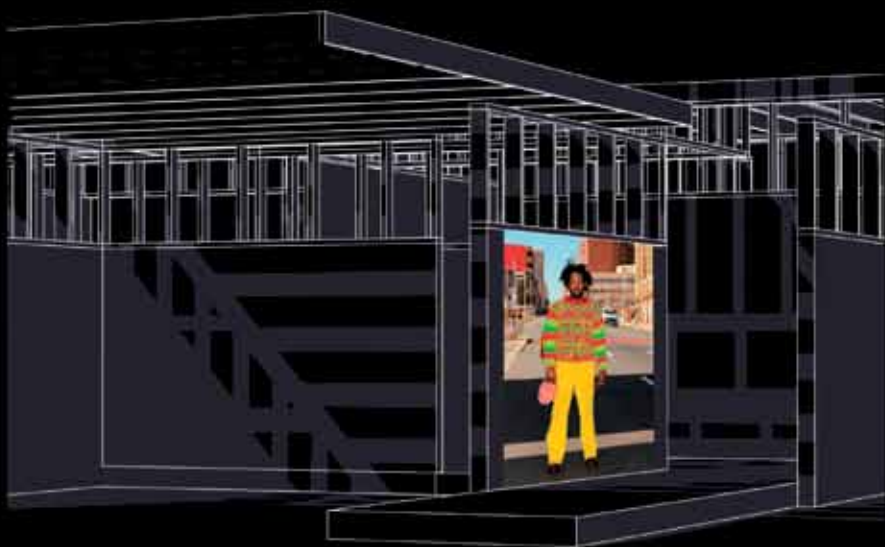


# VISIONARY AFRICA: ART & ARCHITECTURE *at* WORK



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*Visionary Africa: Art & Architecture at Work*

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# VISIONARY AFRICA: ART & ARCHITECTURE *at* WORK



## TRAVEL LOG

*Art & Architecture at Work* originates from *Art at Work* (2011-2012), an itinerant urban platform.

**APRIL 15 – 19, 2013**

— **NAIROBI**

**24th UN Habitat Governing Council Meeting**  
**Side conference and exhibit 'Art & Architecture at work in urban Africa'**

**SEPTEMBER 18 – OCTOBER 16, 2012**

— **KAMPALA**

*Railway Station Gardens*

Local exhibition 'Routes and Traces'

Curated by Makerere Art Gallery

(Katrin Peter-Klaphake & Margaret Nagawa)

Artist in residence: Freddy Tsimba (DRC)

Regional conference: 'How Art and Architecture can make city development inclusive and sustainable'  
with keynote address by David Adjaye

**JULY 12 – 30, 2012**

— **BUJUMBURA**

*Palace of Arts and Culture*

Exhibit 'A Useful Dream'

Curated by Simon Njami

**MAY 24 – JULY 2, 2012**

— **HARARE**

*National Gallery of Zimbabwe Gardens*

Local exhibition 'Images of Zimbabwe are our narratives'

Curated by National Gallery of Zimbabwe  
(Raphael Chikukwa)

**FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 8, 2012**

— **CAIRO**

*Al Azhar Park*

Local exhibition 'Revolution at Work'

Curated by DARB 1718 (Moataz Nasr)

Artist in residence: Tracey Rose  
(S. Africa)

**JANUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

— **ADDIS ABABA**

*African Union*

Local exhibition 'Face 2 Face'

Curated by The Atelier (Leo Lefort)

Artist in residence: Bili Bidjocka (Cameroon)

**FEBRUARY 18 – MARCH 9 2011**

— **OUAGADOUGOU**

*Place de la Nation*

Exhibitions 'A Useful Dream' & 'Urban Africa'

Curated by Simon Njami and David Adjaye

Artist in residence: Theo Eshetu (Ethiopia)



**'Not every show merits a standing ovation, but the display of historic photographs of Africa at the precise moment in the 1950s and 1960s when African spirits were high and aspirations were on the ascendant'.  
'African artists are called upon to play their role to the full'.**

Gamal Nkrumah, Al Ahram Weekly,  
Cairo, March 2012.

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# ART AND ARCHITECTURE: ESSENTIAL DRIVERS OF INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Africa-European Union strategic partnership goes beyond politics, diplomacy and economic ties. It is a platform through which the European Union is reaching out to citizens at large. Culture is one of the particular priorities of the Africa-EU partnership. It is not just an essential element that enriches and enlightens us as such, but also a key driver of democracy, governance and human rights, values which we share and aim to reinforce.

*Visionary Africa: Art at Work* is an important instrument of this cultural partnership. Supported by the European Commission, it is an open exhibition travelling through the public spaces of African capitals. This laudable project thus engages directly with local communities and policy-makers. It encourages reflection on the critical role of artists in civil society, and the responsibility of architects and urban planners in creating and safeguarding culture-based urban spaces for their citizens.

More specifically, *Art at Work*, in its latest focus (Art & Architecture), highlights the new nature of urban planning challenges faced by African capitals.

Africa's unprecedented urban growth and the rise of its colourful metropolises directly impacts on the continent's path of social and economic development and its sustainability. The European Commission is already working on those challenges, together with its partners in Africa.

We also salute the leadership of UN Habitat for mobilizing resources in this field, and for focusing in particular on youth and gender opportunities in urban development. We also welcome the many creative initiatives of cities, communities, architects, and art centres who, alongside national efforts advocate for a strong culture-based vision in urban planning, engineering and the provision of basic services, for all of which *Art at Work* has been an incubator. This local creativity is key for solving the issues we face.

All these initiatives show that culture reaches across disciplines and borders. Culture, and in particular art and architecture, will remain key tools as we seek a better, inclusive and sustainable future together with our African partners and friends.

José Manuel Barroso  
President of the European Commission



Calvin Dondo (Zimbabwe), from the series *Harare Streets*, 2000. © Calvin Dondo

# REJUVENATING URBAN CULTURES THROUGH PUBLIC SPACE

Creating a positive culture is important to cities – directly inspiring their economic, social and ecological development. Today, more than 50 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas and it is estimated that 90 percent of the world's urban population growth between now and 2030 will take place in developing countries.

As cities grow, their culture is often transformed due to the changing urban population. On the one hand, this can have a positive effect on city development, bringing in new ideas and approaches, but this can also dilute the authenticity of already existing urban cultures. For example, in Africa, urban growth is often accompanied by overcrowding, lack of services, poor governance and a failure to meet the needs of the poor. Policies, planning and design solutions must be carefully applied to avoid these negative effects.

People, both citizens and elected officials, are the drivers of change. Elected officials need to specifically consider how urban planning affects people living in cities. Arts and cultural spaces are important to cities' development and planners and administrators need to take this into account.

UN-Habitat aims to improve policies, plans and designs for more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change, at the city, regional and national levels.

UN-Habitat considers public spaces that place citizens at the centre of cities as a key driver to developing well-functioning

city culture. Public spaces are areas that are open and accessible to all citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. They include commonly recognized places, such as parks, squares, plazas and historic districts, but also streets and roads that provide for pedestrian access and commercial places, such as markets.

By taking a public space approach, officials can create an environment where citizens have the ability to meet, discuss and influence the way cities are planned and run. In this way, they can engage the population and influence the organization of their city in a manner in which culture can develop organically – creating livable cities with people at the center of them.

Thomas Melin  
Head, External Relations Office,  
UN Habitat



An overview of Nairobi city, Kenya 2012 © Julius Mwelu-UN-HABITAT

# ART AND ARCHITECTURE FOR A NEW SOCIAL DESIGN

For a number of years now culture has been recognized as an essential part of any development policy. The 2009 *Declaration of Brussels*<sup>1</sup> in particular has greatly enhanced this argument. It inspired the 2010 multidisciplinary platform *Visionary Africa* which proposed a new independent and contemporary vision of African art at the Centre for Fine Arts of Brussels. *Art at Work*<sup>2</sup>, the extension of this project in Africa, was more than an exhibition device: it was an urban exercise involving local artistic creation as a vector of transformation and social cohesion. And in this regard, it demonstrated concretely how culture contributes to sustainable development by being closely associated with its three pillars — social, economic and environmental.

Amongst the many questions stirring the world, one of the most crucial ones is that of *better living together*, a matter which German philosopher Ernst Bloch has labeled 'the absolute question, the issue of the *Us*'. What is culture's contribution to this debate? How can culture foster sustainable inclusiveness in urban environments? It is our opinion that artists and architects, through their commitment to and investment in public art and public spaces, contribute significantly to these questions.

*Art and Architecture at Work* therefore puts the question forth in terms of *social design*, a concept referring above all to the human being, to the organization of public space and the way we live together. *Design* is defined as a creation improving our well-being, it is a discipline adding an aesthetical and cultural function to an object's utilitarian function.

*Social design* is therefore a tool that makes living easier in a society. It concerns itself with the masses and the people wherein uniqueness can only be achieved through more global and more philosophical ways, as French philosopher Jacques Rancière states in his definition of the *distribution of the sensible*: 'The way we organize our perception of the world within a given space, we relate a sensible experience to intelligible ways of interpretation<sup>3</sup>.' *Social design* challenges all local actors — architects, urban planners, artists, historians, sociologists, authorities, cultural managers, and citizens — and shapes the administration of the city. Public art and public buildings in public spaces are key.

Public space is a privileged area where citizens can interact towards an efficiency that fluidifies mutual relations and optimizes the tools the State puts at the citizens' disposal. The public domain is *the* space that structures communities, and in Africa it is shaped very differently in the city from the countryside. Whereas African rural areas are arranged organically, with social mechanisms constructed by ordinary people, it is the political powers that structure the cities, those strategic places from which the entire country is organized. Yet the 'ancestral' organization can transfer from rural to urban sites, providing African cities with an element that external onlookers may qualify as chaotic. Such a conclusion would negate the reality of a subtle human canvas where all things are intertwined. There is no 'centered causal logic' in Africa, but rather a series of micro-logics, which, brought together, form the social fabric. Markets, neighbourhoods and courtyards therefore

become the places where a specific aesthetic is created, expressed not in monuments or concrete instruments, but in the primary immateriality that has always been Africa's secret, and according to the logic of a complex architecture that pervades African society in a very subtle and sophisticated manner. In the context of *social design*, art and architecture have a special role to play. As citizens, the artist depicts and questions the people's moods in a personal manner and without mediation, and the architect interprets imagined and necessary places for living together.

Public art has stemmed from an acknowledgment of the artist's role in society. Often it follows from an evolution that is not necessarily linked to vital needs, but rather is the result of an intellectual process. As Jacques Rancière states: 'Some wish that art should commemorate the horrors of the century in an indelible form. Others want it to help today's men to understand each other within the diversity of their cultures. Others again explain that art today produces — or must produce — not so much works for art lovers but new forms of social relations for all'. But 'the artist', says Rancière, 'is a citizen like any other and his role in society does not go beyond that of a smith or a dentist, each of them having their part to play, each one in his own domain'.

Public architecture puts similar expectations on the architect. 'Communities need empowering buildings' says architect David Adjaye. 'The primary act of public architecture is to create spaces that are socially edifying and socially liberating — using design excellence as a social force that makes good'.

This is why *social design* should not be a State or individual project, but a collective and participatory one, served well by artists and architects. This brochure therefore presents a number of exemplary inclusive practices from various actors on the continent — contemporary artists, architects, art centres, networks, writers — who all work towards the '*Us*' and dream of a better city life, based on local assets.

Paul Dujardin, CEO, The Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR)

Simon Njami  
Independent curator

1. The Declaration of Brussels emanates from the international colloquium 'Culture and Creativity: factors of development', organized by the European Commission in 2009 under the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union.

2. *Art at Work* (see back of booklet)

3. Jacques Rancière, *Et tant pis pour les gens fatigués*, Entretiens. Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2009.



Jodi Bieber (South Africa), *One, Two, Three and... The Ennerdale Academy of Dance, south of Johannesburg, 1997*. © Jodi Bieber, courtesy Goodman Gallery.



Zineb Sedira (Algeria), *Two lovers*, 2008. © Zineb Sedira, courtesy Galerie Kamel Mennour.



# BEST PRACTICES IN CULTURE-BASED URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Berend van der Lans  
African Architecture Matters, Amsterdam

Urban Africa is growing at an untamed pace. With economic development stimulated by the discovery of new natural resources in many countries of the continent, urbanization processes are accelerated. Privately driven investments result in rapidly changing cityscapes, a trend that is barely under the control of urban planning departments. Values of common interest, such as the historic layering of the city, socio-economic balance in the urban reality, and a safe public realm, are under tremendous pressure.

As urban challenges unfold, cities grow increasingly dense and large. The physical impact on the environment is extreme. Reduced energy consumption, waste control, efficient planning and thoughtful use of material are crucial in order to keep cities liveable and economical, but these elements are often still neglected. The social impact is equally serious, as poverty and unemployment on a grand scale threaten stability and safety.

Existing urban planning schemes fall short. While in the West, conventional planning processes have shown their limitations because of a lack of flexibility in times of crises, it also seems obvious that urban development in Africa needs to be addressed

in a specific way. Urban planning departments often face limited capacities and are overpowered by private parties. Another direction is needed, a search for common interest, and strategic alliances among all relevant stakeholders in the urban realm.

This is why a new paradigm is being defined. Top down urban master planning is no longer the answer to the challenges at stake. Inclusive thinking is increasingly seen as the key to sustainable urbanism, with a role for communities, social and cultural actors, as well as private investors. This contributes to a balanced and inclusive growth model with a broad ownership.

The following cases describe urban interventions and planning processes in line with this new paradigm. Unconventional coalitions successfully contribute to shaping the city, innovative strategies and techniques are used to improve urban conditions, and professional tasks are stretched to the maximum in order to perform in today's new circumstances. They engage youth and young professionals of all sectors towards sustainable visions of their environment.

The GoDown Arts Centre is developing into a *driver of a participatory process for urban change in Nairobi*.

South African architect Heinrich Wolff engages local communities in design processes, designing *buildings to create jobs and educate stakeholders* in multiple ways. Doual'art contemporary art centre has initiated *in situ* art projects in Douala for over 20 years, resulting in a *general awareness of public and private responsibilities in the urban realm, and creative environmental solutions to urban issues*. A former slaughterhouse in Casablanca is transformed into a *generator for the social, economic and cultural development of a deprived area*

*in Casablanca with a negative reputation*. Burkina architect Diébédou Francis Kéré exemplifies the *innovative use of local resources and techniques*. And finally, writers of the *Kwani?* Trust in Nairobi engage citizens in reflections on the human experience of urban communities in the contemporary metropolis.



Jean Depara (Angola), *Deux garçons dans un café*, ca 1965.



Nontsikelelo Veleko (South Africa), *Cindy and Nkuli*, 2003.

# NAI NI WHO? (WHO IS NAIROBI?): COLLECTIVE VISION DEVELOPMENT – GODOWN ARTS CENTRE, NAIROBI, KENYA

The art centre as driver for inclusive urban change

The GoDown Arts Centre is based in an industrial area close to the city centre. It provides spaces for studios, rehearsal and performance halls and an exhibition gallery. Since its start in 2003, it gained an important position in the Nairobi and Kenyan art world. Through its initiatives and activities it promotes the role of art as a positive force in society.

In 2010, when the GoDown became the owner of the plot they are located at, they broadened their intentions from cultural driver to driving stakeholder in the rethinking of their neighbourhood, the Nairobi Railway and adjacent Industrial Area.

This area is a historic part of the city, where the first infrastructural and industrial developments took place in the beginning of the 20th century. The neighbourhood is currently characterised by businesses, light manufacturing industries, residential areas varying from middle class to informal settlement, and a large part is occupied by the Kenya Railway Corporation. With a strategic position in larger Nairobi, the gradual replacement of industry by other facilities, and the ambitions of the Kenya Railway

Corporation to redevelop the area, this neighbourhood was poised for change. GoDown was keen to become a driving force in this process, in an attempt to integrate a people-centred approach in this development.

GoDown teamed up with White Architects, an international Sweden-based firm which approaches design and planning solutions in a broad and multi-disciplinary manner. White sees the redevelopment of urban areas as a long term process, requiring room for people to develop and adjust the space to a function appropriate for their way of being, living and working. Their design processes start with an early focus on this 'soft' infrastructure, allowing planning for attractive, dynamic and sustainable cities.

Under the initiative *Shukisha Nairobi* (Common Ground), GoDown and White Architects laid the first basis for a redevelopment approach of the area together with stakeholders during a 2011 workshop. This was followed by a second one, involving UN Habitat and more stakeholders, such as the City Council of Nairobi, the Kenya Railways Corporation, Kenya Polytechnic University College, artists and private sector



GoDown Centre for the Arts (photo GoDown Arts Centre)

representatives. These meetings resulted in the conception of a joint vision on the future of the area and plans were developed from there, to continue to critically engage the relevant stakeholders with a very diverse range of urban backgrounds. GoDown began to serve as an excellent knowledge node and became the driver of this new participatory and integrated process, which will contribute to a broader sustainable urban development approach for the City of Nairobi, developed as 'Vision 2030 Nairobi Metropolitan Area' with the focus of 'Conceiving a World Class African Metropolis'. Through the mobilisation of multiple stakeholders and engaging them in the planning processes, a broad ownership of city development processes will be established.

Two years into this project, an alliance between all involved stakeholders and the target beneficiaries — the local institutions, businesses and residents — has developed leading to common steps to further identify

problems and challenges that need to be addressed. Through looking at a vital pedestrian link from the GoDown to the City Centre and a circuit also starting at the arts centre, case-studies were done for testing integrated planning. In an intense series of actions under the umbrella of 'Nai Ni Who?' (slang for *Who is Nairobi?*), GoDown is developing community generated programmes for 2013, including talks, performances, exhibition tours, markets and mapping, to generate a good base for the creation of a people-centered urban zone, offering safe and inclusive public spaces and mixed use developments.

## NAI NI WHO INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

Instead of top down planning, all stakeholders participate intensively and develop cultural ownership into a process of urban development, leading to enhanced social cohesion and stability.

A steady system of communication and feedback to all stakeholders is set in place, to enable endorsement by all of the final vision developed.

By improving the connectivity to the rest of the city and by turning the area into a destination with quality public spaces and urban services rather than a transit area, the stakeholders give the area meaning for all citizens of Nairobi and their guests.

An existing industrial area is endorsed as a future development base. This is a valid, sustainable, and economical way to build on existing and shared heritage, be it grandiose or not.

A 'Nairobi identity' emerges and GoDown contributes to it, helping new 'Nairobians' look for places to establish city life.

*2013 is the year planned for mapping and participatory planning processes, aiming to develop designed proposals for concrete projects.*

Partners: The project collective is formed by the GoDown Arts Centre and its artist inhabitants, together with White Architects from Sweden as initiators, the Nairobi Municipality, Kenya Railway Corporation as landowner of the area, all businesses, industries, educational institutes and

communities of the area, and Kenya Polytechnic University. Mimeta, Kulturhuset, Arkitekturmuseet are additional partners.  
www.godownartscentre.com  
GoDown Centres for the Arts  
Joy M'Boya, director

## 'THE EXPANSION OF FREEDOM' – ARCHITECT HEINRICH WOLFF, CAPE TOWN

The architect and his position as enabler

Heinrich Wolff is hailed in South Africa for bringing innovative architecture to underserved communities. He believes architects can contribute to social change by developing the richness of architectural intentions through a process of consultation with the concerned stakeholders, but also by adhering to a principle labelled by Bengali economist Amartya Sen as 'the expansion of freedom': creating job opportunities, facilitating physical protection, and developing infrastructure for health and education.

Wolff's vision has also been deeply influenced by the post-apartheid political transition that took place in South Africa in the 90's. The radical change that was needed and the participatory process of the transformation shaped his optimism and critical observations of the existing system. Instead of looking for binding elements or a national expression, he embraces the cultural uncertainty of the present time as an opportunity for invention.

Wolff believes that architects need to contribute to the redefinition of society by creating their own agenda for social change. This cannot be left to the government alone. The shift in cultural values of society needs to transpire in architecture and urban planning. Wolff sees five important elements in social

change, which he aims to address in his work:

1. *Development of freedom*: Extending the freedoms of the individual, through architecture and the building process.

2. *Environmental responsibility*: Environmental change as an essential component of social change. Local building materials, locally sourced and with a minimal environmental footprint are used, while aspects such as optimised daylight, entry, orientation of buildings, water collection and other techniques are implemented.

3. *Perpetuation of the values of dignity, equality and freedom of expression through architecture*: overturning the differential treatment of people in spatial practices.

4. *Contribution to a more labour-absorbent economy*: Awareness of the potential of architecture for local skills development and job creation. These elements influence design decisions.

5. *City as an open and all-inclusive domain*: Closer alignment between a city's shape and socio-political objectives. In his projects, Wolff documents situations where this is working and criticises shortfalls. The above may be seen as an engaged, rational and strategic process, but Wolff claims that architecture is also autonomous



and irrational. Architecture needs to be both engaged and autonomous, to make space for imagination and invention. We all have our personal reading of the world that contributes to the cultural diversity that is claimed in South Africa. Wolff aims to contribute to the social change by equally being engaged and sensitive to what is there, as well as by producing works which are unique, that nobody has seen before.

Heinrich Wolff was leading Noero Wolff Architects with Jo Noero between 1998 and 2012. Since 2012 he runs Wolff Architects with his wife Ilze. The projects presented here were run by Noero Wolff Architects.

### Red Location regeneration with a Museum

Noero Wolff Architects won the competition for the design of the Red Location Museum at the 'National Site of Struggle'. The project initiators Govan Mbeki and Raymond Mhlaba, both Apartheid Struggle leaders together with Nelson Mandela in the Rivonia Trial, had lived at Red Location, and their objective was to rejuvenate the area through a historic museum site.

Wolff realised that the first step to take, before designing, was the improvement of the life-world of the community in the area. While keeping the memory on the Struggle alive, the project aimed to be a positive impulse for the area. Red Location had no surfaced roads, municipal services or greenery, so the first developments involved road construction, water supply, street lighting, landscaping and a small market place.

In parallel to this cultural project, political promises were made for social housing. But the perception of the community was that funds for housing would instead go to the museum. The architects took this seriously and put off the construction of the museum for two years, until the social housing was complete. Supported by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency), Noero Wolff Architects also designed a group of

houses in line with the few brick structures and the now available basic infrastructure, in this way forming street space. The houses were designed after study and consultation with the local community, allowing for ground floor shops and urban agriculture, accommodating the physically disabled, subletting parts to tenants for generating additional income.

For the museum design, monthly meetings were held with representatives from the community, local politicians, municipal officials and museum experts. The discussion informed the architects about the local histories, significant events, and Struggle leaders, and guided the conception of the design. It also continued after the museum completion, as an oral history project.

The project was initiated in 1994, launched with an architectural competition in 1998, and spans a series of constructions, the last one planned for 2022. Most recently, in 2011, the Art Gallery and Library archive were completed. The buildings show respect to the area in which they are built through their material use, and also by the wrapping of the Art Gallery around an original corrugated iron bungalow dated from 1902. The bungalow was carefully restored by its owner and is now under regular monitoring and care, provided by a group of local residents as part of a job creation programme. In line with the city's policy of skills transfer, the contractor used 50% local labour and provided on-site training. The next phase comprises the construction of 210 social housing units, two theatres, an arts and crafts school, a backpackers lodge and commercial spaces.

The choice of building materials is based on local procurement, resulting in a small environmental footprint and making repair and maintenance easy, especially for the housing components. In addition, this makes the creation of adjustments and additions in the housing easy for the inhabitants.



Red Location Museum, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, by Noero Wolff Architects, 1998 – present (photo Rob Duker)

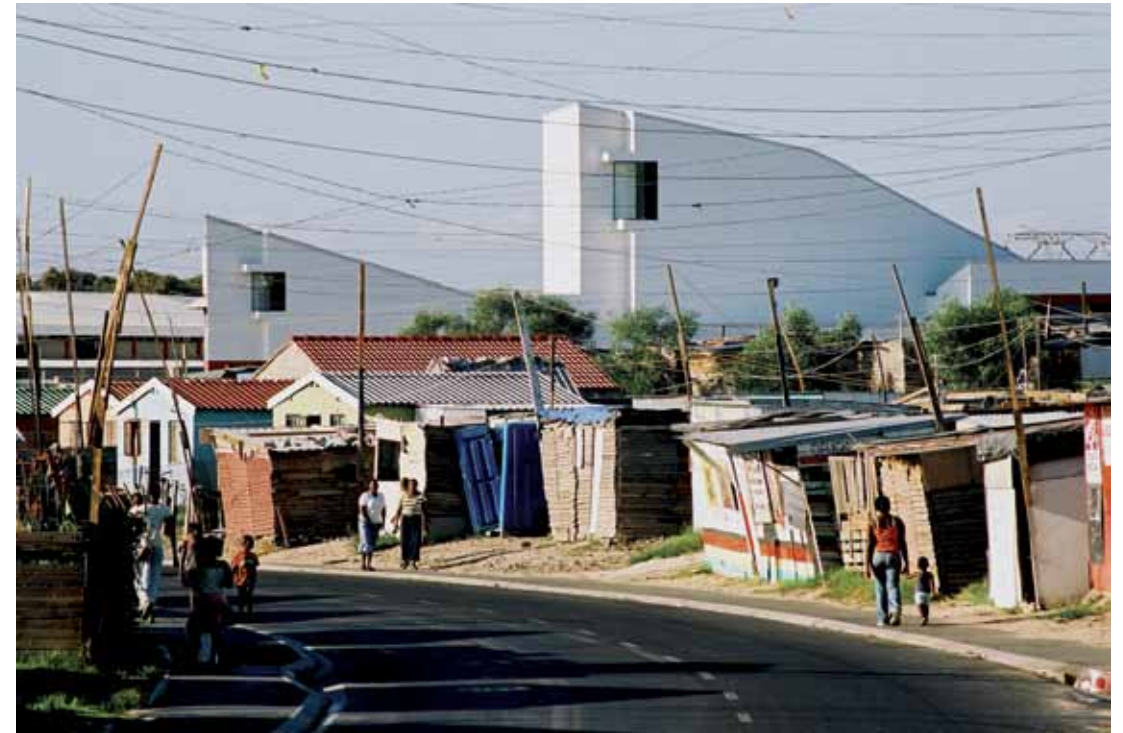


Red Location Museum, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, by Noero Wolff Architects, 1998 – present. (photo Dave Southwood)





Usasazo Secondary School (2003), *Khayelitsha*, by Noero Wolff Architects (photo Rob Duker)



Inkwenkwezi Secondary School (2007), *Cape Town*, by Noero Wolff Architects (photo Heinrich Wolff)



Inkwenkwezi Secondary School (2007), *Cape Town*, by Noero Wolff Architects (photo Dave Southwood)

### Sustainable neighbourhood schools

In 2003 and 2007 Wolff was the lead architect for two schools in townships around Cape Town. Intensive discussions with stakeholders on their needs, know-how, aspirations and economic objectives were part of the design process. The schools present a comradeship with their environment; the architecture pays respect to the achievements of the surrounding settlements. Both have made a substantial impact on their communities.

Statistics show that the majority of secondary school graduates rarely enter tertiary educational institutions, leaving self-employment as a viable option. This is addressed in the educational programme with the introduction of entrepreneurial subjects. The architects contributed to this way of thinking by placing classrooms with a direct relation to the street, furnished with hatches from where students can directly engage with the public, for subjects like hair care, appliance repair, car repair and food production.

In line with open spaces in the surrounding neighbourhood which practically work as living spaces, due to the high density of the area, an 'exterior living room' was extended into the open spaces of the school, furnished with inviting benches and vegetation.

At the Inkwenkwezi Secondary School, the architects also made a specific effort in improving the effectiveness of the educational environment: a central outside space for school breaks improves control over truancy, and the absence of direct views to the courtyard enhances concentration. Again, the design connects well to the informal local building culture through the wall painting tradition used for shops, inscribing the institutional character of the school within the local style.

The school hall was designed for multi-functional uses, to generate extra income to supplement the standard state subsidy, and also function as a central locale for local communities for weddings, and mass services of six churches on weekends.

## HEINRICH WOLFF'S ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS OUTCOMES

Such architectural approaches, based on participatory processes coupled with imagination and invention, lead to new solutions to local urban issues.

Unconventional positions in the design process allowed trust building among the communities impacted by the project. Wolff and his office work with, rather than for, communities.

The critical anatomising of the assignments enabled reaching out to all possible stakeholders in the projects, and taking all their concerns into account while developing plans.

The design process, the material choices, and the foreseen building methods and processes, all address concerns of community ownership, environmental impact, job creation, education excellence, multifunctional economic uses, as well as cultural issues.

The projects contribute to the development of social, cultural and economic capital in the project areas, and South African cities as a whole.

**Partners:** The competition of the Red Location Museum was organized by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Port Elizabeth. The museum project was state-funded and additionally supported through private funds, while a community housing component was supported by the

Swedish International Development Agency. The school projects were commissioned by the government within regular education schemes. [www.wolffarchitects.co.za](http://www.wolffarchitects.co.za)  
Wolff Architects (Pty) Ltd  
Heinrich Wolff, Principal

# MAKING DOUALA — DOUAL'ART, CAMEROON

Artists as drivers for sustainable urban change

Doual'art contemporary art centre started its activities in 1991, with the concern of reconciling inhabitants with the streets, the public space, and the city, following a period known as 'villes mortes', i.e. 'dead cities', when protests calling for a multi-party system through a general strike ceased all economic activities in Cameroon's economic capital. Douala, in the hands of the opposition, was cut off from public money for years. There was no other way than to take things in one's own hands. Doual'art aimed to intervene through artistic actions in and for the city. Its goal was to participate in the construction of a calm citizenship, arousing social dialogue, and inviting inhabitants to reflect and to be reflected upon.

Between 1992 and 2000 a huge range of projects were carried out and spread around the city. The process was left in the hands of artists with, in general, a great level of inclusiveness and openness towards the community. Projects generated feelings of pride through the embellishment and creation of public sites (see next pages). They gave residents opportunities for regained ownership and re-appropriation of public spaces, or provoked questionings in the private and public spheres through media, often gathering a wide audience. Some projects ended up contributing directly and tangibly to the city's infrastructure: bridges, fountains, drains — maintained by newly established

neighbourhood development committees.

Doual'art also initiated a multidisciplinary think tank Ars&Urbis, gathering architects, urban planners, sociologists, curators, artists and cultural operators. This think tank, coming together for the first time in 2005, recommended combining contemporary creation and urban development in focused activities over three-year periods, concluding with a triennial international festival of public art.

The Salon Urbain de Douala (SUD) was born two years later, with two editions to date. SUD 2007 invited artists, designers and authors to make proposals on 'The City of Douala'. Sustainable and temporary artworks were produced, dealing with the history, the parallel economy, and the practice of recycling of Douala. SUD 2010 produced an even larger number of sustainable artworks, public interventions and a CD on the theme 'The Water and the City'. Various issues were addressed: the history of the canoeists, the cosmogony of the people of the water, access to drinking water, sanitation issues, conservation of the mangrove forest that surrounds Douala, etc. SUD 2013, planned for December and entitled 'Douala Metamorphoses', introduces a change of scale. Zones of friendliness are created, in which art mediates between layers of society, aiming at humanisation of urban life and stimulation of feelings of identity.





Passarelle de Bessengue by Alioum Moussa (photo Doual'art)

The inhabitants of Douala are invited to group and become urban citizens with ownership and responsibility for its public space.

Doual'art has recently started training youngsters as guides for their city and the permanent art projects installed throughout the city. The goal is to offer tourists a reading of the city, and also show the impact of the projects undertaken by Doual'art. The project also promotes possibilities of income for starters on the labour market, by becoming advocates of art and tourism. The aim is to extend this educational programme into a more structural activity of Doual'art.

#### Passarelle de Bessengue by Alioum Moussa

A jury comprised of community representatives chose the design of a bridge to connect with Bessengue Akwa, which was a neglected squatter neighbourhood. The bridge is a symbol of acknowledgement of this community as a full and integrated part of the city.



One of the installations of Les Mots Ecrits by Hervé Yamguen (photo Doual'art)

#### One of the installations of Les Mots Ecrits by Hervé Yamguen

Hervé Yamguen developed Les Mots Écrits, i.e. 'The Written Words', a poetic approach for his home neighbourhood of New Bell (one of the oldest and densest neighbourhoods) by involving the local youth in writing texts, applying these as neon sculptures and creating songs with local rappers.



One of the installations of Les Mots Ecrits by Hervé Yamguen (photo Doual'art)





**New Walk Ways New Bell** (photo Doual'art)

### **New Walk Ways New Bell**

Kamiel Verschuren explored with inhabitants a pragmatic approach to flooding. He developed timber covers for the sewers of New Bell, once covered by concrete slabs but now open in some areas. The purpose was to stop the collection of dirt and waste in the stream, and prevent flooding of streets with contaminated water.



**Le jardin sonore** by Lucas Grandin (photo Doual'art)



**Le jardin sonore** by Lucas Grandin (photo Doual'art)

### **Le jardin sonore** by Lucas Grandin

Lucas Grandin created a vertical garden where people can retreat and enjoy the sounds created by water drops dripping off the structure, developed and built together with the inhabitants.

## DOUAL'ART – MAKING DOUALA OUTCOMES

The interventions are designed to act as a mirror in front of the environment, highlighting certain aspects, triggering comments, enhancing relations and solving problems.

The projects ignite a dialogue, between the artists and the community, between the intervention and the physical surrounding, and among members of the community. Often, the artists' work stimulates creative thinking among communities about their environment, such as water use, services in disuse, waste management, and inefficient habits.

The projects target and involve all groups, from decision-making elders to women and youth, all in their specific cultural role, and often also involve them in the execution of the works or even in training towards the project's implementation.

The projects induce change, be it temporal or permanent, creating new patterns to follow, structuring existing informal uses, and enhancing smart material use and the input of social structures.

**Partners:** Doual'art works with a changing group of local and international artists, architects and thinkers, and has developed a very good relationship with the city council. These projects have benefited over the years from a large range of international and local funds, thanks

to organizations such as Arts Collaboratory, Lettera 27, and Mondriaan Foundation, as well as local and international sponsors.  
[www.doualart.org](http://www.doualart.org)  
Doual'art  
Marilyn Douala Bell, Director

## FABRIQUE CULTURELLE DES ANCIENS ABATTOIRS (CULTURAL FACTORY OF THE FORMER ABATTOIRS) HAY MOHAMMADI – 'THE ABATTOIRS' COLLECTIVE', CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

Industrial heritage as driver for social,  
cultural and economic development

At a strategic position in Casablanca, between the city centre and a large extension area built between 1920 – 1960, the years of industrial expansion of the harbour city, was a large and vacated slaughterhouse. This municipal service had been an important employer for its neighbourhood until activities came to a stop at the beginning of the century.

The area surrounding the slaughterhouse is known as Hay Mohammadi, and it housed the first slums of the city. In the 40's and 50's they were partly replaced by experimental modernist housing projects. Since then Hay Mohammadi spontaneously developed into a high-density area, with plots growing from the original one-level patio dwellings to 4 to 5-layered housing blocks. In the area, there is a high degree of social cohesion, but the reputation of Hay Mohammadi in the city is bad; it is seen as a deprived area where it is dangerous to go.

The first inhabitants were poor, searching for work to sustain a better living. They first found shelter in the slums. Addressing the untamed sprawling of these informal settlements, mass housing projects were developed at great speed, but the slums were not dissolved. Although the inhabitants succeeded in improving their living conditions, the area remained predominantly poor. It also became a hotbed for the bloodily suppressed 1965 and 1981 protests against the regime. The authorities neglected this area for years, for it was considered a base for political opposition, unions, and critical artists. The Derb Moulay Cherif police station, centrally located in the area, was a secret torture centre where thousands of political prisoners were locked away, sometimes for years, and in some cases leading to death or disappearance.

The strategic position of the vacated slaughterhouse and its exceptional architectural beauty gave rise to thoughts





Cultural event at *Les anciens abattoirs* (photo Aisha El Beloui)

of converting the complex into a driver for development of the area in 2005. An informal and experimental use of the site was proposed by the city council, to serve as an incubator of options for its later more permanent use.

A group of initial users was gathered to develop programmes for the complex. Since 2009, 15 organisations active in the field of arts, culture, social and youth empowerment, form 'le Collectif des abattoirs' ('Abattoirs' Collective'). They roll out programmes that use culture as a tool for development, promoting citizenship awareness, social and intercultural dialogue between communities, and creation of jobs and income-generating activities. The specific aim was to save buildings that had an important impact on the city and the neighbourhood, and allow it a new life and impact for the area.

Since 2009 a large variety of activities have taken place, starting with the large multi-

disciplinary cultural and inaugural festival 'Transculturelles des abattoirs', followed by concerts and music events, dance, film presentations, exhibitions, debates and round table discussions, theatre and many other cultural events. The abattoirs acquired a position in the cultural world and in the direct neighbourhood through these events. This helped also attracting attention to the interactive part of the programme, through various cultural workshops and social programmes, the community radio, the skate park, children activities, reading workshops etc. The organisations use the abattoirs as a base, but also deploy activities outside of the area.

Meanwhile, the troubled political history of the area was respectfully put forward through projects such as a documentary depicting the personal histories of people born, bred and politically active in Hay Mohammadi, as well as a book describing the social



Cultural event at *Les anciens abattoirs* (photo Collective of the former abattoirs)

and political history of the area. On site, urban signs and panels indicate places that have been important in that history, and the anniversary of the 1981 protests commemorates this history yearly.

## CULTURAL FACTORY OF THE FORMER ABATTOIRS OUTCOMES

The *Cultural factory of the former abattoirs* will define and synchronize its final shape and form, as the buildings — listed as national heritage — are restored. The activities deployed there thus far nonetheless made it serve well as an incubator of ideas, a generator of activities and employment opportunities, and an educator on the role of culture for enhancing the recognition of this neighbourhood's communities and history.

The multi-disciplinary collective involved the local communities in giving shape to the area while offering opportunities for education and employment, thus building a platform of trust for new coalitions.

The project proved the long-term benefits of re-using a derelict industrial heritage — albeit one that contributes strongly to the identity of the area — as an economical activity base.

The City Council of Casablanca initiated the formation of a multi-disciplinary collective of organisations with cultural, tangible and intangible heritage, social, youth and gender focus. Together they have built coalitions with the communities in the area.

The cultural impact, and extent, of the activities deployed, induced a regain of pride among inhabitants, and full acceptance of Hay Mohammadi by the *casablancais*, who previously saw it as a troubled area.

While restoration strategies are being assessed, activities continue, consolidating the impact on the direct environment and the city.

This project also generated reflections with urban planners and architects towards a comprehensive rehabilitation plan, taking into account the complexity of heritage, social and artistic issues.

**Moroccan partners:** La Source du lion, L'association Racines, L'association 'Action Jeunesse', Compagnie le Territoire, EAC-L'Boulevard, Transparency Maroc, BSB Event, L'association Colokolo, L'association X Games, L'association ATTAC-Maroc, Le festival de Casablanca, Le Réseau des Associations Unies pour la Qualification Sociale, Association Initiative Urbaine, Casamémoire.

**Foreign partners:** Head Genève, Rietveld Academy, IMS Montpellier, Inholland University.

**Institutional partners:** La Ville de Casablanca, Casablanca Aménagement, the City of Amsterdam, Union Européenne.

[www.abattoirs-casablanca.org](http://www.abattoirs-casablanca.org)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/La-Fabrique-Culturelle-des-Anciens-Abattoirs-de-Casablanca/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/La-Fabrique-Culturelle-des-Anciens-Abattoirs-de-Casablanca/)

La Fabrique Culturelle des Anciens Abattoirs

Dounia Benslimane, Coordinator

## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN BURKINA FASO AND MALI — ARCHITECT DIÉBÉDO FRANCIS KÉRÉ, BERLIN

The architect and his position as innovator

As first-born son of the Gando village headman, Kéré could go to school and started working as a carpenter in 1978. Via German development projects he continued his education, and graduated in architecture at the Technical University of Berlin in 2004. Already during his studies, Kéré became determined to use his newly acquired knowledge to improve the quality of life and chances of inhabitants of Gando, 200 km from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso's capital, in the arid south-eastern planes of the country. This village houses around 3000 souls, mostly farmers.

The literacy rate in Burkina Faso is one of the lowest in the world, estimated at 26% (UNESCO EFA Monitoring report 2009), leaving most people no alternative but farming. In the past decades, the government and foreign institutions had completion of basic education as a key focus. This led Kéré to start a Germany-based fundraising association in 1998 to support the construction of schools in his home area.

His first design for a primary school, in 1999, was based upon innovative use of local materials and techniques, to be constructed by members of the community themselves. Construction of the Gando primary school started in 2000 and was completed in one year, other buildings following, such as teachers' residences, additional school buildings, a library and also secondary school buildings. At first, the population had difficulty accepting that traditional building materials and techniques perceived as primitive could produce robust and large buildings.

The primary school and the residences were awarded with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2004, even before Kéré graduated. Since then, his successive projects earned several renowned awards, such as the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture in 2009, the Regional Holcim Award Gold in 2011 and Global Holcim Award Gold in 2012.





Gando primary school (photo Francis Kéré)

The innovative use of local building materials in the first buildings was modest. The traditional ‘banco’ clay technique was replaced by clay bricks added with a small percentage of industrial cement and hand pressed, so that they would resist to rain better, while the walls were kept under a large sheet metal roof, supported by a light metal structure. The massive walls keep the coolness of the night, while natural ventilation between the brick ceiling and the metal sheeting avoids direct sunlight, and cross ventilation in the classroom keeps the interior climate bearable. Rainwater is directed from the roof into a pond, and can be used for irrigation. Structural use of wood was avoided, since hardwood is scarce and it is not a traditional building material, and there is little expertise in carpentry. Most of the labour force was locally recruited and trained on the job. In later buildings, innovation went much further. New concepts were developed to improve building techniques and passive climate control, such as under-

ground tubes cooling air, strategic use of vegetation, reforestation, double skin roofs and facades to achieve significant thermal reduction.

Francis Kéré is involved in many other remarkable projects, a most exceptional one being the ‘Operndorf Afrika’, envisioned as a global art project, connecting cultures and aiming to overcome the division between art and life. The Opera Village, about 20 kilometres from Ouagadougou, is designed to include a festival theatre, workshops, a health station, guesthouses and a school for music and film classes. Simple basic modules, which depending upon their function differ in quality and materials, constitute the entire village. Self-construction is used for the most simple structures, and the use of local materials is promoted as much as possible. The theatre hall will serve as a place of encounter and exchange. The project was initiated in 2010, and as of January 2013 is in its health station facility construction phase.



Bamako Urban Park (photo Jurriaan van Stigt)

Another project, this time inside a capital city, is the recently completed National Park of Mali in Bamako, revived to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the country’s independence from France. Supported by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the former botanical gardens were redeveloped to make them a pleasant and safe place for recreation and refuge from bustling city life. The park buildings were designed by Kéré’s firm, inspired by the local modernist style of the 50s and 60s. They include entrance buildings, a restaurant and a sport centre, all designed with well-ventilated half open, half closed ‘in between spaces’ for meeting and interacting. The buildings have a distinctive roof construction, providing highly required shade for recreation. Shaded breathing and closed walls contribute to a pleasant interior climate. Rainwater collection from the large roofs, and the locally-sourced and installed stone cladding, contribute to the environmental sensitivity of the project.

Many attempts towards innovation were based on the use of traditional building materials and methods through ‘appropriate technology’ programmes in the 70’s and 80’s in developing countries. Every so often, this knowledge focus failed due to cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretation. Examples exist of innovative earth building systems not repeated beyond the pilot phase, hand pumps left unrepaired, or sanitation systems considered unclean by local populations. Kéré’s work shows that excellent understanding of local contexts is an essential factor, and that the Diaspora can play an important role in innovation in Africa.

## FRANCIS KERE'S ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS OUTCOMES

Gando developed from a small farming village into an educational centre, attracting students — boys and girls — from many other villages in the area, even from the nomadic Peul groups. The secondary school buildings add to the meaning of Gando as an educational centre.

Through educational programs for adults and a public library (to be completed this year), the schools in Gando are open to the community and will address adult literacy education.

These buildings serve as a platform for meeting, learning and teaching and thus contribute to the social capital of the village.

Kéré's architecture serves as model in the field of innovative technical sustainability. The simplicity of choices in material use, the production of the building material, and the physical design make it a great example for efficient building in Sahel conditions.

These projects enhanced the job prospects of the young workers who were trained in construction techniques.

**Partners:** The Gando school project was initiated by the architect and implemented thanks to mostly German funds. The innovative methods of local materials sparked a lot of attention and praise through awards and

prizes, attracting much more funding for the later construction phases.  
[www.kerearchitecture.com](http://www.kerearchitecture.com)  
[www.operndorf-afrika.com](http://www.operndorf-afrika.com)  
Kéré Architecture  
Francis Kéré, Principal

## KWANI? LITERARY JOURNAL NAIROBI, KENYA

The writer and his reflections on the city

*Kwani?* is a Kenyan literary network which publishes creative stories, offers training opportunities, produces literary events, and connects to global networks.

*Kwani?* ('So what?') grew out of a series of conversations that took place among a group of Nairobi-based writers in the early 2000s. The main themes in *Kwani* relate to an intrusive and teeming humanity, claiming its dignity sometimes quietly, sometimes loudly and sometimes mockingly. For instance the stories penned by Wainaina portray a sly Kenya, which makes fun of Western clichés, while Kahora narrates the harshness of urban life through the eyes of a boy who found in a gorilla at the Nairobi zoo his secret interlocutor, away from the squalor of the suburbs. Another prominent author is Stanley Gazemba, from the *township* who writes from a garage. *Kwani* chooses the short story as its preferred style, being accessible and able to quickly convey direct messages, which break taboos and myths about Kenya. The main settings include Nairobi (which is the heart of business, of politics, of the art of getting by, of misery, of hopes and of dreams), the highlands of the Rift Valley (where absent landlords profit from renting hectares of fertile land) and the resorts along the coast (invaded by hordes of strangers, sex tourists and real estate speculators). It is a world where there is no room

for noble causes and future projects, where everyone is fighting against both themselves and the difficulties of a merciless reality, made up of broken dreams and of wannabe masculine breadwinners forced to lick their wounds in the face of an economic crisis that has produced 10 million unemployed young people aged 18-30.



[www.kwani.org](http://www.kwani.org)  
Billy Kahora, editor

Short story extract from 'Chimurenga Chronic', by Billy Kahora, a writer living in Nairobi, and also the managing editor of *Kwani*.

*My younger brother, James, tells me another Buru Buru Phase 5 story when I make my habitual Saturday phone call and ask him what's happening in the old neighbourhood.*

*'Habari ya ghetto?' I ask and he laughs. Buru Buru 5 is not really a ghetto — no one would laugh at the question if they lived in a real ghetto. Ghetto here, we both understand, is not a physical description, rather the closest description to a sibling common past, relative to where we are now.*

*I ask about the Saiyankas, childhood friends, to hear about their most recent failures. They are safer than the madness of the Buru present. We laugh from the liver (a sound we've acquired from other grown men of my family) with relief that we got away from it all: from Buru Buru's inertia, its self-deceptions, its inflammatory realities, its temptations of matatus, drink and drugs, and also from our childhood friends like the Saiyankas.*

*The escape started when our parents took us to school on the other, Western, side of town. By the time we were older, we felt somewhat immune to the realities of failure across Buru middle-class society, evident in the lives of relatives, friends and neighbours. We picked up an existential snarl in the stomach that was a fear of failure, a fear of not being something, of not being able to say that things were okay and that we were on our way. All these things saved us from Buru Buru.*

*But there was and still is much going on in Buru Buru that tells a bigger story about Kenya's post-independence urban landscape. For the longest time, the default description of Buru Buru was that it was a middle class suburb, which declined slowly into a lower middle class area in the 1990s during an economic downturn that affected the whole country. By the time the downturn was done, many of us realized that our brand of middle class-ness meant nothing.*

*That it was just another Kenyan urban soup bowl of different values, incomes, worldviews as ephemeral and baseless as the latest political fad. The anger and ugly love from my father that I experienced growing up was not old, I realize, but came from the pressures of mortgages, 'good school' fees, the everyday stress of being middle-class 'okay' in this new world. So, Buru Buru became a place of misplaced aspiration succeeded by failed dreams because it could never overcome its initial promise.*

*The estate was built of white uniform two-storey maisonettes, with orange-brick roofs, which smelled*

*of cleanliness, industry and possibility. Later, some model of Toyota became a part of the estate's look. The men dressed in similar suits, but were distant because of their perceived trajectories. The women met the demands of modern African motherhood in a confused no-man's land of arbitrary dictums. Everyone who played in the courts in the green grass was young and a child. Bigger and older children strove for adulthood by lurking in corners in the evenings when they came home for secondary school holidays.*

*The week-day adult world was about clockwork and cars. All the men drove away at the same time in the morning, to presumably build the nation, and came back at 5.30 pm to avoid the traffic jams. I was too young to spot the drinking, the men coming back to their housemaids at lunchtime, the women taking to their respective churches, their neighbourhood groups — not because they loved Jesus, but because they had been failed by middle-class love, their errant husbands, the hellions that their children were becoming.*

*But even as it became evident that this was all a mirage, an entitlement lurked that would ultimately lead to some of our playmates refusing to grow up, like blue-bloods or problem children who had peaked too early, and because the future could never be as bright as childhood shrugging themselves back into early Buru Buru. Many of these became matatu touts, retail traders, hustlers of all shades — things that their parents dreaded, entering a weird kind of civil disobedience that scorned school, grades, trajectories through university and a 'meaningful' place in Kenyan society. These are kids with whom we had played in huge groups and at some point I remember the boys started beating each other senseless, wanting to fight more than anything else. So, when not sneering and being cruel, we played with anger and competitive meaning as if life on the Kenyan hustle had already started. But the real systemic changes came in the mid-1980s. And that is the line beyond which memories of uniformity fade and everything moves into the Buru Buru present — always chaotic, never-ending, a continuing antithesis to childhood.*

1. Buru Buru started off as a middle-class estate described by its investors and admirers as the largest of its size in East and Central Africa, to later develop into a mega cultural soup that struggles to find a balance between its aspirational genesis, its Eastlands location, its ubiquitous matatu culture, its despondent youth and its economic muscle.

# ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS FOR URBAN RESONANCE: DREAM, INCLUSIVENESS AND CREATIVITY FOR URBAN WELFARE

The cases presented, from Kenya, Cameroon, Morocco, South Africa to Burkina Faso and Mali, reach deeper and further than many conventional planning processes have been able to. They share a common approach, in which the physical, social, economical and cultural context is the starting point.

Independent creators — art centres, artists, architects and representatives of the creative industries — use their 'out of the box' working methods and thinking to critically contribute to urban planning and development. They produce surprising, innovative, even provocative design solutions, meanwhile reaching out to and engaging all stakeholders.

This results in coalitions, spanning all relevant bodies at stake and including engaged communities. They participate in the process of critical viewing of what is in place, identify values and failures, and anticipate social, urban and architectural solutions to be produced. They advance implementation and development processes. All are heard and thus given ownership of the projects. Such a way of working enhances cooperation, stimulates social cohesion and stability and ensures the sustainability of the projects. The projects are rather seen as development processes than as end results. They give space for adaptations over time. Platforms, formal or informal, are created through which

processes are checked and balances are monitored. There is a willingness to maintain the projects and one is alert to the requirements of adaptations.

The communities are often not only involved in the planning processes, but also in the implementation and daily functioning of the projects. Training programmes are set up as part of the projects, while skills are sourced and innovated through training on the job. Employment possibilities are raised and income generated. The individual in the city is not a simple consumer but a contributor and beneficiary combined.

Areas that previously have been seen as irrelevant or problematic gain cultural and economic importance. They develop as thriving parts of the city. Inhabitants develop a sense of pride and new audiences are attracted. Taking the tangible and intangible heritage in a broad, inclusive and non-elitist way as a starting point boosts this pride. Existing social, cultural and built structures are mapped and valued. Unexpected attributes and routines may be found that give the nodes for a flourishing and sustainable development plan.

These projects prove that the critical positioning of creators who are sensitive and perceptive to the local context, combined with their autonomous *modus operandi*, involving communities, private and public



stakeholders in new coalitions, leads to ingenious ways of innovation in planning processes. They show where conventional planning models fall short and how this can be addressed.

At first sight, they might seem like costly and labour intensive processes, but the resulting inclusive, sustainable and stable environments make all stakeholders beneficiaries.

The opportunities that these projects are offering make communities, private and public parties invest time, money, energy and expertise.

Ultimately, individuals and organisations are willing to contribute when it becomes clear that there is a collective striving for a healthy environment, where all citizens feel participants of a society that offers chances for dignity, education and income generation.



Stakeholders Workshops 'Towards a Nairobi Urban Identity: Reclaiming city heritage and building cultural legacy' at the GoDown Arts Centre, 2011 (photo Matti Östling, Museum of Architecture, Stockholm)



## AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE NETWORKS § EXPERTISE CENTRES

In recent years, specific challenges of Africa's built environment have been recognised and are addressed by various networks and expertise centres. Below are a few significant players on the Continent.

### **African Centre for Cities (ACC)**

In Africa, urban-related research is highly fragmented. The central objective of the ACC is to provide a base from which to critique urban issues and offer alternative solutions. The aim of the ACC is (1) to partner closely with policy making centres to provide an alternative perspective on dealing with critical urban issues and (2) to provide an intellectual base for interdisciplinary, urban related research with established relations with international funders and think tanks.

The ACC was established in 2007 at the University of Cape Town in South Africa and has been led by Professor Edgar Pieterse since then. It offers a base for research and organises conferences, events, lecture series as well as produces publications and makes use of other media. It also produces the African City Reader together with Chimurenga Magazine.

[www.africancentreforcities.net](http://www.africancentreforcities.net)  
[www.africancitiesreader.org.za](http://www.africancitiesreader.org.za)  
[www.urbanafrika.net](http://www.urbanafrika.net)

### **Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS)**

Many African planning schools operate in a context in which urban planning practices, national planning legislation and planning curricula remain largely inherited from their colonial past and continue to promote ideas and policies transferred from the global North. Many of these ideas and practices are inappropriate in contexts characterised by rapid growth, poverty and informality. AAPS recognises that fundamental shifts in the content and pedagogy of urban training programmes are required.

The AAPS was initiated in 1999 in Dar es Salaam and formally established in 2002. In 2008, in association with the ACC in Cape Town, it held its inaugural conference and started a programme of capacity building and exchange. The AAPS is based at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

[www.africanplanningschools.org.za](http://www.africanplanningschools.org.za)

### **ArchiAfrika**

As a broad and multi-disciplinary informal network, ArchiAfrika brings together architects, planners, educators, artists and all other experts relevant in the built environment on and beyond the continent for a broad discourse encompassing the role of socio-cultural inspired development. ArchiAfrika offers a platform for debate and exchange of information through biannual conferences, their website and magazine. Special attention is given to the next generation architects and planners of Africa through intensified collaboration in the ArchiAfrika Educational Network. A group of 14 architecture schools based in Africa gathered in Ghana in June 2012 to define what is needed in architecture education in Africa and find common grounds for a collaborative programme, including student workshops, exchange of students and tutors as well information sharing. The network presently includes architecture schools from Morocco, Dakar, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa but its specific aim is to extend further across the continent and to cross the 'natural' language borders.

ArchiAfrika is based in Accra, Ghana and is led by activist architect Joe Osae — Addo since 2010. The organisation had been founded by a group of Dutch architects with experience in Africa in 2001.

[www.archiafrika.org](http://www.archiafrika.org)

## ARTS, ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN EXPANSION IN AFRICA: SNAPSHOTS

The timeline on the next pages maps some international cultural policies as well as artistic and literary initiatives in Africa all along the last century up to the present times as political and urban developments unfolded.

It provides key urban milestones and trends for several important African cities (Nairobi, Bamako, Lagos, Kinshasa, Cairo, Dakar, Johannesburg) and reveals the gradual engagement of the arts into urban affairs, moving from literature and biennials to the establishment of contemporary art centres and urban festivals.

Urban planning, architect networks and urban parks also developed significantly lately, as cities experienced exponential growth.

Internationally, the focus of UNESCO widened, from cultural heritage protection to diversity and dialogue, the acknowledgement of cultural identity, and the strengthening of local skills and institutions. In the post-2015 (post Millennium Development Goals) context, development policies are likely to move towards stability and sustainability, major challenges for African megacities.

This timeline, although very selective, helps visualize an essential aspect: the necessity to bridge the gap between urban population growth and the current state of play in culture-based urban planning, so as to secure a sustainable future.

### **Sources:**

United Nations, department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2008). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision. Timeline of the 2010 *Visionary Africa* GEO-Graphics exhibit at the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels, developed in partnership with eight African art centres in Africa.

SUM research

BOZAR research

UN Habitat website

Nairobi 24, Kwani Arts Trust, 2007

2008 = URBAN MILLENNIUM  
THE MAJORITY OF THE  
WORLD POPULATION  
LIVES IN URBAN AREAS

TODAY 60% OF  
AFRICAN URBAN  
POPULATION  
LIVES IN SLUM CONDITIONS

NUMBER OF CARS PER 1000 HABITANTS TODAY	
KINSHASA	190
LAGOS	23
CAIRO	114
NAIROBI	110
DAKAR	64
JOBURG	241
BAMAKO	10

AVERAGE AFRICAN  
HOUSEHOLD SPENDS 18% OF  
MONTHLY INCOME ON URBAN  
TRANSPORT

NUMBER OF ARCHITECTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ARCHITECTS TODAY	
DRC	800
NIGERIA	4500
EGYPT	20000
KENYA	530
SENEGAL	116
SOUTH AFRICA	4271
MALI	150

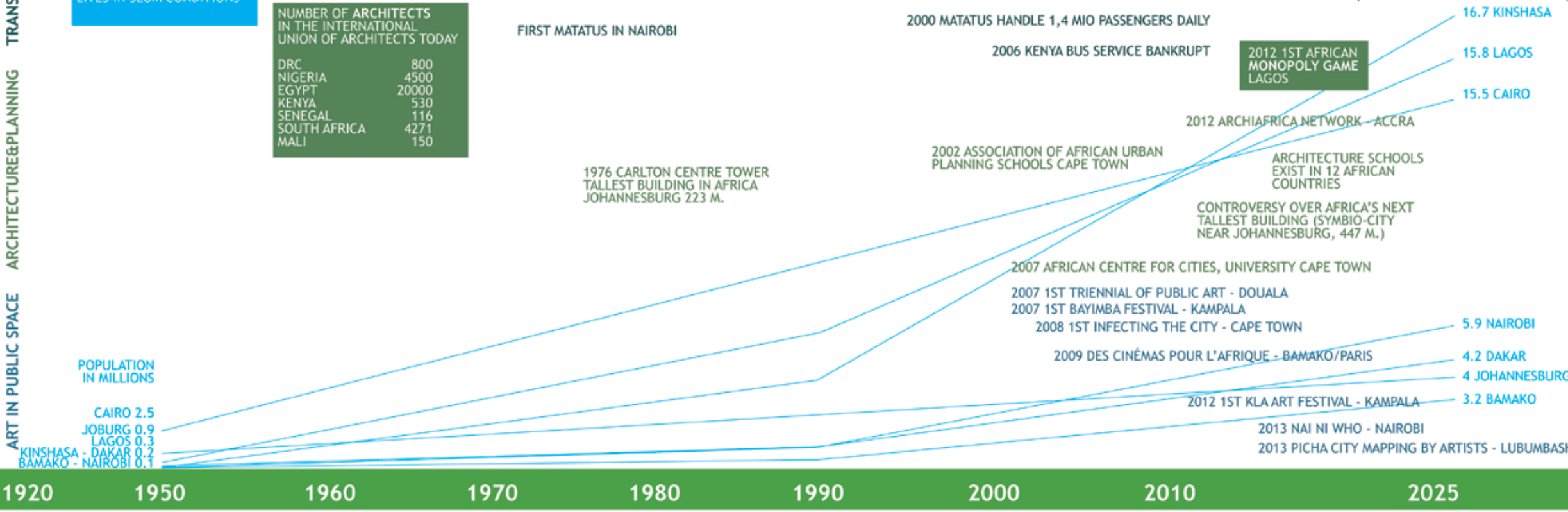
FIRST MATATUS IN NAIROBI

1976 CARLTON CENTRE TOWER  
TALLEST BUILDING IN AFRICA  
JOHANNESBURG 223 M.

2000- 2010 URBAN PARKS CREATION &  
REHABILITATION BY AGA KHAN: FORODHANI  
GARDENS (ZANZIBAR), AL AZHAR PARK (CAIRO),  
PARC NATIONAL DE BAMAKO, NAIROBI CITY PARK

2004 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR WANGARI MAATHAI FOR SAVING THE UHURU PARK - NAIROBI

2032  
THE MAJORITY OF THE  
SUB SAHARAN AFRICAN  
POPULATION WILL LIVE IN  
URBAN AREAS



1922 INDEPENDENCE OF EGYPT

1956-58 INDEPENDENCE OF 3 COUNTRIES

1960-68 INDEPENDENCE OF 36 COUNTRIES

1973-77 INDEPENDENCE OF 8 COUNTRIES

1980 INDEPENDENCE OF ZIMBABWE

1972 UNESCO CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

1993 ORGANIZATION OF WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

2005 UNESCO CONVENTION ON THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

2006 CHARTER FOR AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

1947 PRÉSENCE AFRICAINE - PARIS

1951 DRUM - SOUTH AFRICA

1956 1ST CONGRESS OF AFRICAN WRITERS & ARTISTS - PARIS

1961 TRANSITION - UGANDA

1947 NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE

1956 MUSÉE NATIONAL DU MALI

1961 1ST WORLD FESTIVAL OF NEGRO ARTS - DAKAR

1969 1ST FESPACO FILM FESTIVAL - OUAGADOUGOU

1984 1ST INTERNATIONAL CAIRO BIENNIAL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART (EG)

1991 CREATION OF DOUAL'ART (CM)

1ST BIENNIALS OF DAK'ART (SN), RENCONTRES DE BAMAKO (ML), FESPAM (CG), ZIFF (TZ), FESPAD (RW), JOHANNESBURG BIENNIAL (ZA), HIFA (ZW), GWANZA (ZW)

2003 KWANI - KENYA

2007 1ST AFRICAN PAVILION AT VENICE BIENNALE (IT)

CREATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRES: L'APPARTEMENT 22 (MA), NAIROBI ARTS TRUST (KE), GODOWN ARTS CENTRE (KE), DARB 1718 (EG), RAW MATERIAL COMPANY (SN), CCA (NG), STUDIOS KABAKO (DRC), PICHÁ (DRC), LA ROTONDE DES ARTS (CI)

## ABOUT ART AT WORK

*Art at Work* was a space at once material and symbolic in which, over the course of several installations in public spaces of African capitals, society's stakeholders were invited to debate questions which do not only touch on creativity, but also on the organization of the city.

Architect David Adjaye and curator Simon Njami developed the idea of a mobile pavilion giving immediate access to the cultural production of the continent and of the host country. This structure, conceived as a reflection on access to cultural goods, is the starting point and concrete implementation of this idea. It is a matrix of collaboration between institutions, cultural actors, and local authorities. It engages audiences in the large definition of the term, i.e. the civil society, to rethink its environment, its communities, and its cultural practices. It is an invitation to build the future, not in an abstract and disengaged manner, but in the heart of the city, among and with citizens.

And so, in each city of its itinerance, an *Art at Work* pavilion was installed in a public space, where local populations could see exhibited art works without going through the usual hoops and barriers of the museum apparatus. The content of the pavilion includes a Pan-African selection of photography from the 1960s onward (from Simon Njami's 2010 exhibit 'A Useful Dream'); a photo documentary survey of the architectures of all 52 African capitals by David Adjaye; and also photography works presented by a local curator, which directly relate to the cultural production and history of the host country. An accompanying program of workshops addresses the issues of structures, audiences and education for art in each country visited.

After close to two years of itinerance and workshops held in Ouagadougou, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Harare and Kampala, we can draw two conclusions about artistic production and distribution in Africa. The first one is the critical need for dialogue, to sit around a table and exchange on problems, which may seem trivial to policy makers. This explains the relative difficulties encountered by 'festival' or 'biennial' type initiatives on the continent. The second one is the importance to pose the fundamental question at the heart of any cultural project: who are we addressing and how do we reach this target audience? Many events about Africa happen in Europe without any return to the Continent, depriving Africans of opportunities to discuss their own contemporary art practices on their territory. Furthermore, educational structures (schools, museums, etc.) and cultural policies often have other priorities, leading contemporary art into a conceptual and material dead-end. The idea of transposing models conceived in another time and other places has proved its limits. One of the essential qualities of this project was therefore that it confirmed the existence of a common base of African specificity (whether north or south of the Sahara, and whether in contemporary art or social design areas) and that the expectations of all participants involved in this project echo each other.



*Art at Work* pavilion in Ouagadougou, February 2011 (photo Dominique Thiange)



*Art at Work* pavilion in Cairo, February 2012 (photo Yiahya Diwer)





Nairobi, Kenya

Extract of *Urban Africa* (Mountains & Highveld Region), the 10-year photographic survey of the architectures of African capitals by architect David Adjaye, presented in the *Art at Work* pavilion. Reproduced with courtesy of David Adjaye.

*David Adjaye has stepped out of his regular line of work to photograph and document key cities in Africa as part of an ongoing project to study new patterns of urbanism. Often regarded as a continent defined by under-development, poverty, war and tourism, through this exhibition Adjaye presents Africa in a different light, examining the buildings and places which have a special resonance with his preoccupations as an architect. This detailed survey revealed a unique snapshot of urban Africa today, documenting the nature of city life in a developing continent: a unique geo-cultural survey profiling the African city in a global context.*

From 'An epic act of homage to a continent'  
Observer newspaper, UK.

*Art and Architecture at Work* is adapted from the original project *Visionary Africa: Art at Work* Organized by the European Commission with the Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR), and in partnership with the Commission of the African Union.

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David Adjaye and Simon Njami

Pavilion design  
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Contractor  
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See travel log page

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Photo on cover: Nontsikelelo Veleko (South Africa), *Hloni*, Johannesburg, 2003-2006.  
Drawing of the *Art at Work* pavilion by Adjaye Associates, 2011. ©Adjaye Associates.



# Artists and Architects for urban resonance: dream, inclusiveness and creativity for urban welfare



BO  
ZAR

