

START



A Critical Journal of Arts and Culture

Issue No. 003 | July - September 2009

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- A slightly blurry snapshot of the Ugandan photographer ERIC RWAKOMA
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Foreword



Art and culture often goes hand in hand with the development of a country. Supporting the cultural sector in a country can assist in developing creativity and self-awareness. Cultural heritage plays an important role in this as it can form a source of inspiration for the present and can assist in developing contemporary artistic expression.

There is a broad variety of contemporary art in Uganda. The Netherlands Embassy is proud to have been involved in several activities that have shown the seriousness and commitment of artists. The Street Art Festival, that took place twice already, is a great example of sharing art with the general public. The poetry poster project, that links poets with visual artists and shares the products with children in secondary schools, is using art to motivate creativity and open discussion among young people. Contemporary dancers who received training abroad are using their skills to train starting dancers in Uganda, and the last few Dance Weeks have shown huge development in the number and quality of contemporary dance performances.

I am therefore very grateful to be invited by the Kampala Arts Trust to introduce the third edition of START magazine. START will not only be a source of information about current ongoing contemporary art in Uganda, but will document and preserve this information for future reference. It will motivate Ugandans to enjoy art, make art, write about art and promote art within and outside Uganda.

Jeroen Verheul
Ambassador



**Koninkrijk
der Nederlanden**

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Editorial

Welcome and thanks for the overwhelming support you've shown towards START, Uganda's first and only critical journal of art and culture. Our dedicated team of artists and journalists strives to continue providing you with sharp and timely criticism and documentation of the visual and performance arts in Uganda.

Whether you think it's a rare annual showcase exhibiting Uganda's finest artists or an overblown exercise in vanity, the Makerere art school's Different But One exhibition has become one of the rare annual traditions in the fine arts in Uganda. In this issue, we offer several contrasting perspectives on this controversial show of lecturers' work. Elsewhere, correspondent Henry Mzili Mujunga returns with a reflection on the contentious issue of nudity in the arts and local urban culture. Mzili also profiles successful Ugandan photographer Eric Rwakoma, one of those rare and envied members of our artist community who manages to make his living doing what he does best. On the international scene, Leah Sandals provides us with a primer on how to break into the exciting and lucrative Canadian art scene. Read on for more features on the latest trends and techniques in the Ugandan art world.

A special word of thanks goes to the Royal Netherlands Embassy, which has made this issue of START possible. We look forward to many more exciting and informative issues about local and international art in the future. Let us work together to highlight Uganda's rich culture. Keep the dream alive!

The Editors

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Cover Photo
 Eric Rwakoma

A woman with voluminous curly hair, wearing a shimmering sequined top, a dark skirt, and fishnet stockings, is performing on a stage. She is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. In the background, a diverse audience is seated, watching the performance. The stage is lit with spotlights, and a decorative white fabric with a pattern of dark spots hangs from the ceiling on the left. The overall atmosphere is that of a live performance or event.

NUDE OR NAKED?

Sex and sexual politics in the arts

By Mzili Mujunga



Who is to decide what constitutes pornography? What one person, or culture, considers explicit might be enlightening to another. Are the crusading conservatives who have become so outspoken in our society prepared to ban Rembrandt's nudes or Nabakov's *Lolita*?

Recently, I took part in a televised discussion on nudity in the arts and the media. My co-panelist, Rose, a so-called women's rights activists, argued that ubiquitous exposure of the female body in contemporary entertainment, advertising and even fine art amounts to the exploitation of women for financial and sexual gain. She wondered rhetorically why the masculine body was not being used in the same manner. She also argued that the women whose physiques are thus plundered are often underpaid and too young to knowingly consent to such work. According to her research, said Rose, women are asking for nude male entertainment.

My argument took a demand/supply point of view. Many psychologists tell us that male sexuality has a strong visual orientation, while women tend to experience sex mentally, through memory. Men are more interested in watching the female body, which, among other things, represents fertility and good health. It is, of course, the youthful, supple and energetic young female of the human race who typically exhibits these traits. I also mentioned the traditional and perpetual role of the body in the ritual and art of dance. Dance, boiled down to its components, is essentially a series of sensual movements, organized or erratic, set to music or rhythm. All forms of dance have an exhibitionist element. Many dances allude to, or represent, sex. Dance can be a pre-sex ritual. As they say, it takes two to Tango. As evidence of its function as a celebration of human form, dancers since time immemorial have often avoided fabric that obscures the body;
continues on next page



All forms of dance have an exhibitionist element. Many dances allude to, or represent, sex.

Dance can be a pre-sex ritual. As they say, it takes two to Tango.

witness the wearing of tights by classical ballet dancers, to say nothing of the naked bodies of the *Kau Nuba* of southern Sudan during their mating dances. No exception to this rule is the contemporary Ugandan dance form known as *bimansulo*, a local version of burlesque.

Conservatives, who are often the loudest critics of society (or hypocrites: I strongly suspect many of these were an active part of the flower power era of the past generation, with its mini-skirts, marijuana and all) have got it wrong when they go after the entertainment industry and the media in Uganda. Their argument, of course, is that people are dancing naked (or whatever) before their children and elderly relatives on television. But I submit that the problem is not with the dancers or the press. In Germany, for example, as in much of the developed world, one has to choose to subscribe to cable TV (which is not cheap) and in exchange gains controlled access to hundreds of channels, some of which feature pornography. Even here at home in Africa, paid satellite TV services such as DSTV feature parental control tools; programs are also rated for specific audiences.

But even with all these so-called protections in place from the so-called explicit, who is to decide what constitutes pornography? What one person, or culture, considers explicit might be enlightening to another. Are the crusading conservatives who have become so outspoken in our society prepared to ban Rembrandt's nudes or Nabakov's *Lolita*? One would think such critics would save their opprobrium for truly vulgar material, at least, but often the local sexual images they find objectionable are far from actual pornography. In even the most risqué depictions, the actors almost always have their sexual organs covered. Unfortunately however, in Uganda, we are still living in an era in which a woman's waist and

thighs are categorized as private parts! I am just glad her face is still available for public view, given the rhetoric in some circles lately.

But back to Rose's argument that the display of female body parts is degrading and disadvantageous to women. To me, there are numerous assumptions tied up in that assertion. First, do all young girls want to be lawyers, doctors and politicians? (In other words, will they necessarily be harmed in the future by baring their bodies?) This points to a glaring bias that our elite community harbors against the visual and performance arts. It is as if when one takes to the stage, all dignity is lost—never mind that some of the most influential people on this planet are actors, dancers, painters and singers.

When you hear a song on the radio, do you assume at once that the singer is crooning his desire for you? If you see a steamy sex scene in a movie, do you assume the actor or actresses are immoral sex maniacs or do you simply enjoy your suspended disbelief and know at the end of the day that they're just doing their jobs? When you see a young woman gyrating on the dance floor on a Saturday night with her friends, do you assume she is actually inviting strange men to come home to her bed? Many might call this a delusional and absurd assumption. And yet this appears to be the strange world many Ugandan conservatives inhabit.

The greater cause of education is to expose us to information about our selves and our environment, thus attempting to bring a degree of reason to our existence. We now live in the so-called Information Age, in which every aspect of our existences can be instantly analyzed via tap tapping on a computer keyboard. So why exclude from that an aspect of the human experience as fundamental as sexuality?

--Henry Mzili Mujunga is an artist and teacher based in Kampala.

Art Collectors



Artist: Kyeyune George
Collector: Emin Pasha Hotel



Artist: Ronex Ahimbisibwe
Collector: Emin Pasha Hotel



Artist: Fabian Mpagi
Collector: General Elly Tumwiine



Artist: Daudi Karungi
Collector: Catch the Sun Restaurant



Artist: Ntensibe
Collector: Silk Events



Artist: Ssendagire
Collector: Emin Pasha Hotel

1000 Words

A sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with large, dark clouds illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a dramatic orange and yellow glow. The sun is partially obscured by a large cloud on the right side. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. The foreground is slightly blurred, showing some indistinct shapes that could be rocks or a boat's edge.

A slightly blurry snapshot
of the Ugandan photographer
ERIC RWAKOMA

By Henry Mzili Mujunga





Eric Rwakoma

Eric didn't really catch a passion for photography until he joined Mbarara High School. There his keen aesthetic sense was excited, presumably by the many beautiful young ladies enrolled at the girl's school across the road.

Some time back, I attended a meeting at the Novotel Hotel in Dakar, Senegal on the way forward for African art. It included art world heavyweights and spin-doctors of the caliber of Angolan artist Fernando Alvim and Cameroonian curator Simon N'jami. One noisy European I will not name went on and on about the death of "plastic art" and everyone in attendance seemed to be in agreement. Now this made a big impression on my impressionable mind. I mean I took this guy seriously! Apparently, the so-called plastics are dead: painting, sculpture and the Nice House of Plastics!

At last year's Dakar Art Biennale, the audience flocked around the designers, the video makers and the photography. Yes, the photography. But what is so artistic about photography? I had often privately asked, what more is there to taking a picture today than to point and shoot your digital camera? To answer this question, I put my youthful mind to work and I began reading up about photography as an art form. I even dusted off my Canon EOS Rebel K2 series and took a few "inspired" shots for myself. None of this managed to change my view that photography sucks.

Still, there are many, many people who are deeply engrossed in this art form. Surely there are some in Uganda, I thought! I started making a mental list of all the photographers I knew. Afrika, the dark-skinned guy I had seen snapping away and chatting with artists at every exhibition in town; that tall guy from Photogenix I used to Hash with, and, of course, all the ambitious young artists of this country who own digital cameras (Xenson, Enoch, Ronex, Tukei, etc). Oh—and of course, Joseph Bukonya! Now there is an artistic photographer! I remember him—when he wasn't high—lying on the floor, curling over backwards to get a shot—always with a camera in his hands at every function.

Then I thought of my encounters with one unassuming young man over the 10 years I have been working as a painter. I have always seen a streak of creativity in Eric Rwakoma's photography but had never taken him seriously until now. Shame on me! I was humbled by this thought. I set out immediately to seek out this young artist.



I met Rwakoma at RAC-An Eye for Beauty, his tiny container studio in Wandegaya. He set up shop here in November 2008. Prior to that, like most artists in Kampala, he'd been operating out of his home in Kikoni, a nearby city suburb. Rwakoma is a graduate of the Margaret Trowel School of Industrial and Fine Art at Makerere University, but unlike most of his contemporaries, he had been lucky to experience a lot of exposure in his chosen *métier* early in life. His father was the famous (or infamous) Elly Rwakoma, a prominent photojournalist who worked with the Uganda government press units in the 1970's under former President Idi Amin. In 1979, as some may remember, just before Amin's overthrow, the elder Rwakoma was forced to go into exile after his photo of the Ugandan dictator engaged in one of his favorite activities, swimming, appeared in the foreign press above a caption that asked, "Is Amin floating or sinking?"

Young Eric, who was born in a Jinja hospital the following year, practically grew up in a darkroom, surrounded by tanks, enlargers and film changers, but unlike his older siblings, he did not receive explicit lessons from his father on his craft, as the elder Rwakoma's career was in its twilight years by then. In fact, Eric didn't really catch a passion for photography until he joined Mbarara High School. There his keen aesthetic sense was excited, presumably by the many beautiful young ladies enrolled at the girl's school across the road. Many of his classmates yearned after the photographs of these smartly dressed girls after the co-ed dance balls that were frequently thrown by the two schools. But Eric thought the photos were sub-standard, so he borrowed his roommate's camera and began snapping away. He made pocket money by selling the shots.

When his father was arrested and imprisoned for his political affiliation, Eric lost interest in

But what is so artistic about photography? I had often privately asked, what more is there to taking a picture today than to point and shoot your digital camera?

photography. The medium had become a taboo in his family because of the difficulties caused by his father's work. He didn't pick it up again until he was at university, where his primary interest was creating sculptural furniture of the sort made by Robert Ssewanyana, one of his lecturers at the Makerere art school. But in 2004, during his third year at campus, he came across some images in the now-defunct *Zenji* magazine taken by a photographer known as Andre. Rwakoma still insists that there was a



By nature of the medium,
photography makes it difficult
to romanticize or sentimentalize.

What is it they say about a
picture's being worth a thousand
words?

link between the models he saw in that magazine and the curves in his furniture designs. He got himself a lanky model by the name of Diana and started creating silhouettes. His favorite technique was that of the photomontage, in which the artist superimposes images onto one another to create new pictorial compositions

As a photographer, Rwakoma is a self-confessed romantic. "I love studying the (woman's) curves," he says. "When you put the opposite sex in a certain environment, they exhibit very interesting moods through their body postures. If she is a clean girl and you put her in a dirty environment she will act all jittery."

On the subject of the relationship between the artist and his model, Eric told me that all he wants in a good picture from her, period. He tries to keep it professional. "You will get the respect of your models if you don't get sexually involved," he cautions. "I approach my subjects as objects—but, of course, I don't tell them that." Still, obviously, there are challenges inherent in using live human beings as subjects. Rwakoma explains: "Sometimes you are doing a nude shoot and you are one to one with a model and she feel that this guy is leading somewhere. But photography, like the good old medical profession, has its ethics." Ethics notwithstanding, I don't think I would be able to resist that sort of temptation and, in my opinion, neither can a young romantic like Rwakoma, whose current girlfriend, it's worth mentioning, is an ex-model of his.

But back to the work. Rwakoma told me that the reason he favors the photomontage technique is that it allows him create what he called "surreal" compositions. (Photomontage is done either by using computer photo programs such as Adobe Photoshop or by hand, in a darkroom.) I must admit that learning this was enlightening for me, as it challenged my point and shoot theory.

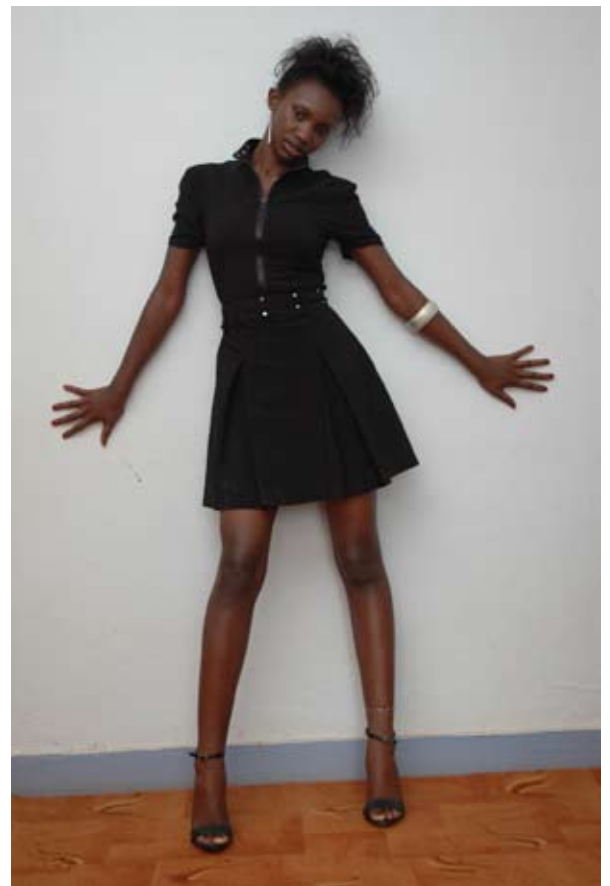
Rwakoma is in the enviable position (from the perspective of artists the world over but in particular for those who struggle to stay afloat in a market like Uganda) of being able to live off his art—or at least his trade. He contracts out his skills to modeling agencies, fashion houses, publishers and advertising agencies, doing everything from wedding photography to documentaries. The rub is that sometimes this work leaves little time for artistic growth. So he tries, he says, to separate his art from his moneymaking ventures.

I asked Rwakoma whether he does much networking with "art" photographers from other parts of the world, but he says he has no interest in competing in the world of photography. It seems like a wise path to me. Many of the photographs being peddled in so-called photography exhibitions don't seem very relevant to the sensibilities of people in developing countries like mine. Rather

they're often just imitations of the plastic arts inside galleries.

Still, I came away from my conversation with Rwakoma convinced that photography as practiced by artists like him could indeed feed the social thirst for documentation and education that plagues developing societies like Uganda. After all, good photography is a direct and unpretentious vehicle for communicating ideas to the masses. And by nature of the medium, photography makes it difficult to romanticize or sentimentalize. What is it they say about a picture's being worth a thousand words?

As one lost in my imagination, I will continue to wield the brush, exposing those mental demons that sometimes only I can hear. I will leave reality—or at least one artist's version of it—to Eric Rwakoma.



Afriart Gallery AD

Composition in Photography

By Ayodeji Adewunmi

Experience is always
a good teacher.
Knowledge of the
principles of design
and color increases the
likelihood of achieving
fantastic results in
photography.

The arrangement of the elements in a picture is known as composition. Whether you're creating a painting or a photograph, good composition strives for a sense of balance and unified design. The composition of a photo is achieved by studying the subject through the viewfinder (eyepiece) of a camera.

There are no set rules regarding the proper composition of a photograph, but a key principle to follow is to keep it simple. Background clutter, or anything that needlessly distracts from the subject of the photograph, should generally be avoided—unless the photographer has a conscious reason for wanting it there.

Moving a few steps can sometimes accomplish this.

In composing an image, knowledge of the principles and elements of design is critical to making a photograph interesting. If you're working in black and white, you play around with values of different shades of grey. An understanding of contrast and intensity will enhance the quality of a photo. The relationship between the foreground and background should be given adequate attention for clarity, depending on the effect that is desired. In color photography, the relationship between the dominant color of the image and the color scheme of the background plays a great role in the final look of the photograph. Experience is always a good teacher. Knowledge of the principles of design and color increases the likelihood of achieving fantastic results in photography.

Here are some basic terms that are important to know in discussing composition:

Emphasis refers to the stress or importance that is placed on a particular image, tonal value or color in a composition. A photographer should know what object or image he is trying to emphasize.

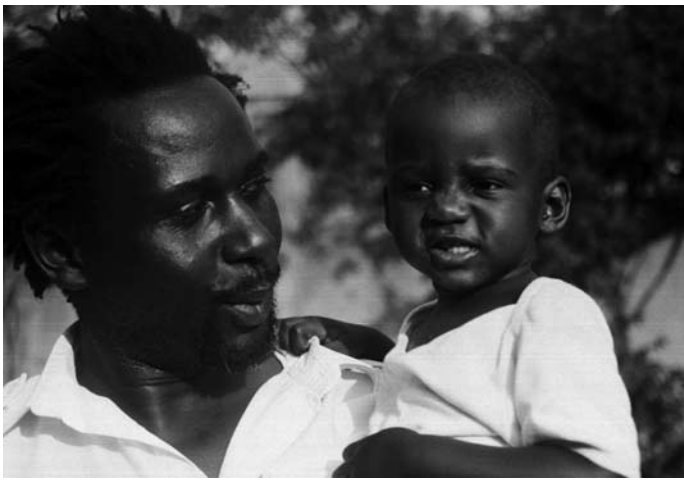
Balance in design can be achieved in two ways: through symmetry; meaning that what is obtained in one part of the image is similar in shape or value to the other parts. One way this can be achieved is through repetition. Asymmetrical balance, on the other hand, refers to situation in which objects or colors are arranged in such a way that the objects and color in one part of the design are not a repetition or mirror of ones in other parts.

Harmony suggests unity. In design, harmony is achievable through the use of color values that agree with one another. Unity is achieved through the arrangement of objects in a way that there is togetherness in the composition.

Rhythm simply refers to a pleasant flow in the arrangement of the objects in a photo and in the placement and combination of colors. In black and white photography it means the pleasant relationship between tonal values.

Contrast has to do with creating distinction between values of objects in terms of tone, shape, size or color in relationship with each other.

Adopted from Basic Photography by Ayodeji Adewunmi and Nwabueze G. Onuora, 2006, Rock Communications (Nigeria).



Balance



Rythm



Contrast



Harmony



Chicken Soup for the Universe

David Kigozi's world

By Addy Beukema

When you step into the home of artist David Kigozi, you know you are in Uganda, with its vivid colors. Kigozi was born and raised in the Ugandan capital, but the Kampala of his youth was a far cry from the noisy, polluted city it is today. Instead, his home felt like a village, Kigozi remembers, complete with animals and vegetable gardens. The children had space to play and his mum worked hard to cook the meals and chase the chickens away from the fireplace.

But these memories are more than just idyllic pictures of the past.

Kigozi has created images that conjure up the smells and sounds of his childhood and they always contain something extraordinary. Look carefully and you may experience something mystical while viewing a Kigozi painting. Is it the bright, unique colors of his trademark chickens? Is it the at once abstract yet lifelike shapes of his animal figures as they search for food, or fun, or simply hang out in the middle of a pond? Is it the subtle humor of his image of a mother hen trying intently to get water from a pump while a child walks away with his brimming jerrycan? Kigozi's backgrounds

are understated, mainly the color of the red African soil, the shade, with small variations in the brown, purple or green or blue-grey. He uses rough, brown bark cloth to create texture.

In the village, children are dancing. Look carefully: The feathers on their heads are chicken feathers; they add color and playfulness to the scene. As for their footprints, they are reminiscent of the story of "Sewazzike", in which playing children leave their village to visit gorillas and never come back. Most of the steps are away from the dancers. But look: Two steps



Paintings by David Kigozi

Perhaps the painter is emphasizing how important it is to examine your heritage, the place you come from: the warmth of your mum, who always looked after you and worked hard to cook the meals and chase the chickens away from the fireplace.

lead back to the dancers. Safely to the beauty of the dance, they seem to be saying, safely home. Perhaps the painter is emphasizing how important it is to examine your heritage, the place you come from: the warmth of your mum, who always looked after you and worked hard to cook the meals and chase the chickens away from the fireplace.



Use your memories to create beauty from another perspective. Look at the development in the paintings, from the use of many colors to the common impressionistic practice of using only a pallet of, say, beige and blue and some green. Carrying water is heavy and you need transportation made from homemade material, the cart of your elder brother, maybe, to help you. But that is yet another story. You will find many more here by looking with your imagination and an open mind.

I got to know David Kigozi when he united all the artists who participated in Kampala's annual Art for Abato event. It was not an easy job, as you might

imagine, persuading 35 creative minds to work together. But that is the overarching theme of all Kigozi's work. He is the creator of a lively Ugandan world in which animals and people always operate together, with respect and tenderness for each other, but not sentimentality. His sculptures too evoke emotions. Look at the world of music, represented in two of his most iconic pieces. The wood is used to visualize the music, but also the relationship between instruments and musician. They belong to each other. It is this universal connectedness, this interdependence, which is the overarching theme in David Kigozi's work.

... a moment of silence

to the fallen Ugandan artists

Fabian Mpagi

Prof. Francis Musango

Elly Kyeyune

Romano Lutwama

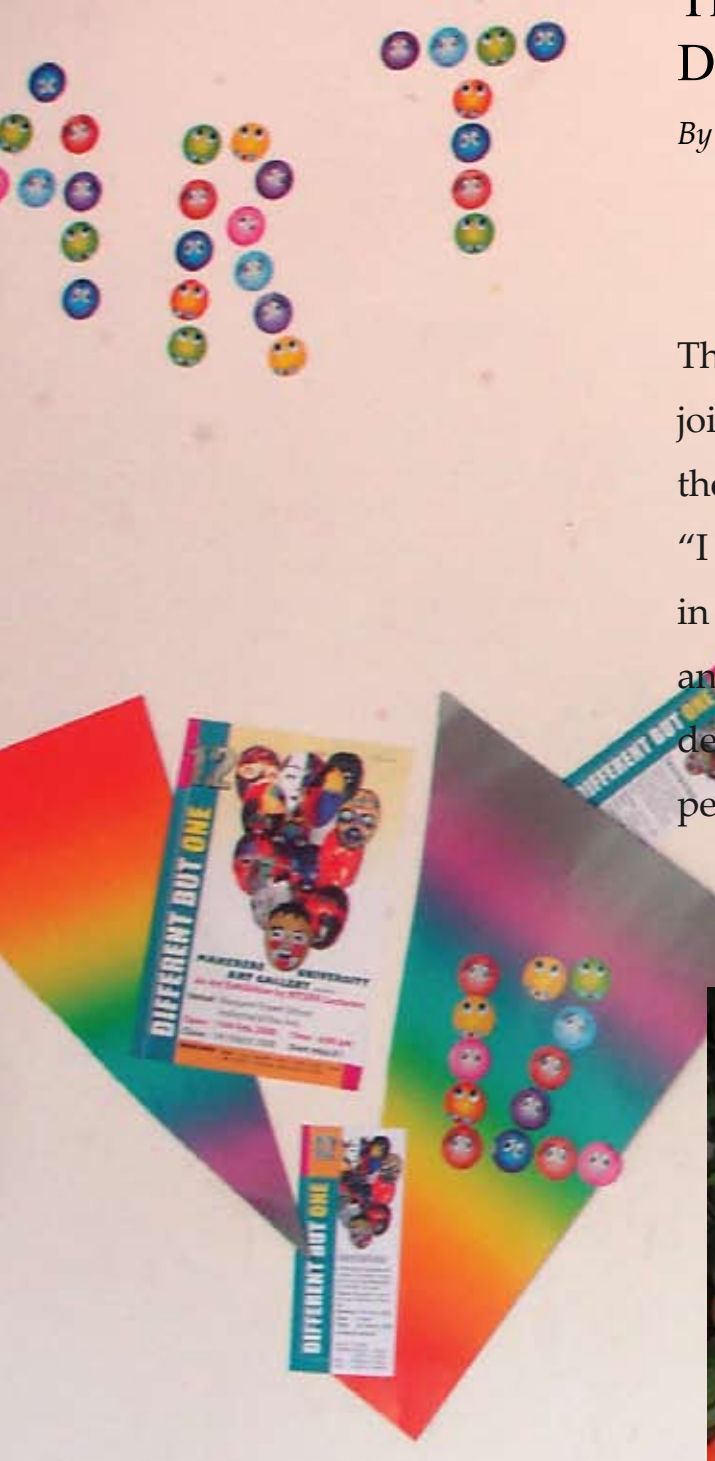
... rest in peace.

Accounting for the Super-Visual

The History and Meaning of Different But One

By Philip Kwesiga

The curator says that the idea of a joint exhibition crossed her mind the first time she met the lecturers: "I saw the powerful art around, in the compound, in the corridors and everywhere. I felt a deep desire to share it with as many people as possible."



Uziel
The Curator, DBO

The academic's mantra of "publish or perish" has not exempted members of the faculty at the Margaret Trowel School of Industrial and Fine Arts at Makerere University. In particular, the theoretical and science-based faculties have been skeptical of the value of teaching practice-based media like art and design. This was especially evident when it came to a question of promotions at the highest ranks of associate and full professor at the ivory tower. So the art school negotiated a solution: Members of the faculty there would prove their mettle via exhibiting their work (in lieu of or to supplement publication.) By 1997, it was officially acceptable for faculty members at the school to show their work in addition to publishing as way to demonstrate continued growth and achievement for their peers. The annual Different But One art exhibition became a perfect vehicle. It was an annual group show of works by Makerere art school lecturers.

The show has aired every February or March now for more than a dozen years. Of course, the birth of Different But One coincided with other new developments at the art school, such as its lecturers' designation as full faculty members, and the addition of departments and newly recast industrial art and design courses. These new departments merited more qualified, experienced staff, and apart from the traditional disciplines of painting and

sculpture, the new industrial art and design departments were dominated by young, inexperienced lecturers. Many of them had limited exposure in terms of exhibiting their work. But it had been agreed that in order to be considered for promotion at the university, faculty members were required to publish—or exhibit—or face the threat of being passed over or pushed out.

Throughout its history, the art school had aimed at providing leadership in training visual arts teachers and designers, the former who were to become role models to subsequent students. The matriculation rate before 1990 was negligible. Most of those who trained at the art school prior to that made their living in other disciplines.

By 1997, it was officially acceptable for faculty members at the school to show their work in addition to publishing as way to demonstrate continued growth and achievement for their peers. The annual Different But One art exhibition became a perfect vehicle.





The work of art should not only move and delight the senses, mind and heart; it should reveal the true nature of the world and provide an occasion to complete the partial experience of our external existence.

what DBO probes beyond the representations and ideas that are but indirect generalizations from experience, either arbitrarily universal, or concretely expressed in metaphor and illustration.

saw the powerful art around, in the compound, in the corridors and everywhere. I felt a deep desire to share it with as many people as possible." Uziel (1996: 2).

The first step in relating the necessity of DBO is an actual which is determined at the same time only as possible – whose other, or opposite is possible. Real possibility in DBO has not always been a real possibility of an actuality, and yet as it stands today, DBO is distinct from that actuality as possibility. The necessity of DBO is relative. It is based upon a presupposition that is itself contingent. For Kyeyune (2009), the involvement of Rebecca Uziel, one of the "rare mortals" in DBO, is directly linked to her selfless commitment to curate the exhibition, which she has done for the last thirteen years.

For her then, the two major aims of the exposition were instructive—to encourage students to take art seriously as well as share the experience—and secondly, social—through getting artists together to display and interface with other artists and the work on display. Different But One as a new Beginning

In the beginning was the word, not as a command, but as a philosophical utterance that vanishes into thin air. Different But One would not be the dialectic if the moment of encounter with the absolute idea was a moment of quiescence of the artworks displayed. The release of a self-propelling art exhibition, of an art idea unfolded—not as if it were in repose, but totally influenced by the people who initiated it—was crucial. Notional desires and challenges alike, art is a universal activity – with a self-determining and self-realizing movement.

Necessity of Contingency: the Actuality of Different But One

One can argue that there was a necessity for developing a staff art exhibition as a kind of contingency. Hegel (1980) posits that a contingency is itself a necessity without qualification. Different but One could be thought of as an idea in the abstract. Indeed,

Uziel (2009:1), (2002: 7) herself now believes that Different But One is a tradition, since she cannot recall any precedent in which such actions by art lecturers resulted in such a sustained display. The curator says that the idea of a joint exhibition crossed her mind the first time she met the lecturers: "I





Whether one conceives art as “externality” in the Hegelian sense, as “exteriority” in the Sartrean or as a “practice” in Leninist terms (Dunayevskaya: 1980), the fact is that the Different But One art exhibition is by nature a mediation. The long passage that Different But One has endured cannot be underestimated. The point here is that it is the power of the negative that is the creative element. It is not the synthesis but the absolute negativity that assures the advance of Different But One. This philosophical ground, of a universal first, considered in and for itself, shows itself to be the other – Different But One. In the various art exhibitions displayed over the years, most artists in their insight have deified subjectivity as a self-manifestation of objectivity.

Vulnerability of Different But One

Different But One art exhibitions contain a large proportion of artists most willing to give only what is available even when in

most of the recent exhibitions specific themes were provided. Art dons face the challenge of developing work for specific projects. These and other factors have tended to limit their positive participation in the annual event. Different But One may be pleasant, but it might also be deceptive; if it appeals to emotion and not the intellect, it should reconcile with the thinking of the time. For Hegel, a work is artistic because it expresses the truth. Accordingly, the Different But One experience par excellence should be cognitive in character. Yet we should recognize that the aim of the art displayed over the years was not the knowledge of the





^ Left: Professor Ssengendo and General Elly Tumwiine



^ One of the exhibits



< A piece by Venny Nakazibwe

absolute; and raises one inquiry - does this fact make it necessarily up to date with the universal underpinnings?

Three issues remain to be answered in DBO, namely: Is imitation of nature the end of art? Is human experience of the world the end of art? Is mitigation of the passions the end of art? These are the kind of theories artists and participants who interface with Different But One ought to know. In relation to the first question, DBO can be said to be good or beautiful insofar as it is a true copy of natural forms. As for the second notion, DBO should be that the moment we bare our senses, our feelings and our inspiration-everything that has a place in the human spirit. The work of art should not only move and delight the senses, mind and heart; it should reveal the true nature of the world and provide an occasion to complete the partial experience of our external existence. Lastly, the

idea of DBO should be to educate, to provide the patrons'/viewers'/readers' passions with reason and justification.

Conclusion

Different But One has existed for the last thirteen years. It has inspired us to reexamine the grandest schemes of the notion of art. There is no doubt that DBO provides one of the richest accounts of art at the Makerere University art school. Yet, there exists a formidable obstacle to the appreciation of this experience. The dominant trend has been to interface with the various artworks and writings of the previous years' events in the lives of the lecturers. These should continue to be cherished. Acknowledgements go to various artists with their various specializations who have agreed to come together to participate in the DBO exhibitions over the years. The mass media has been supportive in providing a platform away from the exhibition rooms. Works on display have ranged from paintings to sculptures and ceramics to prints, textile

decorations, installations, woven materials, drawings, designs, illustrations and more. In short, it has been different but one.

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- The author is a professor at the Margaret Trowel School of Industrial and Fine Art at Makerere University in Kampala.

Subjectivity

The art establishment and judging Makerere's University's Different But One.

By Henry Mzili Mujunga



Some of the lecturers at MTSIFA

We can all agree that taking a goat to the river for a drink is helpful to the goat, but guaranteeing that he will actually drink is another matter. Rebecca Uziel—the Israeli born curator (and funder) of Different But One, the annual exhibition of work by lecturers at the Makerere University School of Industrial and Fine Art for nearly a decade and a half—again persuaded the dons of the school to show their work to the public in a gallery that has been theirs for over 30 years. The unwritten rule is that Africa sleeps. Taking it easy is the name of the game; after all, the easy man ends up eating the best dinners. So our dear lecturers were simply observing a natural pattern when they encountered this simple solution for complying

with the university's new faculty publication requirements—or in this case, exhibition requirements.

Then there is Ms. Uziel, another great white hope with a mission to save Africa from itself. I am not trying to besmirch the efforts of this great lady, but am simply pointing out the rather glaring fact that in this case the goat made it to the river—thanks to Ms. Uziel—but he is yet to take his first sip of cool water.

In an article on DBO that appeared in *The Independent* on 25 March, Nathan Kiwere posed a frequent and disturbing query about both the subjective nature of art and the quality of work being put forth by our so-called mentors for emulation:

“Ideally, this is supposed to be the most superlative visual arts showcase in the country because it embodies the very architects of Uganda's modern visual culture. It should be the platform for the crème-de-la-crème of the indigenous formal art representation, for students to learn from. But is it? This question elicits mixed, if not difficult answers, given the subjective nature of art as we know it.”

Was this year's DBO the most important show on the Ugandan art scene in years? My opinion is firmly, “No!” And thank God, by the way, the writer acknowledged the subjectivity of these matters.

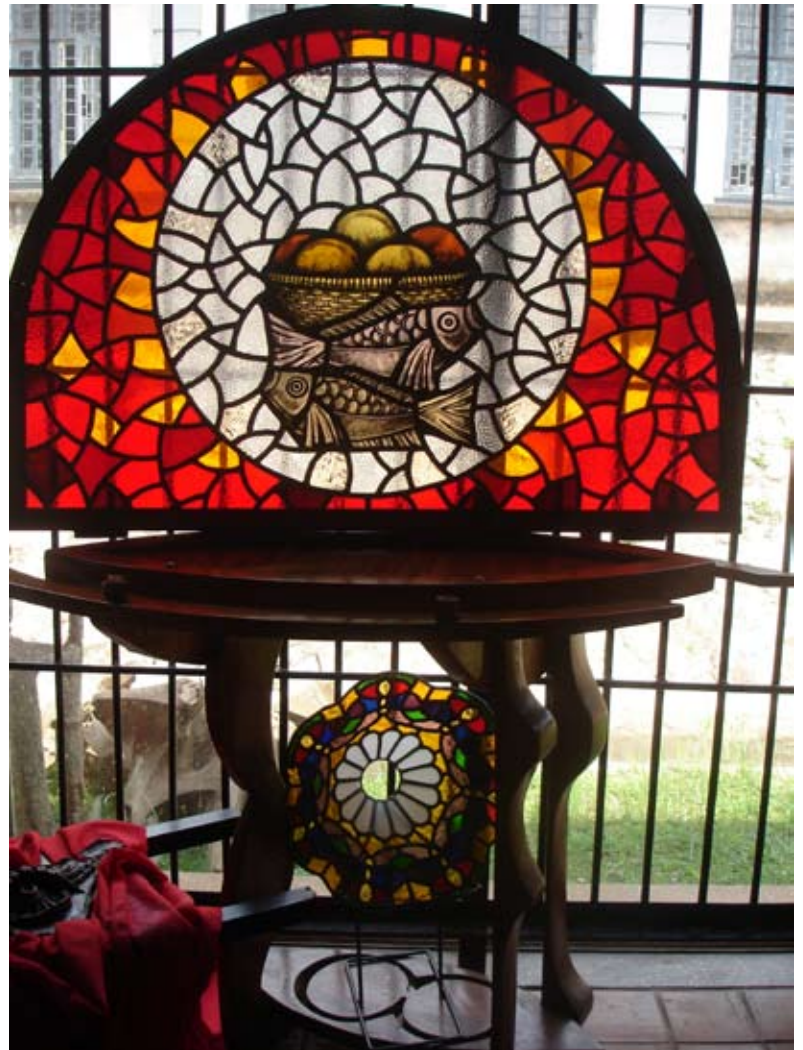
I don't believe that Different But One reflected the best Makerere's

Most of the lecturers are not practicing artists. Some, in fact, have never made a significant work of art in their lives, while others have simply gotten bogged down and lost their way in a war of “isms.”

art school has to offer in terms of technical competence or innovation in the visual arts. After all, most of the lecturers are not practicing artists. Some, in fact, have never made a significant work of art in their lives, while others have simply gotten bogged down and lost their way in a war of “isms.” Meanwhile—and perhaps significantly—the show has to date failed to attract work from Professors Pilkington Ssendendo (a painter), F.X. Nagenda (a sculptor) or Ignatius Sseluryo (a painter)—while these are the golden children of the Makerere art school.

Every February or so, Ms. Uziel rings a bell for the sleeping virtuosos and they wake up and create some works for the show. But no matter how talented the athlete, one cannot sleep the whole year through, then wake up one morning to win the 100-metre dash!

In past years, DBO has been dominated by artists such as George Kyeyune and Godfrey Banadda, who practice regularly but are firmly and intransigently anchored in the Western art tradition. Other lecturers with more vanguard ideas have been too shy to show them in DBO. This is, I believe, because the school has an official line to tow. No one need show students that they can run wild and attract public attention by canning their own excrement, for example, in the name of modernism! Dr. Kizito Maria Kasule got away with



wheeling tons of rubbish into the semi-sacred space of the Makerere University Art Gallery upon completing his studies abroad, but it became an unspoken rule of thumb never ever again to do the same!

DBO cannot be the “crème de la crème” of Ugandan art because mastery in art is not gained through the academic process, but rather by radical and unconventional practice. I have always wondered why most significant African art collections are dominated by works done by so-called “self taught” artists. Take the Contemporary African Art Collection of the Italian Harvard-educated venture capitalist Jean Pigozzi as an example: One will see that over 80% of the artists in it have never seen the inside of

a formal art school classroom. It is only fair to note that leading African artists such as El Anatsui (Nigeria), Bruce Anobrokpeya (Nigeria) and Valente Malangatana (Mozambique) have. El Anatsui is a professor at the University of Nigeria but still finds time to create what is arguably the most innovative artwork coming out of the continent at present. Still, these artists are up there because of their lack of conformity to “isms” other than their own. They understand that art is a calling, like that of priests, and what it requires first and foremost isn’t seminars or exhibitions to list on one’s Curriculum Vitae, but a true and firm commitment of the mind, the heart and the hand.

—Henry Mzili Mujunga is an artist and teacher based in Kampala.



Talk by Maria Naita

Painted Voices

A marriage of the senses

By Addy Beukema and Beatrice Lamwaka

The old man said to his children:

“Talk, I want to hear your stories,
loud as the sound of quarries.”

And they wondered if what he said was true.

For them, it was really hard.

They were used to being seen not heard...

Most African children are not Mused to being seen or heard. That is the point subtly driven home by artist Maria Naita, in her painting inspired by “Talk”, a poem by Sophie Alal Brenda. Both are included in the anthology *Painted Voices*, a collaboration of Ugandan artists and poets published by Femrite (The Uganda Women Writers Association) early this year. Naita’s painting depicts one child who hides her eyes and another who listens thoughtfully against a backdrop of colorful, innocent childish things. Later on in the poem, when their grandfather talks of the “monster called silence” that “covers the lands of unhappy people”, the image makes the poem all the more poignant, just as the poem provides a narrative to the image, thus enriching the experience of the reader/viewer. We almost feel what the children experience when their grandfather talks. The words of the poet make us think while the painting tickles our imagination.

In this anthology, we see various techniques and styles of art combined with poetry. The poets handed over their work and the artists rendered the thoughts in paintings.

Margaret Nagawa, for instance, for the poem “Granny’s Heels” depicted cracks of skin in the heel of an old woman on a background of black and white, the base of the head of a veiled old woman (but I also see Africa in this image) and

The poem also emphasizes the contrast between the prosaic daily chore of fetching water and the grand concept of love, which is represented in the woman’s vivid red eyes, lips and hair against the earth brown of her skin.

one strong heel, just one line in different colors brown and grey, with a lot of energy centered in it, expressed by a line in the form of a circle. The painting is abstract, but in combination with the poem, almost figurative.

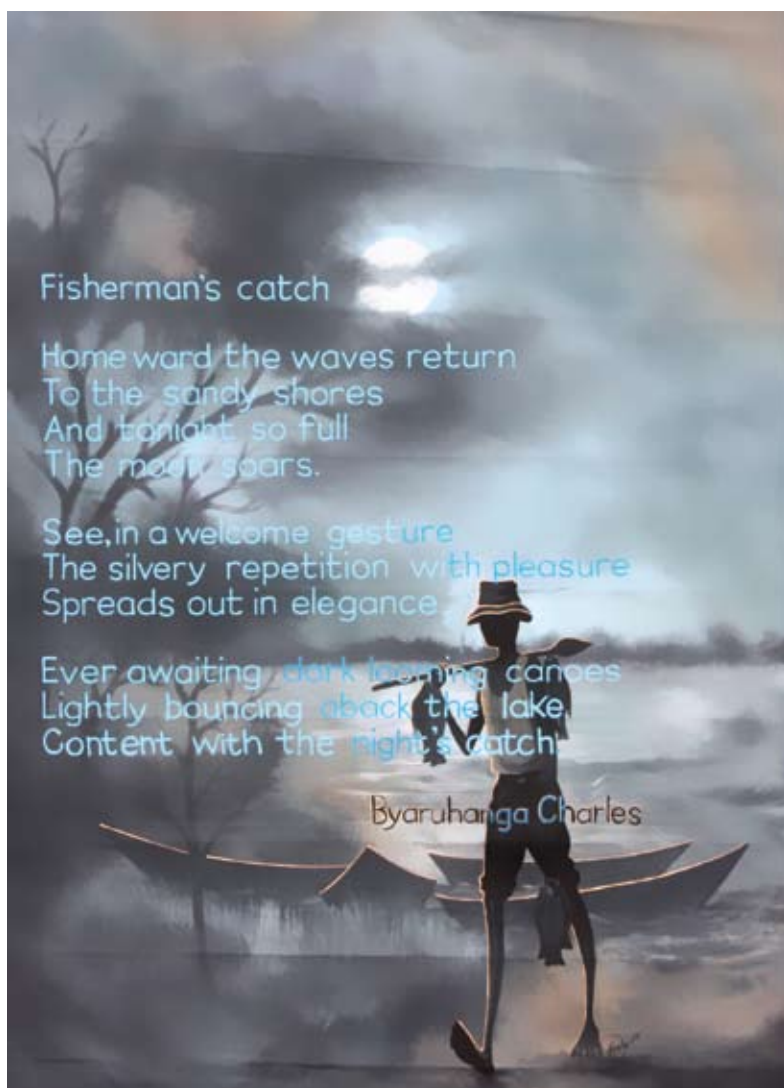
To illustrate Charles Byaruhanga’s “Fisherman’s Catch”, artist Stella Atal colors a textile with precise lines that contrast with a watery exposure portraying the ethereal grayish blue light cast by the moon and mist on the lake, evoking a sense of quiet solitude as well as the humble satisfaction of the fisherman (drawn in subtly sparkling gold) who is, as stated in the poem’s last line, “Content with the night’s catch”. The poem and the painting together deftly portray the theme of the humble but universal satisfaction of the end of a day’s work well done.

Daudi Karungi aptly illustrates the playful “Love Fetches Water” by Samuel Iga in his colorful painting. “The well in the valley”, the poem’s central motif, is depicted by a pot balanced on the head of a woman, thus conveying the humanist theme of the poem. It also emphasizes the contrast between the prosaic daily chore of fetching water and the grand concept of love, which is represented in the woman’s vivid red eyes, lips and hair against the earth brown of her skin. Karungi astutely emphasizes the questioning tone in the poem by making the words run in different directions around the painting. What is the true definition of love, the most basic and yet illusive human need?

Paul Ndema, by contrast, uses ink and water for the blurry night sky background of “Stars



Love Fetches Water by Daudi Karungi



Fisherman's Catch by Stella Atal

in Gulu" by Beatrice Lamwaka. Together with the stars, wrought in yellow, white and red to almost resemble flowers, the effect is at once eerie and spiritual (affirming the Christmas motif). We sense friendship and death, the subjects of this poem about a Christmas tryst that is thwarted by a fatal road accident. The girl in the painting, presumably the poem's narrator, is wrought in fine detail; the viewer can clearly see the sad expression on her face. She wears a bright red and yellow skirt that matches those lovely stars against the inky endless eternity of the night sky, illustrating the last line of the poem: "I know it is all in my heart."

The rushing waters that "clap hands and jump in wild

excitement" in "By the Nile" by Hilda Twongyeirwe are vividly evoked in Joseph Ntensibe's watercolor painting. The mellow pastels portray a sun-drenched afternoon at the sacred spot that is the source of this storied, ancient river, which at this very moment hosts both a "melancholic local boy" and an "anxious tourist." The artist's fluid brushstrokes capture the eternal motion of the river. The Nile, with its life-giving symbolism throughout history, beginning with the earliest civilizations, has always been an important subject of writers and artists alike.

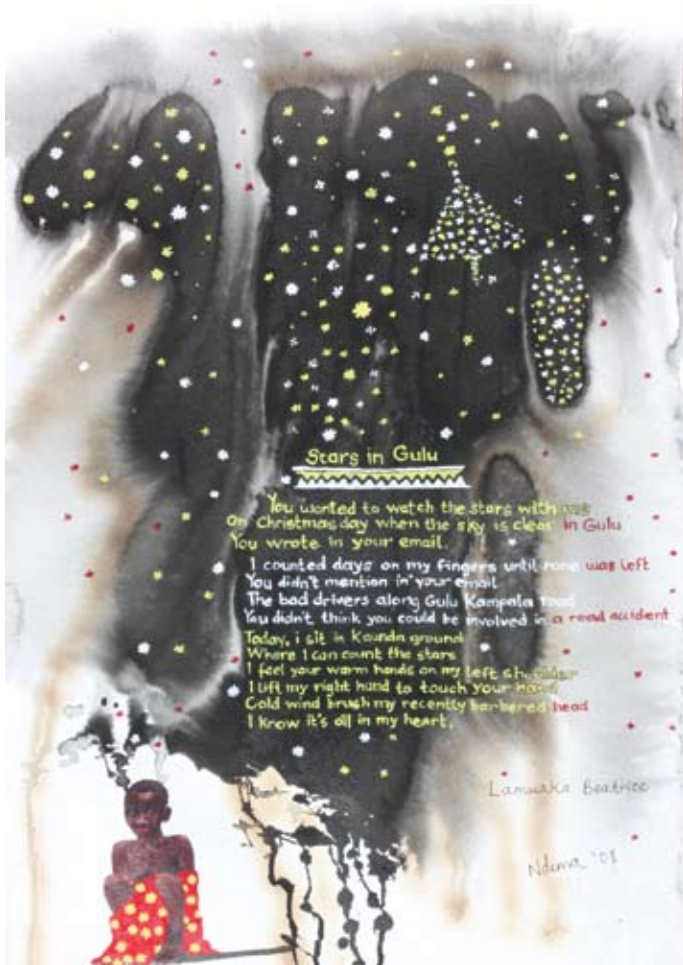
David Kigozi, who "painted to" "The Melody" by Philomena Nabwera says: "The words made me show the mystery of the crows, and all the aspects of

Many people, especially locally, tend to shun poetry because it's too "difficult," an idea this project is trying to dispel.

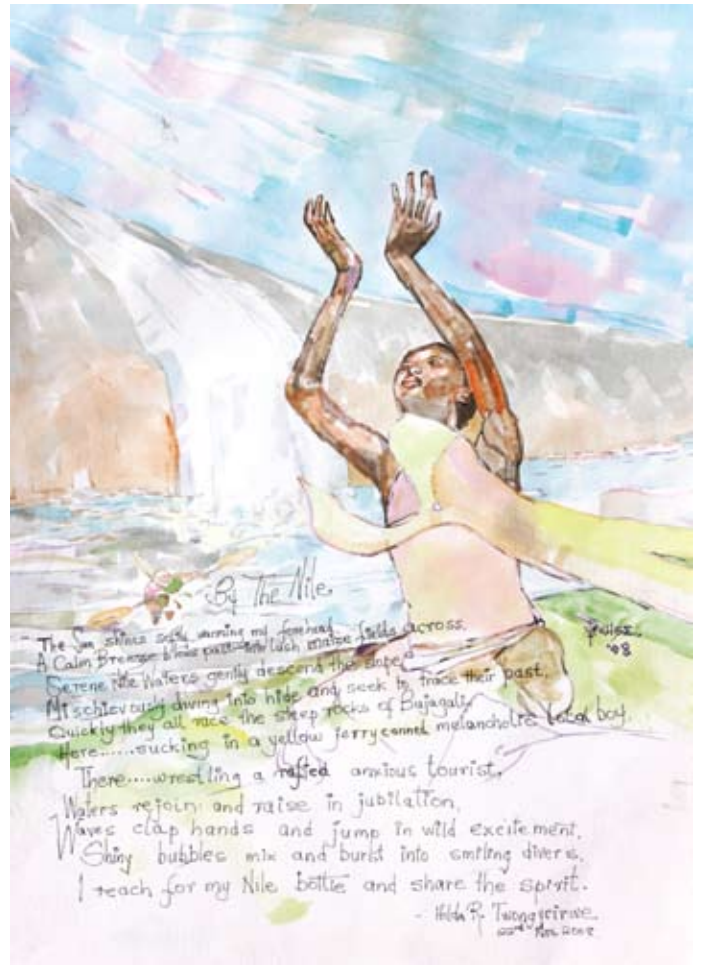
their behavior. Dancing, jumping, stepping and hopping had to be in the painting. I wanted to make the birds not too figurative. The reader must feel there is more in this creature. He or she has to use their imagination to keep the mystery of the melody of the birds. I did not use much color, because in shadow and light you can find many aspects of these animals. And I also tried to get rhythm in the painting."

Painted Voices was created for secondary school students in particular. The aim was to make the poetry and art more accessible to Ugandans, especially the young. The project also sparked talk of extending the collaboration to music and drama.

The aim of "Painted Voices" is to develop and promote Ugandan literature and visual art in a new way. Many people, especially locally, tend to shun poetry because it's too "difficult," an idea this project is trying to dispel. It includes the work of new poets, established poets and well-known artists. FEMRITE also aimed to motivate teachers and students to use this new material as supplementary readers in secondary schools all over the country. Posters featuring two of the poems and paintings are now in libraries, classrooms and staff rooms in selected districts around Uganda. The anthology is a must read for anyone who loves poetry or art.



Stars in Gulu by Paul Ndema



By the Nile by Joseph Ntensibe

“Painted Voices” as well as posters featuring “Dream with Me” and “Un-jumping”

are for sale in Kampala at Afriart Gallery, Tulifanya Gallery, Aristoc Bookshops or at the Femrite offices on Kira Road.



The Melody by David Kigozi

The Canada Connection

Getting your work shown in one of the world's most exciting art markets.

By Leah Sandals



Leah Sandals

We know art rewards the soul. But let's face it; if you can't show your work at least occasionally, you're going to get lonely—not to mention poor. Canada has an established and thriving gallery and museum scene, and though it's not easy to access, it's possible. Here's some advice from some key figures in Toronto, Canada's largest art centre, on how to make the connection.

Wil Kucey, Le Gallery www.le-gallery.ca

Wil Kucey is one of the best young art dealers in Toronto. Just a few years out of art school, he's built Le Gallery into one of the city's destinations for strong, youthful artistic talent. Here's what he advises artists seeking commercial representation.

Understand the odds

Kucey receives submissions from some 2,000 artists every year via "drop-bys, mailed-in packages and email." Out of these, he

chooses to represent roughly one or two. Breaking in isn't easy. On the other hand, every great artist in the world once faced the same discouraging uphill climb. Part of being a true artist is remaining dedicated in spite of the odds. Be honest with yourself about your abilities and your level of commitment.

Now make them work for you

Remember that commercial galleries have to make a living selling art and most do this by specializing in a niche. Kucey says it's important that artists "recognize and negotiate what the dealers like" by researching the kind of art a gallery carries. If you're convinced their roster fits with the style of art you're making, the next step is to put together the strongest possible package tailored to that specific gallery. For Kucey, the best packages—whether in electronic form or on paper—contain five to 10 of the artist's strongest images, a Curriculum Vitae and a short bio.



Wil Kucey
Director, Le-Gallery

Back it up

Kucey advises that for international artists, "a well-designed, well-targeted Web site is probably the best thing to start with." Dealers, like every one else in today's world, troll the Internet constantly looking for good work, he says, so even on its own a good Web site is probably worth the investment if you're looking to break into the international market. A well-put-together, up-to-date site can also serve as valuable support to electronic and paper submissions.

Michelle Jacques, Art Gallery of Ontario www.ago.net

Michelle Jacques, assistant curator of contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, is known for creating space for lesser-known artists. Given the recent much publicized renovation of the AGO, her work could get more viewers than ever in the future. Here are her words of wisdom on connecting with Canadian museums.

Keep your finger on the pulse

It's important for emerging artists to keep an eye on trends and practices in museums and the art world in general. Jacques notes that museums "tend to program artists who are at a certain level of awareness"—meaning those who have already been discovered. Still, that doesn't mean they aren't looking for fresh perspectives, especially from Africa. Jacques notes that a work by the Nigerian

“Things are over the top with attention and interest in China, and it’s getting that way with India. So it seems like Africa has to be next. How to jumpstart that... figuring out what is unique about the art being made there and marketing the hell out of it,” is what will get African artists into Canadian museums in the future.

-- Michelle Jacques, Art Gallery of Ontario

artist El Anatsui held by the AGO is one of the museum’s most popular pieces. She also notes that “things are over the top with attention and interest in China, and it’s getting that way with India. So it seems like Africa has to be next. How to jumpstart that... figuring out what is unique about the art being made there and marketing the hell out of it,” is what will get African artists into Canadian museums in the future, according to Jacques.

Go there

If you can, one way to increase foreign curators’ awareness of your artwork is to do a residency where they live. Jacques recently returned from the Banff Centre, a major Canadian residency hub that invites curators to do studio visits with artists. She notes: “The Canadian art scene is really social.” While they’re competitive, residencies and fellowships for foreign artists are available abroad, and the Internet has made learning about such opportunities easy to anyone who is truly motivated.

Tap into community support

Artists can often benefit from what



Jacques calls “collective energy” in your local art scene. For example, cities, states and interested collectors or dealers often coordinate funds to bring curators from abroad into an overlooked or underserved art region. For a few days, curators are set up on gallery and studio tours. If they like the artists they see, they might end up in overseas exhibitions. Stay plugged in to your local art community so you’ll be aware of such opportunities when they present themselves.

Jacques agrees with Kucey that nothing beats a really good

package. Her museum welcomes all artists, recognized or not, to submit images of their work, a CV and a link to their Web site via email.

Tamara Toledo,
Independent Artist
& Curator,
www.tamaratoledo.com

Toronto-based Tamara Toledo is increasingly well known in the Canadian art scene. Like many independents, she wears many hats: Toledo co-founded the Salvador Allende Arts Festival and recently finished a curatorial residency at A Space, a nonprofit

Breaking in isn't easy. On the other hand, every great artist in the world once faced the same discouraging uphill climb. Part of being a true artist is remaining dedicated in spite of the odds.

artist-run gallery. She is also the public programming manager at Prefix, a small institute of contemporary art. Her advice:

Knock down barriers

Toledo was born in Chile, and grew up both there and in Canada. While she appreciates the many supports available to artists in

Canada, she believes that minority artists are often disadvantaged because they lack knowledge about them and access to those resources. It requires an extra effort for non-Canadians to tap into opportunities in the art world here.

Think geographically

On the other hand, being a

minority artist can sometimes open doors. "One of the things that has helped me is to market myself as a Latin American artist," says Toledo. "Though it's very conflicting—there's a variety of cultures in Latin America, after all, not just one—it does open up some opportunities."

Target practice

Toledo says it's crucial to research which forums and venues would work best for you and your artwork. It also shows curators and gallery owners that you're a serious professional who knows how to do her homework. If you're a painter, don't try and target a gallery that only showcases sculpture, she says. She notes that many nonprofit, artist-run galleries have specific mandates, which you can read about on their Web sites.

It's not what you know...

Toledo notes that in any market, it's critically important to network and build contacts, to promote yourself. The point of meeting people and chatting them up about what you're doing artistically is to "build a network of people who can support you," she says.

Additional resources:

Canadian art news and profiles:
www.canadianart.ca

Canadian art news and calls for submissions: www.akimbo.biz

Information on Canadian artist-run galleries: www.arccc-cccaa.org

General Canadian art news:
The www.cbc.ca/arts, www.globeandmail.com/arts, www.nationalpost.com/arts

Leah Sandals is a freelance arts writer based in Toronto, Canada. www.leahsandals.com.





Painting by Ifee Francis Xavier

All People are Passengers

All people are passengers
of our planet earth.

Traveling through enormous
space,
through the depth of the
universe.

The commoners are fighting for life
and find their death in silence.

Societies vanish,
new born alike,
and ship-earth still turns in circles!

Only the few greatest survive,
in the memory of mankind.

Those survivors are worshipped
forever
because they taught us to be
more clever.

They spread the energy and the
strength
that move our history,
our ship-earth
through the depth of the universe.

L.B. Mukiibi



Imagery by Eric Rwakoma

Views on Art Terms

Meaning:

"Meaning is only a part of art. We object to there not being any but when there is some it's often not all that interesting."

Individualism:

"Individualism is not bad in itself but we don't want to be individual in a corny way like the abstract expressionists. They were not corny but to be like them now would be. Or, they were corny. Either thought works OK. In any case, we want to be individual but within a new climate, a climate where basically signed up to advertising. We don't simply challenge its assumptions. It expresses us."

Mathew Collings, 1999.

Visit Kampala's Finest Wine Centre

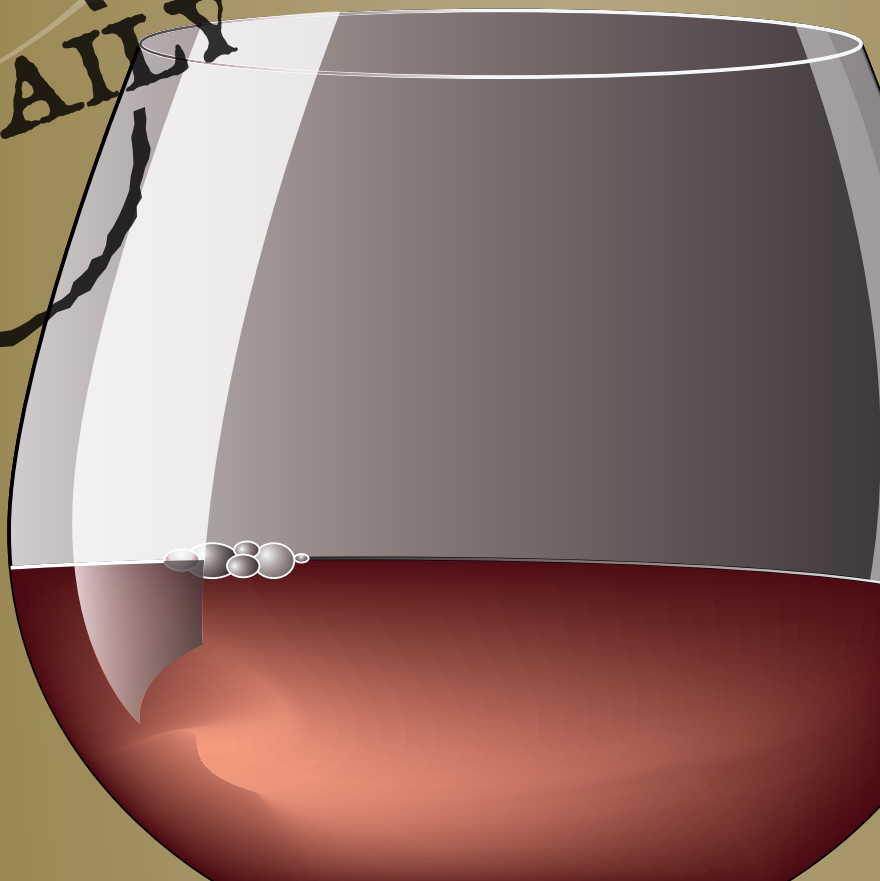
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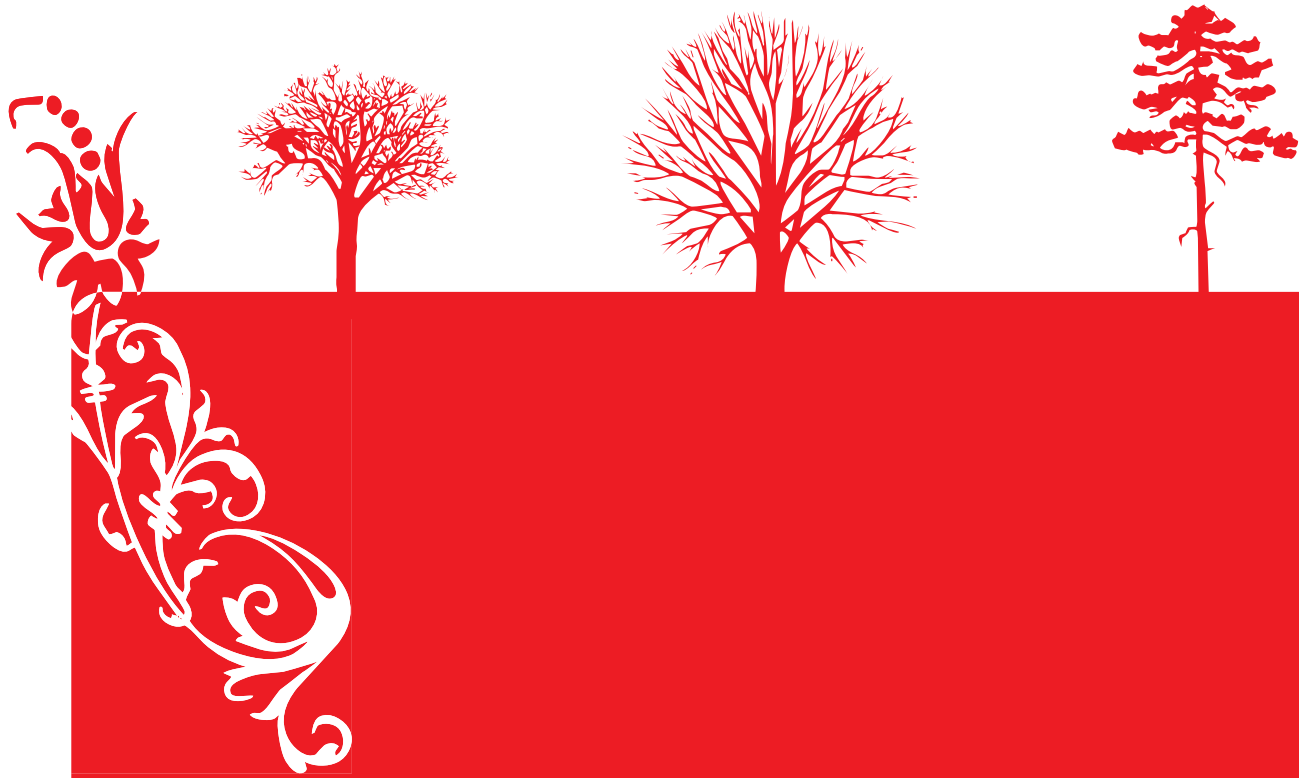
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