

DUOS
FEST
IVAL

A stylized graphic featuring two white spheres and a white arc. The spheres are positioned in the upper half of the image, each partially overlapping a yellow letter 'O' from the word 'DUOS'. The arc is a large, thick white curve that spans across the middle of the image, passing behind the letters 'F', 'E', and 'S' of the word 'FEST'. The background is split vertically into two equal halves: the left half is red and the right half is blue. The text 'DUOS' is in the top row, 'FEST' is in the middle row, and 'IVAL' is in the bottom row. All letters are yellow with a black outline.



DUO FEST IVAL

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The “DUOS” Art and Education Festival was a platform for collaboration between Kenyan coast artists and lecturers/artists of the Academy of Art in Szczecin, Poland. In 2021 and 2023, Polish and Kenyan artists worked together in pairs, but also with the local community of Kilifi County and Mombasa: artisans, musicians, dancers, students from Pwani University (PU), as well as the Technical University of Mombasa (TUM), in the framework of projects in photography, film, sculpture, performance, music, painting, and street art, thus creating an artistic and educational community.

While preparing their projects, collaborative ensembles led by Duos artists worked in various publicly accessible spaces in Kilifi and Mombasa: Giriama Paradise football field, Seahorse Village elementary school, Pwani University, the streets and walls of Mnarani district, Alliance Française in Mombasa, or Water Sports Ground in Kilifi. Activities, as well as the final Festival presentations, were accessible to the general public for free.

DUOS projects continued in Szczecin, Poland in the form of the one-month residency of Kenyan artists, who revisited their Polish partners to finalize the works and take part in academic life at the Academy of Art in Szczecin.

The artistic exchange was summarized with three exhibitions held in the

National Museum in Szczecin (NMS) in 2021 and 2023.

The DUOS Festival was curated by Zorka Wollny (“Community” & “Women Power”) and Łukasz Jastrubczak (“Community” & “Social Ecology”), in collaboration with Ciro Githunguri and Witek Orski (“Women Power”),

and Caroline Ngorobi and Izabela Plucińska (“Social Ecology”)

We would like to thank the following persons for their contribution in the realization of the festival: Dr hab. Aleksandra Łukaszewicz (initiator and main coordinator of the TPAAE project), Dr Wanyenda Chillimo (coordinator on the side of Technical University of Mombasa), Dr Stephen Muoki (coordinator on the side of Pwani University), Marnie Wolfenden (coordinator on the side of Beneath the Baobabs), Lucas Malcor (director of Alliance Française in Mombasa), Juma Chengo (cultural activist of Giriama Paradise), Said Chengo (Giriama community activist), Mramba Mweni (Giriama community activist), Marlena Chybowska-Butler, Ewa Prądkyńska (coordinators from National Museum in Szczecin); assistant curators: Caroline Ngorobi (Jukwaa Arts Productions), Ciro Githunguri, Izabela Plucińska and Witek Orski; Rick Butler, University of Macerata team: prof. Flavia Stara, prof. Rosita Deluigi, dr Giuseppe Capriotti, Kenyatta University team: prof. John Mugubi, Adonijah Ombura, Mijikenda community, and all the persons that were involved in the realization of that grand project.

Zorka Wollny
& Łukasz Jastrubczak

DUOS Festival was realized within the TPAAE project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 872718. It was presented as part of an international project co-financed by the programme of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education entitled “PMW” in 2020–2023; contract No. 5109/H2020/2020/.

1. introduction

2 CO COMMUNITY

The theme of the first edition of DUOS Festival was "Community." The collaborations of artists were realized from the 1st to 30th of March 2021. Curators Zorka Wollny and Łukasz Jastrubczak decided to focus the artistic and research activities in the rural community, located mostly in the Seahorse Village, but the "Street Art Duo" also worked in the Mnarani district of Kilifi town, and "Fashion Design Duo" organized their photo sessions around Kilifi.

Eight pairs of Polish and Kenyan artists collaborated directly with a group of around 45 students (five students per each DUO) from Pwani University. In addition, Film and Dance Duos worked with groups of 11 and 12 local performers, respectively. The Education, Street Art, and Contextual Art ("Seahorse Art Centre") Duos worked with local teachers and a group of around 30 children. The Fashion group worked with around 15 local community members. An additional 20 students and performers were involved in the organization of accompanying events and the "open stage for young artists." Therefore, there were about 100 people directly involved in the Festival activities. The audience for events was another 100 to 200 people, which – due to Covid-19 restrictions – was an acceptable maximum.



“SEAHORSE ART CENTRE” by Said Chengo, Mramba Mweni, Anna Orlikowska, Castro Osore, Łukasz Jastrubczak

With elementary school pupils: **Bakari Ali Karisa, Samuel Kahindi Kalume, Joshua Mweni Maitha, Dennis Mangi Kahindi, Siara Amani Nicholus, Meninah Kadzo Joseph, Moddy Ngala Chai, Lydia Bahati Kithi, Patience Zawadi Hamisi, Latifah Kadzo Kahindi, Purity Mapenzi Katsele, Harriet Kanze Elius, Joyce Santa Safari, Fred Ali Karisa, Moddy Safari Wanje, Fredrick Ngombo Mwango**
Pwani University students: **Calvin Wambua, Faith Khloe Gikenyi, Said Luganye Kahindi, Brandon Wanje Jackson, Wanjala Willy Luchu, Wesonga Cyprien “Seahorse Dockers”**
elementary school teachers: **Kea Isaac Safari, Daniel Hamisi Mwajedi**

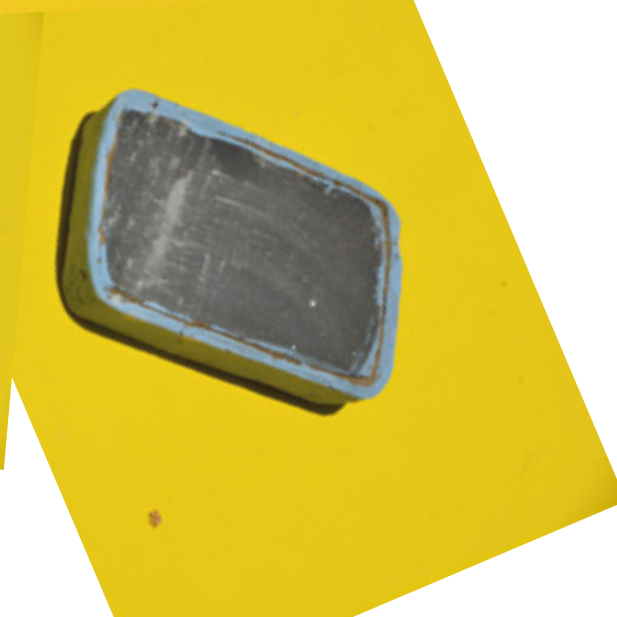
Castro Osore, Anna Orlikowska, Mramba Mweni, Said Chengo, and Łukasz Jastrubczak – in context of the “Community” edition of DUOS Festival – curated an exhibition in the new facilities of Seahorse Dockers School, a grass root initiative of Said Chengo and Mramba Mweni. In the “Temporary Seahorse Art Centre,” for 2 weeks they conducted workshops in clay sculpting and drawing with around 20 Seahorse School pupils. Castro Osore also realized a mural that contextualizes the local problems of the Giriama people, related to the expropriation of the land they occupy. The mural was conceptualized in collaboration with Łukasz Jastrubczak. Pupils also realized collectively a mural depicting a map of Seahorse Village, and futurist models of buildings to be constructed in the new school.

“Art Gift Shop”
clay, cardboard, plastic, paint

A.O.



Descriptions of each of the art projects were written by the artists,
Marlena Chybowska-Butler, Rick Butler and Łukasz Jastrubczak.



A.O.



W.O.

W.O.



A.O.



A.O.



A.O.

"Munda" (Land)
mural painted by Castro Osore
conceptualized by Łukasz Jastrubczak

Munda in the Giriama language means land, the foundation from which tribal societies in East Africa build their wealth. The word is painted in a mural at the new site of Seahorse Dockers School that depicts the terrain behind a wall recently erected at Pwani University. Looking at the mural from the grounds of the school that serves the poor families in neighbouring villages, the impression is that there is no wall. Artist Castro Osore, who provides art instruction to children in Kilifi, employs the tromp l'oeil effect to grant viewers the illusion of access to an area appropriated by the government for the university's expansion, and without compensation for the Giriama families who once lived there.



Y.O.



“Seahorse Village Map”
 Youth from Seahorse Dockers elementary school created
 maps representing their village.
 One map, drawn by Fred Ali Karisa, was used to realize
 together a mural, at the entrance to the school.



Drawing of Seahorse Village Map made by Fred Ali Karisa



Y.O.



Y.O.

SEAHORSE DOCKERS SCHOOL

BARANI
ANGEL
SARA
MAYN
TOM
MAYN
TOM
MAYN
TOM
MAYN



“LOVE AND DEATH” by Richard Onyango & Zbigniew Rogalski

With Pwani University students: **Mraja Omar Mwinyi, Selina Koki Nzuki, Emily Mosomi George, Elina Muthoni Kangara, Lewis Auka Okioga**

The area of East Africa in which Kenya is located today is considered the “cradle of humanity.” It was from here that *Homo Sapiens* began his journey through the world, and it is in this area that archaeologists have been discovering the oldest remains of pre-human species. For example, in May 2021, the 78,000-year-old remains of a 2-year-old *Homo sapiens* child were discovered in Kenya. Previously, the skeletons of a male and female *Homo rudolfensis* were discovered next to each other in the same area.

Inspired by archaeological excavations, Richard Onyango and Zbigniew Rogalski touched on the subject of love: the most intense form of interpersonal relationship. The installation “Love and Death” consisted of pedestals covered with images depicting a life story of a couple, and artificial human skeletons both male and female, made of recycled materials. The installation was exhibited at Pwani University, but also the fake skeletons were situated in the ground of the “Temporary Seahorse Art Centre” as a fictitious archaeological dig.

“Love and Death”
sculpture (sponge, glue),
fictitious archaeological dig at the “Temporary Seahorse Arts Centre”

W.O.



Y.O.

painting installation exhibited at Pwani University
series of 12 paintings on wooden pedestals

Y.O.

Y.O.





Y.O.



“Zaire Ngome Msagapore” documentary film by Zippy Kimundu & Małgorzata Mazur

Cast: **Cecaro Kapondo Teswa, Mtawali Baya Saruni, Nyevu Mlewa Mkare**

Directed by: **Zippy Kimundu**

Camera, editing: **Małgorzata Mazur**

Sound: **Omar Hussein, Łukasz Jastrubczak**

Local guide: **Said Chengo**

Assistance on set: **Jay Mohammed Juma**

Translation from Giriama language: **Suvena Hinza**

“Zaire Ngome

Msagapore” is a grassroots music group that preserves the traditional dances and music of the Giriama people. For the main characters, it is also the main source of income: “To survive, there must be more of us!” says Mama Furaha and begins efforts to acquire new members to expand their ensemble. In the documentary film made by Zippy Kimundu and Małgorzata Mazur, we encounter three main founders of the band: Mzee Kapondo, Mama Furaha, and Saruni. The authors purposely do not hide the camera, therefore the process of making the film itself becomes its second theme, emphasizing the “game” that both sides play equally consciously.

Through the lens of Chief Saruni and Mama Furaha, a charismatic fisherman and his enterprising wife who sells palm wine for a living, we meet a diverse group of characters who keeps their ancestors’ traditions alive through pacing their drums.

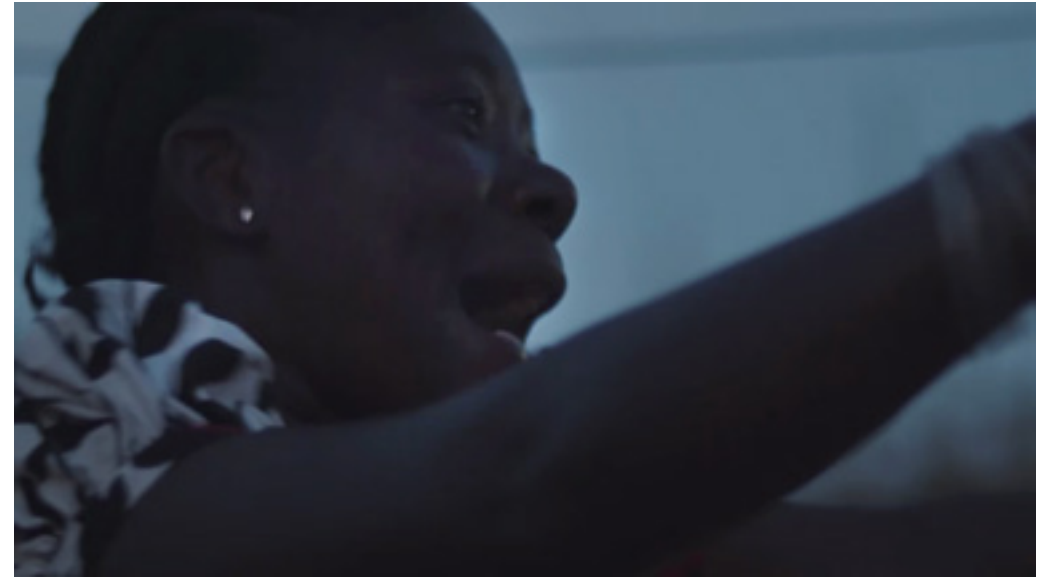
Despite working low-paying odd jobs by day to survive, music serves as a welcome escape from their daily lives. While Saruni, who has two wives, seems unconcerned about the difficult financial situation, his wife Mama Furaha dreams of a better life for her family and the whole community. As Mama Furaha takes action to expand the band’s reach by performing for tourists, the film showcases their preparation, the decision to bring in new members, and their joys and sorrows leading up to their performance at DUOS Festival in Seahorse village.

Women in the film are given a voice, discussing politics, pandemic restrictions, and food shortages, as Mama Furaha hopes to use music and dance as a means to effect change and improve their living conditions. This rare glimpse into a world never seen before reveals the resilience and strength of a community that uses music to overcome adversity, inspiring us all.

With an observational approach and high anthropological value, this documentary tells a compelling and universal story about the desire for a better life. As Kenya is usually portrayed as a tourist paradise with beautiful landscapes and wildlife, this film takes us into unexplored territories, showcasing the challenging conditions and daily struggles of small coastal village life at the Kilifi’s Indian Ocean Creek.

stills from the film / Małgorzata Mazur
duration: 42'





“It’s not about money, it’s about (good) values”
by Mohamed Mbwana Omar, Piotr Pauk

With Pwani university students: **Joan Magoma, Joshua Mwendwa, Beatrice Kurgat**
Youth from Mnarani district: **Fahim Mohammed, Hassan Athman, Hussein Mwasaha**

Mohamed
Mbwana Omar
paints signs for service
shops, bars, hairdressers, etc. in his
home district of Kilifi – Mnarani. In collaboration
with Szczecin-based street artist Piotr Pauk (Fruit of the
Lump), a mural was created on one of the walls of the pri-
mary school in Mnarani, which Mohamed, who takes care
about the aesthetics of his neighbourhood, has always wanted
to renew and “embellish.” The resulting work formally refers
to the graphics on the reverse of Kenyan shillings, which,
like every banknote, are the basic object of interpersonal
exchange. Graphics, on the other hand, represent val-
ues such as education, work, and Africa. Street Art
Duo worked together with young street artists of
Mnarani, aiming to symbolically strengthen
the value of local street artists whose work,
mostly as shop signs painters, is usu-
ally underestimated among
local community.



P.P.



P.P.



P.P.



P.P.



CESS

WARDS SUGG

CHILDREN'S
SELF-FULFILLME



Mohamed & Lump

“Colour, Culture, Vibrancy. A contemporary clothing collection from Kenya” by Emilia Łapko & Wacu Kihara

With Pwani University students: **Charles Gichuhi, Ali Abubakar, Nyabuto Ontegi Carlos, Tasha Atieno, Rembekana**

Models: **Jack – Man Queen, Jumai Afrika, Betty – Elizabeth Wangare Mwangi, RA – Sabry Mundiah Wanjiku, Ciro – Lilian Wanjiru Githunguri, Reanna Alosa Odhiambo, Halima Abdallah Omar Chea, Winnie Mvere Kitsao**

Fashion

Design duo combined Wacu Kihara

(fashion ecopreneur) and

Emilia Łapko (photographer),

working with local tailors to create

a new collection with traditional Khanga

textiles. They conducted a series of photo

sessions with local people as models, and a final

fashion happening in the centre of Kilifi.

Khanga is a colourful, vibrant fabric native to

East Africa. It has been used for hundreds of years

mainly by women to tie their children to their backs and

around their waists while doing household chores. This

printed cotton fabric, with its unique blend of colours, pat-

terns, and text, still holds a special place in Kenyan cul-

ture and history. Based on the khanga, a contemporary col-

lection of clothing was realized, which was picturesquely

incorporated into the local landscape.

“During our stay in Kenya, we realized several photo

shoots. The people posing for us came from all walks of

life from students, people from the countryside, to tour-

ist guides randomly met in the field. We searched for

the most amazing locations in Kilifi County and the

immediate surroundings: we photographed on

the pristine white beach of Bofai, the desert-like

dunes of Mambrui, the rural hills and valleys covered

with red soil, the old town in Mombasa,

the Mackinnon market, and the streets of

Bishara, where all kinds of khanga can be

found. Each photo shoot was a challenge

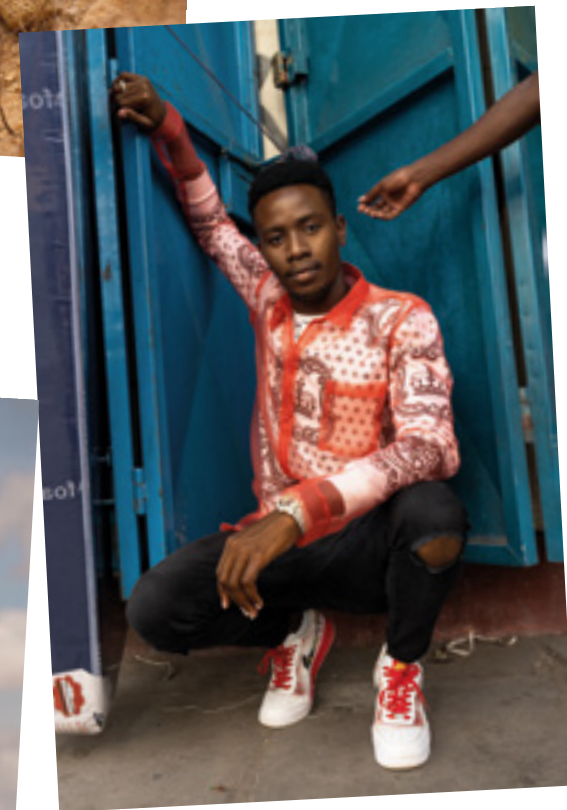
and an adventure. The people pho-

tographed shared not only their

image, but also stories about

themselves and their

lives.”



E.L.





E.L.



E.L.





Y.O.



“Universal Rebeless” by Anna Nowicka & Simba Wanga

“Simba Wanga” ensemble: **Dama Katana, Shida Kenga, Kahonzi Mwaro, Kadzo Jefwa, Kache Iewa, Kitsao Karisa Kanyama, Juma Chengo, Ndoro Karisa, Kadenge Karisa, Jefwa Kalu, Kahindi Thoya**

Pwani University students: **Clekson Muhindi Adogo, Moses Muya Deyie, Faith Tarus, Divina Cherop, Robinson Benoit Apollo**

Simba

Wanga is a traditional dance group from the Giriama people. In collaboration with choreographer Anna Nowicka, who works with stories based on dreams, they have staged a completely new performance based on the story of Mekatilili wa Menza, a heroine from Giriama tribe. The duo uses dance to tell a universal story about rebels, civil disobedience, and the struggle for their own dignity, culture, and land.

The choreography is based on the traditional Giriama dances that Simba Wanga preserves. These collaborative choreographies bring culture to life and recreate traditional stories in the present. Mepoho's vision of the white man's arrival is relived and blazed with Mekatilili's courage to face the colonizers openly. These stories, among other things, form the basis for song and dance pieces. Anna brings her knowledge of contemporary choreography, improvisation, and performance, adding new compositional choices to the stories told. Pwani University students use their unique skills with the use of hip-hop dance and tell a well-known story in a new, unconventional way.

This dance was presented to the audience as part of the DUOS Festival, on a field in Seahorse

Village.

Photo documentation of the dance performance held in Seahorse Village.



Y.O.



Y.O.



“Mnazi” by Biko Wesa & Witek Orski

Biko Wesa,
Kilifi-based photographer,
researched with Witek Orski the
production of palm wine (Mnazi), a popular
spirit in the local culture. Photographs were exhib-
ited in a public space of Seahorse Village on a wooden
construction. Next to the display, artists arranged a semi-of-
ficial Mnazi bar.

Called *mnazi* in Swahili, the coconut palm is indispensable
to the Mijikenda. The nine tribes that inhabit Kenya’s coastal region
use the tree for food, shelter, and clothing, as well as medicine, ves-
sels and implements. *Mnazi* also is the name given to the wine that
is a socio-economic pillar of life on the coast. Made for traditional
ceremonies from the tree’s sap, its sale as an imbibement brings
cash to Giriama households.

However, just as meeting the global demand for palm
oil is degrading the environment, modernization is plac-
ing this centuries-old centrality – which photographers
Biko Wesa and Witek Orski capture in their installation
– under threat. While the production of palm wine
is prohibited by a Kenyan government that can-
not control how it is made and taxed, DUOS

Festival attendees could enjoy *mnazi*
in the Giriama village that
hosted the work.





Zaire Ngome Msagapore (Dancing to trample the paths of Zaire's ancestors)

Małgorzata Mazur, co-author (with Zippy Kimundu) of the documentary film "Zaire Ngome Msagapore" (2023), is interviewed by Joanna Szczepanik. Kilifi, March 5, 2023.

The documentary was produced as part of the first edition of the DUOS Festival 2021 on the coast of Kenya, in Kilifi County, as part of the TPAAE project, Transcultural Perspectives in Art and Art Education, under the EU Horizon 2020 program. Coordinated by the Academy of Art in Szczecin, the project aims to explore contemporary art and various forms of art education in Europe and East Africa. The screening of Małgorzata Mazur and Zippy Kimundu's film "Zaire Ngome Msagapore" is on the program for the third edition of the DUOS Festival in 2023.

We are talking a few days after the pre-release screening, which took place in a village inhabited by the Giriama people, the protagonists of the documentary.

I put forward the thesis that this is a film about nascent entrepreneurship in the village. Do you agree?

The film is about a local village community that, due to the impoverishment of the bay and lack of fish, has to retrain and take up dancing for tourists. It turns out that this may be the only option for the characters in the film to survive. After two years of shooting, I returned to the place where we shot the film and, very interestingly, it has completely changed. The family of Saruni, the film's main character, who two years ago could barely provide them with basic food, now has three houses and electricity. Some Austrian built them a hut where they can receive tourists and dance for them there. (The story with this hut ended dramatically,

which we want to tell you about as we continue shooting.) By having the characters perform, dance, sing, and interact with tourists, they receive support. We filmed the beginning of this process.

How big is the Giriama community?

It's part of the Mijikenda group, which is the seventh most numerous ethnic group in Kenya. It is divided into nine groups, of which Giriama is one. They mainly inhabit the coast of Kilifi, Mombasa, Malindi. [*They also inhabit Tanzania - author's note*].

At the time of your arrival, was the village already listed on Google maps as Giriama Community Eco Camp?

This coincided with our first stay, the organizer is Juma [*an organizer-impresario from the Giriama people*], but Said, who works as a cook at the Villa where white tourists come, was also a big influence. As a guide, Said used to bring tourists to the village so that local bands could make money with their performances. He took us there as well.

Is this his home village?

Yes, Said is familiar with various dance groups, often family small bands. When there was information that tourists wanted to come to the village to watch a performance, a neighbour, a friend who happened to be free nearby, would come and they would do a performance in front of their house. What is the conclusion? After two years and more editions of the DUOS festival, the bands have united and are doing more organized business for tourists. The question that also falls in the film is; if there are more band members, will they earn more from it, or vice versa? Is it better to remain such a rootsy group, which is

harder to reach, or to organize into a larger professionalized group?

Do you observe such an evolution?

I observe the professionalization of performances for tourists.

Are you able to interpret how this translates into their interaction within the community?

No. What I've observed is the introduction of a few motifs typically under the tourists; the dancers, for example, pretend to drink something for the spirits or to pour out some drink for the gods, some fairy tales that other community members laugh at. Before, they simply danced to their traditional songs, which they know from their great-grandfather, and that was believable. Now they're putting on a show. It's more professionalized but less authentic.

Members of the Giriama community, who were both actors and audience, laughed a lot during the screening of the film. Do you know what they were laughing at, can you read the codes?

From what I learned in the conversation after the screening, they were laughing at the gags, at the fact that someone made a silly face or acted strangely. But what I wondered most of all was whether they, mainly the older members of the team, had ever seen a movie on the big screen. Have they ever seen a movie, much less a documentary?

I was afraid to show them our film because there are things in there that are controversial to me. For example, the fact that 60-year-old Saruni [*one of the main characters – author's note*] goes to visit his second wife, who is twenty-five years old, has eight children, and is this forgotten wife whose house collapsed. I don't know if he didn't go there just because we asked him about this second wife. To me it was a very difficult moment, but both Saruni and his first wife Mama Furah say

that this is their reality and there is nothing to hide here.

What is actually the plot?

It's hard to talk about the plot because this is an observational film. We wanted to present the characters in a respectful way, to give them time to express themselves. The starting point was to be preparations for the festival, rehearsals, arranging costumes, etc., entering into relations with a certain reality. There are many voyeuristic scenes in the film, at the interface of anthropological film. The story we tell, that is, this change in the livelihood of our characters, forced by external conditions, shows as if through a lens these huge changes that are taking place. There is a shortage of fish in the bay, while tourists are arriving.

There were no dialogues that were planned?

No. Sometimes Zippy asked to bring up a topic, but mostly, I completely and Zippy largely did not understand what the characters were talking about. The dialogues went on for a long time, the shots were very long, so the camera was static, peeping at them and listening until the characters forgot its presence. Much more significant is the editing process. From these endless conversations we choose three sentences and then the creation of the story, the creation of the action, takes place.

What language did you work in?

The characters talked among themselves in the Giriama language. Zippy [co-director] doesn't speak the language. She communicated with the men in Swahili. But we shot most of the scenes without knowing exactly what the characters were talking about.

How then did you choose the dialogues and how much material did you have?

We made about 12 hours. We waited a year for the translation. Three translators dropped out along the way.

Was it difficult to find a translator?

The translator had to know the Giriama language, operate Adobe Premiere, have a computer and good headphones. There are some students who are from Giriama who meet these conditions, but the challenge was great. These were not interviews done with a microphone in the studio, but situations previewed, sounds overlaid.

What genre of film is it?

Like most of the artists in the project [*TPAAE – author's note*], Zippy and I were matched as a duo without knowing each other, having very different approaches to documentary film. I'm drawn to slow cinema, to film neo-modernism, to films that rely on observation and lingering rather than action. Zippy, on the other hand, is grounded in typical documentary, where action, drama, and storytelling are paramount, so this film is a meeting in between. The film is still at a very early stage of production, confronting the realized material with the characters gave us a lot.

And how did your characters receive the film?

Positively. Saruni was very pleased, he thanked us, he just said that we had portrayed them as poor people, that we should still come and shoot the part about how they now have these three cottages and a beautiful new tourist house, and that he wanted such an ending to the film. So actually, dancing for the tourists brought them something. Looking at this particular Kenyan village from a global perspective, we may feel that nothing is changing there, that this poverty, lack of prospects is a vicious circle, but on the other hand, if we look at it in detail, changes are happening nonetheless, and quite big ones.

Zippy admitted that she had never seen this kind of documentary about rural people, and that most residents of Kilifi [*a city of seventy-five thousand people, the county's capital – author's note*] don't know

how people in the countryside live. Because these worlds have little connection.

Less than in Poland?

Certainly, the stratification is huge. I found it very interesting that people from the city may not know how to cook ugali (a traditional flour dish) over a fire! Documentaries that show life in the countryside are very fictionalized, they do not show the real life of the residents.

How do you work with such actors? Were your characters eager to be peeped at with the camera? Were they ashamed?

They were not ashamed. The group was chosen to take part in the DUOS Festival. The deal was that they perform, and we make a film about it. I really wanted to get a glimpse of what life is like in the Kenyan countryside. And with Zippy, we felt that Zaire Ngome Msagapore had something totally seductive about it, there was some kind of energy between us.

In the film, an elderly man teaches the characters to sing and dance, and it kind of looked like he was doing it for commercial reasons.

It's Mze Kapondo, who is the closest character in the film to me, I have great respect for him. It seems to me that he's the only one who doesn't treat dance as a show for tourists, he's totally excited about it. The woman he teaches to dance in the film is his wife, only instead of answering her questions, he starts singing, not sure why. She is a unique person who derives genuine joy from tradition. I really wanted to capture the way she performs, because it's something that maybe no one will continue to do.

What do you find most interesting about this work, most valuable?

The basic, most important questions that bother me about all people. To what extent the conditions in which they live and the way of life they lead make them happy or unhappy, how they live, how they feel. In

the process of recording, I could only get a sense of what is beyond language. When I got the translated materials, I suddenly saw a new context. What turned out to be amazing was Mama Furaha, who kept saying that she wanted change, that it wasn't normal for children to be hungry, even though everyone around her said that hunger was part of childhood. She turned out to be a very strong, wonderful heroine, because she showed dissent. We were the listeners, she was saying it to us, that she was unhappy that her husband was drinking, that she had to carry water the farthest out of the whole village, that they had already connected everyone to electricity, but not them. For me, the strength of this documentary is that we give her space to speak out.

Do you feel responsible for your characters?

I don't feel responsible, although I would very much like the film to bring them something. I hope that if we can show the film at festivals and later make it available on online platforms, perhaps tourists will want to come, learn about Giriama village and support Zaire Ngome Msagapore...

Here, however, is the paradox, which is also the main theme of the film: how to respond to this change? If so, are tourists in Kenya necessary? Is dancing for tourists the only way the characters, formerly fishermen, can make a living? The bay that gave them their livelihood has been cleared of fish by Chinese companies. I hope the film shows at least a little of this huge web of dependency.

Promotion of the place is already underway. Photos of the paradisiacal view of the sun setting over Kilifi Bay and the name Giriama Paradise, given to itself by the community itself, are attracting attention on the Internet.

Juma, the organizer of this project (and it is in truth a grassroots initiative) has plans to make a Giriama Museum there.

There they want to tell the story of Mekatilili Wa Menza, a heroine who was a freedom fighter, a Kenyan independence activist who led the Giriama people against the colonial administration of Kenya from 1912 to 1915.

The film has been in development for two years. Is it African timing or standard?

That's a good question. African, of course, too, but it's also my timing. For now, I think we have conducted very good research to launch the search for funds for the continuation and post-production of the film.

What captivates you about Africa?

The word "captivates" is a bit out of place for me here. It has hierarchical overtones in it, in my opinion. Of course the landscapes are beautiful, but I can't be captivated by the ocean when there is so much genuine deprivation and problems all around. By choosing to be there, you condemn yourself to the role of a white tourist. You take on the baggage of history. That's why this topic seems important to me, the problem of tourism in Kenya, the entanglement of the characters in our film in a web of dependency with the white tourists living in these spectacular villas. As for the delight, It was realizing the shooting that I was delighted to ask the characters in the film what THEY thought about it.

W O M E N P O W E R 4



The 2nd edition of DUOS Festival was dedicated to Women Empowerment, with Mekatilili wa Menza, the heroine of Giriama tribe, as the festival's patroness. From the 10th of August to the 2nd of September 2021, eight female artists from Academy of Art in Szczecin and the Kenyan coast – poets, musicians, dancers, photographers, and craftswomen – worked in different places around Kilifi town to develop their projects, exchange knowledge, and work together in pairs with students and members of local community.

Their research and practice were carried out in the following areas: animation, journalism, installation, street art, ceramics, wall painting, textile design, dance, music, art education, and film.

On the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of September, the three-week collaboration was summed up and presented in Kilifi, in the form of studio visits which were freely accessible for the local community. The Festival included an open-air cinema, concerts, shows, games, and activities for children, in addition to exhibitions, guided tours, and open studios.

Mekatilili wa Menza was a fierce heroine who opposed British colonization and rule. Even in her elderly years, she fought for independence of her people and lands. She loved nature and fought for her Indigenous culture to be protected, which harboured harmony with the wild and respect for ancient forests.



J.S.



“Leso Zetu Kwenu Zasema” by Linda Shuma & Natalia Szostak

In cooperation with: **Elsa Amondi, Melody Gikundi, Daisy Jepkosgei, Margaret Kendy, Ruth Kisot, William Luchu, Bahsan Samow, Jackline Wachira**

Linda Shuma and Natalia Szostak began work on their project by collecting personal narratives in discussions about female heroes and local traditions, with beneficiaries of the Kesho Kenya aid organization and students from Pwani University. Inspired by the khanga, brightly patterned fabrics containing proverbs meant to communicate important messages among East African women, the duo documented the everyday struggles young women face using graffiti art in murals at the Pwani university's Kilifi campus.

multiple wall text-mural /
sticker-stencil graffiti /
spray paint



N.Sz.



J.S.



Y.O.



J.M.



N.Sz.



N.Sz.



N.Sz.

“The Linguistics of Empowerment” by Linda Shuma, Natalia Szostak, Ciro Githunguri, Justyna Machnicka

In cooperation with: **Elsa Amondi, Melody Gikundi, Daisy Jepkosgei, Margaret Kendy, Ruth Kisot, William Luchu, Bahsan Samow, Jackline Wachira, Musa Kabwere, Safari Mazerah Fahari, Janine Mwende, Tom O. Nyadida, Lawrence Odanga, Yuda Oriema, Stella Wambua**

Slogans
contesting
the oppression of women
which appeared on the streets of Kilifi
in September 2021 arose from the DUOS
Festival Zine, a gazette created by **Ciro G.**
and **Justyna Maknicka**. Articles written by **Pwani**
University students addressed issues of personal
autonomy, including about one’s body and way
of life, in the face of social and religious dogma.
Subjecting these themes to discussion, analysis,
and language play yielded phrases that the duo
transformed into *speech acts* – tools of effi-
cient communication in seemingly neutral
urban space. Hand-made stencils and
spray paint permitted the repetition
of straight forward messaging
as part of a larger graffiti-
ti-manifesto.

action in public space / stencils / photo documentation



N.Sz.



N.Sz.





J.M.



“MekaZine”

Texts: **Musa Kabwere, Mazerah Fahari Safari, Janine Mwende, Tom O. Nyadida, Lawrence Odanga, Shaila Agha**

Editors: **Ciro Githunguri, Justyna Machnicka, Natalia Szostak**

Graphic design and typography: **Justyna Machnicka**

Photography: **Justyna Machnicka, Yuda Oriema, Mazerah Fahari Safari**

The MekaZine profiles issues that Kenyan women face on a daily basis and the successes of women in a male-dominated culture. Reported and written by Pwani University students, articles address sexism, menstrual stigma, genital mutilation, teen pregnancy, prostitution, and single motherhood. Those texts provided the multimedia team with an underlying linguistic foundation with which to challenge the existing power dynamics.



Mekatilili wa Menza: The Rebirth

Author
**Mazera
Fahari Safari**

In Kenya, one of the greatest heroine stories ever told is the legend of Mekatilili wa Menza. She is an influential and dominant feminine figure from historical times. But it doesn't end there. She keeps on resurfacing. She has taken hold of the world today, serving as a mentor and a source of inspiration to many women.

So how did she get here? How did she become such an idol to society and the feminist community. As a matter of fact, in Kilifi, there is a group of women artists who came together to make a difference in the community in honor of Mekatilili. They are called the Daughters of Mekatilili and they are living up to the name, not a brand, as they carry on Mekatilili's legacy.

It doesn't stop there, Mekatilili wa Menza, is also the inspiration of the 2nd DUQS Festival, which is taking place in September 2021 and takes as its theme Women Power.

Mekatilili's journey as a heroine was not an easy one. It's full of chaos, endurance and bravery. Mekatilili's reputation is one of a woman of mystery surrounded by mysticism and mythology. But, there are no myths, only exaggerated facts that came from those who drew courage from Mekatilili's great deeds and ambitions. Through this, it has laid a foundation for Mekatilili to be a well respected and adored heroine.

In my quest to learn how Mekatilili is inspiring my community, one legend stood out among the rest. It is the story of how her

predecessor, the seer and medicine woman called Mepobo, came to infuse Mekatilili with the power to lead her people to freedom. In it, the sun swallows the moon in the night, turning the sky fiery red as chills and panic run through the villages of Sabaki, Mekatilili's homeland.

"The ancestors are sending us a message," says the village medicine man. "The spirit of Mepobo has chosen tonight to unveil her successor. Tonight is a night to rejoice, not to panic."

In a nearby hut, a woman was in labour and about to deliver. As the sun slowly spit out the moon, the woman gave birth to a girl. Her final push occurred simultaneously with the sun at last birthing the moon. She named the child Mekatilili.

Mekatilili grew into a strong, wise and capable woman. Her tribe, the Giriama, were oppressed by their British colonial rulers. She saw the bitterness in her people; how they suffered and tolerated their oppression. They had no voice, no power or authority. The village elders turned a blind eye and welcomed foreigners without question, in fear of being executed or exiled from their own community.

Later on, Mekatilili got married to a man called Menza Mwakiringi from a clan called the Amwakiringi. Although married, she was still disturbed with how her people were being treated. This caused her unbearable pain, but she couldn't do much about it at that time. She was held back, but that was about to change.

In the following season, when half of the moon's belly was shining, Mekatilili wa Menza went to trade with her brother. She witnessed her brother being taken away as a slave. She was powerless as the foreigners who were taking her brother scolded and showed her away. This act, though horrible, made Mekatilili stronger. It was now clearer what she had to do: fight for her daughters and sons, or lose them all to an unjust cause. She had to be ready.

Mekatilili became a widow after the sudden loss of her husband. But she stayed strong. The Giriama people praised her skill as a healer, leader and medicine woman. She even treated barren women with special herbs and healed their wombs. In her prime, she countered epidemics such as small pox and malaria. Indeed a woman of great deeds and power, one of her greatest deeds was about to unfold.

Her call to arms came at a time when the British were at war with other nations. World War I, they called it. Mekatilili's people were trapped in the middle. The British were conscripting African soldiers to fight their battles - King African Rifles as they were called. The colonial administrator Campbell came to Mekatilili's village to conscript soldiers. He never knew his actions would come at a great cost.

Campbell met face-to-face with Mekatilili, the Brave. Their first encounter stirred up an uprising that followed. "Grab that hen's chicken," Mekatilili allegedly told Campbell. Eager to prove himself, Campbell stretched out his hand to grab the chicken. But, the hen attacked. "I will react the same way, if you take our children to fight a war that does not concern them," Mekatilili warned. Consumed with shame and anger Campbell took out his gun and shot the hen in response.

Mekatilili, took it upon herself to stir up a rebellion. She gracefully danced to songs of war, calling men and women to take up arms against the British.

Apart from being well respected, widows held a special place in the Giriama community. Now a female warrior, Mekatilili the Brave honed her people's skills to resist Campbell. It is said Mekatilili used a spiritual herb and treatment technique called *Bundungo* to build confidence in her warriors. *Bundungo* made the warriors invulnerable. The battle lines had been drawn, but this was not a head-on battle. It was a battle of wits.

As a military strategist, Mekatilili used guerrilla warfare tactics to fend off Campbell's men. Her famous military tactic was ambushing the first and last soldier in a convoy, simultaneously. She would then command her warriors to shower down arrows in the middle of the convoy. This caused confusion, deceiving the enemy that a large army.

No one could perceive that a woman can pull this off. Campbell underestimated Mekatilili and this led to his capture. He became a prisoner of war and was kept hidden in a maize silo. He was fed three-day-old Ugali, mixed with water, to sustain him. As a reminder, the name Campbell still circles around in the Giriama community with a slight twist, since the people couldn't properly say his name. The natives pronounced Campbell as, *Chembe*. Mekatilili's triumph offered the Giriama people the closest thing to freedom they had tasted.

Their victory smiles soon turned to frowns as two of Mekatilili's high-ranking assistants, Wanje Wa Mwandori and Luganje Wa Ziro, betrayed her. They collaborated with Campbell's men to fire him and they exposed Mekatilili's war tactics. They told Campbell's men to fire their guns in the bushes when travelling. This is where Mekatilili's fighters hid. The traitors also gave away the secrets of *Bundungo* to the enemy.

The betrayal was a major blow to Mekatilili's freedom campaign. She was arrested and imprisoned in Kisumu. Wanje was made chief by the British administration to rule and oversee matters of the Giriama. Closely assisted by Luganje, he killed off the rebellion.

In my quest to learn more about Mekatilili, I stumbled upon different versions of her story. It is surrounded by controversy, particularly about Wanje. In one version, Wanje is arrested with Mekatilili and exiled in Kisumu. He escapes prison with Mekatilili but is injured and dies on their way back to Sabaki. Another version claims Mekatilili and Wanje were lovers and they fell in love on their way home after breaking out of prison in Kisumu. I was confused at first, until I further dug into her story. History is written by the victors.

As a chief, Wanje closely collaborated with the British to prevent another uprising. The Kaya elders were banished. New Kaya elders were appointed to help maintain law and order. The oppression went on. Wanje and Luganje were puppets. As time passed, the Giriama favored Wanje because of his influence. The Giriama people became educated by the British and welcomed Christianity.

The root of Christian teachings began to take hold. Christian leaders portrayed Mekatilili as evil because she cured barrenness in her role as a medicine woman and that contravened the teachings of their religion. Their doctrines taught that Jesus was the only saviour of the Giriama people. Mekatilili was their doom, not their savior.

The benefactors of this system also saw Wanje as a hero and Mekatilili's equal. They even overlooked his previous actions. Some could not bring themselves to accept that a woman led a rebellion and conjured Wanje into the story as Mekatilili's right hand man.

This skewed the Mekatilili story.

The different legends which support Wanje as Mekatilili's companion cherish patriarchy. Patriarchy was not the way of the Giriama people. This is seen as Mekatilili advised the Kaya elders of her time. It is stated that the idea of a man's superiority was a foreign concept to prevent any other woman besides Mekatilili from obtaining influence and power over the Kaya elders. The men became instilled with the notion that the man should be in total control of the household and the community. The woman must submit to the man and most of what Mekatilili stood for became dismissed. This tradition is going extinct.

All is not lost for the people who closely followed and continued Mekatilili's legacy to the bitter end. They passed on to us another story. After her arrest, Mekatilili escaped by

swimming in three days to Malindi. She continued with the uprising and was arrested several more times; each time escaping under mysterious circumstances. Being branded an enemy by some of her people, who now allied themselves with Wanje and Luganje, and also fighting old age, Mekatilili slowly faded into myths and legends. She died of natural causes and her body rests peacefully in Bungale.

However, her spirit lives on in principles that have persevered through the ages. Although her story stirs up numerous debates, she is still revered as a heroine - a superwoman.



Photo: Mazera Fahari Safari

The roots of poetry in the Kenyan Coast

Author
Odanga Lawrence

Swahili poetry is generated from Arabic poetry. Poetry is called *ushairi* in Kiswahili, from the Arabic word *Shair*. It is written in the traditional manner and created to be sung rather than read. It began in the northern Kenya coastal towns of Lamu and Pate, before spreading to Tanga, Zanzibar and other parts of the coast. Traditional poetry is often published in local newspapers and used in *taarab* songs, weddings, birthdays, burials, sports and cultural practices.

There are a few differences between the Swahili and Arabic poetry. With much African influence, it is difficult to compare two poems because of their uniqueness. Traditional poems can be categorized into different classes as per their form and content, such that they can be epic, lyrical or didactic, and many more.

The traditional art of oral expression in poetry has produced a number of valuable works. It is characterized by its preachy aspects, heroic songs, folkloric ballads and humorous dialogues which depict Swahili life,

cultural beliefs and traditions. Because of the immediate historical aspect of Swahili literature, it is still a hard job to interpret many poems due to the lack of knowledge of the context in which the poem was written.

INTRODUCTION

Poet Phillis Wheatley spent the majority of her life embroiled in a clash of cultures. Her poetry revealed much about colonial society in 18th-century New England and its hierarchical relationships. As a Christian, a slave, a woman, a poet and an African, Wheatley experienced discrimination on several fronts. Her poetry gave insight into marginalized groups in colonial America often silenced due to illiteracy. This only proves that women were not allowed to do any kind of artistic work, or, rather, poetry, back in the day.

NYANJA KAZUNGU THE POET

Elizabeth Sidi Kazungu is her real name. She was born in Kilifi in 1939 to a family of five. She got married to the late David Kazungu, and they were blessed with eight children. Being the first born to her family, she always wanted to be strong and act as a role model

to children around her. As a girl in a religious family – the missionary invasion influenced them to adopt the new religion of Christianity – they were morally taught to be upright. The quest for education really enlightened her and instigated her passion towards poetry. She recited her first piece in 1952; to her, poetry was all about fun as she interacted with other children both at home and at school. In those days, women were less regarded in such activities but freedom from her parents is what made her get through it. Her passion grew fonder and she also started singing in a church choir, giving her a better chance to lose music as a whole. Through this, she employed musicality in most of her poems to create rapport with her audience. From the accounts, whenever she recited her pieces, the audience could sing along and it was really amazing. One of her true reflections and a source of inspiration is that, being from a Giriama community, many times they were taught tales of the Great Mkatili. She took those tales as vital lessons in real life and this led to her great artistic work.

Elizabeth was quite resilient and determined that she was always at the top of her class. Her courage and tolerance is what made her realize that despite the harsh treatment from the boys, she still had space and a voice in her community. This made her face fewer challenges and became fearless as she grew. Her main objectives in life were to educate others; since most of the children did not have access to learning. To enlighten others about arts as a vital thing and to bring people together. As a matter of fact, she performed most of her pieces during great ceremonies, including weddings, birthdays, burials, sports, and cultural practices, such as initiation.

In an interview, she said her favorite poems were about COVID-19. She wrote two pieces in the same year she was hospitalized. She states this was her greatest nightmare, as well as her perfect time to teach the world how to cope with the virus. She was a victim of the pandemic at 81 years, and wanted the world to be cautious and aware of how to live with COVID-19.

Besides being a great poet, she was a Nutritionist Nurse for 30 years. This helped her tackle matters related to nutrition in society, and she worked tirelessly to teach parents about the effects of deficiency diseases like marasmus, kwashiorkor, rickets, and others. As of now, she is an herbalist dealing with products like Coconut Oil, Moringa Powder, Baobab Powder and Neem soap. She is a real woman made of steel. To live longer, she advises people to eat more of the traditional foods, to avoid fast foods, to do regular exercise, and to stay together as a family to maintain a healthy relationship.



Elizabeth Sidi Kazungu. Photo: Yuda Onema

Covid Covid Covid

Covid covid covid nineteen

Jamani niambieni Kiswahili ni nini

kabala kuyatia akilini

kaona nimelazwa wadini

ikawa kutiwa oxygen angalu

kunifikia ubongoni

keshafika miaka themanini na moja niko miongoni

kati walio hatarini

kwa kewli kutoka wadini ni

mapenzi yake maulana

na lile lishe bora nikila wakati

wangu wa ujana

Elizabeth Sidi Kazungu. August, 2021

Why so many teens moms?

Author
Janine Mwende

Teenage pregnancies are one of the major concerns in Kilifi county. According to the Ministry of Gender, Culture and Social Services, there has been a prevalence of 21.5% of teen pregnancies in Kilifi county making the county as one of the highest with the pregnancy rates. This means that one in five adolescents get pregnant at a very young age. Most of these girls are between the ages 14-17, mostly affected are the standard seven students who are estimated to be about 13-15 years of age since most of the girls start school at a very old age and by the time they finish their primary education they are fully matured. These numbers have continued to increase every year and are expected to increase especially with the Covid-19 pandemic. After conducting interviews and doing research I found that some of the main causes of teenage pregnancies include:

POOR PARENTING. It all starts at home with the relationship between the kids and the parents. Many parents are neglecting their duties. They cannot account for their children's presence and whereabouts. They are less concerned about the kind of people their kids are hanging out with and what they are doing. Most of these kids grow up with no parental control and with the freedom of doing whatever they want regardless of the consequences. Poor parenting narrows down to the lack of sex education to the growing kids. Parents ignore matters regarding sex and assume that they're going to be taught in school. Parents should create time and interact with their kids, instill values, and educate them on sexual and reproductive health. Most of these parents do not know how to talk to their kids

about matters regarding sex. For most of them it's an uncomfortable topic that should not be discussed especially with the kids since it is "ubia mbaya" (bad manners) to talk about sex in the African culture. When the girls hit puberty their bodies start maturing and there is a lot of male attention. Since they do not know what to expect most of them end up pregnant because of the lack of knowledge on how to use contraceptives. Studies show that girls who have received minimal education are five times more likely to become mothers at a very young age compared to those who attained higher levels of education.

INADEQUATE SEXUAL EDUCATION provided to young girls and boys and unprotected sexual intercourse leads to most adolescent pregnancies. The parents, schools and the church ignore matters regarding sexual education on the use of contraceptives as they think the kids may interpret the information as permission to engage in sexual activities. Those with knowledge about contraceptives choose to keep it a secret or choose not to use the contraceptives to avoid detection by the parents and the church members. Most of these churches condemn the use of contraceptives. Most of the teenagers do not consider the use of condoms as a pregnancy prevention method and as an infection control method because sex with a condom is not enjoyable. Lack of education is another cause of teen pregnancies. The school enrollment in the county is very low. Primary school enrollment is 84% meaning that 16% of the kids are in and out of school while the secondary school enrollment is 26% estimated to 92,030 children do not get access to secondary school education with this figure teenage pregnancies in the county is on a rise due to lack of sexual health education due to illiteracy.

High poverty levels resulting in the high numbers of teenage pregnancies in the county. According to the Kenya human development report 2013, Kilifi ranks as one of the poorest counties with a human development index of 0.47%. Compared to the national average of 0.548. Most of these young girls are from very poor families, so they have to look for means of providing for their siblings and pay their school fees while others work as sex entertainers in order to provide for the basic needs for the families and provide for their needs. Some of them drop out of school since they cannot afford to pay the school and it becomes difficult for them to study while working. Since they are desperately looking for a mode of survival, they are easily lured to unprotected sex since they are paid more. These girls take the parental role very early in order to provide for their families. It becomes difficult for them after they get pregnant and the father of the child does not want to take responsibility and their parents are not willing to support her and the unborn child.



Cultural activities such as disco matangs and nightclubs with no parental or adult supervision making them free to do what they want. While at these gatherings, they take the advantage of meeting their sexual partners and engage in sexual activities. These disco matangs act as meeting points for all the youth in the area. There is the presence of drugs such as mungu, alcohol mostly chang'aa and mazi and blung that is very accessible in the region leading to sexual activities among the teens. These are the same youths that have no access to sexual education. Most girls that end up pregnant are unable to continue with their education.

Eunice Adhiambo who is a human rights activist, a development actioner and a feminist. She works with Beijing Champions, a group that campaigns for gender equality. She told us that teenage pregnancies are deliberate

of young girls, since these children are not old enough to be parents. Most of these girls get pregnant due to sexual violence by their peers, their so-called boyfriends, local boda boda drivers, and some by their parents. After getting pregnant, some girls are forced into early marriages and told to "enda kwa baba" (go to the child's father). In these marriages, they are prone to abuse by their partners and are denied access to basic education because they are partaking in their wife and motherly duties.

Peer influence, social media influence and drug abuse also contributes to the increasing rates of teen pregnancies. These teenagers are quick to jump to the latest trends in order not to feel left out. Some of them cannot afford the lifestyle and up taking jobs as sex entertainers to get the extra cash. During the teenage years, peer influence is very high because everyone wants to fit in and so ends up engaging in early sexual activities with no knowledge on how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Technological advancements have also contributed to increased teen pregnancies. Whereby the teens are able to access inappropriate media such as pornography leaving them with the desire to try out what they are watching.

Prevention is better than cure so how do we curb the teenage pregnancies in the county? Parents and schools should provide sex education to the young boys and girls as early as possible so that they can grow up with the knowledge. Parents should not assume that kids are not old enough to understand some of these things. As kids are growing up, parents should equip them with sex education knowledge. Parents should make sure they account for their children's whereabouts, regulate the programs their teens are watching and make sure that they are of no negative effects to their children. Parents should create time to interact with their kids and create a good rapport between them. They should ensure their children

can freely talk to them, instead of creating fear among them.

The community can also ban the disco matangs that provide room for increased sexual activities and drug abuse among teens. They also can establish clinics where youths can obtain contraceptives without being stigmatized. Instead of condemning sex education, religious leaders can discuss with teens the ways to prevent early pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

These high cases of teenage pregnancies have seen the county lagging behind in terms of the economy, developments and the education system. Unmarried pregnant adolescents face stigmatization from their parents and peers and most of them end up in early marriages that are violent. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the main cause of death among youth between the ages of 15 and 19 globally. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the adolescent mothers aged 10-19 years face a huge risk of eclampsia, puerperal endometritis, systemic infections and fistula. In Kenya, where abortion is illegal, some of these girls run for unsafe abortions. Some 3.9 million unsafe abortions occur globally each year for girls between 15-19, contributing to maternal mortality, morbidity and lasting health problems. Babies born to mothers under 20 years face higher risks of low birth weight, preterm delivery and severe neonatal conditions (WHO).

The county departments of gender and education have come up with ways to curb teenage pregnancies. In early 2019, the county launched an Adolescent Sexual Reproductive and HIV Strategy that has helped in the coordination of adolescent reproductive health needs. The recently formed Kilifi Youth Advisory Council (YAC) ensures meaningful youth engagement and conducts generational activities in the county to empower men and

women, boys and girls economically. Enhancement of service delivery to adolescents also is taking place through the Melinda Gates Foundation. Various activities have been implemented to reduce teenage pregnancies, such as Youth Open Days. The county is on the way to reviving at least four youth-friendly centers in Rabai, Matungani, Mtwapa and Malindi.

These efforts have yielded a reduction of teenage pregnancies in the county from 30.2% in 2018 to 19.2% in 2019 and 16.1% through March 2020. With continued support from parents, schools, government, churches and the provision of sexual education to teens, teenage pregnancies in the county are dropping. Parents of the affected girls should continue supporting their children since they are still kids. They should continue providing them with education, since children have the right to education.

"If we as a nation are to break the cycle of poverty, crime and the growing underclass of young people ill equipped to be productive citizens, we need to not only implement effective programs to prevent teen pregnancy, but we must also help those who have already given birth so that they can become effective, nurturing and bonding parents."

Janine Mwende



Janine Mwende (left) Interview with Eunice Adhiambo, Kilifi. Photos: Vudja Oriema

“Ushaha fitswa (Hidden Treasure)” by Aneta Grzeszykowska & Shaila Resia Agha

students: **Thomas Kimtai, Franckline Ochieng, Lewis Auka**

A heroine for Kenyans and for women, Mekatilili wa Menza was a Giriama grandmother who struck a blow for the independence of her people and land at the turn of the 20th century. As one of the country's first conservationists, Mekatilili lived in harmony with the wild and fought for her Indigenous religion, based on respect for Kenya's ancient forests, to be protected. Activist Shaila Resia Agha and artist Aneta Grzeszykowska propose to honour Mekatilili's spirit of resilience by installing a monumental sculpture on the floor of the Indian Ocean, just at the entrance to Kilifi Creek. The object is intended to restore a coral reef threatened by climate change and to boost tourism by attracting divers. The sculpture, in the shape of a mask and made of metal, will be sunk in November 2022.



J.S.



S.H.



S.H.





J.S.



←J.S.

“Gama Ra Kimbi” by Alicja Pilarczyk & Shangazi Masika

Preparation and libretto text, dramaturgy, stage design and costumes: **Shangazi Masika**
 Music, libretto preparation, dramaturgy, choreography: **Alicja Pilarczyk**
 Performed by: **Tumaini Choir** and **Euphemia Nyamusi, Faith Gikenyi, Petronilah Sharon, Joseph Mugalla, Maxwell Luvonga, Benoni Ouma, Ken Kurt Stoll**
 Recording: **Pole Flavio**

Alicja Pilarczyk and Shangazi Masika created an opera based on the oral histories of Kenyan women. The duo set a series of Masika's poems about the everyday life of Kenyan women to a score written by Pilarczyk that features elements of rap, pop, and classical music styles. Sung by Tumaini choir (made up of women from local villages) and students of Pwani University and danced to an accompaniment of handmade rattles, *Gama Ra Kimbi* (Woman Power) reflects the important role that storytelling plays in the life of the tribe.



A.P.





A.P.



Y.O.



Y.O.





Y.O.



“My Name is Mekatilili” by Marta Ziółek & Faith Kwamboka

With: **“Simba Wanga” music ensemble**

Dancers: **Shida Kenga, Kahonzi Mwaro**

Musicians: **Kitsao Karisa Kanyam, Ndoro Karisa, Kadenge Karisa, Jefwa Kalu, Kihindi Thoya**

Rappers: **TNC, Kitty Raw**

Pwani University students: **Raphael Ondimu, Claire Wafula, Mohammed Hassan, Valary Otieno**

Inspired

by the heroine of the

Giriamba people, Mekatilili

wa Menza, Marta Ziółek and Faith

Kwamboka focused on the emancipatory

aspect of dance and the history associated with

the women’s liberation of the Giriamba people. They were

interested in women’s practices and actions that bring social

change, especially those that manifest through the body and

movement. The artists referred to the local dance culture and the history associated with it, including that associated with colonialism.

The initial object of study was traditional culture and related dance forms, particularly “Kifudu” and “Spirit dance.” The latter was used as a dance against the appearance of the “white man,” while “kifudu” was a funeral dance promoting Mekatilili’s campaigns against the “white man,” against oppression by British colonization. In their work, the artists relied on the stories of local elders, quacks, and healers, who described to them the spiritual and ritualistic aspects associated with the dance as a healing, curing practice linked to the ancestors and nature.

The final presentation took place in two locations: near the “Distant Relatives” by the bay and on the main stage of a local club in Kilifi.

The performance included: traditional “Spirit Dance” performed by the dancers of the “Simba Wanga” group accompanied by an invited djembe drummer, self-portraits in the movement “My name is Mekatilili,” a jointly created choreography to the music of Michael Jackson “They don’t really care about us,” a female Ohangla choreography, a male “BOYZ” choreography, and a joint dance practice with a DJ and drummer.



J.S.



J.S.→





Y.O.

Y.O.



Y.O.



Y.O.



Textiles by Irena Zieniewicz & Ciru Karimi

Students: **Marygrace Wamamu, Peter Kyama, Lavenda Atieno, Winfread Ntinyari**

Screen-printed textiles by Irena Zieniewicz and Ciru Karimi feature pigments obtained from the leaves, bark, seeds, and roots of native plants applied to fabrics using contemporary production methods. The duo cooperated with Daima, one of the craftswomen working in the Mnarani district of Kilifi, to realize this project. They also organized a series of graphics workshops for Pwani University students to teach a technique that fuses traditional dyeing methods with modern technology.



J.S.



J.S.



Y.O.





J.S.



“The River Meets the Ocean” by Fauzia Aly Khan Volke & Anna Molska

With students: **Carlos Ontegi Nyabuto, Simon Mathole Shungu, Natasha Mbula, Seline Koki Nzuki, Cynthia Nyaberi and Katana Gona**

Employing ancient jewelry patterns from Kenya, the artists installed a mosaic made from porcelain and earthenware tiles at the entrance of Seahorse Dockers School in Kilifi with the help of students from Pwani University.

The River Meets the Ocean uses locally sourced red clay to tell the story of how Mekatilili wa Menza evaded the British at the Sabaki bridge, near where Tana River joins the Indian Ocean.

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Y.O.

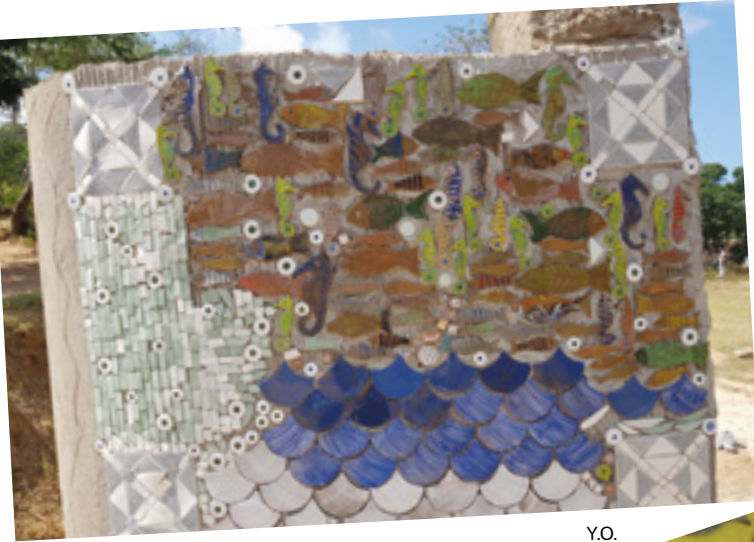




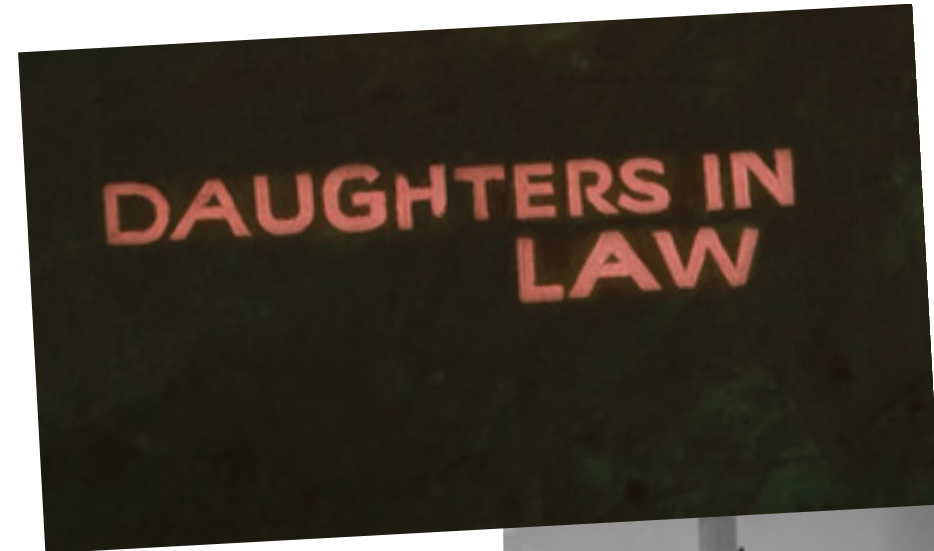
“Mekatilili Wa Menza” & “Daughters in Law” by Izabela Plucińska and Sheila Okanga

Students: William Chengo, Emmanuel Mwanza, Joseph Tuva, Fabius, Mwaniki, Peter Omondi, Gabriella Jumwa, Owen – Lucas Sagali

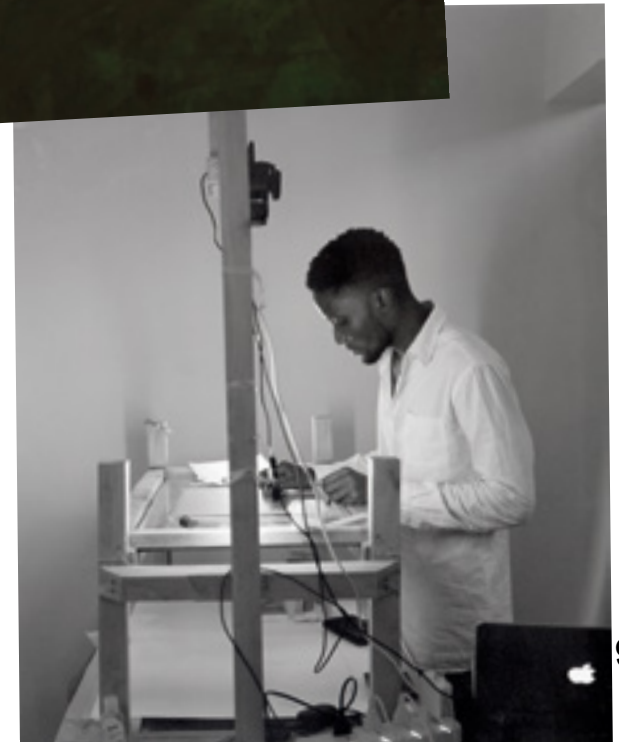
Two animated films about Mekatilili Wa Menza, Giriama tribe heroine, were created by different groups of students, with the use of various techniques: sand, plasticine, paper, and objects.



Y.O.



"Daughters in law"
Poem by Shangazi Masika
3 min, Mix technic: sand, charcoal,
clay, object





Y.O.





additional mural made by Said Chengo, Said Luganje Kahindi (Gendo),
Zuzanna Wollny and Seahorse Dockers School pupils



J.S.

Zorka 5 Volke Fauzia With talks only Zorka

ZW

Fauzia, can you tell me your story? How did you get involved in the Duos Festival?

FV

I read it on a WhatsApp chat. For we have a very big WhatsApp group for artists in Kenya, and they were looking for artists in Kilifi who are women, and I am just on the border of Kilifi and Mombasa. So I said, 'Yeah, I'm one of them.'

And I was told to contact Ciro G. [Githunguri], she said the meeting will be in Kilifi. Are you willing? I said, I'm willing. I guess sometimes you just have to take the chance and be open to everything. For many years I was afraid I'm too old, maybe I'm not cutting the pace, but I know my work is good, so I just took the chance. So I went for the interview and I met you.

ZW

I remember that meeting. Strong circle of women...

For the second edition we wanted to put a spotlight on creative women on the coast. The first edition got mostly men involved, but as we are working with students it seems important to set the example for youth and locals to respect women as leaders too.

Do you think it made sense to focus on female artists?

FV

I think that that was a good thing, that you took a chance on women. There are many male artists, I can already tell you from the 300 artists we have in this WhatsApp group, maybe 30 are women and they are not even confident in themselves.

I know my work is good. I can vouch for my work 100%, I do my very best. But sometimes when such offers come, they

can also have an age bracket which maybe sometimes doesn't give them the thing that they're looking for.

It was one of the things that I liked about the DUOS team – they didn't look at the age. They didn't look at many other things. They just looked at the work. DUOS was the true exchange of knowledge; they were looking for the right people.

That opportunity I couldn't miss under any chance.

There are many women like me who don't cut the norm, norms which are saying 'you should be this, have a university degree, you should do that, care for the family.'

I am also from a minority, not many Swahili women are doing art...

ZW

Why?

FV

Because of culture. Because of religion, because of so many other things. It's not something they are promoted in. They shall do something that defines their femininity, but not something like painting or going abroad. But times have changed. Opportunities are there. And I think after these exchanges I've seen a lot of other women really picking up other spaces.

The festival was female-led but there were males still in it, just not as leaders, as they usually are. Majority of females were good, to give them a place for expression.

ZW

And which of the projects took your attention?

FV

What I liked was that I saw very diverse things. I saw a poet and I saw a dancer, and the type of art that you do, that

this is an art form too. And I saw people doing some interesting research like Marta. I think there are so many women doing daring things and we, here, could work on those things too. It was a good mixture.

ZW

And tell us about your project.

FV

My project was wonderful. I was led by the lucky stars. I had a good partner. She understood what I wanted, we had a good compatibility, I was less experienced than her, but she took me with her friendship and patience. I learned a lot from Mum Anna [Anna Molska – ZW]. It was a true exchange.

We worked with local clay, which is a crazy kind of clay, which I am still trying to master. But from working with Anna I have got an insight, and I was more successful after this. So for me it worked. I will say 100% from that time I learned, I'm still using her skills.

We're still in good communication. That was a good thing. I think what I lost from this is the communication with the other parties, maybe because I was just too focused on my area.

ZW

And how was it to visit Poland?

FV

In Poland I was working with Anna again and living at her place. So if she worked, I worked it. When she slept, I slept still. And she's a workaholic. But a beautiful lady inside and out. She taught me some solid life lessons, which also ceramics teaches you: to work slowly, and diligently, and be patient.

ZW

What do you think was the value of this exchange? What can we learn from each other?

FV

I think we, in Kenya, need to learn more to evaluate our work. Polish artists who I met there have a lot of originality.

I think for example you yourself work with a very different material, you work with a very difficult art of sound, for me it is something new and for Europeans, sound installation is a known area. And for us, these things would be like, oh, this is noise. But we are not exposed to that. We have just learned to draw and to paint and not to think a bit deeper. But originality is very important.

And I still work a lot with finding my own path and my own ideas and just knowing that it will be accepted. Having your concept and believing in your concept and putting it out there and to be accepted.

ZW

But we were encouraged to do so. you know, here we're asked for nothing else but being original...

FV

We are very much into copying people. Maybe that is our limitations. But I see people also diversifying now.

But well, I've seen a lot of artists during the revisit in Europe, and they really think a bit deeper about art. I still remember when we went to this first museum in Berlin [Savvy Contemporary – ZW]. We had a night of poetry there and some shows that I still remember.

So I think when you are teaching art, especially to us out here, encouragement of originality and thought is important.

ZW

Well, the thing that I was personally amazed with it, that everyone I met in Kenya who got somewhere was talking about giving back to the community.

Giving back to the community was a mantra that we could take with us as a lesson, because yes, we have a lot of ideas and freedom of expression, but this ability to see the place for your work in society, as part of the bigger picture, we crave for it desperately.

Art world can be very alienating in Europe...

Although now the tendency is different. I think it is also because of the better, I mean more equal, exchange with the outside world. You are a teacher yourself, you are giving workshops. You share and you encourage a lot of young women, no?

FV

It's because I encourage them to look a little bit outside the box and to just use the available material which is around you, make something out of it and use it in art.

I teach a lot of techniques and through these techniques they're able to come up with their own original art, which nobody has done before, which is so nice, and it's something for them to keep forever.

I have teenagers who know that they love art, but they have nowhere to go to practice it and have free time with a little something to do for themselves.

I have younger groups. They are like kids who want to do art, but they are not sure where to start. Then I have parents. I have parents who want to be with their children, to bond with their children doing a hobby.

And then I have adults who are coming because they want to have their own time, to do something of their own. They know they can do a certain art and they are

happy to practice in the quiet. So I have a wide group of interesting people from the community.

So I think I'm doing well in this mentoring and teaching and doing my own work.

ZW

What advice would you give us, Europeans who are planning such exchange again?

FV

I think the time was short. You people who are coming from the other side should have time to bond and investigate. Also what the wishes are: what do the people from this side want?

You're doing the research within two weeks or three weeks, that may cause a lot of misinformation. Maybe your idea will not go there, maybe there is no time to put your plan across.

So you need to do a pre-meeting. You need to do a pre-planning. And this timeframe was too short.

My experience through that was very good, but maybe with proper preparation it should take, it could have been even better.

There is no shortcut, artists here they also have wishes and they should have time to fully express themselves. Now they also want to cut short to what you want to present. The shortcuts are wrong.

So maybe we could collaborate more on how to prepare for those things.

ZW

Yes, I agree that the exchange shall be longer and more stable. But this is hard to organise in the frame of this European Culture grants.

But I would be happy to do a year-long festival next time.

6 “SOCIAL ECOLOGY”



M.T.

From February 8th to March 8th, 2023, artists from Academy of Art in Szczecin conducted research and realized artistic projects in pairs with Kenyan artists in the Kenyan Coast. The results were presented in the 3rd edition of DUOS Festival in Mombasa at Alliance Française and the centre of Kilifi (Water Sports Ground) on the 1st and 4th of March 2023.

The third iteration of the DUOS Festival was titled “Social Ecology,” and it illuminated the many methods which artists from Kenya and Poland used in collaboration across a range of artistic disciplines. Together with actors, artisans, dancers, and musicians, DUOS artists – with students from Pwani University in Kilifi and the Technical University of Mombasa – used “Social Ecology” ethics to address material and power imbalances, by testing new forms of collaborative work in relation with nature.

Developed in the last half of the 20th century by American political philosopher Murray Bookchin, Social Ecology traces today’s cascade of environmental crises to policy decisions made by both Capitalist and Socialist governments of the period in pursuit of economic growth. Bookchin sees these outcomes as products of the hierarchy and domination at work in diverse sets of power relations, including men over women, the old over the young, and man over nature.

Social Ecology proposes decentralized cooperation among self-governing communes to counter the effects of top-down, hierarchical structures of production and mass consumption. In the proposed direct democracy, communities take responsibility for services traditionally provided by government.

Artists worked in DUOS in eight different disciplines, with an additional group guided by Rosita Deluigi from University of Macerata in Italy, who conducted workshops with children (Kids Session) as well as the Percussion group initiated by Rafał Krzanowski from Academy of Art in

Szczecin. Six Polish artists worked in Kilifi and three worked in Mombasa.

In context of the 3rd edition of DUOS Festival, Izabela Plucińska initiated the competition for amateur filmmakers which was developed into “The LAMPART Short Film Festival”. It offered mostly student filmmakers and coastal producers the opportunity to present their films to the general public. Films submitted through an open call were screened in Mombasa (Alliance Française) and Kilifi (Water Sports Ground) in frames of Duos Festival. The Jury – combined of Issa Ghana (chair of Coast Filmmakers Association), Heinz Hermanns (director of InterFilm Festival), Mumo Liku (Kilifi-based director, producer and curator), Clinton Kanyangi Kihima (filmmaker from Kenyatta University), Adonijah Ombura (lecturer from Kenyatta University) and Daudi Anguka (cinematographer from Mombasa) awarded 8 films: “Shikamoo Mama” by Paita Bakari, “SAKA WERA” by Oliver Maganga, “MKIRITIMBA -THE TYRANT” by Dickson Kashindo, “KILIFI THROUGH THE EYES OF A LOCAL” by William Chengo, “REFRAIN” by KIRAGU CHAN, “KISWAHILI KITUKUZWE (THE GLORIOUS SWAHILI)” by Omar Kibulanga, “HOPU” by Brian Mrira, and “TURN” by Gedion Mkuzi.



C.C.



“Three Boats”

Directed by: **Caroline Ngorobi & Justyna Celeda**

Scenography by: **Mike Okoth, Anna Maria Karczmarska, Mbinga, Mikołaj Małek**

Music by: **Rafał Krzanowski**, in collaboration with **Saruni Thoya, Kanga Mae, Makusanya Kazungu, Tsolomba Thoya, Kadenga Kalu, Furaha Mtawari, Katumwa Kithi, Kitsao Mbaya, Juma Chengo, Saidi Chengo**

and students: **Maxwell Luvonga, Joseph Joshua Mugalla, Euphynya Musi, Raphael Boniface Were, Eugynia Anyango, Khloe**

Characters:

King – Emmanuel Lucky Kiti, Joker – John Mumba, Love – Mary Favour, Hope – Fedys Nazi, Faith – Sheila Biyumbe

Students participating: **Shaban Juma, John Kisangau, Victor Nyang’or, Bridgit Mwendwa, Stella Wambua, Lucy Muhonja, Marvin Njoroge, Caleb Mutai, Kennedy Rapemo**

Dancers: **Said Juma, Dominic Tumaini, Mtsonga Dennis, Victor Baraka**
scenography & costumes assistants: **Jason Baraka, Elina Muthoni, Gabriella Jumwa, Griffins Bakhuya, Frankline Ochieng, Lewis Auka**

A main aim of the 3rd edition of DUOS Festival was the organization of a Community Theatre to accommodate the work of three duos: Theatre, Costumes & Scenography, and Music. Caroline Ngorobi and Justyna Celeda (Theatre duo) crafted a story and script about a king who passes his power to three daughters, each of whom introduced a different type of governance.

Inspired by Shakespeare’s King Lear and the non-hierarchical leadership in the Kurdish territory of Rojava in northern Syria – the only place where Social Ecology is practiced as a form of government – Caroline and Justyna weaved Kenyan and Polish cultural experiences to explore themes of leadership and community. The play fuses music, dance, and drama into compelling theatre that invites audiences to share visions of an ‘ideal world.’

Contemplating retirement, the aging king wants to pass the throne to the daughter that most loves him. However, this does not sit well with his people. They believe the king is leaving them at a time when the country is not stable and want him to continue. Despite their pleas that he retain power, the king decides to end his reign. To do so, he decrees the cutting of a sacred tree that symbolizes unity in the community and the fashioning from the wood of three boats for the transport of his daughters to the lands he has divided among them.

Neither the people nor the gods are happy.
When his youngest daughter, called Love,
expresses her disappointment, she is
cast out.

But she receives a reprieve from the Ocean goddess, who installs her in a separate land.

There, she allows the people to decide how they should be led. Under her non-hierarchical leadership, she works with their strengths to create a decentralized form of governance.

Meanwhile, the remaining daughters employ different styles of leadership in their kingdoms. His eldest daughter, Faith, continues in her father's dictatorial footsteps, relying on military enforcement of her decrees. She is harsh and leads by order and command, whilst middle daughter Hope is charming and manipulative. She controls her people using a digital platform that makes them think she has their best interests at heart.

The play borrows heavily from Kenyan cultures around family relations, music, death ceremonies, and connection with the spirit world, as is seen when the king is haunted for cutting the sacred tree. While the fairy tale style – as seen in the clownish behaviour, costume, and props of a character called The Joker – harkens Polish cultural and theatrical traditions.

The play's mix of Swahili, English and Mijikenda vernaculars mirrors the way Kenyans mix language in conversation, and its participatory form invites the audience to help Love create her 'ideal world.'

Scenography and Costumes for the Community Theatre were designed and realized by Mike Okoth, Anna Maria Karczmarska, Mbinga, and Mikołaj Małek, who collaborated with Pwani University students as well as local seamstresses and artisans to realize the boats, the sea on which the actors sail, costumes made of local fabric, and the structure that was used as exhibition display and film projection screen. The wooden screen was painted by Mikołaj Małek with images referring to local iconography of the Kenyan Coast.

Environment and location had a significant

impact on the project. Working with readily available materials like recycled boxes, plastic, textiles, and wood from the local market, the designs played with volume, shape, and fit by manipulating fabric and working with grainlines. A combination of draping on dress forms and a local tailor's sewing helped achieve the final looks. The colours, prints, and symbols enhanced the personalities of each character. Hand painting is visible among the techniques the artists taught to their student charges.

Percussion group, composed of percussionist Rafał Krzanowski and drummers from two local Giriama bands: Simba Wanga & Zaire Ngome Msagapore (which participated in collaborations in the past two editions of the DUOS Festival) practised together a combination of rhythms taken from Samba (rooted in Western Africa) and Giriama music.

Eventually they organized a percussion parade which led local people to the Football Field in Kilifi, where the Community Theatre took place on the 4th of March, and played a soundtrack for the Community Theatre.



A.F.

A.K.



A.F.





A.F.



C.C.



C.C.



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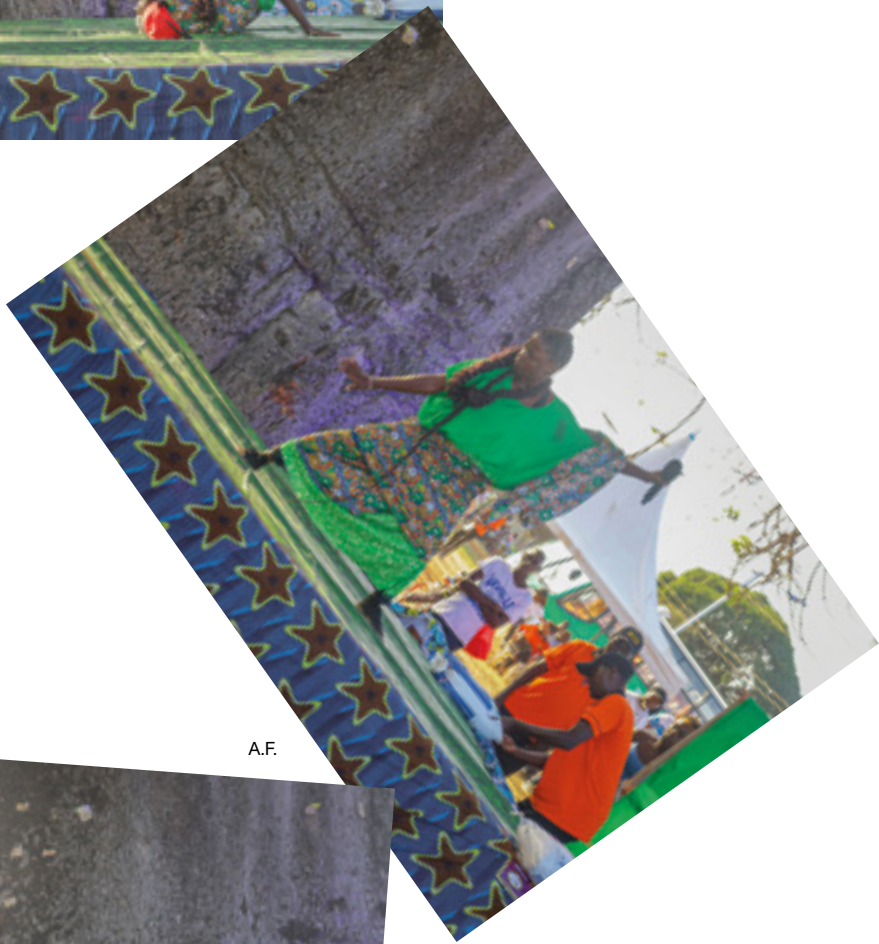
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“Miti” by Tommie Ominde & Igor Omulecki

Meaning
trees in the Swahili language, miti are the object of observation for Igor Omulecki and Tommie Ominde. Their photographs of the sacred forests, called Kayas Kauma by the Mijikenda, and of the mangrove plantation operated by the Friends of Nature cooperative in Kilifi Creek, illustrate relationships that are both spiritual and symbiotic; objects made by Omulecki inspired by magical trees complement their documentation.

The Miti project was inspired by the work of Polish artist Andrzej Różycki (1942–2021). Trees played a special place in his art, showing their role in Polish tradition and spirituality: that is why Różycki’s 1990 performance from the East Gallery, ‘Tree of Life, Tree of Christ’ is part of the exhibition, along with a recreated piece of it in Kilifi, in February 2023.

Trees play an important role in the culture of the Mijikenda people who inhabit coastal Kenya, both as objects of worship and in everyday life. Sacred forests, called kayas, are home to mystical baobabs, trees that have a deep, spiritual significance for the local community. Meanwhile, the mangroves that claim land from the Indian Ocean provide both building materials and support for the ecosystem that sustains coastal communities. Believed to offer protection and blessing, the baobab is a focal point for prayers, offerings, and ceremonies among the Mijikenda. This “tree of the soul” symbolises strength and perseverance due to its longevity and resistance to disease. With roots that are believed to reach to the underworld, the baobab connects ancestors to those in the present and its surroundings serve as burial places.

Mangroves are integral both to the coastal economy and to its ecology. The wood is used to the boats used to catch the fish that provide livelihoods for those that live there, as well as in construction of the homes in which they live. In addition, the trees guard against erosion and flooding, and provide a breeding ground for many fish species. Mangrove forests also are home to other marine organisms, underscoring their central role in coastal ecosystems.

In any case, trees play an important role for both people and the environment. Their value is immeasurable spiritually, economically, and ecologically. The history of trees includes the fate of the world as we know it, and our culture. The holistic dependence of the coexistence of human beings with nature is revealed.



I.O.





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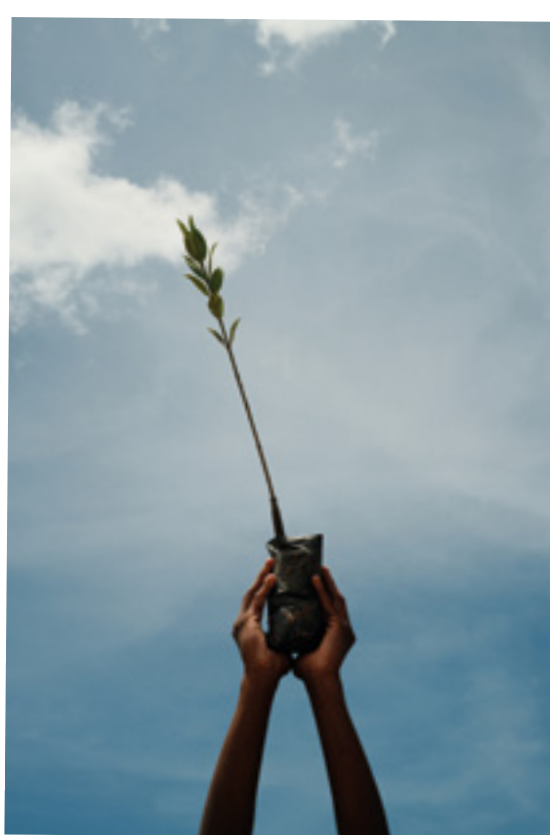
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“I Choose to Be a Woman” by Magdalena Szymków, Ruby Kanghete, and Justyna Celeda

Realization: **William Chengo, Kelvin Makau, Bildad Nyaboga Ondara, Joseph Tuva**

Based on interviews registered by: **Ruby Kanghete, Justyna Celeda and**

Suvena Hinzano

Artistic supervision: **Magdalena Szymków**

Working from recorded interviews with Kenyan visitors to Kilifi beauty salons during the second iteration of the DUOS Festival (2021), young directors created four films that illustrate the position women hold in modern Kenya. They include tales of a woman who was thrown out of her home by her husband; a mother who left her children with their grandmother so that she could earn money for their support; and a girl who rides boda, a motorcycle, to earn money for college. Drawn from a cross-section of social classes, they depict the extremes of determination and confidence, attitudes that are determined by family, education, and economic background.

Development of the concepts for these short documentaries took place during a series of pre-production meetings with Pwani University students that served as the starting point for film production. Shooting days and subsequent catch-ups with the heroines followed, as did regular online meetings that elicited the editing feedback that helped shape each narrative.



S.H.



M.Sz.



M.Sz.



S.H.



S.H.



S.H.



“Artists United Against Wali Mkawu” by Joseph Awllan Green & Rafał Żarski

In collaboration with students from the Technical University of Mombasa:

Bravian Niukenya, Jack Muyuka, Emmanuel Nelson

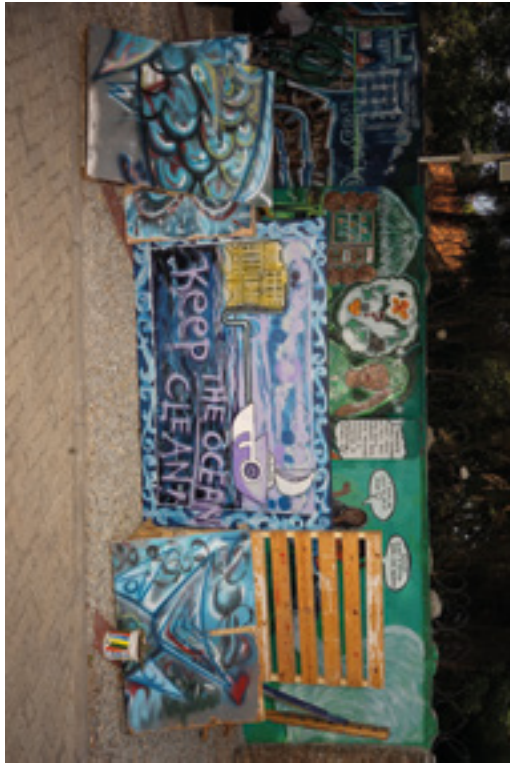
And local artists: **Maryan Suleiman, Saidali Bashir, Mohammad Mwaruwa, Aqlila Alwy**

The group created a series of murals on walls at the Alliance Française in Mombasa – a French language and culture centre – along with large-format oil paintings on canvases. Their works address contemporary issues such as social inequality, global warming, or environmental pollution, which are consequences of irresponsible policies aimed at unsustainable growth that widen the economic divide. The artists employ contemporary graffiti and comic book aesthetics to convey messages that draw on Swahili symbolism and traditions in their expression.



I.O.







A.F.



I.O.





I.O.



“Hybridimal” by Yona Mudibo & Natalia Karczewska

In collaboration with: **Kadet Mikail Nasonga, Elfour El, Michael Okumu, Jánice Nyadida, Maxwell Odhiambo, Sally Atieno Ochieng, Fredrick Otieno, Ali Mvurya Mkala, Mwakiwiwi Mwachia**

Special thanks to **Kivukoni School**

Beginning with a sculpture workshop which took plastic waste as its medium, artists envisioned a constellation of gods relevant to contemporary environmental and social issues and made figures to honour them. Referencing African culture in their chosen sculptural forms, the artists reflected on the possibilities of the throwaway items previously considered as rubbish. Made with recycled materials, their site-specific experimental garden took the shape of a sea turtle's shell in order to draw attention to the species under threat from plastic waste. The *Hybridimal* of the title is derived from the words hybrid and animal, which is what the sea animals become when they tangle and ingest the plastic refuse that is causing their extinction. The installation in the garden at the Alliance Française de Mombasa is made from planters, pots, and objects that are both decorative and demand contemplation.

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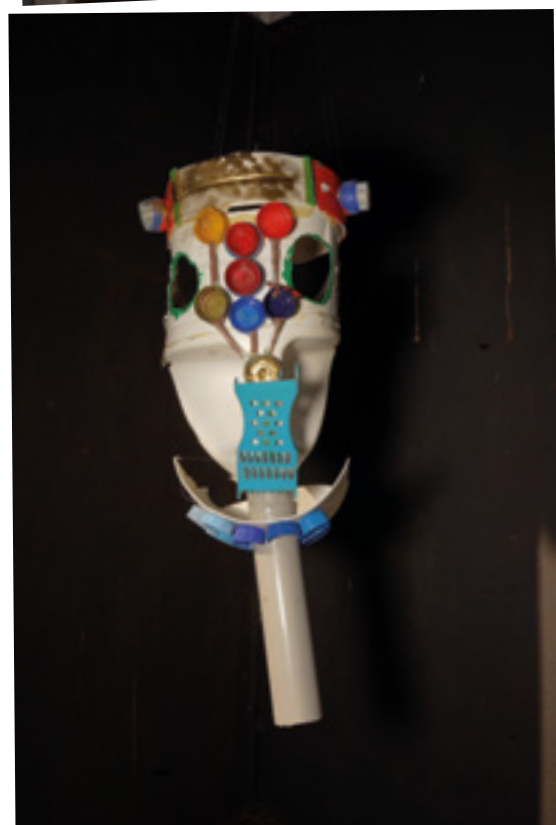


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“Power Games” by Zorka Wollny & Philip Tangara

Performers: **Winslet Wairimu, Queenter Odol, Anthony Mwaikwasi Kimbio, Tressy Mwendwa, Felishar Saria Elly, Abdallah Kassim Abdallah, Japheth Odhiambo, Abel Salim, Philip Tangara**

Five poems set to music explore different facets of urban life in contemporary Kenya. Titled “Capitalist,” “Power is Beauty,” “She Mental,” “Technocratic City,” and “Kwaheri Kenya,” they point to the forces at work and their effects on city dwellers.

Philip Tangara, who signs his compositions as Pet the Poet, wrote the texts; Zorka Wollny created melodies, soundscapes, and choreographed their performance. Eight students from the Technical University of Mombasa contributed ideas, sounds, and movements in helping to create works that brought out the socio-ecological aspect at the heart of each poem.

The group performed at Alliance Française in Mombasa on the 1st of March, and at the Water Sports Ground in Kilifi on the 4th of March.



A.F.



C.C.



C.C.





A.F.



A.F.

A.F.



A.F.



A.F.



C.C.

7 Łukasz Jastrun czak talks with Caroline Ngarobi!

We met in Kilifi in the first edition of DUOS Festival, “Community.” You visited the Seahorse Village with John Wasonga, who worked back then at Jukwaa Arts Productions, which you run in Mombasa. Do you remember your impressions of DUOS Festival, as a person not involved in its production?

Yes. My first impression was: Wow! How beautiful is this space? How is this all happening during the pandemic? I absolutely loved the walk around the village to experience different art and installations. The concept of presenting the work in the village was amazing and authentic. Making such high-quality artwork accessible to people in the village was a highlight for me.

DUOS Festival was conceived as a platform for transcultural exchange and collaboration between artists from Eastern Europe (Poland) and Eastern Africa (Kenya). As a curator, theatre director, and producer working in Mombasa in Africa, do you think that for Kenyan artists and cultural institutions it is important to be involved in these types of projects? Or is it more important to develop such initiatives with other African countries or countries from Global South, rather than with Global North?

These opportunities are rare for artists here in Kenya, especially when the learning is involved. I support within-continent collaborations as well as cross-continent collaborations, both have lots of rich cultures to exchange. The beauty of the Global North-South collaboration is that the North has the funding to enable these collaborations. Which is actually a good thing. Most of our art is learnt in practice, such collaborations also help in enriching our practices because they bring informal art learnings to our experience.

As organizer of Jukwaa Arts Productions, theatre group from Mombasa, could you say something about the cultural environment in Mombasa, or wider coastal Kenya? Is there a need for artistic/cultural practice among people? Is Art/Culture appreciated? Is there government support for Culture?

If you randomly start playing drums on the street, people will stop to listen and sometimes even join in. The coastal community are lovers of art, especially when it's at their convenience. Culturally, music and dance amongst the Indigenous community is used to communicate, entertain, and even heal. There was a place for the arts, storytelling was ingrained in everyday life and important for the survival of communal life.

Culture is decentralized; hence each county has its mandate to enhance and preserve culture. Government support is slowly beginning to be felt, but from the national level. In the counties there is barely any support for the arts. There are no subsidies for arts, hence most of the money comes from the foreign governments like the British council, French and German governments.

Could you share your experience in working in duo with Justyna Celeda (a person from a different, non-Kenyan cultural background), as an artist/theatre director in “Social Ecology” edition: how did the collaboration influence you?

This was my best part of DUOS, but also challenging. It was a moment of learning. We had different methodologies, Justyna coming from a fictional and fairytale practice, and me inclined more to reality. In the end this was our biggest strength as we merged these two languages to create our show. Since then, I have directed a show fusing reality with fairytale components, it's a style I now use to enhance my work. Being a director in my space, I do almost everything

– I have been an actor, stage manager, set designer, director, producer. Say, a jack of all theatre trades. Working with Justyna, who studied directing and mainly works as a director, was also enriching for me as I got to tap so much into her specialized directing skills.

The main idea for the 3rd edition of DUOS Festival was to organize a community theatre play. It is you who shared with me the idea of “community theatre,” which is an important part of local culture. When I learned about this practice, I instantly thought about Rojava, and how they solve social, political problems in a directly democratic way, within public debates, accessible locally for every member of society. In Kenya I experienced that hierarchy is very deeply ingrained in social fabric. Therefore, testing the non-hierarchical proposition of social ecology was a bit tricky in my opinion. How did you feel about it? Was it important for you to get inspiration from the Rojava movement?

I read the book [*“Make Rojava Green Again”* Dog Section Press, 2018 – L.J.] in disbelief. What dreamland is this? How is this possible?

Yet Rojava was a good inspiration to our work, especially provoking the audience to think of non-hierarchical leadership as an ideal. Hierarchy is closely associated with respect, which is a big attribute of coastal communities. The higher your position, the happier we are to award you respect. Respect for elders, authority is held with high regard.

Community theatre in my practice allows me to create a space for dialogue on even contentious issues, and this was one such issue. Juxtaposing dictatorship with non-hierarchical leadership and inviting

the audience to take part in this debate was a risk...which we took. It was interesting to hear especially young people attracted to the Rojava kind of leadership, where their ideal world was one with mutual respect.

The fairytale approach helped the audience ‘dream’ of an ideal world which was just that, a fairytale and not a reality, at least not in our near future.

I think that non-hierarchical leadership does not necessarily exclude respect. On the contrary, actually there are leaders in direct democratic systems, like the one practiced in Rojava, who share their opinions in general assemblies, and influence how people react, and people respect their knowledge, experience. The difference is that it is not those individuals who decide in which direction to go, it is the collective. But could you please say more about Community Theatre as it is practiced on the coast. Like e.g. what types of problems do you solve, how does this work? How do you include the audience?

In my work in community theatre, we use the tool of participatory theatre to create a platform for debate and conversations on contentious issues. Our target is mainly ordinary people, we rarely get a chance to share their views, or even to vent on social issues. We cover a myriad of topics including marine conservation, young and police, culture, gender issues, taboos, healthcare, waste management, among others.

Our technique fuses acting, poetry, dance, and music. We also use a fusion of languages, especially English and Swahili as these are the spoken languages in Kenya. We also in some cases use Indigenous languages if our target audiences are in the rural areas.

The performances in most cases pause at a point where the actors invite the

audiences to share their views or even role play. This can be done directly by the actors or by a facilitator (joker).

Collectively the community gets an opportunity to come up with solutions or recommendations of social issues highlighted within the play.

8 DUOS Festivals Exhibitions in Szczecin Marlena Chybowska-Butler Cultural Connections

The National Museum in Szczecin (NMS) – Museum of Contemporary Art exhibited the outcomes of collaborative projects realized by Kenyan and Polish artists within the frame of the DUOS Festival. The NMS staged three exhibitions based on events in Kenya during one-month residencies of Kenyan artists in Poland in 2021 and 2023. Collateral events, displays of works in public spaces, and meetings and talks in which the public could engage with the makers of the art on display and documented in the NMS exhibitions accompanied the exhibitions, which Marlena Chybowska-Butler (NMS) and Łukasz Jastrubczak (Academy of Art in Szczecin) curated.

The main titles and themes developed for the festivals tie together community organization and female empowerment as key themes in the socio-political philosophy of Social Ecology. American thinker and activist Murray Bookchin (1921–2006) developed the theory of grassroots organization as the basis for political self-determination in an economic system that prizes environmental stewardship and resource management over ecological exploitation and throw-away consumerism. In Bookchin's paradigm, neighbourhoods come together in municipal federations and women play a significant role in their smooth-running operation. Those tenets stand apart from the Neoliberal approaches at work in Poland, Kenya, and worldwide that prize government support for market systems as the most efficient means of self-actualization and at the expense of social programmes.

Curators adopted and adapted those themes in exhibitions that leveraged the dynamics of the gallery space in Szczecin. They worked with teams of DUOS artists to modify the projects realized in Kilifi and Mombasa during the Festivals to the white-cube environment at the NMS, with some works remade in Szczecin and others shipped from Kenya. The exhibitions

also presented works in documentary form, including video projections, photography, sound recording, and written descriptions.

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions also played a role in the Szczecin presentations. Imposed in Poland in March 2020, the directives forced the organization of a joint exhibition comprising works from the first and second DUOS Festivals, which ran from November 12, 2021, to January 16, 2022. In preparation, the NMS realized an outdoor exhibition promoting the TPAAE project around the city for the forthcoming events in Szczecin. During the month of May 2021, the NMS contracted to place five large-format photographs placed at tram stops in the city centre. Taken by Polish photographer Emilia Łapko of fashions created by Kenyan designer Wacu Kihara, the images made during the first DUOS Festival in Kilifi in March 2021 alerted residents to the upcoming exhibition. The NMS staged the third DUOS Festival from June 29 to September 9, 2023.

Community

Community is a vital concept in social life and central to the overarching theme of Social Ecology. It reflects the values of solidarity, reciprocity, mutual support, and collective identity. Community also plays a key role in addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality, conflict, and environmental degradation that affect our world. To illustrate the theme for audiences at the NMS, curators worked with visiting artists and their Polish partners to bring to life many aspects that resulted from direct contact and cooperation with the Giriama community in Kilifi.

NMS visitors could see video projections of several works, including the trailer of a documentary film made by Zippy Kimundu and Małgorzata Mazur on Zaire Ngome Msagapore – a performance by a troupe that preserves the traditional dances and

music of the Giriama people. The “Universal Rebeless” performance, created by choreographer Anna Nowicka and the Simba Wanga ensemble, portrayed in dance the Giriama Revolt of 1913–1914, paying tribute to grandmother and tribal elder Mekatilili wa Menza, whose opposition to conscription for Britain’s forces in the First World War prefaced the end of Colonial rule in Kenya a half-century later.

Photo documentation loomed large in the exhibition, including of the mural adorning a wall of a local primary school in Mnarani, created by graffiti artist Piotr Pauk and sign painter Mohamed Mbweni Omar, who realised Omar’s desire to renew and “embellish” the aesthetics of the impoverished settlement on the south side of Kilifi Creek. Meanwhile, Emilia Łapko’s images of the “Colour, Culture, Vibrancy. Contemporary Clothing Collection from Kenya” fashion event communicated those qualities in DUOS partner Wacu Kihara’s designs. The pair also worked with AAS design students during Kihara’s DUOS residency, and the exhibition enabled audiences to try the clothing sewn by Kenyan tailors from traditional khanga fabric and Polish linen, as well as African jewellery and footwear.

Calabash cups, drinking straws, baskets, and whisks accompanied the photo essay by Witek Orski and Biko Wesa on uses for the palm trees that are central in the lives of the Giriama. The artists arranged the artefacts as part of their installation at the NMS. Similarly, papier mâché recreations of skulls and bones found in Kenya for the “Love and Death” installation, created by painters Zbigniew Rogalski and Richard Onyango, accompanied photos of the works made in Kilifi as did a model and paintings of the “Poclain Excavator” taken from Onyango’s “Kangalika” series, which were new for the NMS show.

Named for a bus that traversed the coast road that runs from Mombasa, the

paintings and model are among works that draw their inspiration from the vehicles and heavy equipment that captivated Richard Onyango as a child in the 1960s. The Kangalika’s arrival each week appeared as a significant event in Malindi, which since has grown both as a market town and tourist hub. The artist fashioned his models from materials found on the street, including cardboard, plastic, rubber, and copper wires. Paintings in the series depict the machines used to improve the road along the Tana River near his boyhood home, which then was susceptible to the periodic floods that waylaid the arrival of the Kangalika and other vehicles that also appear in the works.

Artefacts made by students at the Seahorse elementary school in Kilifi occupied a portion of one NMS exhibition room. Neighbourhood children constructed an array of items from recycled materials in workshops run by artists Said Chengo, Mramba Mweni, Anna Orlikowska, Łukasz Jastrubczak, and Castro Osore. The exhibit at the NMS featured drawings made in those sessions, photographs of Osore’s trompe l’oeil mural on the school’s perimeter wall, as well as plans for the school’s ongoing development.

Pwani University student artist Said Luganje Kahindi’s painting “The Girl in African Mask” won a competition for young artists organised under the DUOS Festival events. Working under the name Gendo and new for the NMS show, the artist’s work offered visitors an image of modern-day East African life.

Curators also included Italian artist Christian Niccoli’s video installation “Two,” which features protagonists high above the ground hanging onto the ends of what appears the same length of rope on opposite sides of a brick wall, to underscore the exhibition’s theme of mutual dependence. Their struggle to maintain their respective

holds illustrates the necessity of collaboration, and the obligations and solidarity among individuals unknown to each other that is so important in creating and sustaining communities.

WOMEN POWER

One of the important aspects of community in Africa is the role of women, a situation that is reflected in the central role they play in Social Ecology’s socio-political structure. Often the main agents of social cohesion, development, and resilience, women in Africa contribute to the well-being of their families and communities through their productive and reproductive roles, as well as their participation in decision-making and leadership. Women also have a strong connection to a natural environment that they depend on for their livelihoods and must manage in sustainable ways.

Taking as its honorary patron Mekatilili wa Menza, whose arrest and subsequent escape from an upcountry exile lives in Giriama lore, the DUOS Festival “Women Power” exhibition highlighted the contributions and challenges of women in male-dominated societies on the Kenyan Coast. An animated retelling made by Izabela Plucińska and Sheila Okanga, along with students from Pwani University, illustrated the Mekatilili legend. A three-minute etude set to Kilifi poet Shangazi Masika’s “Daughters in Law” that accompanied the work praises love and solidarity in the face of the hierarchies and domination that remain long after the passing of Colonial rule.

Also on display at the NMS:

A scale-model mock-up of “Ushaha Fitswa” (Hidden Treasure), the monumental mask that Shaila Resia Agha and Aneta Grzeszykowska envision placing on the sea floor near the mouth of Kilifi Creek, provided audiences a look at a living tribute to the DUOS patron. Intended as habitat for coral in the shallows of the Indian Ocean,

the project is aimed at sustaining marine life in an area that suffers from damage to the natural reef that buffers local beaches against erosion.

Ceramic tiles made by Fauzia Aly Khan Volke and Anna Molska through an exchange of methods and materials, each learning from the other about clays and pigments as they created a porcelain mosaic inspired by traditional Kenyan patterns. “The River Meets the Ocean” displayed the decorative ceramics accompanied by a photo montage of their artmaking in Kilifi.

Screen-printed textiles by Ciru Karimi and Irena Zieniewicz featured pigments obtained from the leaves, bark, seeds, and roots of native plants. Applied to fabrics using contemporary production methods, the techniques stand as alternatives to the chemical-based dyes whose runoff despoils the environment around factories in Kenya and elsewhere in the Global South.

Presented as a playlet in the NMS gallery, the opera that Shangazi Masika and Alicja Pilarczyk based on the oral histories of Kenyan women offered audiences insights into contemporary Coastal realities. Visitors could read the libretto in booklets as they listened to the performance.

Stencils that Linda Shuma and Natalia Szostak used to spray-paint slogans on the walls of the Pwani University campus and around the town of Kilifi similarly raised awareness among audiences in Szczecin about traditions in Coastal communities. Such practices, which Social Ecology aims to eliminate by elevating women to prominent roles in government and service provision, determine the often-unsavoury fates of women in Kenya’s male-dominated culture.

The slogans arose from the MekaZine, a gazette produced for the DUOS Festival Zine by Ciro G. and Justyna Machnicka, who oversaw a team of content-creators from Pwani University. The compendium contains stories and photographs that explore

the challenges Kenyan women face on a daily basis, and their triumph over personal, social, and political adversity.

Articles written by Pwani University students addressed issues of personal autonomy, including over one's body and way of life in the face of social and religious dogma. Subjecting these themes to discussion, analysis and language play yielded phrases that Shuma and Szostak transformed into speech acts – tools of efficient communication in seemingly neutral urban space.

Their hand-made stencils and spray paint permitted the repetition of bullet-point messaging as part of a larger graffiti manifesto. Printed in Szczecin with a Polish translation, copies distributed during the exhibition reinforced the themes of the second DUOS Festival.

Several events and actions ran alongside the combined “Community” and “Women Power” exhibitions at the NMS gallery. They included Masika's performance of spoken-word poetry accompanied by Pilarczyk's direction of the Contemporary Music Ensemble from Academy of Art in Szczecin. Painters Piotr Pauk, Castro Osore, Mohammed Omar, and Gendo realized murals at prominent points in the city. Along with Suvena Hinzano, Shaila Agha, and Biko Wesa, the four also presented works at the “UHURU” exhibition held at Artspace Leibig 12 in Berlin. Wesa, Osore, Hinzano, Gendo, and Omar also showed works made during their Szczecin residencies at the “Bure, Bure” exhibition held at Tribe Bandas in Kilifi in December 2021.

Social Ecology

Community orientation and female empowerment are dimensions relevant to the theme of the third and final iteration of the DUOS Festival, which examined the interrelationships between human societies and nature. Offering guidance on

sustainable and harmonious coexistence, artists worked with the principles of diversity, democracy, decentralization, and cooperation to illustrate Social Ecology's holistic approach to the myriad environmental and social problems arising from the profit-motivated exploitation and consumption of shared natural resources.

Works adapted the works for display at the NMS included:

A multi-channel video documentation of the Community Theatre production overseen by Caroline Ngorobi and Justyna Celeda. Featuring elements of the scenography realized by Jonathan Mbinga and Mikołaj Małek for the Kilifi staging, the installation presented costumes made by Mike Okoth and Anna Maria Karczmarska.

Mbinga's digital collages inspired by illustrator Jason Baraka hung as posters on the walls of the NMS gallery. Adorned with sayings in Swahili and in English, Kenya's official languages, which exhort viewers to conceive of solutions in unconventional ways, the images address problems created by Kenya's post-Colonial economic and social development; many of which find parallels in Poland and the West.

A film of the Mombasa performance of poems exploring different facets of urban life in contemporary Kenya brought the work of Philip Tangara (aka, Pet the Poet) and choreographer Zorka Wollny to audiences in Szczecin. Entitled “Capitalist,” “Power is Beauty,” “She Mental,” “Technocratic City,” and “Kwaheri Kenya,” the poems set to music and performed in dance, point to the forces at work and their effects on city dwellers.

Sculptures made by Yona Mudibo, Natalia Karczewska, and their team of students replicated the “Hybridimal” installation the artist presented in Mombasa. Made from recycled plastics and natural materials, the ‘hybrid’ and ‘animal’ forms

evoke sea creatures entangled in the man-made refuse that is hastening their extinction.

Joseph Allan Green and Rafał Żarski showed canvases made in conjunction with murals they painted on walls at the Alliance Française in Mombasa and presented as wallpaper photographs. New for the NMS show, Green's Social Ecology-themed comic book addresses the consequences – such as social inequality, global warming, and environmental pollution – of irresponsible policies aimed at unsustainable growth.

Tommie Ominde and Igor Omulecki presented a series of photographs and a video work that focuses on spiritual and symbiotic relationships arising in sacred forests, called Kayas Kauma by the Mijikenda. Entitled “Miti” (Trees), the project also took in a mangrove plantation in Kilifi Creek, with the artists incorporating a 1990 performance “Tree of Life, Tree of Christ” by Polish artist Andrzej Różycki (1942–2021) into their NMS installation.

The NMS also showed a film of the drum performance realized in Kilifi with Simba Wanga and Zaire Ngome Msagapore bands, conducted by Rafał Krzanowski, as well as drawings and a slideshow of art workshops for children from the DUOS Festival Kids Session conducted in Mombasa and Kilifi by Rosita Deluigi (The University of Macerata).

“I Choose to Be a Woman,” a documentary film of stories told by four women drawn from a cross-section of social classes, debuted at the NMS. The two-year collaboration by Ruby Kanghete, Magdalena Szymków, and Justyna Celeda, along with students William Chengo, Kelvin Makau, Bildad Nyaboga Ondara, and Joseph Tuva, depicts the extremes of determination and confidence of Coastal women – attitudes determined by family, education, and economic background.

Social Ecology at the NMS also saw invited artists present new works. Mbinga

made a cycle of five photographs – entitled “Deepening Dependency” (Red Series) – specially for the exhibition. Images of a two-part paper sculpture project in rich and resonant maroon the power of society to shape our attitudes, beliefs, ideals, and morals.

Tangara wrote and performed “Black Boy in Szczecin” at Kangete; she showed a selection of her films at Szczecin's Trafo Contemporary Art, whilst Green realized a mural under the Trasa Zamkowa bridge as part of the iteration's collateral events. Kenyan artists presented a group exhibition called “Twanduda Tu” at Domie gallery in Poznań on July 5–6.

Through various artistic expressions, the DUOS Festival in Kilifi and Mombasa as well as exhibitions in Szczecin drew attention to other cultures and broadened perspectives by offering learning experience on global issues like social inequality, women's rights, water pollution, and global warming. The project served as a platform for exploration of the relations between man and nature in different contexts and perspectives, such as Indigenous communities and endangered ecosystems. The exhibitions also invited the visitors to reflect on their own actions and attitudes towards the environment, and to engage in dialogues with the artists and experts. In the end, the exhibitions provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and inspire change for a more sustainable future.

Exhibitions realized at the National Museum in Szczecin – Museum of Contemporary Art in Szczecin, Poland followed the DUOS Festivals in Kilifi and Mombasa, Kenya:

“Community”

November 11, 2021 – January 16, 2022

Artists: **Zippy Kimundu & Małgorzata Mazur, Castro Osore & Anna Orlikowska, Wacu Kihara & Emilia Łapko, Mohamed Mbwana Omar & Piotr Pauk, Biko Wesa & Witek Orski, Simba Wanga & Anna Nowicka, Richard Onyango & Zbigniew Rogalski; Mramba Mweni, Said Chengo & Łukasz Jastrubczak, Said Luganje Kahindi, Christian Niccoli**



R.S.



R.S.





R.S.

M.W.



R.S.



R.S.



R.S.

“Women Power”

November 11th, 2021 – January 16th, 2022

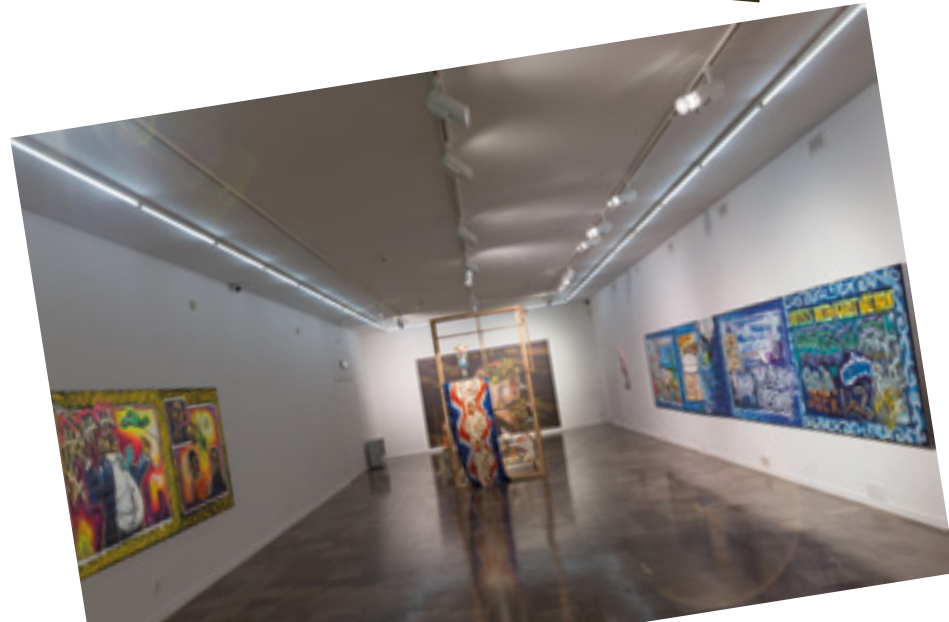
Artists: **Shaila Resia Agha & Aneta Grzeszykowska, Sheila Okanga & Iza Plucińska, Fauzia Aly Khan & Anna Molska, Faith Kwamboka & Marta Ziółek, Ciro G. & Justyna Machnicka, Linda Shuma & Natalia Szostak, Shangazi Masika & Alicja Pilarczyk, Ciru Karimi & Irena Zieniewicz, Jan Smaga**



“Social Ecology”

June 29th– September 24th, 2023

Artists: **Joseph Allan Green & Rafał Żarski; Yona Mudibo & Natalia Karczewska; Philip Tangara (Pet the Poet) & Zorka Wollny; Caroline Ngorobi & Justyna Celeda; Mike Okoth & Anna Maria Karczmaraska; Mbinga & Mikołaj Małek; Tommie Ominde & Igor Omulecki; Ruby Wanjiru Kang'ethe & Magdalena Szymków, Rafał Krzanowski & Simba Wanga & Zaire Ngome Msagapore; Rosita Deluigi**







J.Sz.



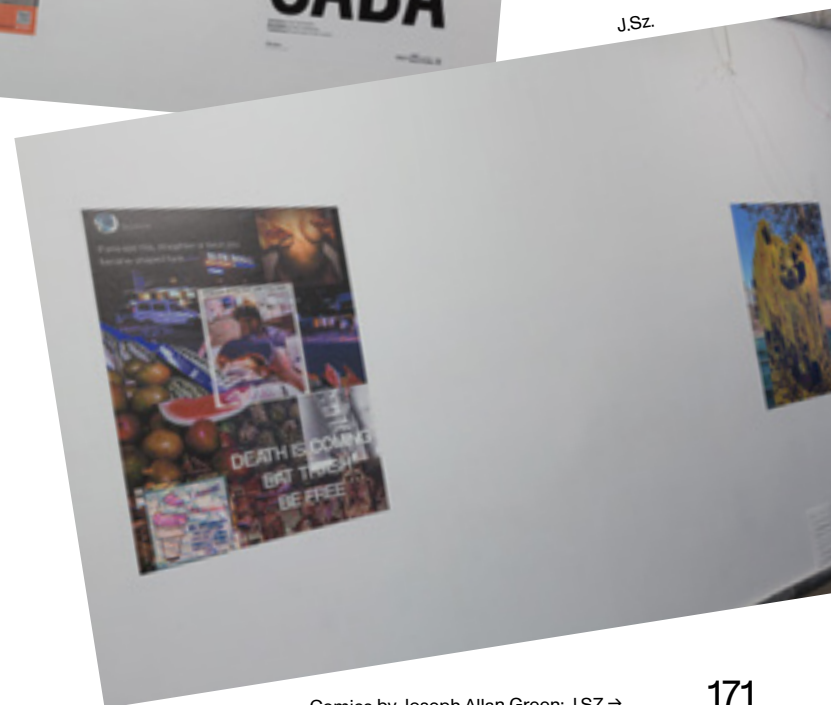
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Comics by Joseph Allan Green; J.SZ.→





J.Sz.



J.Sz.

BLACK BOY IN SZCZECIN

BLACK BOY SAT ON A PLANE TO COME SAY POETRY.
 BLACK BOY HAD A LONG DAY, LITERALLY.
 BLACK BOY IN SZCZECIN.
 BLACK BOY EXPERIMENTING TO FIT IN.
 BLACK BOY TASTING BURGERS AT MAK KWAK.
 BLACK BOY PADDLING THE KAYAK.
 BLACK BOY ON THE TRAIN.
 BLACK BOY ON THE TRAM.
 BLACK BOY ON THE STREETS
 TRAFFIC LIGHTS SENDING BLACK BOY MIXED SIGNALS.
 RED, SHORTLY AFTER GREEN.
 SO BLACK BOY HAS TO WALK IN HASTE.
 TAK TAK.

TAKE THE BLACK BOY SLOW.
 BLACK BOY JUST ATE PIEROGI,
 BLACK BOY LIKES THE TASTE.
 THE COLORS AND THE ARCHITECTURE.
 THE BUILDINGS CALLING FOR A PICTURE.
 THE YELLOW MAKES HIM MELLOW.
 FLOWERS ON THE WINDOW.
 LET THE SUN SINK IN.
 LET THE COFFEE SIP SEEP IN.
 OF LONG, SHORT, BEAUTIFUL DOGS, LOYALTY.
 OF HORSES AND CHARIOTS, ROYALTY.
 FAMILIARITY WITH THE ZLOTY.
 HARD STREET NAMES
 HAD HIM BEFRIENDING GOOGLE MAPS.
 AT A THRIFT SHOP LOOKING FOR THAT POLISH(ED) LOOK.

TALES OF A BLACK BOY IN SZCZECIN.
 BLACK BOY LEARNING LANGUAGE
 NIEGAZOWANA? NIE! NIE!
 GAZOWANA? TAK TAK
 BLACK BOY LIVING IN THE MOMENT.
 BLACK BOY CAPTURING THE MOMENTS.
 BLACK BOY WITH FULL STORAGE.
 SZCZECIN WITH A LOT IN STORE FOR BLACK BOY.
 BLACK BOY STORY IN SZCZECIN
 BLACK BOY HAS AN EXHIBITION ON 29TH JUNE.

Murals realized by Castro Osore, Said Luganje Kahindi (Gendo), Mohamed Mbweni Omar, and Fruit of the Lump (Piotr Pauk) during residency in Szczecin in 2021



Mural realized by Joseph Allan Green during residency in Szczecin in 2023



P.P.



P.P.

Photographs of Tommie Ominde from his month residency in Szczecin in 2023, in frames of "Social Ecology" edition







Kid's Session by Rosita Delung!

Kid's Session was an integral part of the cultural and artistic events of DUOS Festival in Kilifi and Mombasa. The research team of the University of Macerata (UNIMC – Italy) organized the first and second edition in 2021, and the third edition in 2023.

The Kid's Session aim was to involve kids, families, schools, and communities in meaningful creative and artistic experiences. The interdisciplinary working group consisted of researchers, artists, teachers, social educators, university students, and volunteers from local associations in order to develop educational activities and artistic workshops for kids and schools.

The project offered children and adolescents spaces for creative expression in which artistic languages became mediators of community learning. They had the opportunity to play with their imagination, discover new materials, colours, languages, and learning by doing.

The cooperative approach was also developed through the use of local materials and the discovery of the surrounding environment as a space to be known and explored.

The proposal of the three editions of the Kid's Session, while changing the topic, was supported by an 'edutainment' approach in which the participants were the protagonists of the experience.

1. "Community" (February–March 2021)

The first Kid's Session (February–March 2021) focused on the theme of "Community" and addressed this aspect through two levels of work: the development of the concept of community with its different representations through the use of artistic languages, and the group experimentation of cooperative and participative dynamics, with which the different facets of community perspectives could be highlighted.

At the Kilifi Junior Primary School, the UNIMC team, teachers, and kids were involved in a workshop on different meanings of "Community." Many small groups shared ideas, visual brainstorming, and planned how to represent several versions of community, freely chosen by the pupils.

The opportunity to work together on an initially abstract concept in order to make it more concrete required the participants to draw on their own knowledge, to compare themselves with real experiences and to connote their artistic work in a personalized way. Multiple narratives of the meaning and forms of community emerged, and, at the same time, the open dialogue allowed them to find mediations and accommodate different points of view.

At Kilimo Primary School, due to the high number of participants, diversified activities were planned, experimenting with creative languages and tools. With kids of grade 2, the UNIMC Team and teachers held a workshop on primary colours, discovering materials and tools (fingers, brushes, banana leaves, etc.). Two classes were involved through a cooperative learning approach, and they realized artworks using objects, icons, and symbols. A class of grade 3 was involved in a photo-language workshop focused on the idea of community. Students used images and short texts from newspapers and magazines to describe original and plural images of community. The kids of grade 1 participated in a creative workshop focused on the idea of cooperation: students created paper flowers and stars, working one by one and then in small teams, to achieve common results.

The possibility of communicating one's own idea and sharing the experience as a group allowed the children to express numerous points of view and to find mediations and similarities, both from the point of view of its artistic-creative techniques

and from the point of view of being part of a group-community.

At Ocean of Wonders Primary School, the University of Macerata (UNIMC) team, teachers, and kids were involved in a photo-language workshop focused on the idea of community. The team conducted two parallel working sessions, and the students used images and short texts from newspapers and magazines to define the community with visual messages.

In this case, the use of familiar references to the context (the newspapers were mainly local) allowed the children to choose the images that were most relevant and interesting to them, representing different aspects of the concept of community. The use of images to create plural messages opened up dialogue between peers, encouraging the emergence and sharing of many nuances of the idea of 'community'. The co-operative working atmosphere also made it possible to develop links between similar representations but with different meanings, giving space for participants' voices.

At Nazarene Church Academy School, the UNIMC team, teachers, and kids were involved in a creative workshop focused on the idea of cooperation. Students played with colours and created several games with natural materials (small stones and sticks) and paper flowers working in small teams.

The opportunity to build something together allowed the children to be creative and, at the same time, to self-produce games to be used and shared with other kids. The valorisation of the local material also supported the focus on creativity and recycling.

At Seahorse School and Temporary Art Centre, the UNIMC team, teachers, and kids were involved in two creative workshops focused on the idea of community and cooperation. In the first part were discovered the primary colours through different techniques and tools; in the second part participants worked on a large image of a village

(full of details of the local context) and then created paper flowers working in small team, to achieve common results.

The children worked by sharing spaces and materials to construct articulated narratives of community space, especially in reference to the representation of the village as a familiar place. Observing the commitment and care put into the big map and the realization of the origami brought out many possibilities for dialogue in which every kid could tell his/her stories, allowing adults to access their vision of space and time lived together.

The workshop activities with the schools lasted three weeks. All the materials collected were part of the research documentation and, during the first edition of the DUOS Festival, some of the outcomes were displayed in Kilifi. In particular, the stars-flowers made with the origami technique and collectively coloured, and the map with the representation of the village created together were exhibited. In both cases, the focus was on cooperation and community.

2. "WOMEN POWER" (August–September 2021)

The second Kid's Session (August–September 2021) focused on the theme of "Women Power" and addressed this aspect, consolidating the strategies of participatory dynamics, stressing the attention on the topic of female empowerment and the roles of kids, girls, and women in society. The classes that participated in the training proposal, shared with the teachers, have deepened a current theme, starting from different representations and stereotypes, in order to identify ways of recounting the power of women, especially through the role of the visual arts.

The theme, also particularly felt by the teachers, was analysed with different levels of intensity, opting for the direct involvement of everyone, paying great attention to the

presence of the girls as the primary bearers of ideas. The educational keys were always based on awareness of the challenge of gender equality and the construction of spaces for dialogue and self-narration.

The use of visual and manual languages, including painting and sculpture, has led the schools involved to produce shared materials that bear witness to all the ideas represented.

Compared to the first edition, the planned creative ateliers were realised transversally in different locations, involving numerically smaller and more homogeneous age groups.

In the schools where the workshops were carried out with the support of the painter Castro Osore (Kilimo Primary School, Ocean of Wonders Primary School, Nazarene School, and Nyota Ya Asubuhi – Koinonia Community) the activity was structured in three phases: presentation of the theme and brainstorming on "women power" (collective presentation, individual and small-group reflection work); graphic representation of the theme in small groups with individual artifacts (sharing ideas with the artist, and support from the Pwani students and the research team, in deepening the stories belonging to each child's real experience); collective discussion of the ideas that emerged and the representations made.

In the schools where the workshops were carried out with the support of the sculptor Simon Katumba (Seahorse School and Upendo Primary School), the activity was structured in three phases: presentation of the theme and brainstorming on "women power" (collective presentation, individual and small-group reflection work); creation of two-dimensional women's profiles with recycled natural materials (sharing ideas with the artist, and support from the Pwani students and the research team, for the deepening of the theme and the stories belonging to each child's real

experience); collective discussion of the ideas that emerged and the artistic objects realized.

The climate of dialogue that was generated throughout the activities allowed the participants to express their ideas and ask questions, from the point of view of content, and the use of materials, to artistic techniques, and the production of original messages. The use of different codes and the opportunity to create drafts of artistic works, discussing their meaning together, stimulated reflection on content that is not easy to express only verbally or in written language.

Also in the second edition, the workshop activities with the schools and the socio-educational agency lasted three weeks. All the materials collected were part of the research documentation and, during the second edition of the DUOS Festival, some of the outcomes were exhibited in Kilifi and in Szczecin.

As for the artifacts produced with the visual-pictorial language, the artist involved and the Pwani University students, after supporting the management of the activities, created "artist books" by collecting all the works drawn by the participants with illustrated covers by Castro Osore. These enhanced the theme and the main contents that emerged during the workshops.

Some of the images depicted by the children were chosen to produce stickers, which were then distributed to the young artists and visitors to the final exhibition, depicting alternative narratives of the role of women.

As for the artifacts produced with the support of the sculptor Simon Katumba, they were exhibited on a special support, and a parallel session on the tools of sculpture was launched through direct interaction between the artist and visitors to the final exhibition.

The activities of this edition of the festival were always organized in order to encourage cooperation and dialogue among the kids with a communitarian learning style. In addition, several convivial moments allowed for very direct interaction with the participants (children and adults), consolidating educational alliances and working methods. Finally, it should be emphasized how the presence of local experts, as the two artists already mentioned and Elizabeth Aruba, a teacher who supported the coordination of the educational part, favoured the prefiguration of further activities to be managed in co-designs aimed at enhancing the skills present in the local area, listening to the needs of the school and social agencies.

3. “Social Ecology” (February–March 2023)

The third Kid’s Session (February–March 2023) focused on the theme of “Social Ecology,” and it was discussed in depth with respect to the balance between humans and nature and in relation to the dynamics to be experimented in the workshops implemented.

While previous collaborations were more focused on the educational alliance between preschools, primary schools, and the research group, this edition of the festival involved more socio-educational organization, including the territories of Kilifi and Mombasa.

This choice was due to the fact that the intention was to create an educational impact on the territory, also through non-formal social organisms, in order to consolidate community strategies and co-creation of content, democratic processes, plural narratives, and self-organization of children and young people.

The pedagogical design of the activities maintained the collective approach, which characterized all the editions of the Kid’s Session, further enhancing the

co-creation of pathways and workshops that could empower all those involved (children, young people, and adults). This made it possible to act with great flexibility with respect to emerging skills, with a continuous evaluation and feedback gathering process.

Since educational work with social services and centres requires more planning, not being within formal educational institutions, the UNIMC team opted for the involvement of two local organizations and fewer children and young people.

Differently from the first two editions, in 2023 we were able to hold a final collective event open to the community, both in Mombasa and Kilifi, in which all the participating agencies were involved.

The planning of the workshops and creative activities took place together with the socio-educational agency, involving leaders and educators. The team took into account the specific educational needs and priorities of the different organisations, considering the target audience and the different urban and rural contexts.

The UNIMC team was enlarged thanks to the collaboration with the socio-educational organizations SwahiliPot Foundation in Mombasa and Nyota Ya Asubuhi – Koinonia Community. Furthermore, four students from Pwani University made it possible to create working subgroups, in which to facilitate free expression and deepen dialogue on the chosen theme.

Also in this edition, the interdisciplinary structure of the working group made it possible to design activities aimed at listening to children and adolescents, and to promote the development of critical and creative thinking skills. In particular, collaboration with local socio-educational organizations allowed for a close and daily dialogue with the educators and experts who, through co-creation of content, interaction, and direct observation in the field,

provided useful indications on the process to be developed to promote greater autonomy in the children. Moreover, the presence of Pwani university students in the field of education and ecology made it possible to design ad hoc micro-actions with which to explore the topic in an interactive manner. In this sense, the process of collective construction of knowledge and creative experience was even more evident.

Children and adolescents investigated the theme of social ecology through different artistic languages, exploring territories, making small videos, taking photographs, drawing, painting, and experimenting with cooperative and self-organization games. In these experiences, kids and teenagers expressed their creativity as active protagonists.

The use of several creative languages and technological tools allowed the children and adolescents to explore the territory and represent the balance between human beings and the environment from direct observation. Photographic and video documentation made it possible to reconstruct significant details and contexts and to focus on the need to take care of living contexts. The awareness of being part of a natural balance was expressed through drawings, illustrations, the creation of short texts, and the construction of objects with recycled materials. During the various explorations, the dialogues between children, young people, and adults brought out different awareness of environmental roles and responsibilities (as the extended ecosystem). Furthermore, the possibility of self-organizing playful activities involving cooperative social dynamics emphasized the need to create places of proximity and collaboration.

During the final events, the children and the teenagers showed the path they had taken and had the opportunity to explain their point of view, as well as to participate in a final session of activities where their bodies

became a tool for representing meaningful relationships.

More specifically, at the end of the three weeks of immersive workshops, activities, and feedback, the Kid’s Session produced an exhibition at Alliance Française and organized a full day of workshop at the Water Sports Ground in Kilifi, involving children from Nyota ya Asubuhi and the local community and taking part in the DUOS Festival activities.

Workshops with other DUOS artists were also realized in Kilifi, including an animation workshop with Izabela Plucińska and a photography and creative installation workshop with Igor Omulecki.

Finally, thanks to the cooperation with Swahili Pot, a short documentary on the activities was produced and screened during the final event in Kilifi.

As in the second edition, some of the artifacts produced by the Kid’s sessions were also exhibited at Szczecin.

All activities were carried out under the coordination of Prof. Rosita Deluigi, with the shared planning and active participation of the entire UNIMC team composed of Prof. Flavia Stara (principal investigator of the TPAAE UNIMC research unit) and Prof. Giuseppe Capriotti (member of the TPAAE project).



Y.O.



Y.O.



M.W.



Y.O.



T.O.





T.O.



T.O.



10 Cardboard models by Bakari Ali

Bakari

Ali lives in Seahorse

Village, on the outskirts of Kilifi. In 2021, when he was 12, he joined with his brother Fred (see page “Seahorse Art Centre”) the workshops run by Castro Osore, Anna Orlikowska, Said Chengo, Mramba Mweni and Łukasz Jastrubczak, realized in frames of “Community” edition of DUOS Festival. For the two weeks of the workshop, Bakari brought a new handmade cardboard model of a house every day, developing his architectural fascination.

Bakari and his family have a tragic history, but thanks to local Giriama activists Said Chengo and Mramba Mweni, they were able to join Said’s and Mramba’s grassroots initiative, Seahorse Dockers Elementary School, and were given a home. It is a clay house, typical for many lower-class Kenyan residents who face the hardships of daily life as a result of prevailing social inequality. Beside the “Seahorse Art Centre” exhibit in the “Community” edition of the Festival, Bakari’s sculptures were shown also in frames of the “Women Power” edition, in a festival’s club. As part of “Social Ecology,” his works were part of the Sculpture Group exhibition at the Water Sports Ground in the centre of Kilifi.

A.F.





Y.O.

S.Ch.



11 TPAAE - research between Kenya and Europe based on DUOS: art-

Summary by Aleksandra Łukaszewicz

Art is the language that allows human beings to represent in a symbolic form the experience of their own time. Then, to understand a culture it is necessary to appreciate its art. It is so also because the aesthetic experience represents the fundamental interaction between individuals and the environment stimulates creative thinking, therefore activating processes for human evolution.

Opening oneself to the other in the common artistic and aesthetic experience helps to find the common ground between different peoples and cultures. For this reason, within the research project focused on Transcultural Perspectives in Art and Art Education (TPAAE) there were realized three paths: research, educational, and artistic – the last of them resulting in the Polish-Kenyan art festival DUOS that took place in the years 2021–2023.

The transcultural perspective is the response to three main strategies for the reduction of otherness developed in globalization: egocentrism, logocentrism, and ethnocentrism. These forms, intimately connected to one another, are mutually reinforcing when used as strategies to face otherness. Their shared goal is to neutralize otherness and replace it with something habitual. Individuals, in order to learn to appreciate the importance of cultural diversity, need to experience otherness in the first person. To this end, it is necessary to promote the ability to make the other the starting point of our thinking: that is, to learn to see ourselves through the eyes of others, and to learn heterological thinking.

The transcultural perspective is essential, today more than ever, to persuade individuals to appreciate cultural diversity and to recognize the importance of defending and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Transcultural education is a useful tool for helping individuals to dialogue with the cultural differences

that they experience even in the immediate environment. It is not possible to think of identity without otherness. Education to a transcultural interpretation of social contexts, implies a relational connection able to mediate between an irreducibly fractal self and the many forms of otherness. Cultural hybridization weaves new social fabrics. If the understanding of others is conditioned to the understanding of oneself and vice versa, then the process of transcultural education is also a process of self-knowledge and self-education in relation to otherness.

Art and its multiform universe turn out to be the most significant hybrid, contaminated, changeable, transcultural expression. An authentic approach to the world of art requires going beyond the traditional space in which art has been understood and justified.

Instead of absolutizing a certain concept of art, we looked at the changing character of reality and reflected on art, philosophy, and education as expressions of the human world, fostering interactions of cultural perspectives while developing an institutional model of artistic education at the Pwani University (thanks to the TPAAE project, the second university education in the field of Fine Arts in Kenya), and creating spaces for free creativity development, artistic creation, cooperation, and so forth.

The programs in Art & Design at the Pwani University on Diploma and bachelor's degree levels have been created by the international and interdisciplinary team, basing the curriculums on African traditional culture and arts, on African contemporary art, and opening them up for the international art scene and the Global North art history. They have been implemented since September 2023, which is considered a great achievement of the TPAAE project.

The educational and theoretical path is not enough, and it was supported by practical activities connecting Polish and Kenyan

artists in the process of creation of three editions of the DUOS Festival in Kilifi-Mombasa (Kenya) and three exhibitions after the DUOS Festival that were held at the National Museum in Szczecin (Poland): Community, Women Power, and Social Ecology. This was the work aimed towards creating the artistic platform on the Kenyan coast, consisting of festival activities, galleries/places for art residences, and formal university education.

Our activities were guided by the following principles:

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGES – Responding to economic changes and climate crisis and recognizing the disadvantaged situation of the people from the coast with only Nairobi offering a wide range of galleries and artistic activities, in the DUOS Festival activities we focused on supporting coastal artists for the sake of developing the creative industries and media sector. This is important for contemporaneity, especially in times when traditional livelihoods are disappearing into the past also due to climate changes.

OPENNESS FOR THE COMMUNITY – The DUOS Festival was created for the open public and participation in it was not charged, due to the concern of accessibility of artistic events to the local community.

INCLUSION AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE – Polish and Kenyan artists, working together with a small group of students to whom they were passing their knowledge and competencies, were located each time in different site-specific locations within the local community. The objective of such action was to share the knowledge between professionals from different cultures, to transfer part of the knowledge and competencies to the youths, to support the recognition of what the art is, and to level up the status of the artist.

CULTURE AND GENDER EQUALITY – The equality of the Polish and Kenyan artists learning mutually about their similarities

and differences as artists and as humans during the research stays in Kenya was later assured by the exchange mobility of Kenyan artists to Poland, where they were working with the National Museum in Szczecin preparing the exhibition, having workshops, and giving artists-talks. Gender balance was considered too.

CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION – The DUOS Festival was not only focused on musical arts or visual arts but contained a broad spectrum of art, consisting of: Film; Photography & Animation; Sculpture & Installation; Painting; Design & Craft; Performance; Architecture & Technology – not forgetting about kids' involvement, which was guided by Prof. Rosita Deluigi from the University in Macerata (Italy). Each time assured: events for children; artistic and expressive workshops for children; as well as artistic and expressive performances of the schools within KIDS SESSION of the DUOS Festival.

The important objective of our activities was to make them sustainable, so it is a good achievement that from the DUOS Festival emerged a smaller Short Film Festival 'Lampart,' organized by the Technical University of Mombasa with the support of, among others, Kenya Film Commission, the Pwani University, the Kenyatta University, the University in Macerata, and the Academy of Art in Szczecin. This will allow for the exchange of visions, ideas, and interpretations of art, culture, and society in the years that are yet to come, maintaining academic cooperation with the Academy of Art in Szczecin.

DUOS¹² Artist Bios

Shaila Resia Agha

ventured off into the corporate world for most of her early career, and although agro-forestry remained in her list of hobbies, consuming African literature, history, and folklore were her favourite pastimes. When 2020 struck its vicious deadly blow, she decided to pack her bags and head to the one place that gave her most joy, the coast. She settled in Kilifi where she began researching into indigenous trees, which led her down a rabbit hole deep into folklore and mysticism. In Dec 2020, only 8 months after relocating to the azure creek that is Kilifi, she curated a cultural installation on the magical waters. Here she told the story of Mekatilili wa Menza, the warrior, the Gohu, the mother of the rebellion. Through storytelling, dance, music, and costume, the Mijikenda people were united and 9 dhows, representing the 9 tribes, sailed down in unison celebrating our lives and how far we have come. The event was a huge success, many were educated, entertained, and even encouraged to step into the blue waters. She feels the spirit of Mekatilili running through her veins and is ready to stand up for the voiceless and fight for what is right.

Justyna Celeda

Theater director, lecturer, film scriptwriter. She graduated from the directing department of the L. Schiller Film School in Lodz. After graduation, she stayed at the university as an assistant, obtained her doctorate there, and currently works as an independent lecturer, teaching the subject "Character Building. Cooperation with the actor." For more than twenty years she has been directing in theatres all over Poland, staging both large shows based on the classics and intimate texts focused firmly on an in-depth psychological portrait. Among her most important productions are: "On the ark at eight o'clock" by U. Hub (awarded the Grand Prix at the Korczak Festival), M. Gogol's "The Hedgehog" and I. Bergman's "Fanny and Alexander" from the Contemporary Theatre in Szczecin, M. Visniec's "Let's Hire the Old Clown" and S. Sachs' "Masterpiece on the Dump" from the Powszechny Theater in Łódź, as well as W. Tomczyk's "Nuremberg" from the J. Osterwa Theater in Gorzow Wielkopolski. Recently, she directed I. Vyrypayev's "Valentine's Day" at the St. Jaracz Theater in Lodz, and Alicja Pilarczyk's performance for Gare du Nord in Basel - "Corpuscule".

She is a co-writer and script doctor of animated films, and permanently collaborates with award-winning director Izabela Plucinska. They are currently working on their next project, an adaptation of a novel by R. Topor.

Ciro Githunguri

is also known as 'Machokali,' initiator of company Mystic Breed, under which she has worked with some of the greatest artists and musicians in the region designing their album sleeves, event posters, and personal branding. Machokali is an artist with the conviction that it is our responsibility as Africans to shape our future by understanding our past, inquiring and documenting our findings. What better way to archive than with powerful images as concrete evidence of what our cultural practices are/were. Activist Photographer: AWID INTERNATIONAL FORUM (2016 Bahia Brazil) an event that brings together around 2000 feminists, community leaders, social justice activists, and donor agencies from around the world. Artist: 2018 Noirlinians Artist Exchange (New Orleans, LA). Machokali participated in a 2-week art exchange whose focus was to work on a Pan African collaborative piece with other New Orleans artists. Community work: UAACC (United African Alliance Community Centre) 2006. Participated in a 3-month residency in Imbaseni Village, Maji Chai, Arusha; as a Graphics Design volunteer teacher at UAACC, which is an ingenious creation of former Black Panther activists. UAACC provides programs and projects for the enrichment of the Arusha community.

Joseph Allan Green

is a Kenyan Artist born in the coastal area of Kengeleni, Mombasa. Before he was ten, he had already picked up the artistic inclination. He was known to sell comic books in his late primary schooling. In high school he stylised letter writing pads with address-ees' or senders' caricatures. Shortly after schooling, the eager youth found himself in Sync Sound studios with Kenya's legendary music producer Ted Josiah. He did musician logos and T-shirts, after which he never looked back. His journey took him through the WHO, British Council, Deloitte, and Kenya's only art factory, Chrysalis, amongst others. The artist is presently Mombasa-based, doing Art Consultancy, Swahili product development, and running a HipHop program at Alliance Française de Mombasa. His art is post-modernist Swahili, Arabesques, and art nouveau in all mediums, though oil on canvas is his specialty.

Aneta Grzeszykowska

was born in 1974, lives and works in Warsaw. The primary mediums in which Aneta Grzeszykowska works are photography, film, and sculpture. However, she treats all of them instrumentally – as the tools for the realization of advanced artistic and ontological exercises. The key strategies employed by the artist are manipulation of film and photographic mediums, and thus also of the viewer.

Grzeszykowska use photography emphasizing the performative dimension of the artist's activities and her feminist way of perceiving image and art. In various ways Grzeszykowska takes apart her own image and manipulates the vision of her body, ultimately reaching towards a sculptural substitute. In this way she approaches the radical and jarring assertion that self-creation is merely another, imperfect means of dealing with the mortal nature of the body.

Łukasz Jastrubczak

was born in 1984 in Zielona Góra. He creates films, installations, sculptures, concerts, interventions, situations, ephemeral actions on a journey, and recordings of intuitive music. His solo exhibitions were presented at Art in General in New York, Bunkier Sztuki in Kraków, CCA Kronika in Bytom and Sabot Gallery in Cluj-Napoca. His films were presented at Kino Arsenal in Berlin, Whitechapel Gallery in London, and "The Images Festival" in Toronto. In 2013 he received "Spojrzenia (Views) – Deutsche Bank Foundation Award" for the most interesting young Polish artist in the past two years. Member, with Krzysztof Kaczmarek, of the artistic duo "Krzysztofjastrubczaklukaszaczmarek." Author, with Sebastian Cichocki, of the publication and events titled "Mirage." He played on synthesizer in the bands "Boring Drug" and "ŁST." He co-runs (with Małgorzata Mazur) an obscure institution "Centrum Centrum" dedicated to art/life practice and philosophy. He lives in Szczecin, Poland, works in Media Arts Department at Academy of Arts, and he co-directs "Młode Wilki" Art Festival, dedicated to visual and sound arts.

Ruby Kang'ethe

has worked in Kenya's film & television industry for over 20 years. In the early years Ruby's extensive experience was through commissioned work that covered documentaries, TV commercials, game shows, and series. Ruby has worked as a Line Producer, Assistant Director & Director on short and feature length films, but remains compelled by the urge to visually explore reality-based human interest stories. Since 2010, Ruby's passion to explore people's cultural expression and its meaning has led to a focused dedication to reportage/documentaries that not only inform but also engage. Believing that resonance and connection is found in the detail, a keen combination of research-led, instinctual, and unassuming listening makes the experience of her stories both memorable and meaningful.

Natalia Karczewska

is a visual artist working with sculpture, installation, drawing, and poetry. She graduated from the Faculty of Animation (2017) and the Faculty of Intermedia Art (2019) at the University of Arts in Poznań.

Her diploma project was presented at the Maria Dokowicz Competition for the Best Diploma Project and received an award from "Czas Kultury" quarterly (2019). She has presented her works in The Arsenal Municipal Gallery, Poznań (2020); Skala Gallery, Poznań (2018); Re Gallery, Museum of Contemporary Art, Kraków (2017); lokal_30, Warsaw (2017); BWA Zielona Góra (2017); and internationally: Villa Vertua Masolo, Milan (2020), Foothold, L.A.L.D., Polignano a Mare (2019). Since 2019 she has been part of Sandra Art Gallery – a collective and nomadic space. She works as an assistant at the Painting Department of the Academy of Art in Szczecin. Currently represented by Stereo Gallery from Warsaw.

Anna Maria Karczmarska

Visual artist, set and costume designer, art curator, university lecturer (Academy of Art in Szczecin). She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow (2005, Master of Arts, Faculty of Painting, 2017, PhD, Faculty of Painting). She studied painting, animation and stage design. She is the recipient of awards: Samsung Art Master, CCA (2006) and two editions of the Divine Comedy Festival in Krakow - best scenography (costumes) in the performance "Odyssey"; (2010) and best scenography (costumes) in the performance "Hymn to Love" (2017), in 2015 she received the Leon Schiller Award for scenography. Her work traces the performativity of "appearance" from social, historical and cultural angles, and works with the medium of photography and on photographic archives. She has been working in the theater since 2005, and has created numerous sets, costumes and stage art. As a set and costume designer, she has worked with directors such as: Michał Borczuch, Krzysztof Garbaczewski, Cezary Tomaszewski, Radosław Rychcik, Jacek Jabrzyk, Marcin Wierzychowski. Since 2017, she has also been working in a stage design collective with Mikołaj Małek, together they have produced, among others, "Duchologia", "27 grudnia" and "Gargantua and Pantagruel", directed by Jakub Skrzywanek, "Solaris", dir. Marcin Wierzychowski, "Marzenia polskie", "Frankenstein", "Ptaki ciemnych krzewów" directed by Jędrzej Piaskowski, "Przemiana" directed by Grzegorz Jaremkowski, "Opowieści babć"; directed by Gianina Carunariu. Since 2021 she teaches stage design at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, leading (together with Mikołaj Małek) the Stage Design Studio.

Mikołaj Małek

painter, draughtsman, creator of installations, stage designer, percussionist. He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, where he received his diploma in 2009. He defended his PhD thesis at his alma mater in 2017. He received a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National

Heritage in 2015. The artist's works are created on the borderline of painting and sculpture, for their creation he often uses found, or rather sophisticated, materials. It can be said that the author's creative method presupposes the accumulation of remnants after the decay of microcosms or the disappearance of memory. That's why Małek makes deliberate use of imperfect forms, does not avoid mistakes, does not escape from makeshift solutions. Individual works are arranged in constellations, and his installations consist of drawings and objects. He has presented his works at Bunkier Sztuki in Krakow, CCA Kronika in Bytom, MOCaK in Krakow, Spike art in Berlin, Noplace in Oslo, among others. Since 2017, he has also been working in a set design collective with Anna Maria Karczmarska. Since 2021 he teaches stage design at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, leading (together with Anna Maria Karczmarska) the Stage Design Studio.

Ciru Karimi

is a self-taught natural dyer. She is an eco-artist who sustainably extracts dyes and colour pigments from leaves, seeds, bark, and roots of plants. Her journey with natural dyes started when she was working at an indigenous forestry company as a researcher for NTFP's (Non timber forest products). She has experimented her dyes on various mediums; cotton, wool, sisal, calabash, wooden chips, and paper to create earthy hues and shapes. On occasion, she has engaged in natural painting projects with the community schools. Children used the natural colours extracted and sisal brushes to paint on paper. She hopes to engage in more art and community projects through her natural hand-dyeing skill. Her mission is to collaborate with visual artists and garment designers to add value to the dyes by creating environmentally friendly crafts. She envisions reducing the risks accompanying the use of synthetic dyes through inhalation of toxic fumes by dyers and painters. Back to simplicity to reduce toxicity is her inspiration to keep researching and extracting natural dyes and pigments. This will awaken our inner spaces into co-existing with nature. She is currently working on a solo project "Women of colour" to identify and document common dye producing plants. She currently resides in Kilifi, Kenya.

Fauzia Aly Khan

is one of only a few Swahili female artists from the Kenyan coast, traditional painting and dye etc. Women were left to basketry, pottery, henna. But this is changing. My journey with art started as a hobby. Listening to embroidery, smoke stitch, crochet, and crafts with my grandma. With a lot of time at hand, we did happily whatever we were assigned to do. That interest did not just die. I went along picking up various skills

from different people and from my travels. Observation has always inspired me to express my feelings and reactions to my surroundings through painting, ceramics, and artsy stuff. Much later in life when I already had children, I saw that kids lacked this stimulation. If they learnt anything it was limited. With life changing around us, traditional skills faded. In a digital age, often most people seem to press buttons all day. Very few people actually produce anything by hand anymore. It is increasingly important that we don't lose touch with the uniquely human skills of using hand, heart, and mind to produce things. Working with your hands, being creative is now recognized as actually very good for our mental health and well-being. With this in mind I carved my dream, doing artistic things like painting, pottery, ceramics, batik, and much more. The world of art opened for me all by working from my Veranda in my home... I have been teaching teenagers, adults, and children aged 7 and above for over 15 years, alongside doing my own art. Where are my inspirations? To do more art and focus on lost arts and crafts technique like pottery, ceramics, Batiks. To explore and use old dyes but in modern ways.

Osore Castro Mohammed Khwale

was born in Kakamega county, Kenya. He became interested in art at the age of 8, drawing comic sketches with pen and ink. His older brother, a graphic designer, has helped him a lot through his artistic journey. Although very talented with sketching, painting is where he belongs and he loves it passionately. Now living in Kilifi county, Castro has a small art studio in Kilifi Town next to the main supermarket. There he paints portraits, abstracts, murals, and has even started dabbling in sculpture. "Art has no limits." His goal is to be able to own his own larger studio closer to his home in Mtwapa.

Wacu Kihara

Founder of Khangadelic – a Sustainable Fashion Label. Khangadelic symbolizes the colour and vibrancy of Kenyan Coastal Culture and Lifestyle through contemporary clothing and accessories. We have a passion for Fashion and a love for the environment. Our clothing items use a traditional Kenyan fabric - Kanga that includes printed proverbs and are used by women to tie round the waist while doing chores, carrying their babies on their back, and for ceremonial use such as weddings and funerals. We blend the Kanga with modern fabric. We are members of African Women Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP), Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency, Kenya, She Trades Commonwealth under International Trade Centre (ITC) based in Geneva. We have participated in several International Trade Fairs such as NY NOW

2016, New York, FIHAV 2016, Havana, Cuba, Sourcing at MAGIC 2017, Las Vegas, Spring Fair Birmingham 2018, She Trades Global 2018, Liverpool and Expo Dubai 2020. Our vision is part of the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and top of our list are #1 No Poverty, #5 Gender Equity and #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. Wacu Kihara is an award-winning fashion designer (Smirnoff International Fashion Awards 1996 & Search for National Costume 1995) who graduated from the Istituto Internazionale Politecnico Della Moda in Firenze, Italy affiliated with the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T.), New York and the Scuola ai Fini Speciale of the Università di Firenze. She was on attachment for 3 months at Tripper Jeans in Weesp, Holland. Wacu Kihara is on the International Coastal Clean Up committee and Kenya Association of Waste Recyclers. She also works with the Beach Management Unit in Shelly Beach and Aga Khan Academy Mombasa on Beach Cleanup exercises, separation of Marine Waste, and collection for Recycling. Since her move to Naivasha, Wacu has set up 2 collection centres where people in and around Naivasha drop off their recyclables. These are then aggregated and sold off to different recyclers. They have provided employment for 2 Youth who segregate the recyclables.

Zippy Kimundu

is an award-winning Kenyan Filmmaker who has been working in the global industry for over a decade as a Director/Editor in more than 20 countries across continents. Her work has been screened internationally, receiving various nominations for her short films 'Burnt Forest' and 'Give me back my Home,' a great review of 'Mother's Song' by Hollywood Director Oliver Stone, and a win for Producing 'Manilla Running' screened at the Directors Guild of America. Zippy co-wrote and co-directed the short Documentary, 'a fork, a spoon & a KNIGHT' with renowned Hollywood Director Mira Nair, for Tribeca Film Institute's and Nelson Mandela Foundation 'Power of Word Series' and was the Assistant Editor on the Disney Film 'Queen of Katwe.' She has worked for various clients including Universal Studios, Action Horizons Stunts (LA/Japan), Six Toes & TBWA (Singapore), Safaricom, HIAS, Standard Chartered Bank, and The British Council. Zippy holds a diploma in TV Production from the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, a degree in Public Administration (HRM), and a master's in Fine Arts (Film) from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts – Asia. She is a Hotdocs Blue Ice, IDFA, IDA, Sundance, Afridocs, and Docubox Fellow and continues to work independently as a Producer/Director, a Film Educator, and Managing the Afrofilms International Film Collective.

Rafał Krzanowski

cooperated with the Szczecin Philharmonic, Opera at the Castle, and the Academia Orchestra since 1998. Participates in projects of the Współczesny Theatre, Pomeranian Dukes' Castle, Baltic Neopolis Orchestra, and Artelier Chamber Music Festival, and cooperates with the Polish drum duo Hob-Beats. In 2004, he co-founded the Sambal band. A member of the international group Bloco X. He gives concerts in Poland, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Great Britain, and Hungary (including CrossDrumming Festival, Bremer Karneval, Festival Kody, and Sziget Festival). Initiator of the Bom dia Samba 2011 festival at the Art Academy in Szczecin. He passes his experience by organizing numerous batucada workshops in Poland. He creates Szczecin Bloco Pomerania. Educator in primary music schools. Propagator of percussion art in various scenes. With Prof. AS Dr hab. Jorge Valcarcel Gregorio, develops the idea of percussion chamber music in the academic band PercusionistAS. He creates "Migiem na Majka," an innovative samba and hip-hop project for the hearing impaired and deaf in Szczecin. He participated twice in the preparations for the carnival in Rio de Janeiro and took part in master classes with the best sambistas in Brazil. Master classes in Żagań, Berlin, Cologne, and Rio de Janeiro under the tutelage of such famous people as J. Beck, R. Flores, K. Szymanowski, S. Raiz, S. Krakowski, and Mestre Jonas. In 2004 and 2005 he was the first prize winner in the Academic Miniatures Competition.

Faith Kwamboka

is a Certified Baptiste Teacher, who works passionately to break down communication barriers and create opportunities for the hearing impaired, the blind, people living with albinism, autism, and the mentally and physically challenged. Through yoga and her work as a sign language interpreter, she is bridging the gap between the 'Special' populations and the greater community. Faith enjoys working with youths from the slums/ghettos of Nairobi such as Kibera, Huruma, Korogocho, Mathare, Dandora, Kawangware, etc. A natural teacher and communicator, Faith is a dancer by profession, artist, and leader; for over 14 years, she has been teaching, training and choreographing dance to schools, such as Imani Children's Home in Kayole, and learning institutions, prisons, and for general visitors who come to Kenya. She has travelled across the continents as a dancer and has trained and worked with hearing impaired students who have gone on to become professional dancers and performers themselves. She introduced regular Dance Sessions at the Kenya National Theatre and has worked in different correctional institutions in and outside of the City. She also

introduced dance and Yoga classes at the Kenya Police Training Institute Kiganjo (Nyeri) and Kenya Police CID Training School South B. Kenya Police Staff College Loresho.

Emilia Łapko

runs her own studio of photography and design which focuses on art creation as well as fashion, creative and image-building photoshoots. She advises companies as an artistic director specializing in branding. Her area of activity includes photography, video, and visual communication. She enjoys unconventional solutions and a professional approach to every project. She graduated from two universities – the University of Arts in Poznań, where she obtained a master's degree in art and the University of Szczecin, where she obtained a master's degree in philosophy. Emilia Łapko is a lecturer of fashion photography as well as post-production and visual communication in fashion at the Academy of Art in Szczecin.

Justyna Machnicka

Graphic designer, freelancer, and university lecturer. Works on various projects related to Graphic Design, starting from logos to publishing and to web pages. Her creative work concentrates mainly on posters. Designing self-edition posters, she relates to events in her private life and to the headline issues. Her creativity spreads also to designing posters advertising cultural events. Active participant of Polish and international poster exhibition. Establisher and organiser of Overview of Self-Edition Poster, Roller Poster. Wrote a column in "Beautiful pages" in "Przekrój," the quarterly magazine. Awarded as many as five scholarships by the Mayor of Szczecin, in the years: 1996, 1997, 2002, 2003, and 2004. Received an award from the Marshal of West Pomerania for "The Best Diploma" in the field of Graphic Design in the 2004/2005 academic year. Diploma work was qualified to "The Best Designing Diplomas" exhibition in Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise, which was organised within the national competition for Polish art graduates in the field of Design (2006). First-prize winner for logo jubilee competition of the city of Piła (2010). Associate Professor at Szczecin Academy of Art where she runs Publishing and Digital Designing Studio in the Faculty of Visual Art.

Shangazi Masika

Poet, altruist, fashion designer, and motivational speaker. Popularly known as Shangazi (Aunty) Masika, the 33-year-old poet caters for major Cultural events across the coastal region of Kenya, and Kilifi County is where she resides and also her place of birth. Being a "hando" ambassador calls for dedication and determination, whereby she is expected to represent

and promote her Mijikenda Culture in so many ways, which she does so perfectly. She has won two trophies as best cultural & artistic group, where she was the team leader of the Kaloleni Sub-County Women's group. She studied at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT). She is the founder of "Kikwetu Kiafrika" which deals with decors, fashion, coastal delicacies, photography, beadwork etc. In Kilifi, cases of early marriages are on a rise; so, she came up with an initiative called "NIACHIE NIKOMAE" (let me grow) to enlighten the young girls and males from immoral practices. 'Akaza ana manabanda MIDZI' (daughters in laws are splitting families), a very famous poem by her, is one of the most influential GIRIAMA poems on YouTube, as well as the local mainstream media. She intends to disseminate Mijikenda arts including poems, songs, traditional attires, and the local creative masterpieces to the global market by proper marketing, promotion, and mobilization of resources from well-wishers, investors, corporations, and the Kenyan government at large.

Małgorzata Mazur

is a cinematographer and film director. She works in both the experimental film and documentary fields. Films she has created and co-created have been screened at numerous festivals, including FID Marseille, Mar del Plata IFF, Transcinema Festival Internacional de Cine, Diagonale, Austria, Underdox, Munich, First Look, New York, 34th Internationale festival of Uruguay, Dokfilmwoche, Munich and shown at many exhibitions including the National Museum in Warsaw, Cricoteka in Krakow, Arsenal Cinema in Berlin and many more. She runs the Documentary Forms studio at the Department of Experimental Film at the Academy of Art in Szczecin. Together with Łukasz Jastrubczak, she runs the cultural institution "Centrum Centrum" located in the allotment gardens in Szczecin. She graduated Film Image and Photography in the Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School of the University of Silesia in Katowice

Mwambi Jonathan Mbinga

is freelance artist based in Kenya, working through abstraction of photographs, whose works revolve around still life re-living themselves through a new perceived meaning so as to be understood better as entities constituting life. The process is the abstraction of Imagery through photographs and overlays to challenge creative boundaries and stimulate thinking, exploring more unconventional methods of interpretation and presentation. I work to reveal the sublime concealed within the 'ordinary.' This necessitates slowing down, upholding responsiveness, and paying close attention to details. My choice of subject comes from a place of intuition and is fuelled by an impetuous desire to partake in the stories that unfold around me.

My main interest is humans and society, since man is a social animal, society has become an essential condition, more so a fundamental defect for human life to arise and to continue. The shift from society to individualization meant creation of photographs that hint at a perspective space, with its plans to some extent to evoke the pressure and urge of conformity.

Anna Molska

was born in Szczecin in 1980 and is a ceramic designer. She works at the Academy of Art in Szczecin leading The Laboratory of Ceramic Techniques at the Faculty of Design. She runs her own ceramic studio, Open Work, where she works with dyed porcelain and stoneware, making limited series of items for cafes, restaurants, and concept stores across Germany, France, and Spain. In the past she was engaged in educational projects related to historical ceramics at the Ceramic Association. She also led gallery cafe Kafele in Szczecin, where she curated temporary exhibitions for artists of different art disciplines, mainly related to the community of young artists in Szczecin. Moreover, she collaborated with Basta-animal initiative with Magazyn Sztuki, and Kids Love Design festival. For several years she has been co-creating the Free Way Democratic School, where she works with children and youth outside of the education system, on the basis of their participation in social life, their creativity and partnership. Besides design, her fascination focuses on music and sound. She holds degrees in both design and musicology.

Yona Mudibo

is a multidisciplinary visual artist working in various media such as pencil drawing, oil and mixed media paintings, body art, mural painting, installations, and string art. He is more well known for his work in body art, mural installations, and string art. Most of these works are usually aimed at inspiring pride in African heritage, highlighting legends in African history, and campaigning for environmental conservation. Based in Mombasa, where he was born and raised, Mudibo has been involved in several exhibitions and projects around Kenya. These exhibitions include the Affordable Art Show, Safari ya Sanaa, and Pwani Art Exhibition, among others. His projects include painting educational murals in the streets on preventive measures against coronavirus, and the Creative Economy project in which he and other artists did artworks to beautify the streets of Mombasa (the highlight of which was doing a mural inside the famous MacKinnon market, and a string art piece at the Railway Garden.) He has won several awards, including Sodeka Awards, in which he was awarded the “Best Traditional Artist” in 2020. A participant in a number of residencies including Bahari Huru

residency and Anidan Art Centre Residency among others, he has also become a champion against plastic pollution in the ocean.

Mramba Mweni and Saidi Chengo

Founders of Seahorse Dockers School – a project developed 2015 in the Fumbeni area of Kilifi, Kenya. Said and Mramba, as local Giriama activists, found that in their own village many children were not attending schools due to the unachievable cost of school fees. This inspired them to open their own establishment where fees are a third of the price of schools in the area, or fully subsidized by funding partners. They now have 236 students between the ages of 4-13 who are able to access basic education.

Caroline Ngorobi

is a theatre producer, director, and performer based in Mombasa, Kenya with over 8 years’ experience as a producer. She is an ISPA (International Society for Performing Arts) Fellow 2023. She is the founder of Jukwaa Arts Productions – a creative greenhouse which voices social issues through creation and presentation of performing and visual arts, based in Mombasa, founded in 2015. Her work fuses drama, movement, music, and poetry. She creates work from observation and human stories. She explores the subjects of art as education, identity, love, gender, environment, and taboos, and their intersection with emerging and popular culture. Her work is presented in both theatre and non-theatre spaces, with a special love for street art.

Anna Nowicka

is choreographer and performer, plunging into the lush reality of dreaming. She researches the potential of images to expand the body into a state of continuous becoming. Graduate of the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance (SEAD), MA Choreography at the HfS Ernst-Busch/HZT in Berlin, and MA Psychology at the Warsaw University, she also wrote her practice-based PhD on embodied awareness as the foundation for being present. Since 2010 her individual choreographic practice has been connected with the Art Stations Foundation by Grażyna Kulczyk in Poznań. Anna is a certified Sapphire® Practice teacher at The School of Images of Dr Catherine Shainberg, and she is deepening the work on dreaming with Dr Bonnie Buckner. Her most recent work – “Eye Sea” premiered in December 2019 in HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin.

Sheila Okang

is a functional artist based in Kilifi, Kenya. Her current interest is in upcycling and recycling various materials, including glass, wood, khanga, beads,

acrylics, and plastic, to enhance their value and appeal, and ensure they can be used for multiple purposes. The various products she produces include but are not limited to candle holders, chipboard catering sets, and upcycled reusable tins. Sheila has a background in graphic design and commercial art. She uses her expertise and knowledge to teach art to a group of women from disadvantaged areas. Sheila has turned her current workspace into a safe space for women to learn how to create art and indulge in some form of art therapy and counselling. Products produced by Sheila and her team are sold through social media and other avenues.

Mike Okoth

also known as The Black Cob, is a 25-year-old non-binary interior designer who runs Black Cob Design House in Kilifi, which was founded at the beginning of 2021 after graduating from the Nairobi Institute of Technology. I am a multi-faceted artist that also enjoys fashion and dabbles in fashion design and styling. Like many designers, I view interior design in particular and design more generally as a storytelling medium. Black Cob is primarily focused on designing and building furniture utilizing Swahili carpentry techniques, and over time I have changed to only using Kilifi’s most plentiful wood, the neem tree, also known locally as Mkilifi, where I include my stories and my enjoyment of Swahili history and culture into the furnishings and settings I design, and I ask my customers to join me in helping them discover and share their own stories in their homes and places of business. My furniture creates stages for people to occupy and claim spaces without being intrusive or noisy, and to bring my ideas to life. I have found and worked with local artisans and carpenters in accordance with the ethics of my production method. To prevent waste and bad business speculation, all of my furniture is made to order. It is also, to the extent possible, handmade, and carved in remembrance of Swahili design traditions.

Mohamed Mbwana Omar

is a shop sign painter, taking care of his neighbourhood Mnarani (district of Kilifi) where he lives with his big family.

Tommie Ominde

was born in 1996 and is based in Kilifi, Kenya. My artistic practice is one that is fuelled by my love for observation. I am particularly inspired by the manner in which we human beings occupy space, in particular our relationship with the natural and built environment. My protagonist is often nature itself or people doing ordinary activities.

Igor Omulecki

(born 1973 in Łódź) is a visual artist, photographer, and educator, who lives in Warsaw. His artistic stance was influenced by the Łódź post avant-garde scene; he bore witness to the most significant events in the Polish conceptual art that were taking place in Łódź in the 1980s and 1990s. He studied at the Cinematography and Photography Department at the Łódź Film School. Recipient of fellowships from the Minister of Culture and the City of Warsaw. Awarded numerous prizes and honours, including the IPA Award, PMH, ExhibitA, Photolucida Critical Mass, Cannes Lions, and Europe’s Premier Creative Award. His highly diverse creative output has, in recent years, been focused primarily on visual perception and forms of visual representation. Omulecki’s oeuvre also includes hundreds of press credits and a number of exhibitions. His work has been exhibited in a variety of prestigious venues, including the Barbican in London, the Centre for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv, the Matadero in Madrid, MAC Santiago de Chile, and MOCA in Warsaw.

Richard Onyango

Born in 1960 in Kisii, Kenya. Lives and works in Malindi, Kenya. For the first thirty years of his life Richard Onyango supported himself through a remarkable range of occupations—sign-painter, bus-driver, woodcarver, carpenter, fashion designer, furniture maker, farmer, and animal trainer. He was born in the western highlands of Kenya, near Lake Victoria; while he was still very young his family moved to the developing coastal regions. His father worked for the Tana River Irrigation Scheme, and Onyango became fascinated with the signs of industrial development in the African landscape: trucks, tractors, bulldozers, planes, etc. As a child he recorded such impressions in a series of sketches he called “photo pictures” of “whatever my eye could see.” He has explained further, “To keep things properly in mind I had to draw them, since I didn’t have a camera to record what I would like to put in memory.” These elements are still present in Onyango’s paintings today. He frequently chooses to depict situations that waver between the exaltation of imported technology and its fragility. Accidents, warnings, calls for prudence reveal a world constantly threatened by disaster and the unforeseeable. This psychological tension is notably present in the paintings that Onyango dedicated to his relationship with Drosie. White and curvaceous, the young woman is represented in imaginary or real situations that compress all the fantasies that Africa projects onto the West. Whether depicting the couples’ alternating domination and submission, or the fascination exercised by a life-style synonymous with luxury and wealth, Onyango succeeds in inverting stereotypes and denouncing their inherent violence.

Anna Orlikowska

is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. Her work spans diverse media, including videos, spatial arrangements, or photography. Orlikowska in an observer of the unnoticeable, the minor phenomena which art usually tends to overlook by treating them as all-too-common. The artist has participated in numerous exhibitions in Poland and abroad; also, she is a recipient of a number of art fellowships (Młoda Polska, fellowship of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage), and winner of honorary mention in Spojrzenia 2005 competition. Currently a lecturer at the Academy of Arts in Szczecin. Recently, her works were shown at such exhibitions as Zooestetyka. Zwierzęta w sztuce, The National Museum in Szczecin (2019), Różnica i powtórzenie, Museum of Art in Łódź (2017), Optical Illusion of the Body, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (2017).

Witek Orski

Born in 1985, in Warsaw. He is a visual artist and theoretician of photography. A philosophy graduate of the University of Warsaw, he creates photos, photographic installations, and video works. He refers to his practice as post-conceptual photography. He studies the relations between images, and is interested in the social functions of photography and its status in the field of art. The medium of the exhibition itself is also an essential tool for Orski. He arranges series of works into visual essays in which the reception of each item is meticulously designed. He lives and works in Warsaw.

Piotr Pauk

Born in 1984. Graduate of Poznań University of Art, diploma in 2011 at Faculty of Multimedia Communication and in Intermedial Photography Studio (PhD hab. Krzysztof J. Baranowski). Forms of artistic activity include: Urban art, activities in urban space, street guerrilla (adbusting, architectural interference, leaving installations in space) "The artist deriving from graffiti scene of Szczecin, being seen not only in Polish urban spaces, disturbs everyday city life by forcing public discourse and change of past perception of the nearest space. He acknowledges what cannot be seen in welter of advertisements, billboards, posters and colourful shop windows – real colour of street, architecture, which viably creates urban space." His works were presented in Poland and abroad, including: Spain, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Ukraine, Sweden, "Polish Urban Art" 2014 and 2017, Indonesia – Mobile Art Residence, Indonesia (Jawa / Bali, Indonesia, 2014), France – Le Havre Biennial Arts Le Havre, and ARTAQ in Paris in 2012. Participant in "VI Triennale Młodych", Centre of Polish Sculpture,

Orońsko (2011) and "Wild Graphic. Half of a century of street visual diversion in Poland 1967–2017, "Poster Museum Warsaw" (2017) Author of urban projects: OD/ Blokowanie – Action Muralization, Fruit of the Lump / Analog recovery 1984, and QRWO the Zerwane Films. Associated with the Up/Side Art Foundation. Founder of FREEDOM gallery.

Alicja Pilarczyk

is a Polish violinist and interpreter of new music. She pursued studies in Warsaw (UMFC), Bern (HKB), Frankfurt (IEMA) and, finally, Basel (FHNW) where she recently lives. Alicja performs as a soloist and chamber musician, often involved in creative interdisciplinary projects with dance companies, theatres, or visual artists. Recently she is working on her independent project with a dancer and multimedia artist. In 2019, as a member and the founder of Concept Store Quartet, she was awarded 1st Prize and Audience Prize at Nicati Competition in Bern (CH). The quartet concentrates on premiering and commissioning new pieces written especially for their unconventional instrumental set up (violin, saxophone, accordion, and percussion). Together with the Quartet Alicja curates a series of concerts called Landscapes. Moreover, she regularly performs with Ensemble Neuverband, Sinfonietta Basel, and as a guest musician with Ligeti Quartet, Ensemble Riot, or Ensemble Modern Orchestra. In recent years she was invited to play on festivals such as Huddersfield Festival, Warsaw Autumn, Acht Brücken, Gaudeamus, Manifeste, Ruhrtriennale, Lucerne Festival, and others. Active as an orchestra violinist, member of Zürcher Symphoniker and previously Berliner Symphoniker, Polish Orchestra Sinfonia Iuventus, and Baltic Neopolis Orchestra, she has performed in most important concert halls in Europe, South-East Asia, and Japan. Since 2015 she has been an assistant at the Academy of Arts in Szczecin. For two years she had held the course "Art in Public Space and Experimental Music." Recently she teaches chamber (bez and) contemporary music, and creates an open space for an academic interaction between different branches of art.

Izabela Plucińska

born in Poland and currently living in Germany, Izabela Plucińska has some thirty films to her credit. She studied art and film and now brilliantly combines her talents to create animated works. In 2005, her short Jam Session won a Silver Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. Since then, this gifted filmmaker has enjoyed a steady stream of projects and successes. Her politically and philosophically oriented medium-length film Esterhazy was screened around the world in 2009, including in England, France, Finland, Hungary, and Mexico,

garnering a number of awards. In 2015 she finished Sexy Laundry co-production with NFB of Canada. At the moment, Plucinska, a Berliner by adoption, is busily working at her own production company, Clay Traces, along with her associates. Owing to her renown as an artist, she frequently leads workshops and teaches film animation at universities internationally. Several exhibitions have featured her work. Now she's back with Portret Susanne, her latest film, inspired by Roland Topor's short novel, with puppets from the film Esterhazy. Izabela Plucinska is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz and Film Animation of the Cinematography Department at the Lodz Film School, where she also completed her Ph.D. in the field of animation. She specialises in clay animation. Currently she is a teacher at the Academy. She created a lot of workshops and masterclasses in: Poland, France, Germany, Korea, India, and Rwanda.

Zbigniew Rogalski

is a painter, author of multimedia projects, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan. He has exhibited at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Raster Gallery in Warsaw, Arsenal Gallery in Białystok, Art Museum in Lodz, Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Kestner Gesellschaft in Hanover, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Zak Branicka Gallery in Berlin, Almine Rech Gallery in Paris, and Akinci Gallery in Amsterdam, among others; Jack Hanley Gallery in San Francisco, Site Santa Fe in Santa Fe, Krasnoye Znamya in St. Petersburg, National Centre for Contemporary Arts in Moscow, Museum of Contemporary Art in Bat Yam, Sommer Gallery in Tel Aviv, Sprüth Magers in Munich, Lee Gallery in London, Krininger Projekte in Vienna, The Letterkenny Arts Centre in Letterkenny, and Estonian Art Museum in Tallinn. He received his doctorate in fine arts from the Pedagogical University of Cracow in 2020. He runs a painting studio at AS in Szczecin.

Simba Wanga

Juma Chengo and The Simba Wanga group foster and encourage people to come together and celebrate the day's struggles and joys with music and dance. Traditionally these dances are performed at special occasions, weddings, and funerals, but the 12 members of Simba Wanga are educating about the traditions of the Giriama by celebrating and sharing the culture with visitors. The 'Mabumbumbu' drums create a rhythm that will leave you with no choice but to dance away to the sound of the Giriama.

Linda Shuma

is an upcoming artist based in the coastal town of Kilifi along the East African Coast of Kenya. She works mostly with recycled, upcycled, and repurposed

materials (wooden shipping pallets, plastic, and glass bottles). She enjoys experimenting with bright colours to create her different pieces that can be used decoratively and that are sometimes gifted to family and friends. As she undertakes her community work, Linda uses her artwork to teach life lessons during mentoring sessions and hopes to inspire many more in the community to pick up different art genres as a way of therapy, self-expression, and gainful living.

Natalia Szostak

Visual artist combining traditional and new techniques, action in space and text. Her work explores themes of memory, identity, perception and image-making. She graduated from San Francisco State University in California (B.A. Painting & Drawing), Academy of Art in Szczecin (M.A. Graphic Arts), University of Arts in Poznan (Ph.D. Painting & Drawing). Assistant professor at the Faculty of Graphics at the Szczecin Academy of Art, leading the Image Concepts Studio since 2019. Her work has been shown in various institutions in Poland and abroad including The National Museum in Gdansk, TRAFO Center for Contemporary Art in Szczecin, and Kunstquartier Bethanien in Berlin. She is affiliated with Ego Gallery in Poznan.

Magdalena Szymków

Filmmaker, director, screenwriter. She is a PhD of the Faculty of Film, Television and Theatre Directing in Lodz, assistant professor and head of the Experimental Film Faculty at Academy of Art in Szczecin. Graduate of the law department of Szczecin University, journalism at Warsaw University and the Andrzej Wajda MasterSchool of Film Directing. Scholarship holder of the Polish Film Institute, Amsterdam Art Fund and President of Warsaw Scholarship. In her projects she develops visual forms relating to the past and memory. She combines the documentary tradition with the processing of archival materials, home movies and found footage. She is the author of the documentary film "My House Without Me" (Wajda Studio, Pomerania Film, Vezfilm, 2012, 28') and "Graduation" (Wajda Studio, 2014, 25'). Writer, editor and director of the film "Occupation 1968: I'm Writing to You, My Love" (Silver Frame, Peter Kerekes, 2018, 25'/90'). Second director of the documentary film "Escape to the Silver Globe", directed by K. Mikurda (Silver Frame, 2021, 75'). Formed the London-based Vez Film production team, which produced the films "Anita", "Train to Moscow", among others. Awarded at Polish and international film festivals. Nominated for the 2019 Focal International Awards in London for best use of archival footage in film production.

Philip Tangara

better known by his stage name “Pet The Poet,” is a spoken word artist whose works are deeply rooted in activism. Over the past four years, he has been performing on stage in the coastal region of Kenya, sharing his love of words and poetry with audiences. Believing that art is a powerful tool for driving change in society, Pet The Poet uses his talent to bring attention to important issues and inspire others to take action. As he often says, “Writers should write sick pieces, for that is the only way the nation would realize it needs healing.” Through his thought-provoking performances, Pet The Poet continues to engage and inspire listeners with every stage performance.

Biko Wesa

born in 1992, is a Kenyan photographer currently working in Kilifi, Kenya. Mainly focusing on cultural heritage, he strives to tell the stories of a people, their culture, and history, playing a part in preservation through photography. He owes his photography knowledge to the various workshops he has attended such as the World Press Photo Masterclass, Photographer's Master Class by Goethe-Institut Johannesburg & Simon Njami, New York Times Portfolio Review, Canon Miraisha Program, and many more. His work has been exhibited in Kenya's National Museum, University of Liverpool – UK, The Museum of Drug Policy – New York, USA, Photoville - New York, USA, Lumix Festival – Hannover, Germany, and International Photo Festival – Leiden, Holland, among others. He has been commissioned by various publications and organisations such as Wired Japan, Axis Japan, and World Vision International. He is currently working on a long-term project: Rabai, researching his family's history and the history of Christianisation in East Africa, focusing on the first church edifice that was built in 1846 by the missionaries welcomed to Rabai, his native land, by their community elders.

Zorka Wollny

is a composer and a theatre artist who creates site-specific works which respond to their architectural surroundings. She collaborates—in a director-like mode—with musicians, actors, and dancers, and members of the local communities she works in. She was the initiator of the DUOS Festival and coordinated it together with Łukasz Jastrubczak.

Irena Zieniewicz

graduated in Graphics and Painting and Sculpture at the Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. In her work she touches upon such themes as: emigration, discrimination, identity, human rights, xenophobia, and intolerance. She works in such media as

sculpture, site specific installation, painting artistic and design graphics. Since 2019 she works at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, in the Serigraphy Laboratory of the Centre for Creative Industries.

Marta Ziótek

Choreographer, director, and performer living in Warsaw. Studied at School for New Dance Development (SNDO) in Amsterdam and at the Interdepartmental Individual Studies in Humanities at the University of Warsaw. In her work she focuses on exploring new forms of expression and embodiment; she uses the language of new technologies and pop culture; she is interested in new rituals and the performativity of identity. She constantly crosses boundaries between theatre, visual arts, performance, film, and choreography, which she consistently tries to broaden.

Rafał Żarski

Visual artist employing interdisciplinary in his art practice. His interest explores the aftereffects of contemporary labour systems including exhaustion, powerlessness, and leisure. He mixes fiction and scientific research to find connections between activities of everyday life with global socio-economical mechanisms. Currently, he lives and works in Poznań (Poland).

KOLOFON

Edited by
Łukasz Jastrubczak

Texts by
Aleksandra Łukaszewicz
Marlena Chybowska-Butler
Rosita Deluigi
Caroline Ngorobi
Fauzia Volke
Małgorzata Mazur
Joanna Szczepanik
Rick Butler
Łukasz Jastrubczak
Zorka Wollny

Authors of photographs

Y.O. - Yuda Oriema
A.F. - Arnold Frank
C.C. - Chariot Creations
T.O. - Tommie Ominde
W.O. - Witek Orski
I.O. - Igor Omulecki
J.S. - Jan Smaga
E.Ł. - Emilia Łapko
J.Sz. - Jerzy Szreder
A.O. - Anna Orlikowska
P.P. - Piotr Pauk
N.Sz. - Natalia Szostak
J.M. - Justyna Machnicka
A.P. - Alicja Pilarczyk
M.Sz. - Magdalena Szymków
S.H. - Suvena Hinzano
R.S. - Robert Stachnik
M.W. - Michał Wojtarowicz
M.T. - Mikołaj Tomczak

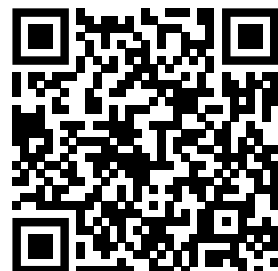
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Elizabeth Gagnon

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