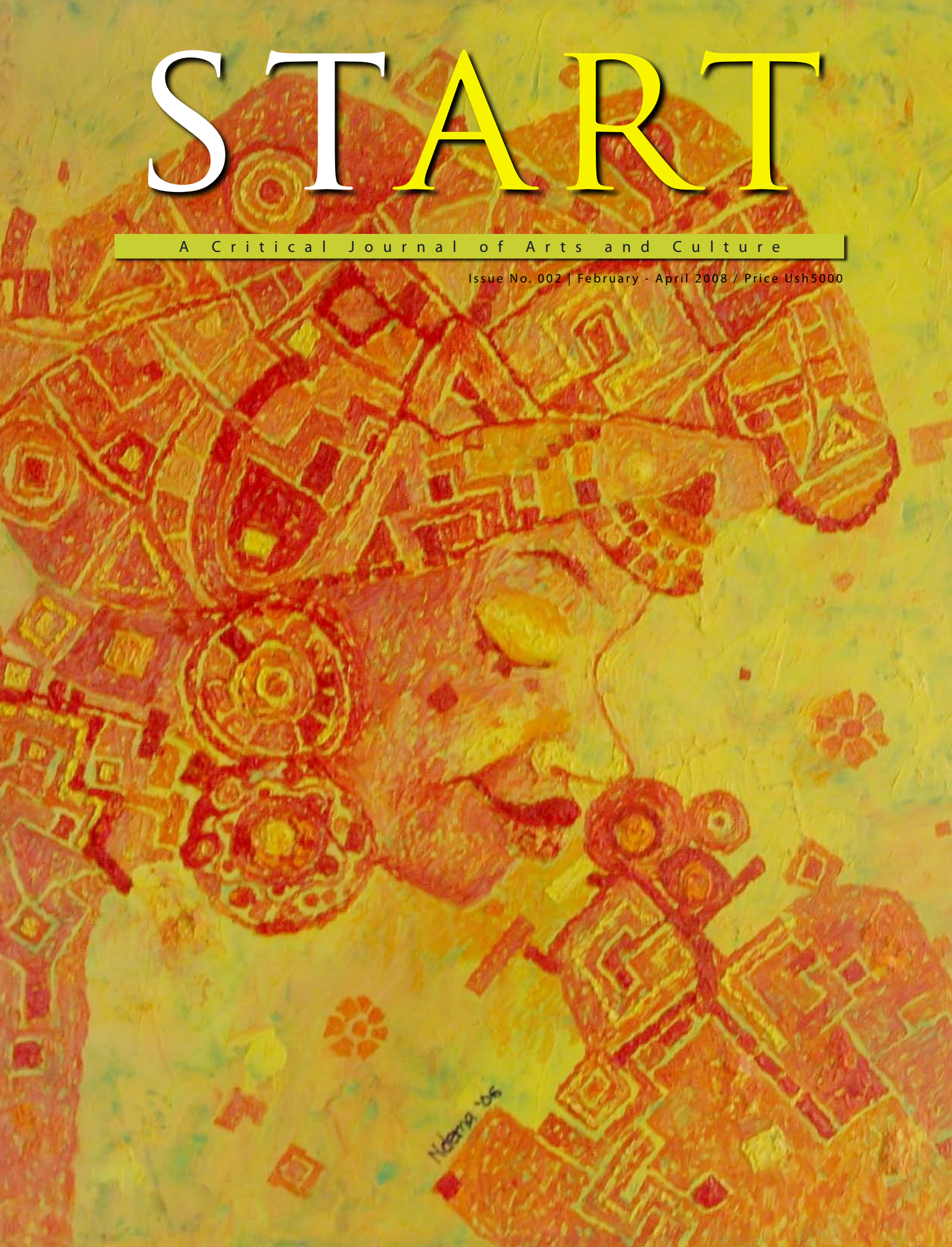


START

A Critical Journal of Arts and Culture

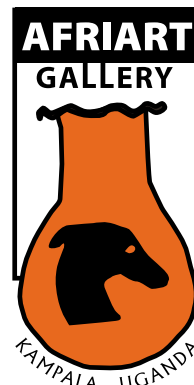
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Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of START, Kampala's first and only critical journal of arts and culture. The response to our first issue was overwhelming: Within the first two weeks, readers had snatched up the entire first run and we are still getting requests for more copies. Contrary to some predictions, there is a clear appetite among Ugandans for a new kind of publication, one that contains the sort of thoughtful information and criticism we are providing on the emerging arts scene in East Africa.

In the second issue, we explore the vital—and sometimes uneasy—relationship between the arts and the commercial world. Artist and writer Henry Mzili Mujunga returns as our chief correspondent, exploring the recent rash of "biennales" and other art festivals in Africa and around the globe that have, in a desperate search for approval from the arts establishment, looked suspiciously similar. Mzili also profiles Segah, the rising Ugandan sculptor with a refreshing work ethic and takes us behind the scenes for the making of The Stride, the sculpture commissioned for last year's CHOGM extravaganza. Anne-Liese Prem looks at the trend on the international art scene of works fetching staggering sums and the struggle to bring funding to our local arts scene. And finally, Catherine Meyer writes about how the arts in Uganda are giving something back to communities.

START continues to stay afloat in these early days thanks to our visionary sponsors, advertisers and contributing writers. We'd like to extend a special thanks to them and encourage others to contribute to this unique voice in Uganda in whatever way you can. Keep the dream alive!

The editors.

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START

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COVER CONTENT
Oil Painting: 'Sentimentality'
by Ndema Paul

Rantings of a madman

Imitation & Influence

By Henry Mzili Mujunga



Sun 1 by Daudi Karungi

Squatting on my pit latrine, I see leaves falling from the fene (jackfruit) tree. Broad, bold-veined leaves, coming down in a tropical torrent that enriches the terrain below with rich, dark loam. Sprinkle some leaves on the ground, take mental pictures of them. Link it with a previous quest for a cure to a terminal illness and reflect upon the medicinal purpose of plants. I attack my medium with sketchy yet convicted ideas of color, subject

and spirit. These I release onto the format in quick rolls and scratches as a child, stick in hand, attacks the earth of an African courtyard. If you are Daudi Karungi, go a bit further; borrow the leaf motif and use it as your own invention! But do not forget to add a bit of gold trimmings.

But I am not threatened by imitation. In fact, I believe it crucial to the future of art in Uganda. Without influence, after

all, art movements cannot grow. I recognize myself in the works of Ronex, Daudi, Ojok, Ddamba, Enoch, Juuko, Ssendagire and numerous others. Mind you, all these artists have also given back to me in one way or the other. Take Ronex. Where would my art be without his roller technique? I appreciate when the young but immensely talented Sane says I inspired him to do the art he does today.

While I was musing about the origin of individualism (as opposed to movementism) I stumbled upon information suggesting that this trend goes back to the great Renaissance masters Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo. I learned that as fiercely individual as they were, these great masters were intricately bound together in the artistic tradition. They were taught by those who came before them; they taught and influenced generations that followed.

At the Makerere University art school, young, impressionable minds were taught by the likes of Professors Jonathan Kingdon and Margaret Trowell to work toward developing a personal style that would set them apart from others.

Through out Africa the practice of the arts had always retained the possibility of social and political critique.



Ronex's "The Harvest"

Most students, having acquired this coveted, signature styles sought to discourage copycats by living reclusive lifestyles.

This also fits with a certain popular image of The Artist as an introverted loner that seemed to be held by students and faculty alike. Professor F.X. Nnaggenda, while serving on the same teaching staff as Professors Pilkington Ssengendo and Ignatius Sserulyo, did not share a comradery that fostered regular cordial house calls. The desire to work in isolation has led to lack of a fluent course of influence in the development of art in Uganda. Ugandan and Nigerian



A painting by Damba Ismael

art traditions may share a similar academic structure and colonial background, but contemporary Nigerian artists seem far more aware of the need to work together towards the development of art movements than their counterparts in the East of the continent. The likes of professor Uche Okeke (University of Nigeria, Nsukka) and Bruce Anabrakpea have consciously influenced a generation of young Igbo artists to produce Uli art, a genre anchored in the rich signs and motifs of traditional Igbo society. Since 1962, Uche Okeke has been deliberately pushing for the utilization of Uli motifs in modern

painting. This has given rise to successful artists such as the water colourist Tayo Adenaike.

In Uganda, we need to work deliberately to create movements like this. I support the formation of art groups like Index Mashariki, Kann, Musono, the Uganda Printmakers Association and others that encourage artists to borrow ideas from

one another. It will enable us to make a bigger impact on the global art scene. This brings to mind the European art group Cobra, which counts Karel Appel and Coneille as its most important artists. Vouhou vouhou (Senegal), Sisi kwa sisi (Kenya), Ngecha (Kenya) and Tinga tinga (Tanzania), are all conscious African attempts at cohering for greater impact in the global art scene ■



Flight by Herbert Kalule

The Van Gogh of Africa

and other global misunderstandings: Inside EASTAFAB 2007 -The East Africa Art Biennale

For the official opening of the East Africa Art Biennale-EASTAFAB 2007 on November 2nd, 2007, a selection of guests from the government, diplomatic, media and private sectors were invited at the National Museum of Dar-es-Salaam.

The biennale opened to the public from November 3rd to 22nd, 2007. To properly exhibit the great number of artworks received, the Biennale used five venues in Dar-es-Salaam, running simultaneously: the National Museum, the Russian-Tanzanian Cultural Centre, the Alliance Francaise, the Movenpick Hotel and "La Petite Galerie" (Oysterbay).

The East Africa Art Biennale is the biggest art exhibition in Central and Eastern Africa; it showcased the works of 105 visual artists from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda together with the works of artists from Belgium, Burkina Faso, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (DRC), Cuba, Denmark, France, Ghana, Italy, Mauritius, Nigeria, Norway, Spain, the UK and the USA.

Each artist was allowed to submit to the Organising Committee a minimum of two artworks and a maximum of five.

These shows are seen by their sponsors as helping to fashion new identities for societies that find themselves re-entering the international discourse in radically new circumstances.

The event was very well attended on the opening day, gathering at the National Museum an estimated four hundred guests from the official, private, media and art sectors. All along the duration of the Biennale, the general public attendance was significant and regular.

Private schools organised visits to the National Museum and other venues on their own initiative, and EASTAFAB provided transport to six secondary public schools to the Museum and offered these alumni a "One Day at the National Museum" visit, including a guided tour of the Biennale and received refreshment.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the official press release by the organizers of this noble event. I did an Internet search on it and hardly anything was written about it. The question is, why is this big event being ignored by the

art world? I mean, a lot has been written about Dak'Art in Dakar, Senegal, for instance.

One thing is clear: All these biennales raise complex questions about the relationships between tradition, modernism and kitsch within varied cultural contexts. The main impetus for the biennales that have been multiplying around the developing world for a generation—by my count, there are now almost 40—seems not to be artistic so much as political. These shows are seen by their sponsors as helping to fashion new identities for societies that find themselves re-entering the international discourse in radically new circumstances, such as the end of Euro-colonialism, the fall of the Soviet empire or the emergence of

Asian capitalism. In many cases, the aspired new identity is embodied by the ambition to become “a world-class city,” as Christopher Till, then Johannesburg director of culture, described the aim of the first Johannesburg, South Africa Biennale in 1995.

Often, in the rash to go global, exhibition organizers seem to have overstepped tending to their own nation’s artistic identity. Their global ambitions require an exhibition that will instantly grab the art world’s attention. In pursuit of this goal, biennale curators have tended to pick from the same list of critical favourites, creating uncomfortably similar shows—as with Sao Paulo (Brazil) in 1994 and Johannesburg in 1995—from which their own society’s history and needs has mostly been erased. (In the case of the Johannesburg Biennale, which suspended operations in 1998 when government support dried up, this strategy seems to have backfired.) The strategy of sticking with one’s own region—as with the Cairo Biennale (Egypt), which chiefly serves the Arab world—may make for less stunning exhibitions by international standards, yet serve a necessary social purpose. This was the case with EASTAFAB 2007.

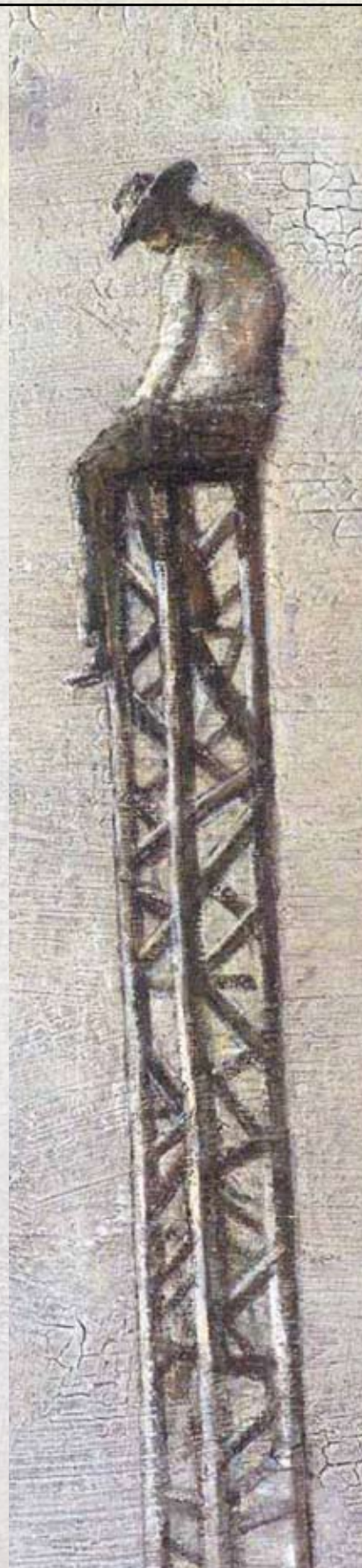
Still, despite the show’s avowed dedication to Africa, much if not

most of the work seen at EASTAFAB 2007 addressed Western art history. This air of cross-cultural connectivity arises from various confused reverberations of colonialism, including a desire to modernize. A couple of generations ago it seemed transparently obvious that modernization meant Westernization. Today, it is not so obvious. In India, critic and curator Gita Kapoor and others have called for a uniquely Indian modernism (somewhat like how Mao and his associates called for a uniquely Chinese brand of socialism.) Similar ideas are heard elsewhere in the previously colonized world. Whether modernism requires westernization or can be indigenously generated is one of the questions that EASTAFAB 2007 indirectly explored.

The relationship between modernism and Westernization is controversial, in part, perhaps, because it is not well understood and is often treated simplistically. Modern African art is all too often subject to comments like the following negative judgment by a western curator on a show of modernist African art (cited in an article by Salah Hassan of the African studies department at Cornell University in the United States,): “(It) seems like third-rate artwork to us because the art presented here emulated the Western tradition ... and because

it is always lagging behind.... It cannot escape the critical eye of the Western art world....” This formulation of the situation—in particular the emphasis on the idea of “lagging behind”—

Biennale curators have tended to pick from the same list of critical favourites...from which their own society’s history and needs has mostly been erased.



They are working with the stylistic signifiers of two essentially dead traditions—classical modernism and African traditionalism—not in a passive way but actively, with the intention of striking from their impact some as-yet-unidentifiable spark of new life.

-is obviously inadequate. Art history does not follow the same chronology everywhere, and different societies use artistic modernism for different purposes. The anonymous Western curator Hassan cites seems to be assuming that every society has the same needs and should follow the same chronology in fulfilling them. This position makes the Western developmental time line into a kind of absolute that overrides the cultural and historical characteristics that distinguish societies from one another.

In his commentary on the quote, Hassan objects, rightfully, to judging the world's societies on such a monolithic scale and to the "widespread misconception that

contemporary African culture is a distorted copy of Western culture, and therefore lacks authenticity." On the contrary, he insists that "Africa's creative impulses remain alive and continue to contribute ... masterpieces of visual and performing arts to the world cultural scene."

Yet Hassan, it seems to me, is on less solid ground when he retorts, without naming names, that "African artists ... have ... been in the forefront of contribution to modernism and even postmodernism." Certainly, non-Western artists deserve to be defended from the simplistic monolinear-historical charge of "lagging behind," but to declare them to have been "in the forefront" of modernism seems a thinly disguised form of postcolonial reversal which without concrete examples does not really do the job. What is at issue here is not so much the question of whether contemporary African art imitates Western modernism—which once, as everyone knows, in its own formative years, nourished itself on traditional African art—as it is something less definite and more potentially creative.

From the Western point of view, modernism seems old-fashioned, while in much of Africa it's still seen as a new and desirable mode. This ideological divergence leads to very different points of view on specific works. Artists in the third world who seek to give their works a modernist look—from the Bombay Progressives to Ugandan painters such as Steven Kasumba and Geoffrey Mukasa—strive for

a sense of aesthetic totality and integration that recalls Western abstract painters of the 1950s. To its audience at home, such work carries an aura of progress, but to Western viewers it can seem like kitsch. Indeed, it is not uncommon for progressive African artists to be referred to by such clichéd monikers as "The Van Gogh of Africa." In view of this argument, kitsch modernism was well represented at EASTAFAB 2007, as it has at several other biennales including Dak'Art, Johannesburg and Cairo. Kitsch, in this context, means that these re-creations lack a sense of authenticity that the style possessed when it was alive and dynamic. Here, to "the critical eye of the Western art world," as the nameless curator in Hassan's essay put it (meaning, really, not just Western but Eurocentric), the works look like wanton imitation that might have arisen out of nostalgia, or worse. But that's only one aspect of the situation.

Although contemporary African artists are often as ferociously talented as artists anywhere, their products are apt to come out looking derivative to the Western eye. This doesn't mean that they are imitating the West. It seems to me that they are after bigger game than that. They are working with the stylistic signifiers of two essentially dead traditions—classical modernism and African traditionalism—not in a passive way but actively, with the intention of striking from their impact some as-yet-unidentifiable spark of new life. Already both styles, as practiced in postcolonial Africa, have developed new

meanings behind the deceptively stable visual signifiers. Modernist abstraction, for African artists, no longer signifies the quest for transcendence but, rather, the opposite: the quest for inclusion in the here and now as it is represented by industrialization, urbanization and international commerce. The adherence to African traditionalism, similarly, no longer deals with communal ritual and animistic religion so much as with the rejection of Westernization and the desire for a type of modernism that might somehow be culturally African.

In the works that seek to join these tendencies, the affirmation and the negation of the West coexist in an uneasy equilibrium. This is the creative dynamic that underlies the somewhat tortured mixtures of different brands of kitsch.

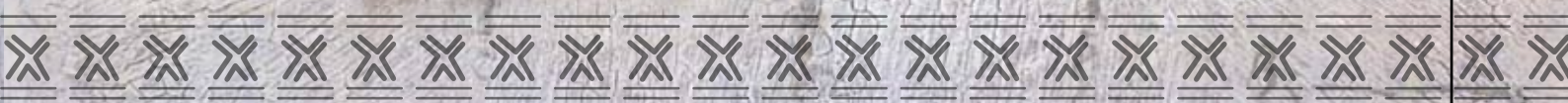
Eventually, perhaps, an inner transformation of meaning will render them something else, though that moment has not yet arrived. Ultimately, one has to admire the artists who are sticking with this problem. There are easier options. Some African artists, mostly younger

and often Western-educated, have sought a way out of this exhausting dilemma by stepping directly into trans-cultural postmodern styles, as many Asian artists have done. EASTAFAB 2007 included little of this work, which is marked by an affirmation of fragmentation instead of totality, contradiction instead of integration.

While one hesitates to generalize about so vast and varied a continent, it seems that Africa can work its way through all this in one of three ways: by creating a hybrid form of African modernism; by stepping comfortably into what

are now well-known international postmodernist styles; or by making a leap into something new and unforeseen, which may impact back upon the rest of the world in surprising ways.

It was in the midst of this charged atmosphere of simultaneous cultural opposition and assimilation that a selection of guests from the government, diplomatic, media and private sectors converged on the National Museum of Dar-es-Salaam on the 2nd November 2007, the first day of EASTAFAB 2007.





List of participating artists (by country)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Australia (1): Kate Bond | 12. France (3): Johan Baggio, Jean-Pierre Montigaud, Jan Vanderhoeven "Papa Jan" | Ray Mwasha, David Mzuguno, Augustino Karani Samwel, John Shoghollo, Samuel Susuma, Nadir Tharani |
| 2. Belgium (6): Pascal Bogaert, Yves Gosciny, Veronique Laurent, Mufuki Mukuna, Hermine Romain, Xavier Verhoest | 13. Ghana (3): Isaac Awuley Addico, Gabriel Eklou Assignon, Peter Odeh | 23. The Netherlands (2): Marianne De Moor, Mieke Van Grinsven |
| 3. Brasil (1): Inez Olude | 14. Italy (1): Sacha Polverini | 24. Uganda (25): Anwar Sadat Nakibinye, Herbert Bakka "Herbak", Damba Musoke Ismail, Daudi Karungi, Yakuze Mubiru "Ivan", John Bosco Kanuge, Paul Kasambeko "Kaspa", Mark Byamugisha Kassi, Kateregga Ismael, Paul Kintu, Kizito Fred, Stephen Mubiita, Edison Mugalu, Geoffrey Mukasa, Enoch Mukiibi, Barigye Navio Ivan, Felix Oburu, Ojok Robert, Ronald Odokotho "Ro", Ronex Ahimbisibwe, Eria Nsubuga Sane, Collin, Sekajugo "Secolli", Ssali Yusuf, Paul Ssendagire, Ronnie Tindimwebwa |
| 4. Burkina Faso (4): Laurent Ilboudo, Christophe Sawadogo, Fernand Sawadogo, Vivien Deogracias Tapsoba, | 15. Kenya (7): "Bertiers", Sebastian Kiari, Cartoon Joseph, Caroline Mbirua, Maryann Muthoni, Peter Ngugi, Emily Odongo | 25. United Kingdom (3): Bruce Clarke, Sarah Markes, Allister Moon |
| 5. Canada (1): Teresa Rozkiewicz | 16. Madagascar (1): D'Ange Lalao | 26. United States of America (1): Charles Hargrove Jr "Koor" |
| 6. Congo-Brazza (1): Rhode Bath-Scheba Makoumbou | 17. Mauritius (7): Bibi Sultana Haukim, Ravi Jetshan "Soz", Alix Le Juge de Segrais, Jean-Yves L'Onfle, Nirmala, Luckeenarain, Rishi Seeruttun, Nalini Treebhoobun "Nin" | |
| 7. Croatia (1): Ivan Klapez | 18. Nigeria (1): Akindiya Rasheed Olaniyi "Akirash" | |
| 8. Cuba (10): Agustin Bejarano Caballero, Luis E. Camejo Vento, Eduardo Roca "Choco" Salazar, Luis Contino, Roque, Roberto Diago Durruti, Aisar Jalil Martinez, Pena Peralta Julio Cesar, Rigoberto Mena Santana, Israel, Naranjo Sandoval, Dausell Valdes Pineiro | 19. Norway (1): Kari Glomsaas | |
| 9. Democratic Republic of Congo (1): Ange Kumbi | 20. Spain (1): Miguel Costales | |
| 10. Denmark (2): Kirsten "Kis" Nielsen, Dorthe Pedersen | 21. Sudan (1): Ahmed Abushariaa | |
| 11. Federal Republic of Germany (1): Jurgan Schadeberg | 22. Tanzania (17): Azim Akberali, Haji Chilonga, Phidelice Gervacy "Fide", Elias Jengo, Salum Kambi, Kitogo, Ally, Emmanuel Lutashobya, John E. Makumba, Juma Mewana Mgenda, Muzaffer Sulemanji Muzu, Mwandale Mwanyekwa, Peter | |

The prostitute's pledge of honour

We shall use our bodies as a shield against hunger and deprivation.
The breasts shall feed the oppressor with venom;
Intoxicating them with lust and desire for self destruction.

We shall flash our flowers, red, ripe in full bloom with dark intriguing
brush,
Besides overflowing canyons of sweet milk.

We shall strap our nudity around our waists like belts ready to burst
our adversaries, lovers and clients in a terror embrace for the freeing
of body and soul from hunger, homelessness and ugliness.

We are forever, free to walk in the cold and free to shine street lamps
between our legs for all to see the scars of the twins we bear for the
glorification of masculinity.

Henry Mujunga

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JUSTICE

POETIC
JUSTICE

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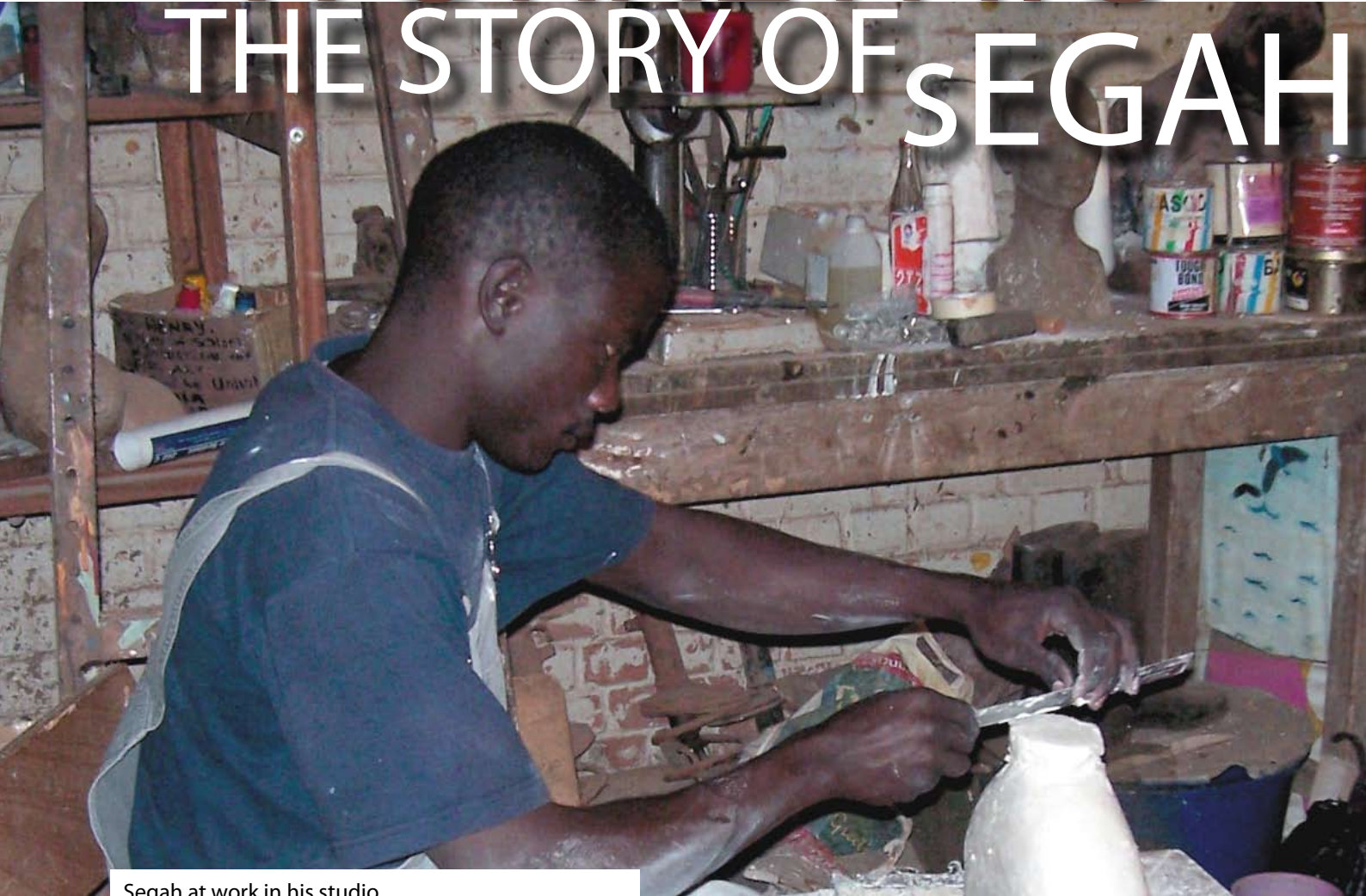
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WORKETHIC

THE STORY OF SEGAH



Segah at work in his studio

It has often been said that hard work breaks no bones and that it pays as well. I have seen many an artist trying hard to live by these words. None, however, has shown such resilience and consistency in his work ethic as Segah.

Born Henry Ssegamwenge to the Late Fredrick Wassajja and Nora Kawesi of Seeta in Mukono district in central Uganda, Segah came into this world on the 20th day of January, 1980. As a truck driver

With a gauge he had got from a catholic priest at Michelangelo, Segah carved one of the logs into a beautiful abstract composition of a shield bearing mask-like faces.

with SDV Transami, a freight company, Fredrick was a well-traveled man and had enjoyed his share of exciting roadside affairs, which truck drivers partook of without much consequence in the pre- AIDS 1970s. It was on one of these journeys that he chanced by the government hospital at Itojo in Mbarara where Nora was training as a nurse. One thing led to another and before long they moved in together in Seeta where Nora got a

job as a nurse at Kawolo Hospital.

When Segah came along, it was hardly years since a combination of Ugandan rebels and the Tanzania People's Defence Forces soldiers (wakombozi they were popularly called) had stormed Kampala, bringing an end to the 9-year misrule of Idi Amin Dada. I'm sure that the hotly contested presidential elections later that year found Segah peeing in his nappies (this was before Pampers had arrived in Uganda) not, as was the case for some of his older, less fortunate countrymen, out of panic and fear of Milton Obote's goons, but due to the invalidity visited upon him by babyhood.

Segah grew up in Lugazi town, hub of the sugar industry in Mukono. It was an industrial town full of such small-scale opportunistic enterprises as repair workshops for the trucks and other machinery used in the sugar cane plantations, maize mills and carpentry workshops. Lugazi East primary school, where Segah attained his formative education, was right in the middle of this industrial hullabaloo. Between home and school, he spent a lot of time prowling the fabrication stalls for wires, which, with the help of friends, he turned into the latest models of wire cars. These they used to transport vegetables from the market. He was also a regular at the carpentry workshops, where he developed a profound fondness for manual labour. He would help the carpenters to tidy their workplaces by sweeping and burning the wood



shavings. Eventually, they taught him to determine the moisture content of timber, and how to measure, cut and varnish. While in primary four, he made his first piece of furniture, a stool, which he proudly gave to his mother as a thank you gift for her single parenting.

One school vacation, he landed a paying job at a maize mill. He also worked as a porter at a building site. Segah believes these early encounters with manual labour taught him valuable lessons in self-reliance.

Ready for the challenges of secondary education, Segah joined Bishop Nkoyoyo boarding school, Matala. In the capable hands of art

The hotly contested presidential elections later that year found Segah peeing in his nappies...due to the invalidity visited upon him by babyhood.

teachers Daniel Mukama (graphics), Kato Bugembe (drawing) and Francis Buga (painting), Segah found the quiet, rural feel of Matala inspiring compared to his bustling younger childhood home. He dedicated his time to sharpening his skills in the visual arts, sometimes to the detriment of other subjects. In senior two, he decided to spend his holidays at school in order to make banana fibre, seed and egg shell mosaics with a friend. They got the bananas from the large school plantation. Segah designed the mosaics and inscribed them with inspirational mottos. At the time, this was a popular form. It was not uncommon to see mottos like "Christ is the head of this family", "I love my wife", "Awangale ssabasajja

>>



He remembers making a large drawing inspired by a painting of a Persian trader with a tiger.... Segah likes to say that this was his first masterpiece.

kabaka wa Buganda”, and so on, displayed in people’s living rooms. From these mosaics, Segah raised pocket money. This enabled him to provide his mother with some financial relief, helping her with basic needs such as sugar, soap and “grab,” as they called edible knick-knacks back then.

It was at Matala that Segah had his first clay experience. Clay from scraped from a nearby swamp to make clay models. His first model was a torso (he was fascinated by breasts at a tender age.) In senior four, Segah made his first attempt at producing a sculpture through the process of casting. He made a clay model of a large python and applied paper-maché dipped in cassava starch.

He remembers making a large drawing inspired by a painting of a Persian trader with a tiger. He sketched it out on a piece of paper as large as a black board. The entire drawing was executed in pencil. Segah likes to say that this was his first masterpiece.

Most of his friends from home became teachers and accountants; there is even a professional footballer among them. Segah believes art training in Matala was not well conducted because it lacked a designated area. There was no art room. Instead, the art teachers and students were constantly bumped from one classroom to another. Segah believes now that



Back to life

he excelled because he befriended the art teachers and worked in their homes.

The art room at Kyambogo School was a pleasant surprise to Segah as he began high school. The lockers, electric kiln and large working spaces were too good to believe. At Kyambogo, regular classes would end at 1 p.m. So the industrious Segah used most of his evenings to work on his art rather than leave camp to carouse with his friends. He experimented in still lifes, nature scenes, imaginative composition and modeling.

The two fighting dragons he made at the end of senior six contributed a lot to the "A" he received in art.

After completing his "O" levels, he worked with a friend, Deo Yiga, who doubled as his mentor. The two made sculptural reliefs, statues and murals for the Ridah Hotel in Seeta, Kiwatule Recreation Centre in Ntinda and Lutembe beach on the shores of Lake Victoria.

It was at this time that Segah started working with cement and sand. He also took a solo commission to make statues of Father Laudel and

Brother Hermans (the first Catholic missionaries in Uganda) at Kigungu landing site in Mukono district.

However, for all his hard work, Segah failed to raise enough money for his university education. So in 2001, he applied for a (cheaper) certificate course at Michelangelo School of Creative Arts in Kisubi, 15 kilometres down the Entebbe Road. He majored in painting and sculpture and did some history and drawing as well. Once again, he enjoyed the meditative rural environment, which helped him to discover himself. At Michelangelo they mined clay from the swamps near the lake and worked outside under trees. Segah continued to work with Deo Yiga to raise money for his school fees. He completed his studies in 2003.

Back home in Seeta, Segah experimented with a new medium, pottery. It was during a visit to the swamp to get clay when he chanced upon a couple of abandoned logs. With a gauge he had got from a catholic priest at Michelangelo, Segah carved one of the logs into a beautiful abstract composition of a shield bearing mask-like faces. He gave it a metal stand. In this work he was able to draw upon his childhood skills in carpentry and metal works. For the first time, he sold a piece. He used the money to buy a chain saw, which he used to carve a second piece he titled "Fear Not." It was based on stories about the cattle raids between the Karimojong and Turkana tribes in northeastern Uganda that were dominating the media at the time. It depicted a woman with a child, so often the victims of African wars, looking about in anticipation of attack from the raiders. They are protected (or threatened) by a spear hovering above their heads.

>>

The sale of these works highly motivated cash strapped Segah. It strengthened his resolve to become an artist.

In December 2003, he participated in a fundraising exhibition for the Abato children's home in Nsambya, Kampala; in which decorated rocking horses were auctioned. Soon after he went into residence at the Ngoma International Workshops Centre in Bukoto.

The following year, together with Ismail Ddamba, Hood Juuko and Robert Ojok, Segah took part in the first young artists' exhibition at Afriart Gallery, in Lugogo. He sold all the pieces he exhibited. Once again he invested the money in purchase of tools.

Segah's career has since soared. He has participated in a number of exhibitions including "Art Therapy," organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005

he is in the process of establishing a technical art studio for sculpture, foundry, glass blowing and metal fabrication in the countryside.

and the Commonwealth exhibition at Sheraton Hotel in 2007. He has done several projects on commission, including fashioning the Lifetime award for the British council in Uganda, the Amakula Kampala Film Festival award and the Freedom Fighters' Monument in Kabamba military barracks, among others.

His greatest achievement came in October 2007 when he collaborated with leading Ugandan sculptors George Kyeyune and Maria Naita to produce "The Stride," a sculpture commemorating the

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala.

Segah is currently based at the Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Art at Makerere University where he works as a studio technician in the sculpture

department. At Makerere, he has had a chance to interact with great sculptors such as Lungwe Kingdon (UK) and Damien Hirst (UK). He has also attended international art residences in Kenya.

As for the future, Segah hinted that he is in the process of establishing a technical art studio for sculpture, foundry, glass blowing and metal fabrication in the countryside. For all his ambition, Segah is still single. His ideal partner should share his outlook on life, he says. He does not wish for a big family; one or two kids would be enough for a family of hard workers ■



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Striding into history >>

A group of dynamic perfectionists by the name of Kann have taken public sculpture in Uganda to a new level.



Art in Uganda has been advancing at a brisk pace since the late 1990s—so fast, in fact, that many art practitioners are experiencing production hysteria. One medium that has seen massive growth is painting. There is even a new term to define this proliferation. Gunpoint art. One artist explained that the pressure to produce makes him feel as if someone is holding a gun to his head!

But the biggest leaps have occurred in sculpture. A group of dynamic perfectionists by the name of Kann have taken public sculpture in Uganda to a new level. The artists Mary Naita, George Kyeyune, Henry Ssegamwenge, David Kigozi, Jude Katete and Nuhu Kintu will go down in history as makers of magnificent sculpture.

"The Stride" was a work commissioned by the Ugandan government to mark the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Kampala. The CHOGM organizing committee provided the artists with a general theme: culture and diversity. The artists came up with the symbol of a family taking a step towards development to show the dynamism of society. It symbolized Uganda walking confidently forward among the other Commonwealth states.

The 15-foot sculpture stands on a five-foot pedestal. It was fabricated out of cathode copper sheets welded over a stainless steel frame. There are three figures; father, mother and son. The parents are hoisting a flag of the Commonwealth bearing the CHOGM emblem while the boy holds a book in his right hand, a symbol of education. (One wonders why the boy and not the girl given the present political climate.)

The artists made two wax marquettes. One had no child in the family unit; it had the man alone holding the flag. In the second, both parents hold it. The second marquette also emphasized forward movement. To get the human anatomy and morphology right, the artists used models. They made drawings of the models to help them work out the scale for enlargement. Steel bars of slightly varying lengths were cut and welded together to fabricate the armature.

To blend the figures into their green environment, copper nitrate solution was heated over the copper to give it a lime green patina, and then some parts were sanded and papered to expose the original copper.



One of the artists took me through the long process in detail: Working out of the Kann studios in Mutundwe, the artists built three figures using leather-hard clay. Kyeyune and Kigozi played a big role in the male figure by attending to anatomical and morphological details. Kintu and Katete did the forming. The female figure was mainly Naita's work. Waste molds (negatives) made out of plaster and cement were taken off the clay figures. They were reinforced with steel bars and wire mesh.

The artists then made templates from the negatives using newsprint. These were transferred onto copper sheets and cut into actual size plates. The copper pieces were then heated in a forge of charcoal and the red-hot pieces were knocked in the molds, doming and ridging them through a process known as repousse.

After accumulating the forged pieces of the same piece-mold,



they were gas welded together and reinforced on the inside with stainless steel bars. The piece-molds forming the different parts of the figure were then welded together. For example, the back piece-mold was joined to chest piece-mold to form the torso, and so on until the whole figure was assembled.



The figures had to be chased to a desired texture and finish using grinding, chiseling, matting (using a ball hammer) and hand filing techniques. The figures were then "pickled" in dilute sulphuric acid and washed with clean water to halt the reaction. To blend the figures into their green environment, copper nitrate solution was heated over the copper to give it a lime green patina, and then some parts were sand papered to expose the original copper.



Finally, the figures were waxed to stop the chemical reactions and protect them from the elements. The finished sculptures were transported to the site in a hydraulic armed truck.

Meanwhile, at the site, the newly planted Engineers' Garden next to Parliament, a concrete pedestal was erected. It was drawn to

scale, depicting Gothic designs and cornices for mass and strength to support the five-ton assemblage. The original templates were made out of chipboard, timber and plaster moldings. Then a fiberglass mold was taken off the template as the general mold to hold the concrete of the entire pedestal. The core was made of concrete blocks stabilized with murram and hard stones. The fiber-glass mold was used to encase the core around which concrete was poured



Art \$ells



At first glance, art and business don't go together. An artist is supposed to be a free creature, after all, inspired by nature and emotions. Yet, art has increasing commercial appeal in recent years, as [Anne-Liese Prem](#) finds out.

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Andy Warhol certainly wasn't the first person to appreciate the connection between money and the arts, though



Andy Warhol: Marilyn Monroe (1967)

his work did form part of a trend which had the two closely linked: 'Pop Art' was the first movement in which works were judged first by the market and the public, and then later by art critics and historians. The excitement this work caused among the general public, despite experts' opinions, and the huge prices that contemporary pieces have managed to fetch since then, helped establish art as a luxury 'lifestyle' product. The first major boom in contemporary art in the 1980s rocked the art world. The artist, enfant terrible and uninhibited bohemian, who wasn't supposed to dare hope for monetary recognition in his lifetime, was suddenly a star, an icon and a leader. A Jackson Pollock painting sold in 2006 for a staggering US\$ 140 million, setting the world record for most expensive painting. Only a few months earlier, the American cosmetic giant Ronald Lauder bought a Gustav Klimt painting for US\$ 135 million.

The study of art, once seen as an unwieldy, bourgeois educational

tool, is no longer restricted to lengthy analyses in libraries, but is blazing a trail in the public sphere. At the same time, galleries have dusted themselves down and, more than theatres or concert halls are seen as the places of cultural interest in today's Western societies. At the recent Art Basel fair in Miami, Florida, considered the most important art fair in the world, insiders estimated sales totaling US\$ 1 billion. Even if the real sum is only half, the fair was a huge economic boon to the city of Miami.

Who decides which pieces of art offer relative, contemporary messages—and command big price tags—is no longer restricted to elite critics. Rather it is shared by all those who are involved in the ever-growing world of modern art, as collectors, commissioners, dealers and gallery visitors. The 1980s also saw luxury brands enter the modern art world, in an attempt to capitalize on its glamour and newfound cachet. Cartier was a pioneer. In 1984, the famous watchmaker opened the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris, which,

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with some specially commissioned pieces and consistently first-rate exhibitions, quickly established itself on the international art scene. Brand names like Prada, Trussardi, Dornbracht and Boss have since followed, building new exhibition spaces, setting up generous prizes, and lending financial support to prestigious art events, such as fairs and biennales. Bernard Arnault, CEO of fashion house Louis Vuitton, has recently topped them all by announcing his plans to build a

"Making money is art, and working is art and good business is the best art."

Andy Warhol, "The Philosophy of Andy Warhol", 1975

US\$ 127 million cultural foundation in Paris.

In Uganda, the art movement is slowly gaining momentum of its own. While the government sponsors the Nommo Art Gallery, there are now various companies that also offer corporate sponsorship to exhibitions and





Damien Hirst: For the Love of God, Laugh (2007)

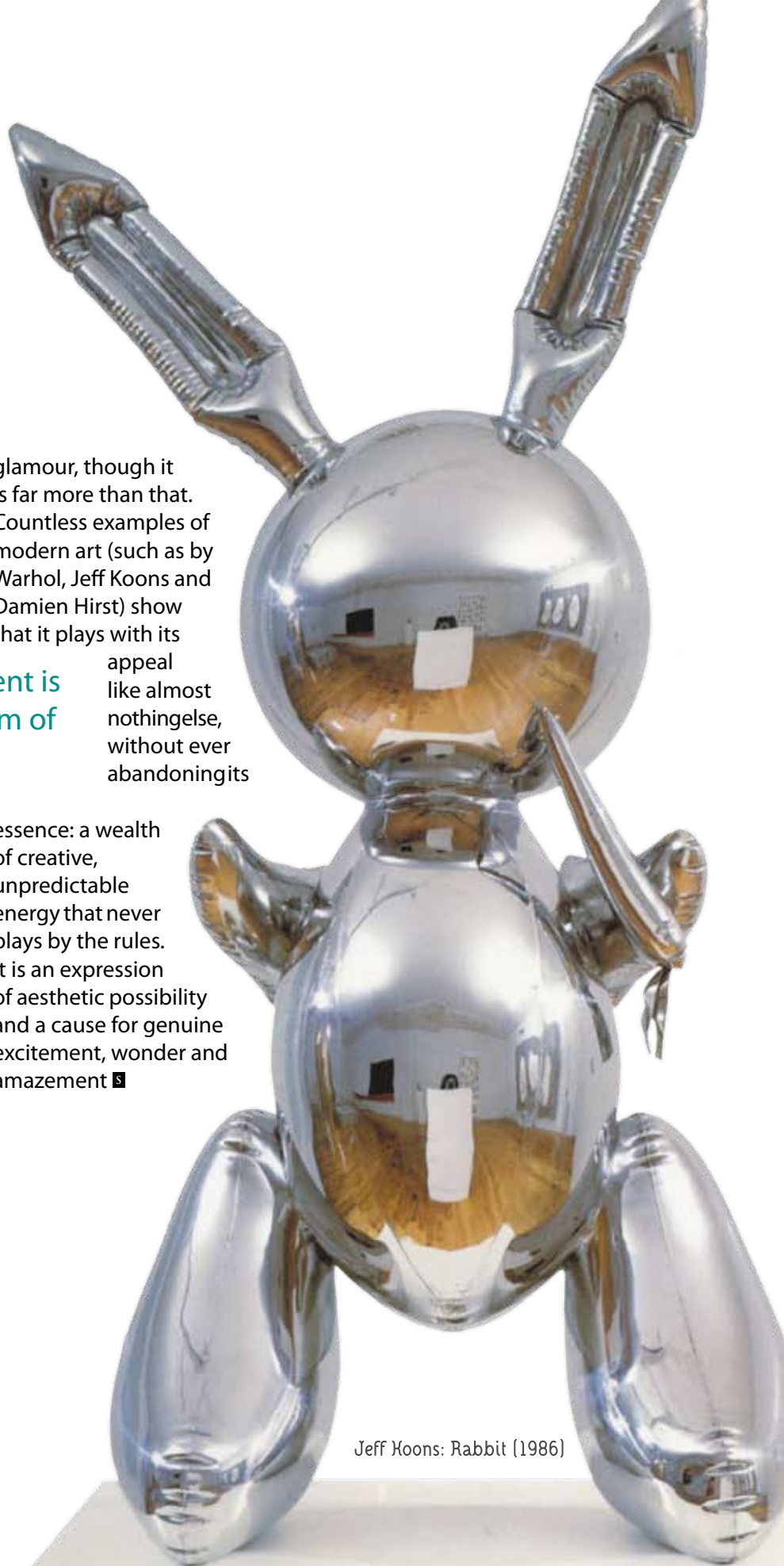
In Uganda, the art movement is slowly gaining a momentum of its own.

events. Embassies and cultural centers are getting involved in supporting Ugandan artists. But in terms of large-scale initiatives to push Uganda's art potential to another level, commitment remains limited. With art supplies very expensive, a young up-and-coming artist struggles to buy his very paint while trying to sell his work. Perhaps the only way to encourage more financial support of local artists is to create more awareness of the prodigious talent of Ugandan artists.

In this context, it is important to remember that international modern art began as a niche movement, with very little mainstream coverage, and had to rely on state-sponsored programs. It represents glitz and

glamour, though it is far more than that. Countless examples of modern art (such as by Warhol, Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst) show that it plays with its appeal like almost nothing else, without ever abandoning its

essence: a wealth of creative, unpredictable energy that never plays by the rules. It is an expression of aesthetic possibility and a cause for genuine excitement, wonder and amazement ■



Jeff Koons: Rabbit (1986)

Art For CHANGE

Inspiring creative programmes are trying to improve the lives of underprivileged children in Uganda. By Catherine Meyer

Artists have always believed in creative expression as a force for improving individual and collective lives. Art can bring about social change. From professional youth theatre groups in the United States like The Tribes Project, which uses drama to educate people on matters of race; to the Pongo Publishing Teen Writing Project, which works with teens who are in jail or on the streets by helping them express themselves through poetry, artists are empowering and inspiring young people around the world.

Here in Kampala, there are several such projects. Kuc Kidz (Kuc means peace in Acholi) was started by Catherine Hallam, a Canadian Art teacher working at Kampala International School of Uganda. In early 2006, Hallam participated in a successful daylong tile art project to promote peace among children from the Acholi Quarters, a Kampala slum. Through the project, she identified a real need for a regular art program where the kids could develop their skills. The Kuc Kidz Art Program was born.

Working with about 28 children, the bi-monthly art class takes on a new project each session in which Hallam introduces the kids to new techniques and/or materials. So far, they have worked in a variety of traditional and Western media from oil pastels to collage to paint. Hallam, who prefers to call herself

a facilitator rather than a teacher, insists that most importantly, the project provides the kids with a chance for a lot of unrestricted fun and a space where they can engage in fearless expression.

Hallam's central aim is to show these children the value and richness art can bring to their lives. Visual literacy adds an extra dimension to the world around us, she says. "To see the world through artists' eyes is to see the world through new eyes everyday," says Hallam. She wants the kids to be confident and free in their expression. She says she has already witnessed a big change in them, from timid and fearful to free and determined budding artists.

In the short term, Hallam would like to develop the program to include other arts including drama,

Abramz often pays the rent for the Sharing Youth Centre space out of his own pocket. People have often suggested that he charge for his classes, but he insists that the key to the project is that the lessons are free.





music and dance. She has begun a drama workshop. She would like to see local Ugandan artists of all kinds act as mentors and inspiration to these young creatives.

She would eventually like to develop the program into a travelling one, whereby an equipped "art bus" could journey to other disadvantaged communities around Uganda and offer workshops to kids, as she puts it:

"To see the world through artists' eyes is to see the world through new eyes everyday," says Hallam.

"Taking the value of arts education on the road!"

Breakdance Project Uganda shares many of the ideals of Kuc Kidz. Started in February 2006 by Abramz Tekya, a young Ugandan breakdancer, this project aims to use the form (and other elements of hip-hop) for social change. It has been giving free classes twice a week at Sharing Youth Centre in Nsambya in order to empower





The building that the Kuc Kidz do their art in has a rough, uneven, mud floor with no tables or chairs to sit on and the sides are open to the elements, letting in rain.

and positively inspire the youth of Kampala.

Some of its other aims are to bridge gaps between Northern Uganda and other regions as well as the advantaged and disadvantaged; build people's self-esteem and create employment opportunities.

Both of these projects are entirely self-funded and volunteer run. Unless the project has happened to raise enough money from teaching at international schools, paid performances or donations, Abramz often pays the rent for the Sharing Youth Centre space out of his own pocket. People have often suggested that he charge for his classes, but he insists that the key to the project is that the lessons are free.

Of course, problems come with idealism. One of them, for both these projects, is a lack of space. The building that houses Kuc Kidz has a rough, uneven, mud floor with no tables or chairs and the walls are incomplete,

letting in rain and sun. As for the breakdancers, their space is not just costly (US\$ 50,000 a month,) but too small for the 50 to 60 young people who regularly attend.

Have these programs improved the lives of the young people they set out to help? This question is, of course, hard to answer. Asked what they have gotten out of the Kuc Kidz program, some of the older children speak of wanting to become artists when they grow up. Abramz mentioned two students who have gone on to be part of paying projects as dancers, and a few who now offer free classes to young people outside of Kampala,

thereby passing on their new-found skills in other parts of Uganda. He also points out that because the classes are free, the youth who attend mix with people from all walks of life.

There are other projects in Kampala

that attempt to use the arts for human betterment. Tigers Club, a Retrak Project, works with street kids. It is currently working with Uganda Heritage Roots using dance, drama and drumming to encourage the kids to tell their stories as a form of therapy, to discover a sense of self-worth and their

own potential. In Movement is an NGO that teaches various art forms to disadvantaged children to increase self-esteem and teach life skills.

Art for social change is a growing movement here in Uganda. Its leaders, especially volunteers such as Catherine Hallam and Abramz Tekya, should be commended for their lofty goals.



UPCOMING Workshops

Talking Compounds II
International Workshop
30th March - 14th April 2008
E-mail: ngomaart@yahoo.com
not later than 31 January 2008

ABRO International Artists
Workshop
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
16 - 29 April 2008
Closing date for application:
28 February 2008.
E-mail: abroethiopia@gmail.com

Residency at the Domboramwari
Art Village, Zimbabwe
www.domboramwari.com
Email: dboramwari_arts@yahoo.com

Kuona Anternational Artists
Residency in Nairobi Kenya 2007

The 11th International Artist's
Residency Program To be held from
the 21st march to the 28th of march
2008.
Email: snakedoctor2@gmail.com

Saatchi Gallery invites artists to
post their work online
Email: kieran@saatchigallery.com
www.saatchigallery.com

Where to find ART

Afriart Gallery

Peacock building
UMA showground, Lugogo
Tel: 041 375 455,
071 2 455 555

daudi@afriartgallery.com
www.afriartgallery.com

Design Agenda

JIC Building,
Parliament Avenue
Tel: 0772 718 158
designagenda@hotmail.com

Aidchild Galleries

At the Equator on Masaka Rd
Tel: 0772 616 861

Kwetu Afrika

Lubowa Off Entebbe Rd,
Tel: 041 200 690,
0772 419 061
kwetu@infocom.co.ug

Makerere University Art Gallery

Tel: 041 531 423
artgallery@sifa.mak.ca.ug

Nommo Gallery

4 Victoria Avenue, Nakasero
Tel: 041 234 475
Email: culture@africaonline.
co.ug

Tulifanya Art Gallery

28/30 Hannington Road
Tel: 041 254 183

A photograph of the Emin Pasha Hotel in Kampala at night. The hotel is a large, multi-story building with a prominent central tower and many lit windows. It is surrounded by lush greenery and tall palm trees. The sky is a deep blue.

Emin Pasha Hotel - Kampala

A wide-angle photograph of the Apoka Lodge in Kidepo Valley National Park. The lodge consists of several small, circular huts with thatched roofs, nestled in a vast, open savanna landscape. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

Apoka Lodge
Kidepo Valley National Park

The Finest Accommodation in Uganda's Wildest Places

A photograph of the Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. The lodge is a small, rustic building with a thatched roof, situated on a hillside. The background shows a range of mountains under a blue sky with some clouds.

Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge
Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

A photograph of the Semliki Lodge in the Toro-Semliki Wildlife Reserve. The lodge is a large, circular building with a thick thatched roof, surrounded by lush greenery. In the foreground, there is a swimming pool with lounge chairs.

Semliki Lodge
Toro-Semliki Wildlife Reserve