



September 17, 2012

VISIONARY AFRICA - Art at Work
ITINERANT EXHIBITION PLATFORM IN AFRICAN CAPITALS

September 19-October 14, 2012, Kampala Railway Station Gardens

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This project includes an **itinerant urban exhibition of contemporary African artistic practices, residencies for African artists, and workshops on the relation between art and the development of modern urban centres in Africa**. One of its aims is to highlight the importance of culture and creativity as development tools. This initiative is part of the strategic partnership between the EU and the African Union.

THE CONTEXT

Culture at the heart of African-European dialogue

Since the end of the 1990s, the European Union has been increasingly committed to strengthen dialogue and build relationships with Africa.

The first **EU-Africa Summit**, held in **Cairo** in 2000 and the second one of **Lisbon** in 2007 emphasised culture and creativity and their central role in development policies.

The European Commission increased its efforts to show that culture is a factor of human development, social cohesion and employment: in 2009, the seminar on ***Culture and Creativity as Vectors for Development*** brought together high level politicians, artists and civil society representatives from the EU and Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific countries. This forum stressed on the importance of the status of artists and audiences, as culture is not 'a plaything for the pretentious elite' but an integral part of development, 'a sphere in which society explains its relationship with the world and plans its future.'¹

In response, the Centre for Fine Arts presented in Brussels in the summer 2010 *Visionary Africa*, a vast platform for African cultures, bringing together an eclectic programme adapted to all types of audience, uniting exhibitions, debates, concerts, film screenings, performances and shows. This festival celebrated the genius of African cultures and proposed a new vision of African art, through dialogue between contemporary artists and ethnographic collections of the Royal Museum of Africa.

The European Commission supported the African extension of this program as at the same time, the European Union-African Union partnership had identified cultural cooperation as one of the priority actions to consolidate the important dialogue between the two continents. **The itinerant exhibition "Visionary Africa: Art at Work" forms part of this.**

The period is very appropriate, for in 2010-2012, some 22 African countries are celebrating the **50th anniversary of their independence**. An independence which has been closely linked to profound changes in political, economic, social and cultural life. In addition, this is also the moment when the African Union launched the campaign *African Cultural Renaissance* and integrated the exhibition in its partnership with the European Union. Indeed, in the words of African Union Chairperson Jean Ping at the *Art at Work* Addis Ababa opening, this project comes at a time when 'Africa, the cradle of mankind, melting pot of civilisation and universal wisdom – in other words 'the cultural primogeniture' - struggles to revitalize its common values, its identity, and its cultural riches'. This event in Kampala is timed during **Jubilee festivities** to reinforce the celebration of arts and artists in the independence of African nations.

¹ 1. Louis Michel, former EU Commissioner of Development and Cooperation

THE PROJECT

Visionary Africa: Art at Work, an itinerant urban art platform in Africa

The exhibition platform is presented for three weeks in several African cities in conjunction with important institutional and cultural events. After a launch in Tripoli (Libya) at the 2010 **EU-African Union Head of States Summit**, it was presented in **Ouagadougou** (Burkina Faso, 2011) during one of the focal points of celebration of African culture, the pan-African cinema and television festival FESPACO. It was then held in **Addis Ababa** (Ethiopia) at the headquarters of the African Union on the occasion of the African Union Summit (January 2012), in **Cairo**, in the highly visited Al Azhar Park (February 2012), in **Harare**, in the garden of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe (May 2012) and in **Bujumbura** in the Palace of Arts and Culture (July 2012).

The aim is to provide, through the work of African artists, a snapshot of the transformations that have occurred on the African continent during the last half century, as well as put its future development into perspective.

The driving curatorial concepts of this project are:

- the intent of accessibility to all (free of charge and in a public space);
- the relation between citizens, urban space and culture
- the Pan-African content (not often seen in some African contexts), and reference to African independences; and
- the temporary and adaptable nature of the structure, including its investment by a local art contemporary centre and artists.

Housed in a wooden pavilion designed by architect David Adjaye, the exhibition is divided into four sections.

The first three, core of the platform, represent the past, the present and the future of Africa cultural and architectural richness and diversity: **A Useful Dream**, curated by Simon Njami, which celebrates 50 years of African photography; **Urban Africa**, David Adjaye's personal 10-year photographic survey of the architectures of African capitals; and the **showcase of artists from the host city**, curated by a local contemporary art centre. In Kampala's case, it is **Traces and Routes, an exhibit of Ugandan photographic archives and contemporary photographs**, co-curated by Katrin Peters-Klaphake, curator of the Makerere Art Gallery/IHCR, and Margaret Nagawa, independent curator. A fourth section offers an **Atlas Wall** which maps significant culture and arts policy-making documents related to Africa and created both on the international and national level from 1954 to present. Each section retains its autonomy. At the same time, there is a continuous interface and dialogue between the four modules.

Furthermore, the project includes a **regional conference** on the role of art and architecture in urban development (18 September), here led by **David Adjaye** and **Joe Addo**; and a workshop for Ugandan artists on education, structures and projects for art (20 September), led by **Simon Njami**.

Finally, the project proposes an **artist residency** for an African artist from another region. **Freddy Tsimba**, sculptor from DRC, will spend three weeks in Kampala, working on a new project inspired by the city and its artists, to be donated to Uganda upon completion.

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH A LOCAL CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE

The Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels is pleased to partner with the **Bayimba Foundation** and **Makerere Art Gallery/IHCR**. Bayimba Foundation is a young visionary arts institution under the excellent leadership of Faisal Kiwewa, with an unconditional dedication to creativity and empowerment of artists in Uganda. Makerere Art Gallery/IHCR, thanks to curator Katrin Peters-Klaphake's vision, strives to create inventive exhibitions by local and international artists and organize talks and workshops. Equally as important is the strong outreach mission of these two institutions to bring art in communities.

Traces and Routes is the Ugandan exhibit presented in the Art at Work pavilion.

'Photographs are about memories, both personal and collective, about a particular moment in time seen by a particular person. Yet, in looking at them we bring our own experiences, knowledge and memories. We recall the light of a moment, a smell from our youth, or feelings of joy or sorrow. Over the last century images of Uganda's history and culture were captured by explorers, colonialists and by ourselves. This exhibition is about re-reading images and events, about different gazes, stories and histories.' (Co-curators Katrin Peters-Klaphake and Margaret Nagawa).

Featuring: Photographers Edward Echwalu, Okujo Joel Atiku Prynce, Rumanzi Canon, Bwette Daniel Gilbert, Kibuuka Mukisa Oscar, Peter Tukei; and History in Progress Uganda – photographs from Kaddu Wasswa archive, Deo Kyakulagira/Central Art Studio Limited, and Gayaza High School archive.

This exhibit provides a thoughtful complement to Simon Njami's section, *A Useful Dream*.

The project thus fulfills its mission as platform for Africa-based centres and artists. This project is an example of EU-African Union partnerships' support of African creativity and cultural diversity.

THE PAVILLON

David Adjaye's pavilion is 109 m2 and is placed in public spaces. With just four rooms, no doors no lighting, it is fully accessible to all. Inspired by African market stalls, the structure is elegant and bare and receives artwork directly on its wooden walls.

David Adjaye: *'Our idea is to talk about art and work, with the intention of supporting civil society in a wide range of locations. Instead of spending money to campaign for better facilities, we intend to use that money to work with art institutions or local organizations, to build a structure. The structure will be linked to a local organization that can look after it, and that will allow artists who are not in the mainstream to show their work in a space that supports public discussion and education. To meet both sets of requirements, the exterior of the building is as much part of the exhibition as the interior'.*

THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The one-day regional conference entitled ***How art and architecture can make city development inclusive and sustainable*** is organized as part of this project, with the valuable collaboration of the Aga Khan Development Network Kampala Representative Office. It will gather Mayors and architects of the East African region, Kampala city stakeholders in the field of arts and architecture, and key experts in architecture, arts management, and city planning such as **David Adjaye** (Adjaye Associates, UK), **Joe Osae Addo** (ArchiAfrika, Ghana), **Marilyn Douala Bell** (Doual'Art, Cameroon), **Joy Mboya** (Godown Arts Centre, Kenya), **Francesco Siravo** (Aga Khan Trust for Culture), **Thomas Melin** (UN Habitat) and other experts. This conference is considered the opportunity for an unprecedented inclusive debate among cultural and city stakeholders of the region together with international experts, to discuss the challenges and choices East African Capitals face today in their development, and the role of art and architecture in it.

THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP

The one-day workshop, led by **Simon Njami** (independent curator), will gather a select group of Ugandan artists and intellectuals to reflect on the relationship between culture, art and development, and on the state of structures and audiences for art in Africa. Simon Njami will moderate this day of reflections which will lead to recommendations for cultural reforms, to feed a final publication, the *Atlas manifesto*, at the end of the project's itinerancy. Participants will receive the project's promotional publication, as introductory basis for the discussions.

THE ARTIST RESIDENCY

The three-week residency for an established African artist from another region is planned as part of this project, to foster intra-African artistic exchanges and conceptualize an artistic piece inspired by the spirit of the project. Freddy Tsimba, sculptor from the Democratic Republic of Congo, will produce a sculpture inspired by Kampala to be donated to Uganda upon completion. Tsimba announced he will build 'a house glorifying the encounter of people and material. The house is symbol of shelter. It will be welded to symbolize cohesion and understanding among people, for the progress of humanity. The roof will be made of brooms, symbolizing cleanliness, and inviting people to cleanse exteriors but also interiors. The rest of the material will be recycled and used objects such as hoes, car parts, forks, kitchen utensils, and others. This house will be inspired by the landscapes of the country. All elements will have meaning as well as a visual and sculptural quality'.

Tsimba will work at a sculpture studio at Makerere University Art department, and his presence there will be an interesting opportunity for students and artists to interact with him.

THE BOOK

Visionary Africa Art at Work is the project's promotional publication, presenting the project background and the concepts behind it, with contributions by David Adjaye, Simon Njami, Emiliano Battista and Nicola Setari, as well as testimonials from participating artists in previous editions of *Art at Work* and in Brussels' *Visionary Africa* festival.

'*Art at Work* has been conceived to be adaptive, both to the varying urban realities of the different capitals on its itinerary, and to the responses generated by its temporary transformation of the urban landscape during each of its stops'.

Architect David Adjaye, about the pavilion: 'a device capable of organizing a context, precisely because it was designed without a particular context in mind'

'The pavilion does not impose a pre-fabricated artistic programme; rather, it inscribes itself into the landscape as another site where a specific aesthetic can materialize, like the markets and courtyards across Africa that are spontaneously transformed into 'aesthetic' spaces, as Simon Njami says. The platform is a public art project: by changing, if only for three weeks, the coordinates of the citizens' daily experience of the city, it invites reflection on their role in shaping their own urban environment.'

'Art at Work inscribes art in the day-to-day tasks of urban life, and it does so, paradoxically perhaps, by liberating it from its commoditization and by reasserting art's visionary quality, its capacity to mediate between the visible and the invisible. Art and work, after all, share a common dignity: both patiently reconcile past and future through the (imaginative and material) transformation of reality in the present'. Emiliano Battista and Nicola Setari.

KEY STATEMENTS

The Art at work pavilion is a witness and a showcase of artistic dynamism in Africa, past and present. It offers a space for celebrating the importance of culture and the arts in transforming societies from Alexandria to Cape Town.

Artists are social commentators and agents in economic development. Their creativity is a positive response to changing times.

A strong artistic base is developed on multiple levels: audiences, structures and spaces for art, policies, and markets.

Africa and the European Union have worked intensely together for the past decades to reinforce cultural cooperation:

'This travelling exhibition bears witness not only to the vitality of the partnership between Africa and Europe, but allows us measure the extent to which the creative abundance of African photographers and artists has mounted the world stage'. Dr Jean Ping, former Chairman of the African Union.

'This project was designed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the independence of approximately 20 African countries and also to showcase the wealth and diversity of African creators as well as the necessity to take into account culture being a vector of development' EU Ambassador Quince to the African Union.

THE CURATORS

Simon Njami (Cameroon/France) is a Paris-based independent curator, lecturer and art critic. Njami was the co-founder and editor-in-chief of *Revue Noire*, a journal of contemporary African and extra-occidental art. He has served as artistic director of the Bamako photography biennale from 2001-2008, and he co-curated the first African pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. Njami has curated numerous exhibitions of African art and photography, including *Africa Remix* (2004/2007) and the first African Art Fair, held in Johannesburg in 2008. Njami serves as adviser of the Sindika Dokolo Collection. Njami is the author of several publications, including a biography on Leopold Sédar Senghor and two monographic books on African photographers, Samuel Fosso and Zwelethu Mthethwa, published by La Fabrica/Revue Noire. Recently, Njami curated the *Visionary Africa* exhibit *A useful Dream* at BOZAR in 2010, and the subsequent traveling version *Art at Work: Une plateforme itinérante pour l'Afrique*. In each African city this project travels to, Njami leads workshops with Africa-based contemporary

artists on the theme of audiences and spaces for art. One of his principal struggles is to make contemporary African artists visible throughout the world and above all, on the African continent – a struggle that is slowly beginning to bear fruit. Given his impressive background, the choice of Simon Njami as the curator of the exhibition "A Useful Dream". African Photography 1960- 2010" was an obvious one. Simon Njami gives voice exclusively to artists of the African continent, living or deceased, some of whom have managed become known worldwide.

David Adjaye (Ghana/UK) is now recognized as one of the leading architects of his generation in the U.K. He formed a partnership in 1994 and quickly developed a reputation as an architect with an artist's sensibility and vision. His ingenious use of materials, bespoke design and ability to sculpt and showcase light have engendered high regard from both the architectural community and the wider public. Recent works include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo, and the Skolkovo Moscow School of Economics. Adjaye is currently designing the National Museum of African American History and Culture, part of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington DC. His design features a crown motif from Yoruba sculpture. According to David Adjaye, *'architecture must make the world a better place.'* The way it influences and shapes daily life is at the centre of his thinking and his work. He also attaches great importance to the public and cultural character of architecture. His design of arts centres and large public buildings, built recently in London, Oslo and Denver, bear witness to the interest he shows in the needs of the community as well as the integration of architecture in the existing local environment. About **Urban Africa**: *'An epic act of homage to a continent - Observer Newspaper*
One of the leading architects of his generation, 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 underdevelopment, 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'

Katrin Peters-Klaphake (Germany/Uganda) is curator at Makerere Art Gallery/Institute for Heritage Conservation and Restoration and lecturer in museum studies at Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts (MTSIFA), Makerere University, Kampala. Before moving to Uganda in 2009 she served as curator for temporary exhibitions in the photography department at the German Historical Museum, Berlin. Her program at Makerere Art Gallery/IHCR focuses on creating inventive exhibitions by local and international artists as well as the preservation, documentation and research of modern and contemporary visual art in Uganda. She is a member of the curatorial team of the first Contemporary Art Festival in Kampala, KLA ART 012, taking place in October 2012, and co-curates an exhibition on Architecture and Urban Planning in Kampala – A Review of Ernst May's Contributions (working title) in collaboration with the Uganda Museum.

Margaret Nagawa (Uganda) was born in 1971 in Uganda. After attaining a first class degree in Fine Arts from Makerere University in 1993, she worked as resident artist and manager for The Gallery Café in the mid-1990s. She earned a Masters degree in Curating from Goldsmiths, University of London. Nagawa has held positions with the October Gallery, London, UK; Uganda Artists' Association; Equation Gallery; and Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art, Makerere University. She has worked closely with artists and organized exhibitions in and outside of cultural institutions. Nagawa is currently pursuing doctoral studies on artists' audience development strategies.

Faisal Kiwewa (Uganda) has a strong cultural background. Since his childhood he has been engaged in cultural activities. He worked in numerous areas of the cultural sector before embarking upon founding Bayimba Cultural Foundation to promote a vibrant creative arts industry and making Uganda and East Africa a significant hub for arts and culture on the African continent. Bayimba Cultural Foundation organizes a range of activities and programmes to this end, the annual Bayimba International Festival of the Arts being the main one. Through Bayimba Cultural Foundation and its programmes, Faisal has played a leading and exemplary role in the sector and brought back hope to the arts and culture in Uganda.

THE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Freddy Tsimba (Democratic Republic of Congo) is a sculptor-artist born in Kinshasa in 1967. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Kinshasa in the discipline of monumental sculpture in 1989, and worked afterwards with bronze and cement. He has become known all over the world thanks to some 50 exhibits in Africa, Europe, Canada and China. He obtained several prizes in France and Canada. 'My true school, even after graduating from the school of Fine Arts in Kinshasa, is the street where I find my materials in abundance. My masters have been the blacksmiths, with whom I have learned the techniques of fire and welding for 5 years.' Freddy Tsimba was one of the most interesting representatives of the DRC at the 2002 Dakar Biennale. With his assemblies of recycled materials – whether bullet cases and cartridges, or spoons – he denounces the tragedies generated by war. With his provocative and expressive sculptures in chunks, he bears witness to the essential questions of humanity and their devastating and universal answers.

THE EXPERTS

Joe Osae Addo (Ghana) was born in Ghana, West Africa, and trained at the Architectural Association in London. He worked in Finland, the UK and the USA, setting up his practice in Los Angeles in 1991. His work has been influenced by 'genus-loci', and how architecture can/ should respond to this in creating pieces which are both site specific and meet the needs of people who will interact with it. He is a founding partner in the A + D Museum, Los Angeles, whose mission is to advance knowledge and to enable people to appreciate and understand architecture and design. He moved back to native Ghana in 2004 and is currently the CEO of Constructs LLC, an inno-native design firm based in Accra and Tamale in Ghana. Addo is on the Board of ArchiAfrika, the network for African architecture, and directs the network base, recently moved to Accra.

Marilyn Douala Bell (Cameroon) is a socio-economist and co-founder and president of Doual'art created in 1992. She has been collaborating as an international expert in urban and rural development with the Swiss co-operation (DDC), the World Bank (GRETA), the European Commission (PPDR-FED) and with the German co-operation (EED, GTZ); she coordinated in Douala the programme FOURMI of the European Commission. In 1990 she produced with APICA, AFVP, GRET-Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques and the French co-operation an analysis on negotiations between population, founders and public operators for urban development. Doual'art believes in the role of architecture and symbols in the city, and over the years has successfully initiated and implemented public art projects with the City of Douala.

Paul Dujardin (Belgium) is the General Manager of the Centre for Fine Arts of Brussels (BOZAR) since 2002. Paul Dujardin holds a Master of Arts in History of Art and Archaeology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (1986), and a Master's Degree in Management Sciences FIM from VLEKHO (1987). He started his career as Deputy to the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Youth and Music. Founder of *Ars Musica* in 1988, a contemporary music festival, of which he remained the coordinator until 1993, he then became administrator and councillor. In 1992 he became general manager of the Brussels Philharmonic Society and co-administrator of the artistic direction and the programming of the National Orchestra of Belgium in Brussels. As secretary and treasurer from 1996 until 2002, he represented the Brussels Philharmonic Society in the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO), an international federation of the most important concert halls in Europe. Since 2002, as General Manager, he has represented the Centre for Fine Arts Brussels in various platforms, such as the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO), the International Society of Performing Arts (ISPA), the "Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne" (R.E.M.A.) and ASEMUS – Asia-Europe Museum Network (since Sept 2010).

Joy Mboya (Kenya) is the Executive Director of The Performing & Visual Arts Centre Ltd, popularly called The Godown Arts Centre, a nonprofit facility providing subsidized space and residency opportunities for Kenyan artists and presenting artistic public programs for local audiences. She is a Trustee of Gaara Dance Foundation (Kenya) whose aim is to develop contemporary African dance. She is also a Trustee of the Kalasha Film Awards (Kenya). She has served on the Board of Trustees of Action for Music. In 2004, she received the National Women's Council of Kenya 2004 Merit Award for her contribution to the development of the performing arts. Through appointment by the Minister of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, she has served on the Governing Council of the Kenya Cultural Centre, under which falls the Kenya National Theatre. Joy worked for 7 years as an architectural designer with a practice in Nairobi. At the same time, she joined the Kenyan pop band Musikly Speaking as lead singer. In 1993, she re-located temporarily to Sydney, Australia where she pursued post-graduate studies in Voice at NIDA. She returned to Nairobi, Kenya in the late '90s and initiated a training program in performance-making for young people aged 15 to 22 years. This organization, Fame Trust, was among the 'founder' groups of a communal arts space concept which was finally realized as The Godown Arts Centre.

Thomas Melin (Kenya) is Head of External Relations of UN-Habitat. An architect and planner by profession, he has been working in the field of international urban development for more than 25 years. His long-term posts have been for Swedish Save the Children in Ethiopia, and the Port Elizabeth Low-income Housing Programme in South Africa. He held a variety of progressive positions at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, where he served as Head of the Urban Development Division from 2005-2009 when he joined UN-Habitat. Mr. Melin is author of several articles and publications, among them, "Fighting Poverty in Historical Cities".

Francesco Siravo (Italy) is an architect and preservation planner specialized in historic preservation and town planning. Since 1991 he has worked for the Historic Cities Support Programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, with projects in Zanzibar, Cairo, Samarkand, Mostar, Mopti, Djenné and Timbuktu. Previous work includes the preparation of plans for the historical areas of Rome and Urbino, Italy, and for the old town of Lamu, Kenya, as well as consultancies for UNESCO and ICCROM. He has written books, articles and papers on various architectural conservation and town planning subjects, including "Zanzibar: A Plan for the Historic Stone Town" (1996) and "Planning Lamu: Conservation of an East African Seaport" (1986).

IMPORTANT DATES

17th of September, 2012:

VISIONARY AFRICA - *Art at Work* press conference. Media Center, Kampala, 11:00.

18th of September, 2012:

Regional Conference on art and architecture in urban development. Kampala City Hall, 9:00-17:00. On invitation.

Press interview with David Adjaye. 17:00-17:30. On appointment.

Art at Work pavilion opening, Kampala Railway Station Gardens, 18:30. On invitation.

Followed by a reception and concert by Kampala Symphony Orchestra and Carmela Sinco.

19th September-14th October, 2012:

VISIONARY AFRICA - *Art at Work* exhibit, Kampala Railway Station Gardens. Open to the public.

20th of September, 2012:

Workshop on artistic curatorial practices at the Uganda Museum. On invitation.

28th of September, 2012:

Joint artistic performance at the pavilion ground within the framework of the "Year of EU-China Intercultural Dialogue"

9th of October, 2012:

Donation ceremony for sculpture by artist in residence Freddy Tsimba, DRC. Location to be confirmed.

CONTACTS

International : H  l  ne van den Wildenberg, Cecoforma press: press@cecoforma.com

Uganda : Simon Kasyate, European Delegation, Simon.KASYATE@eeas.europa.eu

Anna Ku  ma, Bayimba Foundation annakucma@gmail.com