

ZAM



Summer 2012 - A milestone! AAF presents the **5th Annual National Art Competition** - In partnership with Nigerian Breweries, Plc (Book launch to commemorate 5-year anniversary).

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The DOEN Foundation's mission is to help build a world in which everyone can participate. With support of the DOEN Foundation, Bayima Cultural Foundation is one of the first organizations that helps to professionalise the cultural sector in and outside Kampala, Uganda. For example by organizing international and regional festivals which connect different art disciplines and stage upcoming artists. By doing this Bayimba stimulates the development of creativity and freedom of speech in Uganda.

DOEN promotes cultural frontrunners like Bayimba that help build a society in which individuals can develop and be part of a broader social context. If you are a frontrunner too, don't hesitate to visit our website www.doen.nl/internationalculture



Photo: Raphael Khisa



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WE, ZAM

Imagine Africa!* 54 countries, a multitude of (wo)men and mindsets.

A vibrant laboratory, a breeding ground of discovery and change. Her patrons? Journalists, activists, photographers, writers, academics, artists, visionaries and doers. Imagine beyond. It's happening. No matter convictions, religion, sexuality or background. Open minds, open mouths, open markets.

Imagine Africa! A continent no longer harassed by platitudes and prejudice, and attitudes marinated in woefulness and dependency. No romantics masking realities. A continent on top. No more judgments biased by narrow sightedness and a need to fortify. No limits. No longing. It's happening.

Enter the world of ZAM, follow and be part of it. Read and move. Here is Africa worldwide.

The ZAM Team

* The phrase 'Imagine Africa' refers to a speech of South African writer Breyten Breytenbach, held in March 2007 on the island Goree (Senegal) at the launch of 'Arterial', a network of people from the African arts and culture scene.

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Galerie SANAA is a new exhibition space for young and established artists from Africa and the Netherlands. Why African artists? We wish to direct attention to the fascinating artistic production of the African continent, which so far has been undervalued in the art world. Why African and Dutch artists? Because art does not follow frontiers, or fall into western/non-western categories. We facilitate the intercultural exchange of artists, based on the idea that this forges new pathways and promotes a fertile ground for the making of compelling art.



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Owusu-Ankomah (Ghana/Germany)
Victor Ekpuk (Nigeria/USA)
Arjan Janssen (Netherlands)
Eva Spierenburg (Netherlands)

until Sun April 1

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DRAWINGS
DRAWINGS
PAINTINGS

FANTASTIC CREATURES

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Barbara Polderman (Netherlands)
Manu Baeyens (Netherlands)

Sat April 7 - Sat May 19

PAINTINGS
SCULPTURES

Sat May 26 - Sat July 7

PAINTINGS & SCULPTURES

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CONTEMPORARY ART OF AFRICAN AND DUTCH ARTISTS

'We are witnessing a new kind of literature emerging in Africa' Helon Habila, page 14

'I'm not comfortable with speaking'

Jane Alexander, page 22

'Opening a window of dialogue may be the way to laying Boko Haram to rest' Kassim Mohamed, page 37

'You hate Plato and Marx and Martin Luther King and J.F. Kennedy for the hazardous wisdom that they made available' Elnathan John, page 68

'I can't sing to save my own life'

Kopano Matlwa, page 45

'A thought is not a real thought until a western mind has also thought it' Kalundi Serumaga, page 35

'I think I don't have Aids. But I am still thin and the parents at school still look at me funny' Prudence Mbewu, page 43

'Good dictators go to New York, bad dictators go to The Hague'

Paula Akugizibwe, page 73

'Will any fashionista worth her credentials want to copy her grandmama's style?' M. Neelika Jayawardane, page 42



THE CONTINENT



Guerill[art] Zimbabwean Sindiso Nyoni is a self-made artist, activist, designer and illustrator. His subversive African street style has won him numerous awards and made him a name as one of the world's leading activist designers.

Nyoni is working at an advertising agency in Johannesburg, but continues to do a lot of freestyle work – like this tribute to football legend Kaizer Motaung. Find a short documentary on Nyoni on our Facebook page. *More info at www.studioriot.com*

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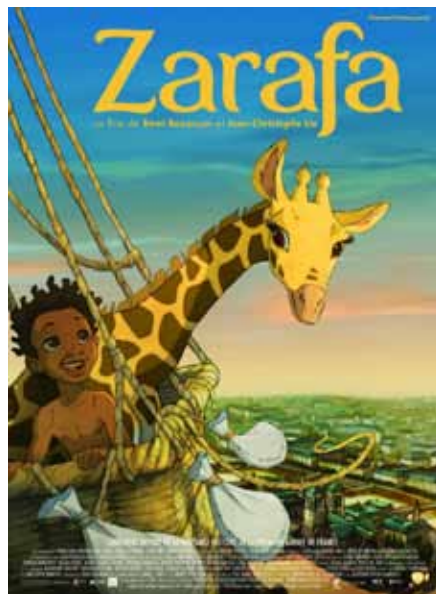


IMAGE: PATHE

In cinemas this month: **Zarafa**. Delightful African animation about a boy and a giraffe. Watch the trailer online.

PHOTO: KATERYNA MISHYNA

O PATRIMONIO AFRICANO EM PORTUGAL

A preview of this fantastic-looking book by Paula Scher and Kateryna Mishyna about the relationship between **Africa and Portugal** is available on our Facebook page.



Hasaki Ya Suda

It is 2100. The land has become the subject of fierce battles by... African samurai warriors. View the award-winning short film online.



PHOTO: THOMAS SUBTIL



THE PROTESTS IN NORTHERN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST ARE COMPLEX. THIS INTERACTIVE TIMELINE SHOWS YOU EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED. AVAILABLE ONLINE.

IMAGE: WWW.GUARDIAN.CO.UK

South Africa like you've never seen it before...

I SEE A DIFFERENT YOU

is a three-person collective of young photographers from Soweto. They make beautiful things and put them online. See their work featured on our Facebook page.

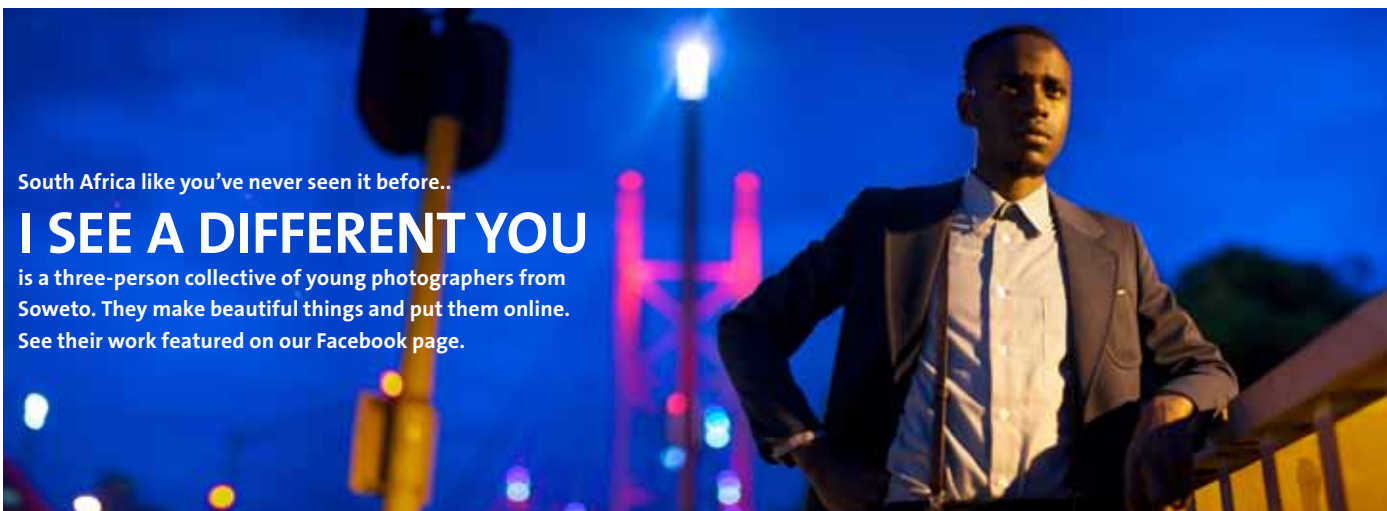


PHOTO: JUSTICE MUKHELI, INNOCENT MUKHELI, VUYO MPANTSHA



South African football star **Jeffrey Ntuka** (27) was tragically killed in January. Ntuka played for British football club Chelsea and the South African national team. After losing the battle with his **alcohol addiction**, his career took a downturn. Ntuka was allegedly stabbed by a jealous friend in Kroonstad, South Africa.

Zimbabwean businesswoman **Divine Ndhlukula** was awarded the first **Africa Award for Entrepreneurship**. Ndhlukula, founder and managing director of private security company Securico, received a USD 100,000 prize. According to the sponsors her company 'exemplifies the vital role

played by entrepreneurs in creating economic growth, prosperity, and realising opportunity in Africa'.

The new documentary **Justice for Sale** follows Congolese lawyer **Claudine Tsongo** as she investigates the case of Masamba Masamba, a junior soldier jailed for rape. The film is touring European festivals. Catch it in the Netherlands during **Movies that Matter Festival** (22-28 March).

One of Zimbabwe's most popular poets, **Chirikure Chirikure**, has announced that he will be part in the **Caine Prize for African Writing**

jury. The prize is probably the most prestigious literary award on the continent and will be awarded this summer. Chirikure is well known for his satirical poems, but is also one of the leading literary agents in his country.

Nigerian movie legend **Omotola Ekeinde** (pictured) is finally conquering the rest of the world. She stars in the big-budget blockbuster **Last Flight to Abuja**, which is set to become one of the first Nollywood movies to make it to global mainstream theatres. The world premiere is scheduled for March 29 in the prestigious **Odeon Cinema in London**.



JINHUA, CHINA

It had never occurred to me that all those fireworks during Chinese New Year had a deeper meaning. It was Jorge, a 25-year-old Mozambican student, who told me about it while we were walking through the streets of Jinhua, 900 miles south of Beijing. 'They're lighting fireworks to scare away evil spirits,' he said. He pointed at the red lanterns that were shining from nearly every window. 'Those keep evil spirits away, too.'

We were on our way to the restaurant where a New Year's party was being held for foreign students. After dinner, an African girl stood alone on the empty stage and gave a heartbreaking rendition of a Chinese love song. She'll never forget that song, I thought – it'll always stay with her.

I realized how clever the Chinese are, spreading all those African students – the official number is 4,000 per year – over the entire country. Just as the girl will never forget that Chinese song, Jorge won't forget that the Chinese chase away evil spirits at New Year. In the villages around Jinhua, people even put tables outside with food and drinks to placate their ancestors. How could Jorge ever have imagined the Chinese are so similar to Africans if he'd stayed in far-off Mozambique? (*Lieve Joris*)



ENUGU, NIGERIA

The hills around Enugu look like humongous breasts. The sun above the city is dull, like the overcooked yoke of a sunny side up. The banister I'm leaning on is coated in fine dust. The smell of burning waste hangs in the air. It comes from the incinerator down the road.

Enugu is empty. And quiet. Normal for mid-December when city dwellers return to their villages for the holidays. Once in a while a car drives by. A girl hawking moi-moi beancake balances the tray of food on her head and shouts, 'Buy moi-moi'. She cannot be more than 10 years old. Her voice fades as she turns a corner. Silence. Suddenly noise slices into the silence: voices singing, cymbals jangling, bells ringing. The noise is loud but not as effusive as the ones made by itinerant Pentecostal preachers who peddle the gospel early in the morning before most people are out of their beds. A voice calls and a group chants

the refrain.

Then they come into view: a group of six clean-shaven men draped in orange blankets singing and chanting *Hare Krishna!* Even on this Harmattan afternoon, their bald heads glitter with sweat. They stop in the middle of the street. One moves away from the group, raises a hand in the air, twirls like a ballet dancer. He crosses his legs and sways from side to side with astonishing fluidity. It is as if the bones in his body have been filleted out. He looks like a flame in the wind. He goes down and then rises, standing on the tip of his toes. He closes his eyes, throws his mouth wide open and shouts in Igbo. His voice mingles with the group's Hare Krishna refrain and fits perfectly. Forget American films on TV. Forget fast food restaurants dotted all over the place. This is a sure sign of globalization. (*Chika Unigwe*)

I have always been puzzled by the fact that people on the commuter trains crowd on the entrance. Even when it's not full, even when they go twenty stations away. Some researcher must come up with a new theory about it, something like 'Millipede Mentality'. They crouch somewhere and then just stand there. MUNYARADZI MAKONI, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA

'There is no place like home,' says Abdullah Jibril, 28. He isn't referring to the shabby hotel room in which he has lived for the past two years. Jibril's home is in Guinea, on another continent, thousands of kilometres away. Every week he spends a fortune to talk to his wife and two sons over the phone. Banda Aceh is a town that is mainly known for the tsunami disaster of 2004 and because Islamic Law is practiced here. It is also the home of Persiraja, a football club in the second Indonesian division. Jibril is captain of a team that

mainly consists of mediocre players. 'We used to have a great Argentinean striker, but he left the club when he didn't get paid on time.' Djibril smiles when remembering. 'His wife was very beautiful.'

Now Jibril is one of the very few foreigners in the area, and probably the only African, creating quite the spectacle when he's wandering through town. Still, he insists that he isn't lonely. 'I learned to speak some Indonesian, and the Acehnese are nice people. Racism here isn't as bad as in some places.'

He was only 17 when a Belgian coach arranged

a transfer to France. Soon after, he found himself transferred to Singapore. 'I liked it there. I was even offered Singaporean citizenship so I could play for the national team.' But then he was somehow transferred to Indonesia. 'Referees here are very corrupt, the weather is impossibly hot and most of the pitches are in terrible condition. But at least I get paid, and I have time to study. When I'm 40, I'll be back in Guinea with an education and enough money to build a life there. In the meantime, I just have to work hard.' (*Anton Stolwijk*)



Each Alone

WRITING AS A WAY OF SEEING

At the prestigious Winternachten Lecture 2012, award-winning Nigerian writer **Helon Habila** asked: ‘How many among us can claim to have really seen the poor and the powerless?’ An essay.

TEXT: HELON HABILA

In 2005 I wrote to a friend of mine, a South African, and told him I had just visited his country. I had been to Cape Town and I commented in particular on how breathtakingly beautiful the view of the ocean was from Table Mountain. At the time my friend was in exile from his country, he had left because he couldn't bear the apartheid system. In his reply he said that growing up he used to swim in that very ocean in the mornings before going to school, but when he grew up he saw that a majority of people in the country couldn't swim freely like him because they were black, and he could swim only because he was white, so he left.

Art, and indeed life itself, is a way of seeing. There is looking at a thing, and then there is seeing a thing, the two are totally different. We look with our eyes, but it takes more than eyes to really see. This is a subject I find myself coming back to over and over again in my writing and in my thinking, and I find that, as a metaphor, it can be extended to most everyday situations. Oppression and poverty have always been with us, but how many among us can claim to have really seen the poor and the powerless, not just look at them, but truly see them?

One of the ways we avoid seeing is by pretending that what we are looking at is not really what it is. We look at the poor and we pretend that they are actually not so unfortunate; that they may be lucky not to have our burdens: no mortgages to think about, no car payments to worry about. In fact, we begin to convince ourselves their tears are actually tears of joy, not sadness, and we might even begin to feel sorry for ourselves. And yet, not one of us will change places with them.

Dungeon

History is replete with examples of such moments of willful blindness. During slavery, the slave buyers pretended that they were not doing it for economic motives, they were actually doing these benighted Africans a favour by taking them away from their savage homeland to Europe and America and the Caribbean, and converting them to Christianity. The same thing happened with colonialism. The colonizer, blinded by greed and self-righteous power, convinced himself that to colonize - which really means to subjugate and dispossess - was a burden he reluctantly had to bear for humanity's sake. Seeing is an acquired skill, something that we have to learn, it doesn't just come to us naturally.

My friend's story reminds me of another story. It is a short story - a parable really, by the American writer, Ursula K. Le Guin, titled, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*. In this beautiful story we are presented with a happy and flourishing city, a magical utopia drenched in sunshine and the sound of music. We are told that its citizens are filled with 'A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer.'

But then suddenly, this sun-filled, summery story takes a darker turn, we are led away from the happy streets to a dungeon where a boy of about ten years old is imprisoned, tortured, casually starved. The fact of this child's situation, we are told, is no secret to the people of Omelas, 'They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas... they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance

of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery.'

This scapegoat mythology has appeared in many guises in different cultures. It is in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*; Le Guin herself attributes her inspiration to William James' *The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life*. In my country, Wole Soyinka has dealt with it in his play, *The Strong Breed*.

Alone

But Le Guin has captured it most vividly with the directness and force that only the short story can muster. Imagine yourself a citizen of Omelas, living with this terrible knowledge, what would you do? Most of the burghers are heart-broken, but they come to accept it, they even begin to rationalize it, to justify it. After all, due to prolonged ill treatment, the child is already feeble minded and incapable of living any meaningful existence even if it were to be taken out of the dungeon.

But not all of them think that way. Some of them decide they can't live in Omelas anymore. Like my South African friend, they leave. We are told, 'They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. ... Each alone... they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness... It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.'

I particularly like the inclusion of that phrase, 'Each alone.' You may descend into that dungeon as part of a group, as part of society, but whatever decision you make, to stay or to leave, you are going to make as an individual. Commendable as it is to just walk away from that city of shame, I like to think that sometimes to just walk away is not enough. Once you have entered that dungeon, and raised your lamp, and seen the injustice residing in there, nothing can ever be the same again. No matter how far away you run, that image, that knowledge will be with you.

And this is the difference between the true writer and the non-writer: The true writer cannot forget. The true writer in us will be haunted by that image until he or she writes about it. It will keep him awake at night, it will visit his waking hours. The writer is fascinated by evil, not mesmerized or attracted by it, but he is fascinated by it, by the fact of its existence, and by its sheer banality. It is a slippery slope, and we all stand on its edge. The writer is like that dragon slayer of legend who tirelessly seeks after dragons, from town to town, village to village, tormented by his passion; he knows that once he stops to rest, or to reflect on how perilous his vocation is, he will be overtaken by the very evil he seeks to exterminate.

Fiction

How can literature act to increase our vision, to enlarge our sympathies? And this is where I want to make a link between literature and truth: truth as a concept has always existed side by side with fiction, way back to the earliest days of fiction. Before the advent of the novel, the English novel in particular, the dominant form of narrative was life writing, that is, biography and autobiography, or 'histories' as they were then called.

The earliest writers of the novel, in order to be taken seriously, pretended that their tales did actually happen (although in this deceit I like to imagine more the hand of printers and marketers than that of the authors themselves). Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* was supposed to be an account of a real shipwreck and survival, written by Robinson Crusoe himself. Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* was actually titled *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. *Moll Flanders*, again by Defoe, has the full title, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, etc. Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once to her own Brother), Twelve Year a Thief, Eight Year a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and died a Penitent. Written from her own Memorandums*.

Once you have entered
that dungeon and raised
your lamp, nothing can
ever be the same again

I dreamed I was an old sick detective, and I had been looking for lost people for a long time

I find it interesting that people actually believed those novels to be true stories. But then, people in any age will believe the most unexpected things, just look at *Big Brother*. Such is the power of the narrative to transport, to convince, to evoke sympathy. That is why we still find it convincing when a character called Michel Houellebecq, writer, appears as one of the central characters in the new novel, *The Map and the Territory*, by Michel Houellebecq, or J.M. Coetzee, writer, in the novel *Summer-time*, by J.M. Coetzee, or Martin Amis in *Money* by Martin Amis.

Detective

I can go on and on, but the point I am making is that this self-referencing goes beyond post-modernist playfulness or mere self-aggrandizement by the authors; it is a continuation of one of the fundamental functions of the novel: the attempt to grapple with the truth, to seek to convince – to shorten the distance, as it were, between truth and fiction. Because of this connection between the novel and truth, the late Chilean writer,

Roberto Bolaño, likens writing to detective work. He says in a poem: 'I dreamed I was an old sick detective, and I had been looking for lost people for a long time. Sometimes I happened to look in the mirror and I recognized Roberto Bolaño.'

As writers, all we are doing is trying to see past the red herrings and the false leads to the heart of the mystery we call the human condition. We are asking not just 'whodunit?', but also 'why'. The writer enlarges our sympathies by making us see ourselves better, but first he must see himself better in his own work. For regardless of how extraverted and socially oriented we may be in our writing, we write first and foremost for ourselves; we write to answer the most niggling questions bothering us, and so, in a way we are raising that lamp not just to see the poor boy in that dungeon, we are raising it to a mirror, to see ourselves.

Homeless

Writing as a quest, as detective work, has always been an important aspect of my writing, perhaps because I started my career as a journalist. My very first novel, *Waiting for an Angel*, has as its main character a journalist; in my third novel, *Oil on Water*, I again find myself returning to the theme of journalism and the quest for truth. Here a British woman visiting the Nigerian Delta has been kidnapped and two journalists are sent into the jungle to find her, and through their eyes we are shown a world devastated by violence and oil pollution.

The writer, like the detective, like the dragon slayer, is the ultimate loner and outsider. 'Each alone'. He can only exemplify the truth he sees by bucking against trend, against tradition and accepted ways of thinking. That is why in some countries where freedom of speech is seen as a threat, writers are imprisoned, or sent into exile, or even killed. In fact, exile – both real and metaphoric – has been described by Edward Said and many others as the natural state of most thinkers and intellectuals, to whose ranks the writer surely belongs. In order not to compromise himself he must reject all notions of belonging, he must make his home only in his writing, he must adopt an attitude of transcendental homelessness because, to quote Theodor Adorno, 'It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home'.

For me, no writer has exemplified and lived that truth better than the eccentric Zimbabwean writer, Dambudzo Marechera, who famously said, 'If you are a writer for a specific nation or race, then fuck you.' Of course he was sent into exile – first by the white minority government of Ian Smith, and nine years later when he came back from external exile in England he still remained a pariah, an internal exile in his now independent country, and in 1987 he died, still an exile.

War

Most nationalisms have no place for the individual voice, everything is subsumed under the story of the nation, and that is why the writer, unless he writes in praise of the nation, will always be viewed with suspicion, even hostility. And that is why the writer, the artist, will always be at war with society. Where the novel-

ist cannot be tamed, his novel is often re-interpreted and co-opted to serve the national cause. Perhaps the most obvious example of this would be Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* – I have watched over the years how this important book has gradually come to assume an almost oracular sanctity. The author, in countless interviews and essays, has mentioned that he wrote the book for two main reasons: first, to point out to us Africans where the rain began to beat us – that is where we went wrong and therefore made it possible for alien culture to overcome us - and second, as a comment against colonialism.

Today, our critics and intellectuals have conveniently forgotten the first reason. That is how dictatorships are formed, in the name of the nation, of the collective, in the unquestioning belief that tradition is always right, that the new is alien and contaminating. When Marechera was asked what inspired him as an African writer, of course they wanted him to say, 'African history', or 'African culture', but instead he referred to the suffering of the people, the helpless who are daily denied justice by the very leaders who had promised them so much.

Dreamers

Who is more important: the nation or the individual, the one single child or the community? This question isn't as counterintuitive as it might appear. This is a debate that has been going on since the beginning of human history. But as a writer I must cast my lot with the individual, for how can I help or change the nation if I cannot even see my fellow man?

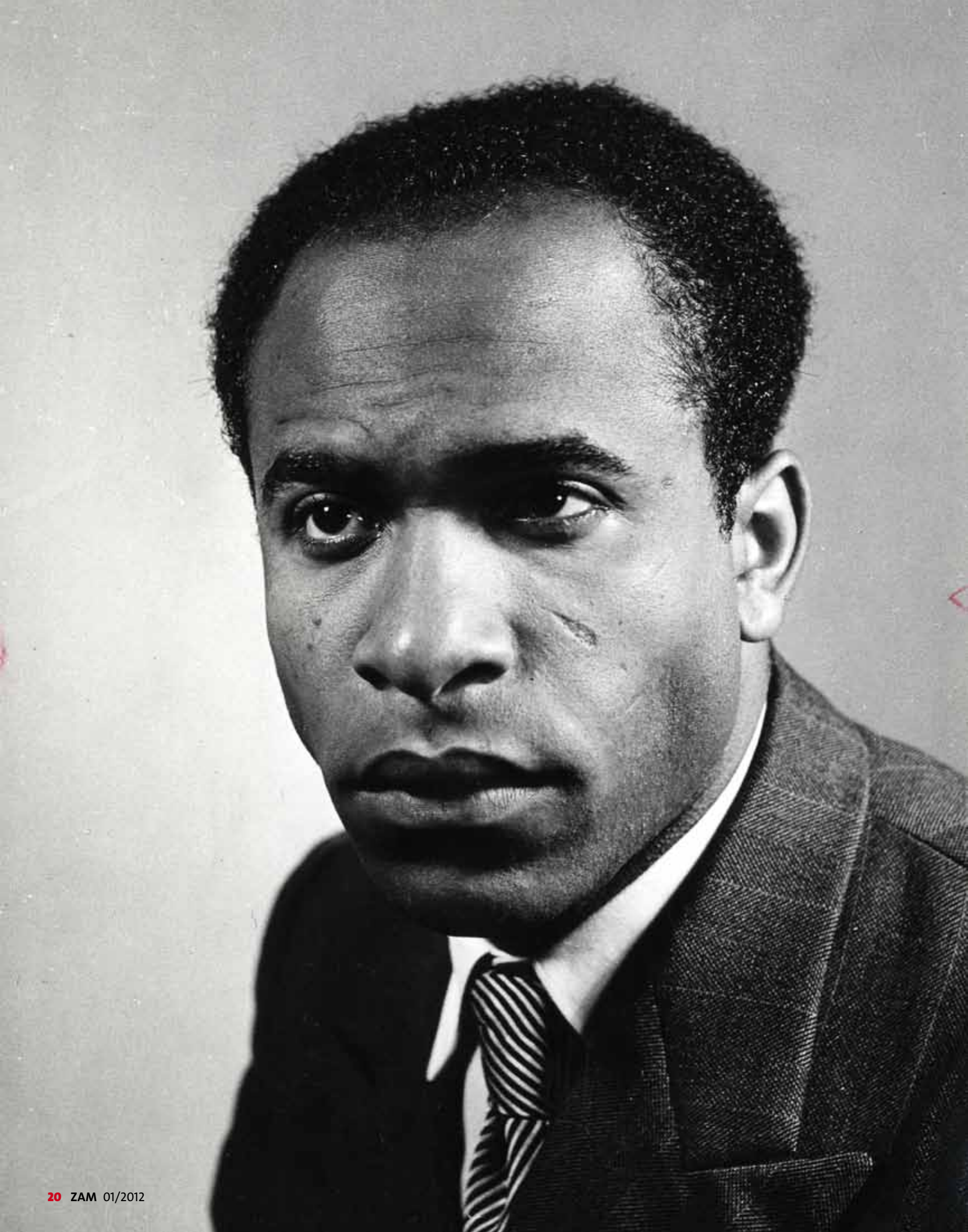
As a writer I work with character, one at a time, and I always begin with the simple question: what does my character want? If I can answer that, the rest is easy. In my second novel, *Measuring Time*, my protagonist decides to write a history – or what he prefers to call a 'biography' - of his hometown, and the method he adopts is to write about the ordinary individuals, not the chiefs, or the generals, or the pastors, or the imams, but about the labourer and the housewife, and the schoolchild. He believes that if he can talk to these individuals and paint in words their hopes and desires, then in aggregate, he will be capturing the dreams and hopes of his entire hometown.

I wrote this book in 2007, long before the popular revolution we call the Arab Spring, but I now see that my character's intention is in so many ways similar to that of the Arab Spring revolutionaries. They are both dreamers, dreaming of a new dawn when the individual's story will be as important as that of the president's, when both will be seen to be truly equal before the law and before history.

In front of our eyes the Robert Mugabes and Yoweri Musevenis and Hosni Mubaraks and Muammar Ghaddafi's who all came to power in the name of the people, some under the glorious banner of anticolonial struggle, have turned into enemies of the people. But as long as the nation continues to fail the individual, to deny him even the most basic of civil rights and freedoms, so long will the writer continue to walk away from the nation, to focus his attention on the individual, that single child in the dungeon.

Gradually we are witnessing a new kind of literature emerging in African, a literature I like to call 'post-nationalist'. In our globalized world, the writer now prefers to write about the individual who, tired of not being seen or heard or respected, simply packs his bag and crosses into the next country where he can live more freely. We are discovering what writers like Marechera knew long ago, that before you can be a writer for a group or a nation, you first have to be a writer for the individual.

If you are a writer
for a specific
nation or race,
then fuck you



Frantz Fanon died 50 years ago, leaving us with his last testimony, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Today some of his predictions ring true.

TEXT: ACHILLE MBEMBE, PHOTO: FRANTZ FANON FOUNDATION/IMEC

A coming nightmare

Written in the crucible of the Algerian War of Independence and the early years of third world decolonization, Fanon's book achieved an almost biblical status. It became a source of inspiration for those who opposed the Vietnam War, marched with the civil rights movement, supported the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and countless insurgent movements around the world.

Fanon's life had led him far from the island of Martinique in the Caribbean where he was born a French citizen. He took part in the war against the Nazis only to discover that, in the eyes of France, he was nothing but a 'negro'.

He would end up feeling a deep sense of betrayal. *Black Skin, White Mask*, his first book, partly relates this story with colonial forms of dehumanization. But it was in Algeria where he worked as a psychiatrist that Fanon finally cut the cord that bound him to France.

The country had started to replicate Nazi methods during a savage war against a people it denied the right to self-determination. About this war Fanon said that it had taken on the look of an authentic genocide.

Having sided with the Algerian people, France disowned him. He had betrayed the nation. He became an enemy and, long after his death, France still treated him as such.

For those committed to the cause of oppressed people or fighting for racial justice, his name remained not only a sign of hope but also an injunction to rise up. Indeed, to Fanon we owe the idea that in every human being there is something indomitable, that no domination – in any form – can eliminate, contain or suppress this spirit, even partially.

Praxis

Fanon tried to grasp how this 'something' could be reanimated and brought back to life under conditions of subjugation. He said that this irrepressible and relentless pursuit of freedom required the mobilization of all life reserves. It drew the human subject into a fight to the death – a fight he was called upon to assume as his own task, one he could not delegate to others.

Fanon was also convinced that colonialism was a force animated at its core by a genocidal drive. To destroy colonialism could only be ensured by violent means.

His diagnosis of life after colonialism was uncompromising. For him, there was a distinct possibility that post-liberation culture and politics might take the road of retrogression. The project of national liberation might turn into a crude, empty shell: the nation might be passed over for the race, and the tribe might be preferred to the state. He believed that the liberation struggle had not healed the trauma that was the true legacy of colonialism. After liberation, the native elite had been ensconced in intellectual laziness and cowardice. In its will to imitation and its inability to invent anything of its own, the native bourgeoisie had assimilated the most corrupt forms of colonialist and racist thought, and were stuck in a great procession of corruption. The innermost vocation of the new ruling class seemed to be part of the racket or the loot. It had annexed state power for its own profit and transformed the former liberation movement into a trade union of individual interests while making itself into a screen between the masses and their leaders.

Relaxation

Fanon was equally scornful of nationalization, which he saw as a scandalous, speedy and pitiless form of enrichment. He warned against the descent of the urban unemployed masses into lumpen violence.

From nationalism, they passed to chauvinism, negrophobia and, finally, to racism. They were quick to insist that foreign Africans should go home to their country. They burned their shops, wrecked their street stalls and spilled their blood on the city's pavements and in the shantytowns.

Surveying the post-colony, Fanon could only see a coming nightmare – an indigenous ruling class addicted to relaxation in pleasure resorts and casinos, spending large sums on display, on cars, watches, shoes and foreign labels.

He could distinctly see stupidity parading as leadership, patriarchy that turned women into wives, vulgarity going hand in hand with the corruption of the mind and of the flesh – all in the midst of hilarity and demobilization. The spectacle of Africans representing themselves to the world as the archetype of stupidity, brutality and profligacy, he said, made him angry and sick at heart.

Metal

To read Fanon today means to translate into the language of our times the major questions that forced him to stand up. Questions that made him break away from his roots and to walk with new companions on a new road the colonized had to trace on their own, by their own creativity, with their indomitable will.

All around us, it is easy to see elements of his nightmare. Globally, new forms of colonial warfare and occupation are taking shape, with their share of counterinsurgent tactics and torture, Guantanamo-style camps, secret prisons and their mixture of militarism and plundering of faraway resources.

New forms of social apartheid and structural destitution have replaced the old colonial divisions. As a result of global processes of accumulation by dispossession, deep inequities are being entrenched by an ever more brutal economic system. The ability of many to remain masters of their own lives is once again being tested to the limits. No wonder that many are not only willing to invoke once again Frantz Fanon's heretic name, they are also willing to stand up and rise again.

I have been attracted to Fanon's thinking because it has the brightness of metal. His is like a metamorphic thought, animated by an indestructible will to live. What gives this metallic thinking its force and power is the air of indestructibility and the inexhaustible silo of humanity that it houses.

ACHILLE MBEMBE IS A RESEARCH PROFESSOR IN HISTORY AND POLITICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, SOUTH AFRICA. HIS LATEST BOOK, *SORTIR DE LA GRANDE NUIT*, WAS PUBLISHED IN 2010 IN PARIS.

JANE ALE



ALEXANDER

SECRET ARTIST

Jane Alexander is one of the enigmas of South African art. Her work is critically acclaimed, but what is it about? 'People are able to extract things for themselves.'

TEXT: SEAN O'TOOLE



Alexander
dispatched a
legal letter to
Die Antwoord
requesting
the video be
removed

Every February, during Cape Town's hottest month, students at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, a satellite department of the University of Cape Town, must register for the start of the academic year. It is a hot and sweaty procedure that, for now at least, continues to defy the advances of online technology.

For Jane Alexander (Johannesburg, 1959), a professor at the art school, the yearly arrival of hordes of undergraduate students demanding advice and signatures has been a routine part of her working year since 1998.

A large room with wooden floorboards is crammed with mostly white students holding paperwork. Some of them are new students, others are returning following the long summer break. Alexander, her straight, greying-brown hair worn loose, is seated behind a desk stacked with differently coloured registration papers. She is wearing a green blouse. Her cheeks are flushed – it is 38 degrees outside and the room has no air-conditioning. Placed on the wall behind Alexander, just above her head, is a single word printed on an A4 sheet of paper. The temporary sign not only clarifies what she does, what she is most famous for, but, in the university context, also defines her specialism: 'sculpture' it reads.

POP CULTURE

Even if the young first-year students queuing to register do not recognise her by sight, they will undoubtedly know Jane Alexander by name. She is the artist who made *The Butcher Boys* (1985-86), that inseparable trio of classically sculpted, seated male figures whose bestial facial features include snouts and horns. Art historian Brenda Schmahmann has described it as 'an extraordinary commentary on dehumanisation and brutality, issues that were prominent in the public consciousness during a period of remorseless political repression'.

Despite the relative youth of this work, the young artist-hopefuls fanning themselves with bureaucratic forms will have studied it at school, possibly even made the connection between their art studies and global pop culture while watching music videos on YouTube.

In January, in the lead up to the release of their new album, *Tenšion*, the satirical South African rap outfit Die Antwoord released a promotional video that explicitly referenced *Butcher Boys*. In the video, a creature with snouts and horns has its heart ripped out by Die Antwoord's female vocalist. The gesture did not sit well with Alexander, who dispatched a legal letter requesting the video be removed.

Whether interpreted as homage or cheap pastiche, the use of this iconic work by Die Antwoord does make sense. *Butcher Boys*, which is owned by the South African National Gallery, a public museum that is a 10-minute stroll down a tree-lined avenue from Alexander's office and studio, is deeply ingrained in the shared visual consciousness of the country. It offers an acute and uncompromising statement on the violence that marred South Africa life during the 1980s, violence that has metastasized in incalculable ways to the post-apartheid period. The gangland tribalism hinted at in the faux prison tattoos decorating Die Antwoord's front man is just a small part of this complex web of violence.

NOT FOR SALE

Violence seems to lie at the centre of almost all of Alexander's work. But is this a fact, or merely interpretation? The artist will not directly tell you that her work is about violence, at least not if you confront her on campus or around town. Despite being a visible presence on the Cape Town art scene, regularly attending openings, talks and performances, Alexander prefers not to do press interviews. She is, in the words of Spanish philosopher Pep Subirós, who is a great admirer and latterly also a clear-sighted interpreter of her work, 'a sort of secret artist'.

Here are some of the things Alexander will confirm, should you, like Subirós did some years ago, knock on her studio door in the Egyptian Building with questions. She will tell you that she makes sculpted tableaux and site-specific installations incorporating her many individual figures; also photographs and photomontage, many depicting her sculptures in urban and rural landscapes; and, occasionally, video. She will further confirm that she

does not make her work for sale through commercial galleries; that she prefers to exhibit in response to invitations by museums and biennales. Yes, she will admit, sometimes she does exhibit in commercial galleries, as in 2010, when she showed 13 of her recent animal-human figures in a newly configured tableau at the Stevenson Gallery in Cape Town, but even then her work is not for sale.

In her typically soft-spoken manner, she will concede to exercising greater vigilance over the sale of her sculptural work. Since 1999, Alexander has only sold one work, despite continually adding new works to her modular repertoire. Last year she also donated a sculptural piece to an auction in aid of a local art scholarship; a consultant acting on behalf of Jochen Zeitz, executive chairman of PUMA, who is amassing a collection of contemporary African art, quickly snapped it up. Most importantly, however, she will emphasise her refusal to interpret her works, to shut down their meaning with words.

INTRIGUE

'Jane is an educator and an artist who is really enveloped in her creative practice,' says Laurie Farrell, executive director of exhibitions at Savannah College of Art and Design, a regional museum in the American seaport town of Savannah currently hosting Alexander's first North American survey show. 'In some ways the strength of her images along with the absence of her persona adds to the intrigue of her work.'

'I tend to resist invitations to interpret my own fiction,' remarked author JM Coetzee in a rare interview with literary scholar David Attwell in 2003, after winning the Nobel Prize in Literature.

It is an attitude implicitly shared by Alexander. 'I'm not comfortable with speaking,' she confirmed to a *Sunday Argus* journalist a few years ago. 'I work in a very direct – and not really conceptual – way, so people are able to extract things for themselves.' Pushed to explain the meaning of *Born Boys* (1998), a tableau featuring nine cement-grey young boys in masks that the artist modelled on street children living near her then home, Alexander ventured a

rare interpretive statement: 'The masks are a metaphor for the different states one perceives the children are in. You can never access those children. You can talk to them but you'll never know who they are or what they've experienced.'

AUDIENCE

Cameroonian-Swiss curator Simon Njami wrote in 2004, 'Maybe I'm still naive but for me there's a kind of magic in a work of art. It is something an artist produces, but they don't know exactly why. If you are not told what you are looking at it allows for interpretation.' In the same year he included Alexander's many-figured installation, *African Adventure* (1999-2002), a sombre deliberation on South Africa's new political dispensation, on his globe-hopping showcase of contemporary African art, *Africa Remix*.

Since 1994 an increasingly diverse audience outside South Africa has been able to access her impressively crafted work, in effect, allowing for the enacted interpretation Njami spoke of. Her work has, for instance, been displayed in Accra, Amsterdam, Bamako, Barcelona, Berlin, Bilbao, Havana, Munich, New York, Paris, Sao Paulo, Singapore and Tokyo. This great visibility has inevitably resulted in a steady production of writing focussed on making sense of Alexander's consummately finessed, psychologically immanent, and emotionally austere work. Diligent and insightful as this writing is, it has often stood at a remove from the artist. They are not her words.

BASEMENT

A few years ago, while working on a newspaper article about Alexander, confronted with the difficulty of her silence, I visited the small library in the basement of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Here, in this municipal museum, librarian Jo Burger had quietly, without fanfare, kept a record of the doings of South Africa's more prominent artists. A boxed file with Alexander's name on it included a handwritten entry form for the 1988 Vita Art Now exhibition, the blank-spaced paperwork not dissimilar to that stacked in front of Alexander on registration day in February. In forward

'I'm not comfortable with speaking'



PHOTO: LUKE TAN







Page 22: *Infantry* 2008-10 (detail): 27 fiberglass figures, oil paint, found shoes, wool carpet

Page 26/27: *Verity, Faith and Justice*, 2006 (detail with *Bird* 2004, *Harbinger in correctional uniform* 2004/06, and *Defendants* 2006); *Installation Courtroom 21, City Hall*, 1st Singapore Biennale 2006; Synthetic clay, fiberglass, oil and acrylic paint, prisoner's uniform from pre-democracy South Africa, shackles loaned from Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison, industrial strength gloves, found clothing, wood walking sticks

Page 28: (top) *Convoy* 2008, Pigment on cotton paper; (bottom) *Post Conversion Syndrome (in captivity)*, 2003, Pigment on cotton paper

Page 29: (top) *Corporal*, 2008, Pigment on cotton paper; (bottom) *Harbinger with rainbow*, 2004, Pigment on cotton paper

Page 30: *Verity, Faith and Justice*, 2006 (detail - *Harbinger in correctional uniform* 2004/06); *Installation Courtroom 21, City Hall*, 1st Singapore Biennale 2006; Fiberglass, oil paint, prisoner's uniform from pre-democracy South Africa

All works: © JANE ALEXANDER



sloping script, Alexander's 1988 competition entry lists her modest achievements, which then included two student prizes. Fast forward to October 28, 2001: Alexander had just been awarded the DaimlerChrysler Award, which that year focussed on South African sculpture. In the *Sunday Argus* Alexander is quoted as whispering: 'It's a difficult thing to win an award. I just wouldn't like it to change my values.' Those values are not limited to her principled silence, as I discovered looking through her file and finding her postgraduate student thesis. After completing her undergraduate fine art studies in Johannesburg, in 1982, Alexander briefly taught English as a second language in Rehoboth, Namibia, a teaching role she would reprise when she moved to Cape Town after completing her Masters degree in 1988.

ELEGANT

As part of her postgraduate studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Alexander was required to submit a written thesis. For the most part, it outlines her interest in then recent trends in realist sculpture, notably the work of American figure sculptor Duane Hanson. Arguably, the most intriguing aspect of the document is the eight-page discussion Alexander offers on her own work, including *The Butcher Boys*.

As an artist, wrote Alexander, she was interested in identifying 'the manner with which violence, aggression, cruelty and suffering are conveyed through and contained by the human figure'. Being 'deliberately elegant', she stated, was key to her presentation strategy. The news media, she revealingly offered, was a significant source for her early sculptures and photomontages, 'particularly propagandist related images and personages, and the methodologies employed to endow these figures with the appropriate presence'.

PURPOSE

News media remains a key source of inspiration. When Alexander exhibited a human-vulture hybrid figure at the São Paulo Biennial in 2006, she enclosed it in security fencing and had five Brazilian men dressed in South African

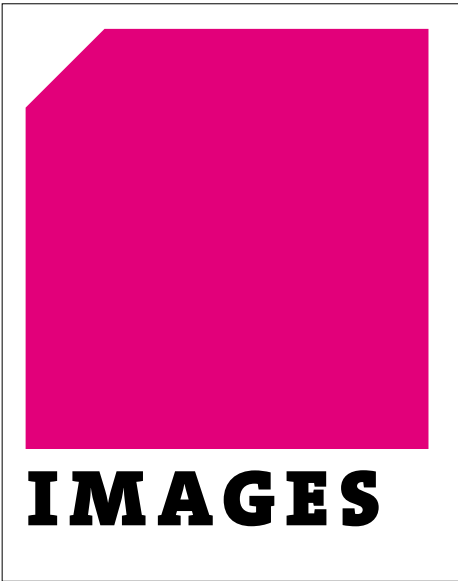
private security uniforms guard the installation. Later shown in a revised configuration in Johannesburg, *Security* (2006) not only references South Africa's macabre private security culture, which in 2006 was the subject of a headline-grabbing violent strike, but also explicitly references the Melilla barrier fence. This 11km long fence, which separates Morocco from the Spanish city of Melilla, is a striking symbol of European anti-immigrant xenophobia enacted on African soil. The North African fence has a correlative in South Africa's own apartheid infrastructure, in particular two electrified security fences along the Zimbabwe and Mozambique borders that, while no longer set to lethal mode, continue to be actively patrolled.

It is tempting to interpret works such as *Security* and *The Butcher Boys* as social criticism, to slot Alexander into a programme of resistance. Artist and writer Sue Williamson did as much when, struck by her 'extraordinarily mature series of works, technically highly accomplished and conceptually powerful,' she included Alexander in her seminal book, *Resistance Art in South Africa* (1989). The unfortunate outcome of this very necessary book is how it now leads to descriptions of Alexander as a 'prominent resistance artist', to quote a news journalist reporting on Die Antwoord. Jane Alexander is not resisting anything. She said as much as a student, in 1988. Her work, she wrote, is not intended as social criticism, nor does it want to promote an attitude: 'It is intended rather as an attempt to objectify observations of the character of a particular time and place from a particular social context.' That's all. It is remarkable how faithful she has remained to this plainly stated sense of purpose.

Jane Alexander: *Surveys* (From The Cape of Good Hope), curated by Pep Subirós is on at SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (February 21 – June 3, 2012).

SEAN O'TOOLE IS A JOURNALIST AND WRITER LIVING IN CAPE TOWN. HE WRITES AN ART COLUMN FOR *FRIEZE* MAGAZINE (LONDON) AND IS CO-EDITOR OF *CITYSCAPES*, BIENNIAL MAGAZINE ON CITIES AND URBAN ISSUES PRODUCED BY THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CITIES.

Being
'deliberately
elegant' was
key to her
presentation
strategy



NEW MESSAGE

Nabil El Makhloufi
 Born in Fes, Morocco (1973)
 Lives in Leipzig, Germany



PHOTO: CAMILLE ZAKHARIA

Galerie 23 in Amsterdam will organise an exhibition of El Makhloufi's work later this year. See www.galerie23.nl

'People say that I have foreseen the revolution in the Arabic world in my paintings. That, of course, is not true, but I have seen the contradictions, the tensions and the social problems that in the end have led to the uprisings. Those observations have crept into my work. After studying at the College of Arts in Rabat, I, like many Africans, travelled to Europe. Yet for me it wasn't a flight from an economically precarious situation, it was an intellectual journey. I longed for new impressions and experiences. Rather accidentally I ended up in Leipzig, a city in former Eastern Germany with empty factories that attracted many artists. This art scene has become known as the 'New Leipziger School'. I decided to stay and study art in this city. I make figurative paintings, mainly using oil or acrylic paint on canvas, because these materials allow for layers in technique, which reflect the layered motives and narratives I want to convey. Some think the colours that I like to use a lot - brown, yellow and blue - are reflective of the Moroccan landscape, but I think they are rather influenced by the light here in Leipzig. While giving thought to my roots, I discovered Sufism as an important source of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. What makes Sufism interesting to me is the idea that only through loss one can obtain a higher, poetic truth. This idea has consequently become a principle in my work: I paint over, I erase, I hold back. This process of searching and trying can clearly be seen in my work.'

(Fenneken Veldkamp)



Top left: *Überfahrt*, 2009
 Bottom left: *Die Waschung*, 2011
 Right: *Menschenmenge I*, 2008
 Oil and acrylic on canvas





Untitled, 2010. C-print on watercolour paper. Each panel:108 x 170 cm

IMAGE: MOHAU MODISAKENG/COURTESY OF THE SAATCHI GALLERY, LONDON

MOHAU MODISAKENG IS A 25-YEAR OLD ARTIST FROM SOWETO, JOHANNESBURG. AFTER FINISHING HIS ART STUDIES IN CAPE TOWN IN 2009, WHERE JANE ALEXANDER (SEE PAGE 22-31) WAS HIS MENTOR AND SUPERVISOR, HIS STAR HAS BEEN RISING VERY QUICKLY. THIS SPRING HIS WORK CAN BE SEEN IN LONDON AS PART OF THE *OUT OF FOCUS* EXHIBITION. www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk

EXHIBITIONS

Guy Tillim is a South African photographer, widely regarded as one of the country's finest. He started out as a reporter in the 1980s. In later years he took landscape photography to a new level, devoid of clichés. Tillim's most recent series is set in French Polynesia. March 2 – June 3 in Huis Marseille, Amsterdam. www.huismarseille.nl

Invisible Borders is a project started by Nigerian photographers in 2009. By taking road trips through various countries, they want to 'to tell Africa's stories, by Africans, through photography and inspiring artistic interventions'. This resulted in, amongst many other things, a beautiful website (www.invisibleborders.com) and an exhibition in the United States. February 15 – April 22 in the New Museum, New York. www.newmuseum.org

Deborah Poynton is one of South Africa's foremost realist painters. Her new series, *Land of Cockaigne*, is referring to the medieval myth of a land of plenty. 'Painting itself is that land of never-realised fulfillment, a place away from language where I can efface myself and try to feel peace.' April 4 – May 18 in Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg. www.stevenson.info



Guy Tillim

PHOTO: GUY TILLIM



Invisible Borders

PHOTO: CHARLES OKEREKE/INVISIBLE BORDERS 2010.



Deborah Poynton

IMAGE: DEBORAH POYNTON/ COURTESY OF STEVENSON, CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG.

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OPINIONS

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Notes on a Scandal

Western politicians, church leaders and NGOs scream and shout with every turn the homosexuality debate in Uganda takes. Little do they know, says Kalundi Serumaga.

A flashpoint in the debate about homosexuality in Uganda has been the Anti-homosexuality Bill containing proposals to further criminalize same-sex acts, making them punishable by death. This move has been widely condemned by many of the donor countries, with some even threatening to close the aid taps. The leadership of the Anglican Church in Uganda, as well as many Evangelical groups stand on polar opposite sides. Their fulminations against this 'abomination' dominate the airwaves, consultative seminars and the pulpit. The Ugandan government seeks to strike a skewed balance. President Museveni openly warned his party members that the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (no less) had bent his ear on the matter, while allowing a party loyalist to privately re-table the bill.

Sex can be a complicated issue, and it remains a bone of contention in societies all over the world. Neither President Clinton nor Obama could get the US Armed forces to drop their policies on gay soldiers. *Don't Ask Don't*

Tell became the historic compromise. Last year this policy was finally repealed, but almost by default. This is the conundrum that Uganda civil society – to the delight of our dictators – cannot unpick. The despots' quick recital of European history, speaks of women voting just 80 years

The western mindset takes its intense obsession with matters sexual as the natural default position

ago and sexuality fully legalised less than 30 years ago. Why are their 50-year old countries being denied the right to a similar leisurely pace? The discourse is further confounded with the

western mindset that takes its intense obsession with matters sexual as the natural default position. This is what it then transmits globally as 'normal', as a result of its cultural dominance of the world.

Donors

Only the native voice is truly silent. Public discussion of matters sexual is not the done thing in most African societies. Very explicit community expositions on matters sexual are held, but only in private. The current European-like free flowing sexual media-fest was created only quite recently under the pressures of the War Against AIDS.

Uganda is not a democracy. The state is influenced by powerful interest groups, descendents of the various African warlord factions that once secured the colony for Britain. Among these is the Anglican Church, one of the biggest landowners in the country and owner of nearly half the country's schools, numerous hospitals and rural clinics. Until the eve of independence in 1962 only Anglican Church members were legally allowed to rise to the very top of the civil service. These, together with Uganda's ruling NRM party; the donor community; other faith factions and human rights activists all seem to have perspectives that seek no benefit in the hindsight provided by our history. As such, it is hard to know if their argument about criminalizing homosexuality a discussion about sex at all. Perhaps it is about

theology and the organisation of knowledge. Perhaps it is about how to weigh history. Perhaps it is just about good manners. Or voyeurism.

Women

The adventurer John Hanning Speke was a man of his Victorian times. He was in pre-Uganda in 1862. He needed African assistance to find the Nile's source so that he could then 'discover' it immediately thereafter. In his review of the book *Speke's Journal* that draws on the explorer's recently released diaries, Sean Redmond comments on the practicalities Speke had to deal with:

'Speke provides a truly valuable, day-by-day account of life at an African royal court... Speke found himself in turn caught between (King) Muteesa and the Namasole (the queen-mother) as they manoeuvred for prestige and power. The two were jealous of each other over Speke's company, so he favoured now one, now the other, visiting them in turns, trying to cajole their permission to continue on to the Nile....'

In that passage we learn that there was a woman of considerable institutional power in the African court as there was in the Victorian one. Reflecting on the evidence in African systems of 'gendered political power', American researcher Holly Hansen states that African women are 'one of history's most politically viable female populations'.

Casualty

Such voices were not heard with the appointment in 1997 of the first female Vice-President in Uganda. In a manner similar to the donor-driven excitement of Liberia's first female President, commentators promoted this development as ground breaking.

There is more. The notion of a woman taking a leading role in religious matters is not a conceptual problem for most indigenous African cultures. This reality should be contrasted to the near-schism that occurred in the Anglican church

when the issue of ordaining women priests was first tabled, a decade before the current controversy over female Bishops that still shakes the global Anglican church today.

And more. Previously, the Ibo practiced a form of female same-sex marriage. Some Kikuyu still do. Whether sexual in nature or not, their existence shows a scope of conceptualisation in African minds that did not exist within the Judeo-Christian religion then, and which western thinking still wrestles with now. But like the Nile discovery and sexual discourse, until the European hand has been placed on African events, they have not happened. How will any aspect of African life be understood, when actual manners and customs have never been

Many African followers fail to understand how global Anglican theology changed while the founding Bible stayed the same

acknowledged properly? Many small tragedies of mind and method flow from the failure to yet answer that question. And an understanding of sexuality may be the biggest casualty.

Ancestral darkness

June 3 is Uganda Martyrs' Day, a public holiday that attracts pilgrims from all over the region. It commemorates the day in 1888 that Christian missionaries exploited to later bring down Buganda's King Mwanga. Part of their strategy was to publicly denounce him as a homosexual after he burned scores of young male converts at the stake for resisting his alleged advances. The incident became a major proselytizing tool

and forms the very ideological foundation of the Anglican Church in the entire Eastern African region.

In just more than a century, western opinion politically condemned homosexuality and overthrew an African government, only to later denounce those African governments that condemn it today. The Christianity that aimed to 'liberate' Africa from her ancestral darkness has now left many of its African followers bewildered. They fail to understand how global Anglican theology changed while the founding Bible stayed the same.

Explanation

Uganda's human rights abuse record, which reached truly disturbing levels at the height of the aid giving, has left government opponents wondering why the discussion about homosexuality has attracted such direct donor intervention. In its quarter century of state power, Uganda's ruling party has more than a little blood on its hands, from the battlefields of northern Uganda to the well-documented state torture chambers and the devastated villages of eastern Congo. Media censorship, detentions without trial, suppression of demonstrations, and election rigging are rife, and well documented by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Yet, president Museveni has been feted by no less than three different American presidents serving a total of four or five terms. None of them have been able to explain why the possible fate of some gay Ugandans weigh more on their conscience than the fate of those countless Ugandans and Congolese who have actually perished or remain illegally imprisoned under this regime. Such contradictions must provide some grim satisfaction to Africa's dictators.

Western Minds

If African society here is indeed now rigidly opposed to any arrangement that deviates

Only Dialogue Will Stop Terror

from a monogamous heterosexual universe with clearly marked boundaries for women, it is European Christianity that has made it institutionally that way. It is not necessarily the native cultures, where the evidence points to a more complex approach to these issues.

This is a story of how the future of African sexuality is in danger of becoming a hostage to two traditions of European enlightenment. Maybe I should have relayed the stories of people embroiled in the tale, but this has refused to be that kind of story. The details are not the issue. Oppression and discrimination exist. But this is not new, and it is not limited to any one group. It is the way Ugandans as a whole are condemned to live.

A thought is not a real thought until a western mind has also thought it. Once it has been thus endorsed, it then becomes his thought. Once it is his thought, then it is the only thought worth having, and all other thoughts must step aside. The presumption seems to be that the complexities of human sexuality were discovered only when the western world encountered them, and as the western world reached its conclusions about them, then these are the only valid thoughts.

In the end, societies must decide how they want to live. Uganda's governing processes have never been inclusive enough to capture that. The three-way debate between the secular elite, donor governments and the Christian establishment – all well funded – is narrower still. The questions, like the over-governed citizens, remain impoverished.

KALUNDI SERUMAGA IS A JOURNALIST, CULTURAL ACTIVIST AND BANNED BROADCASTER IN HIS HOME COUNTRY OF UGANDA. HE IS CURRENTLY COMPLETING A DOCUMENTARY SERIES ON OIL AND CITIZENSHIP.

Although Somalia and Nigeria are far apart, their residents have become victims of similar militant groups – Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. Fighting them will yield few results, argues Kassim Mohamed.

Charged bodies, sombre mood, deadly bomb blasts are among the things Somalia and Nigeria have in common.

Although the two countries are located in different parts of Africa, the residents have become victims of similar militant groups – Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. The daily death and devastation by these groups have made their countries security hotspots. While Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram may have different modus operandi and spiritual structures, they share a common vision and ideology of creating sharia-ruled states. Their leaders are on a recruitment drive to ostensibly build rock-solid forces to fight the governments.

Domestic factors may have triggered the formation of these two groups, but it seems international policies are rapidly radicalizing their followers. Some African security commentators say the two groups are part of a growing resentment that emanates from the war on terror – a war that is quite clearly repugnant to these groups' ideologies.

War

Al-Shabaab is an Arabic word that means 'Youth'. This militant group came into the spotlight in late 2006 after Ethiopian military incursion into Somalia to back former president Abdullahi Yussuf. The Ethiopian military defeated the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an amalgamation of local Islamic courts that controlled most parts of South and Central Somalia. In the name of protecting security, Ethiopia violated a United Nations resolution that prevented frontline countries from intervening militarily in Somalia. In the wake of the military defeat, over 3,000 members of the ICU

went underground to form an insurgency and carry out attacks in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia. They soon became known as The Al-Shabaab.

There is historic enmity between Somalia and Ethiopia dating back several decades. Capitalising on the attitude of the Somali community towards Ethiopia and its military, Al-Shabaab

Goodluck Jonathan cried in public after he heard the news that Boko Haram members have infiltrated his security agencies

managed to gain the sympathy of several traditional and religious elders and grew in strength. When the top brass of Al-Shabaab declared their interest in transforming Somalia into an Islamic country, foreign interest groups started sensing the impending strength Al-Shabaab could accumulate if it would be allowed to establish this state. Al-Shabaab was declared a security threat not only to Somalia but to the entire world. This perception prompted foreign nations to intervene with policies and military aid to the Somali government.

An African Union force of at least 10,000 troops from Uganda, Burundi and Djibouti is currently based in Mogadishu; Kenyan Defence

Forces are battling the Al-Shabaab from the South and Ethiopian troops are waging war on the group from the west. American journalist Jeremy Scahill recently uncovered in *The Nation* that the CIA uses a secret prison buried in the basement of Somalia's National Security Agency headquarters, where prisoners suspected of being linked to Al-Shabaab are held. He also unearthed that the CIA runs a counter-terrorism training program for Somali intelligence agents and has its own aircraft based at the Mogadishu airport. Despite all these efforts, Al-Shabaab has only increased the number of its attacks. In a recent video message, Al-Qaeda network's chief Ayman al-Zawahiri announced Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda are joining forces. Analysts say foreign policies have ulcerated the already fragile state of affairs in Somalia.

Task Force

The television images coming out of Nigeria of late have been as horrific as those from Somalia. Women and men have been hacked to death and suicide bombers have turned cities like Kano, Damaturu, Potiskum and Jos into mourning venues. In the last 14 months an estimated 900 Nigerians have been killed, which is largely blamed on a group named Boko Haram (Western education is a sin).

According to Nigerian insiders, the organization was founded in the year 2001. The leader, Mohamed Yusuf, claimed that Nigeria authorities were corrupt and self-centred. After a fall out with politicians in Borno state, Yusuf was arrested and executed. Days later, violence spread across Borno and neighbouring states. The government put the army to action and about 800 people were killed in the space of a week. When Boko Haram responded with a string of bombings, the Nigerian government deployed a special military task force to quash the insurgency. This strategy hasn't been very successful. Recently, Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan cried in public after he heard the

news that Boko Haram members have infiltrated his security agencies. Interestingly enough, Boko Haram is alleged to have sent fighters to Somalia to be trained by Al-Shabaab. The new leader of Boko Haram recently hinted in a video message that he would like to be part of a global jihad aligned to Al-Qaeda.

Dialogue

Opening a window of dialogue may be the ultimate key to laying Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram

The CIA uses a secret prison buried in a basement and has its own aircraft at the Mogadishu airport

to rest. True, neither group has shown any serious interest in dialogue in order to reach political and social resolutions, but then nobody has ever offered them the right venue and means for discussing their claims. Perhaps now is the time to do just that. The current strategies of the war on terror don't seem to hold a long-term solution for Somalia or Nigeria. The common man is paying a colossal price. According to a recent report, the international community has already spent US\$ 55 billion on Somalia since 1991; much of this was spent on counter terrorism and failed military approaches.

In the case of Al Shabaab, dialogue doesn't seem all that difficult. There is a broad agreement among Somalis regarding the future role of Islam in Somalia. The problem seems to be that different groups have different interpretations of Islamic law. Since neither Al-Shabaab nor the Somali government seems to be winning the

military struggle, the time for negotiating has never been more perfect.

Acacia

Boko Haram would seem a more difficult partner to get to the negotiation table, as religious animosity between Christians and Muslims may scupper any attempt. But the Nigerian president can form a commission to look into Boko Haram's demands and the underlying issues. If Africa's most populous nation can mend the broken trust by creating an environment of dialogue between the government and Boko Haram, religious animosity will definitely take a backseat.

In the African setup, elders used to gather under a shade (Acacia trees mostly) and sort clan issues. These were informal courts whose final verdict was always taken seriously. There's hope for both Somalia and Nigeria, but that ray of hope should come from Somalis and Nigerians themselves – not western powers. Roll out the carpet for dialogue and discuss. The US military intervention in Afghanistan should act as a lesson. After several years, the United States are now engaged in dialogue with their enemy, the Taliban. In an effort to write the obituary of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, political and military issues will have to be rendered second to dialogue.

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Democracy is Hard Work

Democratic revolutions in Africa invariably turn sour and history holds the answers to why, says William Gumedé.

Ordinary African citizens tired of tyranny, and acting together, have been remarkably effective in removing rotten independence-movement governments, military dictatorships and personal rule. Coalitions of civil groups, whether consisting of trade unions, women's and student groups, churches, media, non-governmental organizations, rallying together, held together by common determination to remove an autocratic government, have on many occasions, through 'peoples' power' in Africa removed tyrannical regimes in spectacular ways.

Sadly, however, in most cases, the autocratic African regimes ousted by peoples' power are often soon replaced by similarly autocratic movements and leaders – as can be seen most recently in places like Egypt. Even where opposition parties came to power under the aegis of democracy and lift autocratic independence movements and leaders out of power, they more often than not behave like their autocratic predecessors. A case in point is Zambia, where Kenneth Kaunda, the independence leader and the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the dominant independence party, was swept out of power by Frederick Chiluba and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), which was formed by civil groups. However once in power, Chiluba was as truant as Kaunda.

Accountable

Revolutions towards democracy in Africa almost never seem to turn into genuinely lasting democracies. Since African independence, people's power took a number of different forms. There were those against colonial or apartheid regimes, such as South Africa

and Zimbabwe; then there were those against former independence movements turned autocratic governments, such as Zambia; and there were those against autocratic regimes, whether military regimes, one-or-dominant-or-multiparty autocratic regimes ruling under the veneer of 'democracy', or outright personal rule. The anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements that led campaigns for independence were rarely proposing democracy as an alternative once the old regimes were out. These movements were often led by organizations that may

Civil groups do not automatically ensure that revolutions will turn into democratic ones

have rhetorically said they were democratic, but were hardly democratic themselves – often run by one dominant leader, clique or even armed wing. The ordinary citizens who were the foot soldiers, activists and members in these movements commonly do not hold their leaders accountable after independence. Rather than insisting on continual accountability, genuinely democratic decision-making and empowerment for all, they abdicate their powers to a small (liberation struggle leadership) elite.

Armed Wing

In the instances where 'democratic' opposition

groups against a sitting independence movement government emerged, this trajectory has in most cases been the same. In some cases the opposition parties were either irrelevant – with associations with the old colonial or apartheid regimes, or even more politically conservative in outlook than the sitting, but failing, independence-movement government.

In many cases the focus of opposition movements was mostly on unseating the sitting independence movement government. They rarely settle on detailed democratic reform programs, fearing alienating powerful allies, who could undermine the broader quest to unseat the sitting autocratic liberation-movement-turned-government.

In other cases, such as in Eritrea and Uganda, new opposition groups against post-independence governments formed armed wings, whose cultures then dominated the entire opposition movement. When eventually these armed opposition movements come to power, their military and undemocratic culture also dominates the governments they now run.

Arab Spring

The North African democratic revolutions were driven by spontaneous action. The delayed effects of the global financial crisis was one of the sparks that pushed youths with little prospects of jobs and middle classes that were financially hard pressed together. The fact that well-developed organized civil groups were missing in these revolutions was perhaps the biggest weakness of the Arab Spring.

Of course, in many cases in Africa, 'the presence of well-developed organized civil groups' does not automatically ensure that revolutions will turn into democratic ones. So here's what *is* needed: well-developed organized civil groups *and* active citizens, holding their leaders accountable. The quality of the corps of the leaders, including that of potential successors, and the quality of organized civil society is of course equally crucial. Leaders and movements taking power after

autocracy must be imbued with a genuine sense of social justice.

Success

Mauritius is a good example of a country where a new democratic opposition appeared when the dominant liberation movement-turned-government slid backwards. The three core elements were present: a well-developed and independent civil society that formed a new political party based genuinely on democracy; a group of quality leaders spanning several generational cohorts who offered quality leadership; and active citizens, who actively held their leaders and political movements accountable.

Cape Verde is another African democratic success story. The party of independence there initially plunged into autocracy after independence. More democratic orientated members of the party broke away and, together with organized independent civil groups, formed an opposition party. That Movement for Democracy eventually came to power – and also disappointed initially. But eventually it turned out well. Agitation by independent civil society and active citizens and members of dominant parties helped hold ruling parties accountable in government – after they initially failed, like elsewhere in Africa.

It is clear that the after-tremors of the global financial crisis – which may cause hardships in

more African countries, may also serve as a catalyst for democratic revolutions in more African countries, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa. If these and the Northern African revolutions are to turn into genuinely democratic governments, the past lessons of African failure in this regard will have to be heeded. It is possible for democracy to succeed – but it's hard work.

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The New Missionaries

Adventurist travellers, confronted with ‘poverty in Africa’, feel the need to ‘do something’. Pieter van der Houwen wonders if their initiatives are really about the recipient.

As cheap airline tickets continue to shrink the world, travelling has become some sort of fashion activity. A seasoned backpacker will vehemently argue that Kampala is without question a more interesting destination than Rome or Paris, the logic being it is further away and has a ‘less European feel’ about it.

A common reaction of the adventurist traveller in Africa is guilt – guilt for one’s own affluence. Suddenly poverty that had remained two dimensional in disposable newspaper coverage attains a third and tangible dimension. This confrontation often provokes a desperate need ‘to do something’. These initiatives often revolve around a personal experience, for instance an attempt to save a sick child in one’s own vicinity.

Over the past few years, however, the ambitions and volume of personal aid projects have grown substantially. The number of private aid projects in the Netherlands alone is estimated at 8,000. This number is growing steadily as there seems to be a common consensus that conventional aid and development has become ineffective due to swelling bureaucracy and corruption.

Books have been published describing the pitfalls and successes of various private aid initiatives; one of the most recent is *The Children of Africa* by Ton van der Lee. This book has become a sort of User’s Manual for potential initiators of private aid projects.

In his book, Van der Lee reveals the trajectory from the very first seed of initiative to the complication of a school in Sanouma, a small Malian fishing village. Although some of Van der Lee’s descriptions of village life are quite beautiful,

one cannot escape the feeling that this project is more about the white Western initiators than the Malian recipients.

One Dimensional

The Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe suggests that for Europeans Africa will always remain an open template that can absorb images and narratives. These narratives, Mbembe argues, are not about Africa at all; they create a metaphor through which Europeans can recalibrate their own moral compass. Africa becomes a creation that we utilize to forge our identity and enhance our morality.

Journalists seduced by either the catastrophic or the exotic have failed disastrously in portraying the continent.

Why else would a continent three times the size of Europe boasting a population of one billion people speaking 2,000 languages be portrayed as a single entity? How is it possible that a continent that has been closely scrutinized by the media industry for the past 50 years remains subjected to such one-dimensional portrayal? Journalists seduced by either the catastrophic or the exotic have failed disastrously in portraying the geographical dimensions and vast complexity and nuances of the African continent.

Van der Lee, too, persists in referring to Africa

in sweeping romantic statements. Arriving at the small provincial airport of Mopti he instantly forgets the rain and the cold in Holland. He describes the bar at the small provincial airport of Mopti. A bowl of fruit, a few pieces of roasted goats meat, lukewarm beer in a rusty refrigerator. ‘This really moves me, this is real, this is Africa’. These quixotic generalizations border on patronizing and will only reinforce the wall of clichés that surround Africa.

Western Union

Of course it will always be argued that Van der Lee’s initiative in Sanouma helped better the lives of 52 children and this remains an irrefutable truth. However after reading the book one cannot escape the sense of 19th century missionary zeal that is not in sync with a 21st century globalized world. In a sidebar Van der Lee explains the use of Western Union to send money to Africa. What he does not say is that

the World Bank has calculated that the amount of money sent back to Africa by Africans living and working outside of the continent is three times the amount of all western aid. This money is exceptionally effective as it is sent directly from relative to relative.

Solving any problem, be it personal or global demands a degree of sacrifice or at least compromise. This is never the case in Western approaches to ‘African problems’.

Both conventional aid and Van der Lee’s approach circumvent any such sacrifice,

perpetuating the role of the Western saviour.

The Harvard economist Dani Roderick states that if the West was to adopt a more lenient immigration policy towards Africans for two years only; this alone would generate 200 billion dollars in remittances. This approach would involve a degree of sacrifice but would be so much more effective and much more apposite to a 21st century globalized world.

PIETER VAN DER HOUWEN IS A DUTCH PHOTOGRAPHER AND DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER. HE IS COMPLETING HIS PHD IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW. WWW.PIETERVANDERHOUWEN.NL



Column Colonial Fabric

‘How can Gwen Stefani’s attempts to remain relevant by spitting out a poorly constructed set of ‘African’ looks compete with the innovative designs of African tailors?’ asks *Africa Is A Country* blogger M. Neelika Jayawardane

The Dutch fabrics manufacturing company Vlisco has been ‘producing colourful fashion fabrics that form an essential part of the lively West and Central African culture’ since 1846. Their designs are typically associated with a certain cohort of parliamentarian women throughout the continent, many of whom are overly fond of shoulder-puff dresses better left behind in the 1980s.

However, the company that claims to be ‘the sole authentic designer and manufacturer of such fabrics as ‘Wax Hollandais’ is proud to trumpet that its new ‘strategy is aimed at enabling well-to-do African women to experience the brand in all her facets.’ Vlisco’s new lines, ‘Delicate Shades’, ‘Silent Empire’ (a troubling moniker for Geisha-inspired designs), and ‘Nouvelle Histoire’, offer new designs aimed at gaining the attentions of a younger market; the new PR argues that ‘Developments take place at neck-breaking speed in Africa and Vlisco aspires to inspire and gain the loyalty of younger generations as well.’ And true to their word, the new fabrics have a gorgeous, transformative quality to them, producing trompe l’oeil effects that unravel ‘three-dimensional illustrations with outlined shadows, as the elusive waves of colour appear to set the illustrated woman into motion, seemingly revived in your imagination.’

Black Dutchmen

I almost want to congratulate Vlisco’s purple prose writers for finally catching up with the complexity of the African woman - one who does not exist in a unidimensional primitive past ordained for them by an equally constrained European eye. And it’s a good thing that Vlisco

realized that no fashionista worth her Bottega Venetta and Chloe would be caught wearing a frock that looked like their grandmother’s at the Independence Cha Cha.

But despite the welcome changes in the designs, African critics in both fashion and the intelligentsia find it problematic that the material sold throughout Africa as ‘authentically’ African has never actually been ‘African’ at all. Vlisco cloth remains, in actuality,

Will any fashionista worth her credentials want to copy her grandmama’s style?

a European product aimed at Africans. ‘Dutch’ wax print was based on batik print techniques from the colonies in Indonesia and other parts of the Indian Ocean world, into which the Dutch East India company sent warships in order to take over trade. In the Netherlands, the batik techniques were simplified and adapted for faster manufacturing processes using machinery, which eliminated much of the finesse with which the original cloth was made. The result: cheap, mass produced stuff, which was eventually pushed on foreign markets.

It is commonly thought that African soldiers recruited by the Dutch (known as the ‘Belanda Hitam’, or ‘Black Dutchmen’) and stationed in the East Indies returned to West Africa in the

nineteenth century, bringing along batik fabrics for their loved ones... giving birth to a new clientele.

What is now commonly called ‘African fabric’ goes by a multitude of names: Dutch wax print, Real English Wax, Veritable Java Print, Guaranteed Dutch Java, Veritable Dutch Hollandais. This is not to say that Africa never invented anything - but to illustrate that in Africa, as in any place where identity, objects, and concepts of taste and beauty are influenced by trade, was (and remains) in flux. In other words, there is no such thing as an ‘essential’ African look or way of being.

Bounty

Yinka Shonibare, the Nigerian-British contemporary artist, has famously used this signature cloth, traditionally associated with the imagery that ‘Africa’ conjures up, to fashion dresses fit for European madams of the Victorian era. Shonibare’s disembodied Victorians blurt the obvious: that every privilege enjoyed by the European body is patterned with the bounty and booty from the colonies; and conversely, that every ex-colonial matron has a little Victorian lurking within them.

That new innovations in printmaking is bringing finer cloth and designs to African consumers is wonderful. And it’s sweet that a number of major design houses, including Michael Kors, Burberry and Oscar de la Renta recently used African prints and motifs. But for those tailors who labour on their free-standing Singers abandoned by colonial madams, and every young African designer attempting to compete with Gwen Stefani’s latest attempt to remain relevant (this time, by spitting out a poorly constructed set of ‘African’ looks on her ready-to-wear collection), seeing the West embrace what it sees as the latest fad, and garbling out a few bad frocks in ‘African’ (read: Dutch) prints remains problematic at best.

M. NEELIKA JAYAWARDANE WAS BORN IN SRI LANKA AND GREW UP IN ZAMBIA. CURRENTLY, SHE IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK-OSWEGO. THIS PIECE APPEARED PREVIOUSLY ON WWW.AFRICASACOUNTRY.COM

Getting Thinner



I lost a lot of weight in the past year because of all the stress that came with moving into my new house. I never knew

there were so many bills to pay! I was prepared for mortgage, water and electricity, but every week there was something new again. It was like a whole new existence. I ran around and worried constantly.

The biggest headache was transport. I used to rent a place close to my work, but now I was forced to take the train. At first I did not want to, because trains, or rather public transport in South Africa has not improved much since apartheid times. Trains are mostly used by servant workers travelling from the townships into the suburbs. Because all of us have to be at work at seven in the morning, there is usually a rush. Young rebels who do not want to buy a train ticket hang on top of the train or outside between the coaches. In my first week there was a young boy trying to catch the train, pushing his way through. He fell out of the moving train and in that process scraped half of the skin off his face. It seemed like the other passengers didn't give a damn, because for them this is the life they are used to. But for a black snob like me this was a trauma I needed counselling for.

Big Bums

With time I started to understand how it worked. I learned that there is a Christian coach where a black man preaches his interpreted version of the bible. Then there are a few people who make a living from selling things like pens, cigarettes and baked cakes inside the train. Someone needs to create proper jobs in South Africa!

But even as I got used to it, the stress remained and I began to lose more and more weight. The white parents at my school noticed and began to look puzzled. They started asking me questions about why I looked so 'tired'. In their mind, you see, a thin black person has to have AIDS. They are used to their domestic workers, who eat half a loaf of bread, quarter chicken and tea with milk and three sugars *every day*. This results in big tummies and big bums. Anything less, and you have AIDS.

I would explain to them that 'we are still moving house', hoping that would work. After all, they also give silly excuses when their children are insufferable. They say things like 'oh shame it's because daddy is away on business' or 'ouma is a little strict.'

At the same time I was looking around for life insurance policies, to cover my mortgage in case something would happen to me. I did some word-of-mouth research, and eventually I asked a lady who worked at the bank. To my shock she told me I should get tested for 'various diseases that can influence the payout rate of the policy'. We all know she was referring to HIV/AIDS. She said she would phone with more information and I gave her my contact details.

Test

Two months later a voice greeted me in typical Afrikaner fashion. 'Wie praat nou?', she asked. Who's speaking? I know this is the usual greeting from Afrikaners on the phone but it sounds rude to me. So I responded by asking her, 'When you dialled my number, who did you think you were looking for?' That was the last time we spoke.

I went to another company. They were equipped with a resident doctor who can perform all medical tests immediately. After a few hours



**PRUDENCE
MBEWU**

But for a black snob like me this was a trauma I needed counselling for.

of hell, my test came back negative but they suggested I come back after six months. A while later, a friend of mine wanted to take the test. I went with her and even took the test again, simply because she was so scared. The nurse asked me when last I had the test. 'Quite recently', I said truthfully. Then the nurse completely freaked out and started talking to me as if I had HIV. With treatment like this it's no wonder some people would rather sit in silence and suffer from HIV then go out and get help. I think I would suffer less embarrassment being caught with holes in my underwear. Anyway, I don't think I have AIDS. But I am still thin and the parents at school still look at me funny.

PRUDENCE MBEWU IS A SOUTH AFRICAN COLUMNIST. SHE LIVES IN JOHANNESBURG AND WORKS IN A SCHOOL.



Kopano Matlwa is one of South Africa's most exciting writing talents, recently winning both the Wole Soyinka Prize and the EU Literary Award. ZAM caught up with her.

TEXT: PALESA MOTSUMI, PHOTO: GUUS RIJVEN

What is your current state of mind?

I am optimistic and full of anxiety for many reasons. For one, I would like to see South Africa becoming a better place, but in the same breath, I have come across young Africans who are doing remarkable things. I am influenced by my ancestral roots, which bind me to do more. My focus is coming as close as possible to doing God's work.

Is that why you write?

My writing is based on prayer. I sometimes feel like an orphan of the world and in such challenging times, so I anchor my life on prayer.

What is your idea of happiness?

I draw energy from myself most of the time and that serves me to gain some happiness. I am happy to help people, whether it is through my writing or through my work as a doctor.

Who do you admire?

When I worked in one of the hospitals in Cape Town, I was inspired by the nursing sisters who were working with me. They care selflessly and their actions illustrated to me what it means to do things without being noticed. To serve.

Who do you dislike?

I do not like Julius Malema. (*Former leader of the ANC Youth League, ed.*)

You travel a lot. Which places do you like most?

I love different things in many of the countries I have travelled to. I gathered great energy from New York City; I was amazed and shamed by the kindness of the people in Zimbabwe. Austria was exquisite; its beauty makes it a repeated destination for my husband and I.

Does your husband play a role in your work?

My husband is my best friend. We have been committed to each other since my first year of university in Cape Town, seven years ago. We have been married for a year now. I would love to have a normal family, to be a good friend, daughter and wife.

So are we going to see you in the near future being a mother?

Not yet. I believe you need to be selfless in motherhood. I have not reached that stage in my life, I'm still very selfish. I still need to give further meaning to my life and the world.

What else would you like to do besides writing and being a doctor?

I would have loved to be able to sing, but I can't sing to save my own life.

What is the connection between your writing and your home country?

I grew up in Mamelodi, a township in Pretoria, in a caring environment. My parents and family were and still are very supportive of all my decisions. I have never felt as though both of my passions, writing and helping people are at loggerheads. When I wrote my first book, *Coconut*, it was an outlet for all the issues I was grappling as a young South African. *Spilt Milk*, the second book, is less about me and my issues, but directed to who we are as a people, in South Africa.

Would you say that your dream has come true?

There is a lot of room for improvement. Yet, I'm currently studying towards my MA in Global Health Science at Oxford University and that gives me the courage to steer on and represent the bulk of young people all over the world who are saying no more to injustice and inequality and who rally for a better world.

What would surprise people about you?

I am an old soul as much as I am an eternal optimist.



AYA





NA V. JACKSON





Page 46,47: *Grand Matron Army*, top (l-r): *Esther, Adah, Martha, Ruth*; bottom (l-r): *The Sentinel, Electa, The Warder, The Conductress*, from *Leapfrog (a bit of the other) Grand Matron Army*, 2010. archival pigment prints
Page 48: *Dis Ease*, from *POVPORN (Poverty Pornography)*, 2011, archival pigment print
Page 49: *Death*, from *POVPORN (Poverty Pornography)*, 2011, archival pigment print
Page 50: *The Grand Matron*, from *Leapfrog (a bit of the other) Grand Matron Army*, 2010. archival pigment print
Page 51: top (l-r) *Maria de Latte I, III, II* (triptych), 2011, Archival Pigment print; bottom: *Destruction*, from *POVPORN (Poverty Pornography)*, 2011, archival pigment print





THIS IS AYANA V. JACKSON

WHO Ayana V. Jackson (1977) was born in New Jersey but has been working in various parts of the world. Today she lives between Johannesburg and New York. She was one of the stars at the African-themed Paris Photo 2011 fair – which prompted her to ask: ‘Am I an African photographer because I am black? Am I an African photographer because I live in Africa? Am I an African photographer?’

ART Jackson initially studied sociology, but she says, ‘I wanted to use visual rather than academic language to express my research findings’. She took photography courses in Atlanta and Berlin before embarking on documentary photography. After her series *Full Circle: A Survey of Hip Hop in Ghana* (2001) was picked up by the World Bank Art Program she decided to enter the art world.

THEME One of the recurring themes in Jackson’s work is the complexity of black identity. ‘My work carries an activism within it. Black skin often serves as a projection surface for a very limited set of ideas. I want to question those ideas.’

SELF-PORTRAITS Jackson finds it difficult to come to terms with the fact that spectators may have interpretations of her work that differ from her own. This prompted her recently to turn to self-portraiture. ‘Making my body a constant allows my audience to consider my intentions rather than examine my portraiture via an ethnographic point of view.’

LEAPFROG One of her series features Jackson in a leapfrog position, dressed up as different female archetypes from the precolonial to afrochic. ‘The jumping position represents the female empowerment, obtained thanks to the work and sacrifice of other women.’

POVERTY PORN ‘Careers are spawned by one’s ability to capture images of suffering. Watching an image of an emaciated child in Sudan inspires outrage, but more poignantly a feeling of gratitude that this is not the viewer’s station in life. The seductive nature of this kind of imagery I find pornographic in its most basic sense. This series addresses the tension between attraction and repulsion in such photographs.’

FREEDOM Her 2007 move to Johannesburg marked a new stage in Jackson’s career. ‘South Africa is one of the most important pillars of photography globally. Working within that constellation has launched my work incredibly. My dream is to be able to keep going like this – I can address any issue I want, without having to take commissions geared toward someone else’s agenda. I have freedom.’

Quotes used with kind permission from Qiana Mestrich and dodgeburn.blogspot.com
With thanks to Gallery Momo and the artist www.gallerymomo.com

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LEAPFROG SERIES: PRODUCED IN COLLABORATION WITH PASCAL OBOLO







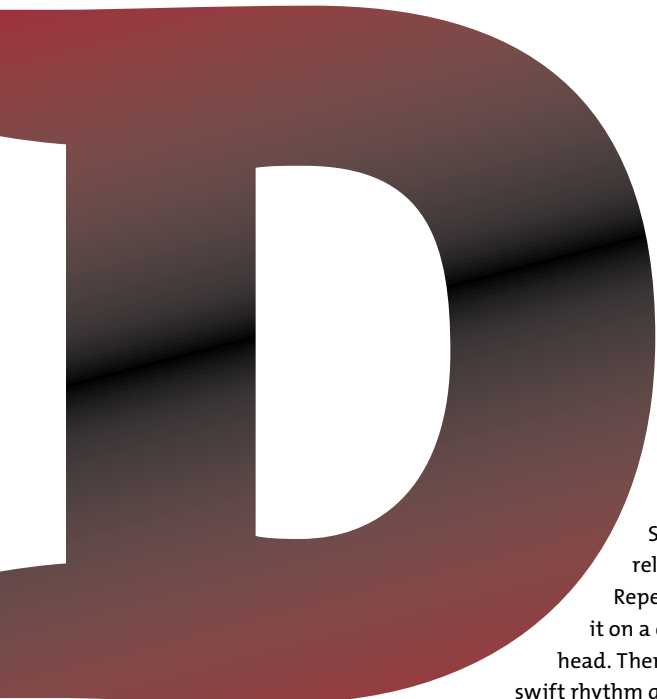
SENEGAL'S POLITICAL CLASS CAN NO LONGER INDULGE THE PATIENCE



TEXT: BRAM POSTHUMUS, PHOTO: REUTERS/STRINGER/JOE PENNEY

ACCELERATE

OF ITS CITIZENS. Y'EN A MARRE! EVEN THE MUSIC IS PICKING UP PACE.



Doon – doon...
Ta-ka-dang!
Doon - doon...Ta-ka-dang!

Sabar drums and their relentless driving syncopes. Repeat this, very fast and put it on a constant loop in your head. Then add a pulsating bass, a swift rhythm guitar, a drummer playing hi-hats on the last beat of every syncopic loop.

Then add two keyboards interspersing this pattern with percussion-style torrents, a soaring voice and occasional bursts of solo electric guitar.

Now you have some idea of the sheer power of Mbalax, Senegal's trademark music. True, qualities differ widely and there is some seriously bad Mbalax around as well – but when it's good, it's irresistible.

When in Senegal and tasked with selling a mobile service, food, fashion items – or a politician - you mount a bunch of speakers on a car, crank up the volume, and hit the streets. February 2012, and there are a lot of these very loud parades on display. It's campaign time; Senegal is choosing a new president.

THE SENEGALESE PRESIDENT SQUANDERED HIS POPULARITY WITH A RAFT OF FAILED PROMISES

Not that any of this is currently troubling a genial bespectacled 60-something called Ablaye. He's sitting in a suburban bar and he's trying to follow a quarterfinal game at the African Nations Cup.

'I wish they'd turn that noise down.'

Trouble is, it's not the DJ who chooses the tunes. It's the computer. And right now, the computer has decided to spit a bunch of Rihanna tunes into the room. TV commentary gets crowded out by a nasal metallic voice drowning in over-production. The youthful clientele remain unperturbed.

Baobab

In downtown Dakar, there once was a dusty old café, run by the eccentric Mr Sow. Newspapers with old sports clippings covered the windows and the bar had not seen a lick of paint for decades. At the weekends, a band would show up there, playing old-fashioned salsa on a rickety sound system. The music harked back to the mellifluous sounds of bands like Orchestre Baobab and the Star Band. Ablaye would have approved.

Thirty years ago, Baobab reigned supreme in the clubs of the city. Musical revolution, however, was in the air. Close by, in one of the teeming suburbs, a new sound was being born. Soon, it would burst onto the scene, wiping out the languid guitars and sweet harmonies of the old orchestras. Mbalax arrived, propelled relentlessly forward by a young lad from the Medina suburb of Dakar. His name is of course Youssou N'dour. In political terms, N'dour's musical revolution came a little early. It happened at a time when Senegal was a controlled multi-party state, run by only its second president since independence, Abdou Diouf. Diouf was the handpicked successor to the president-poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, a man of stellar intellect who had kept his country stable on a diet of benign autocracy and love of the French language. The music of Baobab could not have been a better soundtrack to that era.

Power Grab

The real political change came long after Mbalax had changed the Senegalese music scene. Long-standing opposition politician Abdoulaye Wade had been waiting for decades but only got his chance in 2000. Carried by a youthful generation that suffered from gnawing unemployment he won the presidency. Interestingly enough, rap music rather than Mbalax provided the soundtrack to these elections. But the 'King of Mbalax' Youssou N'dour seemed

SOUNDTRACK

To fully appreciate this article, you will need to go online and listen to some appropriate music. We have compiled a special 'Accelerate Senegal' playlist on www.youtube.com/zammagazine, to be enjoyed while reading!

Our playlist includes:

ORCHESTRE BAOBAB | *Utru Horas.*

Quite possibly their signature song. Here in the 1982 recording for the album *Pirates Choice*, which has never been topped.

YOUSOU N'DOUR | *Immigrées.*

His breakthrough song reminding all Senegalese living abroad to not forget the country they still call home.

BLACK RED | *Gorgui na dem.*

Rap song urging president Wade to get out. It's everywhere: belting from lorries on the street, in cars, on (non-state) radio stations.

Y'EN A MARRE | *Faux! Pas forcer.*

The other iconic rap song against Wade's third term candidacy and the theme song for the youth protest movement.

wholly sympathetic with the cause and enjoyed good relations with the Wade family.

Not any more.

Wade and N'dour had an almighty row over the licence for the singer's television station, TFM. The government had every reason to fear competition for the upstart media tycoon: the state television channel RTS (Radio Télévision Sénégalaise) is so boring that it's commonly known as 'Rien du Tout ce Soir' – nothing at all tonight. Couple that with N'dour's other operations (*L'Observateur*, Senegal's biggest selling newspaper and RFM, a chain of hugely popular radio stations) and you understand why N'dour could well be seen

as going for a pretty solid power grab using his own media machine.

Back at the football bar, Ablaye told me that he loved Youssou's music but would never have voted for him in an election. 'He's not educated. Just not suitable.' He sounded almost sorry.

Since 2000, Wade has managed to squander his popularity with a raft of failed promises. The first was peace in the southern province of Casamance, where a low-intensity conflict has been ongoing since 1982. Peace is nowhere nearer now than 12 years ago. Other promises included getting to grips with unemployment, resurrection of agriculture – it's a list as long as your arm. What he has done is build six-lane motorways in Dakar, a new airport outside the capital, construct a hideous African Renaissance Monument on a hill overlooking Dakar and organise a hugely expensive Black Arts Festival. 'Nice for millionaires,' scoffs Moustapha Niasse, another politician who opposes Wade in the elections. 'Wade doesn't care about ordinary people.'

Banana Republic

Wade has also made corruption fashionable. In his usual irreverent style, Ivorian writer Venance Konan summarised Senegal's history as follows: Senghor built Francophone Africa's first functioning democracy, Diouf has tropicalized it a bit and Wade has turned it into a banana republic like all the others.

Last year, rap musicians set up a movement called *Y'en a marre* (We're fed up). Their hard-hitting tunes are on YouTube and cannot be misunderstood. *Faux! Pas forcer* (You're Wrong! Don't Force It) and *Naa Dem* (Be Gone). They also tell everyday stories about the endless electricity cuts, deepening poverty and an interminably bleak future. The Senegalese music went from slow salsa to fast Mbalax to furious rap. Step on the accelerator if you want to keep up. Wade says, 'It took 40 years to throw out the socialist party, give me more time.' The young reply, 'We haven't got the time. Be gone. Now.' The impatience is palpable and has already led to violent confrontation, a rare event in a land that has the notion of peaceful exchange written into its DNA.

BRAM POSTHUMUS IS AN AFRICAN MUSIC ENTHUSIAST AND A JOURNALIST WHO WORKS FOR RADIO NETHERLANDS' WORLDWIDE. HE LIVES IN DAKAR, SENEGAL.



WORDS & SOUNDS

POETRY

Shilling Love

They never said / they loved us

*Those words were not /
in any language / spoken by my parents*

*I love you honey was the dribbled caramel /
of Hollywood movies / Dallas / Dynasty /
where hot water gushed /
at the touch of gleaming taps /
electricity surged / 24 hours a day /
through skyscrapers banquets obscene as the
Pentagon /
were mere backdrops /
where emotions had no consequences words /
cost nothing meant nothing would never /
have to be redeemed*

My parents / didn't speak / that / language.

Excerpt from the poem Shilling Love (see lodestarquarterly.com/work/201 for the complete poem)

PHOTO: WAMBUI MWANGI



Shailja Patel was born and raised in Kenya, has lived in London and San Francisco, and now divides her time between Nairobi and Berkeley. She is an award-winning poet, playwright and theatre artist. Her work has been translated into eight languages.

ESSENTIAL MUSIC



CLASS ACT

OMAR PENE **NDAYAAN** After *Myamba* and *Ndam*, here is Omar Pene's third mellow album. His other side is of course the undiluted hard-hitting Senegalese dance music known as *mbalax*, with which he has been wowing crowds for decades. There are hints of it on *Ndayaan* but for the most part these are carefully crafted and very elegantly arranged songs featuring guitars, real horns, percussion and kora. He addresses issues from daily life, the plight of children, the unemployed, the value of friendship. Fortunately, the obligatory reggae track (it seems everyone needs to have one) comes early. But for the rest, this album is a lovely class act.



Hour of Elegance

TEOFILO CHANTRE **MESTISSAGE** He is the Cape Verdian in the background. But check your Cesária Evora collection and you will find him credited as far back as *Miss Perfumado*, her 1992 breakthrough album. Teofilo Chantre has a great knack for writing catchy songs and much if this is in evidence on his latest offering, *Mestissage*. His musical styles are distinctly Cape Verdian although he moves about easily in French too, thanks to a quarter century living in France.

The songs are good and his voice is made for the kind of mild-mannered melancholia the music conveys. But *Mestissage* may be a little bit too easy on the ears. There's just a little too much of that gentle slightly jazzy, very French unhurriedness about this album, which puts it a tad below his earlier ones, like *Viaja* and *Rodatempo*. In short, if you want an hour of elegance, get this one; for more rootsier experiences, we recommend his previous albums.

REDEFINING RAP

BALOJI **KINSHASA SUCCURSALE** (*Crammed Discs*) His name means 'sorcerer' in Swahili, a language widely spoken in the DR Congo and his second – ambitious - album is a story of rediscovery. Baloji was born in Lumbumbashi 1978 but moved to Belgium while he was still a toddler, to live with his father. His youth was troubled, following this early deracination. Now, he is busy rediscovering his country, musically, personally and politically. He released *Hotel Impala* in 2008; this is the sequel. *Kinshasa Succursale* reflects on his own past, provides a searing indictment of the current state of affairs in his country (*Tout ceci ne rendra vous pas le Congo*) and further explores the sounds of his country, from the sweet guitars on *Tshena Ndekela* to the glorious distortions of Konono No 1 on *Karibou Ya Bintou* and the sumptuous female choruses on various tracks. Baloji is part of a group of rap artists who are redefining the genre. The similarities with Blitz the Ambassador is not coincidental; they perform on each other's albums. Baloji will be in Belgium, Brazil, France, the Netherlands and the UK in the coming months. Details on his website: www.baloji.com



This time it works



OWINY SIGOMA BAND

(Brownswood Recordings)

Plonking down a bunch of Westerners in an African setting rarely is a good way to get musical synergy but every once and a while something does work. This is one such time. In 2009, five London musicians sat down with seven Kenyan colleagues and started working on a few tracks. Gilles Petersen, the radio jazzman with a keen ear for new sounds, signed them for his label and here we are with an entire album of grooves based on the music of the Luo, from a part of the world that has had little musical exposure. Not everything is that brilliant but the best tracks are exceptional and worth getting the album. Here, traditional instruments feed into modern sensibilities with mesmerising results.



'Western prosperity had made me less hardy. I felt a renewed gratitude towards my parents for giving me the life that I had.'

NOO SARO-WIWA IN *LOOKING FOR TRANSWONDERLAND*

BOOKS: NEW ARRIVALS



NOVEL Chibundu Onuzo, *The spider king's daughter* (Faber)

A modern-day Romeo and Juliet story about the pampered daughter of a wealthy businessman, Abike, and a poverty-stricken street-seller. A story about truth, love and family loyalty, set against the backdrop of a transforming Lagos. Written by one of Nigeria's most exciting young writers.



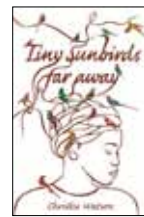
SHORT STORIES | Sipiwo Mahala, *African Delights* (Jacana)

This collection of short stories forms a literary journey through some critical moments in South African history. From Sophiatown of the 1950s to the rural Eastern Cape and present-day Johannesburg. It contains a tribute to Drum Boy Can Themba, in which the author rewrites Themba's classic story.



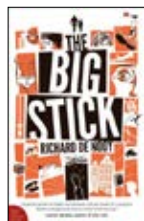
TRAVEL WRITING Noo Saro-Wiwa, *Looking for Transwonderland* (Granta Books)

Noo Saro-Wiwa grew up in England, but her summers were spent in Nigeria. When her father, activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, was murdered, Noo avoided Nigeria for ten years. In this book she describes a belated visit to her father's beloved country. A funny and honest look at Nigerian life.



NOVEL | Christie Watson, *Tiny sunbirds far away* (Other Press)

When her mother catches her father with another woman, twelve year-old Blessing is forced to leave her comfortable home in Lagos to live with her mother's family in the Niger Delta. Adapting to life with a poor countryside family is a shock beyond measure after their privileged upbringing. Winner of the 2011 Costa First Novel Award.



NOVEL Richard de Nooy, *The big stick* (Jacana)

A woman from the South African Kalahari travels to Amsterdam to retrieve the body of her gay son. As she tries to reconstruct his life and the events leading up to his death, she enters a bizarre world of scissor queens, leather men, rent boys and daredevils.



POETRY | Florence Ndiyah, *I will fly- a collection of poems* (Langaa RPCIG)

A collection of 52 poems, telling a story of struggle and hope, focussing on ordinary Cameroonians. Earlier, Ndiyah wrote the acclaimed novel *Blessing*. This is her first poetry collection.



The Seller of Cotton
Candy at Gezeeret
El Dahab

EGYPTIANS

When Spanish photographer **Miguel Ángel Sánchez** moved to Egypt in 2009, he planned to portray the residents of Cairo. Musicians and greengrocers and painters and shoe shiners, all set in carefully controlled studio conditions. 'I approach a portrait as if it were a painting. My work is the result of my love for the Spanish baroque imagery and the Italian and Spanish naturalism by Caravaggio and Ribera', Sánchez explained to *coolhunting.com*.

Each portrait took about a week to create. 'Many photographers spend a lot of time thinking about concepts and philosophy, while they forget about the main elements of good photography: light and hard work.' In 2010, revolution started and the project took a completely different direction. 'The emotions of some 20 million people exploded in Cairo. It was like a goldmine for an artist. I opened my studio to make portraits of all the people who were fighting and making sacrifices.'

The result is a series of 110 portraits, featuring bloggers and politicians and protesters from all walks of life. 'I think that everyone sees a common element in these portraits, and that is dignity.'

El Alma del Mundo, a book containing the entire photo series, is due for release in March 2012 by Lunweg Editores. Check Sánchez' website www.masg.es



The Revolutionary
from Tahrir Square



Marina Barsoum,
a Young Graduate
Who Wants
To Go Abroad



Ahmed, a Middle Class
Conservative Muslim



Zeinab, Journalist
and Blogger



BURIED GOLD



MUSIC | Angola Soundtrack – the unique sound of Luanda (1968-1976)
Bambara Mystic Soul – the raw sound of

Burkina Faso (1974-1979)
(Analog Africa)

Analog Africa founder Samy Ben Redjeb braved the odds to unearth the best from Luanda's short-lived golden age, a time of frenetic guitar-driven music, a gorgeous stew in which rumba, salsa, semba, local and Western instruments were thrown in with reckless abandon. The result, compiled on *Angola Soundtrack*, still sounds stunning 40-odd years later.

Redjeb also has reunited musicians from old mythical bands like Os Bongos, Os Kiezos, Jovens do Prenda and others. 'This is better than the Buena Vista Social Club,' I overheard an enthusiast say after one of their European performances. Indeed. The guitar player from Os Bongos, Botto Trindade, told me that he was very happy with the resurrection of his old music, 'We can now pass it on to a younger generation'. And there is much more musical gold buried in the Angolan soil. Maybe Redjeb should have a go again. But meanwhile, he's been to another lesser-known (yet more accessible) country, Burkina Faso. There is an open-air club in the capital Ouagadougou, with live music at the weekend. A band stands on a concrete stage in an open space with bare

walls. People mill about with a drink and when they get bored they simply leave for another club. It would have been the perfect setting for a lot of the bands on the latest Analog Africa release, *Bambara Mystic Soul*.

The local legend is, without any doubt, Amadou Ballaké. He is nicknamed Señor Eclectico and you only have to listen to the wide variety of tracks on *Bambara Mystic Soul* to understand why. He moves from American funk to soul to the soaring melodies so beloved of his Manding neighbours in Mali and Guinea. In fact, he

'THIS IS BETTER THAN THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB!'

does a full-blown rendition of a classic by Guinean greats Bembeya Jazz on one of the tracks here.

But after Ballaké, there are other bands. Burkina Faso's advantage is its location at some sort of regional crossroad. So on one track you think you are in the company of a Malian orchestra (Abdoulaye Cissé), the next you have the distinct feeling you're sitting next to a Ghanaian highlife orchestra (Orchestre CVD). Take 'Afro Soul System', with its Hammond organs and wild veerings between Africa and America. There is a lot to remind you of that old dance and band club in Ouagadougou. Highly recommended. (*Bram Posthumus*)

Both albums are available at selected stores and on www.amazon.com.

FROM BEARDED

EXHIBITION | Human Zoos – The Invention of the Savage.

In Quai Branly, Paris until June 3, 2012.

Footballers usually want to be remembered for their physical prowess. Not so with Lilian Thuram. The former French international may well go down in history for his intellectual pursuits. He is the lead curator of an exhibition currently on at Quai Branly, *Human Zoos – The Invention of the Savage*. In his bid to raise awareness of the roots of racism, Thuram set out to give names back to the thousands of individuals who were stolen from around the world and exhibited across Europe over four centuries. With origins in Guadeloupe, Thuram played football in France when black players had no choice but to accept the ugliest forms of racism as part of the game. He can perhaps empathize with the kidnapped African children who would grab at the coins thrown into their cages by European spectators. Thuram and his assistants at Quai Branly certainly succeed in giving names to some individuals most often associated with negative colonial encounters, such as Saartje Baartman, the Khoikhoi tribeswoman who was exhibited in freak shows under the stage name Hottentot Venus. And Thiob, Cabelou, Gunelle, and Sigjo, four Inuits captured by a Danish explorer and exhibited in Copenhagen. The exhibition, however, fails to give some insight into their personal histories, or even give an idea of how these people felt about their encounters with their colonizers. Instead visitors are taken on a chronological journey of Western curiosity with the 'Other' from the time of exploration to the end of empire. Starting with the seven Amerindians captured by Christopher Columbus and paraded in front of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain in 1493. Visitors learn that royalty in Europe realised at some point that they had counterparts in the lands their countrymen were reaching. Then, tribal leaders and kings were invited to London and Paris as guests. Kosa Pan,

WOMEN TO ZULU TRIBESMEN

ambassador to the King of Siam visited Louis XIV in Paris in 1686. His visit caused such a stir in royal circles that prints of Pan circulated throughout France for more than a century after his return to modern-day Thailand. What started out as a pass time exclusively for royals and the rich soon opened up to the masses in the 19th century. Theatres such as the Egyptian Hall in London, Folies Bergères in Paris and the Paroptikum de Castan in Berlin all began putting on shows with whole casts made up of people from far and distant lands. As public interest began to wane, directors started casting people from exotic places in shows with the disfigured or disabled, as though all belonged to a sub-human species. So bearded women would prance about on stage in the midst of Zulu tribesmen. Then, in stepped the anthropologists who began to measure and observe people of different races. The findings of these early anthropologists claimed people from non-white races were intellectually inferior, which helped justify colonialism as a paternalistic undertaking. The final stop of the exhibition caravan was Belgium in 1958, a show to mark the end of the Belgian colony in the Congo. Like other shows in the first half of the 20th century it tried to overwhelm the crowd with sheer numbers, some 2,000 people took part. Complete villages were transplanted from the heart of the Congo to feed Belgian curiosity. But the show failed to attract the crowds who by that time were being entertained by the big screen and television. Thuram's attempt to trace the roots of racism doesn't quite make it to the final whistle. There are no references to the biggest human zoo of all – television. Partway through the second half of the 20th century the big screen helped to keep racial stereotypes and images of the savage very much alive. And in the 21st century, so-called reality TV regularly features white people taking forays into the jungles and plains of faraway lands to live with native people. Still, it's a very interesting exhibition. An exhibition about the shames of previous exhibitions – it's quite ironic. *(Rosie Collyer)*

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RECLAIMING HISTORY



BOOK | Samwiri Lwanga Lunyiigo, *Mwanga II: Resistance to Imposition of British Colonial Rule in Buganda, 1884-1889* (Wavah Books).

Noam Chomsky once described historian Howard Zinn as having created a whole new writing genre with the book *A People's History of the United States*. With his book on the life and turbulent times of 'Buganda's last independent King' Mwanga Basammula, Samwiri Lwanga Lunyiigo seems intent on bringing something of this approach to Ugandan letters.

'Blood thirsty tyrant', 'insane youth' and 'lunatic potentate' are only a few samples of the missionary invective against him. Mwanga was the original victim of Western moral maligning, whereby a leader is primed for regime change through systematic vilification, justifying a western-sponsored 'liberating' of the people he governs. This seems to be the ailment Lunyiigo wants to cure, by unearthing a clearer picture of Mwanga and his times, discerning the motives behind his most infamous actions, and reflecting on his political legacy. No small task, even for an African-born professor of African history. There is still an almost instinctive understanding among respectable (Western) academia that Africa has, at best, only an unreliable history to report, and that Africans themselves cannot be relied upon to tell it.

Mwanga inherited the throne of Buganda in 1884 after the death of his father Muteesa. Confronted by the political realities behind the presence of the various visitors in his realm, Mwanga embarked on a strategy of reorganization. With advocates of Islam, Anglicanism and Catholicism – each representing rival imperial interests – all seeking a bigger voice in his court, open warfare eventually broke out. In all, Mwanga was to be driven from his capital three times, and only regain his throne by building alliances between traditionalists, and one or

other of the missionary camps. He was finally defeated by a freshly bolstered triumphant Anglican army in 1899 and imprisoned in the Seychelles where he died, aged 37 in 1903.

In the western or western-shaped imagination, Mwanga is remembered for the execution of the first Anglican Bishop in the region and the burning at the stake of over 40 Christian converts. Interestingly, he was also condemned as a homosexual, an affront to European moral opinion at the time. This prompts the author to speculate on why General Gordon, the British soldier outsmarted by Mwanga's father, had not been condemned for the same reason.

In the middle of all this, his character,

HE WAS CONDEMNED AS A HOMOSEXUAL, AN AFFRONT TO EUROPEAN MORAL OPINION AT THE TIME

and therefore the particular nature of his reign emerge as a battleground for interpretation into which Lunyiigo happily wades. In a book replete with remarkable revelations, the author radically strays from the conventional view of this leader and his time in history. The meticulous attention to detail and close referencing, despite many avoidable typographical errors, should force other serious commentators and analysts of Ugandan history and politics to rethink their long-held opinions of Mwanga and his people.

In the conventional Ugandan historical narrative Buganda is typically assigned the role of the collaborator who 'let the colonialists in'. The cultural problem among many proponents of contemporary African nationalism is to

conflate xenophobia with patriotism on the one hand, and cosmopolitanism with collaboration on the other, when considering the pre-colonial period. Mwanga said, 'We, the Baganda, want peace to prevail and our independence as in the past. We shall welcome all visitors to our country but will not allow anybody to take over the government of my country'. This perfectly sums up Buganda's attitude and perhaps that of pre-colonial Africa, towards foreigners, whose sophistication seems a little difficult for ideologues to grasp. This also challenges the reader to accept an alternative reading of the Christian executions. After 'fighting slavery' the next Imperial pretext for invasion was the need to 'protect African Christians'. By providing missionary records of their initial protection by Mwanga, coupled with evidence of converts working as spies for the invaders, Lunyiigo brings down another pillar of anti-Mwanga historiography.

This book allows us a clearer picture of not just Mwanga, but the complexities, nuances and sophistication of 19th century indigenous African politics, diplomacy and military affairs, especially in the face of great calamity. Alexander Mackay, the pre-eminent Presbyterian missionary to Buganda at the time observed that, 'In former years the universal aim was to steal the African from Africa. Today the determination is to steal Africa from the African'. That was then, but the Africa of today remains a place whose history has been stolen and hidden. The challenge Samwiri Lunyiigo has put to other African historians is to boldly reclaim this history. After all, many more figures need to be revisited to truly understand their true nature and significance. (*Kalundi Serumaga*)

Mwanga II: Resistance to Imposition of British Colonial Rule in Buganda 1884-1889 is available for purchase on www.wavahbooks.co.uk

RWANDA WITHOUT HOLLYWOOD



FILM | Kinyarwanda.
Directed by Alrick Brown

The Rwandan genocide of 1994 has formed the basis of many narratives in books and films. One thing binds these different offerings: the harrowing and inescapable experiences of men, women and children, left helpless on the basis of tribal origin. Films like *Sometime in April* and *Hotel Rwanda* have given us a chance to witness the stories of those at the forefront of the tragedy at a political level. The new movie *Kinyarwanda* focuses on the human voice at its most vulnerable moment, without the added 'effects' of Hollywood.

Based on true events and shot entirely in Rwanda, *Kinyarwanda* interweaves the stories of characters during and after the genocide: an Imam, whose mosque would serve as a refuge for many; a young woman at the mosque, whose murdered parents were Hutu and Tutsi; the RPF soldiers who rescued people in hiding; the Hutu militias, who went on a killing spree and men in re-education camps after the genocide ends. The film is an exploration of forgiveness – what it means to forgive and be forgiven on the way to reconciliation.

Written and directed by Alrick Brown,

this chilling tale has been making the rounds at film festivals, including the prestigious Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Audience Choice Award in the World Dramatic Cinema category. It was nominated for Outstanding Independents Motion Picture at the 43rd NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Image Awards, in the US. It has been screened at the Hillywood Film Festival, Rwanda's film industry annual festival, where approximately 300 people laughed, cried and reminisced about the events in the film. *Kinyarwanda* was screened at Hôtel des Mille Collines, better known as 'the real Hotel Rwanda' and the set for the film starring Sophie Okonedo and Don Cheadle. At both screenings, local media gave warm reviews.

There have been talks about priests and nuns who alerted militias to Tutsis hiding out in churches and the impact that would ultimately have on people and their faith after the genocide – a tale well narrated by Leah Chishugi in her book, *A Long Way From Paradise*. Part of Alrick Brown's movie focuses on the role of the Muslim community in Rwanda during the genocide – a story that has often been overlooked.

While this is not a film about religion, *Kinyarwanda* illustrates the importance

A WOMAN PRETENDING TO BE A POSSESSED VILLAGE WITCH IS TRYING TO RESCUE TUTSI MEN AND WOMEN FROM SLAUGHTER

of faith and conscience during the darkest of times. A powerful scene features a woman pretending to be a possessed village witch in front of soldiers, to rescue a group of Tutsi men and women from slaughter. In a way, the scene redeems the humanity that seemed lost during the genocide. There are moments when you have to recall previous scenes to make sense of the plot and here the film runs the risk of losing its audience. Despite this, *Kinyarwanda* is a very powerful offering. (Belinda Otas)

Kinyarwanda is currently on screen in selected theatres and is scheduled for screening at the UN's annual commemorative event for the Rwandan Genocide on April 4 2012. More info at www.kinyarwandamovie.com





LOVE IN A TIME OF PROTESTS

Third Mainland Bridge, Lagos, Nigeria. Dinah, the daughter of the Minister of Oil, finds her fiancé Domkat caught up in the Occupy Nigeria protests. When she discovers that the army has been ordered to fire at protesters, she rushes out to warn him. A chilling story by Elnathan John, a rising star in Nigerian literature.

TEXT: ELNATHAN JOHN, PHOTO: HANS WILSCHUT, COURTESY GALERIE RON MANDOS

You push through the growing mob of artisans and unionists, motorcyclists and drivers beneath the overhead Berger Bridge. At first the combined smell of sweat and cheap musky perfume makes you dizzy. It isn't possible to hold your breath until you reach the front where the truck and loud speakers are; your lungs refuse to cooperate. Within you, your heart pushes your head, pushes your body. If Uncle Haruna had known that when he told you the President, fed up, had approved the shooting of mischief makers in the streets, you would rush out despite the curfew with neither veil nor head covering, he would not have placed that call. You clutch your phone tightly; you do not know these people, you do not trust them. Some of the banners and hurriedly made placards make you afraid. The back of a T-shirt reads, 'Death to the Cabal', and you read from many of your friends on Facebook, before you deleted your account last week, that the Minister of Oil, was part of that cabal. Not that the people passing the rumours knew anything of the matter. Not that they even realised you were his daughter when they tagged you in the viral notes and links. You knew better than to defend him. Now you wonder if anyone in the crowd will see the resemblance in your slant eyes, or dimples, or sharp nose; whether the man in the T-shirt that wants death for your father, will turn around and stab you in the eye. Or worse take you hostage and promise to do horrible things to you unless your father and his friends give themselves up, let go of the country, make fuel 65 naira again.

You hold your breath again and keep pushing. Your heart is doing well. It is resolute. Only seeing Domkat can stop this push. One of the labour leaders has just finished speaking and

the music takes over before the next speaker takes the mic. As the speakers boom out the first sounds of Fela's 'Zombie', a tall placard-bearing man in front of you suddenly becomes animated. His elbow pokes you sharp in the chest. As you step back, stunned, your palms on your chest, he turns around with his placard in one hand and just waves sorry. His placard is written in two lines: *Jonathan is a bitch for the IMF. Sent to fuck Nigerians*. It is shocking at first, then funny. A sigh is all you can manage in the urgency of the moment. You know what will happen when the tanks come. They did it in Kano to the protesters who defied the curfew; they dragged dozens of lifeless bodies through the streets just to make the point. The music stops and everyone cringes at the ear-splitting shriek of amplifier feedback. You cover your ears, even though that doesn't help much. The boy next to you, he can't be more than 16, drops his placard as he covers his own ears. You lose breath for a second at what he has written in red at the back of an old calendar. *'Removing Subsidy Without Removing Corruption is like Trying to Have Sex Without Removing Your Pants.'* The sound dies down and in its stead you hear a coarse whispy voice, like Marlon Brando in *The Godfather* but louder. Unmistakeably Domkat.

Your arms stretch out like a swimmer doing a butterfly stroke, to part sticky arms and bodies and squeeze through impossible openings. Some people complain, some just give way. No one stops you until you reach the white truck and hear him right above you. It is enervating to be breathing air that has bounced off clammy bodies. You still feel the point where the tall man's elbow hit you; it isn't pain, just awareness. The T-shirt Domkat is wearing is unfamiliar - you know all his

clothes. You bought most of them. The T-shirt is the colour of ketchup, round necked - it looks like something that will turn the water red when you soak it. On the front you read the words, 'We will fight the invisible cabal, until they become visible'.

The words that he is speaking are not his - you've known him 12 years; loved him, until it becomes a habit, a duty. You do not remember not loving him. The years before his father joined your father on mission in South Africa, before they both were moved to Nigerian missions in Ghana, Australia and Turkey - those years are a blur. Before that you did nothing, preferred nothing, knew nothing. Your life was but a fact, with no meaning, until he gave you that heart-shaped button in the garden at the Nigerian Ambassador's residence in South Africa. That was when you realised you loved Bounty and hated Snickers, like him; preferred Achebe to Soyinka, like him - you both thought *The Interpreters* you got from your father's library needed interpretation. It didn't matter that your father was always the ambassador and his father always the assistant.

'This regime courts danger,' he begins, 'but ours is a sacred duty to make demands of rulers that lead without a conscience. Power concedes nothing without a demand. And we so demand. We demand 65 naira a litre and nothing more.' You feel the air ripple as the crowd bawls in agreement. A chill runs through your body and you grit your teeth. Dust rises from thousands of stomping feet and you cover your nose with your hands. You want to remind him, that the wedding is only a few months away. You were supposed to be picking colours, making a final selection for the rings on the internet. It was *solomonbrothers.com* that had the rings you both liked. He was supposed to choose between the 6mm 14k white gold satin band, curved stripe, diamond and the 7mm 14k, machined contemporary diamond. He was not supposed to be in a truck fighting the government your father serves. Domkat puts his hand up in the air. The crowd responds by going silent. The look in his eyes is the look you saw the day he heard his father had died. A stare both distant and defiant. The man behind you interrupts the silence with the dry crunch of plantain chips. You want to turn and pour sand in his mouth.

You need Domkat to stop. Stop inciting the crowd, stop telling them that 'he who makes peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.' Stop starting things he cannot finish. You need to tell him what you know, what Uncle Haruna has heard from the emergency security meeting with the President. The soldiers have different orders today; they will not arrest anyone. The prisons and police stations are bursting with people with bloodied faces, swollen lips, and broken limbs.

You wish you had not walked out of his house angrily yesterday, when you could have stopped him. It had shocked you when you walked into his flat, and found nearly a dozen

men, most in the same yellow T-shirt, milling about like ants gathering food, no one even acknowledging you. None of their resolute faces looked familiar. Someone stopped finally to ask if you were looking for someone. Written on the front of his too-small T-shirt was 'Revert to 65 or kill us'. If he knew how badly you wanted to stick your car keys in his chest, puncture those man boobs protruding through the T-shirt, he wouldn't have stood in your way. You pushed him aside and headed for Domkat's bedroom. As you reached for the door knob, you saw inside the second bedroom, three spindly girls, one with low cut hair and a nose ring, the other two with wild, ambitious weaves that had lost their lustre from washing and re-use. They were making placards, talking loudly, laughing. You saw your slippers - the turquoise ones you bought in Malaysia - on the dusty feet of the girl with the nose ring. You wished leprosy on the girl as you asked her to take them off. She looked both afraid and shocked as she slowly took them off. Your chest was heavy and your pounding heart was no longer yours. You opened the door and found Domkat engrossed in debate with more people you didn't know, papers, phones, cameras and two iPads on the bed. They were discussing what routes were blocked and what new routes they could use. In a pile on the ground by the bed, were the same type of cheap yellow T-shirts that they are all now wearing, facemasks, fez caps and banners. He looked up at you. You looked into his eyes for expression, for shock, for remorse, for guilt. Something. Anything. *Nothing*. His eyes were blank and all you could see was someone sleep deprived. You had discussed it. You understood why he supported the protests and strikes; he understood why you thought removing the fuel subsidy was a good idea. It was hard to disagree, but that was it. He wasn't going to join the protests; you weren't going to discuss your views publicly. He broke the deal. You stormed out telling him you wouldn't come to bail him out if he got arrested.

You blame yourself for him being here now, for letting the *Occupy Nigeria* thoughts fester and occupy his head and make him do foolish things, memorise the dangerous things he has Googled and is telling this crowd. You hate Plato and Marx and Martin Luther King and J.F. Kennedy for the hazardous wisdom that they made available, hate them for writing it into books, hate the internet for making it available on his Kindle; for possessing your man. You will tell him, as soon as you can drag him away from this place, before the tanks reach here, that it is his ego doing all of this; that he does not care about fuel being twice the price it was; does not really care or know much about the Nigerian masses or socialism. The closest he has come to any hardship, is the death of his father, and even after that, he and his mother did not want for anything - but you will not go that far. You will not hurt him, like he is hurting you now, risking everything that you both have built together. If he speaks for two more minutes, you tell yourself, you will climb the back of the truck and drag him down yourself.

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE PICKING COLOURS, MAKING A FINAL SELECTION FOR THE RINGS ON THE INTERNET

'We will march until we reach Government house. We will march beyond the soldiers. We will push the boundaries until they hear our demands!'

Domkat is the last speaker and the crowd pushes forward as the men at the back of the open truck jump out one by one to lead the march. You move quickly to grab him by the shirt as soon as he gets down. He turns to see who is tugging at his shirt, and smiles as he sees you. It irritates you that he thinks you are here to join him; that he cannot see what is in your eyes.

'I need to talk to you,' you say, trying to scream above the noise of the crowd and the loud music that has just started playing.

'Let's walk,' he shouts back.

Talking will not help this. You drag him by the hand away from the truck.

'There are soldiers coming,' you say, not wanting your anger to get in the way of the urgency.

'Of course, there are soldiers everywhere,' he replies.

You want to slap his face.

'They have orders to shoot, Domkat. Let's get out of this place now.'

'And do what with the crowd? This thing has already started, they can't shoot everybody here.'

'I made a sacrifice, Domkat, I came out here to tell you, and you tell me...'

'Dinah, if I leave this place posterity will judge me.'

'Fuck posterity. If you do not leave now, I will judge you.'

Your eyes burn with hot tears. His eyes, white a few days ago now puffy and red, are saying that he has to do this. The veins standing out on his bulky arms, his pulsating jaw that tell you he is gritting his teeth, saying he has to do this. Behind him the crowd moves away from the bridge, spreading out across the two lanes. You stare at him, dare him to walk away, to leave you standing. He doesn't move. Then you feel it. The vibration of the armoured Scorpion Tanks grinding toward the protesters. His eyes and nostrils widen. 'Please go now, let me take care of this,' he says, his hand on

your shoulders. 'Please!'

Slowly, he backs away from you. There are shots, then a cloud of white smoke from tear gas canisters. The crowd goes wild. They have planned for this. Everyone seems to be putting on the same blue facemask. Domkat runs to the truck and gets out a bottle of water and a blue, three-ply facemask.

'For the tear gas,' he says, 'go now!'

He thrusts it into your limp hands and runs toward the scattering crowd sliding his own mask over his mouth and nose. The rattle of assault rifles jolts you. This is the first time you hear assault rifles fired so close to you and no, it is nothing like how they make guns sound in movies. This is crude, the sound of death. Nobody could enjoy a war movie with sounds like this. You start to run toward your car under the bridge. You stop and turn. He is hurling stones at the trucks and soldiers. People are screaming. One man throws a bottle and before the bottle shatters into shards onto the body of the approaching tank, he slumps. Some people are running in your direction away from the tanks and shooting. Your nose stings and your eyes burn as the tear gas diffuses into the air around you. You put on the mask and run. The tears from the tear gas and the tears from your heart mix and soak into the facemask. The burning in your eyes is unbearable. You stop, push your head back and pour the water in your eyes. The burning does not stop. It is everywhere. Your nose. Your throat.

It burns, the thing that has knocked you down. It burns your back. You can't feel your fingers. Or your legs. It is not like the movies. You do not get to say last words. Your life does not flash before your eyes. The last thing you see is the cold concrete pillar of the Berger Bridge.

ELNATHAN JOHN IS A LAWYER WHO LIVES IN ABUJA, NIGERIA. HE HAS PUBLISHED SEVERAL SHORT STORIES. READ MORE AT ELNATHANJOHN.BLOGSPOT.COM



Mevrouw Vilakazi Tshabalala, een gebedsgenezer in Johannesburg

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ZAM

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The Death of Context

Good dictators go to New York. Bad dictators go to The Hague. Some things are lost in translation, others are implied. Before the death of reason, there is the death of context. The International Criminal Court (ICC) is hard to find. Tucked away in a suburb of The Hague, it looms up like a misplaced bureaucratic Godzilla amidst an innocuous sprawl of middle-class homes.

We are visiting the Netherlands on our way home from a conference, and curiosity has brought us to the doorstep of the ICC. Armed guards eye us suspiciously: two women with Rwandan and South African passports want to pop into the public viewing gallery? African civilians are clearly not expected to have such arbitrary access to the courtroom fates of our super-villains.

But rules are rules, so yes, okay, scan here, sign there, stop here, screen there, one more time please, until finally, stripped of all possessions except the clothes on our backs, we are admitted into the judgement chamber. A glass gallery hovers above an intense courtroom scene: Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia, on trial at the ICC for crimes against humanity.

Jumpy

The courtroom is sparsely populated. Three judges from Ireland, Samoa and Uganda preside over the two small camps gathered here to represent Humanity and Criminality – defence to the right, prosecution to the left. And there he is, a couple of rows from the front, the Criminal himself; dressed to the nines in a sharp tailored suit with flashy gold accessories.

Today one of his alleged henchmen, General Sesay, sits in the witness stand. The prosecutor interrogates him via a team of immersed translators. Allegations are fired out in English and Sesay responds in Creole, his response relayed back to us in English through simultaneous translation headphones. The translator's tone is jumpy. A string of denials rings defensive and unconvincing, and completely

incongruous with Sesay's face, which remains unruffled. Puzzled, I switch channels to listen to his voice, and come across a distinctly different tone – one that matches his calm expression. I shift uneasily. To me, the observation does not point towards innocence of the man; but it does cast a one more question mark over innocence of the process.

Long Distance

Some things are lost in translation, others are implied. Thousands of miles from the scene of the crimes under investigation – with questions and answers, and testimony and judgement, separated by nebulous degrees of linguistic and emotional interpretation – I wonder how much of the truth falls between the cracks in this estranged endeavour at justice. Crime and punishment, in a long-distance relationship? A difficult romance, to say the least. So why go there voluntarily? In the case of Charles Taylor, the disconnection of justice from context was downplayed by African and Western governments alike in the name of expediency. 'The Special Court [of Sierra Leone] has simply set up a little satellite office in The Hague for the purposes of trying Mr Taylor,' explained one pro-ICC group. George Bush was the first to announce the relocation of Charles Taylor's trial from Freetown to the Netherlands. He spoke from the safety of a country whose central intelligence agency furtively supplied the rebels with arms at the height of the murderous conflict that Taylor allegedly masterminded. Ironically, US law mandates an invasion of The Hague in the event that the ICC should ever attempt to prosecute a citizen or ally of the United States of America.

But so what? In the global conversation about crimes against humanity, the Bush/Iraq point of reference is just one more white elephant in a political circus. All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others, and only the latter and their friends get to decide who goes where. Good dictators go to New York. Bad dictators go to The Hague.



**PAULA
AKUGIZIBWE**

Context

It is impossible to underplay the brutal conflict that hangs any dictator like a foul scent, African or otherwise; and it borders on heresy to question the effort to end impunity that this court ostensibly represents. But the real problem goes deeper than white elephants and geography, deeper than the recent political theatrics around the ICC – the denouncement of its racism by the African Union, followed by the absurdly predictable appointment of an African to head the court.

We live in a time where just about everything of major public interest in most African countries is outsourced, from health to religion to telecommunications. It was only a matter of time until justice followed suit, but to what end? The question speaks to dysfunctional local systems as much as it does to global opportunism. Neither perspective offers an encouraging prognosis, instead converging in the direction of a seemingly endless stretch of dependency and increasingly blurry versions of the truth. Truths systemically told in somebody else's language, on somebody else's turf and terms and conditions, for somebody else's reasons.

Sitting up in the glass gallery that day, the insidiousness of it all began to dawn upon me. If we cannot own our stories, we cannot own their endings. Before the death of reason, there is the death of context, and in this era of political correctness, its tombstones are scattered around the globe in the form of powerful bureaucracies with philanthropic pretensions.

PAULA AKUGIZIBWE IS A RWANDESE/SOUTH AFRICAN/UGANDAN/NIGERIAN WRITER AND JOURNALIST. SHE SPECIALIZES IN HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND IS CURRENTLY BASED IN CAPE TOWN.

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MANDELA LANDSCAPE

by Anton Corbijn and Berend Strik



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About the work

Anton Corbijn is one of the world's best known photographers and filmmakers. He has worked with the likes of U2, REM, George Clooney and others. Berend Strik is an internationally acclaimed multi-talented artist who is especially famous for his textile art.

In 2003, Corbijn made a portrait of Nelson Mandela.

Strik recently reworked the portrait with the unique stitching technique that brought him international fame. The resulting Mandela Landscape is a double-sided artwork; the backside showing a labyrinth of wires and stitches. Both sides were then photographed and reproduced, resulting in a double sided art print, which is available only through ZAM.

PHOTOGRAPHY by Zanele Muholi

About the work

Zanele Muholi is one of South Africa's top photographers. Exhibitions and awards have taken her all over the world, but she remains very much involved in activist art in her own

country. Gender and sexuality plays an important part in her work. For ZAM she created a limited edition of one of her most beautiful pictures.



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ZAM likes art, and artists like ZAM. Over the years, various renowned artists have helped ZAM grow.

Anton Corbijn, Berend Strik, Ruan Hoffmann and Zanele Muholi do not intend to make any profit from their artworks. All proceeds of the sale (excluding production costs) will be used to fund the new international editions of ZAM Magazine. By supporting ZAM, these artists follow an example set by Marlene Dumas, Adriaan van Dis, Victor Ekpuk, Chika Unigwe and many others.

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If you are interested in obtaining any of these artworks, mail info@zammagazine.com or call +31(0)20 5318497.

CERAMICS by Ruan Hoffmann

About the work

Ruan Hoffmann is a celebrated South African ceramics artist whose work has been displayed all over the world. While staying in Amsterdam, Hoffmann created, especially for ZAM, a limited edition series of 10 artworks.

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