

VISIONARY AFRICA

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Visionary Urban Africa

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VISIONARY URBAN AFRICA

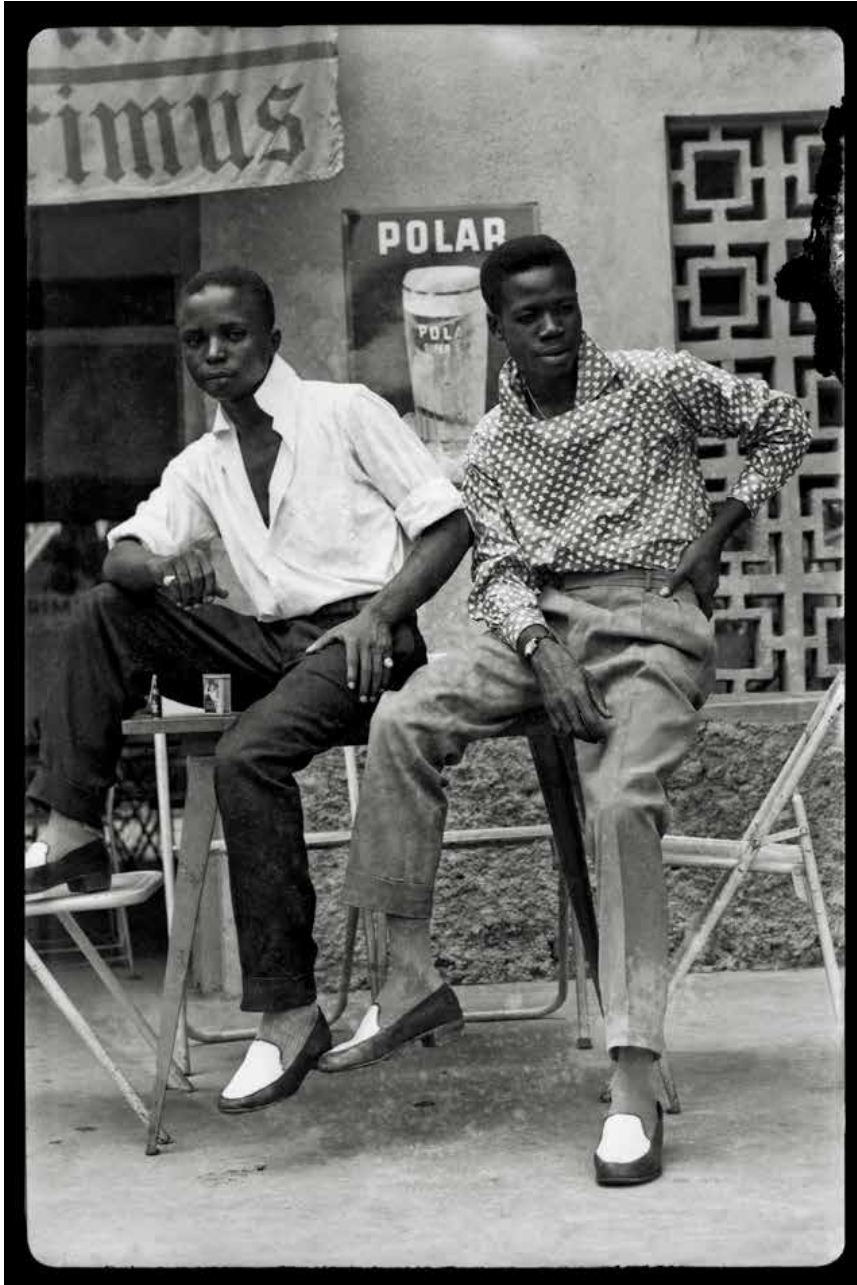
Built environment
and cultural spaces
for democracy

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



Art at Work and Social design

Paul Dujardin

Director General, Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR)

Simon Njami

Independent curator, Paris

For a number of years now, culture has been recognized as an essential part of any development policy. The 2009 *Declaration of Brussels*¹, in particular has greatly enhanced this argument. It inspired our 2010 multidisciplinary platform *Visionary Africa*², which proposed a new independent and contemporary vision of African art at the Centre for Fine Arts of Brussels (BOZAR), in the form of a pan-African celebration of the 50 years of independences of 20 African nations that year.

From *Visionary Africa*, Brussels to *Art at Work*, Africa

For the *Visionary Africa* festival, BOZAR involved eight African contemporary art centres, giving them carte blanche to propose contemporary art exhibitions in dialogue with the ethnographic collections of the Royal Museum for Central Africa. The *GEOgraphics* exhibition was the result, curated by David Adjaye, Anne Marie Bouttiaux, Koyo Kouoh, and Nicola Setari. Simon Njami, on his end, curated *A Useful Dream*, an exhibition celebrating 50 years of photography on the continent.

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

2 These eight art centres and their curators were: Marilyn Douala Bell et Didier Schaub, Doual'art; Yacouba Konaté, la Rotonde des Arts; Abdellah Karroum, l'Appartement 22; Koyo Kouoh, Raw Material Company; Patrick Mudekereza, Picha; Moataz Nasr, Darb 1718; Jimmy Ogonga, CCAEA.;Bisi Silva, CCA, Lagos.



The Afro, by Mansour Ciss, was one of the contemporary art works included in the exhibitions. It illustrates the transformative power of contemporary art, and understandingly caught the attention of numerous visitors.

Artist Mansour Ciss (Senegal) explains: 'I conceived the Afro, an art project for a single, pan-African currency, in opposition to the colonial Franc, the CFA. We bring samples of the Afro to every one of our performances. The Afro travels with me a bit everywhere, and I want to stress that it is my conviction that the unit of currency can become an important element in the economic stabilization of the African continent. This is why I am always drawing the attention of politicians to the pertinence of this project. I think, I am convinced, that this is one very real way to seal Africa's unity'.

'I like the utopian flavour of some of the things I've seen here. My favourite room is the one with the Unit of currency, the Afro. To me, that's what art should be about: it should be suggesting visionary ideas'.

— Adam Hochschild, author

'The artist has to confront Africa's many difficulties, its darkness, but he must also be the bearer of hope. The image of a single African currency, the bills bearing the faces of Africa's great leaders, like Sankara or Mandela, is a beautiful hope. Desperate, maybe, but a beautiful hope nonetheless'.

— Denis Hirson, author

'I was struck by the way Mansour Ciss revisits the great figures of recent African history, like Lumumba, Sankara, Cheik A. Diop ... I think that showcasing these figures, like medallions, icons, for the younger generation is very interesting, both pedagogically and artistically'.

— Abdourahman A. Waberi, author

The Afro, by Mansour Ciss, included in GEOgraphics, BOZAR, 2010.

Jodi Bieber (South Africa), *One, Two, Three and... The Enmerdale Academy of Dance, south of Johannesburg*, 1997. © Jodi Bieber, courtesy Goodman Gallery shown in the exhibition 'A Useful Dream' during the *Visionary Africa* festival.

At a roundtable discussion held at BOZAR with the participating art centres, the project's return to Africa was addressed. This discussion laid the ground for the later *Art at Work: A traveling urban platform* project, made possible with the support of the European Commission. Here are a few of the important statements heard.

Patrick Mudekerezwa, writer and curator, director of Picha, Lubumbashi: 'Two challenges were met here at BOZAR, which ought to both be followed- up: a platform for African encounters, which is rare; and bringing Africa to BOZAR, an international cultural space. A traveling exhibition program can involve each art centre welcoming artworks from the others, and not only as an opportunity for art openings, but also as an opportunity for reflection.'

Yacouba Konate, writer and historian: 'An exhibition in Brussels is good, but it is more interesting to make artists known in Africa, and foster intra-regional connections. This diverse African platform offered by the BOZAR project was the interesting aspect. Small, intra-regional programs, without stress, are needed'.

Koyo Kouoh, curator and writer, director of Raw Material Company, Dakar: 'Geo-GRAPHICS was an institutional critique against the unchanged arts doctrines of national governments, the European Union, and African Union. It is important to go beyond borders and work outside the framework to innovate. So beyond making the BOZAR exhibit travel (which can only happen with international collaboration), what art centres need is infrastructure, and institutional development. We must rely on existing expertise, and beware of miracle expectations of more roundtables'.





An urban experiment

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

Art at Work was designed as a space at once material and symbolic in which, over the course of several installations in public spaces of African capitals, society's stakeholders would be invited to debate questions which do not only touch on creativity, but also on the organization of the city. More than an exhibition device, it was an urban exercise involving local artistic creation as a vector of transformation and social cohesion. And in this regard, it demonstrated concretely how culture contributes to sustainable development, by being closely associated with its three pillars – social, economic and environmental.

The project was officially launched in Tripoli at the 3rd EU-Africa Summit, and then proceeded on a 6-city tour (see map). In each city, an *Art at Work* pavilion was built and installed in a public space, where locals could see exhibited art works without going through the usual hoops and barriers of the museum apparatus. The content of the pavilion included a Pan-African selection of photography from the 1960s onward (from Simon Njami's 2010 exhibit 'A Useful Dream'); 'Urban Africa' a photo documentary survey of the architectures of all 52 African

Art at Work sample exhibit at the 3rd EU-Africa Summit in Tripoli in November 2010, where the project *Art at Work* was announced.

Photo Nicola Setari

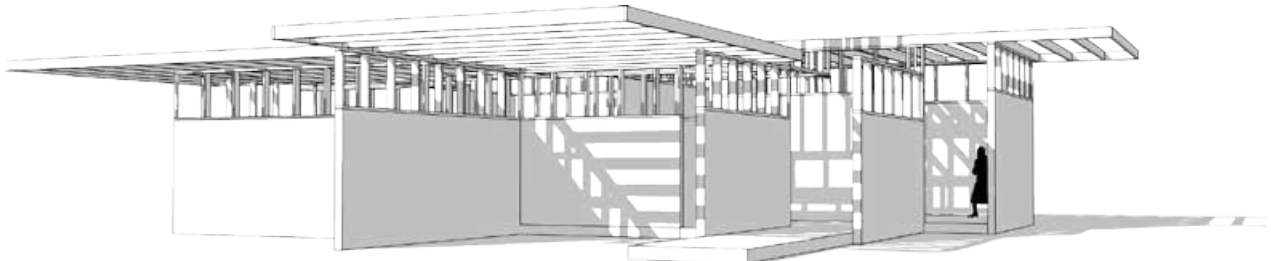
David Adjaye

David Adjaye (Ghana) is the Principal of Adjaye Associates, London. Adjaye is now recognized as one of the leading architects of his generation. He formed a partnership in 1994 and quickly developed a reputation as an architect with an artist's sensibility and vision. His ingenious use of materials, bespoke design and ability to sculpt and showcase light have engendered high regard from both the architectural community and the wider public. Recent works include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, two community libraries in Washington DC, and Skolkovo Moscow School of Management. Adjaye is currently designing the National Museum of African American History and Culture, part of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington DC. His design features a crown motif from Yoruba sculpture. Adjaye curated the GEOgraphics exhibition for the *Visionary Africa* festival at BOZAR in 2010, and conceived the pavilion for its traveling extension *Art at Work*. According to David Adjaye, "architecture must make the world a better place." The way it influences and shapes daily life is at the centre of his thinking and his work. He also attaches great importance to the public and cultural character of architecture. His design of arts centres and large public buildings, bear witness to the interest he shows in the needs of the community as well as the integration of architecture into the existing local environment.

capitals by David Adjaye³; and photography works presented by a local curator, which directly related to the cultural production and history of the host country. An accompanying program of workshops and artist residencies enhanced the dialogue between artists during the pavilion exhibits. The one-day workshops, moderated by curator Simon Njami and the director of the local partner art centre for each city, addressed issues of structures, audiences and education for art specific to the country. Guest artists worked together with local artists on an artistic project which was then donated to the host organization at the end of the residency.

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

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



Drawing of the *Art at Work* pavilion
©Adjaye Associates

The itinerance of *Art at Work*

February 18 – March 9 2011
OUAGADOUGOU – Place de la Nation
Exhibitions '*A Useful Dream*' & '*Urban Africa*'
Curated by Simon Njami and David Adjaye
Artist in residence: Theo Eshetu (Ethiopia)

January 25 – February 15, 2012
ADDIS ABABA – African Union
Local Exhibition '*Face2Face*'
Curated by The atelier (Leo Lefort)
Artist in residence: Bili Bidjocka (Cameroon)

February 15 – March 8, 2012
CAIRO – Al Azhar Park
Local Exhibition '*Revolution at Work*'
Curated by DARB 1718 (Moataz Nasr)
Artist in residence: Tracey Rose (S. Africa)

May 24 – July 2, 2012
HARARE – National Gallery of Zimbabwe Gardens
Local exhibition '*Images of Zimbabwe are our narratives*'
Curated by National Gallery of Zimbabwe (Raphael Chikukwa)

July 12 – 30, 2012
BUJUMBURA – Palace of Arts and Culture
Exhibition '*A Useful Dream*'
Curated by Simon Njami

September 18 – October 16, 2012
KAMPALA – Railway Station Gardens
Local Exhibition '*Routes and Traces*'
Curated by Makerere art Gallery
(Katrin Peters-Klaphake & Margaret Nagawa)
Artist in residence: Freddy Tsimba (DRC)
Regional conference: '*How art and architecture can make city development inclusive and sustainable*'
with keynote address by David Adjaye

April 15 – 19, 2013
NAIROBI – 24th UN Habitat Governing Council Meeting
Side conference and exhibit '*Art & Architecture at work in urban Africa*'
With Joy Mboya, GoDown Arts Centre, and Heinrich Wolff, Wolff Architects

'Not every show merits a standing ovation, but the display of historic photographs of Africa at the precise moment in the 1950s and 1960s when African spirits were high and aspirations were on the ascendant'. 'African artists are called upon to play their role to the full'.
Gamal Nkrumah, Al Ahram Weekly, Cairo, March 2012.



Simon Njami

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

Social design

Visionary Urban Africa proposes a reflection on 'social design', a concept referring above all to the human being, to the organization of public space and the way we live together, to the notion of urbanity. A field adding aesthetical and cultural function to a space's utilitarian function, making living in a society easier. It concerns itself with the masses and the people wherein uniqueness can only be achieved through more global and more philosophical ways, as French philosopher Jacques Rancière states in his definition of the distribution of the sensible: 'The way we organize our perception of the world within a given space, we relate a sensible experience to intelligible ways of interpretation⁴.' Social design challenges all local actors – architects, urban planners, artists, historians, sociologists, authorities, cultural managers, and citizens – and shapes the administration of the city.

Public art and public buildings in public spaces are key elements of social design. Public space is a privileged area where citizens can interact towards an efficiency that fluidifies mutual relations and optimizes the tools the state puts at the citizens' disposal. The public domain is the space that structures communities, and in Africa it is shaped very differently in the city from the countryside. Whereas African rural areas are arranged organically, with social mechanisms constructed by ordinary people, it is the political powers that structure the cities, those strategic places from which the entire country is organized. Yet the 'ancestral' organization can transfer from rural to urban sites, providing African cities with an element that external onlookers may qualify as chaotic. Such a conclusion would negate the reality of a subtle human canvas where all things are intertwined. There is no 'centered causal logic' in Africa, but rather a series of micro-logics, which, brought together, form the social fabric. Markets, neighborhoods, and courtyards therefore become the places where a specific aesthetic is created, expressed not in monuments or concrete instruments, but in the primary immateriality that has always been Africa's secret, and according to the logic of a complex architecture that pervades African society in a very subtle and sophisticated manner.

As citizens, artists and architects play a key role in investing public urban spaces. Artists depict and question the people's moods in a personal manner and without mediation, and architects interpret imagined and necessary places for living together. Public art has stemmed from such an acknowledgment of the artist's role in society, stemming from an evolution that is not necessarily linked to vital needs, but rather is the result of an intellectual process. As Jacques Rancière states: 'some wish that art should commemorate the horrors of the century in an indelible form. Others want it to help today's men to understand each other within the diversity of their cultures. Others again explain that art today produces – or must produce – not so much works for art lovers but new forms of social relations for all'. But 'the artist', says Rancière, 'is a citizen like any other and his role in society does not go beyond that of a smith or a dentist, each of them having their part to play, each one in his own domain'. Public architecture puts similar expectations on the architect. 'Communities need empowering buildings' says architect David Adjaye. 'The primary act of public architecture is to create spaces that are socially edifying and socially liberating – using design excellence as a social force that makes good'.

This is why social design should not be a state or individual project, but a collective and participatory one, served well by artists and architects, supported by many other disciplines. And it is this very focus of the *Art at Work* project, which caught the attention of UN Habitat, itself increasingly interested in the crucial role of culture in the sustainability of cities. BOZAR, UN Habitat and the European Commission have since collaborated to advocate this message together at an official event at European Development Days in November 2013 and a event to the 4th EU-Africa Summit in Brussels in April 2014.

(...)



Tamrat Gezahegn - Face 2 Face
Acrylic on canvas, 2012

ADDIS ABABA

To Redeem the Work (...)

Leo Lefort

Serial Curator, LeLa Art Gallery Associate, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

As with many nations throughout the world that possess a notable artistic patrimony and nurture an edgy interconnection with the *en vogue* modernity, Ethiopia occupies an indeterminate grey zone on the map of contemporary arts. With the forces of globalisation very much at play, Ethiopia is trying to come to grips with its hybrid identities, looking elsewhere, nowhere and everywhere for inspiration and leadership. Like many other small countries on the so-called periphery, Ethiopia's contemporary art situation is characterised by both dilemma and prospects.

Here in Addis Ababa, exhibiting works of art outside conventional art venues is more of an absolute necessity than a fashionable preference. Upon being invited to 'invade' the remnant of the itinerant laboratory *Visionary Africa: Art at Work*¹, the exhibition entitled FACE2FACE engaged seven artists to confront spatial vacuity, temporary amnesia, collective unaccountability and institutional lethargy, in an obvious and explicit declaration, in the heart of the African Union compound, offering to relocate the art experience as an open multilayered dialogue between audiences, artists, institutions, action and momentum. Breaking from the archetypal notions of what a 'gallery' could be, featuring artists who create critical projects that reflect our present circumstances, and who produce works of seminal importance to Ethiopia's contemporary art scene, FACE2FACE strived to encourage an open dialogue about a major concern: the lack of exposure for artists whose work challenges attitudes, conceptual values and aesthetic norms. The show also allowed the transmission of two signals simultaneously in opposite directions: on one side a fine selection of filtered high quality replicas were displayed for the recreation of officials and white-collar workers passing-by; on the other side

¹ The *Visionary Africa - Art at Work* exhibit pavilion, with the Ethiopian section curated by Léo Lefort, was shown in Addis Ababa January 25- February 8, 2012, in the compound of the African Union, after city authorities canceled their building authorisation and permit for installation in Meskel Square.

uncensored original art works were brought to the view of connoisseurs at LeLa gallery². The duality of the exhibition spaces themselves addressed the enigma of how artwork relates to both context and prominence, pivotal factors to this collaborative enterprise that constituted a premise, not an outcome. The artworks of Ermias Kifleyesus, Mulugeta Tafesse, Behailu Bezabih, Tewodros Hagos, Mulugeta Gebrekidan, Tamrat Gezahegn and Michael Tsegaye came face to face with each other in those provisional apertures, harmoniously colliding, and offering sets of visual interpretations in their own singular manner to variables of space occupation. Under the current trends and the symptomatic confusing zones of tensions impacting both the real world and its virtual extensions, it was important for us to seize this *frame for habitation* as an ultimate attempt to confront audiences with images that matter, and ignite the discussion on otherness, appropriation and territory. The Trojan horse — FACE2FACE —, allowed the artists to ostensibly perform some innocuous functions in the very compound of the new gem of *Alem Bekagn*³ (literally *farewell to the world*), the *monumentuous* pristine head-office of the African Union, albeit still acting as a powerful pedagogical weapon and scale of reference in a complex, yet vibrant scene.

It felt natural that the dismantled pavilion should be offered to Netsa Village at a time when it urgently needed of a shelter - they were provided with a field by the local administration. With their vision, Netsa Village takes on the task to showcase la crème-de-la-crème of Addis Ababa's avant-guard. Artists' low confidence in institutions and museums demands that they become more imaginative in the way that they organise themselves. Since its inception this artist-run centre aims to broaden the scope of the local art scene by initiating and facilitating professional networking, sharing resources, solving problems collectively and acting as a powerful think-tank in close contact with local communities. Oscillating between the self and the group, self-imposed bureaucratisation, flexibility and activism, the creative horde, among whom Helen Zeru, Leikun Nahusenay, Mihret Kebede, Tesfahun Kibru, Salomon Tsegaye and Tamrat Gezahegn are producing significant works with a diverse range of mediums, approaches and concepts, mutualised their talents -and savings!- to bring challenging contemporary arts to the public. Last summer, The Prince Claus Fund and Mimeta funded the "*Wax and Gold*" platform, the first brain-child of the pavilion according to Tamrat Gezahegn. The pavilion is now being used constantly by Netsa Village for exhibitions, panel discussions, workshops, publications and discursive projects aimed at forging a critical understanding of local and international phenomena in art and society (see *Living Museum* on next pages).

This is only one example of how during the last fifteen years there has been a marked increase in activity in the field of Ethiopian contemporary art. There has been talk of a scene, a *wind of change*, a *renaissance*, though this discussion is largely internal - sometimes resonating like the dissemination of chauvinistic self-promotion. What is a '*scene*' anyway, and what exactly does it consist of? It is doubtful if any significant international curators, renowned art critics or influential collectors worldwide can name more than one or two contemporary Ethiopian artists (at best) and most-likely those would be based elsewhere than in Ethiopia or already breathing six feet under. It might be relevant though, given Ethiopia's cultural heritage and recent political history (let's say the past hundred years), to perform a site-specific approach based on analysis of the foundation, preeminent factors, topical conditions and anticipated prospects. At the present time Ethiopia provides a unique and challenging context: the impossible becomes possible, the unthinkable becomes the norm, off-limit behaviours become new social customs. Artists and art institutions have to navigate these nebulous borders in constant motion, eventually mapping a space for recognition.

Leo Lefort

Through varied collaborations Leo Lefort has proved to be a singular voice in the Ethiopian contemporary art scene for the past fifteen years. Founder and director of The Taitu International Art Centre, LeLa and ATELIER art galleries, Leo has an extensive curatorial background having worked for reputable public and private institutions, non-governmental organisations, and government in the country and abroad. A recipient of the AFAA Prize, Leo taught four years Art Theory & Aesthetics at the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Abeba University and was another two years affiliated researcher with the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. An art educator -currently head of the Visual Arts Department. ICS Addis-, Leo teaches photography, film, design and fine arts courses endeavouring to "*take care of the ABCs of art, but as there is always the X, the unknown, I try to allow for that too, keeping the program (be it curatorial or educational) elastic, resilient and cutting-edge, allowing for permanent innovation.*" Mentored by art critic and curator Denys Zacharopoulos, Leo Lefort holds a Master Degree in Fine Arts from the Université de Haute Bretagne, Rennes, France.



Tewodros Hagos - *Federal*
Acrylic on canvas 2010

Things seem to be evolving in a positive and optimistic way, in a city where 60% of the population is under 30 years old. The voice of this young generation is strong enough to have a consequential effect. If nurtured by a healthy, non-prohibiting, environment, this young generation might shortly demonstrate publicly its striking creativity, its enthusiastic desire for knowledge and willingness to take-risk. So far, private initiatives have been instrumental in raising awareness about Ethiopian contemporary artists, playing a quasi-institutional role for years and it's about time for this striving sector to be backed-up with significant systematic, regulated, financial, material and technical support. Despite the problems faced, however, it is clear that the energy that characterises the current situation is unprecedented. The moment is at its most opportune: if all these efforts can come together constructively, and be consolidated, the tables can really be turned.

NOW that public interest for contemporary art is increasing. NOW that contemporary art is becoming a topic for public discussion. NOW that we talk about an improving of the qualitative and quantitative conditions for art production itself. NOW that empowered Ethiopian artists are taking their place on the international art stage. IT'S TIME that in education Art is placed beside Science, Sociology, History, and Axiology recognised as one of the great architectonic disciplines of Ethiopian culture. IT'S TIME to restore Art to its full meaning as a fundamental rational capacity at work in paint-brushes as well as plows, in cloth and leather manufacturing as well as in writing poetry, in industrial machineries as well as in the throats of *azmaris*, in our bodies as *eskēsta* dances, in *bēgēnas* and *māsinkos*, excavators, airplanes and satellites. IT'S TIME to create the means to support the art milieu, encourage residence programs, and assist private organisations enabling the production of critical discourses and publications about projects, expos and artists whose work are exhibited to provide the audience with material to refer to, for them to be better equipped to interpret art works within broader frameworks. IT'S TIME to inspire corporate sponsors — specifically in the current *open-source* economy sphere, paradoxically plagued by avarice — to contribute a significant share of their profit to the well-being of the art industry aiming to stimulate economic growth while developing alternative creative cooperation. IT'S TIME to institute art dealers and galleries' professional coalitions — remaining free from particular schools or categories of creation — to mutually operate as open laboratories for the convergence and cross-pollination of media, practices, disciplines and audiences. IT'S TIME to redeem the work (...)

LESS INHIBITION. NO PROHIBITION. MORE EXHIBITIONS.



On next page:
Behailu Bezabih - *Eskēsta*
Acrylic on canvas. 2011

Curator Leo Lefort and Jean Ping, chairman of the Commission of the African Union, at the Addis Ababa *Art at Work* pavilion. January 2012.
Photo by Christophe Bouliercac

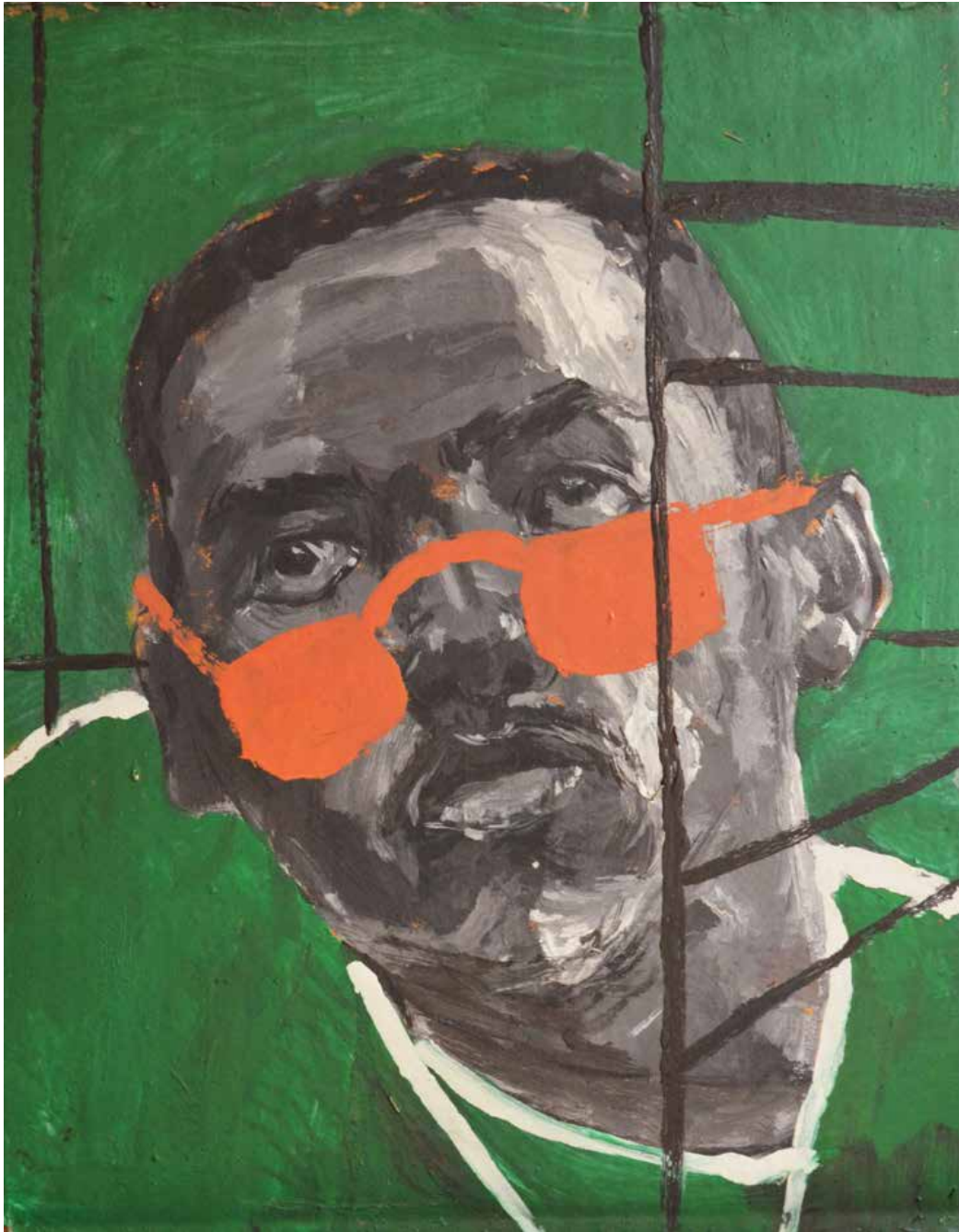




Leikun Nahusenay *Living Museum*
Digital Print 2012



Michael Tsegaye - 非洲聯盟
Digital Print 2010



Tamrat Gezahegn *Face*
Acrylic on board, 2005

Biographies of artists exhibited in the *Art at Work* pavilions between 2011-2012

Behailu Bezabih (Ethiopia) studied for 5 years and was awarded a DFA from the School of Fine Arts, Addis Ababa in 1981. After 20 of teaching, he pursued his studies, and recently graduated from the Transart Institute New York / Berlin, with a Masters degree in Fine Arts and New Media. His work has been exhibited in solo and group shows in Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Belgium and the United States. Behailu is a recipient of numerous national and international awards. Recently, he was awarded the well-respected Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant award. Scrutinising everyday life while creating his delirious mythology.

Rumanzi Canon Mbarara (Uganda, b.1991) works as a freelance graphic designer and artist using drawings, video and photography. He is one of the founders of and currently engaged in the long-term project *History in Progress Uganda* (HIP Uganda).

Yahya Diwer (Egypt) was born in Alexandria. He is a lead photographer with Egyptian contemporary art & culture and international culture resources institute . Yahya graduated from medical school and currently works as a junior gynecologist, medical consultant and freelancer photographer.

May El Hossamy (Egypt) studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. She received her Master's degree in Art from France specializing in the subject that had begun to haunt her work in the last year in college: symbolism in Ancient Egypt. She held her first private exhibition in Spain, where she showed the colors and the different images of the Egyptian desert. Her photographic project *Souq El Gomaa* began in 2008, and took a sudden and unexpected turn when the souq burnt down in June 2010. This incident led to a short documentary, called *Kan ya.Makan*.

Nahla El Sabei (Egypt, b. 1983) graduated from the faculty of Art Education in 2006. She participated in different group exhibitions in painting, jewelry and Fashion including the "Dress Up Project" and "Fashion & Identity Night", in cooperation with the Goethe Institute & SAWA workshop (Townhouse Gallery 2008). Nahla also participated in "From Inside to Outside" Exhibition at the Townhouse Gallery. In addition, she participated in different workshops in painting and drawing, jewelry and fashion. Nahla won the "Gazbia Seri prize" in 2005.

Tamrat Gezahagne (Ethiopia) creates moments of forceful irony by constantly reinventing the language of Ethiopian contemporary fine art, introducing a straightforward style that deliberately rejects sophisticated artistic techniques, preferring the bold directness of bright colours, or minimalist ink pen and the meticulous repetition of motifs. A new wide world is under construction under the genuine intervention of this artist with exceptional skills.

Tewodros Hagos (Ethiopia b.1974) graduated from the School of Fine Arts and Design, Addis Ababa University in 1995. In 1998, Tewodros left to Belgium, where he stayed for over ten years living and working in Antwerp. Since his return to Addis Ababa, Tewodros has managed to carve out a distinct style and is now regarded as one of the most promising Ethiopian painters of his generation. He has been exhibited at the Studio Amschloss, Berlin, B o u l e v a r d A m a n d l a , Antwerp, Bek Gallery Leuven, KN10 Gallery, Antwerp, Futuro Center, Rome & Atelier gallery Addis Ababa.

Kibuuka Mukisa Oscar (Uganda, b. 1992) is a young photographer and videographer. He learned photography with the support of friends and is self-taught in videography. He is a dedicated long-term member of the Break Dance Project Uganda and documents their events and activities comprehensively.

Bethule Nkiwane (Zimbabwe, b. 1979) works and practices in Zimbabwe. Bethule is one of the emerging photographers in Zimbabwe; currently he works as a photojournalist with the Daily News. Bethule got his training from the Market Photo Workshop in South Africa. On his return to Zimbabwe Bethule had a solo show at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. He has also exhibited his work at a number of Gwanza exhibitions at the Gallery. He is interested in people and tapping into the unknown stories. His work is more documentary.

Believe Nyakudjara (Zimbabwe) is a photojournalist and documentary photographer, currently working as the Chief Photographer for The Sunday Mail Newspaper, a leading Zimbabwe Newspapers weekly broadsheet. He is a graduate in photojournalism from the Market Photo Workshop in South Africa. Nyakudjara has exhibited in Zimbabwe at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe and in South Africa mainly. He is interested in art photography and the themes of migration, identity and religion.

Hani Rashed (Egypt, b. 1975) studied art with artist Mohamed Abla from 1994 to 2004. He worked in Egyptian television from 1994 to 2010.

Mina Tadros (Egypt) graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in Cairo. He joined several exhibitions and Residency programs. Mina won First prize in drawing at the 51st Pioneers exhibition in Cairo in 2011, and also won a prize in drawing at the 21st Youth Salon in Cairo in 2010.

Michael Tsegaye (Ethiopia) grew up in Addis Abeba where he attended Cathedral High School. He enrolled in the Economics Department of Addis Abeba University before transferring to its School of Fine Arts and Design. There, he received his diploma in painting in 2002, but soon gave up painting after he developed a severe allergy to oil paint. He subsequently found his passion in photography. In his photographic work, Michael focuses on social documentary projects as well as art photography.

Aaron Ufumeli (Zimbabwe) works, and practice in his home country like many Zimbabwean photographers. He is a self taught photographer and now working as a photojournalist with the local newspaper Newsday. Through a month of photography Gwanza he saw his work exhibited at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. His big interest is in people and their way of life. The piece in this show entitled “High Jump”, says a lot about not giving up on life.

Gayaza High School is the oldest girls’ school in Uganda, founded in 1905 by British missionaries. Their photo archive houses documentation of school activities, portraits of Old Girls and two sets of lantern slides. One set was produced for educational purposes and shows images that were considered to represent Uganda in the first decade of the 20th century. The other set documents the early years of the school.

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Photo on cover: Nontsikelelo Veleko (South Africa), Hloni, Johannesburg, 2003-2006.

Drawing of the Art at Work pavilion by Adjaye Associates, 2011 ©Adjaye Associates.