african arts

AFRICAN ARTS CONSORTIUM
UCLA
Rhodes University
University of Florida
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

• SUMMER 2017 • Volume 50 • Number 2 •

Rhodes University editorial board
Ruth Simbao

african arts

summer 2017 • vol. 50 • no. 2

Rhodes University editorial board
Ruth Simbao

dialogue

10 **Reaching Sideways, Writing Our Ways**
The Orientation of the Arts of Africa Discourse
Ruth Simbao with William B. Miko, Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin, Romuald Tchibozo, Masimba Hwati, Kristin NG-Yang, Patrick Mudekereza, Aidah Nalubowa, Genevieve Hyacinthe, Lee-Roy Jason, Eman Abdou, Rehema Chachage, Amanda Tumusiime, Suzana Sousa, and Fadzai Muchemwa

30 **Aporias of Rock Art Interpretation**
Advancing a Phenomenological Reading
Nomvuyo Horwitz

46 **Re[im]agining the Village as a Portrait of a Nation-State in Uganda**
Angelo Kakande

58 **Alex Baine's Women's Emancipation in Uganda**
A Visual Archive of the History of a New Generation of Women in Uganda
Amanda Tumisiine

artist interview

68 **Reimagining Our Missing Histories**
Eria Nsubuga SANE and Sikhumbuzo Makandula in Conversational Partnership

DEPARTMENTS

first word

1 *Situating Africa: An Alter-geopolitics of Knowledge, or Chapungu Rises*
Ruth Simbao

exhibition reviews

84 *Creative Africa*
Philadelphia Museum of Art
reviewed by Perrin Lathrop

87 *Patience on a Monument*
New Gallery, University of Texas at Austin
reviewed by Phillip Townsend

90 *Artists' Books and Africa*
Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
reviewed by Josh Hockensmith

book reviews

92 *African Fashion, Global Style: Histories, Innovations, and Ideas You Can Wear by Victoria L. Rovine*
reviewed by Jonathan Zilberg

94 *Vladimir Markov and Russian Primitivism: A Charter for the Avant-Garde by Jeremy Howard, Irēna Bužinska, and Z.S. Strother*
reviewed by Frances S. Connelly

95 *Battleground: Charles Bell's Drawings of the War of the Axe, 1846, in Historical Context and in Relation to Recent Representations of the Frontier/ Wars of Dispossession edited by Michael Godby*
reviewed by Malcolm Corrigall

Published by The James S. Coleman African Studies Center
UCLA International Institute
http://www.mitpressjournals.org/afar

Cover Sethembile Msezane, *Chapungu–The Day Rhodes Fell*, 2015. *Photo: courtesy of the artist*

Reaching Sideways, Writing *Our* Ways

The Orientation of the Arts of Africa Discourse

Ruth Simbao in dialogue with William B. Miko, Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin, Romuald Tchibozo, Masimba Hwati, Kristin NG-Yang, Patrick Mudekereza, Aidah Nalubowa, Genevieve Hyacinthe, Lee-Roy Jason, Eman Abdou, Rehema Chachage, Amanda Tumusiime, Suzana Sousa and Fadzai Muchemwa.

How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere 'its' in whom I cannot recognize other 'I's? How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of pure men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are 'these people' or 'the great unwashed'? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite…? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others? How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness? …At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know. Paulo Freire (2005[1970]:90)

DIALOGUE AND ORIENTATION

I prefer to listen closely to those voices which seem to be speaking from a place of difference and are met with indifference. Rehema Chachage (2014).

Ruth Simbao: In Rehema Chachage's video installation, *Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu* (2010), sculptural objects representing old-fashioned transistor radios are mounted on the wall, side by side (Fig. 1). Embedded in each radio is a small video screen, which reveals a figure who stands in one place while the vertical line of the radio tuner crosses her body in search of the desired frequency (Figs. 2 and 3). A man's voice wafts in and out as it is periodically interrupted by unsolicited noise, revealing the

Ruth Simbao is a Professor of Art History and Visual Culture and the NRF/DST SARChI Research Chair in *Geopolitics and the Arts of Africa* in the Fine Art Department at Rhodes University, South Africa.

William B. Miko is a practicing visual artist and culture interlocutor who lectures at the Zambian Open University, where he introduced the first Fine Arts degree course in Zambia.

Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; and a recipient of the AHP Fellowship of the American Council of Learned Society.

Romuald Tchibozo is a Professor in Art History and Deputy Director of the National Institute of Art, Archeology and Culture Professions at Abomey-Calavi University, Benin.

Masimba Hwati is an independent artist and researcher who works between Harare, Zimbabwe and Cape Town, South Africa.

Kristin NG-Yang is an artist based in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa and is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Visual Art at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

PatrickMudekereza is the Director of Waza, Centre d'art de Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Aidah Nalubowa is a member of *Artivists 4 Life*in Uganda and a Teaching Assistant at the School of Theatre and Dance, Illinois State University in the USA.

Genevieve Hyacinthe (PhD, Harvard) is a West African dance artist and teaches art history at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and Purchase College, State University of New York, USA.

Lee-Roy Jason is a photogra- pher based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

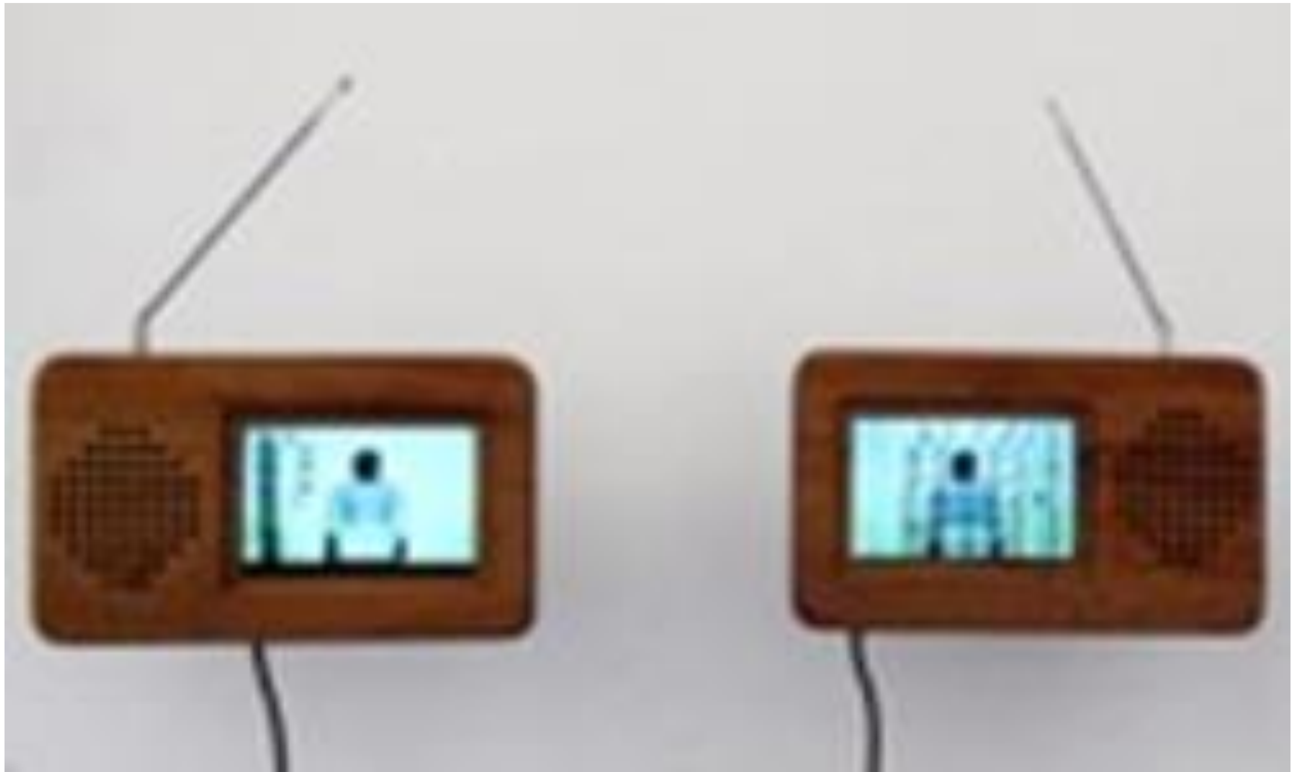
Eman Abdou is a visual artist and an Assistant Professor in the Painting Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Helwan University and the French University in Egypt.

Rehema Chachage is based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and works independently as a visual artist while managing her initiative Kuta-na Sanaa (meeting with the arts), which has a special interest in experimental art in the public sphere.

Amanda E. Tumusiimeis a Senior Lecturer in Visual Arts, Culture and Art History in the Department of Visual Communication and Multimedia,Makerere University, Uganda and a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Fine Arts, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Suzana Sousa is a curator and a PhD candidate at the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL) in Portugal.

Fadzai Muchemwa is an Assistant Curator at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in Harare.



1 Rehema Chachage. *Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu*, (2010).
Mixed media installation: video (loop) and sculpture,
40 cm x 35 cm x 15 cm.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

2-3 Rehema Chachage. *Kwa Baba Rithi Undugu*,
(2010), detail.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

difficulty of relating to others whensound is interrupted or there is an absence of voice. Voice, writes Chachage, is a "prerequisite for interlocution and the construction of discourse" This work engages with the assertion that to "live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree…" and to do so full heartedly with your "eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit…whole body and deeds" (Bakhtin 1984:293).

Rehema Chachage, a Dar es Salaam-based artist who works with video, installation and performance, explains that her work is predominantly determined by her situatedness. Herearly work draws from her experience as a student at the University of Cape Town in South Africa and she describes experiencing this situation as a "'cultural foreigner' and a non-South African, black female student in a predominantly white middleclass…institution." At this time, she says, her work was produced from "the point of view of a stranger, the outsider, the other, alien and often voiceless"

Chachage's concern with dialogue and voice in *Kwa Baba Rithi Undungu* serves as an effective inroad into a multi-vocal conversation in the context of a scholarly journal, for "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (Freire 2005[1970]:92—93). Dialogue, writes

4- William B. Miko and the graduating Fine Art students of the Zambian Open University (ZAOU), *Human Canvas,* 2014. This performance marked the occaission of the first cohort of students to graduate with a Fine Art degree in Zambia. ZAOU Graduation Ceremony, Lusaka, Zambia.
Photo: Chanda Mwenya.

5- Masimba Hwati, *Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe,* 2016. Mixed media installation, part of the *Instruments of Memory/Simbidze Ndangariro* exhibition at SMAC Gallery, South Africa.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

Paolo Freire (2005[1970]:88—91), is about horizontal relationships; it is an existential necessity and an act of creation rather than an instrument of domination of one person over another. When one listens to a radio, voices can be tuned out selectively. Opinions exist as waves *out there*, but statements can be blocked with the turn of a dial. At times there is a crackle—a disruption of signal or an interference caused by the receiver. If one were to hold an old transmitter radio, one could attempt to receive better sound if one moved around, changing one's orientation.

This multi-vocal dialogue reaches sideways as it opens up the dominant international discourse of the arts of Africa to include a higher percentage of voices from the African continent. (Participating writers are based in Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, the USA, Uganda and Angola/Portugal.) This sideways reach registers the importance of intra-continental conversations in Africa that are sometimes missing from internationally visible scholarship on the arts of Africa, and it asks how scholars in the Global South *and* the Global North can benefit from a reconsideration of what the predominant orientation of our scholarly discourse is.
A common understanding of the word "orientation" is one's position relative to, for example, the points of the compass, and its meaning in the nineteenth century was the "arrangement of a building etc. to face east or another specific direction." The etymology of "orientation" links the word historically to the notion of facing the Orient, implying a particular position from which one views the world and thereby develops a certain standpoint. This dialogue attempts to encourage an understanding of orientation that situates speaking positions and gives credence to the physical positioning of knowing subjects, whilst also expanding beyond physical co-ordinates, seeking richer understandings of the orientation of our research.

What is the orientation of the international discourse of the arts of Africa in the twenty-first century and what position do we see this discourse in relation to? In what ways might it matter that the vast majority of authors in journals such as *African Arts* and *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art* are based in the North? (See "Situating Africa: A Geopolitics of Knowledge, or Chapungu Rises" in this issue). Are there ways that we can hear others' contributions more effectively if we adjust our orientation, even if only slightly? Can we reduce the crackle that sometimes surfaces in the discourse if we shift our respective positions?

This dialogue places an emphasis on the voices of scholars, artists and curators based on the African continent, as it marks the start of an Africa-based editorial consortium partnership with *African Arts*. The dialogue is neither definitive, nor complete. Instead, it is a departure point that invites further conversation from people who, together, desire to learn more than we now know about our field of research and our respective roles in generating new knowledge. What is our view on the strength of the current scholarship on the visual and performing arts, and from what standpoint have we developed this view? How can we discuss various orientations and in doing so work towards generating scholarly knowledge and artistic practice that is more rigorous and diverse, and is relevant to different locally embedded and interconnected contexts?

William B. Miko: Africa is like an absent landlord in most dialogues and discourses relating to her own arts. This *African Arts* discussion aims to turn a new page on scholarship and knowledge-generation, which has largely been produced and propagated by and with an "outsider's" point of view. Usually, when an opportunity for an African scholar arises to study the arts of the continent, the curriculum that is used remains foreign, thereby shrouding scholarship and keeping the knowledge of Africans in obscurity. How can an African scholar living and working on the continent today still ascribe to and perpetuate this status quo? (By "African" I mean every scholar living on the African continent or in the African diaspora, without engaging in dichotomies of skin color, creed or ethnicity). The question is: *Who* needs to shift the production of knowledge about Africa and what are the engines and spaces of production of this knowledge? As I discuss further below, it is critical for Africans to be at the forefront of this shift.

Eyitayo Tolulope Ijisakin: While one cannot but give credence to some Africanists and non-African writers who have played a role in laying the foundation for scholarship in the visual and performing arts of Africa as an internationally recognized field of research, it is critical to acknowledge that the West still largely dictates the rhythm of art scholarship in postcolonial Africa. Many critics and art historians (including some African scholars residing in the West) continue to apply predominantly Western considerations to the analysis of "contemporary African art." Furthermore, a number of African artists who are celebrated in the West are not particularly popular or well-known in their own countries in Africa. Their works are seen as visual representations of African thought, but in some ways this gives an inaccurate impression of African intelligence and artistic dexterity.

In rethinking the ways in which Africa is positioned in relation to the arts and beyond, I strongly suggest the use of the philosophies of African people in the critical discourse and analysis of their arts. African subject matter and cultural symbols that are deeply meaningful to an expression of African identity should be engaged with more often, and in my view it is only the person who is deeply immersed in a particular culture that is well-placed to advance the purpose of that research.

At this point, we have not seen the emergence of sufficient momentum and quality of scholarship that could meaningfully challenge and positively shift this Western dominance. This is partly due to the challenges scholars on the continent face in terms of publishing, such as inadequate financial support and limited publishing outlets. Locally-produced publications that meet international standards and benefit from the visibility of wide geographic distribution are rare. That said, scholarship and artistic practice that is rigorous, diverse and meaningful can,I think, be generated by African scholars.

Romuald Tchibozo (translated by Jean-Sylvain Tshilumba Mukendi): I don't think that much has fundamentally changed in recent years regarding Africa's positioning in the world. Our fellow researchers in Africa haven't progressed sufficiently, and

6- Kristin NG-Yang. *Bird/Fish*, 2016.Mixed media installation and performance at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa. Performers: Tegan Peacock and Bonwa Mbontsi. Music composed byJianjun Wang.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

7- Revolution Room workshop at Waza, Centre d'art de Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,2014. Prof. Dibwedia Mwembu (center) examines the collection of the research project Mémoires de Lubumbashi, in preparation for the *waza CHUMBA wazi* exhibition, which was part of the Lubumbashi iteration of the Revolution Room project. The community from Gécamines Cité and various artists were invited to choose objects from that collection and curate an exhibition to be presented in their own neighbourhood. Photo: Tristan Guilloux.

researchers based in the South continue to be viewed as appendices to research programs developed elsewhere. Research projects are often formulated without consultation, and without cooperative agreements regarding the mutual interests of both parties. The result is that other people write and think on our behalf. In my opinion, there is only one thing to do: we need to create research funds on the continent, and facilitate work exchanges between Southern-based researchers in order to formulate new concepts. This has the potential to meaningfully change the gaze of other scholars and to shift the global positioning of African researchers and artists.

We need to develop a better overview of the various platforms that grant scholarships in Africa, and it is important to share knowledge about funding that is specifically for writers and practitioners who are based on the African continent. This would play a significant role in challenging the perception that one needs to be located outside of Africa in order to be recognized. Scholarship-holders and other scholars could develop broad research themes every three years, and by identifying active researchers we could collaborate more and move beyond hierarchical differentiations between African researchers who are from different African contexts and who speak different languages. We could also develop a professional association of international standing in Africa that is able to defend theoretical and conceptual choices regarding the study of the arts in Africa.

William B. Miko: Returning to my earlier point about Africans being at the forefront of shifts in knowledge production, I provide a relevant example from my own context in Zambia. Zambia gained independence over fifty years ago, but until 2010 there was not a single university that offered a Fine Arts degree. The Zambian Open University (ZAOU), which was founded in 2005, created the first university-level arts degree at the School of Media, Performing and Fine Arts. Withtenacityin the face of much doubt, I played a key role in establishing this Open Distance Learning (ODL) art school. Many argued that art cannot be taught in an ODL system, but in my view this perpetuates established colonial notions of education designed to prevent the "other" from excelling.

Colonization has its own fair share of mental constrictions in the formerly colonized person's mind. What is from the West is often perceived as good even if it was initially taken from Africa, repackaged in the West and brought back to the continent. Unfortunately, some contemporary artists hold this viewpoint and think that it is more prestigious to study abroad, and they have little knowledge of their own national art history.

Students at the ZAOU art school learn through a combination of contact periods and distance learning, and we bring together formal university education and engagement with the non-formal

8- Waza, Centre d'art de Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Photo: Véronique Poverello K.

sector and practicing artists. During contact periods we visit local art collections and art platforms, such as Chaminuka Lodge, the Lusaka National Museum, Namwandwe Gallery, Lechwe Trust, Henry Tayali Centre, and Twaya Art Gallery. We also visit many artists' studios and community-based art initiatives. The academic progression observed in students has been amazing—one has to see this *modus operando* in motion to believe in its success in a developing nation with limited resources. My philosophy is, "It can only be done for you if you do it yourself; the rest will join in on the way."

The first cohort of students graduated in September 2014, and to mark this momentous event I produced a public performance with my students at the graduation ceremony in Lusaka. I purchased a new white Pier Luigi suit, and during the ceremony the graduating students transformed the suit into a "human canvas" with paints and brushes hidden in their graduation gowns (Fig. 4). Dancing to traditional music performed by the theatre and drama students, they signed their names on the suit, registering their role in creating a new space in the production of academic knowledge in the arts. Some of these undergraduates are currently pursuing their Master's degrees, and together we are asserting ourselves by generating scholarship, knowledge and artistic practice that is rigorous and relevant—first to ourselves in Zambia and secondly to the rest of the world.

9- The logo of the Artivists 4 Life community-based organization in Mukono District, Uganda represents the group's use of the visual arts and the performing arts. The collective focuses on horizontal forms of education and brings together artistic processes and social activism. Current members of the collective are Deborah Namulondo, Leslie Robinson, Cathy Mashakalugo, Aidah Nalubowa, Maurice Collins Walubungo, Andrew Jackson Obol, Joel Muwanga, Joseph Kisitu, Joseph Kalungi, Joseph Kizito, and Joseph Kabanda.
Photo: Courtesy of Artivists 4 Life participant, Aidah Nalubowa.

WHO PUSHES THE WHEELBARROW?

The recent fascination with "African art" on a global scale has led to the commodification of heritage, raising questions about whose story these projects are telling. Whilst curatorial projects on the continent promise fresh possibilities of Africa's place on international platforms, the internationalist emphasis has led to a certain erasure of the plural and complex nature of tradition and history. If one examines exhibitions of new work by artists from Africa organized in Europe or the United States in the past decade, it becomes apparent that most artists have not played an active role in conceptualizing the presentation of their own works themselves. (Fadzai Muchemwa)

The international art market that constructs the idea of "African art" continues to favor the stereotypical and the nostalgic. This links to the discourse of "Middle Eastern art" or the label "Egyptian artist" that gained considerable interest in the region after the 9/11 events, but which many local artists tried to resist. (EmanAbdou)

Ruth Simbao: At this critical time of ongoing and revived calls on the African continent for decoloniality, it is evident that not enough has changed in terms of the way the world imagines, views, frames and consumes Africa, subsuming the complexitites of its numerous contexts. How can we continue to rethink the ways in which Africa is positioned in relation to the broader artworld? To what degree do external forces continue to shape artworks, artists and theories, and what alternative forces already exist? Whose agency is exerted and recognized? As Masimba Hwati asks, who pushes the wheelbarrow?

Masimba Hwati: The way that Africa and its contexts continue to be imagined and seen by other groups of people is problematic, because commercial motives tend to lie at the heart of political and cultural engineering of representations of Africa. Due to ongoing perceptions of Africa as a dangerous and poor place, artists from Africa are burdened with the political pressure to appease the ill-informed appetites of collectors and curators. Being an African artist or an artist from an African context are often a negotiation of history itself and a constant navigation of the various images associated with the word "Africa." In my engagement with different Occidental cultural platforms, I find that sometimes people view my artwork through distorted lenses. At times this challenge can transform into positive processes of dialogue that can become an extension of the work.

Unfortunately, there remains a persistent pre-conceptualization of art from Africa as "tribal", "ritualistic" and "functional." This does not mean that Occidental authors have not played a positive role in negotiating the image of Africa as a cultural space. There are quite a number of credible critical reviews on art from Africa by various writers who are not from Africa and who succeed in countering erroneous images. However, the onus also rests on writers on the African continent to challenge certain bodies of knowledge created about Africa, and it is critical that this is not just done in a reactive way, but in proactive ways such as creating more critical platforms that are not insular in nature but are inclusive of multiple audiences.
This raises important questions around the definitions and parameters of curatorship as an institution and its potential to reform or to perpetuate the problematic images of the African continent, which has become a cultural albatross. This question becomes critical as we explore the sources of funding that are available for some of the major curatorial projects on the continent. Most funding from former colonial masters' countries creates a fundamentally problematic situation for the arts on the continent in terms of agency and dependency, hence the need for more African-funded curatorial projects on the continent. Many foreign policies treat the African continent as an entity that moves only by external pressure.

In my artwork I use the wheelbarrow to symbolize a lack of agency, as it is an inert apparatus that requires external force to move it. The wheelbarrow appears in the form of a wheelbarrow-table in the installation *Don't Worry, Be Happy*exhibited in *Consuming Us* at the 2016 Cape Town Art Fair [see p. 7 Figure 10 in this issue]. It also appears in the installation *Rinamanyanga Hariputirwe* exhibited at SMAC Gallery (Fig. 5). The title of this recent work refers to a Karanga proverb that can be loosely translated as "that which has horns cannot be wrapped," alluding to the idea that the truth will always come out or that nature will always mete out vengeance and eventually provide a balance.

Through the hybridity of form and symbolism, such as the wheelbarrow-table or the wheelbarrow-boxing bag, I explore the absurdity of definition and containment. The boxing bag is an object designed to be punched or pummelled. It's an object of appropriation and fantasy; an object of training and experimentation. Meanwhile the wheelbarrow is a symbol of raw labor, a classic example of inertia.

In the work, *Rinamanyanga 4858 Hariputirwe*, I explore the Zimbabwean socio-cultural context, whilst making a broader connection to the African context. The work explores events of August 2016 when Zimbabwe started experiencing mass citizen protests against an oppressive government system. We witnessed a group of people questioning definitions imposed upon them and resisting a narrow mold formerly used to characterize them.

In my work these developments are explored using various objects built around the boxing bag as if to defend the bags, and the horns allude to a nascent aggression built up in a group of people.

10- Genevieve Hyacinthe and students from Purchase College, State University of New York.*The West African Dance Experience (Performance and Discussion with the Students of West African Dance: History, Theory, Practice).* Neuberger Museum, 16 November 2016. The male dancer in this image raises his hands in the "hands up, don't shoot" position. His sisters raise their hands in the spirit of black preservation as women's work.
Photo: Reneissance Francis.

11- Genevieve Hyacinthe and students from Purchase College, State University of New York.*The West African Dance Experience (Performance and Discussion with the Students of West African Dance: History, Theory, Practice).* Neuberger Museum, 16 November 2016. Women dancers protect the young men with their performance of the *Sounou* dance of femininity.
Photo: Reneissance Francis.

12- Genevieve Hyacinthe and students from Purchase College, State University of New York.*The West African Dance Experience (Performance and Discussion with the Students of West African Dance: History, Theory, Practice).* Neuberger Museum, 16 November 2016. Dancers raise clenched fists as a sign of solidarity.
Photo: Reneissance Francis.

REACHING SIDEWAYS

Ruth Simbao: I am currently grappling with the ideas of learning sideways and reaching sideways to develop two approaches in my own work as a scholar and a teacher: 1) South—South and intra-continental scholarly engagement that does not always look "upwards" to the theories, methodologies and institutions of Europe and North America and 2) non-hierarchical—or at least less-hierarchical—ways of learning in educational and other contexts that emphasize reciprocal, horizontal learning (Simbao 2015b).In what ways are the concepts of learning sideways or reaching sideways articulated in the visual and performing arts, and how might they be further implemented in our various contexts of scholarship, education and art production? How could a sideways reach change the orientation of the dominant discourse of the arts of Africa that in many ways continues to emphasize an "upwards" reach?

Kristin NG-Yang: My work is situated in the Global South and engages with South—South collaboration. It is, in part, autobiographical in that it references my own predicament as a Chinese/African artist/mother/father. My identity is tempered, as different philosophical, cultural and gendered dimensions both challenge and shape me. Reflecting the complexity of working in this position, I recently produced an installation titled *Bird/Fish* (Fig. 6), which draws from a Chinese song in which a bird falls in love with a fish. Alluding to the ephemeral and the impossible, dancers interact with the shadows of suspended fish/birds that are painted onto plexiglass.

The installation encourages viewers to meditate on issues of time and continuity, presence and absence, as well as sameness and difference. It also alludes to ambiguity: one is confronted with choice but is also subject to fate, obliged to accept or resist, in the process of learning about self and other. Through the use of live performance and music, the installation references African, Chinese and Western cultural idioms in a collision and fusion that is both strange and yet familiar. I commissioned musician Jianjun Wang to compose a special piece for *Bird/Fish*, using the traditional Chinese musical instrument the *Guzheng* and the African *Djembe* drum. These musical instruments from different regions combine in a way that conveys a sense of otherworldliness—a sound meditation that shifts between the realms and vibrations of both birds and fish.

13- Lee-Roy Jason, 2016. Photographic documentation of the Fees Must Fall student protests at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.
Photo: Lee-Roy Jason.

14- Lee-Roy Jason, 2016. Photographic documentation of the Fees Must Fall student protests at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.
Photo: Lee-Roy Jason.

Patrick Mudekereza (translated by Jean-Sylvain Tshilumba Mukendi): In my context in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this logic of knowledge sharing is evident in artists' collectives in a much more relevant way than in formal arts institutions. In particular, I have experienced this in the case of the Vicanos Club in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Lubumbashi. Reflecting on our various experiences over time, it seems evident that our challenges differ when we focus locally on Lubumbashi and when we try to have a regional or international impact. In the Vicanos Club, we didn't bother much about what was happening elsewhere and we focused very locally, renaming things in a language that fluidly mixed Swahili, French and English. Today, the practice of Waza, Centre d'art de Lubumbashi (Figs. 7 and 8) is part of the flow of information shared worldwide. This openness should not temper our enthusiasm to name our reality in our own way. Instead of using the international art world's language, we need to choose voices that reflect what we have to say, and we can then dare to expand the references used in the field. This is a big challenge, because even when interactions are broader and more fluid, the prisms and frameworks tend to remain unchanged and the same ambitious explorers are visible and present themselves to us as intermediaries. For this reason, we choose very carefully the collaborations we get involved in.

Waza has integrated two networks that are worth mentioning in relation to the concept of sideways learning—*Arts Collaboratory* and the Africa Cluster of *Another Roadmap School. Arts Collaboratory* is a community of artistic organizations from Africa, Latin America and Asia. The project, *Arts Schoolaboratory*, which forms part of this network, redefines our responsibilities and develops a framework for content and methodologies based on an alternative artistic education that focuses on "learnagogy" instead of pedagogy. The Africa Cluster of *Another Roadmap* is a research project that sets up relevant educational tools in our own African contexts, breaking with "missionary stances" in the teaching of art that were inherited from colonization.

Aidah Nalubowa: Education has different meanings for different people. In Uganda, our education continues to conform to the legacy of colonial education and as such remains a largely Western concept. If a student simply attends an institution that has a curriculum, takes exams or tests and receives a diploma, certificate or degree, she or he is considered to be educated. But what about a kind of education that is different—more creative and engaging? This could be, for example, something as simple as learners and the instructor sitting in a circle facing each other or the use of creative games to generate a sense of equality and active participation rather than passive agreement and conformity. Forms of sideways learning are not common in education in Uganda.

As a member of the *Artivists 4 Life* collective in Uganda, I seek to bring creativity to scholarship and scholarship to art. *Artivists 4 Life* is a community of practice in Uganda that fuses artistic processes with social activism to respond to the conditions that plague our everyday modern existence, which still reflects a colonial framework.

15- Phumulele Tshabalala, *Loosie Trap*, 2016. Found bricks and cigarette, 38 x 30 cm.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

16- Lachell Workman, *Do You See The Black? Asphalt Shroud (Floor Piece)*, 2015. Installation made from white T-shirts and asphalt, 280 x 360 cm.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

The collective was founded by a group of young artists including photographers, graphic designers, dancers, actors, painters, cartoonists, graffiti artists and arts lovers, who have a deep desire for social change. After a series of informal meetings and brainstorming sessions that began in a small studio at Makerere University in March 2011, the group developed the name—*Artivists4 Life* (from the concept of "Art + Action")—as well as a logo (Fig. 9), a slogan, a set of core objectives and a manifesto.

The collective uses various art forms to identify problems, find solutions and communicate particular messages. The messages are tested in the community and later presented in the form of drama skits, dances, murals, and billboards. Members of the collective, which is a registered community-based organization in Mukono District in Uganda, are based in Kampala and Kayunga Districts, as well as in Canada. Made up of members of varying

education levels, the group embraces the approach "each one teach one," which links to sideways learning as everyone shares knowledge and learns from one another. Group members have no permanent roles, and duties and responsibilities are distributed according to interest, availability, skills and need at particular times.

Critical to our methodology is Freire's (2005[1970]:72) notion of moving away from the "banking system" that simply "deposits" knowledge. In Freire's understanding of pedagogy, the teacher's role ceases to be that of the knower and the giver of knowledge, and the learner participates in the process of creating, analyzing and sharing knowledge. As such, indigenous creative methods can be used to own and repurpose knowledge, creating inclusive decolonial spaces.

Genevieve Hyacinthe: I was educated as an art historian and also trained as a West African ritual dancer for sixteen years, and a colleague once told me I use dance as art historical social practice. I like this descriptor; if sideways learning is about challenging hierarchies, then we art historians might consider stepping out of our comfort zones of clean, critical distance, where our words can sometimes rain (reign) down upon the artists, artworks and contexts that we include in the discourses that we construct.

One of my recent collaborative performances, entitled *The West African Dance Experience (Performance and Discussion with the Students of West African Dance: History, Theory, Practice)*, took place in November 2016 in the Neuberger Museum at Purchase College, State University of New York, where I taught for a number of years. Here, and in many of my courses, I endeavored to collaborate with my students by breathing life into Robert Farris Thompson's (1974) now canonical text—*African Art in Motion: Icon and Act*. In this class, after reading and discussing key scholarly ideas with my students, I moved out from behind the podium and into the studio with them to share dance choreographies from *djembe* styles born in Senegal, Guinea, and Mali. The students were in turn encouraged to add their own contemporary moves.

As I played the drums for *The West African Dance Experience* performance, I saw elements of the Black Lives Matter, Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements being transcribed in the bodies of the student dancers, who were still recovering their breath from the recent U.S. election failure. In the first photographic image of this series (Fig. 10), the viewer sees the back of a black male dancer who moves his hands up into the "hands up, don't shoot"

black preservation as women's work. In the second image (Fig. 11),

two young men are protected by the *Sounou* dance of femininity that I taught the students of various gender expressions, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who come together in collective breath; in collective protest and art-making. None are alone; all of our hands are raised. The gestures of "hands up don't shoot" become the waving hands of testament, and these hands then turn into raised fists of solidarity (Fig. 12).

ACTION—REFLECTION

> *Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action—reflection.* (Freire 2005:88)

Ruth Simbao: In recent years, critically important movements and forms of protest and activism, including Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter, Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall have challenged oppressive regimes, ongoing racism, police brutality, outmoded institutions and increasing income disparity. In what ways have, could or should such pressing events shape our production of scholarly and artistic knowledge? How do these movements and protests, as well asthe situations of injustice that drive them, shape our writing, teaching, creative processes and activism?How might we choose to engage with pressing social justice concerns as scholars and artists in Africa and the African diaspora without, as Basim Magdy (2003)writes, being stereotyped and limited to our respective local socio-political contexts and thus consumed as artists and writers in a narrow way?

position, translating through his body a catch-phrase of our era. In that photograph, however, the male student is covered, protected. His breath won't be taken, for his sisters dance in front of him, their hands fully raised, in the spirit of

17- EmanAbdou, *Comodino #2*, 2012. Oil on canvas, 80 x 110 cm. Photo: Courtesy of the artist

18- Eman Abdou, *The Couch*, 2012. Oil on canvas, 1m x 1.5m. Photo: Courtesy of the artist

19- As part of an art and activism project organized by Angelo Kakande that advocated for the visually impaired to gain access to public national monuments in Kampala, ablind woman "sees" themonument titled *Journey* (2012). Simon Banga, a MFA student at Makerere University translated the *Journey* for the blind through the use of several tactile effects such as the stylus (left), the Thermoform Braille Printer (two images in the center) and a candle wax relief (right). The exhibition of Banga's tactile translations was held at the Humura Hotel in Kampala, Uganda, 21 May 2016.
Photo: Angelo Kakande.

Lee-Roy Jason: In October 2016 I chose to photograph the Fees Must Fall movement during a fresh spate of protests, as students in South Africa continued to demand free and decolonized tertiary education. Through my photographic work Iresponded to what I saw in newspapers and on television, and what I heard about the demonstrators over the radio and online. It concerned me that the "Fallists" were simply being labeledas the problem in the mainstream media and by those in power at academic institutions and in government. Regularly they were referred to as disorganized hooligans who were simplyin defiance of writing exams.

I wanted to be part of those who were documenting other versions of this story.

I went to Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg every day for two weeks. When I arrived on the first day, there were tensions between protesting students and campus security, which I photographed. Shortly after clashes had erupted between the two groups, police were deployed and I witnessed the over-militarized forces inciting violence by quelling and manipulating peaceful student protests. This led to the police opening fire.

As I continued photographing first the "calm," then the tension and violence, I believed I was capturing something that was missing from the mainstream coverage of these particular events. Instead of a simplistic narrative that justified one side or the other, I became interested in capturing the bridge between the peaceful protests and the violent clashes. I focused on the grey area that showed the tensions on the ground; the conflicted emotions of some police officers, the fearless and resilient students, and the topless female protesters who played a significant role in quelling the violence (Figs. 13 and 14).

I witnessed the sheer power of the moment.

It was moving to see at the scene renowned journalists and photojournalists who have documented events in war zones, such as the Bang Bang Club's Joao de Silva and J. T. Lemon. It compelled me to document the story in an accurate and nuanced way, as a way of honoring those fighting for our future.

Amandla!

Genevieve Hyacinthe: We can breathe. I use D. Soyini Madison's (2012:227) statement, "We write from our body and we write through our body," as a mantra to bring into alignment my efforts at sideways coalition and black preservation with artists like Phumulele Tshabalala and Lachell Workman, as well as students, colleagues and everyday people in the streets or imaged on screens who find themselves being masters of the art of black protest. Tshabalala, a former MFA student in art and design whom I mentored and learned from, is a self-described feminist, indebted to Miriam Makeba and Malala Yousafzai among others. Inspired by their brand of women's work—their labor for social justice, healing and beauty—he makes prints and installations that muse upon the rupture of the broken black body. Tshabalala sees Black Lives Matter and Rhodes/Fees Must Fall as coalition movements without hierarchies, mobilized against systematic racism, but also sees significant points of difference. Tshabalala remarks:

> What I love about both movements—Rhodes or Fees Must Fall and Black Lives Matter—is that people come in peace and they want to be heard. With Black Lives Matter …. people are allowed to have demonstrations and actually put their bodies out there and be present and be heard in some way … In Fees Must Fall, however, systematically the students … are shut down, which is one of the reasons they've chosen to use disruption [with their bodies in public space], an actual tactic used in the apartheid era to cause the government to listen …
>
> Responding to Rhodes/Fees Must Fall, when policemen see a group … [consisting of] a majority of black people, even if these police people are black, the pool … [of people] causes them to respond in unrelenting and unforgiving ways … and start shooting with rubber bullets and throwing tear gas. The students therefore respond, sometimes with violence, as a means of protecting themselves …So, in light of this, in my work, I've been interested in how the black body has been broken both here and there but at the same time, how does one think about hope; how does one think about offering an alternative?

Tshabalala's work *Loosie Trap* (2016) (Fig. 15) consists of two cinder blocks balanced upon each other with one menthol Newport cigarette. This is the brand popular with black working-class smokers in the United States, the kind that Eric Garnersold on the Staten Island corner before his breath was taken, his body broken by police. Mudimbe writes, "The body which lives and survives as the transcript of the metamorphosis is still that which testifies to the break" (Mudimbe in Abdul-Karim 1999:80). *Loosie Trap* is the transcript produced by Tshabalala's feminist hand that both memorializes and metaphorically resuscitates Garnerand ourselves. Alone, broken. Together, we can breathe.

20- During the project the blind participants and the artists engaged in a heated debate on the legal and socio-political issues related to public art and accessibility, which was moderated by Angelo Kakande who is an artist, an art historian and a lawyer. They then went to the heavily militarized Kololo Air Strip to access the *Journey* monument, which stands high up on a stone pedestal that deliberately discourages physical engagement. As artist Mary Naita explained, viewers were expected to step back to see the monument from a distance, thereby making it impossible for the blind to experience it. Despite the fact that soldiers clutching Kalashnikovs tried to ensure that no one touched or climbed the monument, the blind participants mounted the pedestal in order to "see" the *Journey*. Kampala, Uganda, 22 May 2016. Photo: Amanda Tumusiime.

Lachell Workman's installation *Do You See The Black? Asphalt Shroud (Floor Piece)* (2015) (Fig. 16) consists of a pool of black asphalt punctuated by islands of crumpled white T-shirts, which are staple casual attire of young black men in the USA. Workman's mourning of black loss "subverts the cultural coding that exists within the visual language of ritualistic practices of mourning." Phrased as a question, the title beckons the viewer into collaboration, a call and response, a communal breath, rather than passive reception. The placement of *Asphalt Shroud* on the ground serves as a metaphor for sideways, discursive modes and systems of artistic engagement. Workman notes:

> [with] the shroud form I am uninterested in romanticizing black mourning but rather use the demarcation of physical blackness as a stage for the mourners to perform their story and all the trauma, anger, memory, and power this story may entail. This unapologetic proclaiming of visibility is in conversation with politics of assembly protest and influenced by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Workman transcribes black life and breath by crafting a ritual of mourning and healing, activism and protection, that invites participation. She views her practice of black preservation in relation to the activism of her grandmother. In her MFA thesis, *Young, Black and Hash tagged: A Manifesto for the Radical Potential of Contemporary Art as Activism within the Phenomenon of #Black Lives Matter*, she wrote, "I've yet to understand how it is possible that my grandmother and I both sing chants of 'hands up.' One shouldn't hold one's breath in hoping that these hands raised guarantee a certain safety. There is no breaking of the perceived threat of the joined black bodies" (Workman 2015).

21- The monument titled *Journey*, which was constructed in 2012 at the Kololo Air Strip in Kampala, Uganda. Behind (left to right): Violet Natume, George Kyeyune, Edmond Oyoma, Simon Peter Okwii, Muzamil Alli, Emmanuel Acidri Malunga, Simon Banga, Angelo Kakande and Maria Naita. Front Behind (left to right): Linda Nambozo, Annet Nansumba, Alex Lukwago, Joy Mirembe, Anna Grace Asio, Denis Komakech, Leticia Nabaweesi, Joseline Mijumbi and Winny Naluzze.
Photo: Amanda Tumusiime

SITUATING THE KNOWING SUBJECT

> *The politics of location is a question not just for minority epistemology. On the contrary, it is the keystone of universalism in European thought. (Mignolo 2002:79—80).*

Ruth Simbao: In the contemporary art world, it is not uncommon to read headlines such as "Placing art and discourse in a primary position and geography in a secondary position" (Mac Viban 2016), or to find exhibitions framed as being "more about condition than place, more about subtext than context." On one hand I agree with such assertions as they resist the way that artists connected to Africa are sometimes cornered by writers and curators who limit artists' identities to overloaded notions of place, yet enjoy the freedom of not seriously considering the import of their own locatedness.

Eman Abdou: I agree with Walter Mignolo regarding geopolitics and the production of knowledge, since the daily change in social, political and cultural life creates and shapes the art scene,

On the other hand, however, I think the rhetoric of the inconsequence of geography often expressed in the so-called global art world sometimes contributes to a simplistic flattening of place, which inadvertently perpetuates over-determined notions of geography. All geography, even physical geography, contains an element of imaginariness, just as all geography is inevitably entangled with forms of mobility, is profoundly linked to relationships between environments and living beings, and inevitably involves interpretation. The fact that the arts of Africa have, on the one hand, been grossly over-determined by geography and, on the other hand, been detached from embedded geographies on the African continent in the "post-particular turn" of contemporary global art (Simbao 2015a:267), has resulted in a reluctance to take seriously a geopolitics of knowledge-generation in the contemporary scholarship of the visual and performing arts.

Instead of distancing himself from embedded notions of geography and place, Walter Mignolo (2002:67) argues that ways of knowing and the production of knowledge are not ahistorical, and they have to be geographical in their historicity by bringing what he calls the colonial difference into the game. He argues that it does, indeed, matter where knowledge is produced and who produces it. (See "Situating Africa: A Geopolitics of Knowledge, or Chapungu Rises" in this issue). Without reverting to essentialist or simplistic notions of identities and places, in what ways can a rigorous and diverse discourse of the arts of Africa benefit from a rigorous geopolitics of knowledge? In what ways might it matter who the knowing subject (the writer, the curator or the artist) is and where she or he is situated? How might we all benefit from embedded and situated bodies of knowledge?

22- Kiluanji Kia Henda. *Redefining the Power IV (with Miguel Prince)*, from the series *Homem Novo*, 2011. In this series of images that makes visible layers of political power over the city, the artist goes back and forward in time revealing the original colonial statue and imagining a future where the plinth is occupied by popular local figures such as Miguel Prince.
Photo: © Kiluanji Kia Henda. Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Fonti.

23 Helen Zeru, *One Foot In, One Foot Out*, 2014, video still.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

24 Helen Zeru, *I Live, Leave, Everywhere*, 2016. Installation at theKampala edition of the *Kabbo Ka Muwala* exhibition.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

and acts as a reflection of the woven fabric of all these interrelated factors.In the Egyptian art scene, just after the Arab Spring revolution of 2011, I've noticed the variation in the coverage of political art during what one might call its high season of exposure. Usually the scholar or writer who is a local, and who lives within the fictional geopolitical borders of a particular place, has a deeper understanding of the daily events—the talk shows, the news articles, the verbal sarcasm that needs a shared knowledge of the historical circumstances, the feedback of the community, the social media memes, and all the factors that build up the surrounding environment of the artist. During this intense socio-political time, even Egyptian art critics in diaspora struggled to grasp the exact situation due to the rapid change of daily events.

Politically-relevant art usually targets the community within its geographical context and situation, aiming to reflect, inspire or criticize in an activist manner. It often draws from icons and metaphors known intimately by the local community, which are sometimes hard to understand outside their frame of reference. Further, there are various topics raised by critics, universities and museums in Egypt that aren't echoed in the international art scene because of the use of different languages, and lack of coverage and documentation. By relocating the geographical center of gravity of the production of some of the articles of the *African Arts* journal, a rigorous discourse can be initiated by scholars based on the continent and subsequently outside it. This links to Miko's assertion above that there is value in creating work that is relevant to one's own socio-political and socio-economic context in Africa before one aspires to fit into the international art world. While these two aspirations are, of course, not mutually exclusive, Mignolo's geopolitics of knowledge encourages one to consider the situatedness of one's work. In my own work, I use subtle references that resonate with a local Egyptian audience in a way they are unlikely to resonate with other viewers.

Two of the oil paintings that I produced in 2012 following the Arab Spring revolution, *Comodino#2*(Fig. 17) and*The Couch* (Fig. 18), are part of the *Domestic Relations* series displayed in the exhibition titled *Domestic Relation: The Couch*. While for most people a couch simply represents comfort, rest and quiet time spent in the house watching television, it can also question the passive ways in which people participated in the Egyptian political situation at the time. In Egyptian people's daily use of Arabic, the word "couch" is *kanaba* and the popular term *hezb el kanaba* means the "couch party." This term became a metaphor for the inactive masses in the eventful Egyptian political scene; it is a slang term that was widely spread during 2011 and used in daily

25- Miriam Syowia Kyambi. *Rose's Relocation (III),* (Metz Series), 2015. 28 x 38 cm. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

26- Miriam Syowia Kyambi. *Rose's Relocation (IV),* (Metz Series), 2015. 28 x 38 cm. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

speech, books and magazines in Egypt. The reference to the "couch party" was not mentioned explicitly in the exhibition *Domestic Relation: The Couch*, as this would have been too direct. Instead, the conceptual link between the visual elements and the title remained slightly concealed.

Exploring the domesticity of political events from various angles and considering the ways in which the political scene entered every house, I also used other objects of furniture in the exhibition. The painting *Comodino #2* (Fig. 17) portrays a classic piece of furniture found in Egyptian homes beside the bed, and draws from a slang Arabic term used in Egypt that is derived from the Italian word *comodino*—bedside table. This colonial piece of furniture often carries people's secrets and their most important, intimate belongings. In my work *Comodino #2*, I depict protestors standing on top of my inherited *comodino*, and those small figures deprive one from sleep as they protest and hold up placards. The political scene at the time was occupied with activism and various ways of taking a stand for one's rights. Every day a new secret was revealed and exposed; intimate "drawers" were climbed, yet again in silence they'll continue to stand, not one but more, working, climbing and exposing.

Rehema Chachage: I am currently working on a paper titled "Tanzanian Cultural History: Whose story is it?" In 2016 the Tanzanian cultural scene witnessed four German-funded projects: Maji Maji Flava (performance), Remix: Africa in Translation (a symposium featuring artists and academics), and Urban Narrativesand the Humboldt Lab Forum, which were

both visual art and academic. These projects, in my opinion, "forced" us to reflect on the Tanzanian–German relationship and "shared heritage," and in particular on our colonial past. This year also witnessed the publication of a Swiss Embassy funded text, *A Concise Study on Contemporary Tanzanian Art* by the Belgian Yves Goscinny, which in my view should have been titled *A Concise Study on Modern/Modernist Art in Tanzania*, because from my perspective it has little to do with contemporary art currently being produced in Tanzania.

Unfortunately, 2016 can't be viewed as a particularly out of the ordinary year, because we as Tanzanians have for a long time structured our cultural scene as donor-dependent. That said, I personally found it to be an emotionally exhausting year. Each one of these projects has pushed us into conversations about culture and cultural heritage, and the underlying implication is that we Tanzanians do not care about

27- Sikhumbuzo Makandula in collaboration with Moffat Takadiwa. *In Search of a Nation*, 2016. The performer. Sikhumbuzo Makandula, wearsthe found object sculpture/costume produced by Moffat Takadiwa.
Photo: Kresiah Mukwazhi and courtesy of Sikhumbuzo Makandula.

culture and cultural heritage, and the underlying implication is that we Tanzanians do not care about culture and cultural heritage. Take, for example, the Humboldt Lab Forum project, which managed to steer a very heated conversation amongst artists at Nafasi Art Space. The project was initiated by the Humboldt Lab, a soon to open ethnographic museum in Berlin, which will include 11,000 Tanzanian objects (our national museum only has 6,000), and many thousands more from other African countries that Germany once colonized. The project invites artists, curators, and academics to engage with this legacy and focus on the history of Tanzanian resistance. In doing so, the project has also managed to extract, from the involved parties, missing information about these objects, most of which were taken with the use of violence, and so are missing a concise ethnographic story for their display in the museum.
Why do we allow our cultural history, or our quest for a cultural history, to be dictated by the West? Do we need donor money to research our own cultural history? Are we really a society that does not care about our culture? If so, does this play a role in the stagnated growth in our art scene? Should Tanzanians worry about this, for as MwalimuJulius Nyerere said, "*Jamiisiyokuwa na utamaduni ni jamii mfu*" (a society without culture is dead).

Patrick Mudekereza (translated by Jean-Sylvain TshilumbaMukendi): I think that Mignolo raises a crucial point in his call for a new knowledge geography. There is such a disparity between the available means for research in the West and in Africa that it gives the impression, at first sight, that books, exhibitions and critical tools coming from the West are more serious. In the domain of artistic creation there is a problem of legitimization. Who legitimates one practice over another? How do artists and other cultural operators build up a strategy to gain international visibility? Whom do we have to please to go forward? In which institutions, during which events, and with which audiences do artists and other cultural operators make decisions?

During the colloquium "Condition Report, Building Arts Institutions in Africa," the Director of the French Institute in Dakar (who was part of the panel dedicated to the presence of European cultural institutions in Africa and their role alongside African actors) declared that it was our role as Africans to scout the talent of African artists and his institution's role to legitimize these artists.

What we don't sufficiently realize is that, from a practical and ideological point of view, such legitimizing power is very questionable. Is the French Institute of Dakar a more prestigious and efficient legitimizing body than, for example, the locally run Raw Material Company? I doubt it. Nonetheless, no one in the room challenged this misplaced position. I posed the question to the Director of the French Institute on the side, but he responded by reminding me of my own background and the role that the French Institute played in giving me a leg up.

WEIGHING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Ruth Simbao: Often it is the large, well-documented and well-funded international projects that receive the limelight, and the dominant discourse of the visual and performing arts (particularly the relatively young discourse of the contemporary arts of Africa) often frames exhibitions, biennales, art fairs, conferences, or symposia as the "first," the "largest," the "best," the "only" or the "leading." In the context of mega-exhibitions, art fairs and biennialization driven largely by privileged institutions in the North, such assertions tend to position curators and scholars in the North as the leaders who shape the arts of the South. Furthermore, such rhetoric prompts linear, one-dimensional competitiveness that ignores the value of engaging with process and even embracing so-called failure (Simbao 2015a:276—278). Rhetoric of the "largest" or the "leading" perpetuates the problematic idea that relatively small, modest or less-formal exhibitions, projects or programs (whether deliberately scaled as such or not) are less valuable, whereas they might, in fact, be very significant and might play an important role in challenging dominant ways of producing knowledge in the arts.

There are a number of projects being generated on the African continent that are critically important and could play a significant role in shifting the center of gravity of the arts of Africa discourse, despite the fact that they might not be documented in catalogues and books with high visibility. What are some of the arts-related event, process or happening have you seen, studied or been involved in that is relatively small, modest, process based, overlooked, to some degree invisible, or in some views unsuccessful, yet in your view is important and might be valuable to readers of *African Arts*? How do we weigh the value of such knowledge production, and how might this contribute towards a shift in a geopolitics of knowledge?

Amanda Tumusiime: Recently, I participated in two exciting art-related projects dealing with the inclusion of people with disabilities, especially the blind and the deaf. In 2014 Angelo Kakande from Makerere University initiated an art project that advocated for access by people with visual impairment to public national monuments in Kampala (Figs. 19 to 21). A Master's student, Simon Banga, was recruited to turn his illustration work into Braille—a system that the three of us learnt so that we could communicate with the blind. To the blind community, the prospect of inclusion and development caused a great deal of excitement and celebration. They argued that they saw art for the first time, and their ability to "see"—through touch—national monuments in Kampala, empowered them to be an integral part of the citizenry of Uganda.

When I returned from a Fulbright year at the University of North Carolina in 2016, I initiated a similar art project dealing with art students who were deaf. Through this project I lobbied for the deaf students to be given access to and to tour the art gallery as well as the students' end-of-year exhibitions in the art studios at Makerere University. I became the tour guide, answering questions through their two sign language teachers who interpreted for them, and I delivered some lectures to them through our community engagement program. As a follow-up to this initial tour, my Master's students pursued a course titled *Art as a Social Practice*. Together with a PhD student and my Master's students, we are working with the students who are hard of hearing to forge ways of advancing knowledge and education about the arts of Africa.

Involving persons with disabilities in art projects is proving to be emancipating, especially for those who have experienced many negative life-changing events throughout history. Despite being very intelligent, such persons have been constructed and stigmatized as *Bakasiru*, *Bakiggala* or *Abalema*—labels that define them as less human than others. And they are indeed aware that they are being negatively labeled. Their marginalization in Uganda's art scene is enormous, and they have been largely excluded from art institutions and art schools. Galleries tend not to exhibit their work, which is considered to be less urgent and necessary.

My engagement with art students who are hard of hearing aims to include them in the art world. An increasing number of African scholars and artists are working across disciplines, and arts organizations and individual artists are developing new ways of working. The deaf students that I have worked with excel at working in a variety of forms and media, and the insights that they express in their work regarding their relationships with the environment (both the natural world and the deaf cultural environment), as well as socio-political and everyday life, are very valuable. As such, I recommend that the less privileged artists in our communities, such as deaf artists, should become Africa's next priority, since their history, identity and status are all essential to the future of the arts sector in Africa.

Suzana Sousa: At the moment, the growing art scene in Luanda, Angola struggles with a lack of infrastructure in terms of art museums, galleries, work spaces, materials, education and funding. So far, artists have been responsible for the entire process of selling their work, from the sale itself to the packaging and transport of the work. New actors have recently come into play, resulting in artists depending excessively on the few structures that exist. There also tends to be a lot of dependency on the funding of international organizations since there is a lack of national public funding.

Despite these difficulties, one can see a change in themes, formats and techniques that is exciting and challenging, as it indicates that artists are finding new ways to engage with current issues. For several years, one could see the political impact in the arts in Angola through the exploration of nationalistic ideas and the political engagement of the artists themselves. However, due to political changes of the last twenty years, there is a search for a new artistic language and new ways to address and engage with the changing social and political Angolan landscape. The city, for example, has become a critical subject matter for a younger generation of artists, as seen in the work of Kiluanji Kia Henda in which city space becomes a palimpsest of history. In the work *Redefining the Power IV (with Miguel Prince)* (Fig. 22), the artist represents the current Luanda with its empty plinths, busy streets and new buildings, in contrast to the colonial construction of the city and its colonial statutes. In this intervention, the artist explores a third aspect—the occupation of public spaces through iconic popular local figures in what seems to be an attempt to question the creation of national symbols as well as engaging local imaginaries. These are no longer homogenizing national imaginaries of "Angolan identity," but rather multiple Luanda imaginaries.

The concept of curatorship is quite recent in Angola and it challenges the way art is shown and thought of in important ways. For example, Luanda's art viewers were recently presented with the exciting pop-up exhibition by the curator André Cunha, titled *Fucking Globo II*, which included works by Kiluanji Kia Henda, Keyezua, Angel Ihosvanny, João Ana, Elepê, Ery Klaver, Irina Vasconcelos, ThóSimões and Muamby Wassaky. *Fucking Globo* occupied several rooms of an old rundown hotel in downtown Luanda and brought together video art, installation, performance and live graffiti art. Each of the artists occupied a room of the hotel and visitors would go through *Globo's* corridors trying to find the art, often uncertain whether or not they should step into these usually private rooms. The artist Thó Simões was outside painting, and as such the exhibition spilt onto the street, offering a new perspective of that iconic part of the city of Luanda.

Through this exhibition, which was only on for three days, the artists and the curator presented a particular statement. Instead of portraying traditional values and traditional material culture as was often the role of the artist after Angolan independence, "*Fucking Glob"* explored the creative and critical potential of the arts in a new way whilst at the same time addressingissues such as the lack of infrastructure. The use of an old building in a historical part of the city that is typically occupied by businesses during the day and by prostitutes at night raises important issues of social inequalities and the use of public space in Luanda.

Fadzai Muchemwa: In my own context in Harare, Zimbabwe, there are two recent examples of projects that document our history in a way that disrupts the coloniality of power and institutionalized systems of oppression instead of producing knowledge that is merely shaped by the whims of the international art market and art audiences.

In 2016, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, where I work as an assistant curator, hosted a travelling exhibition *Kabbo ka Muwala/The Girl's Basket: Migration and Mobility in Contemporary Art in Southern and Eastern Africa*. This exhibition, which travelled from Zimbabwe to Uganda and Germany, was produced at a time when migration was a constant presence in the media, and it offered an opportunity to reflect on migration and mobility from the perspective of Africans. What is unusual about the project was the way in which two African art institutions and one European museum collaborated to conceptualize and present an exhibition that challenged dominant discourses on migration. The choice of the first host of the exhibition—the National Gallery of Zimbabwe—was deliberate in setting the tone of the project and challenging the fact that many international exhibitions (particularly mega-exhibitions) on the arts of Africa are never shown to Africans on the African continent. Working on this exhibition as an assistant to Raphael Chikukwa, one of three curators for the project, enabled me to engage with a question I posed in a draft paper presented at the Rhodes University publishing workshop: Who tells the story in an exhibition? *Kabboka Muwala* not only positions the story of migration from the point of view of Africans but, through the analogy of a bride returning to her parents with gifts from her husband's parents, it also places women in the forefront of storytelling.

A number of women in the exhibition, such as Helen Zeru, Wanja Kimani, Anawana Haloba and Miriam Syowia Kyambi, deal with the systematic erasure of memory and place, and the

ways in which the Global North turns migrants from the Global South into a spectacle. Helen Zeru's performance *One Foot In, One Foot Out* (Fig. 23) and her installation in Kampala titled *I Live, Leave, Everywhere* (Fig. 24) underline how free mobility differs from forced mobility. In the performance *One Foot In, One Foot Out*, she uprooted a tree, applied salt to the place where it once stood (thus rendering the soil infertile) and replanted it in a different location. The tree eventually withered and died. The performance alludes to the physical and spiritual death that migrants experience, as well as to the fact that they are often unable to thrive should they return home, as the time away renders them virtual strangers.

In the photographs *Rose's Relocation*, 2015 (Figs. 25 to 26), Miriam Syowia Kyambi portrays a character named Rose who comes from Kirinyaga, a rural town in Kenya, and struggles with issues of isolation, identity and materialism in France. Photographic representation of Rose's new home in Europe and her mother's home in Kenya are superimposed, revealing confusion as her two worlds collide. In a different vein, Emma Wolaku Wanambwa's work *Paradise* (2012) reveals nothing but a beautiful, unoccupied countryside. This seemingly blank landscape marks the place where 30,000 Polish refugees were sent to live in remote camps in British East Africa during the Second World War. This largely-erased story demonstrates that migration does not simply occur in dominant directions.

The second example of locally-driven forms of disruption is the establishment of the series of events known as *Harare Conversations*, organized by Raphael Chikukwa. These conversations marked a shift from "business as usual" on the National Gallery of Zimbabwe's monthly calendar and sought to interrogate the positionality of Zimbabwean art on the global arena as well as question the legitimacy of representation for the artists. These events, which developed beyond conversations, have become a platform for the exploration of new modes of expression and experimentation. Sikhumbuzo Makandula's performance in May 2016, which took place before a discussion moderated by Raphael Chikukwa, is one such example. Collaborating with Moffat Takadiwa, Makandula wore a found object sculpture/costume made by Takadiwa from the plastic squeeze bottle tops of dish washing liquid. Titled *In Search of a Nation* (Fig. 27), the performance began in the sculpture garden of the National Gallery and then moved into the Courtauld Gallery. Makandula led the crowd as if they were "storming the museum" (Fitzgerald 2016). This performance became more than just a symbolic invasion of a building that signifies coloniality, but also a representation of the ways in whichsmall subversions and events that take place within the cracks and in-between spaces can provide a form of reimagining.

A number of exciting young artists are working outside the mainstream and their interventions are no longer dependent on gallery sites for activation. This is exemplified by the establishment of art spaces such as Njelele Art Station, Dzimbanhete Arts Interactions and Village Unhu in Harare. The focus today is on actions, which bring the artist out of that "closet of objects" and into a redefinition of artistic practice. Here one can begin to see a shift in the relationship between the work and the public, which is predicated less on the final results exposed in an exhibition setting than on the processes of interaction possible between other artists and other audiences. Independent spaces can critically transform the Zimbabwean art scene, as they become sites for critical engagement and research where artists can be a part of a collective, can take risks and, importantly, can say "no."

References cited

- Abdul-Karim, Mustapha.1999. “La Mort du Prophète,” *African Arts* 32 (2), p.80.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1984. (Translated by Caryl Emerson). Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Chikukwa, Raphael, Katharina Hoffmann, Ingmar Lähnemann, Katrin Peters-Klapake and Lydia Potts. 2016. *KabbokaMuwala/The Girl’s Basket: Migration and Mobility in Contemporary Art in Southern and Eastern Africa*. Berlin: Revolver Publishing.
- Deliss, Clémentine. 1996. “Free Fall–Freeze Fame. Africa, exhibitions, artists” in *Thinking About Exhibitions* edited by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne. London, New York: Routledge, pp.275—294.
- Fitzgerald, Ali. 2016. *Storm the Museum: Colonial Neighbours and Imperialist Spaces.* June 10, 2016. http://blog.art21.org/2016/06/10/storm-the-museum-colonial-neighbors-and-imperialist-spaces/#.WFkCrbnhBpk
- Freire, Paolo (Tran. Myra Bergman Ramos). 2005 [1970]. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 2006. “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power”. In *The Indigenous Experience: Global Perspectives* edited by Maaka, Roger and Chris Andersen. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, pp.165—173.
- Mac Viban, Dzekashu. 2016. “Placing art and discourse in a primary position and geography in a secondary position: An interview with Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung,” *This is Africa*, August 6, 2016. http://thisisafrica.me/placing-art-primary-position-geography-secondary-position-interview-bonaventure-soh-bejeng-ndikung/ (Accessed 3 September 2016).
- Madison, D. Soyini. 2012. *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Magdy, Basim. 2003. “Walk like an Egyption.” Artist’s website: http://www.basimmagdy.com/walk-like-an-egyptian--basim-magdy-749ce. Also published in *Nafas Art Magazine* and *Africa e Mediterraneo*.
- Mignolo, Walter. “The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 1 (2002), pp.57—96.
- Papastergiadis, Nikos. “What is the south?” *Thesis Eleven* 100:1 (2010), pp.141—156.
- Simbao, Ruth. 2015a. What “global art” and current (re)turns fail to see: A modest counter-narrative of “not-another-biennial,” *Image and Text* 25, pp.262—286.
- Simbao, Ruth. 2015b. “Sideways Learning: Struggles of Africanisation in the Eurocentric Discipline of Art History”. Presentation at the Rhodes University Teaching and Learning - Showcase, November 2015, and the African Tertiary Arts Education Networking Event, African Arts Institute, Cape Town, December 2015.
- Thompson, Robert Farris. 1974. *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act*. Berkeley, C.A.: University of California Press.
- Workman, Lachell. 2015. “Young, Black and Hash tagged: A Manifesto for the Radical Potential of Contemporary Art as Activism within the Phenomenon of #Black Lives Matter.” MFA Thesis, Art + Design, Purchase College, State University of New York.