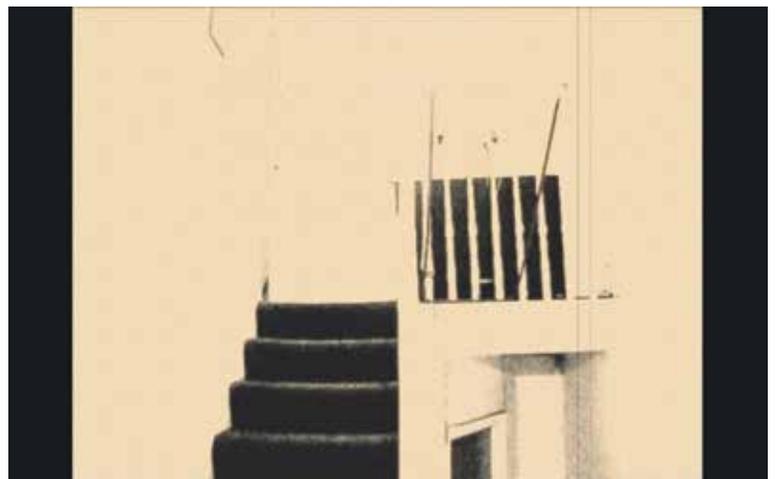
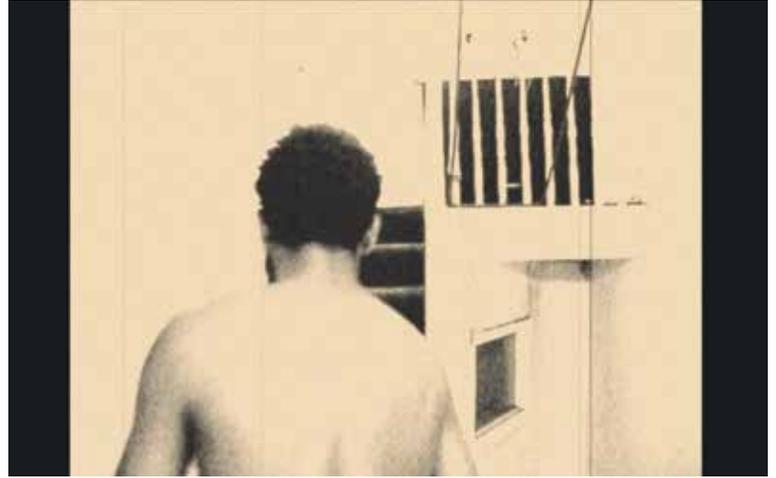
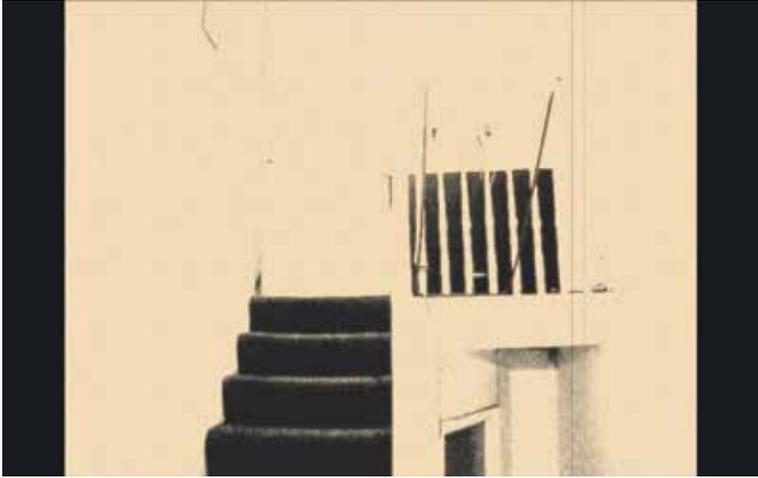
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#### C & INTERVIEW

Hassan Khan: On Science Fiction, Music and Clapping. Find out more on [contemporaryand.com](http://contemporaryand.com)



# NOTES ON FILM

by **Samson Kambalu**

*“Hysteresis” (Bourdieu) – a socio-economic condition in which people find themselves out of sync with their social field of play – like “a fish out of the water” or like the Knight of La Mancha in Cervante’s Don Quixote. Nyau Cinema – the difference between the conception of time as a gift (Malawi), and the conception of time as a commodity (global). Nyau Cinema – hysteresis as an opportunity for film.*

## NYAU CINEMA: TEN RULES

1.  
Nyau film must be conceived as a clip no longer than a minute.
2.  
Performance should be spontaneous and site-specific to found architecture, landscape, or object(s).
3.  
There must always be a conversation between the performance and the medium of film.
5.  
Costumes must be from everyday life.
6.  
Acting must be subtle but otherworldly, transgressive, and playful.
7.  
Editing must be limited to the aesthetics of primitive film and silent cinema.
8.  
Audio must be used sparingly, otherwise it must be performed live at film screenings.
9.  
Screening of a Nyau film must be in specially designed cinema booths or improvised cinema installations that complement the spirit of the films.
10.  
Nyau cinema must encourage active participation from the audience. c&

Working with a truly international network of young critical writers, from Nairobi to New York and Luanda to Lyon, is one of the main ideas behind C&. During the first C& workshop for critical writing in Lagos, we sat down with the workshop leaders **Bim Adewunmi**, **Obidike Okafor**, and **Tolu Ogunlesi** to discuss personal influences, new media, and the idea of collaboration.

# Soft Culture and the Writing of Now

**C&** Please tell us a bit about your background as journalists and writers. How did you start this journey?

**Bim Adewunmi** I went to Bournemouth University to study multimedia journalism and trained for print, online, video, and radio. During my time at university, I was also writing for BBC radio. However, print is where I do the majority of my work now. I still do some radio appearances, but now that I'm cultural editor at BuzzFeed, print and online are where most of my work lives.

**Obidike Okafor** I didn't study journalism in the classical way, but instead was trained by Dele Olojede, the first winner of the Pulitzer Prize born in Africa. Olojede was my first inspiration. I learned all my journalistic skills from him when I got my first job at the Lagos-based newspaper *Next* (now defunct). During that experience, I learned everything from the best.

**Tolu Ogunlesi** My journey as a journalist came at the end of a journey that I started as a poet. So I started out thinking of myself as a poet. Eventually, I wrote fiction and then moved on into journalism. I didn't have any master plan but somehow I just found myself moving. At first, I started with a full-time job doing poetry, fiction, and opinion pieces. Then came the opportunity to work with *Next*.

**C&** And how and why did you become a cultural journalist?

**BA** For me it just comes down to what is interesting to me. Some of my earliest memories center on television. In many ways, television was my second set of parents. The same thing with radio; it was always on in our house where we lived.

So I already had an interest in ideas of soft culture or so-called low culture. And my parents really made us read and write a lot. I always had an interest in reading and writing when I was very young. When I look back, it is very obvious to me that it was a career path that was being designed without my knowledge.





**OO** Ever since I was ten, I have always been doing things to do with culture. I started drawing and writing poetry. When I was in secondary school, I was in a choir. When I went to university, I was involved in a drama group. I wanted to write about culture because I have some basic experiences and understandings of all those things. My father enjoyed writing so he always gave me something to write about.

**TO** I grew up in a world of newspapers and books. So all my life, we got at least one newspaper a day. That was a huge influence on me.

*“I see my role more as somebody who is bringing a different perspective, not necessarily a better one, but a different one.”*

**C&** How do you see your role as a journalist?  
**BA** I think it’s true that a lot of journalists and writers have slightly larger than normal egos. We like to think that we have something important to say. I do think that’s an element of why I write. I like the idea of seeing something through and connecting it to previous things or imagining what might come in the future. So when I write, my goal is always to entertain and inform my readers.

**C&** In terms of the Critical Writing workshop in Lagos that C& launched, how did you engage with the participants?  
**BA** The major thing I encountered in the workshop was the idea of collaboration. Because in as much as we were there to facilitate the workshop, we were all cultural journalists. We have different platforms and different outlets that we write for. But I see my role more as somebody who is bringing a different perspective, not necessarily a better one, but a different one. We all basically work towards the same ends. As I see it, I was in a room full of equals, trying to learn best practices.

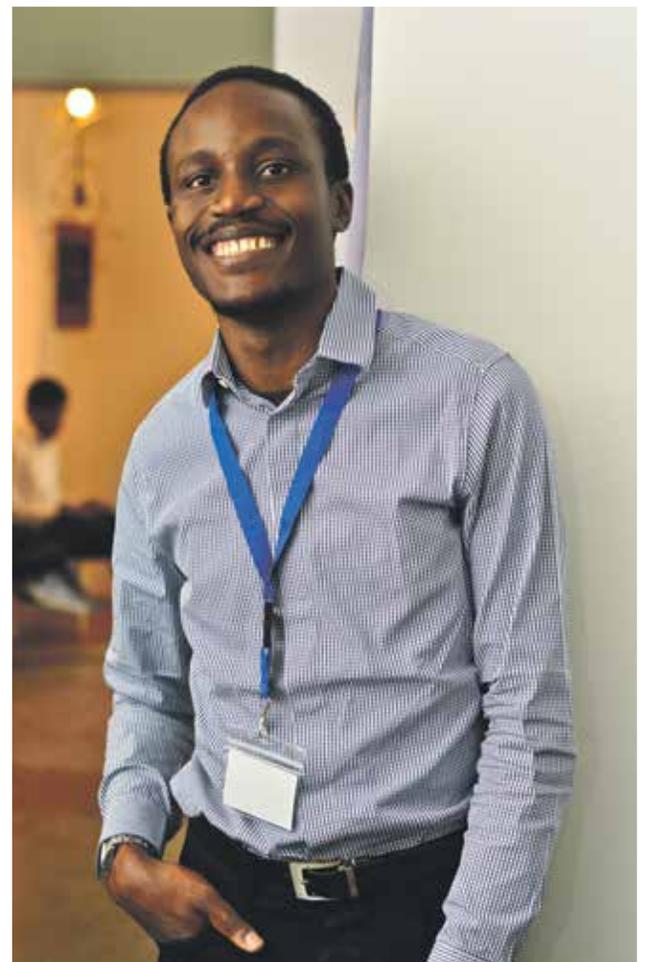
**TO** For me it was as much a learning experience as it was about teaching. I learned a lot, for example, just by listening

to what people said about how things work at the news desks in newspapers in Nigeria. It was good to hear what kinds of challenges people have to deal with.

**OO** I was humbled by the whole experience. The most important thing I made clear to the participants is to strive at all times to develop yourself.

**C&** How do you navigate in the digital world?  
**BA** New media is just old media with a different face; we put out pretty much the same stories. What changes is the format. And what changes is a different level of engagement, which was previously absent. It’s also interesting to use social media, in particular, as a source of research and information.

**OO** There are also all of these new elements because of the way new media is going. Recently I attended a workshop on infographics. I realized that creating visual images with data makes more sense than writing words, and that is the direction I am moving in now. For example, there is now mobile journalism that teaches you how to become a journalist with your mobile phone. And you realize that all those new things keep coming. If you don’t stay up to date, you are left behind. **ca**



Opposite:  
 At the critical writing workshop in Lagos with Bim Adewunmi, 2015.  
 Photo: Aderimi Adegbite

Above:  
 Obidike Okafor.  
 Photo: Aderimi Adegbite

Right:  
 Tolu Ogunlesi.  
 Photo: Aderimi Adegbite

# If I Don't Show It, Nobody Will...

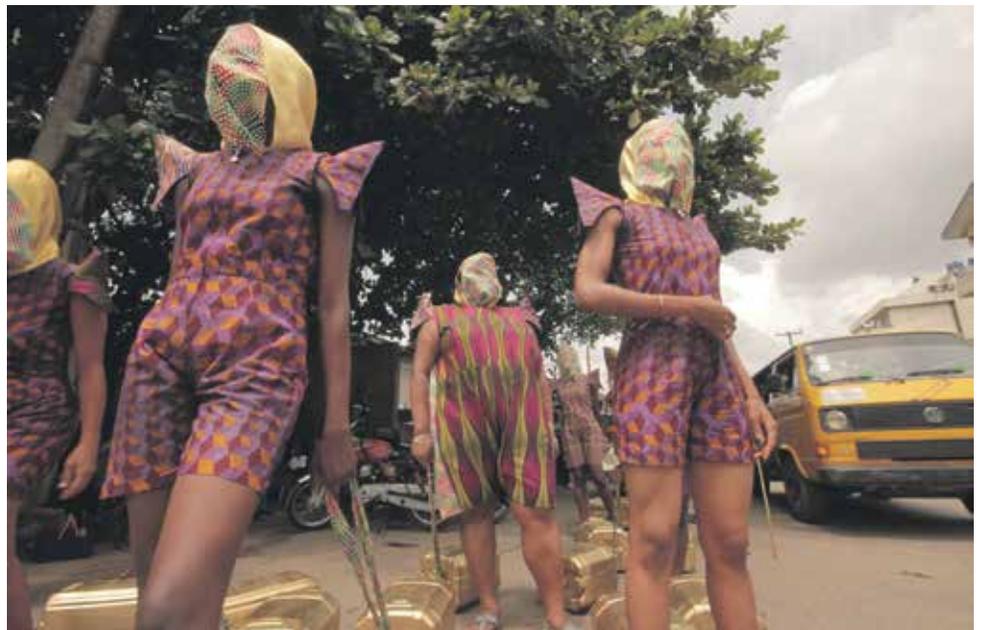
**Wura-Natasha Ogunji** is a photographer, performer, teacher, and anthropologist. We interviewed her about the beginnings of her career, her relationship to Lagos, and politics of the body.

**C&** In your practice, you use performance, video art, photography... What really brought you to the arts?

**Wura-Natasha Ogunji** I started as a photographer and was taking a lot of self-portraits. I studied photography in the 1990s and at that time the absence of people of color from that history of image-making was striking. I had this question: "If they tell us there are no pictures, will we see the stories when they come?" To answer the question I had to turn to my own body, to draw from that knowledge – that ancestral, cellular, genetic, perhaps spiritual, memory. I became interested in photographing people who existed before the invention of photography. I created masks and ancestor dresses that could invoke these people, these pictures. The entire process was performative. I took photographs that I made into glass negatives and also recorded the actions with 16mm film. I was very interested in drawing from my own body's knowledge to create a photographic image.

**C&** You also studied anthropology. To what extent does this translate into your artistic practice?

**WNO** Studying anthropology allowed me to study African and African-American history, Latin-American history, and art. It was the place where these areas of interest came together for me. Anthropology as a field is deeply flawed in its traditional positioning of non-Western peoples, but it also allowed for a kind of observation and research,



which was important to me at the time, especially as an artist and teacher working in the field of photography.

**C&** Performance seems to be your main medium. With this you also engage with public, urban spaces such as Lagos. Can you talk about your motivation behind this and your experiences?

**WNO** I love performance and drawing equally. The sense of engagement with space is similar, though one happens on the page, while the other occurs in video, or more recently in the space of the city.



C& VIDEO

Watch C& in conversation with Pascale Marthine Tayou on [contemporaryand.com](http://contemporaryand.com)

Until I began performing in Nigeria in 2011, most of my performances were private. They happened with the help of maybe one or two friends and were recorded with a still or video camera. That made sense for the questions I was asking at the time. The videos allowed me to answer those questions.

Traveling to Nigeria brought another set of questions that had to be asked in public. My first performance developed from a question I had about the work of women: “Will I still carry water when I am a dead woman?” The question emerged from a very real frustration I was feeling about the workload of women in relationship to leisure time which I was thinking of as time spent talking, thinking, dreaming, and philosophizing about the world – all things that are necessary for creativity, innovation and simple joy. For the performance, I am crawling on the ground carrying water kegs. This action has to happen in the street. To ask the question in this way creates a larger discussion. The answer comes not only from these physical

actions of my own body, but through the presence of the audience – what they have to say is critical. And this happens not just in a verbal reaction, of course. The way the audience waits for the performer or follows a piece through the streets or explains the work to someone else. All of this becomes part of the history and meaning of a performance.

C& How is the notion of (collective) memory in relation to the body (being physical, social, etc.) important to you?

WNO Our bodies are such great containers of memory. And our consciousness holds so much information about our histories, even our futures. Scientifically speaking, we’re carrying this genetic material that is millions of years old. These bodies know a lot and tell a lot. I love how performance taps into this information; I love what it pulls out and where it can take us.

C& We were recently asked by a journalist why we think global art tends more and more to look the same. You can’t look at a work

from Nigeria any longer and say, hah!, that’s Nigerian. What do you think you about that development?

WNO To say that global art looks more and more the same is to miss out on the innovative ways in which artists are working today, and also to miss the nuances and specificity of place and experience. I think the more exciting and important questions have to do with the changing ways we create, as well as write about, talk about, curate, teach, and experience art in this historical moment. The range and diversity of art practice today naturally moves beyond and across geographic boundaries. Artists have totally expanded the landscape for making and sharing work, so the language that we use to understand this work must also shift. ca

Opposite:

Wura-Natasha Ogunji, *Will I Still Carry Water When I am a Dead Woman?*, 2013. Photo: Ema Edosio

Below:

Wura-Natasha Ogunji, *An Ancestor Takes a Photograph*, 2014. Photo: Samuel Bolarinwa





# About Anthems, Bird Calls, Voices, and Choirs

C& interviews sound artist **Emeka Ogboh** about his spatially immersive work at the Venice Biennale, an installation for the African Union Peace and Security Building in Addis Ababa, and Nigerian food in Germany.

Above:  
Emeka Ogboh, *Recording at P4 Studio*,  
Berlin, 2015. Courtesy of the artist



**C&** Your main medium is sound. Why does sound hold such a powerful force for you? Do you see it as a way to get visitors involved as more than consumers?

**Emeka Ogboh** Out of all the different digital media I have worked with, sound is the strongest medium for me. What I find fascinating is its ability to convey emotions and create immersive experiences that can potentially transport the listener from one time or space to another. The experience of sound involves a complete immersion... not just for the artist creating the sound piece, but also for the visitors to the sound installation.

**C&** You won the artwork competition for the African Union Peace and Security Building. What does this mean to you?

**EO** It means a lot to me. Winning this justified all the time and effort I put into working with a nonconventional genre of art over the years. It's rare, a sound installation proposal beating other art forms to take the top prize... It's probably the first time on the continent. Normally, the decision tends to shift towards the visual, with the jury considering artworks that are more tangible or visible over an abstract form like sound art. That means that things are changing on the continent, a shift towards embracing new media and art forms. This will encourage the young aspiring sound artists who have been in touch with me for a long time to keep on working.

Emeka Ogboh, *Untitled (Ojuelegba series)*, 2014. Courtesy of the artist

**C&** You are producing a unique work with local references. The piece is to be based on an adaptation of the anthem of the African Union, which highlights the principle of "Unity in Diversity." Can you talk a little bit about the work and your approach to it?

**EO** It's going to be a series of sound installations in this space, and the idea starts with the AU anthem, which centers on African unity and diversity. The anthem will be vocally rendered and installed in different languages for a random playback. The installation will also be engaging with the past, present, and future. So I've been researching in the AU archives and other Pan-African archives around the continent, searching for prominent speeches that fit the installation's theme. I'll be incorporating excerpts of some of these speeches into the work. There will be a lot of vocals in the installations... voices of Addis schoolkids, an cappella piece created in collaboration with a composer, and sounds of birds from all over the continent.

**C&** What have your experiences in Addis Ababa been like? How do you perceive this city, especially in an artistic and cultural context?

**EO** Addis is a special place. It's not one of those cities that you can assume you've figured out after a couple of days; it needs slow easing into. The food, the people, and the culture... You don't rush it, it takes time to get into. I had a wonderful experience exploring the city with the locals, and they facilitated my integration into the city in different ways. Addis is a city steeped in history, and it is currently undergoing major infrastructural changes. This makes it a great space to create new works that engage urban transformation.

Its art scene is picking up. Spear-headed by the people at the Alle Art School, they're creating exchange programs and opportunities for artists and lecturers from different parts of the world to come and engage with students and local artists, especially in new media art. It would be interesting to see how Ethiopian artists engage with their rich culture and history through new media.

*"It's rare, a sound installation proposal beating other art forms to take the top prize... It's probably the first time on the continent."*



**C&** You're currently doing a DAAD residency in Berlin. What kinds of encounters have you had with Nigerians in this city?

**EO** Food has been the main point of connection between me and other Nigerians in Berlin. It's the quest to seek out Nigerian food that puts me in touch most of the time with my people, whether in restaurants or food stores. The encounters have been quite interesting... people constantly trading stories and experiences of living in Germany. These spaces are about more than just buying food, they also act as social spaces for gatherings. So you're able to stay connected with home not just through news on TV or the Internet, but also through the informal conversations that go on in these places.

**C&** Tell us a bit more about the projects you envision doing as part of your Berlin residency. Will the topic of migration play a role? You mentioned your idea of installing a restaurant as a social point for exchange and dialogue.

Above:  
Emeka Ogboh, Video still: *Addis Ababa*  
(work in progress), 2014. Courtesy of the artist

Below:  
Emeka Ogboh, *Tafawa Balewa Square*,  
Lagos, 2014. Courtesy of the artist

**EO** Again, food is central to one of the projects that I'll be working on here in Berlin. I am particularly interested in the memories that food triggers, the stories and narratives that could arise from such encounters. I have come to realize that we stay connected to "home" through the food we eat.

So, we're planning to set up a restaurant or relocate an existing restaurant to a gallery space and invite some Africans in Berlin to cook, eat, and engage in discussions stimulated by the food they prepared.

I'm not shifting my artistic interest to the culinary, but I am interested in documenting these food processes and the stories that can be born out of them.

The audio materials gathered would make up the core element of an installation I'll be working on.

**C&** How have your many travels and residencies around the world affected your personal and artistic perception of Lagos, your hometown?

**EO** These travels and residencies around the world provide me with an external point of view on not just Lagos, but Nigeria in general. They help me both to appreciate and be critical of where I come from. I am constantly learning, absorbing, and filtering different norms and cultures. Some of these have influenced how I live and work with the city.

Seeing and experiencing various cities opens me up to experiment more with the digital materials I collect in Lagos.

**C&** Can you tell us a little bit about your contribution to this year's main exhibition at the Venice Biennale?

**EO** My work is a ten-channel sound installation of an African choir performing the German national anthem in ten native African languages, mostly from West and Central Africa.

**C&** How did you come up with this idea?

**EO** The work was inspired by the events happening in Germany when I arrived in Berlin, shortly after the refugee crisis in the central Kreuzberg district. There was a constant barrage of anti- and pro-immigration talks going on. People leave their countries for other countries for one reason or another. We are supposed to be a part of an international integration that involves interchange of different aspects of culture.

The work interrogates the theme of migration, especially from the Global South to the Global North, and the quest for sameness in an increasingly globalizing world. The project's element of translations and retranslations will explore the losses and gains of such interactions. **ca**



C& INTERVIEW

"I Am No Longer a Purist..."

Read the interview with Kapwani Kiwanga  
on [contemporaryand.com](http://contemporaryand.com)

# FUTURE MEMORIES

Art

Public Space

Memory Culture

[future-memories.org](http://future-memories.org)

*With contributions by*

MYRIAM ABDELAZIZ  
BERHANU ASHAGRIE DERIBEW  
ELKE AUS DEM MOORE  
N'GONÉ FALL  
STACY HARDY  
DOUNG ANWAAR JAHANGEER  
MARIE-HÉLÈNE GUTBERLET  
MIHRET KEBEDE  
CYNTHIA KROS & GEORGES PFRUENDER  
PREMESH LALU  
ATO MALINDA  
SARI MIDDERNACHT  
PATRICK MUDEKEREZA  
ALYA SEBTI  
MICHAEL TSEGAYE

*+ further articles and responses*

... artists, architects, curators, researchers  
writers, critics and historians from various  
African contexts elaborate on productive  
forms of artistic practices in public space that  
negotiate the culture of memories and  
memorial representations.

Considering the urgent realities in numerous  
African cities, the three days international  
conference **Future Memories** in Addis Ababa  
(September 2014) generated a critical platform  
in which issues related to art, public space,  
memory culture and memorial representation  
were shared and discussed. Proceedings and  
responses are now available online!

FUTURE MEMORIES Conference and online publication is an initiative  
of the Institute for International Cultural Relations (ifa, Germany) in  
partnership with the Alle School of Fine Arts and Design, Addis Ababa  
University and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

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**Ade Darmawan** of ruangrupa arts initiative in Jakarta and **Patrick Mudelereza** of the Lubumbashi-based art organization Picha are both members of Arts Collaboratory. The platform combines over 20 international art organizations from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Darmawan and Mudelereza explain their reasons for participating and how they experience differences as well as similarities while working together.

# Creative Unions in the Global South

**C&** Please tell us about the visions, goals, and practices of your respective arts projects.

**Patrick Mudelereza** Picha is a project involving a voluntary group of local artists and cultural activists to communicate with the world about their society, in their own words. This twofold mission has resulted in the creation of a biennale (Rencontres Picha, Biennale de Lubumbashi, 4th edition in October 2015), and an arts center (opened in 2012). We work just as much with local artists as with international ones. The most important thing for us is the possibility of stimulating a critical conversation with the Lushois (the inhabitants of Lubumbashi) about their city history, and socio-economic environment. We see art as a good starting point for this conversation.

The Picha project revolves around two strands that we are following jointly with our South African partner, the Visual Arts Network of South Africa. The actions take place in a specific way in each of the contexts, but we have exchanges around methodologies and research that are more global. The Revolution Room project is the idea of public space and archives working around the communities of Lubumbashi, Fungurume, and Moba, for the DRC strand. Three artists, Jean Katambayi, Patrick Kalala, and Agxon Kakusa – one from each of the cities – explore their history and its sometimes contradictory dynamics. The second



strand of our exchanges is a platform of low-cost exchange with other independent art centers under the auspices of the Pan African Network of Independent Contemporaneity, known as PANIC.

**Ade Darmawan** ruangrupa was established in 2000 by a group of artists in Jakarta. It is a non-profit organization that strives to support the progress of contemporary art within the urban context, by means of exhibitions, festivals, art labs, workshops, research, and journal publication. Furthermore ruangrupa is prompting visual culture and media artwork that is critical to urban surroundings. In the setting of urban society, the organization emphasizes

providing a space for video and new media works, a platform for the merging of culture and technology and its relation to society.

We try to address larger crowds through an ArtLab that serves as a collaborative platform for artists and interdisciplinary groups from Indonesia and abroad. The focus is on mobility and collaborators do collective research. They work together to produce artworks in various media, creating interventions as well as interactions with the public.

**C&** Both of your art spaces are part of Arts Collaboratory. How did this network come about and what are its main goals?



Opposite:  
Writing Workshop Critique of Art  
and Visual Culture, Ruru Gallery.  
Courtesy of ruangrupa

Above:  
ruangrupa, São Paulo Biennale 2014,  
September 2014, The Ciccilio  
Matarazzo Pavilion, São Paulo, Brazil.  
Courtesy of ruangrupa

Below:  
*Arts Collaboratory Showcase*,  
exhibition by 24 organizations and 3 partners  
participating in Assembly 2014,  
RURU Gallery, 20–24 May 2014.  
Courtesy of ruangrupa

cultural scene to our own. The contexts are very varied. In addition to the burden of history and the socio-economic context we don't have the same notion of organization, and one civil society doesn't function like another. But this diversity is part of the richness of a network.

Meeting the independent artistic scene in Colombia, with its social commitment and its way of dealing with the legitimating authority of the North and doing a lot with a little, has been a very enriching experience for me. Similarly, the horizontality of Indonesian structures can open up questions on our initiatives in Africa. The challenge we still face is to have exchanges with real content and concrete projects. That's what we are working on now in three ways: Minga-Utopia (on the concept of utopia), Arts Schoolaboratory (alternative education that reopens the question of the whole notion of hierarchy), and a festival of video art.



C& What does collaborative practice mean to you?

AD Collaborative practice is about sharing knowledge, experiences, power, and control. Giving a chance to nourish ideas and practices among different kind of persons and organizations. In the context of Indonesian contemporary arts, collaborative practice is also a survival mechanism. It allows independent art organizations to find a formula to produce and promote alternative art works.

PM There was a time when I thought about collaborative practices in terms of drinking beer together and changing the world over the course of a conversation. Nowadays I think more about the need to find ideological intersections. To turn conviction (drinking beer) into actions (putting on an exhibition, publishing a book), you have to share what Elvira Dyangani Ose, borrowing from J.F. Lyotard, calls "enthusiasm." That's what "collaborative practice" means to me.

PM Arts Collaboratory emerged from the desire to set up exchanges among three Dutch donors (Hivos, Doen, and Mondriaan – the latter of whom has since retired) who wanted to collaborate in supporting initiatives from the South organized by the artists. Starting as a network of beneficiaries of the same donor, it transformed gradually into a community of initiatives sharing the same common values and exchanging their ideas and know-how, attempting to encourage ways of looking at artistic creation, for themselves and then for other existing platforms.

AD Within the context of developing networks, we had some things in common: social

problems, poor economic means, a lack of infrastructure, and unstable political circumstances. The network is the result of our redoubled efforts to tackle these issues, to find methods of exchange, and to share knowledge and experiences. We also hope the platform will generate other methods and approaches that could enrich our practice locally.

C& How do you navigate within this system of exchange?

PM I must admit it's not simple. We have an annual meeting in one country that enables us to meet in person and get a better understanding of the reality of a different

*“There was a time when I thought about collaborative practices in terms of drinking beer together and changing the world over the course of a conversation. Nowadays I think more about the need to find ideological intersections.”*

C& Could you tell us a bit more about your approach to experimental art education? How does it translate into your work?

AD Art education in Indonesia has always been experimental. We never had a proper system, one that compares to Western or East Asian countries like Japan or South Korea. There is no real arts canon in Indonesia, no museums, established galleries, or other organizations that would have influenced contemporary art on a grand scale. All that has led to chaotic conditions, which had to be faced by the students. *ruangrupa* has created several programs that are trying to fill the gap left by the authorities. One example is our Art Critique and Curator Workshop that is being held every year.

PM I also think artistic education can't be anything but experimental, especially in contexts like ours. In the Congo, nine out of ten professors got their doctoral degrees in Europe, mainly in Belgium. This extraversion of the production of thought doesn't provide the necessary sensitivity. We have to find ways.

C& In the art world, there are more and more palpable South-South connections. Why do you think that is?

AD For several reasons. Perhaps most importantly: it's a matter of issues. It is very possible to find similar problems in more than one of the Southern countries. More

often than not this creates immediate empathy and a dialogue about the various experiences.

PM Suddenly, mutual comprehension has become easier and people have a common desire to think for themselves without the need to legitimate their ideas and their aesthetics using the history of Western art, which sometimes has the pretension of being globally valid.

C& If you had the opportunity to draw an imaginary map representing the South-South links, what would it look like?

PM With *PANIC*, we made a map of Africa and the exchanges between independent spaces. Unfortunately we slipped the financing

parameter in. This resulted in lots of arrows pointing northwards. That's the sad reality. It's also political. We're going to rethink that map. It would be better if it were more "imaginary." That would be more useful than to stop at this conclusion. <sup>ca</sup>



C& ESSAY

Philippe Pirotte takes a closer look at the subtle performative painting practice of El Hadji Sy. Read it on [contemporary.com](http://contemporary.com)



Below top:  
*Revolution Room* project, the community from Cité Gécamines choosing objects in the Lubumbashi Museum collection for an exhibition in their neighborhood, 2014.  
 Courtesy of Picha

Below bottom:  
 Picha Library. Courtesy of Picha

# ZANELE MUHOLI

BROOKLYN MUSEUM 1 MAY - 1 NOV

—

# SAMSON KAMBALU BARTHÉLÉMY TOGUO

ALL THE WORLD'S FUTURES, 56TH VENICE BIENNALE 9 MAY - 22 NOV

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# New Aesthetic Alliances Across the Continents

C& talks to **Walter Mignolo**, scholar at Duke University,  
about the concept of decolonial aesthetics

**C&** Decolonial aesthetics is a concept you have developed in the process of your reflections and work. How did this come about?

**Walter Mignolo** As any concept of the collective project around modernity/coloniality/ decoloniality, it came out of ongoing conversations. Adolfo Alban Achinte introduced it first. I think it was in 2003, when he asked himself: what is the place of aesthetics in the colonial matrix? We had been talking about the coloniality of knowledge, being, religion, gender, sexuality, or ethnicity, about political and economic coloniality. But we had not yet touched aesthetics. The reason was that none of us up to that point were artists, art historians, or art critics. But along came Adolfo, an Afro-Colombian artist and activist, from the Colombian Pacific.

In the summer of 2009, another Colombian artist, Pedro Pablo Gómez, had invited me to write an article for his new publication, *CALLE 14: revista de investigación en el campo del arte* (14 Street: Magazine of Investigation in the Field of Art). The article “Aesthesis Decolonial” (Decolonial Aesthesis) was published in March 2010. While it was in production, Pedro Pablo proposed co-curating an exhibit-cum-workshop with the title *Estéticas Descoloniales* (Decolonial Aesthetics). And meanwhile, Adolfo was in Argentina where he participated in a workshop that also dealt with aesthetics/ aesthesis. So really, “coloniality” and all the concepts we have introduced since then originated outside Europe in the “Third World.”

**C&** To which movements and thinkers can this concept be traced back? What are the points of origin, specifically when contextualized in Africa and in the diasporas?

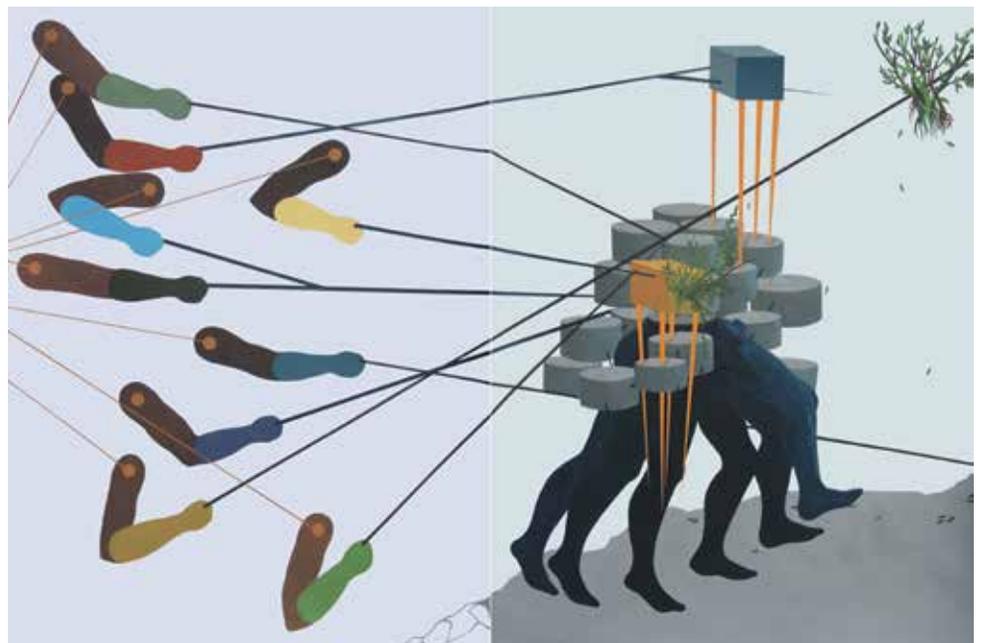
**WM** The historical foundations are not to be searched for in Europe. To me, the

institutional turning point was the Bandung Conference of 1955. It was the first international conference that represented people of color, meaning also people of non-Christian religions. Twenty-nine Asian and African states attended, including China, which was under Mao at the time. Since Bandung and also the works of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, the concept of “decolonization” gained currency.

**C&** How would you define Fanon’s legacies analyzing the “coloniality of power” as a point of reference?

**WM** Fanon’s legacy is and has been crucial for “decoloniality” at large. In fact there are many who take on his decolonial legacies. I would like to highlight the project of the Caribbean Philosophical Association,

Otobong Nkanga, *Social Consequences III: Without you Everything Falls Apart / Engaged / Body Builder / The Overload / Waiting for X / Fractured*, 2010. (Detail) Courtesy of the artist and Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam



founded by Jamaican philosopher Lewis Gordon. Since its inception there has been a fruitful and convivial conversation between modernity/coloniality and the association. We share the lived experiences of Continental South and Central America and the Caribbean. The anchors of those experiences differ and at the same time are complementary. For Afro-Caribbeans, the anchors are the histories of the Middle Passage. For us in the collective modernity/coloniality, it is the histories of our European ancestors (Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, Germans) who invaded, appropriated, and expropriated the land, disregarding the native population and the great civilizations of the “New World.”

**C&** In the light of decoloniality, to what extent do you see the biennale as a structure that generally carries the basis of hegemonic knowledge systems, by creating forms of exclusion along the lines of gender, border, and migration? Could you comment on the example of Dak’Art in Dakar that focuses on artists and artistic productions from the continent and the diasporas?

**WM** Dak’Art started clearly inscribed in the philosophy and sensibility of African variegated processes of decolonization. It seems to me that the biennale is halfway between the legacies of European modernity and the history of decolonization in Africa. It is the lack of strong financial autonomy that makes Dak’Art navigate between the two. Dak’Art can bring the Third World and Europe to the ex-Third World. I see it as a site to promote and enhance Pan-Africanism in the art sphere. And Pan-Africanism could be decolonial but may not necessarily be. ca



# Oshiomhole Changes The Face Of Edo

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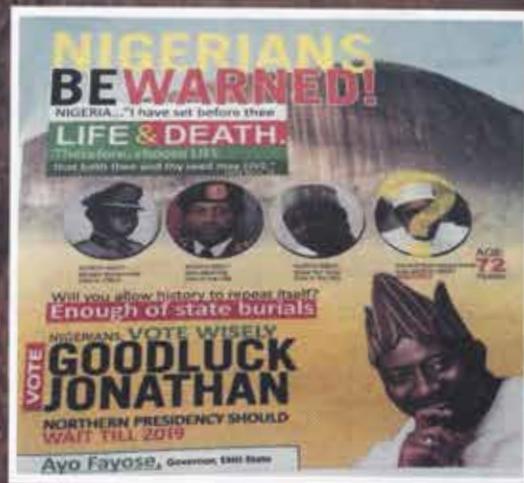
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## FEBRUARY ELECTION

# PDP's Dirty Campaign



### 2015: Why The Ogoni Are Angry

• essay •

# Refugees As Objects Of Contemplation

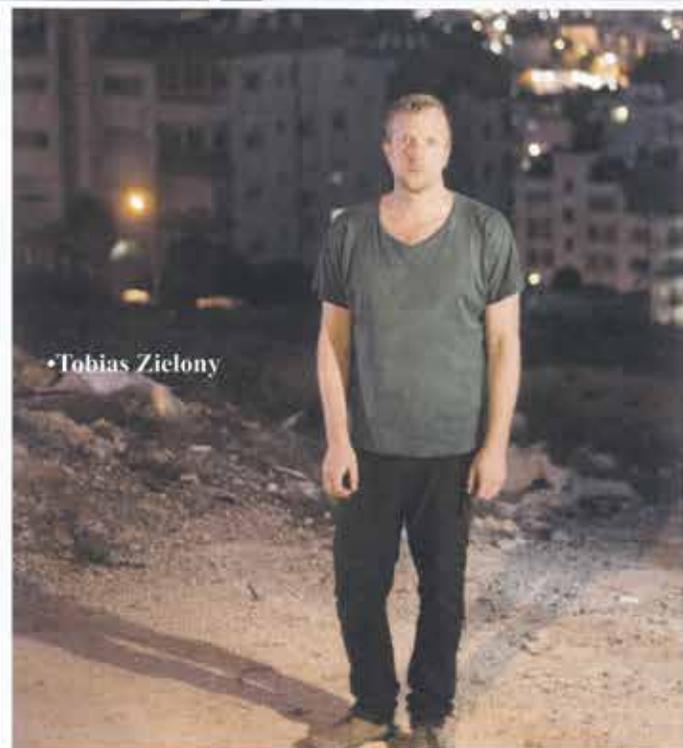


•Refugees protesting in Berlin Photos: Tobias Zielony

## KUNLE AJIBADE

The Spanish philosopher, George Santayana, in his essay, *The Philosophy of Travel*, asks rhetorically: "What is life but a form of motion and a journey through a foreign world?" He submits that "locomotion, the privilege of animals, is perhaps the key to intelligence." Unlike plants, condemned to suck up whatever sustenance may flow to them in a particular spot even when there is a richer soil or a more sheltered and sunnier clime nearby, animals can migrate to better places. And because of their privilege to migrate, animals don't live where there is no life. They constantly aspire to enjoy "the luxury of blooming and basking and swaying in the light" of an enabling environment.

“ It makes a lot of sense to empathise with innocent victims – whether they are black, white or brown – because when we do that, we are saving our own lives too ”



•Tobias Zielony

• essay •

Santayana observes that the power of locomotion changes all the dull experience into a life of passion. Travel, he argues, lends meaning to life. It sharpens the eye and expands the mind. "All tourists are dear to Hermes, the god of travel, who is patron also of amiable curiosity and freedom of mind. There is wisdom in turning as often as possible from the familiar to the unfamiliar: it keeps the mind nimble, it kills prejudice, and it fosters humour." He goes on to remind us that if possession of hands has given man and other animals their superiority, they certainly owe their intelligence to their feet.

I find Santayana's position on migration even more incisive and convincing: "The most radical form of travel, and the most tragic, is migration. Looking at her birthplace the soul may well recoil, she may find it barren, threatening, or ugly. The very odiousness of the scene may compel her to conceive a negative, a contrast, an ideal; she will dream of El Dorado and the Golden Age, and rather than endure the ills, she may fly to anything she knows not of. This hope is not necessarily deceptive: in travel, as in being born, interest may drown the discomfort of finding oneself in a foreign medium: the solitude and liberty of the wide world may prove more stimulating than chilling. Yet migration like birth is heroic: the soul is signing away her safety for a blank cheque."

Signing away their lives for blank cheques is what many refugees do as they leave the known calamities for the unknown catastrophes and, possibly, triumphs and grace.

Albert Einstein laments in *A message to intellectuals*: "while mankind has produced many scholars so extremely successful in the field of science and technology, human beings have been, for a long time, so inefficient in finding adequate solutions to the many political conflicts and economic problems which beset

With striking images, Tobias Zielony tells the stories of his subjects with empathy. They are narratives of tenderness that survived in the miasma of existential tragedy

us." For that reason, war, terrorism, communal clashes, poverty and natural disasters are largely responsible for displacement, dispossession and migration of a large number of people all over the world. In a detailed report published by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) last year, more than 170,000 refugees arrived Italy in 2014 by boat from Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Mali, Nigeria, Gambia and Palestine before they travelled to other countries in Europe. Using ill-equipped boats to journey across the Mediterranean has led to thousands of deaths. In 2013 up to 700 migrants perished near Lampedusa, off the coast of Italy. Desperate migrants no longer wait to cross the Mediterranean in warmer months, they now do it all year round to seek for asylum in Europe. Migrants don't only pay to be smuggled across the sea, they do other dehumanising things just to run away from the boiling cauldron or impending doom in their countries. Home is a problematic idea to all those who are hopeless in it.

The high level of migration flows, and the problems associated with it, have become a humanitarian burden to Italy, several countries in Africa and the European Union. For instance, Italy's Navy, at a very high cost, runs Operation Mare Nostrum (OMN)

to save migrants' lives. Established by the Italian Government on October 18, 2013, Operation Mare Nostrum, in accordance with the 2004 Italian national law, has been patrolling sea lanes, combating human trafficking, improving maritime security and tackling the Mediterranean human emergency in the Sicily Straits. The International Organisation for Migrants' records show that migrants' deaths occurred along the US-Mexico border, Africa's Sahara Desert and the Indian ocean.

What about the increasing number



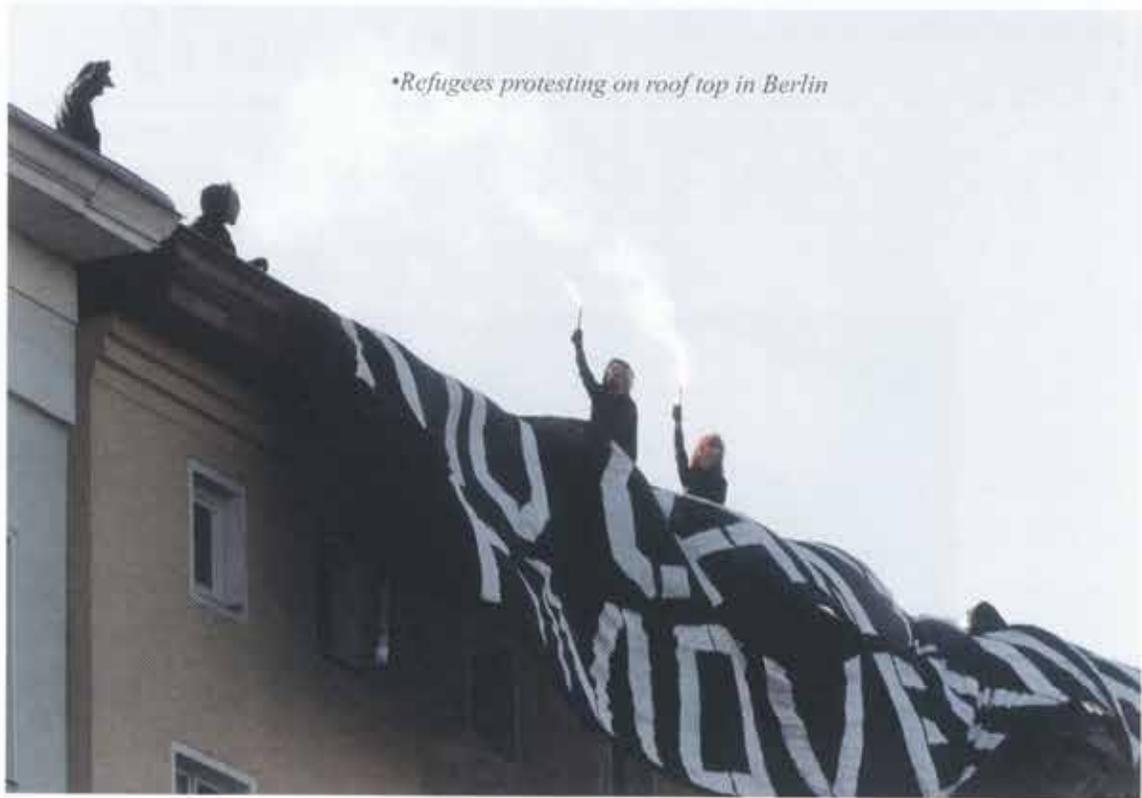
• Another protest by refugees in Berlin

of Internally Displaced People? In June 2014, according to UN's High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR), Syrian civil war displaced about 3 million people, 2.7 million people were displaced in Afghanistan, 1.1 million were forced to leave their homes in Somalia, 670,000 left Sudan, 509,000 fled South Sudan, 480,000 were displaced in Burma, and 426,000 fled Iraq. Countries like Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Iran, Kenya and Chad bear economic pressure of hosting the displaced refugees. In Nigeria, for example, an estimated 3.5 million people have fled their homes in the North-Eastern part of the country as a result of the Boko Haram terrorism,

not just to other parts of Nigeria, but also to Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Right now, the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Norwegian Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN Population Fund, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) are helping to cushion the pains of the victims.

This is not about mere figures. It is about human beings who have been cut off from their means of livelihood. We are talking about trauma patients who are not receiving any treatment. It is about thousands of children who cannot go to schools. It is about thousands of people who have lost their loved ones. It is about people whose social and even political lives have virtually been put on hold. Add to all this the tragedy of the abduction of 276 Nigerian girls from their secondary schools in Chibok by the Boko Haram terrorists. At the time of writing this, these girls have spent 280 days in captivity. It is a pity that the girls are being treated by Nigerian government as special internally displaced people. Their abduction indeed should make us feel ashamed

**“ In photograph after photograph, Zielony invites us to look intently, with some detachment, in order to understand deeply the enduring complexities and contradictions of life in the light of the alienated conditions of refugees ”**



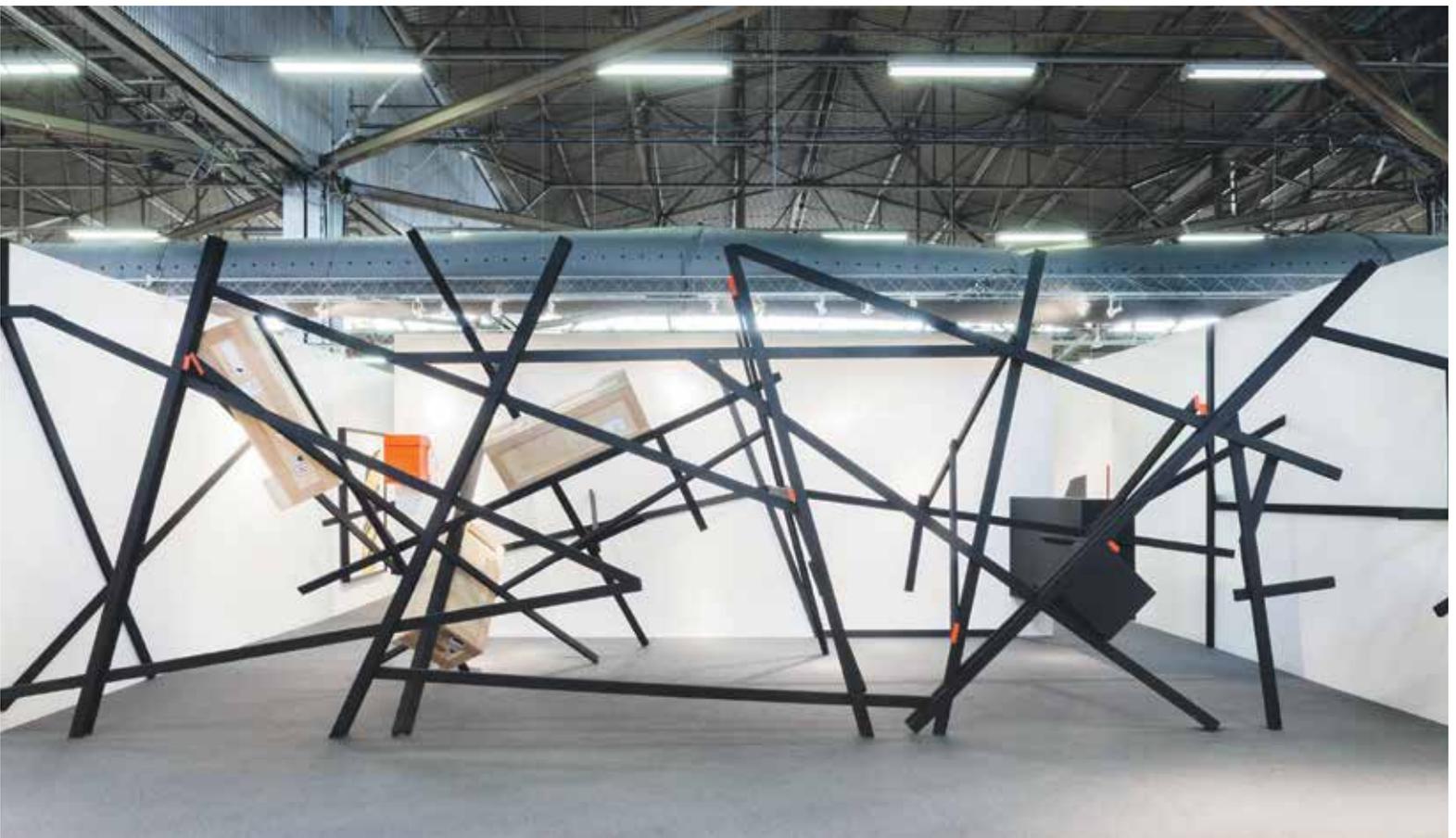
•Refugees protesting on roof top in Berlin

that we live in a country where school girls writing their final exams were taken as hostages. When you yield an inch of your decent space to terror, you should be prepared for a total take-over and dominance. It makes a lot of sense to empathise with innocent victims – whether they are black, white or brown – because when we do that, we are saving our own lives too. In a world that is becoming increasingly flat, those who want to impose their obnoxious values on others can do so now from anywhere. And those who want it to grow and endure can start the process from their tiny corners of our planet .

This brings me to the good works of Tobias Zielony, the German photographer, whose graphic and poignant images of refugees in Europe will be exhibited at the German Pavilion from 9 May to 22 November this year during the 56th Venice international art exhibition curated by Okwui Enwezor. Since 2013 when he accidentally met a group of refugees from Bangladesh, he has done a lot of work on refugees from different parts of the world, creating images of their individual anxieties, nostalgia, hardwork, imaginative leaps, alienation, lifestyles, emotions, aspirations, self-doubts and their political activism. With striking images, Tobias Zielony tells the stories of his subjects with empathy. They are narratives of tenderness that survived in the miasma of existential tragedy. Believing that photography ought to be a positive agent for those who live on the seamy side of life, Zielony uses his camera to tell their peculiar stories of anguish and dangerous love. His authenticity, uniqueness and clarifying moments come from the street. In photograph after photograph, Zielony invites us to look intently, with some detachment, in order to understand deeply the enduring complexities and contradictions of life in the light of the alienated conditions of refugees.

# The Bare Life and Its Archive

C& meet artists **Guy Wouete** and **Serge Alain Nitegeka** to talk about the context of migratory experiences in their work.



Above: Serge Alain Nitegeka, *Barricade I*, 2014, Armory, New York.  
Courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg

Overleaf: Guy Wouete, *Day Todays I*, from the series  
*The dynamic of sunset*, 2012. Billboards in Berlin Neukölln, Sonnenallee,  
during the public exhibition *The Space Between Us*, 2013



**C&** Guy, how do you situate your multimedia work in the context of migratory experiences? For example, your ongoing project *Next Week* that you started in 2010.

**Guy Wouete** My multimedia work aims to re-humanize the notion of migration and borders. I want to elicit emotions in people through my work. At the aesthetic level, most of the artworks that I've produced on these topics have obvious critical aspects. *Next Week* is a project I did in 2010 in Malta. I went there to visit some migrant camps including Hal Far Tent Village, which was planned as a temporary space in 2007, when the other centers could no longer accommodate the rising number of refugees. By 2010, when I arrived there, it was no longer temporary; it had become a settlement.

First of all, the main concern and motivation for the immigration and border issue came out of my indignation in 2005 in Cameroon. Remember what happened in Melilla and Ceuta in September 2005? There were more than 500 migrants who tried to jump the 7-meter high electrified, barbed-wire fence along the 11- and 8-kilometer long borders between Morocco and these two Spanish enclaves in Africa.

When I arrived in Amsterdam in 2009, I was keen to refocus on this issue

from a European perspective, from the destination. I know from the Cameroonian, African perspective how people put themselves in danger *on the way to immigrating*. That is the only way many can maintain hope and keep their minds and their bodies focused on making change in their lives. Once I arrived in Europe, I was confronted with the question of migration, and no matter if it's legal or illegal, the point is, I'm a migrant from a poor country.

**C&** How do you translate this into your aesthetic language?

**GW** It's a very dynamic process; I work with different emotions that I feel. For my last project *Next Week*, for example, I incorporated many different elements, materials such as pictures and interviews, along with some of those migrants' belongings, things which symbolically represent migration, like shoes, pallets, books... After my fifteen-day trip, I transformed all those elements into an installation including a video, photography, and physical structures and objects.

**C&** Serge, your sculptures can trigger a sense of threat when one stands under them because of their size and the use of black. Is that intended, and if so, why?

**Serge Alain Nitegeka** Yes, because this is the refugee situation. The viewers have to be exposed to this situation in the rawest form possible.

**C&** In both installations *Tunnel VII (My Joburg, 2013)* and *Tunnel VIII (The Space Between Us, 2013)*, there is a sense of elevation. How would you characterize this?

**SAN** The elevation is in response to space. The installations are constructed to occupy the entire space allocated to them, maximizing on volume. The two installations work on the principles of lines and angles, distribution of weight and balancing forces. In conceiving these site-specific pieces, I needed to figure out the possibilities of angles and weight based on the best probable aesthetic outcomes. In these installations there is movement, direction, and obstruction. This abstract approach is a self-generating fabrication process that evolves to cover the floor space and the volume above it. I guess it is on-site structural engineering without sketches or mathematical planning on paper. If I had to do another degree, I would do structural engineering.

C& Would you describe your pieces as political?

SAN Yes.

C& How would you define your body of work in relation to border politics and migratory experiences?

SAN Let me use the film *Black Subjects* to elaborate. This film is inspired by the realities of forced migration as experienced by refugees and asylum seekers. The film portrays the liminal space, the in-between space of former selves and unknown future selves. It is a space or stage where they don't make any plans or have the luxury of hope. There is just the now. The moment is lived and confined to the everyday. It is based on the improvised negotiations of survival, a primal human instinct prevalent in all situations where life or death are the only options. These negotiations of survival begin with constructing or finding shelter. The film consolidates these ideas in narratives that prop up the sense of community that arises in the face of adversity.

C& What do you think about the recurring tragedies taking place on the Mediterranean borders?

SAN Sad. Even sadder is that there are a lot of people today who suffer similar misfortunes. They never make the headlines. We never get to hear their stories of valor epitomized by their daring pursuit of better lives.

GW My first reaction to huge tragedies such as Lampedusa and Melilla were shame, shame on us (as human beings) for letting this tragedy happen again and again. Shame, because the context of the global economy in which we're living does not have any humanity, humility, or faith. With all the diplomacy that has been going on in the globalized world regarding respect for human rights and democracy, political leaders are still not taking us in the direction of a peaceful world.

C& Guy, do you plan to travel to any of these places?

GW Yes, that's the artistic action that I'm planning to do. On 17 September 2013, at the border of Melilla and Ceuta, hundreds

of people lost their lives trying to make it to Europe. I have an idea in mind for a trip to Melilla and Lampedusa. I will go there and do a *Walk*, firstly in memory of all these unknown people who died trying to cross that border. And secondly, this *Walk* should be an *open door* for everyone who wishes to move from here to there and from there to here. My aim with this video performance is to question/exorcize this migration tragedy. I would like to address once again this unfair capitalistic dynamic which has been dehumanizing and marginalizing the African continent for centuries now. This *Walk* will take place on both sides of the Spanish and Moroccan border in Melilla and later along the Lampedusa coast. The protagonist of this action will be me walking along that 11 kilometer-long border without water or food till the end.

As an artist, I would like to make the connection between tragedies like those in

Lampedusa and Melilla. I will start from Morocco then go to Melilla (Spain) and continue to Lampedusa...

C& As a militant artist, do you have a network of artists? Do you collaborate with journalists and/or NGOs? Or do you work just on an individual level?

GW I don't collaborate with NGOs on these types of projects. I just work on an individual level. It's my personal approach to work for the change that I want to see in the world. However I have to mention that I wasn't able to finance a project like *Next Week* on my own. The Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, Cultures France, and my wife Medina Tokalic were my major partners when I travelled to Malta. And now I'm looking for some financial support to realize this new step of my artistic quest regarding migration and borders in the context of a globalized world. ca



Above:

Serge Alain Nitegeka, *Barricade I*, 2014,  
Armory, New York.

Courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town/Johannesburg

Below:

Serge Alain Nitegeka, *Tunnel VII*, 2013,  
*Nouvelles Vagues, This House*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris.  
© Palais de Tokyo

April  
Dina Danish

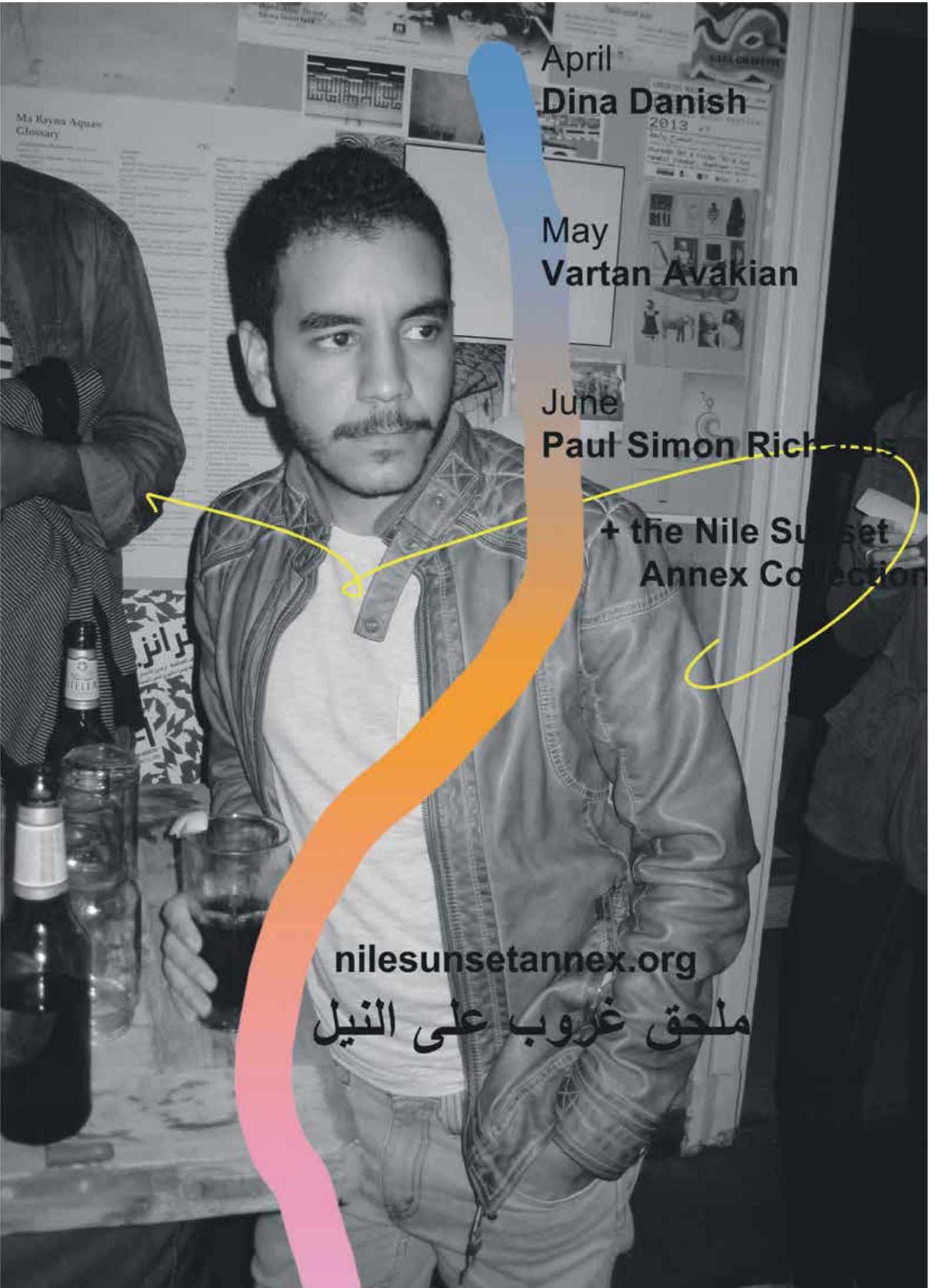
May  
Vartan Avakian

June  
Paul Simon Richards

+ the Nile Sunset  
Annex Collection

nilesunsetannex.org

ملحق غروب على النيل



# Directing a Museum that Responds to History



**Thelma Golden**, director and chief curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem, tells C& about the museum's early years, the dialogue it has inspired, and its fiftieth anniversary in 2018.

**C&** Since 2000, you have been the director and chief curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem. How did you start this journey?

**Thelma Golden** My relationship with the Studio Museum began back in 1985. I had an amazing opportunity during my second year at Smith College to work with the curatorial department and the museum's director at that time, Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell. Dr. Campbell is a pioneering cultural visionary, arts leader, and art historian. So that internship with her really set out the building blocks for my career in the art museum world. When I graduated from college in 1987, I worked as a curatorial assistant at the Studio Museum for a year before working at the Whitney Museum. When I came back to the Studio Museum in 2000, I had already worked at the museum twice for two different directors, Dr. Campbell and Kinshasha Holman

Conwill. I came back as deputy director and chief curator at the invitation of the new director, Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, and I succeeded Dr. Sims as director in 2006.

**C&** The Studio Museum was founded in 1968, in the midst of the American Civil Rights Movement. What was the museum's role during that time?

**TG** I have had the wonderful opportunity to spend time with people who were involved in the Studio Museum's founding – people who were in the conversation before the doors even opened, who envisioned the museum and then did the work to make it happen. The idea of the Studio Museum went hand in hand with many other ideas and projects of that moment. When I talk to people, many of them artists, who were involved with this museum in the early years, they say they saw themselves as creating not only a

museum that would collect and present art, but an institution that would have a singular role in the development of a community.

**C&** How has the museum's structure and vision grown and changed since then?

**TG** I think what is so amazing and interesting about the Studio Museum is that it always changed or responded to different moments in the world of art and culture. This is an incredible testament to the different women who have led it during my history here. This museum has beautifully risen to each moment's dialogue – sometimes leading it, sometimes responding to it, often doing both at the same time. When I was here in the late '80s, Dr. Campbell made an extremely powerful argument for a revisionist art history, a rewriting of a mainstream story that had simply excluded the contributions of artists of African descent, as well as Latino artists, Asian artists, women, and many others. I am truly proud that this institution continues to help rewrite history by creating exhibitions that fill in these missing pieces of history in any number of ways.

**C&** What is the Studio Museum's current role as a social space in reference to the very tense circumstances of Ferguson, the Eric Garner case, etc.?

**TG** I think an institution should provide a framework for conversation. The experience of art, the inspiration and the instigation that art provokes, can serve as a way for people to understand themselves and the world. At the Studio Museum, we have amazing programs for young people, including really innovative high school programs, which have art making at their heart, but also use art making as a way into storytelling and conversation. So at the moment when young people are discovering themselves and considering their place in this world, art can provide the ability to articulate and develop their voices in very powerful ways – especially when tumultuous events are happening in the world around us.

**C&** Let's talk about the rapid spread of the term "global art." Suddenly every museum wants not to only focus on Jeff Koons and Ed Atkins, but on non-Western art perspectives as well. Why is an institution such as the Studio Museum even more important right now?

**TG** I am not sure this issue is an either/or. I think that the opportunity to have artists of African descent showing everywhere is fantastic. I think it is also important to have platforms that exist to present the specificity of artists of African descent. I really argue for both and all of it.





*“The museum’s director Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell made an extremely powerful argument for a revisionist art history, a rewriting of a mainstream story that had simply excluded the contributions of artists of African descent, as well as Latino artists, Asian artists, women, and many others.”*

**C&** The Studio Museum’s permanent collection includes around 2,000 works. Can you tell us a bit more about your collecting approach behind it?

**TG** Our permanent collection embraces all media and ranges from the 19th century to the present. We have a broad approach to collecting, as we seek to really represent and tell the stories of the incredibly broad range of artists of African descent. But in the collection we also explore and manifest very specific ideas and experiences. For example, the Studio Museum takes its name from our foundational Artist-in-Residence program. Every year we have three artists working in studios here in the museum, and they have an exhibition at the end of the year. We acquire work by these artists – so the collection is a marker

of the many artists who have worked here and become part of our community as part of this program. Of course, we also collect artwork from our exhibitions. *Freestyle* (2001) was the first of what has become a kind of signature group show, nicknamed the “F shows,” when we feature a dynamic group of emerging artists. It was followed by *Frequency* (2005), *Flow* (2008), and *Fore* (2012). We acquired work from all of those exhibitions, and many others, so the collection also reflects our unique exhibition history.

**C&** 2018 will be the museum’s 50th anniversary.

**TG** Yes! We’re incredibly excited and have a number of projects and programs in the works. One really important project

that we’re trying to do is to capture the stories of the many people who have been intimately involved with the museum since its founding – the many directors that have been involved here, the curators, the artists who’ve been in our exhibitions, and our many, many trustees, donors, members, and supporters. Secondly, we are thinking about a project that really analyzes these 50 years in the reception, collection, and curation of artists of African descent. Finally, we are beginning to put together a project that we are calling *inHarlem*, taken from the name of The Studio Museum in Harlem. It’s a series of site-specific public projects in the neighborhood. For our anniversary, we would like to create projects that not only reflect on the neighborhood, but also exist as a vital part of it. <sup>ca</sup>

Opposite:

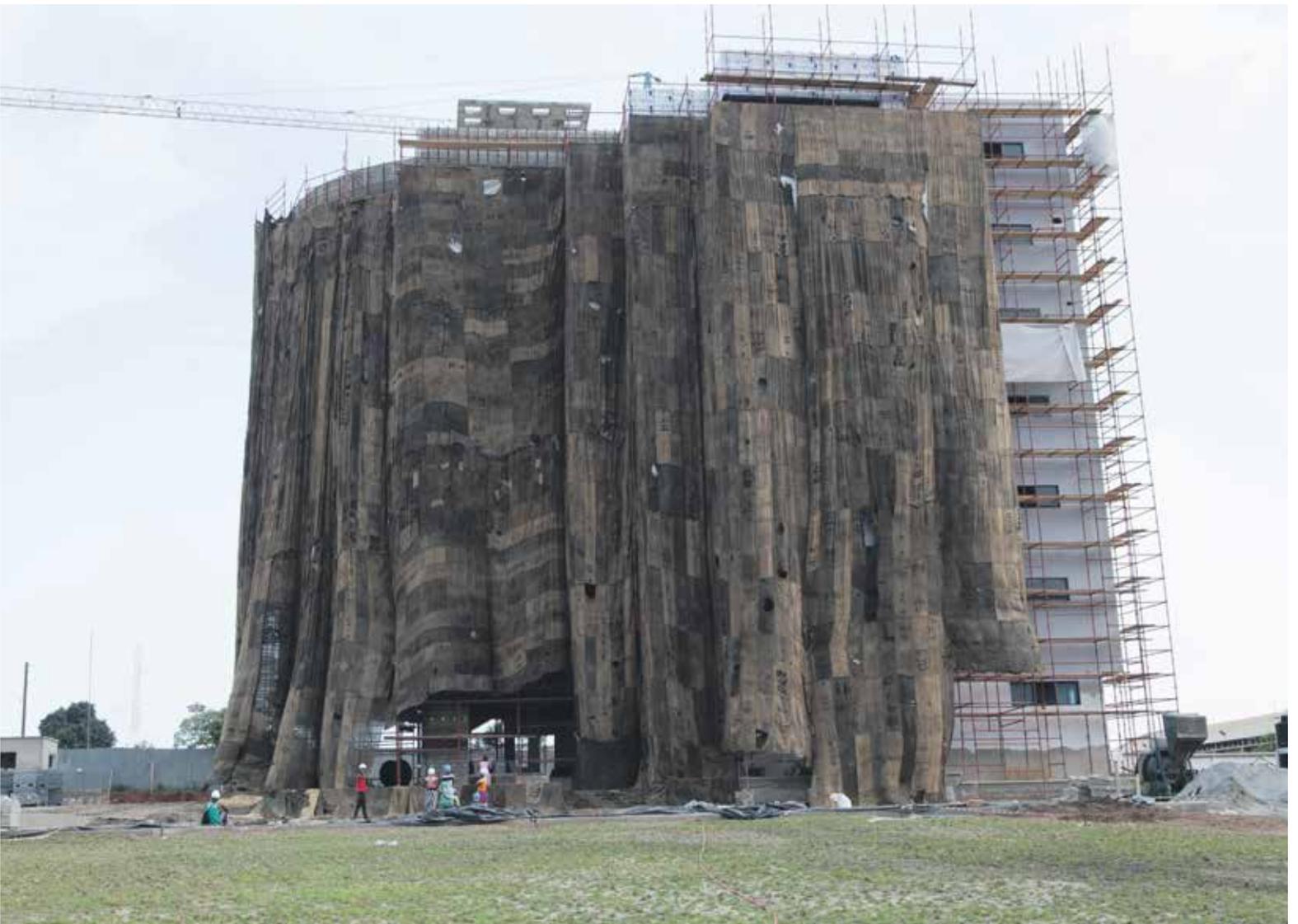
The Studio Museum in Harlem, c. 1993.  
Photo: Sherman Bryce

Above:

At the Studio Museum’s 1968 exhibition,  
Tom Lloyd: *Electronic Refractions II*

Artist **Ibrahim Mahama** discusses his practice and relationship to his materials, which prominently feature textiles. His work will be exhibited at the 2015 Venice Biennale.

# The Politics of Form and Materiality



Ibrahim Mahama, *Civil Aviation, Airport*.  
Accra, Ghana, 2014. Courtesy of the artist

**C&** Did you have an artistic childhood?

**Ibrahim Mahama** Storytelling was a very big part of my coming of age – there was a certain sense of freedom in inventing limitless tales, whether or not they were true. I spent most of my childhood in boarding school and I think that experience helped me to grow creatively. This made me want to see and experience great things as often as possible. With time, I think this idea of greatness has become more and more sublime.

**C&** You mainly work with jute sacks initially used for cocoa and transform them into large-scale installations. Can you tell us about your intentions behind this concept?

**IM** Jute sacks are not the only materials I work with, though it might seem that way during this period because of my *Occupations* series and other experimentations, but I am as strongly interested in them as in any

other material I am quietly working with. I am mostly interested in commonplace materials and objects that have acquired history over time, and re-appropriating them. The re-appropriation is done purely with political intent, so spaces, including labor, become very crucial in the realization of most of my projects. Specifically, jute sacks used in the transportation of cocoa are very loaded with historical and modern-day narratives. Looking at them closely begins to reveal certain things about our society and our ways of living.

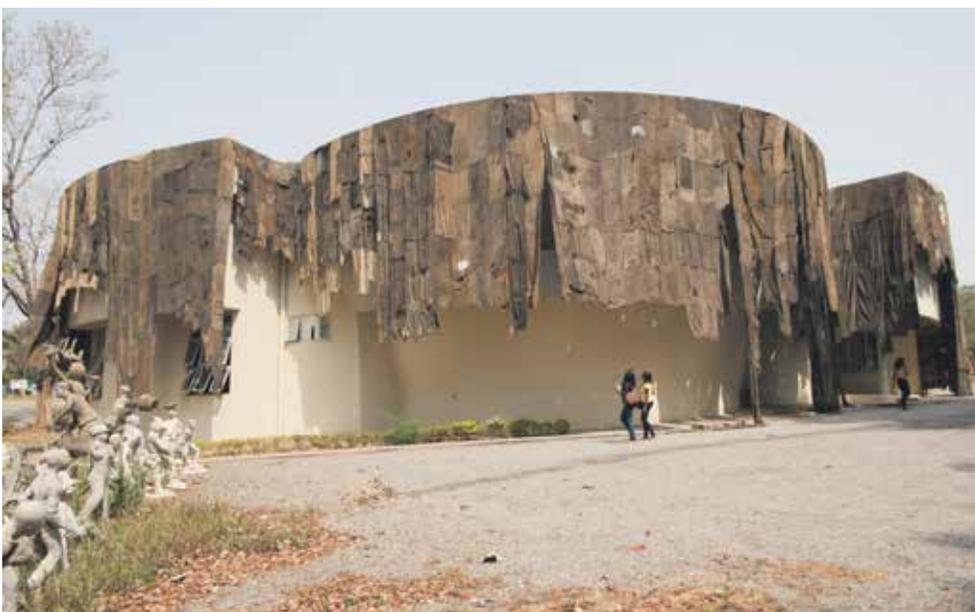
**C&** You install the jute fabric that you transform in spaces like marketplaces, but also drape it on public buildings and institutions such as schools or museums. What do these kind of installations in public spaces mean to you? How do you choose specific sites for your installations?

**IM** Collaborations became important in my work during one of my first installations. The input of the people who already occupied the space that I also wanted to occupy made me sensitive to the spaces around me. I am interested in interrogating materials and spaces that have significant histories and trajectories. I like to think that these characteristics of the materials are more political than purely aesthetic in their form, though the work does take on interesting forms. The materials' studio processes have long histories that extend far beyond their origins and myself, the artist. For me, part of the work has already been done before I collect the materials. The act of collecting those specific sacks and sewing them together is important to the work's display from one space to the other. Politically, I like to give people who might know nothing about my art, but share somewhat in its conditions, the chance to assist me in configuring the work. New ideas are readily accepted as the conditions of the site determine how the piece is going to be displayed. The space's function is relevant to the installation process. Nothing is to be taken out of the configured spaces. The works take the form of the concrete space and the objects within it, but still allow the spaces to function as if the intervention had not been made, as if the artwork were not there. I choose specific sites based on their form.

The autonomous power of art is broken, from its creation to its display, as people negotiate their way through it and their relationship with the process of making the artwork and its final display throughout. The presentation challenges conventional gallery and museum presentation and classification strategies; these projects interrogate the "white cube space." Certainly this draws on influences such as Santiago Sierra and minimalist art.

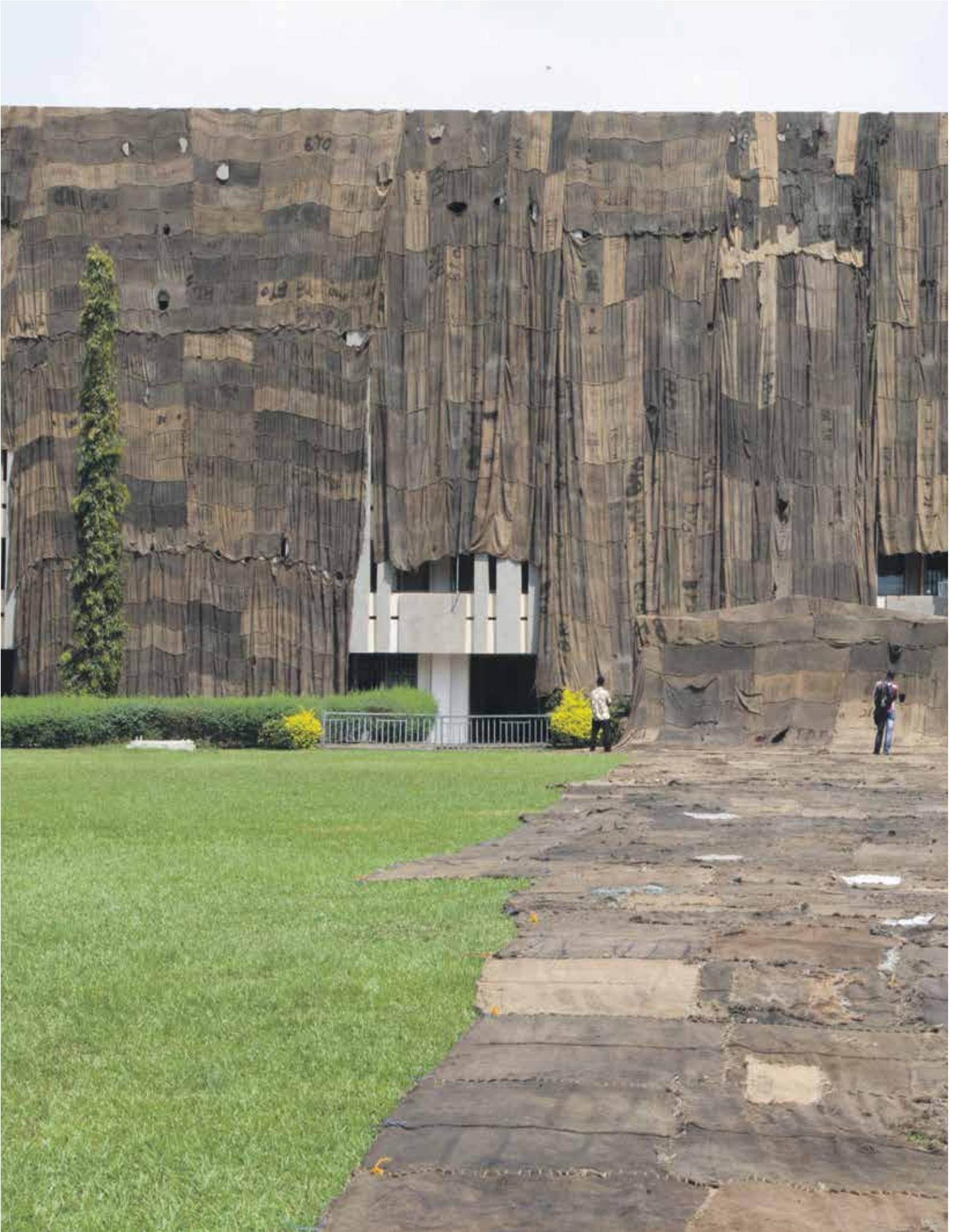
**C&** Acclaimed artists such as El Anatsui, Yinka Shonibare, Sonia Delaunay, and Abdoulaye Konaté work and have worked with textiles and textures in their own particular ways. What does the use of textiles in your artistic practice mean to you?

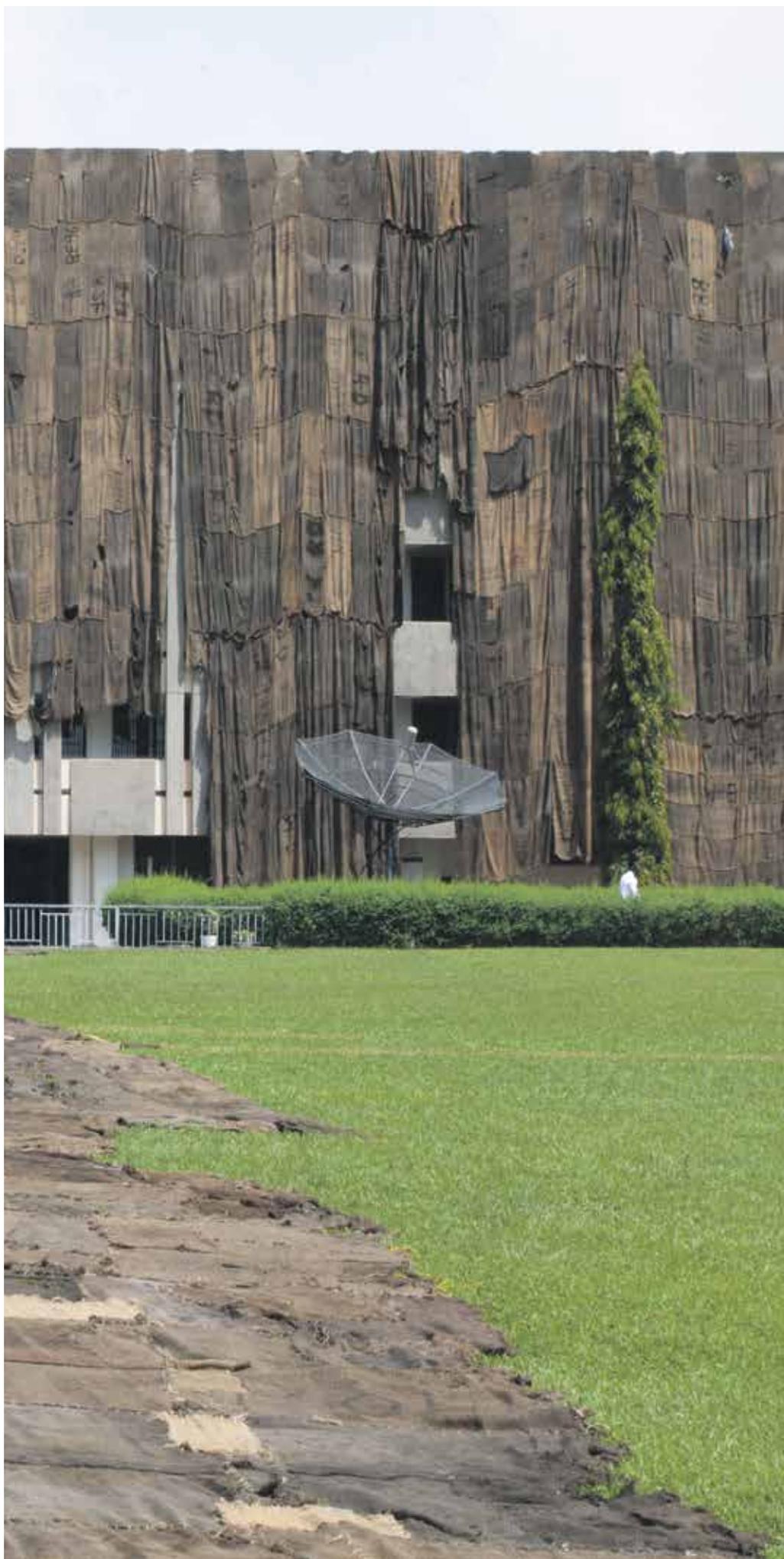
**IM** Textiles are a very important part of our history. I first became interested in them when I started my MFA degree, but later



Above:  
Ibrahim Mahama, *Samsia Towers of Emancipation. Silence Between the Lines*. Group Exhibition. Kumasi, Ghana, 2015.  
Courtesy of the artist

Below:  
Ibrahim Mahama, *K.N.U.S.T Library. Occupation and labour*. Kumasi, Ghana, 2014.  
Courtesy of the artist





came to the realization that I was generally interested in the state of things and that's why I was drawn to them. They are an archival document for me, documenting the accumulation of time, history, form, and place. There are different moments in there I cannot quite grasp, and I became interested in experimenting with those intersections to extend pre-existing forms or create possible new ones. Another thing that also drew my interest was the idea of textiles containing forms and now having to interrogate forms larger than my original ideas for my work. The politics of form and materiality within this context helps me to understand and constantly push my interest in this area. It is an ongoing process.

C& You are based in Tamale/Accra and also work internationally in cities such as London, Dakar, and now Venice. Through all these travels and experiences, how do you perceive the Ghanaian art scene?

IM A recent exhibition like *Silence between the Lines; Anagrams of Emancipated Futures* is a really good point to start from. The Ghanaian art scene is currently going through a lot of changes but it's always been very promising. The Painting and Sculpture Department along with other artists at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (K.N.U.S.T) in Kumasi has put in a lot of work to bring the art scene where it is today. Compared to other centers for artistic discourse, the department doesn't have the necessary structures in place, but I think that is what makes it really exciting. Lecturers constantly push artists to think about how they can position themselves within different contexts to bring about changes, which have heavy implications for the art world. It is a very slow and carefully thought process, which needs time and the right steps. But it's very inspiring and humbling especially when certain players within it have dedicated their entire lives to this.

C& How do you see your role as an artist?

IM Society has always defined roles for different people based on their abilities, position, and reasoning, but I believe in working together so there can be better structures in place. The current state of Ghana and the continent at large serves as a compelling reason to act as more than just an artist, but a socio-political and cultural player. Urgent issues need to be addressed and I believe the time is right. <sup>ca</sup>

The British architect **David Adjaye** talks to **Basia Lewandowska Cummings** about his projects and current solo show at the Haus der Kunst in Munich.

# When Latitudes Become Form



*David Adjaye: Form, Gewicht, Material / David Adjaye: Form, Heft, Material, Installation view, Haus der Kunst, 2015, Photo: Wilfried Petzi*



Above:  
David Adjaye, *Oflection (Landscape)*, Stephen Lawrence Centre, London, 2007. Photo: Lyndon Douglas

Left:  
David Adjaye, Elektra House (front), London, 2000  
Photo: Lyndon Douglas

Below:  
David Adjaye, Visualization of one of Adjaye's current projects, the Cape Coast Slavery Museum. ©Adjaye Associates Ltd

Basia Lewandowska Cummings This is the most extensive survey of your career to date. Where do you start in assembling such varied material?

David Adjaye The concept for the show is to reveal a process in its entirety. Rather than focusing only on completed buildings, we thought about how we could show the way in which I approach projects – my methodology. We have therefore tried to show the research, the thinking, and the early dialogue that happens in the first moments of a project.

Much of this material exists in early design reports in our archive. Then there are the principal elements of any architecture practice – sketches, models, photography – the primary means by which we communicate ideas and test options. There is a mix of media, some encouraging an appreciation of form alone, others offering insight into materiality or exploring content (hence the title *Form, Heft, Material*). Finally, I also wanted to give visitors an unmediated experience of the work – so it was important to include an original pavilion and real fragments of building facades.

BLC What was the relationship between you and Okwui Enwezor – and how did you both approach the task of curating your archive of work?



DA Opening your process up to scrutiny is both daunting and affirming. Okwui has a broad, intellectually compelling understanding of my buildings. Coming from a contemporary art background, he is situated as an outsider. As such, he has made it possible for me to think about the meaning of what I do and the representation of that process within the gallery space as part of the wider intellectual and aesthetic narrative of my work. He has been instrumental in creating an exhibition which is more than a representation of the “real thing.”

BLC How do you negotiate the role of the architect, exhibiting your work around your architectural practice and developing structures for another client's exhibition?

DA It has been an intense period, preparing for this exhibition. Of course, my other projects have continued simultaneously, but this has been a useful way to analyze and archive my work over the past 15 years, to think about the future and to define the strategy for moving forward.



**BLC** You've said in the past, in relation to Africa: "With the right political agency and the right construction environment, you can create extraordinary moments in architecture." How do those moments arise and which projects in Africa are you particularly excited about?

**DA** To find a moment that offers extraordinary architectural opportunities, architects need to work with extraordinary clients who share in or believe in an ambitious vision. My new project in Lagos, the Alara Concept store, is a jewel-like building that encapsulates one of those moments. It is a small project, but it reaches out to a global audience. So while it provides a valuable new space for Lagos and its community, it also offers Lagos an international platform and enables the world to see the city through a progressive lens.

The Cape Coast Slavery Museum in Ghana is a very different project – but again, it reaffirms the dialogue between Africa, the US, and Europe, turning a painful history into an opportunity for engagement and discourse.

Another project that I am particularly excited about is the headquarters building in Dakar for the International Finance Corporation (IFC). It has presented me with not only an opportunity to work for the first time in Senegal, but also a chance to engage with one of the world's important international organizations. The project brings a highly sensitive response to the climate, the architectural vernacular, and the orientation of the site and its relationship to the city together with an understanding of the ethos, the aspirations, and the fundamental DNA of the IFC.

### *"It is an exciting time for architects in Africa"*

**BLC** Your design for the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington is currently being built, and you previously designed the National Museum of Slavery and Freedom in Cape Coast, Ghana. How does one approach such traumatic and important histories in architecture? How do you, as an architect, articulate history in contemporary building?

**DA** This is a building with many narratives – relating to the context, the history and the program. It is certainly a marriage of form with content. This narrative is articulated immediately by the silhouette – borrowing from the form of a Yoruba sculpture – while also resonating with the angle of the Washington Monument. Several other things absolutely came to mind in thinking through what this building should be and how it should work with the program that we were given. How do you add to such a fantastic master plan, one of the most significant master plans in the world – this incredible monumental core to the capital city of the most powerful country in the world? How do you understand its intrinsic nature, which is the idea of the pastoral and the ordered landscape? How do you make an end to the ordered landscape and begin the pastoral, which is the National Mall proper, and then open onto the Washington Monument grounds?

In a way, I always conceived of this building as a kind of turning point, a knuckle, a joint, which articulates the two things, neither one nor the other, but a bridging between the two. This can be understood as a metaphor for the less tangible bridge between cultures – ensuring that the African-American story becomes a universal story. So from the sensitivity of the master plan to the cultural discourse, I wanted to ensure that the building ends the mall proper and begins the monument.

African architecture over the last three decades has been predominantly about the development of modernity, with borrowed images from the West. There is now a new generation trying to establish the DNA of a contemporary African architecture, which is more responsive to the idea of place and embodies lessons from vernacular African architecture, combined with a contemporary sensibility. It is an exciting time for architects in Africa. The Aga Khan Award, for example, is working towards placing African architecture on the global stage. Through initiatives such as this – awards, events, and peer group support – this decade will see a striking new horizon for African architecture and its global impact.

**BLC** You are responsible for the exhibition's architecture and especially for the central room in the International Pavilion at this year's Venice Biennale. Can you talk about your approach to that project a little bit?

**DA** Engaging with Okwui Enwezor's curatorial vision, the design seeks to offer multiple conditions for experiencing art. So there are a series of spaces – a kind of unfolding of typologies as visitors walk through the Arsenale. It is intended to be multi-nodal and multi-sensory, an enfilade of set pieces as you make your way through the chambers. There is also the "arena" to allow for viewing experiences that offer the idea of exhibition as stage. Most importantly for me, it is an exhibition where design and curation are very closely matched and intertwined. It has been incredibly exciting to work like this. ☺

*David Adjaye: Form, Heft, Material*  
30 January 2015–31 May 2015,  
Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany  
19 September 2015–3 January 2016,  
Chicago Art Institute, Chicago, IL, USA

Above:  
David Adjaye, Smithsonian National  
Museum of African American History and  
Culture Plaza, Washington D.C., opens to the public  
in 2016. Freelon Adjaye Bond & Smith Group.  
Photo: Adjaye Associates

# The Constant Observer

**Muhammed Lamin Jadama** has been following and documenting the refugees in Berlin and their circumstances since Berlin's Oranienplatz was first occupied in the fall of 2012. He has been to the political rallies, the announcements, the occupations, and the refugees' tiny private spaces. As a steady observer, Jadama has always been close to the ground tracing the quiet and dramatic moments of the refugees' daily lives. This photo-essay gives us an exclusive insider's view of his important work as a documentary photographer and activist.



Gerhard-Hauptmann-Schule on Ohlauerstr,  
Berlin, 9 October 2013.

This is a political refugee and a father of two children. He fled from his country with the big hope that Europe could make all his dreams come true – his home country had no human rights or democracy – but upon his arrival he became desperate and disappointed.

This picture was taken at the Gerhard-Hauptmann-Schule on Ohlauerstrasse in Berlin, which was occupied by refugees and the homeless until the police evicted them.



Monumentalkunstkollektiv,  
Berlin, 2 November 2014.

It is part of the Monumentalkunstkollektiv (MKK) manifesto to give encouragement to the people that society discriminates against, like the refugees who the law does not allow to work or to contribute to society.



Haus der 28 Türen,  
Oranienplatz, Berlin, 17 December 2014.

This 28-door circus tent (Das Haus der 28 Türen), which represents the 28 member states of Europe, was donated to the refugees by the artist collective Bewegung Nurr after their exhibition in Tempelhof, Berlin. It was burnt down in March 2015.



Demonstration at the Indian Embassy in Berlin against the Indian government killing civilians on the border with Pakistan, 14 December 2014.



Oranienplatz occupied refugee camp,  
Berlin, 27 February 2013.

The Oranienplatz camp, where hundreds of people had been living in tents without any electricity. We all know how cold it is during the winter, especially in Berlin, which is why you can see so much smoke rising into the sky from the middle of the European capital.



Borgo Mezanone reception center for asylum seekers,  
Foggia, Italy, 4 June 2014.



Refugee in Rosarno,  
Italy, 6 March 2010.

The asylum laws in Europe keep refugee camps away from everything, so that refugees cannot have any contact with society. Refugees have to stay inside the camps, like civilized prisons, because the distance you have to walk to get connected to the big cities is very far.



Taken from the entrance to the Borgo Mezanone reception center for asylum seekers in Foggia, Italy, 4 June 2014.

C& in conversation with **RitaGT**, the Luanda-based artist and commissioner of this year's Angolan Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale.

# Angola's Project of Renewal



**C&** This year's Angolan Pavilion features the artists António Ole (b. Luanda, 1951), Binelde Hyrcan (b. Luanda, 1983), Délio Jasse (b. Luanda, 1980), Francisco Vidal (b. Lisbon, 1978), and Nelo Teixeira (b. Luanda, 1975). How do you see your role as an artist and commissioner?

**RitaGT** I think of myself more as an activist artist. Without a team, I wouldn't be able to move forward. Most of all, I'm interested in art as a tool for developing critical thinking.

**C&** The Angolan Pavilion that featured Edson Chagas's photographic work won the Golden Lion at the 2013 Venice Biennale. How will that influence your work at this year's Biennale?

**RGT** I had the privilege to be in Venice for the last edition, working closely with the team of Edson Chagas, Paula Nascimento, and Stefano Pansera. It's an inspiration to see all their effort and teamwork. Our experience with the last edition made this edition's team stronger and more rigorous about the quality of the project to be developed. The Angolan Ministry of Culture has been a great defender of participating in the Biennale, believing in the firm impact this type of initiative brings to the country and to the internationalization of its contemporary art.

**C&** Can you tell us more about the concept behind this year's Angolan Pavilion?

**RGT** As explained by curator and artist António Ole: "Our strategy is about a dialogue between generations. I have worked with these artists before, we have a lot of things in common, and I strongly believe that these young artists will promote renewal in Angolan contemporary art. It is up

Above:  
RitaGT, *Axiluanda*, 2014, 05'32"  
Performance to video, still. Courtesy of the artist

Below:  
Délio Jasse, *Ausência Permanente*, 2014 © Délio Jasse



to the post-independence generation, the generation of rupture that the future naturally settles: by engaging with the artists' concerns, conducting formal research, taking a multidisciplinary approach, and taking advantage of the options that have been opened up by the tools of our time. The interest in this movement translates into the need to pass on a legacy. A legacy that is not only artistic, but can also be found in many different walks of life."

*On Ways of Traveling* evokes the history of the cultural fusions between the different continents that have been underway for more than 500 years, as well as the important social and cultural role that the oral transmission of knowledge still plays in Angola. The oldest people, the "masters," have the responsibility of sharing their legacy with the youngest.

**C&** Young emerging artists have a vibrant presence in Angola, especially in Luanda. How is this reflected in your project for Venice, your ongoing work, and your artistic collaborations?

**OE** Actually, the most powerful current artistic movement started with the first Triennial

de Luanda in 2006. That was one of the reasons that compelled me to move to Luanda. Angola always had very strong cultural production, but it unfortunately decreased during the war. Nowadays, I think that there is a visible production gap in the cultural realm, most significantly in the visual arts. However, from my point of view, it is precisely this gap that makes the most interesting artistic expressions of contemporary art, music, and dance possible. Thus in Luanda, one can observe different stages or types of cultural production (such as contemporary art and performance) that use transversal languages without distancing themselves from the history of Angolan art and expression.

Many of the young Angolan generation were raised abroad, but after the war many of them returned to start working on rebuilding the country, bringing new ideas and energy. These days there is plenty to talk about in Angola, plenty of feelings, ideas, and thoughts to share, especially as the country is changing by the minute.

**C&** What impact did the Golden Lion have on the Angolan art scene and art market?

**RGT** There's a lot of work to be done. Angola doesn't have established mechanisms for cultural production yet, so these types of initiatives are becoming very important. Artists, architects, curators, collectors, intellectuals, activists, and the government have a crucial responsibility in supporting the changes happening in the country when it comes to the cultural realm.

The art school is just starting and there's a lack of accessible art materials, which makes the costs for production high. But it's essential to establish a serious art market with realistic prices and professional collectors who understand art and culture as a powerful investment.

Moreover, it's important to create an art discourse and discussion between the various cultural agents. I believe that cultural investment is the global future. It's obvious that knowledge, culture, and art are the most interesting and valid sub-cultures of any society on any continent. <sup>ca</sup>

Above:  
Francisco Vidal, *Utopia Luanda* series, 2015  
© Bruno Lopes

# Where Do We Go From Here?



Fifty years after the Civil Rights Movement, cultural anthropologist **Misa Dayson** has been examining the implications of visual images connected to the movement and searching for a contemporary approach towards the icons of this very specific time in history

Above:  
"Hands up, Don't Shoot." Black and white photo of a memorial placed during protests. 20 August 2014. Author: Jamelle Bouie

When talking and thinking about the Civil Rights Movement, most people in the U.S. and around the world inevitably call up images. Despite the countless news and magazine articles, history books, anthologies, autobiographies, biographies, essays, personal journals, and letters by and about iconic people and leaders of that time, it is photographs and films that capture the world's attention. Both are the mediums through which those of us who did not live during this historical moment learned about it. The images that immediately appear before me when reflecting on the movement are the ones I first encountered as a child and teenager. They have haunted me due to the violence captured within them. It takes a lot of work to silence silent objects.

The first image: A black-and-white photograph of Emmett Till's disfigured, puffy face lying in his coffin. This photograph disturbed my elementary school mind as I absorbed my first lesson about the psychotically violent nature of white supremacy.

The second image: A black-and-white newsreel film of Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Black female students who integrated Little Rock High School in Arkansas. She slowly and quietly walks toward the school surrounded by a mob of hundreds of rabid, shouting white people blocking her path. Some of them spit at her. At one point, when it is clear the mob will not allow her to reach the school, she quietly sits on a bench. The mob draws in closer, surrounding her, yelling at her. Somewhere out of the group, a white woman steps forward and joins Eckford on the bench, eventually walking her to safety. This film taught my teenage self about the willingness of everyday people to enact upon others various levels of violence and terror in order to uphold the racial status quo. It also taught me the importance of knowing when to break from a mob mentality and act and speak in ways that are civil and just.

A third image: Films and documentaries about the Civil Rights Movement – protestors, often young Black youth, pinned against buildings by water rushing out of high-pressure fire hoses, or being attacked by German Shepherd dogs. They showed me what commitment and standing up for the principles you believed in looked like.

*What are the implications of social and political organizing that happens in reaction against an event rather than for a clearly articulated purpose?*



Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Man reading newspaper)*, 1990, silver print, 28 1/4 x 28 1/4 inches  
© Carrie Mae Weems. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Currently, another image circulates in my head, since the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision on 25 June 2013 that effectively gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It is of the black and white triptych photograph of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, who travelled to Mississippi as part of Freedom Summer of 1964. Their bodies were found shot, tortured, and burned in retaliation for their organizing efforts. I think about the families of these three men, and of the countless unknown women and men killed during this time, working to change the political, social, and economic conditions of Black people in the United States. I wonder what they are thinking as they watch the legal victories of the Civil Rights Movement systematically dismantled in this country through restrictive voter ID laws, electronic voting machines, and inaccessible and restrictive voting day procedures. Do their brother's/uncle's/husband's/wife's/sister's/mother's/father's/cousin's deaths seem in vain?

The Merriam-Webster definition of the word “legacy” is: “something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from

the past.” To talk about a legacy is to talk about something that is completed or accomplished and then handed up through generations to the present moment. The Civil Rights Movement is not complete because the economic and social justice goals of the movement have not been reached. Fifty years later it seems that many of us have forgotten this crucial fact of history.

If it were not for photographers like Gordon Parks, Benedict J. Fernandez, and Leonard Freed, many of the experiences and views of Black Americans would not have been seen or discussed at all. However, it is alarming to observe that over the years, we have celebrated the famous activists, politicians, and writers of the movement to a point where the general public has forgotten to make the distinction between the events of change and the ongoing social movement for change. Instead, we have branded and commodified the Civil Rights Movement. For example, the corporate global communication firm Alcatel used Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I Have a Dream” speech in a television advertisement where a digital recreation of the famous March on Washington depicts Dr. King speaking to a silent and empty National Mall. The collective packaging of the movement as monumental, effective, and finished has neutralized the way we think of the past and its relevance to current times.

But it is an ongoing struggle as last year's images painfully reminded us: Eric Garner being dragged to the ground and killed by New York police officers. Michael Brown's body lying in the street after being shot by a Ferguson police officer, Darren Wilson. Janay Rice being punched unconscious by her husband, Ray Rice. Each time I signed on to Facebook or Twitter last year, a new image of mediated violence sprung up on the page. However, these images did not allow for an immediate comprehension or discussion about the social contexts these images were held in. They were harrowing reminders that the election of a Black man for president of the United States does not vanquish the oppressive, interlocking, and mutually beneficial matrices of social power that the writer bell hooks aptly names "imperialist-white supremacist-capitalist-hetero-patriarchy," nor their attendant violence in this country and around the world. Are we as a public fetishizing the images of violence enacted upon black men's bodies in a way that narrows our political understanding of these situations and our efforts to affect change? What are the implications of social and political organizing

that happens in reaction *against* an event rather than *for* a clearly articulated purpose?

The challenge for us fifty years after the signing of the Voting Rights Act is to honor those who were on the front lines of the movement in a myriad of ways, including visually documenting it, without becoming transfixed by the images and what they symbolize. Ava DuVernay's most recent film *Selma* not only perfectly illustrates this fact, but also highlights where the true power of art and visual images lies. While reliant on historical imagery, it shows how people's personal investment in each other, across racial, class, state, and international lines, motivated collective action. If we truly want to honor and celebrate the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, we can do more than simply revisit its visual legacy. We must keep the fight for social justice alive and do our part, now, to achieve an as-yet unrealized dream. **ca**

April, 2015: Walter Scott runs away from city patrolman Michael Slager in North Charleston, South Carolina. Slager has been charged with murder. (detail from screenshot)



# C&

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Kapwani Kiwanga, *Study for Flowers for Africa: Senegal*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist

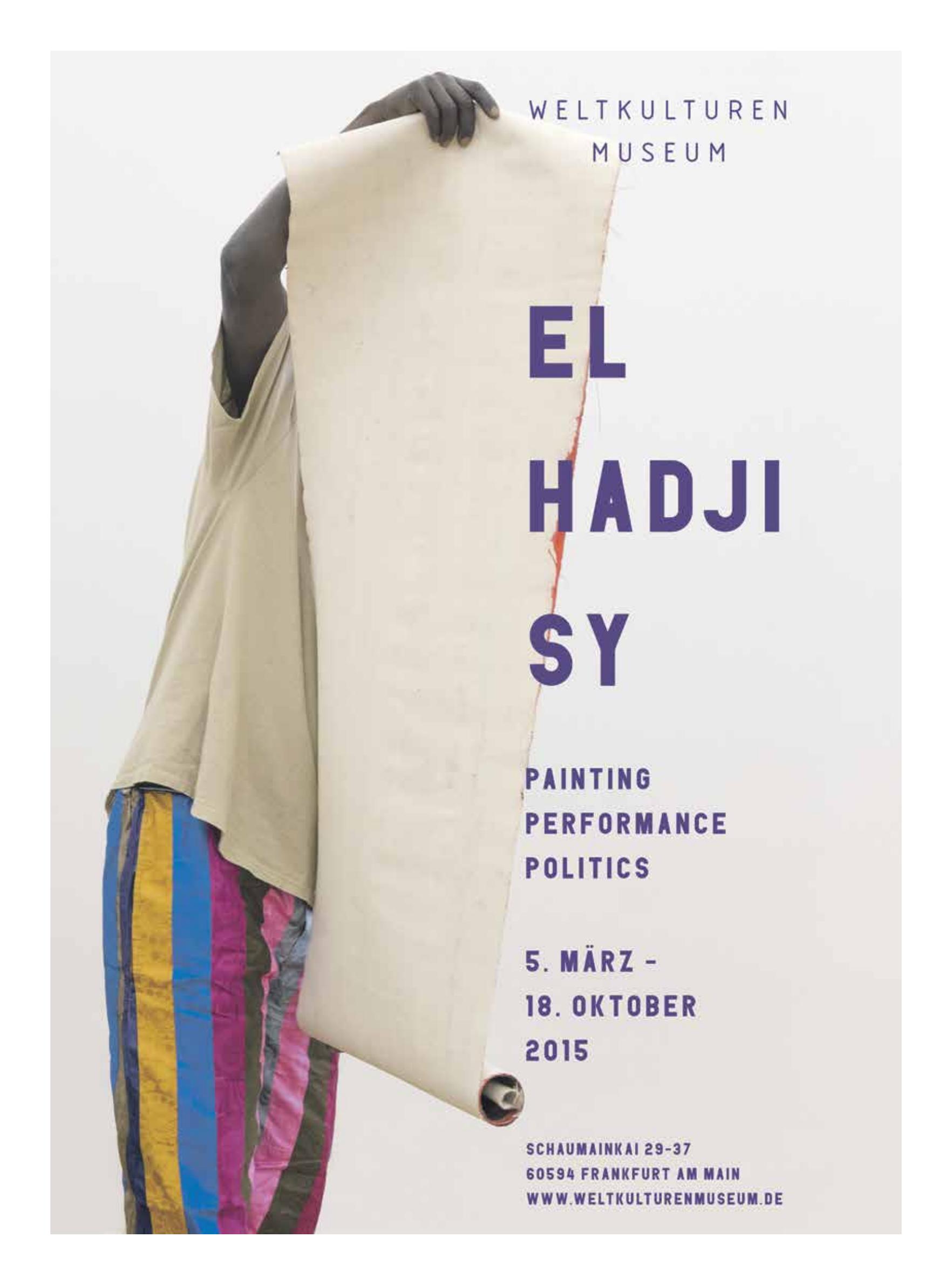
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