THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

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Fonds

I DO NOT SAY ‘CULTURE’,
BECAUSE I STILL DO NOT
KNOW WHAT IT IS:
CULTURE—
CAN YOU EAT IT,
DRINK IT,
TOUCH IT,
MIX IT OR
DESTROY IT?

HRH PRINCE CLAUS (1926–2002), SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE FIRST PRINCE CLAUS FUND AWARDS CEREMONY, 1997.

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Fonds

REMINISCENCES OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

HRH PRINCE CONSTANTIJN

HONORY CHAIRMAN OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

My brother and I joined the board of the Prince Claus Fund in 2003, after my father's passing. The Fund had asked for someone from our family to take over the honorary chairmanship. At the time we were all together in the Dominican Republic. It was a special place for my father, who was a diplomat there during the dictatorship of Trujillo. We discussed who was going to take over as honorary chair of the Fund within the family. It was clear that my eldest brother's future duties as King would be hard to combine with a role at the Fund, so we decided that my brother Friso and I would do it together.

Neither of us were particularly experienced in the topics of either culture or development when we took over the Fund. We both felt slightly incompetent, but confident enough to take on the job. Our perspectives at the beginning were more those of consultants looking at the organisation, as to how it could be improved and where the weaknesses were. At first we were hesitant to engage in the content, but the Fund and its activities really came to life after we began to meet the laureates.

The Prince Claus Fund was the only project that my brother and I worked on together. I still miss the dynamic between us. We would take it in turns to make the annual speech at the awards, alternating our approaches. I remember how Friso once used a comic PowerPoint presentation to accompany his very funny speech. We tried to combine the seriousness of the subject matter and the fact that many laureates were working in quite dire circumstances, with light heartedness and humour. In some ways my father had paved the way for this approach, with his often eventful presentations at the awards ceremony.

When we joined the board, the Fund had already established itself as a key player in the field of culture and development. The Fund's central proposition, that culture plays an important role in development, and that development ought to happen in an equitable and collegial way, with partners in the global south, was gaining traction. My father Prince Claus' idea was that people are not developed, rather that they develop themselves. As the Fund evolved we have come to focus more on the empowerment of cultural activists across disciplines and their social impact. Awareness grew about the importance of exchanging narratives and voices, providing access to a wide diversity of perspectives, insights and cultural expressions. Now we hope to give back further, by engaging with the grassroots of culture and development globally.

It does sometimes feel a bit weird that I am the longest serving member of the board – and that I can never leave! I believe it is good for people to move on from boards after eight years; as habits emerge and one begins to repeat oneself. I try to find the balance between being a bit of an institutional memory on the one hand, and not being overbearing on the other, because the Fund needs new blood and fresh ideas at every level.

Trust is essential for the Fund's relationship to its community. We trust laureates and our partners to know best what to do with the funding we provide. They should also trust that the Fund is more than just a grant maker. We hope to provide the members of our community an anchor – the knowledge that somewhere in the world there is an organisation that looks out for you.

The international acclaim that our laureates receive creates something of a safety zone. Many laureates have told me that the award gave them a degree of support that meant it was harder for state and other actors to threaten them. Once you are part of the network of the Fund, then the Fund is there for you too. We follow our laureates and partners. When they are in distress we try to support them and stand up for those who have been bullied or otherwise hindered in their work.

Of course we also want the Fund to be a catalyst for change, beyond simply providing financial support. Money is just the initial facilitator; indeed the impact of the awards has always been broad. In the case of the architect Simon Velez, for example, his award was instrumental in making bamboo a legal construction material in Colombia.

The stories linking exceptional people and their works have made the Fund to what it is today, and have shaped my perspective on the Fund's role. Each of the laureates is impressive, with extraordinary achievements and personal stories. I think of Zanele Muholi's pertinent activism, or the remarkable and powerful exhibition of Teresa Margolles at the Prince Claus Fund Gallery in 2012. The warmth of people like the fashion designer Oumou Sy, who was one of the first laureates, in 1998, and the photographer and activist Shahidul Alam – who I met in Dhaka, just after he was released from prison – a constant fighter for minority rights, for freedom of expression and diversity, as well as a long term partner of the Fund. Also the people who are no longer with us, like the Egyptian poet Ahmed Fouad Negm, who was the main laureate at an emotional and sombre ceremony in 2013.

Many personal memories connect my family to the Fund. Carlinos Brown dancing with my mother just after she heard that her father was rushed to hospital on the day of his passing. The Fund played a central role in my father's last years. Famously, at one awards ceremony he read the 'Declaration of Amsterdam', freeing man from the Western convention of wearing ties. Another important memory is Carlou D's performance in Delft at my brother Friso's memorial service.

We first saw Carlou D perform at the premiere night of the Sahel Opera in Bamako on the banks of the Niger. The Sahel Opera is arguably the most audacious project of the Fund. It was a wild idea of my father, who felt that the rich storytelling and musical traditions in the Sahel needed a monument. The idea was immediately contested – opera was a western art form, and it seemed wrong to apply this to the Sahel. After my father's passing, however, there was a new enthusiasm for the project, which before had not been taken as seriously. Still, to actually write, cast and produce an opera is pretty complex, particularly for a grant-making foundation without the relevant expertise, as the Prince Claus Fund was. Who would write the music, and the libretto, in which languages? How would the musicians and singers be recruited? Who would do the costumes and choreography? Luckily the network that the Fund had built contained all the essential talent to produce and perform it.

The story, which is told through the eyes of migrants leaving Africa for Europe, was extremely powerful at the time, and remains so. The opera explored the tensions between nationality, pride and culture, the challenges to an individual's identity that occur when they decide to leave everything behind for a better economic future. The Sahel Opera told an important story that is even more relevant today, and will remain relevant into the future.

Sadly I didn't manage to visit enough projects and laureates over the years. One visit I still remember vividly was to the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Nairobi in 2004. It was an incredible experience, which I shared with the Dutch international football player, Aron Winter. The two of us ended up joining a team of girls in a game of football. I am not a very agile player, and because a number of the girls were not wearing shoes, I had to be careful not to tread on too many toes. At one point Aron Winter tried to set me up for a goal, but the girls were such football fanatics that he didn't manage to complete the pass.

I am probably very subjective in my opinion, but I really believe that the Fund has made a relevant contribution to its community. When the network comes together, at events like the annual awards ceremony, it feels like a big family, a global community. At the dinner that follows the energy, creativity and curiosity is palpable. It often ends with music and dancing, while new friendships, collaborations, and initiatives are being created.

The Fund also regularly called on its partners to reassess if it was doing the right things and to reconsider its strategy. At one conference at the Noordeinde Palace, the Fund's activity was criticised for not leading directly to poverty relief. When it came to Shahidul Alam's time to speak, he got up and elegantly pointed out that under the standard understanding of this term, incarceration would fulfil the criteria for poverty relief: food and shelter. His point was that freedom, dignity, civil society and establishing a real polity required much more than just poverty relief. Culture and freedom of expression have an intrinsic value. The economy and material prosperity are not the only yardsticks to assess the quality of life and the strength of societies. Culture conveys humanity and strengthens identity but is also a way to connect with other people. As the Fund has always put it, culture is itself a basic need.

This text is based on a conversation between HRH Prince Constantijn and Fariba Derakhshani.

CONTENTS

CULTURE IS A BASIC NEED: THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

FARIBA DERAKHSHANI
CHIEF SPECIAL PROJECTS OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

'If the paradigms are to offer hope for us all, the approaches required must be rooted in ethics and morality, the realm of the philosopher rather than the economist. They must ultimately go beyond questions of "having" and "wanting" to essential questions of "being".'
HRH Prince Claus, 1992

Ideas have always been central to the work of the Prince Claus Fund. Over the past 25 years the Fund has developed a unique corpus of thought, engaging since the very beginning with some of the most important thinkers in the world of culture and development. This volume hopes to present the journey of the Fund through the timeless ideas that have sustained it – not simply praising the work of the Fund but underlining the importance of the philosophy that it champions.

The Prince Claus Fund was founded in 1996 as a gift to Prince Claus on the occasion of his 70th birthday by the Dutch government. The Fund's initial commitment to philosophy sprang from the interests of the Prince himself, an outspoken commentator on the role of culture in development. Prince Claus's famous dictum, that people are not developed by outside forces, rather that they develop themselves, was only the first step in a wider theory that sought to foreground the intangible power of culture.

The Fund's fundamental precept, that culture – like food, clothing or shelter – is a basic need, is a bold claim, especially given that the Fund was established with funding from the Ministry of Developmental Cooperation. From the very beginning the Fund had something of an activist streak, disrupting the worlds of culture and development at the same time; a tendency inspired to no small amount by its iconoclastic honorary chair, the Prince himself. At the same time, the Fund's philosophy was developed in dialogue with its network, growing from listening to its partners, their preoccupations and their needs.

Looking back on the archive of these years of the Fund it is remarkable how its work foreshadows so many issues that are central to the discussion of art today, from questions of colonialism and histories of slavery, to the globalisation of the art world and the role of beauty in art. While the Fund worked in places of need, 'zones of silence', and broadly, the non-West, these ideas began to shift discourse in the European context also. The Prince Claus Awards in particular played an important role in opening up other European cultural institutions to a far more global vision of the world. The Fund's success in this regard was rooted in a willingness to listen, with humility, to its partners, and follow the advice of its global network.

The early years of the Fund saw conferences and papers, policy documents and discussion. Around the all-important awards, which began to recognise individuals from all walks of life – from artists to fashion designers, cookery writers to festival organisers – a complex and unique network began to be established. Alongside its many activities the Fund produced the Prince Claus Fund Journal and the Prince Claus Fund Library – both of which supported the publication of cultural criticism, and began to fix the Fund's ideas into a critical framework. At every stage, the Fund sought to engage its partners on an equal footing, using its Library platform as a way of supporting publications that might otherwise never have been published.

One of the Fund's most ambitious projects was the Sahel Opera, a long-time dream of Prince Claus himself, which was eventually realised after his passing. The Prince envisioned an opera as a work that would celebrate the rich musical storytelling traditions of the Sahel. The Fund drew together a remarkable team from the region to make this dream a reality. The opera premiered in Bamako, Amsterdam and Paris in 2007; its story of migration from Africa to Europe feels even more painfully relevant today than at its first performance.

This book hopes to capture some of the energy of the ideas that powered the Prince Claus Fund through the last 25 years. New essays have been commissioned from individuals whose work we believe in. Achille Mbembe, Salah Hassan and Hou Hanru – each of them a key architect in the formation of the Fund's philosophy, and important interlocutors since the beginning – share their recollections. Salma Samar Damluji discusses Cultural Emergency Response, the Fund's pioneering project that foregrounded culture in efforts to support regions hit by violent conflict and disaster. Djamila Ribero, meanwhile, a recent laureate, looks to the future of the Prince Claus Fund's philosophy. Between them, these essays capture the ambition and energy that has characterised the Fund since the beginning, and which we hope will continue to carry it into the future.

The Prince Claus Fund has a remarkable archive; across the archive as a whole, the sheer breadth of intellectual concerns, and again, their continued relevance to present debates, is striking. For this volume we have selected articles from the archive that show the breadth of topics that the Fund has engaged with; many are taken from the Prince Claus Fund Journal, a publication that characterised the early Fund's inquisitive, curious and open-minded approach to cultural practice. We have also included the libretto of the Sahel Opera itself, a remarkable cultural document. Finally, we reached out to a number of artists and photographers from the Prince Claus Fund's network, to illustrate the Fund's philosophy visually.

People have always been at the heart of the Fund. There are as many stories of the Fund as there are individuals in its network. This book hopes to tell one such story of the past 25 years, through some of the ideas that have driven the Fund's activities. This clearly, cannot be an exhaustive account of the past two and a half decades, but we hope it will be an important, if subjective, first step. Here, as ever, it is through dialogue that the Fund's work succeeds.

WRITING DOWN
ONE'S HISTORY,
ONE'S IMAGININGS,
ONE'S IDEAS
ABOUT THE FUTURE, HAS
CONSEQUENCES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY
AND INDIVIDUALS…
SPIRITS OF THE PAST AND
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE
FUTURE CAN DWELL IN
BOOKS AND DOCUMENTS.

HRH PRINCE CLAUS, AWARDS CEREMONY, AMSTERDAM, 1997.

THE FUND IS AWARE OF THE
POST-COLONIAL SITUATION
IN WHICH AN 'IMPOSED'
CULTURE HAS BECOME PART
OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE.
THIS HAS RESULTED IN
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
WHICH GENERATE NEW
IDEAS AND FORGE
NEW CONTEXTS.
THE FUND RECOGNIZES
THE DESIRE TO REDISCOVER
AND REVALUATE ONE'S
OWN HISTORY, WHILE OLD
VALUES ARE SOMETIMES
REINTERPRETED IN NEW
CIRCUMSTANCES WITH
NEW MEANINGS.

FIRST PRINCE CLAUS FUND POLICY PLAN, 1997.

HOW DID THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND COME ABOUT AND REACH THE AGE OF 25?

ANKE NIEHOF

The Prince Claus Fund did not emerge out of the blue. In the 1990s the Netherlands still had a Minister for Development Cooperation who headed the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time, DGIS was quite powerful and well-endowed with funds. At DGIS, Prince Claus had a position as Inspector General and Advisor to the Minister. So far as his official duties as the Queen's Consort allowed him, Prince Claus would be at the Ministry. At staff meetings, he would freely express his views on crucial issues, even when those views were at odds with prevailing opinions and standard practice.

Jan Pronk was the Minister at the time. He combined a passion for the battle against poverty and inequality in 'a world of difference' with a keen sense of the cultural colouring of local situations and processes of change. This is why he took steps to anchor the notion of culture and development at the level of policy making. I had a doctorate in cultural anthropology and many years of research and working experience in Indonesia. In 1991, I was appointed as policy staff at DGIS, with the portfolio of culture and development. During my years at the Ministry, I often consulted Prince Claus on the subject, and I could always rely on his support.

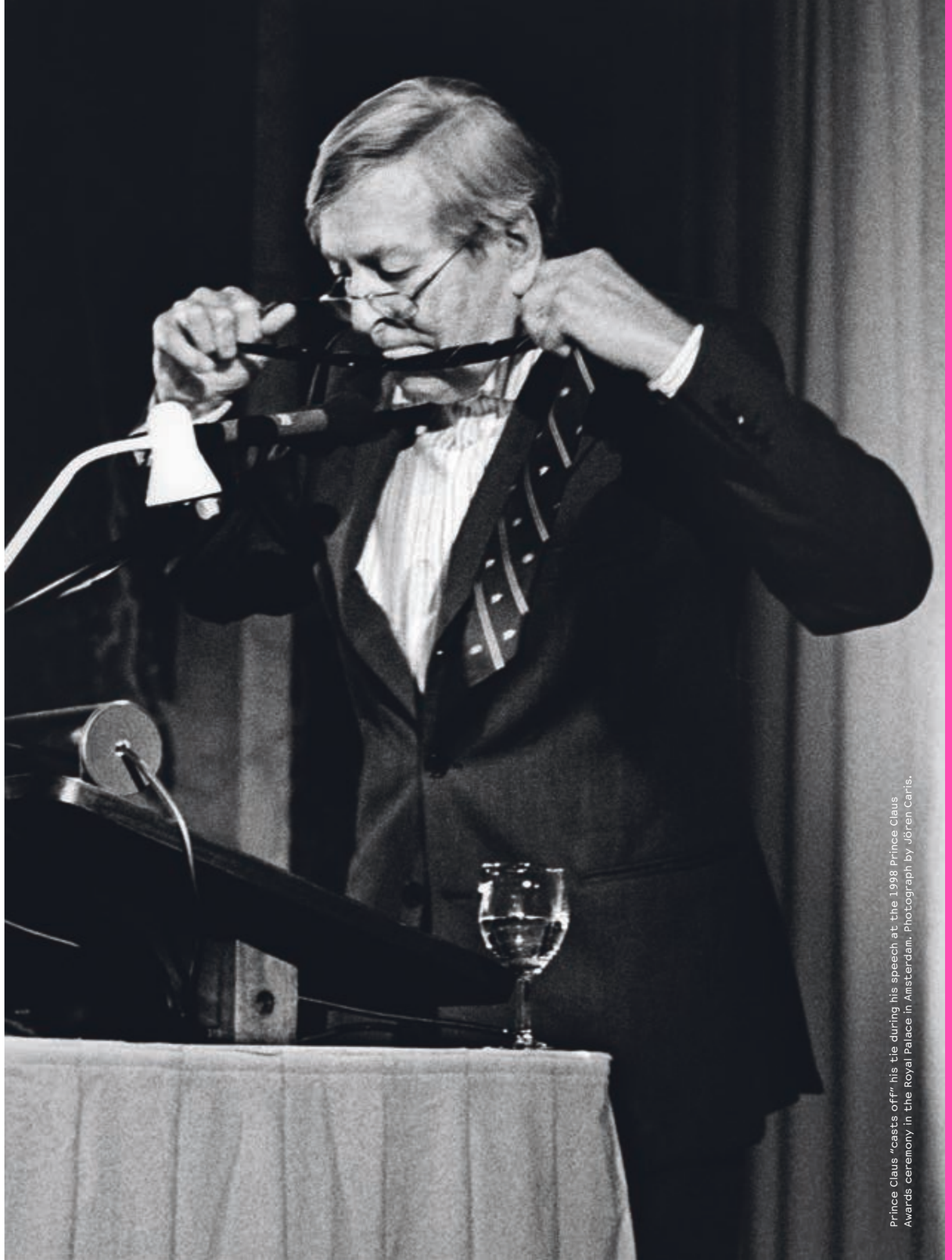
In spite of their different characters and positions, Minister Pronk and Prince Claus shared the conviction that development processes, however defined, are shaped by people's culture-based ideas and ideals. Against this backdrop, the Cabinet presented Prince Claus with the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development on the occasion of his 70th birthday on the 6th of September, 1996. In a moving speech at the launching of the Fund, Minister Pronk praised Prince Claus for his important work during his years at the Ministry and for the, equally important but sometimes controversial, insights he contributed to the cause of people-centred development. The composition of the first Board of the Fund reflected a broad and dynamic notion of culture as a potential positive driving force of people to meaningfully develop themselves and their communities, and arts as embedded in social and cultural environments and – simultaneously – highlighting universal humanity and aesthetic achievement. Among the board members in the early years were Adriaan van der Staay – former director of the Socio-Cultural Planning Bureau, philosopher Lolle Nauta – known for his work in Zambia, the writers Adriaan van Dis and Anil Ramdas, Edith Sizoo – founder of the Brussels-based organisation *Réseau Cultures et Développement*, Louk de la Rive Box – former head of the DGIS policy planning section, and artist Peter Struycken. Then working as a professor of sociology at Wageningen University, on behalf of Prince Claus I was invited by the Ministry to chair the Board. Prince Claus was Honorary Chairman, but contrary to what the adjective 'honorary' might imply, he played an active and sometimes decisive role in the Board's discussions and policy making.

In spring 1997, the philosophical and strategic underpinnings of the Fund's future policy were intensely debated at a conference in the Noordeinde Palace in The Hague. The board members could all invite one other participant. Thus the Board had inputs from thinkers and cultural practitioners from all over the world, such as the philosopher Avishai Margalit, author of *The Decent Society*, and Professor Gelia Castillo, who stressed that power inequalities could deprive people of their cultural heritage and dignity. She gave the example of how indigenous knowledge is used – and subsequently monopolised – by agricultural and pharmaceutical organisations and companies for their own profit.

Of the principles that emerged from the Noordeinde Conference, there are two that I would like to highlight. The first is the strategic choice to reward merit, rather than subsidise proposals. The Awards Committee was installed, chaired by Adriaan van der Staay. This resulted in the annual Prince Claus Awards, for which the Prince Claus Fund became nationally and internationally acclaimed. In December 1997, the founders of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair received the Principal Award at the first Awards Ceremony. Then and in subsequent years, the venue was the Royal Palace in Amsterdam, where Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus received the laureates and the other guests. The organisation of the memorable event was in the hands of Els van der Plas, the first director of the Fund, and her team. Starting from 1997, at each Awards Ceremony the Fund published a book on the awards and the laureates.

The second principle to note is that the Prince Claus Fund should provide a stage for people 'who have something to tell' but whose voices cannot bet heard because of repressive hegemonic discourses or who are silenced by political powers. Being aware that culture is always political, the Board explicitly pledged special attention for these 'zones of silence' where merit is hidden.

The Prince Claus Fund's longevity is a result of several factors. In the first place, Prince Claus was much respected in the 'development world' for his knowledge and his challenging views on the essence of development, and these views resonated with those of the then Minister for Development Cooperation. This ensued the Fund's inception. Second, the two principles highlighted above provided a legitimate and fruitful basis for the Fund's activities. Further, the Fund has actively invested in meaningful international contacts and has nurtured its networks. Last but not least, there have been no concessions to quality, whether it concerns the work of the laureates, the organisation of events, or the design of the awards books. All this makes the Prince Claus Fund a powerful player in the field, hopefully so for many years to come.



Prince Claus "casts off" his tie during his speech at the 1998 Prince Claus Awards ceremony in the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. Photograph by Jören Carls.

KOLWEZI

SAMMY BALOJI

2006, the first democratic elections are held in Congo. The same year corresponds to a strong external demand for copper and cobalt. Several international investors flock to Katanga. Among them, you meet Chinese investors. China promises to rehabilitate infrastructure in return for Congolese mineral development in Katanga.

Following the series *Mémoire* (2006), I documented since 2009 artisanal mining in Kolwezi, a region of Katanga. Artisanal mining appeared shortly after the downfall of the mining industry controlled by Gécamines, supported by the government, and has today become a practice of survival for the Congolese. Workers in these artisanal mines include former Gécamines workers, their family members, students and unemployed families who fled the war.

Given their current territorial and economic instability, artisanal miners live in tented cities of makeshift tarpaulins near the mining areas. These living spaces and operations are temporary. Workers are subject to contracts signed between the state and investors. Maps of these exploitative industrial and artisanal sites remain unknown to all but the mining registers held by government.

The extraction takes place at sites previously drilled by mining machinery, with slopes up to over 100 metres in height. Armed with picks, hammers, lamps and bags of raffia, miners climb these slopes in search of heterogenite (raw material containing copper and cobalt). To extract heterogenite from these slopes, they must excavate tunnels of 60 to 100 metres into the earth, before reaching the vein (a layer of earth containing heterogenite). Then they go up and down the slopes several times carrying over 50 pounds, to accumulate sufficient tonnage for industrial sale. Often miners are victims of landslides, but these losses do not stop the march to riches.

In these cities of canvas, I was struck by the presence of Chinese posters that decorate the interior walls of makeshift bars, hotels, homes, hair salons, photo studios. These posters depict images of Western and Asian cities, landscapes real or imagined. You can almost believe that these images represent the Congo of tomorrow. Thus, I have chosen to integrate these posters into my work as an extension of a utopian future born of artisanal mining, the loss of human lives, the export of minerals and the continuing displacement of populations.

All images courtesy the artist.

Détail of artisanal mining exploitation site #1, 2011.

Détail of artisanal mining exploitation site #3, 2011.

Twin Photos #2, Shiturū Plant, 2011.

Twin Photos #1, Flooded open-pit mine at Musonoi, 2011.

Twin Photos #1, Kawama Slum, 2011.

Twin Photos #5, Flooded open-pit mine at Banfora, 2011.

Twin Photos #7, Shiturú Plant, 2011.

Twin Photos #3, Flooded open-pit mine at Muscnoi, 2011.

Twin Photos #6–Muconoi, 2011.

Flooded open-pot at Banfora #1–Artisana Mine (site), 2010.

GENERAL CREATION FOR A NEW CULTURAL AGENDA

ACHILLE MBEMBE

In memory of Prince Claus of the Netherlands.

After several years spent in Europe and the United States, in 1995 I returned to Africa to serve the continent. That is how, in 1996, I found myself in Dakar, Senegal, as head of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA, *Conseil pour le développement de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique*).

A few months after arriving in Dakar, I received an invitation from Prince Claus requesting that I come to The Hague. On the occasion of his 70th birthday, the Dutch government had graciously offered him a gift of 25 million florins, and he wanted to use this gift to establish a fund for culture and development.

In most European countries culture had been widely acknowledged as a legitimate category of public action since the late 1950s. In the 1990s a contrary tendency began to emerge whereby the cultural sector was no longer entirely free of the laws of the market. Meanwhile, since the 1970s, experts in the field had started to analyse the impact of cultural factors on the development process. In their attempt to mainstream culture in development practice, various international bodies and international cooperation agencies thus began to assert that development and culture went hand in hand. In this context, development was understood to go beyond mere economic growth.

The majority of the institutions involved in research and development funding had a fundamentally utilitarian conception of culture. In most instances, culture was taken to be an exogenous constraint rather than one of the realms of everyday life. In other instances, integrating notions of cultural and economic change in order to design more effective public action was the only objective. Culture was not considered for its own sake; rather, its value was solely derivative. Its primary functions were to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and promote social cohesion. It was on these grounds that culture was to be integrated into public action and public policy as a whole, whether in the field of education, health, the environment or tourism.

Culture was thus subject to innumerable contradictory imperatives in the name of 'development'. The idea of an autonomous arena of cultural production was increasingly under attack and many people sought to subjugate artistic creation entirely to economic and financial priorities.

Reacting against this impoverished vision of culture and associated attempts to reduce it to 'custom', 'cultural heritage' or 'traditions', critics such as Arjun Appadurai emphasised its liberatory and utopian power. For Appadurai, the social, economic, and moral realms were inextricably linked in understanding the determinants of human well-being. In interpreting well-being in terms of a person's 'capabilities', Amartya Sen, for his part, provided much of the intellectual rationale for the movement toward a more holistic vision for development.

A MEMORABLE DAY

Prince Claus had gathered around him a small group of intellectuals, artists, and figures from the world of development. Three of us were from Africa, and there was one person from Cuba. The rest were Dutch. The morning was spent revisiting some of the debates about the links between culture and human well-being, capability, and freedom. In the afternoon, we went around the table gathering ideas about the extent to which culture is an end in itself and how it is a constitutive factor in how life is valued. Various proposals on how best to shape the Fund and define its goals were also discussed.

During the many breaks between sessions, I learnt that Prince Claus had spent part of his childhood in the former German colony of Tanganyika. His attachment to Africa dated back to that time. In Côte d'Ivoire he had worked in the German diplomatic services during the post-independence period. He had travelled to other parts of the continent and spent much of his life reflecting on the ethical basis for engagement in a society by an external agent and the relationships between external agents and domestic partners.

I was struck by the place Africa held in Prince Claus' reflections on the role of culture in development and in the dilemmas resulting from colonialism. He spoke about Africa as if somewhere, in its unexplored depths, it held the deepest roots of what might be called *general creation*.

And he was right. Despite the rape of colonisation, something of animist metaphysics remained. Evidently he had retained one or two things from his Tanganyikan childhood. To start with, the fact that in pre-colonial African systems of thought, culture was not primarily about identity, heritage or custom. Instead it was defined as the never-ending weaving of relations and correspondences between beings and things, liberating the power of germination. From the perspective of African animist metaphysics, culture functioned as an energy believed to govern vital phenomena.

Perhaps during his time in Africa, Prince Claus had also learned that individual humans are defined first and foremost by their vital energy and ability to resonate with the many living species that inhabit the universe – plants, animals, minerals included. As Germaine Dieterlen explains, every category of being and thing 'is in correspondence with all others, rank by rank, and with all parts of the human body, itself considered as a whole'. In return, every part of the entire universe projects into the human being.

Over the course of that day, he asked more than once whether the Fund should be dedicated solely to Africa. In the face of a lukewarm response to this proposal, he continued to insist that Africa be prioritised as a sphere of action. On several occasions he returned to the importance of languages, multilingualism, and translation for both the production of thought and the development process.

Prince Claus was equally interested in discussing the conditions of possibility of endogenous development trajectories in countries where colonisation had interrupted historical mechanisms. To his mind, the task of culture was to foster the flourishing of such possibilities and to contribute towards the establishment of a better balance between nature, the environment, and humans. This equilibrium had been disrupted by the industrial 'miracle' that led to the exploitation of resources to the benefit of a single corner of the planet.

On the topic of development, I was intrigued by the importance Prince Claus ascribed to water. Again, the relation of water to life is a key element in African cosmogonies. As divine seed, water is not only a material resource; it is considered part of the vital energies. These energies can dry up, especially when the conditions of collective and communal use are not met. Prince Claus' insight regarding the importance of water predated the climate crisis. As many voices celebrated the victory of capitalism over sovietism, it appeared he had his own distinctive concerns. Clearly, for him productivism would lead to a dead end. The earth was damaged and the burning issue was how to revive it. To foster such regeneration would require a decentring of thought, new concepts, and modes for generating culture anchored in concrete territories. Such was the task Prince Claus envisaged for the Fund.

Twenty-five years later, most of the intuitions he was not able to fully articulate that day are still valid. Born in 1926, Prince Claus left us on October 6, 2002. Since his passing, the Prince Claus Fund has come a long way. Today, it must bring into being the kind of progressive action that he envisaged. It must re-examine its place and function in a world split asunder by new fractures. It must do so by imagining a new cultural agenda for our time. Concern for the planet and the emergence of a new planetary consciousness must be at the heart of this new agenda.

SHARING THE PLANET WITH OTHER LIVING BEINGS

Humanity has become a telluric force. The new power relations currently forming at the planetary level are essentially the result of the industrial exploitation and organisation of the world. The industrial organisation of the world should be understood as the overuse of resources and the occupying of all ecological niches by capital.

The key practical, biological, ethical, and aesthetic questions of our time all relate to the future of Earth and to what connects us, compels us, transforms us as living beings among beings. The massacre of 70 million animals a year, the systematic, industrial organisation of animal suffering and the collapse of marine and forest ecosystems all present the same challenge: the sustainability of a single common ground shared by all life forms, the basis and product of terrestrial life.

Since one and the same life circulates in all bodies, domination – be it of humans, fish, cows, pigs or nature – is ethnically indistinguishable. All their ecological consequences are disastrous, as is the destruction of habitats and its corollary, the extinction of species. It is clear that the most fundamental cultural question today is how to reconstruct a habitable earth, one that will make possible a home where we all can breathe.

A new understanding of what it is to live on the same planet with other living beings is the priority for any new cultural agenda. The question of how to take care of the Earth, how to repair it, and, above all, how to share it – since sharing is one of the conditions of sustainability – can no longer be deferred. It is a matter of no less than developing an ecological intelligence to allow us to learn how to make space for life and how to live with, not against, life.

This cultural agenda must be forged at a point when the shock of neoliberalism is being felt everywhere. More than ever before, in every place on earth, social order is oriented towards the maintenance by all means necessary of inequalities at unprecedented historically high levels. We are caught in a logic of acceleration, while increasingly the dynamic of capitalism is driven by the ideology of technology, notably via artificial intelligence and robotics.

WHOLE-WORLD

Europe is no longer the world's centre of gravity. This does not mean that it no longer has any influence on the way of the world, or that we should discount it now. But Europe can no longer live in the illusion that it can dictate the course of things alone. This is not only the case for the economy or for military and technological power; it is also true in the spheres of culture, the arts, and ideas.

We are, in fact, a good way off from establishing an international order of solidarity, one endowed with an organised power transcending national sovereignty. At the same time, any hope of returning to self-sufficient empires is illusory.

Yet, technology, media, finance, in short, a whole constellation of forces that are simultaneously physical, natural, organic, and mechanical, are weaving webs and breaching fractures all over the world. Disregarding state borders, or paradoxically relying on them, an unforeseen planetary map, entirely different from official cartographies, is emerging. Composed of crossings and interdependencies, this is a shattered Whole, an interlacing of networks, flows, and circuits that are constantly assembling, disassembling, and reassembling at varying speeds and on multiple scales. This Whole comes of various entanglements, starting with the territories of humans and natural wilderness and their respective frontiers. It represents a fabric of the world made of many distant regions and a multitude of kernels, large and small. One way or another each kernel serves as a relay in the rapid circulation of different flows.

Of the many consequences that must be drawn from this new planetary condition, the first is the need to increase bridges and pathways to foster encounters so that together we can finally free ourselves of a singular narrative of history and, more importantly, from the colonial compulsion to impose hierarchies among beings,

cultures, and things. What our time calls for is to open wide the route to other ways of inhabiting the Earth, in the hope of making it a true refuge not just for some, but for all – human and non-human.

The second implication is a rehabilitation of the idea of Whole-World. Developed by Édouard Glissant, the concept of Whole-World, the keystone of the new cultural agenda, has three distinctive traits. First, it represents a total rupture with all forms of closing in on the self, whether through a territorial, national, ethno-racial or religious enclosure. It is also opposed to the kind of authoritarian universalism that lies at the base of the colonial project, a universalism of conquest that sought to realise itself not in a multiplicity of bodies and beings, but in a single body arbitrarily taken as unique and, moreover, as the only truly significant body. Lastly, from the perspective of Whole-World, culture is an invitation to abandon wilful ignorance, to discover our own limits. It is a matter of learning to be born-with-others, to break unconditionally any mirror expected to inevitably reflect back an image of ourselves.

Whole-World is woven from entanglements and relations between many different homes. The greatest obstacle to its coming to fruition is an ignorance so unaware that it becomes pure nativism trying to pass as both science and universalism. The battle against this form of ignorance requires that we leave the self and open ourselves deliberately to the possibility of multiple pathways and crossings, for only the trial of the journey and transfer allows us, each time from different worlds, to look together – and sometimes to see as one.

A BORDERLESS WORLD

Yet it is not enough to recognise the plurality of cultures. *Unbordering* is the other stake in the new cultural agenda. Not long ago, it was believed that the border between here and there could be defined more or less precisely. Today, this endeavour would be a pointless exercise. Today the border inexorably tends to distend, if not dissolve. Nationalisms notwithstanding, there is but one world and the time is ripe to redefine the parameters of what we hold in common.

All living beings share one and the same life. They all inherit and transfer one life. There is no world, society or community whose foundation does not originate in an idea of debt. Claims to divinity aside, we do not self-generate. The way to life is always opened to us by others. We not only owe them our birth, but also language, fundamental institutions, diverse heritages, and immaterial wealth that are all incalculable, non-repayable.

This originary form of debt obligates us to bequeath to those coming after us a world that is possible otherwise. This is obviously different from the expropriating debt in market form that fetters the conditions of reproduction, or even survival, of millions of people in the world today.

It is the very nature of humanity that we are called on to live exposed to one another, rather than enclosed in cultures and identities. But such is also, henceforth, the course of our existence with other species on this Earth: we are neither the only inhabitants on this Earth, nor are we more important than other life forms.

We are traversed horizontally by fundamental interactions with germs, viruses, vegetable, mineral, and organic forces. Better yet, we are partially composed of these other beings. They decompose and recompose us, make us and remake us, starting with our bodies, habitats and modes of existence.

In so doing, they reveal not only the extent to which the structure and content of human civilisations are based on foundations that are simultaneously complex and eminently fragile. It is also life itself, in all its anarchy, that is vulnerable – starting with the bodies sheltered, the breath exhaled and all the subsistence without which it ultimately withers away.

The principle of vulnerability characterises humankind. It is also shared, to varying degrees by every living thing on this planet, which powerful forces threaten to render if not uninhabitable, then at least inhospitable for most living beings.

PLANETARY CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE DEMOCRACY OF LIFE

To live exposed to one another is to acknowledge that one part of who we are originates in what philosopher Judith Butler describes as vulnerability. This vulnerability must be both lived and understood as a call to bond ourselves together in solidarity.

In matter of fact, what we call identity is not essential. We are all passing through life. As a new planetary consciousness slowly emerges, the reality of an objective community with a shared fate must override the cult of difference. Unfortunately, it is the nature of the neoliberal moment to release all sorts of obscure forces that we had more or less succeeded in keeping under control, or at least to relegate to the area of taboo in a not so distant past. This is the case for racism, and for all the authoritarian impulses which, it bears repeating, will not spare liberal democracies.

In order to function, racism requires the fiction that pure bodies, pure cultures, and pure blood exist. And yet there is no pure and transparent human body. Be it in bodies, religion, culture or blood, white simply does not exist. All bodies are grey, ochre, dark. This is also what makes them living, human bodies, and therefore porous – open to what makes them alive, to the flesh of the earth.

If we are to give democracy another chance, we must find ways to end the process of financialising existence and bring down new forms of war. And we must reinvent terms of representation to ensure that all voices are heard, all voices counted. If the basis of democracy is the principle of equality, then we must recognise that there is a threshold of social inequality that threatens the very idea of democracy.

Classic humanism has no future. It is too compromised and damaged to garner lasting support. It must be amended by shifting to a holistic conception of the world, Earth and even life itself. In addition to belonging to us equally, the Earth is inhabited by non-human species with which a form of complicity, coexistence, and conviviality must be woven.

To give democracy another chance, we must abandon the exceptionalism that asserts that a few are at the top of everything, and the rest of life subordinate. This is how we move towards an idea of the 'in-common', grounded on the co-creation of a planetary consciousness. Everything that supports the emergence and crystallisation of this planetary consciousness, as well as this in-common of our tangled world, must be cherished. For this reason, thinking and healing are inseparable, redefining a policy of culture that is also a policy supporting the well-being of the world beyond the human.

THE GOOD OF THE WORLD

It is highly likely that the arts of the 21st century will be African. This is no surprise, for isn't the future of the planet playing out on the African continent in that enigmatic laboratory of major contemporary metamorphoses? It is in Africa that many planetary stakes are manifesting with more acuity, starting with the question of the life of species, life as a whole, the persistence and sustainability of human bodies in movement and circulation, the objects that accompany us, but also the part of objects that are henceforth undistinguishable from who we have become, modes of existence in general. There is therefore a planetary becoming of Africa that is the flip side of the African becoming of the planet.

Prince Claus foresaw all this, even if he did not have the words to say it, when the Fund was brought into being. To his mind, it was quite clearly in Africa that the question of the *good of the world* arose irrefutably. That is still the case today. Whether in music, painting, sculpture, fashion, architecture, literature, theatre, cinema, dance, new critical thought or digital arts, the dream of an Earth that is hospitable to all burns strong. A habitable Earth would be an Earth whose surface has been repaired because all its inhabitants have recognised the life debt linking them to one another. Since reparation and restitution go hand in hand, this would also be an Earth in which the conflict between rights, memory, and justice would finally be resolved because the conditions of a relation made of reciprocity and mutuality will be recreated.

Struggles to memorialise will no longer be connected to conflicts over identity understood as insurmountable difference. Instead, there will be room for every memory, including those that are not our own. Communing with the suffering of all humanity, a solidarity between all human suffering will take shape and every memory will have the right to recollection. In this way, every human body will house the life of all other species and a politics of what we hold in-common will replace the politics of difference.

The dawn of general creation has arrived. General creation cannot be viewed solely from the point of view of economics. It must also be considered, above all, from the perspective of the production of the good of the world (*le bien du monde*).

After 25 years of existence, the day has come to transform the Fund into a bank, a culture bank, the first of its kind in the world.

Thanks to this original funding mechanism, we will support the new phase of general creation outlined above.

Translated from the French by Carolyn Shread.

AND YET SHE SMILES

SHAHIDUL ALAM

And Yet She Smiles is a body of work that was submitted under the theme 'Hope' for the Prix Pictet photo contest championed by Kofi Annan. It was selected as a finalist in that competition and was part of a global tour that began at the Victoria and Albert Museum, touring prestigious venues worldwide.

At one stage, I discovered it was due to show at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv. I am Bangladeshi. In 1971, we lived under occupation in East Pakistan. Members of my family died resisting the occupation, as did friends. The Pakistan army's denial of the genocide of our people relied on cultural events to demonstrate 'normality'. The boycott of Pakistan, and the global support for our armed struggle, gave us hope and led to our independence. My work in this exhibition is about a woman, Hazera Beagum who provides hope for children who would otherwise have little to hope for. Many children were killed during the recent Israeli aggression. Many more have died over the years since Naqba. Israeli children have died too. With hope dying for the Palestinian children who have survived, my participation would have been an insult to those campaigning for their freedom. It would have been a betrayal not only of Palestinian aspirations for freedom but the human longing for freedom and independence everywhere.

Featuring it in a commemorative book for the Prince Claus Fund, on the other hand, is a perfect fit. The courage, the tenderness and the ability to inspire hope amongst those who have little to hope for, is what Hazera represents and central to the values of the Fund.

Gang-raped numerous times as a child. Forced into pick-pocketing. Caned till she was unconscious. Sold to a madam. Hazera Beagum's life has little that would give cause to smile. Yet she smiles. She cries too. Not because of the gang rapes, or the beating, or the many years she lives in the streets as a rag-picker, but when she remembers that a man who worked in an NGO refused to work in her team because she was a sex worker.

It was at that moment that Hazera decided she would make sure it was different for others like her. She had earlier set up a self-help group for sex workers, but eventually, with the help of some university students and other friends and a generous journalist, set up an orphanage for abandoned kids. They are mostly children of sex workers. Some are children of drug addicts. A few are children of parents who simply couldn't afford to keep them. Hazera and her forty children live in five small rooms near Adabor Market 16, on the edge of Dhaka. Run entirely by volunteers, she has only one paid staff, the cook. 'What will I do with a salary?' she says. We share what food we have. 'I have a roof over my head and I have my children.'

Remarkably, Hazera is not bitter. While she remembers every detail of her nightmarish life, she also remembers the friends who believed in her, and helped her set up the orphanage. Instead of remembering that she is incapable of bearing children because of brutal unwanted sex, she basks in the warmth of the forty children who now call her mother.

When I first met Hazera, back in 1996, she was a sex worker based in the grounds of the house of parliament. We became friends, and she and her friends would often visit us in our flat, an unacceptable act in most homes.

'You hugged me today when you saw me in the street, just like the old times. That's something men will never do. They will have sex with me, grope me in the dark, rape me if they get the chance, but they will never hug me, as a sister, as a friend. That is what I want for my children. That they will grow up with dignity, in a world where they will be loved.'

As the kids get older, there is more need for money, particularly for schooling. Some of the students who support her have graduated and now have jobs. One works in a telecom company. With their help they run social media campaigns to raise money for the centre. The oldest girl Farzana, the daughter of a mutual friend Hasna – who still works in the streets – has just been admitted into a respectable boarding school. Two of the boys are also being sent to good schools. She has high hopes for the other kids too, though she worries about Shopon who is deaf and mentally ill. But she takes great pride in showing me the bunk beds she's had made, so the kids no longer have to sleep on the floor.

As I look back at Hazera peering through the little window, bidding me goodbye, I realise how lucky the kids are to have her as their mother.

All images courtesy the artist.

Don't you catch a cold now.

Bath time.

Aspiring glamour queen.

Dancing in my new dress.

Giant teddy.

Hazera on phone.

Alphabets.

Playing in the rain.

Hazera serving lunch.

Hazera playing with kid.

Classroom joke.

Hazera.

Boti.

MEMORIES OF PRINCE CLAUS FUND: TAKING A RISK, THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

SALAH HASSAN

The Prince Claus Fund has always done several things that are unusual for mainstream western philanthropy in their engagement with the non-western world. Firstly, the Fund has found a niche area, the global south cultures, which are not well funded, and which have always been supported through charity-like funding. The received idea is that something is not happening in these regions and organisations have to act in order to make things happen.

By contrast, the Prince Claus Fund starts from a point of a non-patronising attitude towards the global south, that this is a place, like any other place, which has been a wellspring of innumerable important contributions to world culture and civilisation, that has shaped colonial encounters with the west, and the countercurrents of decolonisation. The Prince Claus Fund's perspective is not the old way of developing or development culture – but rather culture *as* a development. The idea is that that culture is central to humanity everywhere, that the evolution of any civilisation has always been shaped by highly creative cultural forms. This non-patronising approach views the world as equal, diverse, and celebrates this diversity, not as a source of conflict but a source of creativity, a source of connecting to humanity, of transcending Eurocentrism. That basic premise attracted me from the beginning.

The Fund is willing to take a risk, think outside the box, fund things that are not necessarily easy to find the needed support for: an artist in a village in Vietnam or in the outskirts of the forest in the Philippines, or an unknown artist from Sudan, bringing them to the fore.

The second part of 'taking a risk' is that instead of relying on the so-called experts, the Prince Claus Fund went on to establish a network from the bottom up in the global south. Even in its evaluation, its communication, even knowing about different parts of the world, the Fund relies on experts on the ground, people who are either practicing artists, practicing cultural brokers, practicing curators, intellectuals from all walks of life. This is another way of saying let us just cut out the self-appointed 'experts' and go to the ground and establish a network of people with no expectation about how things will go but taking a risk in terms of effort to understand the realities. Other philanthropic organisations tend to look for guaranteed projects that will end up enamouring them to others, that will end up building on their egos, that will end up showing predetermined outcomes. They know beforehand what it is that they want, as well as having expectations of what the outcome will be. At the Prince Claus Fund, there is ultimately one goal, which is to support culture as development in and of itself, in all parts of the world.

At the time I was working on *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art*, which was founded by Okwui Enwezor, myself and Olu Oguibe. It started in a small place – Okwui's apartment in Brooklyn – and after a year it moved to Cornell University, where it was supported by seed funding from the Africana Studies and Research Center, my department at Cornell. *Nka* journal has grown in quality and scale, and for the last decade has been published by Duke University Press. It is now a flourishing major journal in the field of contemporary African art defined globally. The goal of the journal is to highlight the contribution of contemporary African artists, theorise and canonise their work, and bring their creativity to the fore. The journal would never have reached that kind of outreach and excellence, or quality of articles and contributions, or distribution without the major seed funding that came from Prince Claus Fund. We were not well known then, and there were very few other journals in this field, so we filled a niche. Prince Claus Fund recognised such potential and supported us in the first phase, and that really enabled us to stand up and get more funding from similar foundations such as the Andy Warhol Foundation.

Nka has become an important source of information not only for graduate and undergraduate students, but also curators, directors of museums and private collectors. The important question is how *Nka* journal filled the gap. At that time, when you argued with major curators – whether the directors or curators of the Venice Biennale, or Documenta, or any of the other major global platforms for contemporary art – when you asked them why they were not including the contribution of major modern or contemporary African artists, be they men or women, or African diasporic artists, their excuse was always, 'but there is no information about them'. Hence *Nka* filled a most important niche. In addition, *Nka* also provided the discourse that helped people understand the state of African modernism and contemporary African art production. As editors, from the beginning we understood the superficialities of dominant but also artificial boundaries between so-called sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa or black Africa and the so-called white Africa or Arab Africa and black Africa. Our thinking of Africa has been diasporic, and our vision of Africa is to insist that Africa is a global presence and not a geographic boundary.

It is ironic that it is in places we designate as the north, or the colonial metropole that the global south gets to know each other. Of course that has to do the complex historic and ironic relationships between the colonial metropole and the former colonies. But the Prince Claus Fund has made such encounters possible in having several annual meetings of its network take place in cities across the global south. Such encounters have expanded our reach, not only for the journal, but for me as a scholar and a curator. It is not just about

enabling me, and people like me, to connect; it is also about expanding our horizon through the network.

The Prince Claus Fund also played an important role in supporting exhibitions which have become historically landmark events in the history of contemporary art platforms. Initially part of the struggle was to present modern and contemporary African artists while avoiding the pitfalls of colonial thinking and expectation. The Prince Claus Fund supported the pioneering project we launched at 49th Venice Biennale in 2001, as part of a larger project called 'Africa in Venice'. Okwui Enwezor, Olu Oguibe and I formed an umbrella organisation called the 'Forum for African Art', bringing together a network of curators and scholars from Africa and the African Diaspora. Our first project was an exhibition titled *Authentic/Ex-centric African Conceptualism*, curated by Olu Oguibe and myself, which was accompanied by a major scholarly publication published by the Prince Claus Fund Library, and designed by the legendary Dutch designer and dear friend Irma Boom. This was a landmark in the sense that it was the first major exhibition curated by African curators at the Venice Biennale. It did not claim to represent Africa as a pavilion for Africa, or to be the first to showcase African artists. Some earlier efforts had brought traveling exhibitions to Venice, in addition, Egypt has had a pavilion since 1938 and has occupied its current building on Sant'Elena Island since 1952.

The theme of this landmark exhibition was conceptualism in Africa or African conceptualism. By *Authentic/Ex-Centric* we meant to indicated that we were trying not only to look at Africa diasporically, but also to transcend the myth of authenticity attached to non-western art, its permanent imprisonment outside the centres of contemporary art, and its characterisation derivative of Eurocentric paradigms. It was a show that was produced not only as an exhibition, but also as a scholarly book which presented the theoretical and scholarly ideas behind such a venture. This approach was something I always believed in: that you present a theoretically grounded perspective alongside the work in the form of a scholarly book that becomes an important source of the efforts to theorise and canonise the contribution of African artists.

We tried to disturb the stereotypical imagination of Africa by including artists from all sides of the artificial divide of the so-called sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa (sometimes referred to as Arab Africa). The exhibition dealt with the idea of conceptualism, which was unheard of in the context of the discourse of contemporary African art at the time. There was a tendency to focus on painting, sculpture and so forth when it came to thinking about modern and contemporary African art without attention to the fact that conceptualism as a movement has a non-western manifestation. We tried to show that Africa was at the forefront of conceptual art even in the 1970s, as conceptualism unfolded as a movement within Europe and North Africa, and that African artists were not living in isolation in the continent. At the same time, we wanted to challenge the notion of what is 'authentic' in African art, and with *Ex-Centric*, we play on the word eccentric, and the idea of eccentricity and centricity. This show successfully managed to broaden the horizons of western curators and directors of museums and galleries, and exposing them to the rich and diverse manifestations of African art and artistic expressions. Since then, the challenge has been on them to include and present contemporary and modern African artists. The exhibition and its companion book presented that theoretical challenge but it also brought such creativity to the fore. At the time, people would ask me, 'Why Venice?' and I would answer, 'Why not?' I was never opposed to taking the show to the continent. My concern was that Venice is a major forum for visual art that we sought to enter. It was not just a matter of critique, it was also a matter of showing African creativity, because the whole art world descends on the Venice Biennale, especially during its opening days. The outcome of that pioneering show was materially sensed in the trajectory of the careers of those artists. Many of them were invited to major exhibitions afterwards, many of them were immediately picked up by galleries and their careers have blossomed. Just follow the amazing career of the participating artists since the exhibition in 2001.

The third exhibition that was supported partially by Prince Claus Fund was *Unpacking Europe*, which happened in Rotterdam, close to the time of first iteration of Africa in Venice project. That was another interesting show. It was not only about Africa, although it included a visible number of African artists, rather it was meant to deconstruct the idea of Europe itself. We asked artists to think about what the term 'Europe' really meant to them. We tried to challenge the notion of the purity of Europe by just emphasising the simple fact that Europe is not as pure as it thinks of itself. There were hundreds of years of Islamic presence in Europe. The stereotypical fascist idea of ethnic purity in Europe is assumed to be a mid-20th century phenomena, but the truth is this idea began with the end of the Andalusian Empire in the mid to late 15th century. European modernity, indeed Europe itself as an entity, is very much indebted to other parts of the world, especially the Islamic world in all fields of science and culture. Indeed, when Arab travellers sojourned through Europe in the Medieval era, at the height of Islamic civilisation, they thought of Europe as a backwater in comparison to their world. Furthermore, looking at Europe today, its metropoles such as London and Paris, by the very fact of the colonial encounter, by the very fact of capitalist extraction, by the very fact of migration to these cities from Africa, Asia, South America, there has also been a counter-penetration to Europeans colonial ventures in such parts of the world. Europeans cannot just go and colonise other places and assume that they will remain pure. Something will come back to haunt you in the form of cultural and social interactions and movements. In actual fact, this sense of superiority among western nations, and the delusional idea of a pure Europe or west, runs against the logic of what brings the world closer through the idea of finding beauty in the diversity of human cultures.

The third project was a show in Dakar called *Diaspora Memory Place*, which was the official American representation in the Dakar Biennial. The network of Prince Claus Fund was very helpful in terms of the project through its network and through facilitating the design and of its companion book publishing by Prestel. The project brought three African diasporic artists, Pamela Z, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and David Hammons to execute three projects in Dakar that were not only highly conceptual but also site-specific in content and placement. The book published alongside the exhibition also ended up being a scholarly contribution that helped in problematising the idea of Africa and what it meant to diasporic Africans in the manner of three conceptual projects.

I have curated two major shows at the Prince Claus Fund Gallery: one was the exhibition of the work of Ibrahim El-Salahi, who had received a Prince Claus Award in 2002, together with two other artists, David Hammons and Stanley Brouwn, called *Three Crossings,* which opened in 2017. It was about Ibrahim's crossing from Sudan to Oxford, England, Stanley Brouwn's from Suriname to Amsterdam, and David Hammons' from Africa to the United States and back to Europe. I always remember walking in the streets of Amsterdam and seeing the city's sign, which is three crosses. For me it was a crossing, passing, of passage of these three diasporic artists with different trajectories and modes of work. The three are also giants in their own way. I also co-curated with Hoor Al Qasimi the exhibition of Kamala Ibrahim Ishag's work, *Women in Crystal Cubes*, two years later.

The Prince Claus Fund also supported two conferences and two publications on Darfur, Sudan, during the height of its crisis. Since *Darfur and the Crisis of Governance* was published, it has served a purpose, not just in focussing on Sudan, but in highlighting the failure of the ruling elites in postcolonial Africa to manage diversity in the context of the nation states, and in missing the opportunity to see diversity as a blessing rather than a curse. The Prince Claus Fund has always had the goal of supporting the celebration of cultural diversity. Diversity could have played a positive role in the post-colonial state in Africa, in places like Rwanda or Somalia, if it were not for the colonial policies of divide and rule, and the failure of the ruling elites whose interests lie in maintaining such policies. The lack of proper management of diversity, the failure to celebrate it, has been source of crisis for the continent, which the ruling elites, especially the military, have exploited by using minorities to execute genocidal wars, such as in Rwanda or Sudan. This is what the conference tried to analyse in the context of Sudan. We were successful in the sense that we brought together representatives of the Darfur liberation movement from every political inclination, with prominent Sudanese politicians, activists, and scholars all at one conference. The conference and the companion publication, which was published by Cornell University Press, was very helpful in terms of understanding the source of the problem historically and analytically, but also in contemplating the prospects of solutions, and correcting the misconceptions about the war in Darfur, which was not a tribal or a religious conflict as it has been historically analysed in the western mainstream media and the press. We tried to elucidate that the conflict was in fact a 'counterinsurgency on the cheap'. Several scholars at the conference pointed out that the ruling elites in postcolonial Africa have used ethnic differences in this way to perpetuate authority, domination, and hegemony.

That conference took place in Ethiopia, on the continent, through the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at the University of Addis Ababa in February 2008. The idea of doing it there was to make a point that conferences like this do not have to happen in the West. First, we knew very well, pragmatically, that many of the people who were going to attend that conference would never get a visa to the western countries at the time, especially the United States. Many Africans usually do not get a visa easily, and at the last minute you end up with three or four people stuck in some airport somewhere without being able to enter the country. But most importantly, it was a chance to make a point that we can do things related to African affairs on the African continent. The location of the conference also allowed us to bring in representatives of members of Darfur's liberation movements and for scholars from across the world to descend on Ethiopia. This is to say that certainly spaces within Africa can be incubators for brainstorming on complex African-based crises. I think that was also in line with, and essential to, the mission of the Prince Claus Fund – that not everything has to be brought to Europe or based in Europe.

Another conference titled *Imaging Ethiopia: Modernity and Monarchy,* took place at Cornell University in Spring 2007, as collaborative effort between The Institute of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa and the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. The conference questioned issues of modernity, issues of art and creativity and ideas about modernity in the context of Ethiopia and by extension Africa, and not necessarily as a derivative of western modernism.

Above all, the most important thing for me has been to serve as a member of the Prince Claus Awards Committee. It was also a great pleasure to be able to evaluate quality of nominated projects, and to enter into a dialogue with other colleagues and to listen to them. One thing about serving in such a jury is that you enter with your own list of preferred nominees in mind and based on your own biases. As the process unfolds, however, you learn and become humbled by the fact that you know something, but not everything; as the Yoruba people in Nigeria say 'Even the gods don't know everything! But they know something.' In the process of selecting winning projects, you enter into a dialogue with the other members of the jury. This process therefore enlightens you and humbles you and you say at the end: 'What a beautiful list has come out of these negotiations, and what a pleasure it is to meet these creative characters and personalities that have been awarded!' You do not always win – but finding a consensus is joyful experience and learning process in learning how to negotiate ideas. For me, it all points to the fact that the Prince Claus Fund is an organisation that has been different from any other and stands alone like no others. Hence, I ask for the powers in the Netherlands or any other place to increase funding for this important foundation, to keep the awards continuity, and support the network and the archives. The archives of Prince Claus Fund represent a very important story to be preserved and told to the next generation.

Every organisation grows and changes over time, and sometimes change is due to funding limitations and change of leadership. Sometimes there are moments of global crisis, like the world financial crisis or the pandemic that we currently live in. Funding has come into crisis during the pandemic and even prior to it. What this organisation stands on is a legacy of networking from the global south, a legacy of artists and experts in the arts who are grounded in their own cultures and aware of the most current discourse in cultural studies, of a network of artists and cultural brokers among others, built over 25 years. It is important to continue that tradition, the positive aspect of such course of action, and not to think in terms of how funding is limited or to follow the trendy for the sake of being fashionable. Although the recognition of younger generations is important, there are many older artists and cultural workers who have not been given their dues. Art historical, literary as well as cultural discourses remain Eurocentric despite efforts to displace such a grip.

The story of modernism in the non-west and global south has not been fully told. It is important to continue to support the older generation and to celebrate them. Look at the career of Ibrahim El Salahi, or the work of Kamala Ibrahim Ishag and how the trajectory of their careers have shifted and moved to the fore due to support of Prince Claus Fund and other pioneering organizations such as the Sharjah Art Foundation. It is important to tell their stories. My mission and the mission of colleagues like Okwui Enwezor or Chika Okeke-Agulu among others in the field of contemporary and modern art history is to disturb the Eurocentric narrative of art history, and to enrich it as well as expand it by inserting the stories of non-western artists who have not been given their dues, while thinking about the new ones. In many cases the archives and the voices of those older artists are still missing, and supporting efforts to highlight their contributions is also important.

The mission of the Prince Claus Fund is about research, archiving, documenting, and celebrating old and new talent. The Prince Claus Fund's legacy has been the support of research and archiving of the contributions of the global south, while thinking outside the box and thinking about what really matters from the ground up. It is the legacy of networking and bringing diverse experts and creative talents together in dialogue. It is the conferences and publications that the Fund has supported and ideas that came out of those gatherings. It is the exhibitions that the Fund has supported and how they transformed the careers of many artists and art critics among other cultural workers. I think this is the legacy of Prince Claus and the Fund's visionary leadership and programs, which have been embodied in its programming and publications and the support it has lent to so many remarkable projects worldwide.

This text is based on a conversation between Salah Hassan and Fariba Derakhshani.

THIS PROCESS OF HYPHEN-
ATION SEEMS TO HAVE
FOLLOWED ME THROUGH
LIFE AS A PERSISTENT TRAIT;
OF BELONGING AND
NOT BELONGING,
OF BEING NOT QUITE
ONE THING AND
NOT QUITE ANOTHER.
THERE IS A VULNERABILITY
IN THIS POSITION WHICH
I SEE NOT AS A WEAKNESS,
BUT AS A FORM OF
EXPOSURE WHICH ALLOWS
THE WRITER TO INHABIT
OTHER LIVES, TO IDENTIFY
WITH PEOPLE NOT BECAUSE
THEY ARE LIKE US, BUT
BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT.

JAMAL MAHJOUB, FROM *DISPLACING THE CENTRE*, PUBLISHED IN PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL #11, 2004.

CONTESTING THE PAST

JAMES IROHA UCHECHUKWU

James Iroha Uchechukwu is among the leaders of a new generation of Nigerian photographers. He received the Prince Claus Award in 2008 for his striking work, for his stimulation of photography as a contemporary art form in Nigeria and for his support of young artists. By fusing the documentation of everyday reality with the creative language of imagery, Uchechukwu expands the possibilities of photography, pushing local art in new directions. His high quality images depict bodies in context, exploring the physicality of existence in the mix of cultures and influences that is 21st century Lagos, a megacity with urgent social issues. *Fire, Flesh and Blood* (2004), a group of images depicting open-air abattoirs, won the Elan Prize at the African Photography Encounters (2005). While documentary in inspiration, the series plunges the viewer into the chaos of colour, smoke and close-ups that are iconic in their intensity, capturing moments that are at once harsh, powerful and poetic. Uchechukwu was instrumental in founding the Depth of Field collective, bringing six talented young photographers together to create strong exhibitions in Nigeria and abroad. By combining their highly individual perspectives they offer insight into the complexity of their environment. Uchechukwu is also instrumental in mentoring a younger generation of photographers through workshops and seminars. This series, *Contesting the Past* (1998–2018) takes the Igbo people of south-eastern Nigera as a case study to explore the rapid erosion of cultural heritage as urbanisation and 'modernity' creeps in.

All images courtesy the artist.

History is not Absent Minded II, 2019.

History is not Absent Minded IV, 2019.

History is not Absent Minded III, 2019.

Ejima, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Pepe, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Irte, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Dinta, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Ada Bekee, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Ite Nsi Mbom, Contesting the Past, 2014.

Anyim, Contesting the Past, 2014.

ENRICHING THE WORLD

HOU HANRU

'The conditions of our existence in the contemporary world … are full of contradictions – the hegemony of the powerful, whether natural, human or social, always being challenged and defeated by the weaker and more fragile but ever-changing forces, just like life itself. And this is indeed what ecology really means … Liang Shaoji's work reminds us that taking up the challenge to solve the crisis does not only mean resorting to science. Instead, we should start reflecting on the very relationship between our senses and nature itself, namely our aesthetics. The realm of beauty is the very starting point for looking at nature and treating our environment in a more relevant way.'
Towards a New Interface between Art and Science, 2009 Prince Claus Fund Awards Book

The Prince Claus Fund was a pioneer organisation in engaging with questions of contemporary arts and culture in the context of embracing multiculturalism, while rethinking the relationship between the west and the rest of the world, when I was working at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam in 1995. Many of the conversations we had there dealt with the questions of how multiculturalism and cultural diversity were changing the face of the contemporary art scene in the world – particularly in European countries. At the same time, I was also working closely with other institutions in town, in particular De Appel Foundation, who were allies that shared the same sense of mission.

I became involved with the Prince Claus Fund from 1996, after Els van der Plas became the director, and later I was invited to be on the advisory committee. I also joined the Awards Committee: selecting the artists who would become the Prince Claus Laureates. This list includes particularly interesting artists such as Cui Jian, who was considered to be the Chinese Bob Dylan – I had met him in the early 1980s when he was still a trumpet player – and Liang Shaoji with whom I have been working since the mid-1980s. I have since written texts for publications and awards books.

In around 2008 or 2009, Els invited me to be on the new editorial committee for the Prince Claus Fund Library, and there I worked with Okwui Enwezor. Okwui was a really great colleague and an eternal source of inspiration. At the time I was also working with him in San Francisco, and together we were invited to be a part of this library project. That was an intense period! In different ways I was talking to Els, and others involved in the project, in regular discussions on how to build this library.

In those early years it was important that the fund was reaching out to non-Western areas. It introduced so many writers, artists, filmmakers and others from Africa, Latin America – especially the Carribean – and of course Asia, to the Netherlands and Europe. At the time, it was extremely significant for people to have a chance to encounter these creators who had very little visibility in the so-called centre stage. Of course, 25 years later things have changed a lot: people don't necessarily have to come to Europe to become famous any more.

I think the funding strategy of focussing on encouraging creative practices in the Third World was a real avant garde – both at the Prince Claus Fund, but also in the Netherlands as a whole. I was lucky to be working at the Rijksakademie, which had specific grants for artists from the Third World countries. Today they still have a very dynamic relationship with artists from non-western countries.

One of the fruitful results is the main figure of the current Documenta curatorial team, Ade Darmawan, the director of *ruangrupa*. He was one of the most extraordinary students from Indonesia and brought a lot of stimulating ideas, adapted to the new context and created very original work. Within this dynamic, an organisation like the Prince Claus Fund is, in my opinion, part of the game of making such things happen. It is part of a very important common effort to build the new global situation. So after all these years, I really like the slogan 'culture is a basic need' as a philosophy.

The Shanghai Biennial in 2000 was the first international biennale of contemporary art to happen in China. It was an extremely exciting time in which the old system was still in place, but many new things were beginning, especially in trying to bring contemporary art to the establishment, namely, public museums. There were a great many artists and art communities that had self-organised and autonomously undertaken activities in the 1980s and 1990s, but there were very few major museums that could really show contemporary art; indeed there were few museums at all at that time. The Shanghai Biennial, organised by the Shanghai Art Museum, set a model for development to come – and it came at the same time as the urbanisation of Shanghai, the renovation and expansion of the city. The expansion also stood as a model for China and later had a great impact on its global transformation.

Looking back after 20 years, things became much more developed just a few years after the Biennial, new museums were created in Shanghai and in many cities across China, as well as new biennials. You can see a proliferation of contemporary creation and the market for contemporary art in China became the second biggest worldwide. The education system evolved too, even if it remains quite academic. There are also many young artists who have travelled and studied all around the world, and who have come back to China, settled there, and made a scene. Twenty years ago we thought the idea was to make contemporary art something acceptable to society and the establishment – now Shanghai has become one of the leaders in the global scene. This brings excitement, creativity as well as new contradictions and challenges. When you look at the incredibly exciting scenes in Shanghai, Beijing or Guangzhou today, you can see how complex, dynamic and contradictory the evolution is. You no longer have to come to New York to understand how the world is really changing.

On the other hand, it's interesting for us to think about this: What kind of a new understanding of global culture should there be from the European point of view? Such a question changes the dynamics in the old centres. That is something that we tried in the 1990s – to bring the global network to Europe; not only to help these artists be visible, but really to carry out a major restructuring of what we understand of contemporary society in the West itself.

There are many ways to look at the world and they are equally important and equally valuable. In the meantime, it's equally dangerous because at any moment, when they become too established, or too closed in on themselves, there could be a danger of folding back to a so-called indigenous or native obsession. This can pose a danger when driven by a certain social or political agenda. It's very important to be always alert to how to preserve a tension or allow a space for cultural exchanges and hybridisation, in order to resolve the tension between individual freedom and cultural roots, and the envisioning of a future that does not rely on the justification by 'absolute authenticity'.

I learned a lot from the Prince Claus Fund. One of the major fields I have been working in intensely over the last thirty years has been urbanisation, thinking about the space of the city and cosmopolitanism. I've looked at how artists have created new, almost utopian versions of cosmopolitan society. Working with the Prince Claus Fund shifted my perspective a little to also look at the countryside, the spaces in-between, and the history of different regions of the world that do not have the same obsession that we do with the urban. I think one of the most interesting features of my time working with the Fund has been collaborating with artists from Africa or from the Caribbean. They bring a certain difference in understanding how the world is structured and that gives me the feeling that the world can be enriched on a more diverse model.

How we define the future today is an interesting question. I think that it's commonly agreed today that the future is no longer a vision of progress in the development model of modernisation of the 20th Century – not only in the west but all around the world. I think that it's time for us to think again how we can be together, globally. It's not necessarily about following one linear timeline. I think the coexistence of different time systems and the re-emerging of a different system of values about life are becoming extremely crucial. There's a delicate distinction between the exoticised embracement of difference and a real revitalisation of 'other' cultures. It's a real challenge and we're in a highly intense situation. On the one hand, you have an unprecedented transformation of technology that subverts the definition of the human – we are not only using computers but we are becoming computers and computers are becoming us. On the other hand you tend to share a common effort to bring back cultures, things, values which have been forgotten, ignored or eliminated over time, especially the modernisation process driven by colonialism. The interesting thing is that thanks to information technology, we have access to much of this while excessive information technologies are dominating our life. Then there is the environmental crisis – a very direct feeling about the transformation of our natural conditions. Whether you call it climate change or global warming, it is real, and it has become a central concern of artistic creation. It's here that diverse cultural resources become fundamentally important as references for us to look for ways out.

Art is about showing us how contradictory our lives and values are. Art is critical of everything; it's always on the side of provocation. It's not simply something we use to celebrate how good we are. We need someone to stand up and put in your face that there are things that are wrong out there. Somehow we are all lost in these huge waves of information, and especially in the facility of expressing oneself without having the time to think about who we are. But I still want to say to future generations: be yourself. Perhaps, today, this is the most difficult thing to be, as the notion of self has changed into a kind of constant transient or transformative existence.

It's a huge luxury to have an organisation like the Prince Claus Fund in the sense that it has not been 'eaten up' by the market or consumer system. This can help to preserve things that are otherwise no longer possible in big institutions. Small and medium-sized institutions with a distance from the mainstream – and especially from the incredible power of capital – need to be preserved. Change is always about looking for the reinvention of the self.

This text is based on a conversation between Hou Hanru and Fariba Derakhshani.

SECRET SARAYAKU

MISHA VALLEJO PRUT

This is the story of an indigenous people turned cyber-activists in the fight to protect their jungle.

The Kichwa people of Sarayaku in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest have always held a physical and spiritual connection with the jungle and its Supreme Beings in order to maintain equilibrium within their world. They believe in the *Kawsak Sacha* or Living Forest. The Kawsak Sacha is based on the idea that the jungle is a living, conscious and rights-bearing entity in which all elements, including the plants, animals, humans, rivers, wind, stars, etc., are alive, have a spirit and are interconnected. If one aspect of this is damaged, it will trigger a chain reaction affecting all other parts of the jungle. Thus, the Kichwa take from the jungle only what they need to survive and nothing more. They believe that protecting their home is fundamental not only to their own survival, but to that of humanity. By documenting their everyday life, this transmedia project offers a reinterpretation of their worldview.

At first glance, this story may appear too insignificant to affect life on the planet at large, but not according to the worldview of the Kichwa. The Kichwa people believe we are all part of this big and complex organism that we call Earth. Everything that affects the Kichwa affects all of us. Everything is connected.

In emphasis of this connection, the Sarayaku have used social media to become cyber-activists: they spread their environmental message and connect with supporters across the globe via a satellite internet connection. The community is convinced that by sharing their life in the jungle, they will inspire people around the globe to implement different strategies in the fight against climate change. By raising awareness of their values, they also pressure the Ecuadorian government and big oil companies to not intervene in their territory again, as they did a couple of years ago, causing a major social conflict. Nevertheless, this internet connection with the 'outside world' is a double-edged sword and has resulted in an ever-greater presence of Western culture within their everyday life.

The worldview of the Sarayaku is not linear. It resembles a circle with hundreds of nodes and internal connections. This documentary uses that concept as a starting point, for which reason several elements within this project are accessible both individually and as a whole. The elements of this project consist of a web documentary, book, exhibition and podcast.

This transmedia project is an invitation to explore this jungle of information where Western contemporary knowledge merges with the knowledge of the ancestral indigenous community. Furthermore, this documentary opens the debate on how we can keep our planet alive. The Sarayaku are at the forefront of the fight to mitigate climate change; the question is, where are we?

Betsy Santi paints her face with the dark pigment of a rainforest fruit called 'wituk' before the Uyantza Raymi celebrations. It is common for people to paint their face, hands and hair for these festivities with a substance known as wituk. This dark ink is made from an Amazonian fruit, also known as wituk, and can stay on the skin for up to two weeks. Women often create more elaborate and delicate designs than men, combining drawings of stars, geometric figures and western makeup techniques.

Children play in the Bobonaza River. This river is the main 'road' that communicates this indigenous community with the nearest city of Puyo, which is located at around 5 hours upriver by motor boat.

'The relationships we maintain with the Supreme Beings enable us to uphold our economic systems, our technology, knowledge and science. They guide and accompany our social, cultural and spiritual life. It is with their help that we construct our organizational and political systems, and design our future, autonomously determining our destinies and ensuring the continuance of our community.' - Extract from the *Kawsak Sacha* (Living Forest) declaration written by the Kichwa community of Sarayaku.

Jhonzu Machoa holds a purse at sunset. She is standing on one of the trails that runs along the Bobonaza River.

A catfish lies on the Rotuno River in the Sarayaku territory. Catfish is the most common fish found in the Ecuadorian Amazon region and as a result, is an essential part of the local communities' diet.

A Sarayaku boy leans on monkey skin that is being dried up in order to make a drum. Before important celebrations, the Sarayaku men go deep into the jungle in order to hunt. They take from the jungle only the necessary for their subsistence and take advantage of everything they hunt: they will eat the meat, use the skin for drums and use the fur and feathers as clothing.

A boy holds an oropendola bird lying on cut leaves. The bird's feathers will be used for decoration and its meat as food for the community.

Yaku, a Sarayaku albino boy plays with tree leaves at night in Sarayaku's central plaza. The philosophy of the Sarayaku, called Kawsak Sacha, states that in the rainforest everything has life and has relation to each other. People, animals, plants, land, water and wind – everything is related and if something gets damaged it will affect and probably destroy the rest.

'Trees in the jungle are centers of biodiversity that ensure the continuation of life. Some trees have been alive for millennia and these are essential in maintaining the spiritual balance; each member of the community is able to communicate with and connect to them.' – Extract of the *Kawsak Sacha*

Two women prepare 'chicha' on sunset. 'Chicha' is a yucca based fermented beverage that is usually prepared for celebrations. Its preparation consists of boiling the yucca roots, mashing them, chewing them and spiting them into big clay bowls. After that, the bowls are sealed with leaves and the mass is left for three to four days of fermentation.

Emilio González holds a recently caught catfish during the night fishing and hunting expedition. Catfish is the most common fish found in the Ecuadorian Amazon region and as a result, is an essential part of the local communities' diet.

'The jungle is home to the Sacha Runakuna, or inhabitants of the jungle, both visible and invisible, who jealously protect the balance of the fragile ecosystems and their relationship with human beings. Water falls, lakes, rivers, swamps, clay clicks and giant trees, each of these has its own Supreme Being.' - Extract from the *Kawsak Sacha*

Jose Miguel Santi sits near the fire in his mother's kitchen. Fire is an essential part of daily life here: it is used for cooking and smoking food, and for warmth on rainy days.

A Sarayaku indigenous boy dresses with a self-made hat that has a small sun hanging from it. The sun's face is decorated with traditional indigenous paintings. Back in the day they used to worship celestial bodies such as the Sun and the Moon but nowadays these traditions have merged with western culture in general and with Catholic religion in particular.

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY AS A PRINCIPLE FOR ART CAN TRULY PROPEL US AND THE PHYSICAL ENERGIES THAT ARE PART OF OUR UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE TO BUILD NEW VISUAL AND MATERIAL FORMS OF EXPRESSION LESS TIED UP IN ORIGINALITY AND THAT LINK US TO ARCHAIC, EVEN ANCIENT, TIES TO NATURE.

JOHN GRANDE, FROM *THE GROUND UP: ON SITE EARTH ART EXPANDS AND EVOLVES TO CULTIVATE THE WORLD*, 2009 PRINCE CLAUS FUND AWARDS BOOK.

RETHINKING ARCHITECTURE & CULTURE: THE ROLE OF THE CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND NETWORK

SALMA SAMAR DAMLUJI

Located in the south-west corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen was at the centre of a network of early urban civilisations and produced one of the world's most distinguished cultures and architectural traditions. The cities of Yemen, have long been the domain of stories and fables, woven in civilisations of esoteric references, and kingdoms of power, glory and beauty. From the Queen of Saba', or the pre-Islamic poet Umru' al Qais of Kindah who sang of the red wine grape vines of Shibam, to Queen Sayyidah (referred to as Arwa) who ruled Yemen for 60 years in Jiblah where her palace and mosque, polished in brilliant white, stand. The land of incense trees, myrrh, and perfumes, produced to this day in Hadramut and the eastern province of Mahrah that borders Dhofar (in present-day Oman), and the Prophet's reference to the people of Yemen being 'the most kind-hearted'. Historians and travel writers have been fascinated with the culture of Yemen and its people across the centuries. It is a country and terrain blessed with an extraordinary landscape, inhabited by ingenious builders, that has continued well into the present.

The value and contribution of Yemeni earth architecture with the systems of construction and use of natural local resources and materials, is a valuable discipline informing contemporary sustainable design and building, as well as reconstruction and rehabilitation of the urban heritage and environment, in areas of conflict and crisis subjected to neglect, dilapidation and destruction over the past two decades.

In the summer of 2007, I received a phone call from Yemen. It was June. After the exchange of formal pleasantries, my colleague finally broke the unexpected news. The seasonal rains over Daw'an had caused severe flooding that ravaged the town of Masna'at 'Urah. The five-storey mud brick mansion of Ahmad BaSurrah had collapsed partially down the middle, with the northern façade destroyed, and that of Naib Hassan which was exposed beneath the mountain rock escarpment, was demolished. Photos followed of the heart-breaking damage. In the few months prior to that we had completed the architectural survey of the site with its 12-building complex, with view to rehabilitating the site for a heritage hotel.

While I remained in a state of total loss, back in London I consulted with a colleague on how we could get sponsorship to conduct the immediate emergency works needed to mitigate the danger on the site, to prevent the possible gradual and complete collapse of the aforementioned buildings. Masna'at Daw'an, constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century, in sundried mud bricks, crowns the villages of lower Wadi Daw'an. Perched on the rock escarpment overlooking the Wadi the buildings encroached on the cliff walls, the earliest inscribed date found on one of the entrance gates is AH1298/1880–1 AD. The stronghold towers over the *wadi*, overlooking the neighbouring towns to the north, west and south.

I was finally advised to contact the Prince Claus Fund. Cultural Emergency Response (CER) came to my rescue. This was the beginning of a partnership with CER, one that has endured and been most inspiring and constructive. Work on Masan'ah continued between 2008 and 2012 with cleaning the debris, consolidating the site and the reconstruction of the partially collapsed walls and rooms in 3 houses of Masna'ah (of Ahmad, Nasir and Ali Ba Surrah). The damage was more extensive than originally conveyed and described (I was later told this was not to discourage me) and we had to spend three more seasons to cover other damaged locations on site. By 2012 the reinforcement of the entire site, external walls, roofs, and foundations of the 12 houses was complete. The site had come back to life from the ruins of 40 years of desertion.

Between 2009 and 2013 the emergency reconstruction of the architectural heritage continued with further projects carried out in partnership with CER. This covered different towns and over 20 sites in the Province of Hadramut. Several other cultural sites suffered flooding due to torrential rain fall, causing the loss of villages, inundating agricultural fields and housing. A particular area that was devastated was the town of Sah and the neighbouring city of Aynat where three emergency sites were rescued: the ancient mosque of Aynat, the Dome of Ghayl BaWazir and three demolished Sufi Saint Domes in Wadi Sah. In Wadi Daw'an another site was recovered and restored by 2014, that of Qarn Majid. Two houses in the city of Shibam, which was added to the World Heritage List in 1984, were consolidated and rehabilitated, while one had to be rebuilt completely due to the collapse of the two upper stories, following the flooding and rainfall that had ravaged some of the city's towering housing.

Working with the Cultural Emergency Fund was not restricted to Hadramut but led to advising on emergency work projects engaging with the destruction caused by the ongoing war there since 2015. This included the capital Sana'a, and the Bayhan museum collection in Shabwa. Further we assisted on a Fort in Kurdistan, Iraq (2017–2018) and a workshop in Karachi, Pakistan with a CER Network partner, architect Yasmeen Lari (2019).

The partnership has been an important catalyst, a driving force with modest funding that has enabled the resuscitation of an architectural culture and wealth that is a valuable resource for earth materials, technology in architecture and design, and reference for contemporary and sustainable architecture within ecological environments. This is why it is important to reiterate, after years of working with the master builders all over Yemen, that this is the architecture of the future, not the past. Cultural Emergency Response and its network has been our collaborator in this quest. As a gesture of gratitude, the name of the Prince Claus Fund, and CER is recorded in plaques at each of our reconstructed buildings, forts, mosques, saint domes and the Shibam city wall.

As a result of the past six long years of war in Yemen (2015–2021), the condition of devastated cities and the built environment is lamentable and heart-wrenching. Notwithstanding the loss of lives and suffering, deprivation, famine, cholera and lack of clean water and basic health care, the scale of bombing and destruction has targeted some of the important landmarks of the country's cultural heritage in a continuing act of urbicide. Both of architectural and archaeological significance, a heritage of unique historical and cultural quality undergoing ruin, along with the historic residential quarters and neighbourhoods of Sana'a' and Taiz were hit, damaged or destroyed in the process.

Cities like Sanaa, Taiz, Aden, Zabid and Maarib have all had their equal share of targeted destruction and demolition (Sana'a' and Zabid are included on the World Heritage List). Residential quarters, hospitals, schools, gardens, orchards and infrastructure have not been spared. Churches in Aden and early mosques and domes, have been desecrated and damaged by force. Domes and sanctuaries of Sufi saints have suffered the worse acts of aggression, detonated and flattened to rubble. Looted museums witnessed in Aden and Mukalla. And after all that has passed and gone, the question remains; why?

POST WAR PROJECTS 2017–2021

Over the past 4 years, Daw'an Architecture Foundation has been engaged in the reconstruction of cultural landmarks that have been damaged or destroyed during the war in Yemen. The primary sites were located in Hadramut Governorate, including the city of Shibam. In 2017 the Shibam Gateway and Palace entrance were badly damaged when a bomb was detonated outside the city gate.

Shibam was selected for project implementation. This followed an appeal in May 2018 for funding to reconstruct the damaged city gateway, adjacent palace and *sur* (surrounding city wall), which all suffered after a bomb was detonated near the city gate in 2015. The first phase of the building work was implemented and finalised over the period from March to May 2019. It included the structural reinforcement of the old walled city's South Gateway, Shibam Palace's western rampart and an adjacent house.

Following Shibam, a new cycle of projects was implemented in partnership with the CER Network, which were funded by the British Council's Cultural Protection Fund. The funding was provided by the CPF enlisting the collaboration, administration, and support of the CER who entrusted us with this work.

The first phase of the project (2019–20) included the reconstruction of the distinguished Sufi shrine, the Shaykh Ya'qub Dome, a landmark and focal point of Mukalla's old quarter and cemetery it was one of the first targeted and blown up shrines. In the town of Shihr there were three sites: the severely damaged Shaklanza and Bin Isma'il historic mosques, and the Domes of Al Habib abu Bakr that were demolished.

Building on the successful completion of this project, the local community appealed to Daw'an Architecture Foundation to work on other destroyed or damaged public edifices. A second phase of the project followed during 2020–21. Two other Sufi shrines, the Domes of Mahjub and Shaykhan have been recently reconstructed, and the Old British Governor's Headquarters that was also bombed by al Qaeda, was reinforced and rebuilt in major part.

Youth from the community participated in training on the building sites, with the aim of raising awareness to the importance of architectural skills and extant natural resources in their region. The reconstruction engaged local master builders and craftspeople, with their specialist knowledge and expertise, in responding to the inherent challenges involved in sensitively restoring the war-torn urban fabric's refined typology and aesthetic impact that is highly valued. The Quaiti Palace: Museum and Centre for Archaeological Research; The project scope involved working with the Museum director and team to develop a security plan to safeguard, record and archive the museum's collection and to assist in setting up the galleries and exhibits with an educational programme, in consultation with an international specialist and curator.

The post-war reconstruction projects described above have recently won an international prestigious award for sustainable design, pending official announcement by the awarding party in November 2021.

THE FUTURE

The course of our work and its impact over the past two decades in Hadramut and the Yemen, resulted in institutions soliciting our assistance for undertaking emergency projects in important cities like Aden, Sana'a' and Ta'iz.

This has led us to develop the longer-term plan that can consolidate and invest the knowledge and experience in creating a post-conflict Earth Institute. This will serve as an academic research institute dedicated to earth architecture, post-war and disaster, particularly where traditional and vernacular techniques are threatened. A priority will be addressing the economic and social depravation of communities, by creating work opportunities to engage in the arts and crafts of the building sector, before this resource is completely lost. This would provide the opportunity for newly trained architects, and the youth to engage in developing the knowledge and skills to contribute in-situ to these projects instead of being alienated from the process (due to an inadequate education that is estranged from the local and vernacular architecture), and in order more urgently to enforce protecting measures to address the ecological balance in the landscape and urban planning, particularly in managing water and agricultural resources.

The Earth Institute will set up training and programmes for volunteers, to engage in capacity building for the youth, practitioners, craftsmen and young architects in the practice and field research of Yemeni architecture, building and the crafts. The institute will involve research in postgraduate studies across other disciplines at Seiyun University, with the expertise, exchange, and collaboration of the university of architecture in Venice. The institute will enhance and support masters, doctoral and post-doctoral education research, and create career pathways to contribute to post-war reconstruction, and contemporary design and building in inflicted and deprived communities.

The landscape of Yemen is spread with buildings of architectural value. Neglect and dilapidation abound in the absence of professional or civic institutions that recognise the importance of investing in Yemeni architecture or in the natural resources that constitute the fundamental wealth of the country's historic topography, cultural heritage and landscape.

The situation has been exacerbated inhuman conditions, that are beyond moral apprehension or accountability, caused by an open-ended war waging aggression on neighbourhoods, public buildings, and cultural landmarks. Each collapsing wall is a deep scar etched on the face of the silent neighbourhood. The need for an emergency national policy for post-war reconstruction that responds to the human tragedy that has befallen entire communities, is denied, or understated. Such a policy is plausible, if at all possible. Unless it is contingent upon incorporating the sensitive and complex components of the architecture, urban fabric and balanced ecological environment (that encompasses Yemen's archaeological sites and classified natural reserve). Furthermore, it must contain and validate the design and construction technology and discipline respectively, using the knowledge of the keepers of this legacy: the inhabitants, master builders and craftsmen of Yemen.

Following pages, Masn'at 'Ūrah project reconstruction work, 2009. Courtesy Salma Samar Damluji.

The collapsed facade of Dār Aḥmad al Qabīlī, Julie Haddow, 2008.

YOU'RE GOOD AT JOKING
AROUND. PEOPLE LIKE YOU
THE IDEALS YOU USED TO
HAVE ARE NOW JUST TOOLS.
YOU SAY THIS IS LIFE,
THIS IS WHAT'S
INTERESTING.
YOU SAY STRAIGHT OUT
THAT YOU'RE WILLING
TO KEEP SMILING,
EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE LOST.
HEY HEY. JUST SMILE.
HEY HEY HEY. JUST SMILE.

CUI JIAN, LYRICS FROM *SLACKERS*, PUBLISHED IN PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL #6, 2001.

CONGO: A GLIMMER THROUGH THE CRACK

NEWSHA TAVAKOLIAN AND SARA KAZEMIMANESH

The Spring equinox – *Nowruz*, the Persian New Year is – in half an hour. They say whatever you are doing at the exact moment the sun finds herself right above the celestial equator defines how your life will unfold over the coming year. And I am sitting in a car, traveling to Drodro, on commission for Doctors Without Borders (MSF) for a project about sexual violence. Those who ride in the passing cars wear makeshift head covers to protect themselves from the cloud of dust and dirt that surrounds moving vehicles. We are driving on this muddy trail that squelches underneath the tires, a road that winds and tangles, like a snake shedding its skin.

We stop yet again at another checkpoint, avoiding the gawking bloodshot eyes of the CODECO rebels, some of whom are just boys, armed and dressed in military gear. The back of a callused finger runs against my bicep, and I chase the glimmer of light that bounces off the single horizontal crack in the windshield. The shrill of the pigs will not stop. I ask the driver to go faster so we can leave them behind. The road splits, one end leading to the Lendu tribe, while we turn right toward Drodro which houses thousands of the displaced Hema people. Life goes on outside the huts, with the harvest and drying of cassava the most prominent image the eye can see.

We arrive at the village, and even though Sunday mass is a few days away, there is a gathering of people milling around a crucified Jesus on a tall cross. We cannot stop to investigate, as we need to move on toward the Drodro hospital, where I am supposed to visit the malnourished mothers and their young children. Under the mosquito nets, small children wail and cry. I meet a little girl who doesn't smile and – with help from one of the doctors – I ask her to become my assistant. She holds the light for me as I shoot. Outside the building, relatives have gathered with their meagre supplies of local crops – cassava, bananas, and pineapples – making meals for their patients staying at the hospital.

Despite its rich natural resources – oil, diamonds, cobalt, and gold in particular – the majority of the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is extremely impoverished, with millions of people being displaced and exposed to physical and sexual violence on a daily basis. The violence is unfortunately unleashed by the members of military and ethnic militia, whose impunity inspires similar acts by members of the public – men in specific – with their main victims being women and children.

In the Ituri region in north-eastern Congo, the conflict is especially severe between the farming communities of the Lendu people and the pastoralist communities of the Hema people. When three wounded Lendu youth are brought to the Hema camp by members of MSF to receive medical aid, members of the Hema community are quick to react. They gather around the MSF van, threatening them with violence if they treat members of their rival tribe here at the camp.

Mamma Justine the president of SFVS, a coalition of women activists who support victims of sexual violence tells me that the normalisation of sexual violence is not merely the product of the unstable political condition in Congo. She goes on to tell me about the existing cultural context that inspires the objectification of women. Evidently there used to be a long-standing tradition that prompted men to take their desired partner and lock her up in a room, effectively abducting her without asking her consent, before speaking to her family about their possible union. Mamma Justine tells me that the situation is further complicated by false beliefs and superstitions that are used to justify sexual violence. Some even believe that having intercourse with a virgin girl clears the man's body of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

The sunset is hauntingly beautiful when I meet Giselle, the tall 16-year-old girl with very short hair, wearing an off-white shirt, a long skirt, and a pair of plastic slippers with the word 'VIP' printed on them. She says that after giving birth to her youngest sibling, her mother lost her sanity and disappeared. Then, one night in 2018, the rebels raided their village, killing everyone including her father. Giselle and her eight small siblings were among the few who survived, which meant that she would have to step up and care for them. Two months ago, as she was fetching water along with five other women, Giselle fell behind because she was walking slowly as she carried the heavy jugs. That is when she was grabbed by three armed men, who forced her to undress, and held a gun to her head so she would not make a sound during the assault. They raped her one by one, while the two others watched the road.

Bruised and in shock, Giselle got back on her feet to walk the rest of the way. A man on a motorcycle saw how she struggled to walk and offered her a ride back to the camp. At the camp, an elder woman saw Giselle's state and upon hearing of her ordeal she urged her to go to the health centre to seek help. Unable to stand or walk properly for a while after her assault, Giselle had no choice but to continue to care for her small siblings.

Giselle tells me that after her violent assault by three men, her very first sexual encounter, she wants nothing to do with men anymore. She has vowed to herself not to ever get married, and to continue her education so she can care for her siblings and help the women in her community. She speaks of her melancholia and her vast loneliness, telling me that she feels so helpless without her parents, and that she misses her mother every day.

I explore the village, in awe of the beauty that surrounds me. The sky seems so vast here, yet feels extremely close to the earth, as if you can grab the cotton candy clouds merely by raising an outstretched arm. Once again, I find myself near the tall crucifix and the still growing crowd that moves around it. I ask someone about the reason for the peculiarly impromptu gathering. They tell me that Jesus' right foot has been broken, pointing to the crimson liquid that oozes out of it. The crowd seems to have believed that Jesus is bleeding. I cannot linger around the bleeding Jesus, as I need to move on to the health centre.

I come across Dr. Jean-Claude at the Drodro Health Centre, where they care for more women and children than they are capable of. The health centre was supported by an NGO called ACF (*Action Contre la Faim*). Members of the Hema tribe recently set fire to their base, burning their vehicles, and forcing the staff to evacuate with help from MONUSCO (*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo*). Now ACF is no longer doing relief work in the area, which means that the women and girls who come to the health centre will need to pay for the medical aid they desperately require.

I ask Dr Jean-Claude if he can communicate in English. He tells me that he can, to an extent. I ask him if he knows where I can find someone who works with victims of sexual violence. He tells me he himself has been treating these women for the past 10 years, adding that many of them are assaulted by men they know, not the rebels necessarily, but by men from their own families or other men in their communities. Many of the victims are abandoned by their families; some are left with no choice but to seek shelter at the home of the very men who have assaulted them; and some are sent to nearby camps, which consist of a cluster of huts with cement floors, equipped with nothing but a limited assortment of cookware.

There is not much to do at the camps. Children are half bare or with limited clothing, the older ones helping their families by harvesting crops or fetching water. Women bear the brunt of the responsibilities however, from fetching water and collecting food or firewood, to working on neighbouring fields. Most of the sexual assaults happen during their trips to provide for their families. It's ironic that the very grounds where they are sent after their violent encounters become the location of further violence.

Dr Jean-Claude tells me that sexual violence is indeed a weapon of war – a weapon of mass destruction – but these men use and abuse women's bodies to express their frustration as well.

'But why doctor? Why do they do this?'

He tells me that men are frustrated and powerless without jobs or a means of production, so assaulting women is their way of claiming some form of power. I think of the girl who was assaulted because she did not have the 500 Francs – less than one US dollar – demanded from her.

It is such a stark contrast: this giving land, fertile, rife with tropical crops and beautiful flora, but home to such unfathomable violence.

I leave the health centre after Dr Jean-Claude promises to put me in contact with a local relief worker who works closely with victims of sexual assault. There are so many women at the marketplace, moving about, making food, as their small children hold on to them – while the few men who are around don't do much.

Congo is like these beautiful women, violated constantly, giving to everyone who wants a piece of her dress, a piece of her body.

I pass by the girls dressed in school uniforms – white shirts and navy skirts – walking shoulder to shoulder with the boys who hold stacks of textbooks. They all walk by the deep green woods. It's monsoon season and shiny banana leaves still drip from the recent rain, and I cannot help but wonder who among the crowd can unleash violence on these girls? Who – if anyone – is going to protect them?

Dr Serge is a psychologist who has been leading a newly established program that aims to improve the mental wellbeing of victims of sexual violence in the region. He has been working with these women for the past year and tells me that in addition to the two most common emotions experienced by these women, namely shame and guilt, there are two general reactions to the experience of sexual violence here: complete mental breakdown, or denial in the interest of forgetfulness.

I am reminded of the bishop's words, when I asked him about the women and girls who waited their turn to confess.

'Why are they here, father? What is it that they so desperately wish to confess?'

'There are things that burden them that they can tell no one but God,' the bishop tells me.

How ironic that some of them are here to ask God for forgiveness for crimes committed against them.

'But trauma does not fade away. It festers inside the mind only to come back with a stronger, more destructive, force,' says Dr Serge.

I ask him about the victims' families: 'Do they support the girls?'

He tells me that some do, and it helps with overcoming the inevitable shame entailed by being assaulted. But more families tend to banish the victims, leaving them with little choice but to live in self-exile at nearby camps or even seek help from the family of their assailants. How lonely and afraid they must feel, if their only refuge is staying with the same people who have turned their lives upside down.

I stand near the hospital waiting for them to take my temperature and allow me to enter. The broken thermometer keeps showing the number 32, as if detecting a dead body. I hear the shrill of screams and as I enter, I see women, perhaps 10 of them, sitting on the stairway and wailing with their arms outstretched toward the ceiling, mourning a fallen soldier. Another soldier wields his G3 rifle as he explains what has happened. But my interpreter tells me that he has overheard them say that the soldier died by suicide.

They ask me if I want to see the body.

At the end of the corridor, the women gather around the body. Wrapped in white sheets, his eyes and mouth closed as if in a deep slumber. The women throw themselves over the body and continue to wail. A few militia members – friends of the diseased – also join the crowd, crying for their fallen friend. I have no way of identifying the real cause of death. But what difference would that make? These people have lost whom they have loved dearly.

At the health centre, I meet with Honorine, the 48-year-old local relief worker, who has been working there for the past three years. Honorine shows me a notebook filled with the girls' name, telling me that every day, at least five or six victims, mostly underage girls, many of them pregnant, seek their help. Many of these girls are additionally subject to physical abuse by their own husbands. Honorine says that at the camps they encourage the women to come by the centre to receive care if they are assaulted. The health centre offers check-ups, as well as medical care to prevent or deal with unwanted pregnancies and infections from STDs, especially HIV. As we walk along the corridor, I see a packed room of perhaps 15 pregnant women, all waiting for their turn to be checked over by the only attending midwife.

I ask Honorine why there is so much sexual violence. She shares Dr Jean-Claude's opinion, that rape is a means through which men exert power and seek revenge from the cruelty of life. For the rebels of course, rape is a way to take the power away from the local men, tarnishing their honour by violating their women. I think about how the woman's body is the site for this act of revenge-seeking. Many of these women are subject to additional abuse because of the shame associated with their assault. Many are banished from their communities.

I come across the tall crucifix yet again. This time, in addition to his right foot, Jesus is also missing both arms.

My interpreter, Alphonse, tells me that the removal of the two additional limbs is an intentional act to prove to the crowd that the liquid is not blood, but the oxidised metal of the inner skeleton of the sculpture mixed with rainwater. I ask the resident bishop, the 48-year-old resident bishop, how he feels about the bleeding Jesus and the crowd it has attracted. He tells me that this kind of superstition is dangerous for their community and that he intends to put an end to the spectacle. During the Sunday service, with the church packed with attentive parishioners, the bishop warns the crowd of the ill effects of false beliefs and submitting to superstition. But outside, the crowd gathered around the crucifix seems unbothered by this rationale.

The next time I walk past the tall cross, the mutilated bleeding Jesus is gone, and so is the crowd that surrounded it.

Back at the health centre, I meet Gracian, the 52-year-old attending midwife, who has been working here since 2010. In a dark room with blue walls, Gracian sits at a desk covered with papers, documents, and files. The light from the small window illuminates her cramped workspace as she calls in the mothers-to-be one by one. I talk to her about the pregnant and displaced women that she cares for.

'What is the most pressing issue for these women?' I ask Gracian.

She tells me that right now, they need food and clothing more than anything else. Most of them only have one set of clothes – the ones on their backs – and as they fall pregnant, naturally their clothes will not fit them anymore. They are not well-fed, if at all, and as a result, they bear small malnourished infants.

The women sit there listening in silence, without moving or doing much. Two of them catch my eye because they look extremely young to be pregnant. You cannot tell whose pregnancy is the product of sexual violence.

I go to bed in a bare room, protected by the flimsy mosquito net that surrounds me. It has been two years and 11 days since my father's passing. All this time, not once have I spoken to or seen him vividly in my dreams. The moon is so big tonight, as if it hangs lower in the velveteen sky. The silence stretches over the camp area, and just as I fall asleep, my father is there, gently shaking me awake.

'Dad, what are you doing here? Aren't you dead?' I ask him.

'So I am,' he replies. 'Let's go for a stroll.'

As we walk along the muddy trail under the full moon, my father talks to me. I ask him questions to keep the conversation going. I ask him if he is happy, and he says he is. He tells me to keep a diary of all my thoughts every day.

'But why, dad?'

He takes out a small notebook from his pocket, flipping through its pages and showing me his notes and daily tasks scribbled in it: 'Do you remember this?'

'Yes, I do,' I tell him.

In the morning, I am awakened by his loud whisper near my ear, and I wake up to find him gone. I am so confused when I wake up, as if I am surrounded by this heavy fog, like the thick mist that covers the horizon in Ituri. I think of how protected I feel by the memory of my father, even after his passing, and how thousands of the women in Congo never find out what that feels like.

At the Drodro health centre, while they wait their turn to receive the care they need, the women sit on the chair I have placed against the wall. They find little ways to keep themselves busy and distracted while they speak. The girl in a blue skirt and black top scratches the back of her hand. In the darkness of the blue exam room, the most noticeable details are the colourful accessories that adorn their frail bodies: a green skirt, a pink bracelet, a red scarf, a butterfly brooch, and a plunging necklace with blue beads. They do not look directly at me, but I see and remember all these individual details, as does my camera.

When I first arrived in Drodro, I was worried that the women would avoid me, but now I am amazed that they seek me out so they can share their stories, knowing well that I am a photographer and not a relief worker. Most of them – if not all – are led to believe that they should be ashamed of themselves for having been victimised. They live with guilt for the horrific experience that they had no control over. Yet, you cannot box all these women and girls together. No matter how common it might be, the collective experience of violence does not erase its individual impact. Each of these women and girls deserves to be heard.

Noella Alifwa and her colleagues at Radio SOFEPADI are here not only to listen to these stories, but to utilise them to raise awareness. Noella and a group of other women worked at a radio station here about 21 years ago. Together they founded an NGO through which they started to discuss sexual violence. Noella tells me that their collective has four major objectives: 1) to familiarise women with their rights; 2) to work towards creating peaceful communities where women can feel safe; 3) to advocate for better leaders; and 4) to teach women how to care for themselves, both in the immediate aftermath of being assaulted, and in a more long-term perspective. Their NGO works on over 50 cases of sexual assault annually, as they continue to reach out and offer help. They do not believe that change can happen overnight. On the contrary, they are aware that because of the cultural context that objectifies women, and due to a lack of a reliable legal system, slow and steady reform is the way to go.

I cannot help but be reminded of the woman who kept angrily interrupting MSF announcements that shared information about STDs and unwanted pregnancies caused by rape, deeming them blasphemous and wrong. I cannot fault her, nevertheless. Because long-standing beliefs – no matter how harmful they are – require time and effort to fade away.

The last time I pass by the tall cross, Jesus is back on top, no longer 'bleeding' but with his formerly severed limbs reattached awkwardly. There is no crowd gathered around it this time.

Back on the winding dirt road, women walk along the trail, their bodies burdened by the heavy jugs of water and the thick bundles of branches they have to carry back to the camp. Most of them are dressed in colourful clothes made of African fabric (*pagne*) and adorned with the words *huit mars* (March 8th) and *journée internationale de la femme* (International Women's Day).

As I watch their commotion, I wonder if a day will come that their March 8th dresses are not the only clothes they own, a day when they can be aware of and empowered by what the 8th of March represents.

All images courtesy Newsha Tavakolian / Magnum Photos.


Roots
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COLLABORATING ON PLANETARY TRANSFORMATION: DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING, DIFFERENT WAYS OF GATHERING

ONG KENG SEN

The 25th anniversary of the Prince Claus Fund was marked by the festival 25 Years 25 Hours. Taking a leaf from Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*, invited guests presented keynotes, digital workshops, films, music, visual galleries, architectural dialogues, local events or public interventions, cultural reports. This was through the lens of subjectivities produced primarily from the global south. Therefore, this digitalised knowledge production on the performance of human agencies in their contexts, began from the spaces, the worlds, and the bodies of the global south.

In particular, this digital archive sustained a differentiated practice of care and repair for specific contexts, creating a multiplicity of 'local worlds' in the new international, beyond the pandemic. The festival saw a need to contextualise, specify, as well as to expand on differences in the context of the all-pervasive capitalism that has exploited affective, cultural, intellectual, immaterial, and digitalised labour.

Thus the 25th Anniversary focused on the potential of planetary consciousness. This was written about by Paul Gilroy in his book *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005) – 'the translocal impact of political ideologies, social relations, and technological changes that have fostered a novel sense of interdependence, simultaneity, and mutuality in which the strategic and economic choices made by one group on our planet may be connected in a complex manner with the lives, hopes, and choices of others who may be far away'. Planetary consciousness has since been developed by Achille Mbembe as, 'an ethics for a common custodianship of the Earth, continuing life for everyone and everything.' *(On the Need and the Desire to Repair the World: Requirements for a Planetary Consciousness, 2021)*

Ultimately, this anniversary archived a new the work of Prince Claus Fund for future potentialities. It articulated human agency in the larger space of the planet, with a focus on regions of the world which need to be listened to more consistently and more deeply.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING, DIFFERENT WAYS OF GATHERING

In an unusual turn, the Prince Claus Fund gave the camera over to changemakers who have inspired it over the years. Diverse ways of seeing were coupled with different perspectives of editing, the colonising gaze was decolonised, and intimate, unexpected, engaged voices re-emerged to narrate their own stories of urgency. These different ways of seeing brought us deep into contexts which enlarged our worldviews at this crucial time. At this poignant mondial moment, fragile as we stand, battered by a health crisis which affects all peoples in different localities in specific but interconnected ways, the Funds turned to ask its inspirations to share, 'What affects you now?'

In another unusual turn, the audience of the Fund stayed localised to participate in this event. This gesture continued to install the central leitmotif of the translocal in the commemoration. The translocal honours a local which is simultaneous and interdependent on other locals, not inferior to the international. The translocal leitmotif proposes that all localities are dependent on each other, even though they may be physically very distant, to collaborate together, for instance in saving the endangered planet. The worlds around the planet gathered and renewed their commitments in diverse time zones, and more importantly in diverse sites where local governments complicate a shared future for the planet.

WELCOME TO THE 25TH HOUR: NEW BEGINNINGS

All this brought together the Fund's past, present, and future over 25 hours. The last hour, in a fresh and reinvigorated presentation, revealed vividly the new directions of the Fund into its next 25 years. 'Welcome to the 25th Hour: New Beginnings' chose to honour young artists and cultural workers from around the world. The Fund selected six emerging artists from the 100 Seed Awards that Prince Claus Fund awarded in 2021. These six emerging individuals shared their work with us, work that they have produced against all odds, and yet remained pure to the goals, ambitions, and hopes of this emerging generation of young cultural and artistic workers.

I collaborated closely with all six of them across huge distances, never having met face to face, only through zoom and WhatsApp calls. I was amazed by their curiosity, their generosity, their desire, and their commitment to build a better world through their imagination, their artistry, and their hard work. Their words, thoughts, fantasies, charged me up. Most of all, I was impressed by their courage, their perseverance, and how they worked so closely to the soil from whence they came. It was my privilege to work with Marianne Fahmi from Egypt, Abdoul Mujyambere from Rwanda, Mamy Victory from Senegal, Rafael Manuel from Philippines, Ozegbe Sunday Obiajulu from Nigeria, and Rada Akbar from Afghanistan. It was likewise intriguing to experience the range of changemakers, many of whom had been involved from the beginning of the Fund.

It is my belief that the changemakers invited for the 25 Years, 25 Hours Festival and their different ways of seeing, built up a translocal web of different, and interdependent visions. It was not a globalised world decided from one fixed blind spot. Instead, the Festival opened our shared commitments to the endangered planet, allowing a porosity of inspirational perspectives to influence different localities. These different worlds must now turn to collaboration, as a way forward.

25 Years 25 Hours took place from 8–9 December, 2021. The festival included contributions from Achille Mbembe, Emily Jacir, Carlinhos Brown, Hira Nabi, Zanele Muholi, Diamantina Arcoiris, Brigitte Baptiste, Fernando Arias, Newsha Tavakolian, Bahia Shehab, Rabih Mroué, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Jelili Atiku, Etcétera, Lina Attalah, L'Art Rue, Mariam Issoufou Kamara and Aïcha Macky, Fendika Cultural Center, Regina José Galindo, Zara Samiry, Kuduk Cultural Center, Mohamed Mahdy, Teater Garasi, Conflictorium, Zapiro, Simón Vélez, Dada Masilo, Salma Samar Damluij, Carla Fernández, Escola Livre de Dança da Maré, Jia Zhangke, and Djamila Ribeiro.

SOMNYAMA NGONYAMA, HAIL THE DARK LIONESS

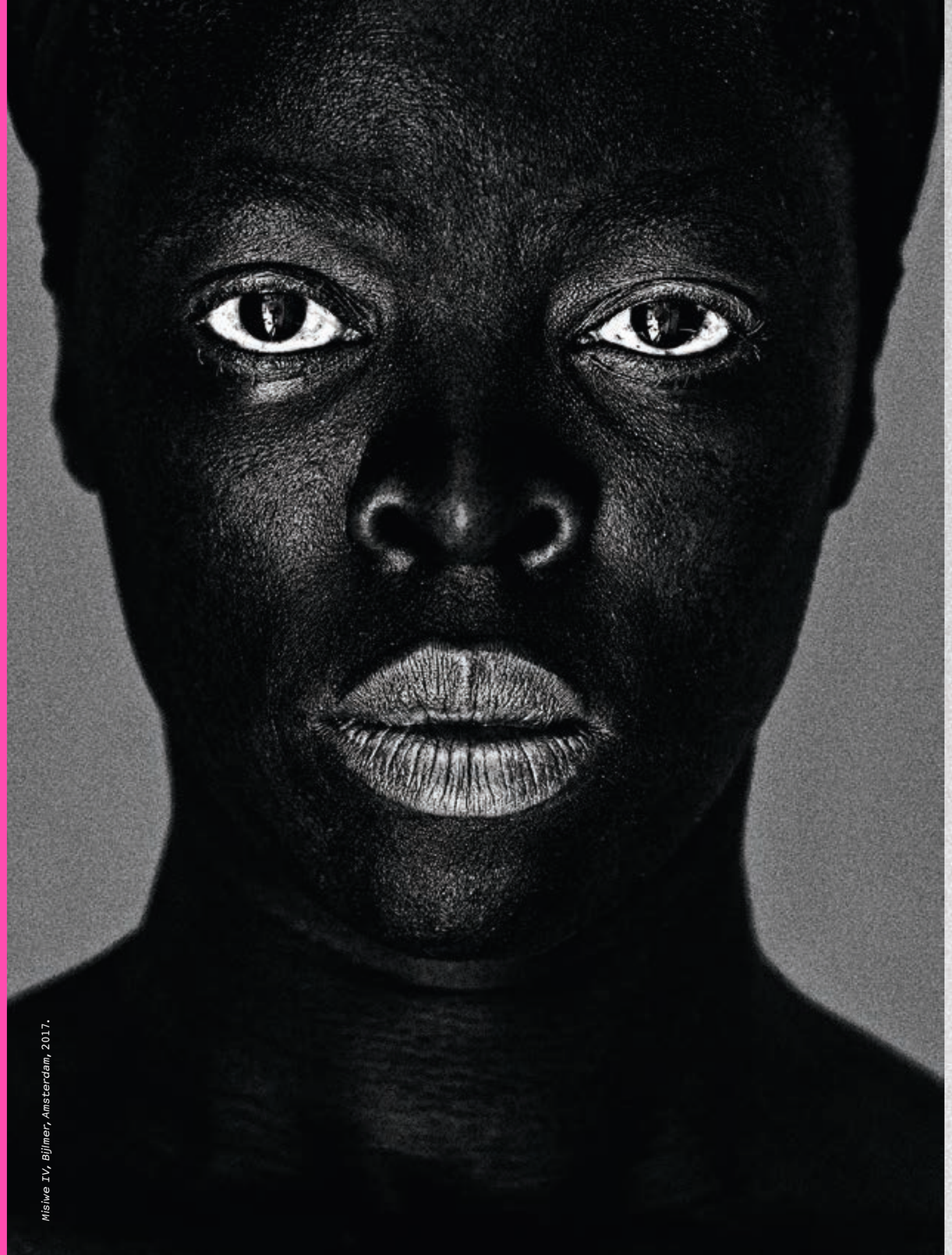
ZANELE MUHOLI

Somnyama is my response to a number of ongoing racisms and politics of exclusion. As a series, it also speaks about occupying public spaces to which we, as black communities, were previously denied access – how you have to be mindful all the time in certain spaces because of your positionality, because of what others expect you to be, or because your tradition and culture are continually misrepresented. Too often I find we are being insulted, mimicked, and distorted by the privileged 'other.' Too often we find ourselves in spaces where we cannot declare our entire being. We are here; we have our own voices; we have our own lives. We can't rely on others to represent us adequately, or allow them to deny our existence. Hence I am producing this photographic document to encourage individuals in my community to be brave enough to occupy spaces – brave enough to create without fear of being vilified, brave enough to take on that visual text, those visual narratives. To teach people about our history, to rethink what history is all about, to reclaim it for ourselves – to encourage people to use artistic tools such as cameras as weapons to fight back.

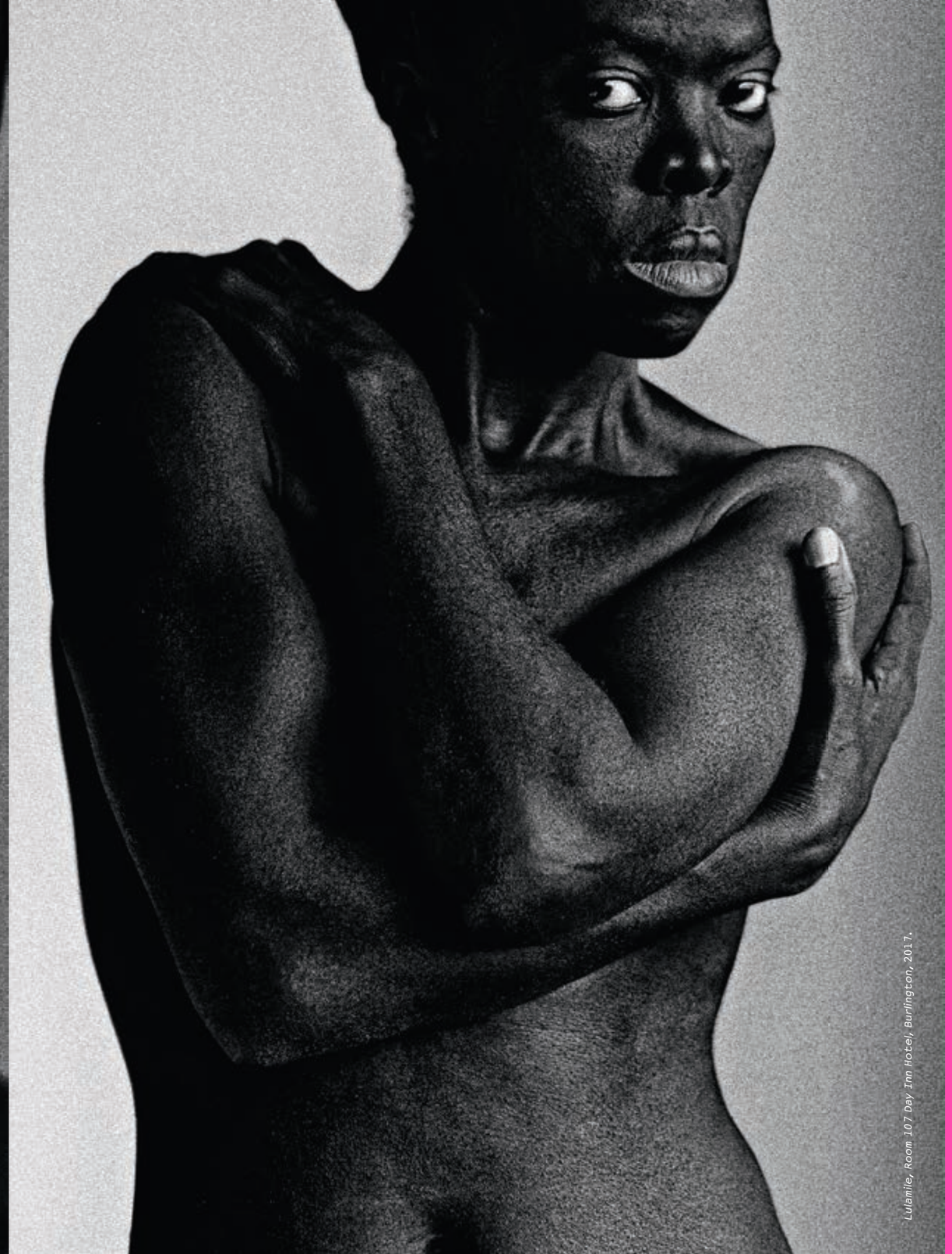
From an interview with Renée Mussai, Aperture, *2018.*

All images courtesy the artist and Stevenson gallery.

Kodwa I, Amsterdam, 2017.



Misiwe IV, Bijlmer, Amsterdam, 2017.



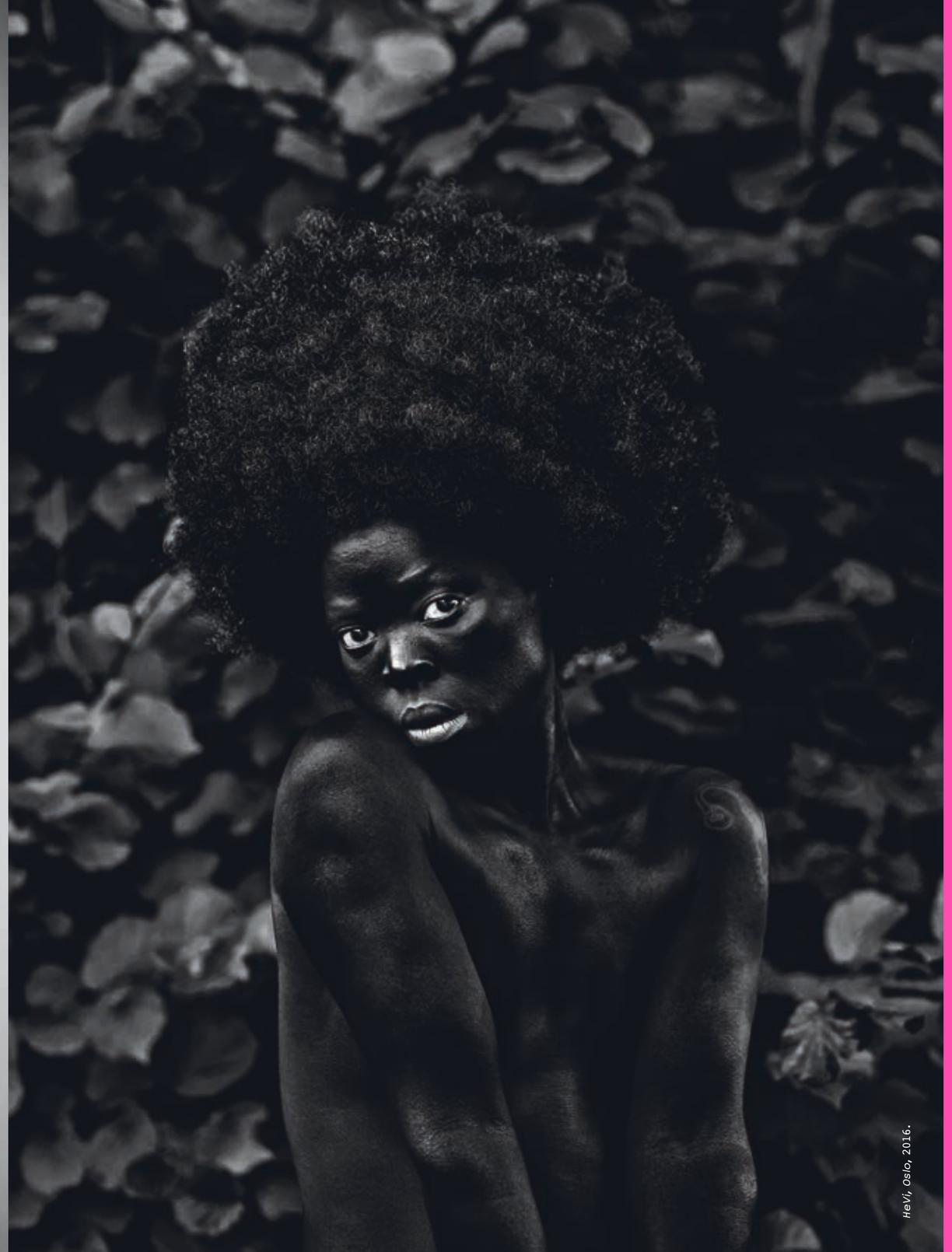
Lulamile, Room 107 Day Inn Hotel, Burlington, 2017.

Sibusiso, Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy, 2015.

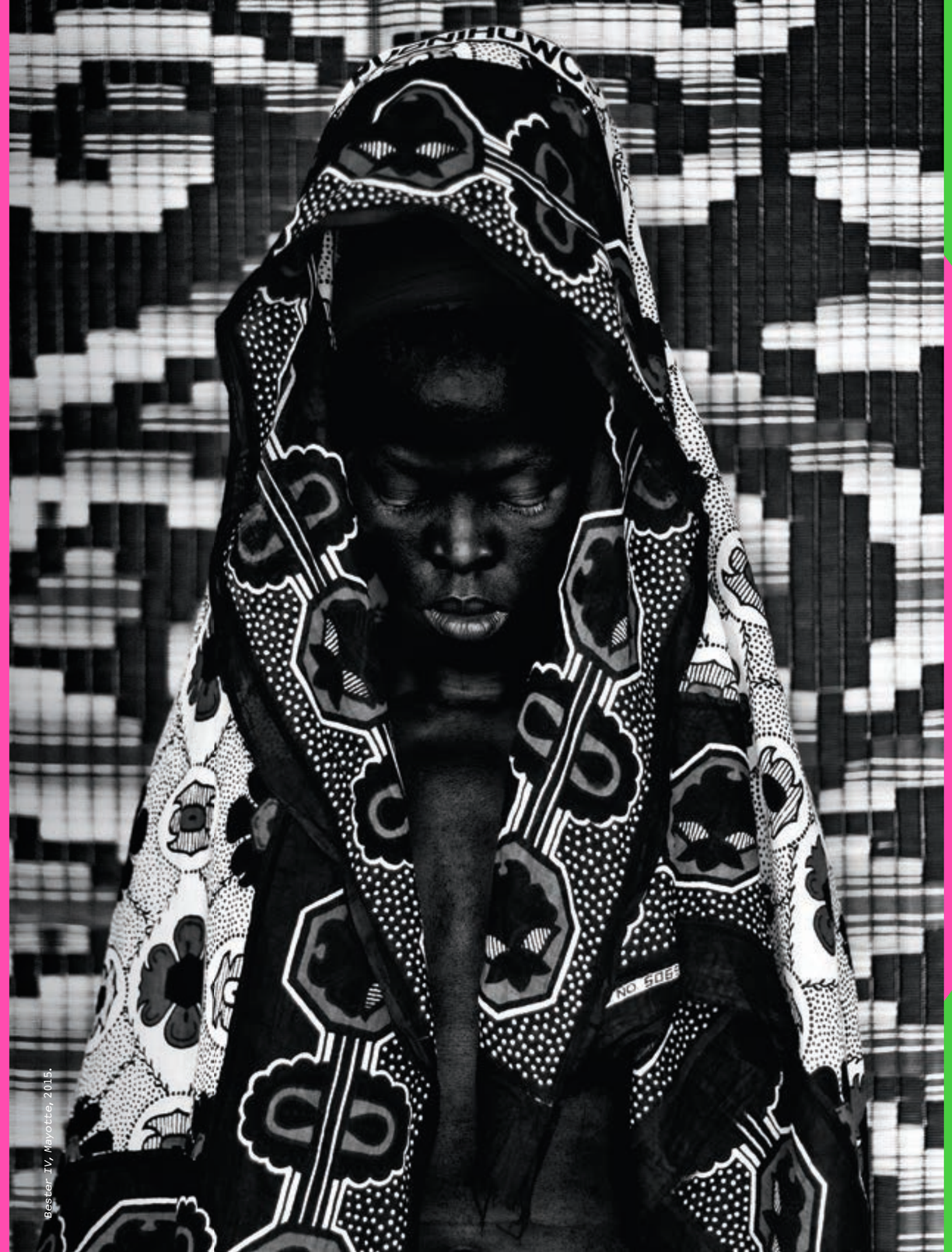
Mumu XV, Newington, London, 2016.

Bona II, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2015.

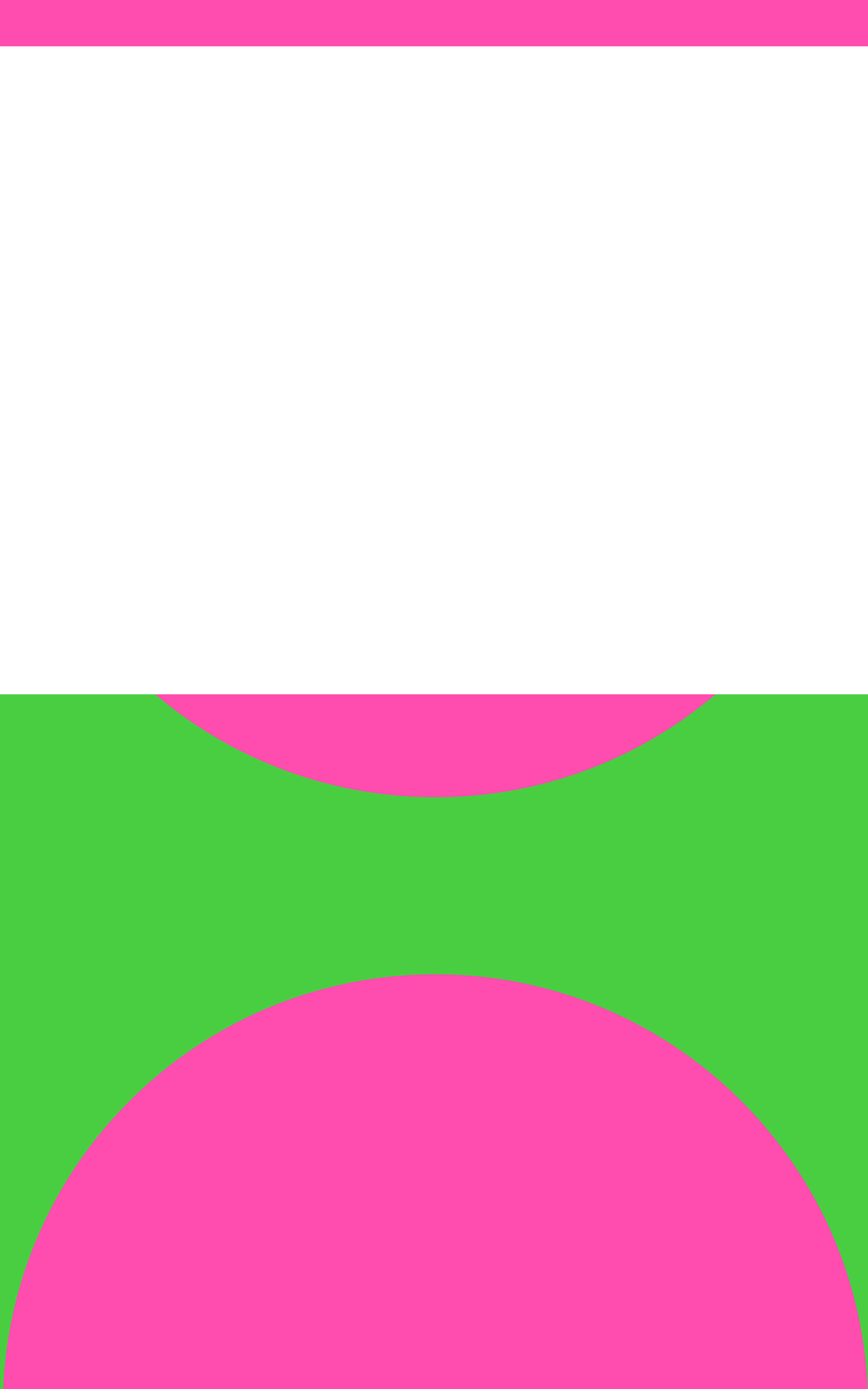
Thathu I, The Sails, Durban, 2019.



HeVi, Oslo, 2016.



Bester IV, Mayotte, 2015.



A SONG FOR WAKING UP MEN

DJAMILA RIBERO

I'm making a song
where my mother and all mothers
will see themselves mirrored,
a song that speaks like two eyes

I'm walking on a road
that runs through many countries.
They may not see me, but I see
and salute my friends.

(…)

My life, our lives,
form a single diamond.
I've learned new words
and made others more beautiful.

I'm making a song
for waking up men
and putting children to sleep.

'Friendly Song,' poem by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, song by Milton Nascimento

We face a scenario in which groups marginalised from global society continue to seek their own spaces from which they can contradict stereotypes, resist the labelling gaze of colonisers, and, on the other side of the coin, plant dreams, water the land, and foster growth in a forest of life. We often come across gazes which focus on these groups in isolation from each other, as if they were disconnected from a dialectical relationship to imperialism. At the end of the day, as Tejumola Olaniyan (1959–2019) taught us, thinking about Europe as modern in its institutions and development against Africa as a space without modernity ignores the fact that both exist in the same historical time and that the modernity of one was based on the colonisation and exploitation of the other. This idea was important to him because it allowed him to rethink modernity from a global perspective as a shared patrimony.

From birth our bodies are caught in a web of meanings which are out of our control. Regardless of our personal desire for transformation, we are inserted into a system which was operating well before we were born and whose structure remains rooted in the oppression of some groups by others. That is part of our reality, so it can never be an invitation to inaction. As long as we are alive, we can generate energy to sustain the structures of resistance which the oldest of our nonconformists built from their diverse identities and points of view as the grounds upon which modernity was raised. In this sense, a prize like the one given by the Prince Claus Fund will not resolve centuries of discrimination, but it surely will play its part in drawing together an international struggle for humanity.

An example will help clarify a number of questions. Lélia Gonzalez (1935–94) was a Brazilian social scientist and celebrated precursor of black feminist thought about the country from which I write. As a public intellectual during the period of military dictatorships that raged across South America in the sixties, seventies, and eighties, Gonzalez had no time to waste. She wrote, organised conferences, taught classes to the general public, and participated in debates to show that she was part of the social group most impacted by misery with the hope of somehow altering the balance of forces.

In her writings from the 1980s, Lélia anticipated the need for a transnational feminist movement when she proposed an 'Amerafrican' identity, an identity for the people of the Americas and the Caribbean. She led marches, organised Black feminist journals, and trained a generation of researchers, activists, and artists. But why am I bringing up Lélia? Because if you had been in Brazil in 1994, the year that she died, you might have seen something in a newspaper about the death of one of the greatest Nagô Queens to have ever lived in our country. If you had related to black Brazilian militancy, always embattled even without any economic power, you would have seen the grief over her passage to the spiritual plane, just as you would have seen the celebrations and joyous memories of fraternal moments. The Afro-diaspora has different funeral traditions from the ones imposed by the colonisers. The point is that outside of these social circles, you would not have seen a recognition of her passing worthy of her impact.

It is important to emphasise that what happened with Lélia and with innumerable voices from the Global South is not a coincidence or merely an injustice, but the result of a colonising project which is constantly updated and continues to this day. It is a sophisticated technique for erasing the existence of marginalised social groups to the benefit of those favoured by that racial oppression. In Brazil, black women are the largest demographic group, constituting close to 27% of the population. Even so, if I go into a government building, a university campus, or an office, I might see one black woman working in institutional solitude among white people, and alongside her I would see black women as the great majority of the cleaning service. For as much as this situation might be uncomfortable for people committed to social transformation, it benefits the racially hegemonic group as a whole through a system of inequality.

Metaphorically, we are speaking here about the renovation of the 'mask of silence'. This mask was an invention of Brazilian sugar plantations. According to the legend, it was first used on the enslaved woman Anastácia. Anastácia was the daughter of Delminda, who was taken from the Congo and brought to the port of Rio de Janeiro. She was raped by the plantation owner and her daughter was born with blue eyes. Given that whitening the population of the country was a publicly acknowledged good, Anastácia was admired for her beauty. Despite that admiration, her 'bad-mouthing' the injustices of slavery irritated many slave owners, who thought up a metal device with small holes in the mouth so that she could breathe and continue to work but not make a sound with her voice for the rest of her days. From the colonial period on, in an example of religious syncretism, Anastácia was beatified by the enslaved population and attracted a legion of followers up to the present.

In the words of the multidisciplinary thinker Grada Kilomba, in her essay 'The Mask':

The mask, therefore, raises many questions: Why must the mouth of the Black subject be fastened? Why must she or he be silenced? What could the black subject say if her or his mouth were not sealed? And what would the white subject have to listen to? There is an apprehensive fear that if the colonial subject speaks, the colonizer will have to listen. She/he would be forced into an uncomfortable confrontation with 'Other' truths. Truths that have been denied, repressed, kept quiet, as secrets. I do like this phrase 'quiet as it's kept.' It is an expression of the African Diasporic people that announces how someone is about to reveal what is presumed to be a secret. Secrets like slavery. Secrets like colonialism. Secrets like racism.

To think about the future of the Prince Claus Fund we need to engage in an exercise of Sankofa, an Adinkra symbol whose image presents a bird with its feet turned forward and its head looking backwards, to the past. In the philosophical tradition of the Akan people, who created this symbol, Sankofa teaches us to return to the past as a means of reframing the present and building the future. Through this exercise, we can glimpse the importance of the Prince Claus Fund award as a global ally in the struggle against the 'mask of silence'.

Lélia Gonzalez reminds us that our inheritance comes not only through the experiences of colonialism and enslavement but also through a legacy of struggle and resistance. It is fundamental, in that sense, to tell the history of black people from the perspective of a subject involved in the construction of society and not only as the victim of oppression. Paraphrasing the philosopher Walter Benjamin, we need to brush history against the grain, from the perspective of the 'defeated'. Benjamin says that history is always told from the perspective of the victors, and if we do not refute that version, the victors will never stop winning. The future can only be thought from a re-examination of the past told through humanising eyes, a multiplicity of eyes. In this sense, the Prince Claus award plays a major role in drawing attention to the stories of people who promote the possibility of other ways of being, in shedding light on the stories of so many people who have stepped up from their places of resistance.

I began this article with a song by Milton Nascimento because we need histories in which our mothers, all mothers, will recognise the stories of their own lives. We need the histories of black mothers who were not seen as people who made an impact on society but only as people who were impacted. Black women who work as janitors or maids are the 'cleaning ladies', the 'coffee ladies'. They are not even referred to by their own names because often no one thinks to ask what those are. The only thing anyone knows is that they have homes, but those homes are somewhere far away. No one thinks to ask where. They are not treated as human beings with meaningful stories, with lessons to impart. They are looked down on with a condescension that hides how other people get to feel so above them. Has anyone ever thought to ask about their dreams? Or has their position become so naturalised? It so happens that the 'coffee lady' has both a first and a last name, as Lélia Gonzalez teaches us. She is in the position she is in as the result of historical inequalities, but she might be a community leader, a prominent member of her church, a respected *Ialorixá*, or she might run her own small business on the weekends. She may be a mother who has had to learn how to stretch the food so her children can eat every day, manage the arithmetic of daily life without letting her dreams become disappointments. The 'cleaning lady' could have a vast knowledge of herbs and the plants that heal. She understands the challenge of making each day work. That is why the threads of history pulled together by the 'winners' do not help her see anything beyond the role they have already forced on her. Not every mother sees her own life in the familiar songs because they were written by patriarchal hands that look down on everything feminine. All mothers need to write their own histories. These are not just 'women's things', but histories that set the tempo of the world.

'I'm making a song for waking up men and putting children to sleep', Milton Nascimento continues. Telling histories that draw men out of the deep sleep of indifference, that bring peace so that black mothers can lull their children to sleep, so that these sons and daughters do not have their childhoods stolen by inequality. I am thinking here of the loneliness of the two thousand black mothers who lose their children every day to policing policies rooted in violence. The loneliness of those women who know the opportunities that will be closed to their children, who try to show the world that their children are hardworking. This loneliness can lead to mental illnesses. With all respect to Foucault, in his *Madness and Civilization* he seems to have forgotten that racism does psychological damage to the black population.

These histories have always been told, but the perspective of inequality has not seen them. 'They may not see me, but I see them.' The vision of the future that we want is one in which all of these people can see and be seen so that, from that multiplicity, bridges can be extended between different networks of meaning.

The objective here is the sum of a collective struggle among people from the most vulnerable levels of global society, a sum that can serve as a great source of strength. As the revered Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo says, 'sometimes people manage to speak with such strength that the mask splits apart. I believe that split symbolises us because our speech forces the mask open.' Even though she has been widely admired and respected within the black community, Evaristo was only recognised nationally in Brazil after she turned seventy, and that due to the strength of younger black women who promoted her through social media. Responding to this issue in an interview with the BBC, Evaristo reflected on what message she would want to leave for other women: 'I would say not to lose a fighting perspective. To look at the past and think about the women living in Quilombos, about women who even with their circumscribed freedom, managed to leave us a foundation for struggle, for freedom, for ourselves. We need to build the present without losing that line to the past. Without losing the example set by the women who walked the same path we are on today.'

'My life, our lives, form a single diamond. I've learned new words and made others more beautiful.' The future we want to build needs to know how to write these histories.

Translated from the Portugese by Brian Gollnick, Associate Professor, University of Iowa, USA.

THE ARTIST NEED NOT BE COMPROMISED TO FIND EXPRESSION IN THE UNWHOLESOME VALUES OF A PROFIT-ORIENTED ECONOMY. THIS DECEPTIVE SITUATION MUST CHANGE IF OUR PLANET IS TO SURVIVE.

ARCHIVE

JOHN GRANDE, FROM *THE GROUND UP: ON SITE EARTH ART EXPANDS AND EVOLVES TO CULTIVATE THE WORLD*, 2009 PRINCE CLAUS FUND AWARDS BOOK.

CRITICAL HUMANISM IN A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

CARLOS FUENTES

The greatest Spanish author, Miguel de Cervantes, is also the greatest literary descendant of the Dutch thinker who shaped, through Cervantes, the literature that we write in Latin America today: Erasmus of Rotterdam, with his *Praise of Folly* and his conviction that, in a humanistic universe, neither reason nor faith can be absolutes, since both are – and should be – the object of critical and ironical imagination.

We meet at the doors of a new century and a new millennium and, as never before in the 20th Century, we have the strong sensation that something is ending and something is beginning.

This has been, in the words of the British historian Eric Hobsbaum, 'the shortest century' – a century of barely eighty years, beginning in Sarajevo in 1914 only to end, again in Sarajevo, in 1994. Compare it with the latitude of the 19th Century, which began, according to taste, with the American Revolution of 1776 or with the French Revolution of 1789, only to end, with the Guns of August, in 1914: a century of as much as 138 and at least 125 years. Ours has been a short century and a cruel century.

The unlimited faith in progress and human happiness announced by the Enlightenment of the 18th Century and sustained by the optimism of the 19th Century, did not prepare us for the horrors of the 20th Century. Nine million dead in the trenches of World War I. Six million Jews murdered in the Nazi holocaust. Countless millions sacrificed in the purges and the Gulag of Stalinist Russia. And numberless, as well, the victims, tortured, murdered, disappeared, of the Latin American dictatorships.

A short century, a cruel century, and a paradoxical century: Never has technological and scientific advancement been greater, never has moral and political regression been more damaging, never has the chasm between them been deeper. A short century, a cruel century and perhaps even a wasted century. Twelve of the 80 years of our century were lost in bloody world wars and another 45 in a cold war that placed us all on the threshold of nuclear disaster and which, in the name of competing ideologies, postponed urgent social, economic and cultural problems.

Now that the Cold War is over, these problems have reappeared with a vengeance, demanding the attention that, to our peril, we denied them for so long. These are concrete problems having to do with the ecology, the population explosion, the rights of women, the increasing divide between the developed and developing worlds and, within each of them, a Third World within the First World and a First World within the Third World, amounting to a generalised crisis of urban civilisation, embracing the plight of the homeless, and the aged, crime and violence, declining standards of education, decaying infrastructures, unyielding pandemics and the uncontrollable drug trade.

This is the new reality of the world. It lacks a new legality. Nation, state, international law, public sector, private sector, civil society: all of these traditional jurisdictions of socioeconomic problems are questioned, in crisis, and calling out for a new legality in a new reality. We are groping for answers. We are, as the French poet Alfred de Musset said, in the transition from the Napoleonic Wars to the bourgeois, industrialised and nationalistic societies that followed the revolutionary period, we are unsure if our feet touch a furrow or a ruin.

The question I am proposing today requires this critical background and incites a historical answer. The land on which the French poet set foot is ours, always ours: it is the territory between past and future, or rather, it is the present which cannot be understood without the memory of the past or the hope of the future.

We are in the world. In it, we are free because we can act. But in it, we are not free because we must die. Civilisations live or perish because of their capacity of failure to overcome the certainty of death with the continuity of life, handed down from generation to generation and from people to people, through the process we call 'culture' and through humanism and creativity as the names we give to the concrete action of continuing life beyond death and of living, in the present, both the past we recall and the future we desire.

As we rush, blindly at times, into a new century and a new millennium, let us recall that the future has a past – that we cannot have a living future with a dead past – and that the past, especially in moments of high exuberance, holds many lessons teaching us to temper our confidence and take heed of the tragic dimension of mankind and its history. That is why I wish to centre my words here on the twin concepts of humanism and creativity – the right and the left hands of culture – as the basis for transcending differences and crafting a global tapestry.

Creativity and humanism can be defined as widely as the Oxford Dictionary does. Humanism is 'a devotion to the studies which promote human culture'. This can sound awfully abstract, though until you give the word a historical context. We all know that 'humanism' is a concept historically defined by the European Renaissance, and perhaps the single most striking declaration of humanist independence from the fetters of medieval scholasticism can be found in Marsilio Ficino the Florentine writer of the 15th century: 'All is possible', Ficino loudly proclaimed so that his age and all the ages, could hear him. 'All is possible. Nothing should be disdained. Nothing is incredible. Nothing is impossible. The possibilities that we deny are but the possibilities that we ignore.' He could be voicing the optimism of today's global universe of communication.

Yet Ficino, after praising the possibilities of humanism, opens the gates of adversity. Things can go terribly wrong, even with the best humanist intentions in the world. The nature of humanity, he writes, 'contains each and all the levels of being, from the horrendous forms of the powers of hell, to the hierarchies of divine intelligence'.

If everything is possible, the humanist seems to be saying, then the worst can happen along with the best; the possibilities of good along with the possibilities of evil. He was right, for the brilliant humanist horizons of the Renaissance were soon clouded over by everything that denied them: protracted religious conflict, bloody wars between dynasties, commercial rivalries, a world of greed and strife, disclaiming the possibilities of the human spirit. In the same way that today's shining world of high technology coexists with 900 million illiterate adults worldwide and, also globally, with 130 million school-less children, while a combat plane for a Latin American air force costs as much as eighty million textbooks. The Americas, our land, Terra Nostra. Renaissance Europe, feeling it had lost its own humanist Utopia in the Old World, sought it in the New World. The Americas were the invention of a European humanism desperately in need of a new space for Utopia.

The discovery of America became the invention of America and the invention of America became synonymous with a new chance for humanism. We were saddled from the very start with the obligation to be happy. What a heavy burden! And what a temptation to delude ourselves into believing that, in the Americas, history would necessarily have a happy ending! Yet what an opportunity also to clearly see the pitfalls of illusion and develop a critical view of ourselves and of the world! This courage, this clear-sightenedness, is part of the humanist demand in the Western Hemisphere – where, only in Latin America, according to the Latin American Commission to the Conference on World Poverty held in Copenhagen in 1994, out of 400 million Latin Americans, 196 million survive on less than 60 dollars a month.

But as Utopia also failed in the New World, betrayed by the harsh realities of colonial exploitation, slavery, the destruction of ancient Indian cultures and the continuing rivalries between imperial powers, humanism once more had to call on its handmaiden, creativity, to transcend the contradictions between the human and inhuman, both in the Old and in the New Worlds – which means, if we look at the cultural history of the Americas, that the defeats of history had to be compensated by the triumphs of art, and this has been true from the 17th Century poet and nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in Colonial Mexico to the contemporary Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Márquez and from yet another great 17th Century female poet of Colonial America, Anne Bradstreet, to the greatest US novelist of our century, William Faulkner.

The compensation of the defeats of history by the triumphs of the creative spirit. This is both the burden and the glory of humanist culture, its right, its obligation, certainly in the Americas, as, from Canada and the United States to Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, we demand so much because so much has been promised in our name. We are spurred by the need to give ourselves and the world what we have promised ourselves and the world in the name of the Americas.

So, what is creativity? Surely, then, not only a compensation, but something – much – more. Again, the Oxford Dictionary comes to the rescue. Its broad, stimulating definition of the creative is: 'The calling into existence of the world'. Not the New, not the Old, but the World itself, the vast inheritance and the vast possibility of humankind embracing it all, heaven and earth, life and death, peace and strife, labour, love, memory, imagination, and time; past and future time held in the cusp of time present.

Time for the imagination. Time to live our deaths. Time to die our lives. This is what is proper to the creative spirit of humankind: to call a world into existence, along with the tradition of that world, its living past, and also, its yearning for the future. But above all, the realisation that everything is present: the past is our memory, the future is our desire, and both happen today. Technological innovation, locally or as a global information network is not – cannot – be exempted from this consciousness, from this demand, for it occurs in the measure of our lives that we call time.

After all, as William Blake wrote, eternity is in love with the works of time, and time was beautifully defined by Plato as the movement of the eternal. When eternity moves, we call it time. In this way, the repeated defeats of the humanist ideal by the incessant claims of power are constantly checked and, with luck, transcended by the force of the creative spirit. Yet, in the modern world, we have been reluctant, at times even blind, to accept that failure – tragic failure – is in no way alien to the humanist ideal.

In other words, there is no immediate cause and effect relationship between humanism and creativity, because there is none between history and happiness. At times, creativity does not flow directly from a joyful humanist spirit, but must make a tragic detour to overcome adversity. The possibility of failure in all human enterprises was clearly seen by the Ancient Mediterranean world and given the form of a tragic warning. Consider the myth of Prometheus so strikingly visualised by the great Mexican artist José Clemente Orozco in his frescoes at Pomona College in California. Prometheus steals the fire of the gods so as to bring freedom to men and women. He is punished by the gods, chained to a mountain, his liver pecked away by an eagle, for all eternity. The tragic question is: Prometheus loses his freedom because he uses it. Would he have been freer if he had not lost it because he had not used it?

The tragic question posed by the Greeks echoes throughout the corridors of time. Let me evoke the greatest: writer of the English language and, as a Mexican, the greatest writer of the Spanish language. I love Shakespeare, who is the tragedian of the great hopes of the Renaissance, as he brings them down to the warning that reason and folly are perilously close to each other, that the arrogant uses of unbridled human power can lead to bloodshed and ruin, and that Renaissance man, who had thought himself the master of the universe, is a sorry thing indeed when pitted against the unleashed forces of the cosmos; humanity struts but an hour upon the stage of the world, 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing…'

Cervantes, on the other hand, is the comedian of the Renaissance: Don Quixote is a fool who believes all that he has read and rides out on a broken-down nag to redeem the dreams of medieval chivalry in a brave new world of thieves, cowards, rogues and cruel aristocrats. *Don Quixote* was

written in the world of the Spanish Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition and the defeat of Spain's multicultural – Christian, Jewish and Arab – civilisation. What Cervantes' creativity did was to put all the dogmas of the repressive age in doubt, by asserting the uncertainty of place, names, authorship, and therefore authority, in favour of the certainty of the human imagination.

In the transitional world which was that of Cervantes and his paper hero, Don Quixote, many things were dying but many deserved to survive. Their dilemma is ours today: we are witnessing the breakdown of a world based on its own systems of analogy and recognition, and suddenly caught in a storm of differences in which we no longer recognise ourselves. It is curious that Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the same date: 22 April 1616.

And it is curious that *Don Quixote*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* were all published in the same year: 1605. Two old madmen and a young assassin rush in to fill the voids of humanism and warn us that we need time, against the crimes of impatience, indifference towards others and lack of human reflection. We need time: a healing pause, time to transform information into knowledge, time to repair the damage that ambition, disdain, the uses of power and sheer mindlessness, have inflicted upon our lives.

The lessons of creativity and humanism handed down by the Greek tragedians, by Shakespeare and Cervantes, were not heeded by the optimism of the Enlightenment and the modern world. Since the 18th Century, we have been assured that progress is inevitable and happiness our destiny. Our blindness to the possibilities of failure made sure that if happiness and progress failed, we would not have the intellectual and emotional safeguards with which to renew ourselves, our lives, our politics. We would be caught unawares. But the Devil, wrote André Gide, adores those who do not believe in him; he is just waiting to pounce on people's unawareness of evil.

The 20th century – the short 20th century – was born in a blaze of optimism and died in a long night of pessimism. Unawareness of the demonic forces of humanity led to Auschwitz and the Gulag, the Holocaust and the concentration camp, the diabolical figures of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Again: Never before has the gap between extraordinary scientific and technological development and moral and political lag, been greater.

Certainly, creative humanism has borne witness and offered imagination to the plight of the 20th century. Not in vain the indispensable 20th century writer, Franz Kafka, derided by political commissars of Left and Right as an irresponsible fantasist, is the only realist writer, in a profound sense, of the nightmare of personal violence, loss of identity and inevitable pain that has forever tarnished our century and our lives.

The first hero of the modern novel, *Don Quixote*, thinks he is a gallant knight of chivalry. The last hero, Kafka's Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*, wakes up one morning and discovers that he has become a bug. In that misty awakening in Prague, Kafka restores tragedy and offers us the most terrible promise of happiness: 'there shall be much hope, but not for us'. Indeed, the supposedly surreal, fantastical Kafka turned out to be the most realistic, almost clinical writer of our time. His despair leads directly to Samuel Beckett's shivering grave of humanism: 'I do not exist. The fact is self evident,' writes the author of *Waiting for Godot*. The creative imagination thus announces that in our time, the bearer of humanism, the human being, is also dead.

Should we surrender to this despair? Should we give in to this nihilism? The last hero has no face or, at the most, he has the head of an insect. Should we cut off his horrible head? Or should we rather seek out our – his-her – new human features? Should we surrender to the delightful tickles of a world of technology as pure entertainment – or as pure, manipulative speculation? Has not the end of the Cold War given a face to the multiple cultures of humankind, long hidden by ideological masks?

Another great writer, William Faulkner, gives us a clue in this direction. Faulkner writes within the most optimistic and future-oriented of all societies, that of the United States of America, a culture where nothing succeeds like success. This makes the US an eccentric country, since most nations have a direct and overwhelming experience of failure. Faulkner dissented from the founding optimism of the American Dream and said: We, too, can fail. We, too, can bear the cross of tragedy. It: is called racism. The North did not defeat the South. The South had already defeated itself by enslaving, humiliating, persecuting other human beings because they were different. Yet the pain of tragedy can redeem us, if within it we can recognise the humanity that we share with others. Faulkner offers the clearest guide to a new humanism defined as the recognition of the other, the capacity to live with he or she who are not like you or me; to transcend differences and weave a common tapestry.

Today, now that the Cold War is over, the discarding of the shirt that we wore for 50 years tears away, like the garment of the mythological Nessus, our very skin. This means that our skin must change, so that it can touch, come into contact with the vast agenda of the post-Cold-War world, an agenda hidden by four decades of Manichean simplifications and strategic myths that clouded the concrete reality of the bearers of any possible creativity: the six billion men and woman who live on this planet, demanding our embrace because they are different and because we are different.

The end of the Cold War has permitted many cultures to rise from the basement and become the protagonists of a history that is far from over. We have entered a dangerous world of conflicting jurisdictions: the transnational, the international, the regional, the national, the local, even the tribal. All of them dispute our allegiances and fight for supremacy.

They are conforming two distinct villages, the Global Village of instant communications, world-wide economic integration and accelerated technological advances, and the Local Village of faith in traditional values, self-government, the hearth and the memory of a culture – the Global Village of Bill Gates and the Local Village of Emiliano Zapata. Both villages present great opportunities, but also great dangers, to creativity and the new humanism.

The Local Village, all too often, spills over into religious fundamentalism, ethnic cleansing, hatred of the other, xenophobia, and racism.

The Global Village, all too often, wears a cold, uncaring technocratic mask, as though macroeconomic wisdom did not affect people, only numbers: it generalises, conforms, and even amuses people to death, robbing them of their personality. We are caught, in a sense, between the Cheerful Robot who lives in the Global Village and the Idols of the Tribe who inhabit the Local Village. How to bridge these extremes? Through our attention, I think, to real people, to the urgent agenda of the 21st century: the saving of the environment, the population explosion, the bodily and mental freedom of women, the increasing disparity all over the world between haves and have-nots, inside each society but especially in the North-South divide; and the grim crisis of our urban civilisations, North and South: crime, drugs, violence, the homeless, the elderly, crumbling infrastructures, plunging standards of education and brutal pandemics that do not distinguish between First, Second, Third or Fourth Worlds.

The Evil Empire is no longer. It has shifted to the Evil Slum.

And from these slums, both internal and external (since the First World has its own Third World; since there are beggars and homeless people in Boston, Birmingham and Bogota; since children are murdered in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, the ghettos of New York City and the suburbs of Liverpool), from all of these places and many more, come the new nomads of the local village moving towards the Global Village: the immigrant, coming in waves from South to North and from East to West, challenging us to meet the other, the men and women of different cultures, transforming but enriching our own; or exterminating the other, denying the humanity of those who are different and degrading our own humanity, once more, in repeated holocausts.

The 3,000-mile border between Mexico and the US is the most striking example of this challenge to meet and understand two different cultures. How to live with those who are not like you or me? How to expect that in the age of global economic integration, and instant communications, the other would not instantly arrive in our midst? Did not, after all, during five hundred years of ceaseless expansion, the West, take over the land, modify the culture, colonise, exploit and arrogantly rule over those who are now heading West to give the West a taste of its own challenges? Here they are, coming back, defying our humanity, our sense of justice and, finally, even our creativity.

For the centres of humanist creativity, once limited to the nations of the West – Europe and North America – have shifted, for powerful economic and political reasons, to include through the sheer excellence of their creativity and humanism, regions long considered as eccentric or dispensable. As a Latin American, I belong to a mixed culture of Indian, Black, and European descent; and through Spain, I am also a multicultural Mediterranean: Greek, Roman, Arab and Jewish.

Many cultures, not only one, tell us the immensely gifted and varied writers from Latin America, Japan and China, the French Caribbean and formerly French North Africa; an immense variety of human minds and voices, tell us the writers in English from the former British colonies of Black Africa, South Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and India: the Empire Writes Back. And many histories, not only one, tell us the Black American writers – Tony Morrison, the Mexican American writers – Sandra Cisneros, the Cuban American writers – Cristina Garcia, the Sino-American writers – Amy Tan, the Puerto Rican American writers – Rosario Ferré, and the Indian-American writers – Louise Erdrich. All women, all modern Scheherazades who by telling a tale assure us of one more day of life: the mothers of the new American Awakening.

This is the message of creative humanism today: Cultures perish in isolation. Cultures only flourish in contact with other cultures. There are no pure cultures in this earth. And who is the bearer of the worlds culture's at their most basic level? A child. Always a child at the very root of life. The child, the father of the man, in Wordsworth's magnificent line. For whatever our ideas about development, politics and society, we must realise that we are being watched, as we enter the coming century, by the true protagonists of the next hundred years: children, their questioning eyes, twinkling at times, at others saddened, eyes filled with hope sometimes, and other times despairing, sometimes blank and other times luminous eyes, waiting to learn, waiting to know, do and be, waiting for the very first social impulses towards work, the experience of work, the pride of work. This shall be perhaps the greatest challenge of the 21st Century as we try to transcend our differences and craft a global tapestry: not to waste a single child's talent.

Memory, imagination, reasoning, physical ability, the awakening to art, the art of communicating with others: we must give the children of the 21st century a powerful sense of their personal dignity, of the capacities they must develop, of their strengths to survive, of their intelligence to make their own decisions, of their will to go on learning.

What a terrible loss when children are wantonly isolated from their culture, from art and the humanities, on the perverted notion that culture is only for the privileged, a minority issue, and a dangerous one at that! This is shocking to me, this wilful insistence on the expendable nature of art, these short-sighted policies that perpetuate the gap between the majority of the people in any one nation and the culture that, after all, the people themselves created – and, again, between the culture of one national community and the tapestry of international historical cultures we are invoking here today. Artists, writers, educators, are men and women of the people, bearers and translators of multiple traditions created and nourished by multiple peoples.

Furthermore, 'Every new work of art', Henrik Ibsen said as he faced the stalwart Pharisees of his own time, 'Every new work of art serves a process of spiritual emancipation and purification.'

Culture, humanism and creativity – the themes I have invoked here today – are at the very root of that fragile and powerful creation which is a human personality. They are also at the summit of any given nation's capacity for acting constructively on the world scene. Within a person's soul, culture both integrates and differentiates. So it does within any national community. But more and more, to integrate without losing our differentiations, is becoming a bigger and bigger demand in the world I have been describing, defined, at the level of the Global Village, by economic interdependence and technological advances and, at the local level, by an anguished need to rediscover the shelters of family, tradition, religion, identity. How to integrate these two worlds, the global and the local? How to avoid the sickness that both the Global and the Local Village are menaced by: a soulless, mechanical, money-grubbing, racist and xenophobic world up in the

penthouse; a deprived, mendicant, fundamentalist, even tribal world, in the gutter?

The growing social and economic gaps between different societies, developed and developing, and within each society, developed or not, will not be breached only by culture and the arts. But take these away and the chasm dramatically widens. Our sense of belonging to the same human species is going to be severely challenged in the years to come by the faceless movement of speculative capitals manipulated by invisible forces; by the insults we are accumulating on the roof of our common house, the biosphere; by the dangers of nuclear accident; by the profound crisis of urban civilisation shared by the First, Second and Third Worlds; and by the untouchable powers of a mega-corruption beyond the scope of national or international jurisdictions.

Can our answer to these challenges be indifference, frivolity, or the mentality of 'after me the deluge?' Can it be a complacent hedonism fostered by the fast-buck entertainment industry? Will we all become cheerful robots, amusing ourselves to death? Even the availability of instant information might not save us: are we perhaps witnessing, on a planetary scale, an explosion of information along with an implosion of meaning? Are we sure that we are better informed simply because so much information is obtainable – even if it is meaningless information?

The responses to these dangers are both cultural and political. We have to restore this essential value, the reminder that the real purpose of economic activity is the well-being of concrete human beings end their families. This will not happen without an approach to education that stresses the variety, the universality but also the necessity of exposure to the greatest values created by any given community, our own and those of other nations: the arts, the letters, the visual and verbal treasures created by humankind.

The creative spirit becomes a force for understanding today, when it realises that we can only recognise our own humanity if first we recognise it in others. Humanism today means a recognition of the humanity of others, of the cultures they bear.

And creativity means calling into existence new worlds, often forgotten, often shunned, but which are, and will have to become, a part of our emotions, of our love, and of the value we give to the continuity of life on this earth.

As we approach the new millennium end the coming century, I am convinced that the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development is called upon to play a mediating role between cultures, defying prejudice, extending the idea we have of our own limits and possibilities, increasing our capacities to give and receive, our intelligence for understanding what is foreign to us and living up to the demands of cultural universalism, without which technological globalism can become an empty shell.

Let us embrace the cultures of others so that others can embrace our own culture. History is not over. We are living an unfinished history because we are unfinished men and women. The lesson of our unfinished humanity is that when we exclude we are poor, and when we include, we are rich. We have yet to discover, touch, reach out, name, embrace the number of our brothers and sisters our arms are capable of holding.

And none of us will recognise our humanity if we do not, first, recognise it in others. Thank you.

This speech was delivered at the Prince Claus Fund Awards ceremony in 1998.

I THINK WE BECOME WRITERS IN ORDER TO BECOME OTHER PEOPLE. WITH EACH BOOK I FEEL I AM EXPANDING THE NATURE OF THE SPACE THAT I OCCUPY, THAT SOMEHOW THIS IS ESSENTIAL, THAT EACH BOOK REPRESENTS ONE SIDE OF ME, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS, AS THERE ARE WITH MOST PEOPLE THAT NEED TO BE ELUCIDATED.

JAMAL MAHJOUB, FROM *DISPLACING THE CENTRE*, PUBLISHED IN PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL #11, 2004.

FOR THE TRANSCULTURAL RECORD

PAUL GILROY

Round the world? There is much in that sound to inspire proud feelings; but whereto does all that circumnavigation conduct? Only through numberless perils to the very point whence we started, where those that we left behind secure, were all the time before us.
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Theories about culture come to mirror the broken world they initially strive to explain. There are too many well-fortified zones, bounded by deference to the authoritarian claims that origins can make, where purity is prized and mutability arouses fear and distrust. But there are also precious moments when concern with the mechanisms of cultural transmission and translation must become a priority, when the promiscuous anti-discipline associated with complex cultural dynamics rewrites the rules of criticism and appreciation in novel, emphatically post-anthropological codes. *Trade Routes* [the second Johannesburg Biennale, October 1997–January 1998] directs attention away from the issue of origins and towards the vectors of travelling modern culture: cramped bodies, bloody commodities, innocent objects, oppositional signals, broken codes, impure thoughts and hidden information. It suggests connections between capitalist enterprise and the development of modern knowledge and power, particularly the typology of races that once corresponded to the terminal points of trading activity. It conjures up the problem of culture's routine and irreverent translocation. This is incompatible with the arcane desires of the butterfly collectors of alterity, who prefer their cultures integral an want their differences to remain absolute. Though their occasional appetite for national liberation and schemes for ethnic conservation sometimes disguises it, they are conservatives, in the most precise and technical sense of that term. Their increasingly influential position certainly offers no protection against the resurgent power of raciological thinking, with which it has often been covertly complicit. For that reason alone, their arguments need to be answered in an assertive cosmopolitical mode that concedes nothing to either the primordialisation or the reification of culture.

Of course, the perils of globalisation have unleashed some urgent versions of national and ethnic absolutism. They have been made all the more desperate and volatile by the destructive power of processes that flatten cultural and linguistic variation into the blander, more homogenous formations that provide fertile territory for consumerism to take root. Their fantasy of armoured particularity reaches out from its starting points in the overdeveloped world. It links rational raciology not just to xenophobia and nativism, but to timely new hostilities and anxieties directed at the forms of jeopardy that have taken shape more recently. We must recognise the special spell cast by the glamour of purity and identify the varieties of fear and hatred, directed not so much at the strange and the different, but with new intensity at those whose difference or strangeness persistently eludes capture by the social and political categories available to make sense of it.

The anthropological tribunes of these complacent and ethnocentric conservatisms come equipped with culturalist alibis for the refusal of political concerns. I wish to speak against them from a different location, where the old game of cultural authenticity is harder to indulge in, and the profane components – from which selves are composed – are inescapably diverse. There is no purity around here, and the anxious desire for it is deeply distrusted as scarcely more than a dubious source of the cheapest political legitimacy.

For almost thirty years, I have been gripped by a passionate obsession with listening to music, most of it produced in parts of the planet far from the corner that I inhabit. Their distant sources were not part of the pleasure they afforded me. Whether they come to London from Cali, California, Trenchtown or Malaco, Mississippi, those tunes had to travel. Trafficking in them constituted an intricate circulatory network that overlapped with, but was not dominated by, the distributive systems of brash, indifferent above-ground commerce. In pleading against the charge of trivial consumerism, I would say that if that half-hidden web was remembered and reconstructed, it could usefully complicate our historical sense of Cold War capitalism, its cultural industries, and the dissidence they unwittingly formed and disseminated. My experience with these objects is part of living through the final commodification of the extraordinary cultural creativity born from the slave populations of the New World. I have watched their oppositional imaginings first colonised and then vanquished by the levelling values of the market that was once, but is no longer, stimulated by commerce in live human beings. Any lingering counter-values are seen today as a pseudo-transgressive adjunct to the official business of selling all sorts of things: shoes, clothes, images, sugared drinks. In a sense, the black vernacular cultures of the late 20th century were the death rattle of a dissident counter-power rooted, not so long ago, in the marginal modernity of racial slavery from which it had a conspicuous exit velocity. For a spell, plastic discs pasted with coloured paper labels and called 'records' furnished unlikely and unanticipated vehicles for a restless, travelling sensibility. They became part of outer-national culture-making, and their history extends arguments about the role of communicative technologies in augmenting and mediating forms of social and political solidarity beyond the imagined communities achieved via the magical agencies of print and cartography.

It is worth remembering that world of sound now that it has almost departed – dispatched by the forces of rampant iconisation. The slave's aural bequest to the future was also notable for its interestingly dissonant relationship to the process of its own commodification. This can be defined by a pattern of conflict that reveals much about the incapacity of capitalism to instantly reconfigure the world according to the rhythm of its own insatiable appetites. Even in the fixed and frozen forms demanded by the industrialisation of culture, dissident, transcendent music was produced and dispatched radically unfinished. Its openness anticipated the involvement of remote audiences. They were keen to make supplementary, but nonetheless essential, creative input into the social use rather than the privatised consumption of a culture that could be only partially objectified. Two warring aspects of the social life of these special objects became entangled. The cultural life of recorded sound did not reduce to the simple economic relations with which it was enmeshed. Indeed a whole tradition grew up around the idea that this music had a value beyond money, beyond the profits it made for those who sold it without regard to its ethical attributes, thinking – mistakenly – that they had its full measure.

As this historic period draws to a close and even its best residual features fall prey to the culture of simulation and iconisation that impacts corrosively upon memory, time, and place, I am very conscious of having been shaped by a translocal, transcultural movement constructed on the 'post-Bandung' planetary scale revealed by the movement of these loaded commodities. I call them 'loaded' to underline the historic supplement they carry in addition to either their use or their exchange values. To the children of post-colonial settlers, a utopian black culture that had travelled west to east, south to north, underscored the truths of a history of migration that was emotionally and politically close at hand, but not always spoken. Perhaps, like slavery, it enclosed a trauma that resisted being turned into speech or writing? Of necessity, it founded new communicative media, new vectors, and new hosts.

Alert to the special relationship this subculture had established between art and artefact, I amassed recordings on vinyl and immersed myself in the ephemeral and disreputable scenes that surrounded them. I could and probably should have paused at the point where the printed and illustrated cardboard in which the music was clothed became as interesting to me as the sounds inscribed on the ridged surface of the plastic inside its seductive covers. Instead, I pressed forward, keen to comprehend the overall architecture of the non-national, cultural, and political formation to which these products became integral by their refusal of their official status as disposable and transient. The older, ethically-charged communicative pattern they consolidated was born from the hidden public spaces of black Protestantism, and then systematically adapted. It has been gradually crushed by new commodities, technologies, and desires. It is being replaced by a culture of simulation that changes the value of blackness in the globalised businesses of information, entertainment, and telecommunication. The supersession of the analogue by the digital is an appropriate symbol and symptom of these wider shifts. Blackness as abjection gives way steadily to blackness as vitality, eternal youth, and immortal dynamism. The ideal body of the black male athlete now supplies a ubiquitous key signature for this strange theme. An exemplary black physicality, mute and heroic, has been conscripted into service to build a militarised and nationalised version of planetary popular culture, in which the world of sports counts for more than that of supple, counter-public expressions improvised around the Gestalt of song and dance.

The transnational black movement to which I affiliated was choreographed against the backdrop provided by the liberatory anticolonial violence of Cold War politics. Solidarity with those important struggles provided a perverse training for emergent post-modern sensibilities. That movement discovered a bridge between the overdeveloped world and the colonies. It announced the resulting political claims through the language of rights and justice. Even when we reassured ourselves that we were dealing with human rather than civil rights, the tension around this debt to modernity was plainly evident. Civil rights derived from sovereign states and artful government, whereas human rights sought legitimation from other, more usually moral and spiritual, sources. They were the authentic rights that the hybrid, populist art of Bob Marley and Peter Tosh assured us were worth standing up for. The new technologies of the free black self-caught the post-colonial wind and were blown hither and thither, finding unexpected but nonetheless fertile resting places far from the territories where the monocrop plantations had once been. They created and communicated an anti- and trans-national ecology of belonging, a vernacular anti-capitalism, an most importantly, a body of distinctive critical ideas regarding the place of 'race' in relation to the goal of democracy and the workings of history, from which Africa and Africans had been excluded by the unsentimental law to which Hegel, when he considered that geography had become the natural amphitheatre in which the drama of History was to be played, gave such memorable expression: 'at this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again'.

These observations are intended to underline that the theories of interculture which are presently available do not assist in capturing half of the stories we need to consider. It is probably uncontroversial to suggest that globalisation needs a longer and more careful periodisation than it has received so far. However, it also needs to be made part of reckoning with modernity on a planetary rather than a parochial, Eurocentric scale. This latter task requires the specification of imperial and colonial modernities, conquest and plantation modernities. The issue of travel is frequently assigned to the margins of settlement, where the premise of cultural life is provided. It is made into the property of marginal people: migrants and refugees. To be sure, the idea that culture can travel has recently found a receptive audience, particularly among the international class in the overdeveloped countries. This deterritorialisation yields important insights, but there is always the suggestion that they have been too cheaply bought, too easily accomplished. Culture loses its adhesive qualities and the romanticisation of displacement emerges as a persistent danger. It can combine disastrously with a wilful forgetfulness about the constitutive, brutal force of imperial and colonial power. Unless we are careful, our reforms of the durable Hegelian scheme will end up by fitting culture into cracks between the fortified aggregations of the nation state that previously provided its primary repositories. There is more to be done in order to disabuse ourselves of the illusions that follow from a sedentary understanding of culture-making. We do not have to be content with the halfway house provided by the idea of plural cultures. A theory of relational cultures, and of culture as relation, represents a more worthwhile resting place. That possibility is currently blocked by the banal invocation of 'hybridity', in which everything becomes equally and continuously intermixed, blended into an impossibly uniform consistency. In opposing that unhelpful sense of cultural process, it is essential to acknowledge and confront the eloquent arguments that have been made about the

inescapability of ethnocentrism, about the necessity of being culture-bound. They assert a clean and logical split between particular 'ethnic' attachments that are seen as both inevitable and desirable and the vicious forces that take shape under the banners of 'race'.

If these two essentially dissimilar phenomena are linked, we are told, it is only by contingency. A long and authoritative pedigree descending from Levi-Strauss is claimed for these arguments, which routinely conceal their own political orientation behind a sham sophistication that marks the true connoisseurship of difference. The desire for a rooted cosmopolitanism is opposed to a trivial and merely political distaste for racism. The same motive is professed as the source of principled objections to the encroachments of empty postmodernism and banal cultural studies.

I want to address the pessimism of the influential position from which Richard Rorty has reduced our options to the tense choice between privileging the group to which we belong and pretending an 'impossible tolerance' for the rebarbative practices of others, to whom one does not have to justify one's beliefs. It should not need to be said that one is not necessarily affiliated to some single, overarching group that is always able to claim a special and fundamental allegiance which wipes out all other contending claims. It is more important to appreciate that different groups are constituted on different bases that correspond to the various frequencies of address that play upon us and constitute our always incomplete identities in an unstable field. Against a priori ethnocentricity, I would argue that raciologies and nationalisms promote and may even produce certain quite specific types of collectivity, characteristically those that are hierarchical, authoritarian, patriarchal, and phobic about alterity. The failure to engage with nationalisms as a historically specific power that connects the pathologies of contemporary racist movements with the history of European raciology and ethnic absolutism is a substantive weakness. The related refusal to engage with the specific qualities of raciological discourses, the solidarities and modes of belonging that they promote and the forms of kinship they both construct and project, compounds the problem. The mild and worthy 'ethnocentrisms', which we are told that we cannot and must not do without, are everywhere shown to be eagerly compatible with the palingenetic forms of populist ultranationalism that represent the mythic core of a generic, fascist minimum.

The pious counter position of 'good' ethno-centrism against 'regrettable but exceptional' racism is an empty charade favoured by those who opt to evade and mystify the moral and political responsibilities that fall to critical commentators in this most difficult of areas. Are we to accept that culture can be racialised and nationalised? The choices are clear. Are ethnic groups overwhelmingly national and 'racial'?

And on what scale is group solidarity to be practised and recognised: room, street, neighbourhood, city, region, state; blood-kin, species-kin, planetary-kin? Even if we were to accept the unitary, fundamentalist form of belonging to an 'ethnos' outlined by Rorty and turned into catechism by his less sophisticated disciples, there is nothing to suggest that the boundaries around that version of monadic collectivity must inevitably coincide with the arbitrary political border of 'ethnic' groups. Belonging-together can make just as much sense either below or above that fateful threshold. Politics, sent packing by raciology, needs to be reactivated not closed down. This dispute over the status of culture, and its claims upon individuals, entails a further quarrel, with the way that politics is itself to be understood.

Against the fashion that would reassign these sibling concepts, politics and culture, to separate and contradictory domains, I want to join them, or more accurately, to relish the fact that they are already inescapably joined both by the idea of politicised art and by the currently unfashionable notion of a politics of everyday life. Politics is still frequently conceived as though it too existed exclusively within the confines of closed national borders that are aligned precisely with those of sovereign governmental authorities. This idea can still hold, even when the official goal of multiculturalism arrives to force a degree of reconceptualisation in the way that political pluralism is understood as a market, entire of itself. *Trade Routes* is making a contribution to breaking that pattern of assumptions and exploring the trans-local resources needed to put better theories of culture and its workings in place of the orthodoxies about its sedentary and national character that, apparently by default, come into play. Estrangement from the nation state has been consolidated by a contemporary mood in which the commitment to nationality as an overriding, ethically charged, or ethnic community has become harder to sustain. The political technologies that solicited national belonging are very different now than they were in the age of industrialised culture. And yet the dream of naturally national cultures is still alive in the midst of a phantasmagoria of invented traditions that does not allow the tidy separation of civic (good) and ethnic (bad) nationalisms. The resurgence of sport at the core of the 'infotainment telesector' is the most telling symptom of its renewed power.

We have entered what is by Hegelian standards a condition of post-History in which Africa and its contemporary fate emerge as significant political and moral issues. The histories of imperial modernity, which will follow this long-overdue adjustment, offer a timely alternative to Eurocentrism, with its overly innocent notions doggedly pursuing the fantasy of progress without catastrophe. In grudging response to this new predicament, the nation state is still being defended as the least bad version of governmental practice. It is still presented as the only available arrangement for organising the essential task of administering justice and orchestrating long-term projects toward cultural recognition and economic redistribution. This, in my view, is an overly-defensive, unimaginative, and unnecessarily pessimistic response. It finds nothing worthwhile in the history that links modern commerce to the formation and development of race-thinking or in the extraordinary record of translocal movements, from abolitionism to Médecins Sans Frontières.

Symptomatically, it concedes no influence to the power of feral art or of other patterns of culture – examples of solidarity and affinity that have worked, rather like my precious records, in wider orbits and founded trans-local circuits, unpredicted, and underappreciated. A post-anthropological understanding of the human condition is only the most basic prize awaiting the reanimation of political culture simultaneously on sub- and supranational scales.

This essay was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #1, 1999. It was first published as part of the catalogue Trade Routes: History and Geography*, accompanying the second Johannesburg Biennale, supported by the Prince Claus Fund, October 1997–January 1998.*

‘LA CULTURE’: THE PROBLEMS OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

MAI GHOUSSOUB

‘*La culture est ce qui reste quand on a tout oublié. Commentez!*’ (‘Culture is what remains when everything is forgotten. Comment!’) It was with an air of great solemnity and a highly theatrical pose that our teacher declaimed his question. The classroom was silent and I was mesmerised. Yes, I thought. Culture is not a mere accumulation of knowledge, it is not about memorising dates and names. ‘*La culture*’, I wrote, ‘*est le but ultime, la seule vertue digne de ce nom*’, (‘Culture is the ultimate aim, the only virtue worthy of this name.’) I was an adolescent then. I adored my young French teacher and I believed in every word he uttered.

It took me a long time to realise that my teacher and his beliefs were not perfect. Many years went by before I could tell that something was missing or was possibly ‘*de trop*’ in my teacher’s definition of culture and its redeeming values.

I made many mistakes, witnessed many conflicts and missed more than one beautiful opportunity in life before it occurred to me that the problem was not in the word culture itself but in the definite article that preceded it. The word culture and the definite article – ‘*la*’ in the context of my Lebanese French lycée – do not mix well. The word culture, in the way I hear it now, in the way I dream of it today, is allergic to the exclusive resonance of the article. It loathes the presumptuous attempt at reducing it to the singular, the cloistered self-confident connotation.

My teacher meant well, and he taught me a lot. I wanted to please him and be a good student. That is maybe why I transgressed his teaching and made space in my satchel for some other wonders (other than French) of human creativity. Inside my school bag there were copies of beautiful Arabic poems complaining about the crusaders’ attacks on ‘our Arab ancestors’ and great epic stories narrating the heroic ‘victories we achieved over the uncivilised hordes that came from the north’. These poems read from right to left. And when I retrieved from the same satchel the books that read in the other direction, the narration came with an opposite interpretation of history as well.

Reading from left to right, I saw the crusaders as heroes and saints, chivalrous men doing a virtuous job. But my Arabic teacher saw things differently, during the right to left reading lessons: he called the men my French teacher described as heroes ‘cruel colonialists, blasphemous thieves’. Reading in both directions, inviting literature that often told opposite truths, should have warned me that culture does not speak one language. The French textbooks introduced us to the ‘saintly’ King Louis IX, whose visual representation charmed us with its bright blue background and its sparkling golden frames. Arabic lessons spoke the language of National Liberation and promised to build a brighter and undoubtedly more colourful future. These teachings, originating in what is miserably called today a ‘clash of cultures’, may have seemed a bit confusing for the little girl I was. But fortunately, instead of turning us, my classmates and me, into schizophrenics or angry adolescents, these contradictions stamped our temperament with the spirit of dissent and enhanced our curiosity. We always listened to words with an alert ear, trying to detect the motivation of the voice that carried them. We learned to adjust our optical nerve in order to better capture the images of difference. We had to learn about relativism the hard way. Please do not misunderstand me. I still believe in universal values, but my very French education could have made some space for the particularities of ‘the other’. A trace of ‘alterity’ could act like ‘*un nuage de lait*’ in tea, could soften it without endangering its vital role.

Looking at words and illustrations from opposite angles, listening to conflicting narratives, made it easy for us to abandon the iconic representations of Louis IX and his exquisite chapel for the weeping woman of Picasso. We had explored the art of Arab calligraphy and the geometric meaning of arabesques before we were able to return to visual representations from the European Middle Ages and appreciate them. Thanks to the opposite promoters of ‘*La Culture*’, their culture, we took some precautions: we contemplated paintings and searched for meanings beyond their frames. We walked around sculptures placing our minds and bodies at various distances from their surfaces and their historical context. Since cinema was still a treat, we never cared for the labels high and low as far as the stage or the screen were concerned. We were mainly eager to see all that was being performed in the historic town of Baalbek during the festival season. Baalbek’s festival was our palpable link with the rest of the world.

This is how we became addicted to chasing radio stations that asserted opposite views and soon we abandoned the news broadcasts to listen to a wide range of music transmitted by the little portable object. We heard ‘foreign’ music that ended up sounding very familiar to our ears, becoming immensely enjoyable.

Our imagination travelled with musical notes, accompanying them across various continents and longing to understand their words. In those days, this was the best we could do before the label ‘World Music’ proudly appeared on the shelves of record shops.

A few days ago, I heard Mohammad’s younger daughter asking her English mother why her father’s books read in the wrong direction. The mother tried her best to explain that this is another – different, optional, contrasting – direction and that there was no right and wrong in this case. The child looked perplexed. She

seemed to prefer to stick to the reassuring word wrong. Observing the child's puzzled expression, I felt an urge to assure her that she was lucky to encounter these confusing realities now, that some people write from top to bottom as well and that thanks to the fact that her parents' books read in opposite directions, she already has a plus and that she looks very attractive.

I will always be grateful to my city of origin. Before it turned nostalgic every time its glorious days were mentioned, Beirut cared very little about the need to assert that one colour is truer than the other, or that the motion of the eyes over a paper ought to travel in one single direction. Before the war, the arts in my city were not obsessed with the nationality of their inspiration or the correctness of their influence. Local galleries exhibited abstract expressionism as well as oriental arabesques and realistic landscapes. Modernism was celebrated, tradition never totally forgotten. Sober respect for minimalism never stopped any poster painters from adding more glitter to the Egyptian and Indian film stars, nor did it inhibit their tendency to give more authority to the kung fu fighters, enabling them to better dominate the avenues leading to the film theatres.

Beirut was more authentically post-modern than it was ever modern. The city was craving to be part of a global village before globalism came into existence. And the definite article '*la*' preceding the word '*culture*' would only have sounded ridiculous in the Beirut before the civil war. Maybe this is how I wish things were and how my imagination remembers them. After all, how much can our memory be trusted when it recalls the 'homeland' we have left behind? The artist and curator Shahin Merali has beautifully expressed the cultural meaning of home for emigrants like us, living in London, a multicultural city par excellence: 'home is no longer a place where we live or work, home is now a spectrum of our histories and imagination.'

A few *pures et dures* complained about Beirut's conflicting juxtapositions, 'the pernicious closeness of its high arts and its kitschy entertainment'. I am sure that the young man who insulted me calling, me 'a noxious cosmopolitan', must have been among those few. I have a feeling that this young man was unhappy to see the end of the war. I can visualise him insulting, at this very moment, a DJ who is broadcasting inauthentic music, the sounds of 'alien cultures' that our young people, along with the young people of all continents, are happy to hum.

Now I know that before the term multiculturalism was invented, the meeting of different cultures was the most wonderful thing about this city that is still struggling to stand on its own feet. Its steel and glass modernist skyscrapers never threatened the smaller decorative Sicilian-like buildings; nor did the Ottoman arcades lose any of their monumentality next to those majestic symbols of industrial triumph, housing the banks and financial transactions of the Middle East. Every immigrant, every refugee who found a home in Lebanon gave the street of Beirut a new accent, a great poet, a gifted musician. These coexisting cultures, with their similarities and differences, could have been the greatest lesson of tolerance for us. It was only when those who despised the arcades insisted that high-rises should be erected everywhere as they are the only true culture – that of the present – and those who did not like shapes in steel and glass asserted that the culture of tradition should be the only one allowed, that the meeting became a clash and that the tolerant alternative was abandoned. I am obviously speaking in metaphors; I can indulge in my anger and direct it unashamedly at this painful use of the definite article.

'*La*': the. But these two letters cannot be made responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands people. Let us forget about this bloody definite article and speak of the word culture itself. I do not know if the words culture and value should be totally separated. The arguments concerning the obligations of the arts, their responsibilities and their right to be selfish will never be settled. But if my first lesson about the meaning of culture goes back to the young French teacher, allow me to tell you about a new lesson that I learned recently from another Frenchman. This man was not standing on a school platform, nor was he declaiming with an air of great solemnity; he was speaking in front of a tv camera, telling us about the long days spent in solitary confinement after he was kidnapped and held hostage in some damp basement, in Beirut. Jean-Paul Kauffmann told a story that ought to be printed in every art book and screamed in the face of every cynic in the cultural milieu.

How do you survive for months on end when you are chained to the floor, in a dark narrow space with no books, no sounds and nothing whatsoever to do? You can dream and imagine all these missing companions. But what if your jailers throw inside your cell some factory- made cheese to feed you and this cheese is contained in a round packet? You eat the content and you are left with the empty circular box. Kauffmann ate the cheese wrapped inside the kiri box and because he is human he needs images and tenderness in order to survive, as much as his body needs food. He looked at the empty packet and noticed the design that an unknown illustrator, an unnamed artist had painted to decorate and promote the product. A simple image of a cow against a green background. A brown cow to remind us of fresh milk and a strong green to represent grass. These 'naive' images of a painter who we would hardly call an artist today uncovered a vast bright world hidden behind the unreachable spirit of the prisoner and inside his tortured body. These lines and colours took him to the countryside, into the fields where he played as a child, carried him through the vineyards and delighted his nostrils with the aroma of vintage wine. Kauffmann's mind travelled to warm lands and welcomed him with smiling harvests. For a while, for a tiny precious moment, the mind lived in an imagined, desired humanity, while the pain from the chains was relegated to the reality of the dark cell.

Life is full of irony. While Kauffmann was suffocating in the misery of his cell, Lebanese artists were painting flowers and exhibiting colourful abstract works. They were rejecting the ugly impositions of war by creating their own world. Many people visited the galleries in Beirut despite the danger of bomb explosions and hazardous bullets. But maybe there is no irony in the matter; maybe this is exactly how we all function, in the same way, as cultural beings. Kauffmann and the Lebanese artists were trying to survive against all odds. Not everybody responds to bloodshed and massacres in the same manner as Goya did. Goya depicted the horror of executions and the masquerade of war by painting 'as though he was standing in the firing line'. Other artists

replace the tragic facts with imagined realities. I would like to add one more thought in homage to the unknown artist who had drawn the cow and the green fields. Thanks to the painful lesson I learned from Kauffmann, I will be less confident in the future to affirm that a work of art is 'too easy', that it is to be labelled 'high' or 'low' or that it is obsolete. Cultures are produced by us. Our societies are not the only multiple human entities. Each one of us is multiple as well.

This essay was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #2, 1999, and appears courtesy of Hazem Saghieh.

BORDER IS A CONCEPT, OR A METAPHOR, GENERATED BY A PARADIGM OF SPACE. IN PRACTICE, BORDERS ARE CONCEIVED AS MARKERS. SINCE MARKERS ARE SIGNS, GEOGRAPHY BECOMES SITES AND/OR COMMUNITIES WHERE SPACE IS INTER-TWINED WITH TIME, PRACTICES AND POWER… THE STORY OF ORDERS IS THEREFORE A NARRATIVE OF NAMING AND OSSIFICATION, AND PERHAPS ALSO OF DEATH.

GOENAWAN MOHAMAD, FROM *AT THE BORDER WHERE ALI DIES (AND KA ASKS QUESTIONS)*, JOURNAL #12, 2006.

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

ADRIAAN VAN DIS

The Prince Claus Fund is active in the field of culture and development, in particular in those parts of the world where culture has been diminished by poverty. For it is culture which gives meaning to people's lives. The Fund aims to provide financial support to artists and intellectuals in so-called developing regions, so that the voices of other cultures, besides the western culture, might also be heard. Not so much here in the Netherlands, as in the countries themselves.

Building roads and sinking wells is important work. But poor countries have equal need for a cultural infrastructure, an independent press, writers and readers, critical thinkers who will propagate a different voice to that of the ruling party. They have a need for beauty which has the ability to shock. It is not uncommon for countries to be totally closed to the uncomfortable activities of artists and thinkers and the desire of an audience to be involved. The Fund has the capacity to sponsor activities such as these, after careful evaluation by an international panel of interested parties and specialists.

As you will gather, the Prince Claus Fund is careful but certainly not deferential. After all, our goal is to stimulate people and communities to rediscover their own voice. If those voices are shouting or swearing, or raised in heated debate, so be it. The publication *Het verleden onder ogen* ('Coming to terms with the Past'), is a contribution to this debate. In the three years that the Fund has been active, the word slavery has cropped up more than once. We find that a great need exists to exchange views on this subject; and not just in individual countries, but across borders. What have been the consequences for Africa, some parts of which saw some 40% of their coastal populations abducted over a period of one or two centuries? And how are the Caribbean region and the Americas dealing with this burdensome legacy? To what extent is the white world interested in knowing that millions of black people were once forcibly taken from their homes forever? Does a past of slavery affect the daily lives of the slaves' descendants? Is there any sense in speaking of guilt and victimisation?

MOURNING AND GUILT

If such a subject is too painful to speak about openly for those involved, we often fill the gap with fabrication and mythology. There is a tendency towards denial ('it wasn't that bad', 'it's all in the past', 'look to the future') or rivalry in suffering ('their plight was much worse', 'there were many more victims'). These are the issues which the contributions in this book address. A few years ago, when I spent several months at the former slave post Gorée, a corruption of Goeree, a name which hints at the involvement of Dutch people from Goeree Overflakkee in the province of Zeeland, it struck me that slavery is still very much a current issue among Africans visiting the island. There is a slave museum which thousands of people visit each year, but in truth the whole island is a monument. It was mainly educated people, rich people, or, at least, less poor, who could afford the trip to Dakar and the crossing to Gorée. And who allowed themselves to realise that, only a few generations before them, something terrible had taken place on that island, the incarceration, branding and transportation of tens of thousands of people. When I say they 'allowed themselves', I don't mean it mockingly. It is no luxury to ask yourself where you come from and where you are bound. But for too long, the conditions of everyday life were too severe for many Africans to concern themselves with their own history. Or perhaps the silence, the denial and the shame were too great. For the African-American visitor, Gorée has become an island of mourning and reflection; the 'Dachau of Africa', as many call it. Which brings us right back to 'competitive suffering', a painful subject. The war in Kosovo received more attention here than the skirmishes between India and Pakistan in Kashmir. Rivalry in suffering cannot be regarded as tactful or sensible, but it happens. Particularly if you don't feel listened to. Moreover, it's very human. It happens among victims, and among outsiders.

In Kosovo we are once again reworking the traumas of the Second World War. And this time we are all on the right side. Together we react and donate money against ethnic cleansing. In the meantime, our reporting is ethnically so clean that the civil war in Sierra Leone virtually disappears from Dutch newspapers, even though many thousands of children and young people were slaughtered there in the early months of this year. Kosovo is closer to us, and therefore it is worse.

African newspapers take a very different view. On hearing the words 'humanitarian war', many an African will burst into bitter laughter. Did Western schoolchildren fill parcels for Rwanda at Christmas with that same shocking festive spirit? Did our collective broadcasting companies send another horde of sloppy journalists to Sierra Leone? Now that the war in Kosovo has run its course, at least temporarily, the world is once again taking notice of misery elsewhere. 'The situation in Sierra Leone is far worse than in Kosovo', said the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recently. And, of course, the papers will start writing about Africa again. After all, it's summertime and column inches need to be filled. But the impression remains that Africans matter less. That black people, wherever they are in the world, matter less. And you see that in the debate on slavery, too. Listen to the murmurs of assent which accompany the unveiling of yet another plaque dedicated to victims of disasters in our own country over centuries past. Contrast them with the resistance evoked by the suggestion that there should be a monument in the Netherlands to commemorate slavery.

I have attended a few gatherings where this question was posed. One of those discussions, in Cultural and Political Centre De Balie in Amsterdam, was particularly emotional. A monument? What would be the point? 'They should be paying!' one man called out, to loud applause. There were demands for damages, compensation, an apology, and the apparently inescapable comparison with the Second World War. 'People listen to the Jews!', 'Yes, the Portuguese Jews were involved in the slave trade.' 'Columbus was a Jew, too.' Many reckless things were said and little attention was paid to the scholars. Justice had to be done. There was a debt to be repaid. For many of those present, this was the first time they had talked about this subject in a group. There was swearing and there were tears. Several times, I felt uncomfortably white.

Among my acquaintances, too, this subject creates a division between black and white. The white people who don't know about it don't like being personally confronted with a past they had no part of: 'Reject the legacy? They never accepted it in the first place. It's all so long ago. Guilt, damages? Who would pay? And to whom? How do you decide who gets what? Apologies are empty gestures. It's all nonsense.' White people who know something about it, are quick to say, 'Of course the European countries played a disgraceful role, but don't gloss over the part that Africans themselves played. Black enslaved black. One tribe delivered up another. Just like the Balkans. And the Arabs were the biggest slave traders of all. Have the Islamic authorities offered their apologies yet? Our guilty conscience won't buy the slaves' descendants anything.' And the non-whites say, 'You have no idea what it is to be a different colour in a world that thinks white'.

HISTORICAL INJUSTICE

Being the victim is 'in'. In *The Moral Significance of Crime in a Postmodern Culture*, a recently published thesis by Hans Boutellier, he showed that victimhood is a binding element in our fragmented culture. Or is that observation already out of date? For, after all the attention for the victims, it is now becoming fashionable to resist victimhood, particularly if you yourself come from those circles. In his essay *Joys and Perils of Victimhood* (*New York Review of Books*, 1999) Ian Buruma convincingly demonstrates the extent to which suffering is used as a pretext. We must not conclude that it's too late for a monument devoted to the slave trade. The crimes committed were too great to ignore, the consequences are still felt today. We can't wriggle out of this one. It is all terribly complicated, this talk of 'historical injustice'. It's about time we started knowing more about it. About time that sober and factual passages started appearing in our history books. That demands documentation centres, here, in Africa and in our former colonies. If we know, that monument will not be long in coming. *Het verleden onder ogen* represents a small stone in its construction.

This essay was first published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #3, 1999. It was delivered as a speech at the launch of the publication Het verleden onder ogen: Herdenking van de slavernij *('Coming to terms with the Past: Commemorating Slavery'), published by the Prince Claus Fund and Arena Publishers (1999).*

OVERVLOED

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

At the 1999 Prince Claus Awards ceremony, the South African artist William Kentridge presented Overvloed, *a video installation commissioned by the Prince Claus Fund on the theme of the 1999 Prince Claus Awards, 'Creating spaces of Freedom'. The work was projected onto the frescoed ceiling of the Citizens' Hall of the Royal Palace in Amsterdam during the ceremony, and mirrors were distributed to the audience so that they could see the to see the projection clearly.*

Overvloed is about dislocation – in the first instance the dislocation of a conventional horizon that occurs when one looks at a painting or projection on a ceiling. This experience disrupts our usual perception of up and down, ground and sky. Faced with a painting or projection on a ceiling, the viewer strives to discover a point – or a series of points – that allow them to understand what they are seeing. In a very broad way, this reflects our own attempts to find a point of view that allows us to make sense of the universe.

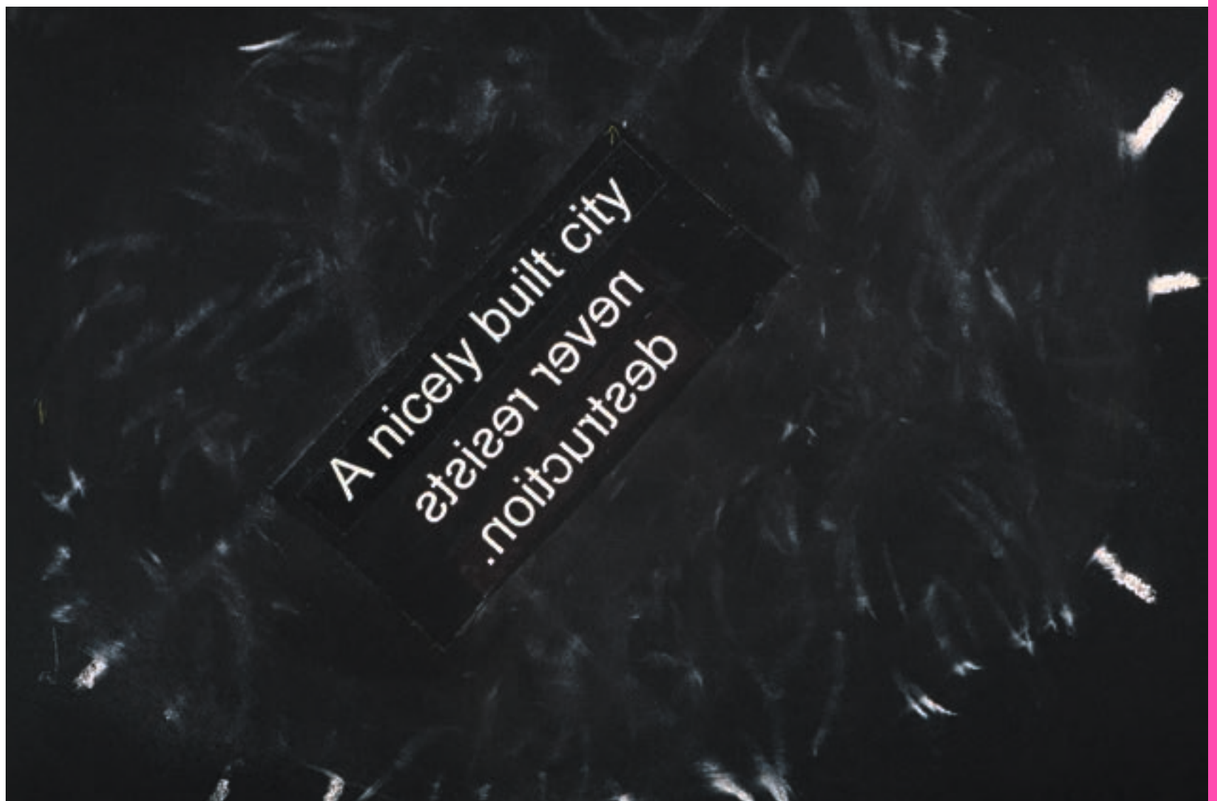
More specifically, *Overvloed* refers to the geographical and historical relationship between the Netherlands and Africa. The construction of the Royal Palace in 1648 coincided with the Dutch colonisation of South Africa (1652). This period, which was in many ways the height of the Dutch Golden Age, also marked the beginning of an extremely complicated chapter in South African history. Three hundred and fifty years later its echoes still resonate.

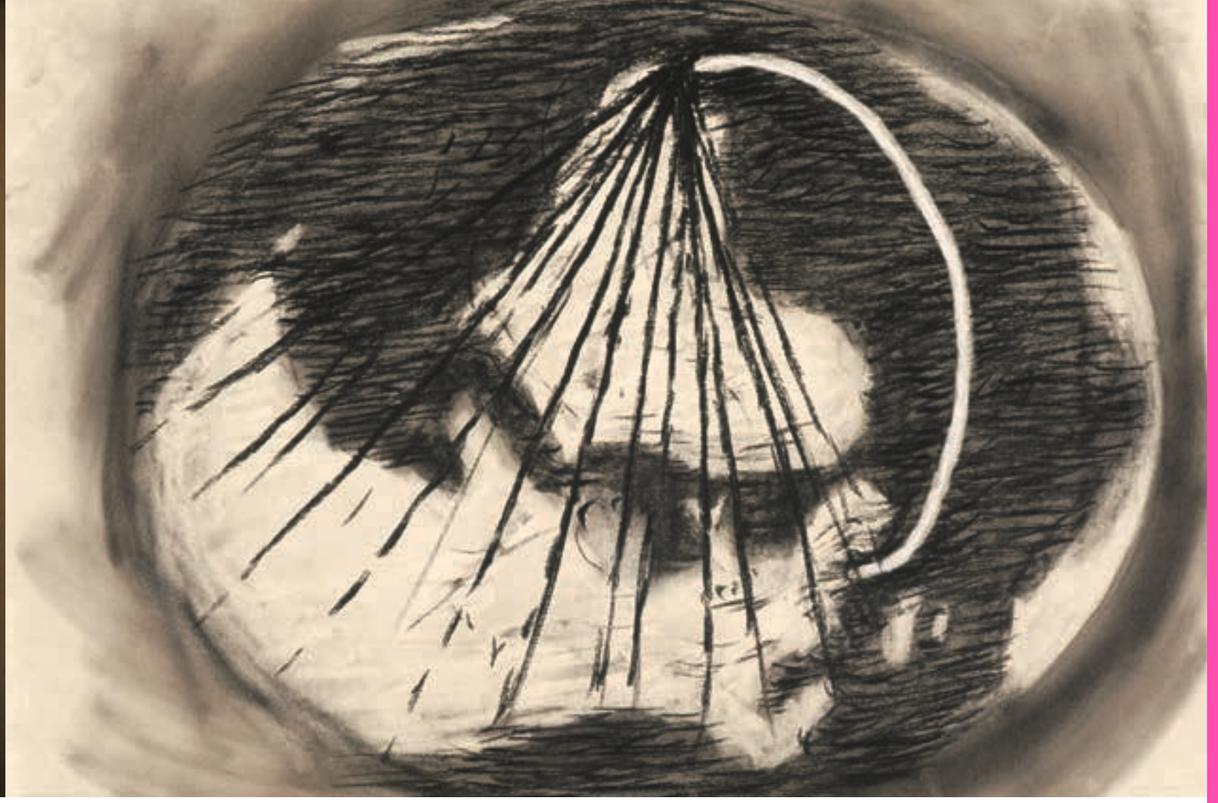
Overvloed is a work in progress, the starting point for a still-ongoing study of ceiling projections. It stems from the artist's continuing desire to discover non-literal ways of clarifying the enigma of European heritage in Africa. The work includes short texts derived from Dutch and East African proverbs.

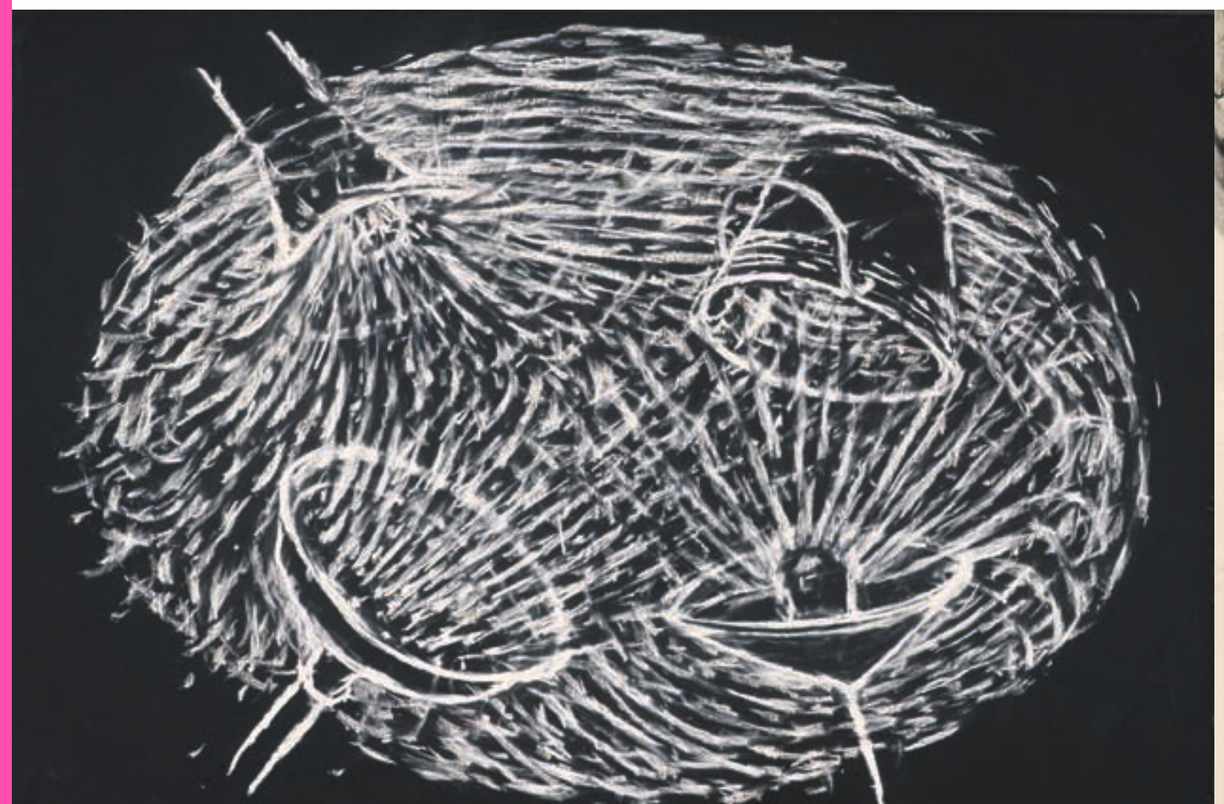
The uncertainty of working on a new medium (the ceiling) – with all its attendant hazards and uncertainties – is a literal reference to those freedoms that are essential to the to the proper functioning of the work of art: the choice of working from a starting point of doubt, the valorisation of uncertainty and the awareness that the project may end in failure.

This work was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #4.

William Kentridge, 'Overvloed', 1999. Video stills courtesy the artist.







A CONCEITED LOOK AT CREATING FREE SPACE FOR THE ARTIST

ALBIE SACHS

PART ONE – THE ACTIVIST SPEAKS

There is no conceit like that of a survivor of an assassination attempt. It was only a year after I had lost an arm and the sight of an eye through a hit-squad car bomb that I found myself opening an exhibition of art from southern Africa at the Kulturhuset in Stockholm. Speaking with the magnified serenity of a near-death survivor, I felt I could say what I liked. My first statement was: 'We don't want your solidarity!' The hall full of Swedish art curators were shocked. 'We don't want your solidarity!' I repeated. A hundred faces tightened at my ungracious remark. 'The solidarity was to bring the works and the artists here; we appreciate that.' The faces relaxed into friendly Swedish smiles. 'Now we want real criticism. If you like the work, tell us. If you don't, tell us. And if you're puzzled, ask us to explain. We don't want solidarity criticism!' The audience was relieved, but my conceit was not yet exhausted. 'And I think that we should stop saying that art is an instrument of struggle.' Once more the tightness. I was the fifth speaker. Each one of the previous members of the panel had intoned the words that art was an instrument of struggle. 'I suggest we ban these words for five years.'

I little realised that my provocative and light-hearted proposal was later to spark the most intense debate on culture that South Africa had ever known. A paper which I wrote on the subject for a seminar organised by the Cultural Department of the ANC in Lusaka was subsequently republished by various South African newspapers and put in anthologies in different parts of the world.

Re-reading it now reminds me of the double pressures under which artists worked in those hard and relentless days of struggle, and which artists today connected with popular struggles must face. The obvious pressures were those of the repressive apartheid state that banned free expression, prohibited publications and imposed censorship over all forms of artistic expression. Writers were locked up; many went into exile. In response, the anti-apartheid movement brought artists together in a solid front against repression (and I am happy to say that the Netherlands played a specially valuable role in this process).The friendships built up in the course of shared danger and conjoined idealism continue to this day, but we paid a price, a heavy, heavy price.

'Our artists' – I now quote from the ten-year-old paper – *'are not pushed to improve the quality of their work, it is enough that it be politically correct. The more fists and spears and guns, the better. The range of themes is narrowed down so much that all that is funny or curious or genuinely tragic is extruded. Ambiguity and contradiction are completely shut out, and the only conflict permitted is that between the old and the new, as if there were only bad in the past and only good in the future. Whether in poetry or painting or on the stage, we line up our good people on the one side and the bad ones on the other, occasionally permitting someone to pass from one column to the other, but never acknowledging that there is bad in the good, and, even more difficult that there can be elements of good in the bad; you can tell who the good ones are, because in addition to being handsome of appearance, they can all recite sections of the Freedom Charter or passages of Strategy and Tactics at the drop of a beret.'*

'And what about love? We have published so many anthologies and journals and occasional poems and stories, and the number that deal with love do not make the fingers of a hand. Can it be that once we join the ANC we do not make love any more, and that when the comrades go to bed they discuss the role of the white working class? ANC members are full of fun and romanticism and dreams, we enjoy and wonder at the beauties of nature and the marvels of human creation, yet if you look at most of our art and literature you would think we are living in the greyest – and most sombre – of all worlds, completely shut in by apartheid. It is as though our rulers stalk every page and haunt every picture; everything is obsessed by the oppressors and the trauma they have imposed, little is about us and the new consciousness we are developing.'

'Listen in contrast to the music of Hugh Masekela, of Abdullah Ibrahim, of Jonas Gwanga, of Miriam Makeba, and you are in a universe of wit and grace and vitality and intimacy, there is invention and modulation of mood, ecstasy and sadness; this is a cop-free world in which the emergent personality of our people manifests itself. Their music conveys genuine confidence because it springs from inside the personality and experience of each of them, from popular tradition and the sounds of contemporary life; we respond to it because it tells us something lovely and vivacious about ourselves, not because the lyrics are about how to win a strike or blow up a petrol dump. It bypasses, overwhelms, ignores apartheid, establishes its own space.'

'Dumile, perhaps the greatest of our visual artists, was once asked why he did not draw scenes like the cruel one that was taking place in front of him: a crocodile of men being marched under arrest for not having their passes in order. At that moment a hearse drove slowly past and the men stood still and raised their hats. 'That', he said, 'is what I want to draw'.'

Some months later, Mandela is freed, I am back in South Africa participating in a heated public debate on my tongue-in-cheek banning of the words 'art is a weapon of struggle'. After the debate someone 'from the struggle' comes up and throws her arms around me. 'I'm a dancer', she says, 'and I love tap dancing, but I didn't dare do it for years because I thought it was bourgeois and an aspect of cultural imperialism. Then I read your paper and went out straight away and did it for half an hour. My dream now is to attend an important ANC conference and jump out of a cake and do a tap dance for all the delegates.' I knew then without doubt that my paper had been right.

PART TWO – THE JUDGE SPEAKS

Did I say there was no conceit like that of a survivor of an assassination attempt? Well, I was wrong. There is the institutional, if not personal, conceit of a judge of the highest court in the land, one who can set aside laws, even those passed by the country's first democratically elected parliament and signed into law by none other than Nelson Mandela. One of our tasks has been to insist that the state does nothing to inhibit all the multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-faith people of our diverse and conflicted country from feeling that they have an equal place in the sun (or, because we have too much sun, an equal place in the shade). When the Court was asked to decide whether or not it was constitutional to prohibit the sale of liquor on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas, that to select out Christian holidays for the prohibition, this is what I wrote – you will note that the language is stiffer, and I will read it with appropriate gravitas, but I like to feel that the quest for freedom was the same:

'One of the functions of the Constitution is to protect the fundamental rights of non-majoritarian groups, who might well be tiny in number and hold beliefs considered bizarre by the ordinary faithful. In constitutional terms, the quality of a belief cannot be dependent on the number of its adherents nor on how widespread or reduced the acceptance of its ideas might be, nor, in principle, should it matter how slight the intrusion by the State is.'

'What may be so trifling in the eyes of members of the majority or dominant section of the population to be invisible, may assume quite large proportions and be eminently real, hurtful and oppressive to those upon whom it impacts. This will especially be the case when what is apparently harmless is experienced by members of the affected group as symptomatic of a wide and pervasive pattern of marginalisation and disadvantage. Even if there is no compulsory requirement to observe or not to observe a particular religious practice, the effect is to divide the nation into insiders who belong, and outsiders who are tolerated. This is impermissible in the multi-faith, heterodox society contemplated by our Constitution.'

This was a tiny, benign and purely symbolic example of the state imposing a single world view onto the whole nation. At the other end of the intolerance continuum, however, is state-backed fanaticism which surely must be one of the greatest threats to artistic creation in the world today. Communal passions are manipulated with a view to acquiring or maintaining state power. Religious emotion is heightened and abused to achieve the lowest and least spiritual of ends. Artists are oppressed not only by walls of censorship and the threat of violence, but by crashing waves of intolerance and incomprehension. Without dialogue and rights of conscience, we are lost; artists flee for their lives and art goes underground. An open society does not mean that anything is permissible, that grossly exploitative behaviour goes unrestrained. It does, however, require that all the multiple voices of humanity have a chance to be heard.

PART THREE – THE CREATOR SPEAKS

The final conceit belongs neither to an assassination survivor, nor to a judge, but to all of us would-be artists. When I was young I used to get confused between the words 'creature' and 'creator'. Now I find it a happy confusion, and I dedicate the last portion of my address to the creatures/creators of the world. In my capacity as one of them, I offer you four simple statements. First, all creators need to be placed and displaced at the same time. Space is never empty, even though it may be invisible. It is always between something and something else. By its nature it is bounded and relational. Artists are never completely alone, nor should they wish to practise their craft in an existential limbo. We live in our world, in our countries, in our cities or farms, in our homes, in our bodies, in ourselves, in our histories, our memories and our languages. Space for the artist repudiates none of these things, but acknowledges them all. In Africa the problem seems to be to capture the experiences of being out of sync, fractured and disoriented but to discover underlying harmonies so that we can recall experience in a synchronised, integrated and oriented way. In Europe – I suggest with continuing conceit – it would appear to be the other way round. Thus, whereas we Africans strive for ways of capturing and soothing an over-tormented reality, you Europeans seem to need to torment and trouble an over-bland one. (Occasionally, I should add, our Euro-Afro-Afro-Euro writers, our Breyten Breytenbachs and our J.M. Coetzees, tell of torment in a tormented way – and how brilliant they can be!)

Secondly, even while we want to be alone, we want to be together. For my struggle generation, togetherness was everything. We found it much easier to love our neighbours than to love ourselves. Yet now we are slowly and painfully learning to love ourselves. There is a fine African word in our Constitution – *ubuntu* – which signifies the connection between individuality and community. We are all human beings, because each of us is a human being; each one of us is a human being, because we are all human beings. Africa has much to give the world.

Thirdly, nothing is more globalised yet lacking in global meaning than the word globalisation itself. It is spoken of everywhere, usually pessimistically, as something inevitable that frees potential, but at a terrible cultural and human price. Yet modern transport enabled me to fly here, the microphone permits you to hear what I am saying, we manage to see films, read books and enjoy cultural exchanges on an unprecedented scale from all over the world. The internationalisation of economic relations is not in itself an evil. What is evil is our near-universal subordination to money, to greed and to the values (or lack of values) of a few. I draw a distinction between globalisation and universalism.

Globalisation presupposes that a technique, a philosophy or an image starts in one part of the world and is spread unchangingly to cover the whole globe. Universalism is just the opposite. It emanates from all over the world and is brought in and distilled as the common experience of humankind, representing something shared and in

constant re-creation, to be generalised and appreciated by all. Unfortunately, what we are getting is increased globalisation of ever more attenuated experience. Even worse, instead of communicating experience (which this Foundation does so lovingly and so well) we all end up simply experiencing communication.

Fourthly, 'We each give what we have to give.' These simple words of the Mozambican artist Malangatana have helped me many times in my personal as well as my public life, and they are indeed what I give to you today. 'We each give what we have to give.' He made the statement when he was opening an exhibition of his paintings in Vienna. 'I thank you good people of Austria', he said, 'for supplying pipes and cement to my poor country. In exchange we give you what we have, and what we have is … a song.' The fact is that Europe has steel, Africa has music. Much of our continent is poverty-stricken and tortured, but most of our people sing, and sing beautifully. There is a musicality that goes with being, a spirituality that is part of ordinary existence, and a delicacy of speech, posture and laughter that informs all communication. People learn in their communities to dance, sing, adorn themselves and produce beautiful objects. My dream is that this rich source of creativity will find projection in high works of art that can be universally enjoyed. I recall the excitement at the Royal Shakespeare Company in London some years ago when the so-called Zulu Macbeth brought the World Theatre Season to an end. The performers were cooks, gardeners, office workers and factory operatives, unskilled in modern theatre. Yet they tapped into a deep, participatory cultural tradition. It was their culture, it was my culture, it was world culture. The most sophisticated audience in the world rose to stamp and cheer.

PART FOUR – THE JUDGE HAS THE LAST WORD

I end as I began, quoting from myself, a one-time freedom fighter, now a writer and a member of the new establishment. I have been normalised – I have become so legitimate that I even insist that the state conduct itself in legitimate fashion! My conceit fails. I face the world with the same apprehension and the same eagerness for applause as anybody else.

The remarks that follow are from a judgement dealing with de-criminalising sodomy. They were addressed to members of the gay and lesbian community who had approached the Court for relief, but they could have referred to artists or to any group anywhere in the world that chose to live the truth of their lives in their own way. The passages I will quote deal with space for love, intimacy and creation in an open society, and centre on the right not only to think differently, but to be different and to live differently. Where difference is acknowledged, art flourishes; where difference is suppressed, art becomes fake and conformist.

'From today a section of the community can feel the equal concern and regard of the Constitution and enjoy lives less threatened, less lonely and more dignified. A love that for a number of years had dared openly to speak its name in bookshops, theatres, film festivals and parades, and that has succeeded in becoming a rich and acknowledged part of south African life, need no longer fear prosecution for intimate expression. A law which has facilitated assaults and induced self-oppression, ceases to be. The courts, the police and the system are enabled to devote the time and resources formerly spent on and futile prosecutions, to catching and prosecuting criminals who prey on gays and straights alive. Homosexuals are no longer treated as failed heterosexuals but as persons in their own right.'

'Equality should not be confused with uniformity; in fact, uniformity can be the enemy of equality. Equality means equal concern and respect across difference. It does not pre-suppose the elimination or suppression of difference. Respect for human rights requires the affirmation of self, not the denial of self. Equality therefore does not imply a levelling or homogenisation of behaviour but an acknowledgement and acceptance of difference. At the very least, it affirms that difference should not be the basis for exclusion, marginalisation, stigma and punishment. At best, it celebrates the vitality that difference brings to any society.'

'In the past difference has been experienced as a curse, today it can be seen as a source of interactive vitality. The Constitution acknowledges the variability of human beings (genetic and socio-cultural), affirms the right to be different and celebrates the diversity of the nation.'

Artist and non-artist alike, we will most comfortably and creatively fill the spaces which life allots us if we do so as we are and not as someone else tells us we ought to be, and if we do so, we must do so with the pride and serenity that can only come from calm and peaceful self-affirmation.

This speech was delivered at the Prince Claus Fund Awards ceremony in 1999.

IT IS ONLY THROUGH A CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE HERE AND NOW OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN—INTERROGATING THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT AND LOOKING AT THE PRESENT TO UNDERSTAND THE PAST, THAT WE BEGIN TO SEE.

JAMAL MAHJOUB, FROM *DISPLACING THE CENTRE*, PUBLISHED IN PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL #11, 2004.

ON PIGEON WHISTLING

WANG SHIXIANG

In the late 1920s I went to a school in Beijing called Peking American School where I studied until I graduated from high school in 1934. While in school, I learned an American saying: 'All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy.' As I was brought up to believe that all good boys should study assiduously, I liked this saying very much. For a little while 'all work and no play' changed to 'work hard and play hard'. But soon after, unfortunately for me, it again changed gradually to 'all play and no work'. During those happy years, I enthused over so many kinds of hobbies that I almost completely neglected my studies. I kept fighting crickets in autumn and chirping katydids in winter. I trained falcons to catch rabbits and dogs to catch badgers. Aside from these sports, raising and flying pigeons gave me even more pleasure, as it was a yearlong hobby not restricted by the change of seasons. In high school we were supposed to write a composition each week. I remember for four weeks in a row, all my compositions were concerned with pigeons. Our teacher was so exasperated. 'If you write another composition on pigeons,' he scolded, 'I'll give you a P (poor) no matter how well you write!'

After graduating from PAS, I studied at Yenching University. Professor Liu Pansui was teaching a course in classical Chinese. The students were assigned to write a *fu* (an intricate literary style of poetic prose). Though I was more mature and by this time tended more to my studies, my old addiction returned, and I could not resist the temptation to write on this same subject again. I wrote *A Fu on Pigeon Whistles*.

Now I am well over 70, and I again pick up my pen to write on this same subject. I must admit that I am still infected with this incurable and chronic disease. I cannot help but heave a big sigh and chuckle to myself.

In Beijing, on a balmy and sunny day in spring; or when the sky is rain-washed clear in summer; or when the space is a blue-green hue in autumn; or on a crisp and chilly morning in winter, one can always hear a pleasing flute-like music coming from the heavens. It may swell and shrink, may come nearer and nearer as if approaching from a distance with a crescendo, and then slowly fade away; its tempo may suddenly accelerate and as abruptly may slow down, or it may soar or level off. It is the divine music played in heaven that exhilarates the mind and delights the spirit. This is a typical Beijing experience. Who knows how many times it rouses a person from slumber; how often it lifts a person's eyes toward the heavens; how many times it brings joy to both adults and children? When we hear this music, it restores to us a lovely memory of this ancient city. Beijing once suffered devastation, and the distant music was heard no more. The silence only evoke danger and despair. The music has penetrated our lives and has become a symbol of Beijing. It has also left a deep impression on foreigners who used to reside here. An American, Mr HP Hoose, wrote on this flute-like sound some 50 years ago and introduced it to the west. A person ignorant of where the sound comes from may not know that it comes from whistles attached to pigeons' tails.

Pigeon whistles, also called pigeon bells, are actually whistles rather than bells. They have an ancient origin. Pigeon whistles have a history of nearly 200 years counting from the time of the first Beijing master artisan who made them. Since that time many generations of skilled craftsmen have appeared, constantly improving the technique. More and more pigeon-raisers attached whistles to their pigeons. Pigeon whistles became folk artefacts. It was not until the middle of the twentieth century with social changes and the withering away of the old artisans that this craft of making whistles rapidly declined. Only Zhang Baotong, a textile engineer, still makes them in his spare time. In his childhood Mr. Zhang lived at the Longquan Temple in Beijing as a neighbour of the master artisan Tao Zhuowen who taught him the craft. Mr. Zhang's products, which bear the logo of the Chinese character tong, are excellent both in sound and form, so we can say that a standard of excellence is preserved. However those sold in markets today are coarse and crude.

Since pigeon whistles are seen as a type of folk artefact, like a toy, they are not deemed sophisticated enough to be found in scholars' studios or to be viewed as antiques. I raised pigeons when I was young and often asked master artisans to make whistles to order or visited temple fairs in search of old masterpieces. I did not stint at paying a high price. But all in all I was more interested in raising pigeons and hearing the delightful music they made. Not many people collected pigeon whistles, or researched on them in depth, or knew all their ins and outs. To find a person who has committed a lifetime's understanding and experience to writing is even rarer. If there ever was one who had done all this it was my old friend Wang Xixian. In my wide circle of acquaintances of many decades this venerable gentleman was the only one.

Wang Xixian (1899–1986), whose ancestors lived in Shaoxing, Zhejiang, and moved to Beijing in the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (1736–1796), began to raise pigeons when he was fifteen years old. Soon his interest shifted to whistles for which he developed a profound passion. Collecting whistles became his lifelong and sole obsession. He called himself the 'Obsessed Whistle Lover'. He was upright and straightforward by nature but was inept in controlling his means of livelihood. Although he once studied at Guoming University, he became a primary schoolteacher with a very meagre income. His poverty made his life austere. Yet, when he found a pigeon whistle he would buy it without hesitation, sometimes even pawning his clothes for the cash. He had to have it or he could not sleep. Decades passed in this manner and his collection and his knowledge of pigeon whistles became rich and abundant. He knew the names of all the master artisans, the characteristics of their products, how many of their products that had been preserved, and the authenticity of these products. I had known him long before 1949, and for 40years I pleaded with him to write down all he knew. Finally in 1976, he showed me his draft, written in old Chinese classical style. But I found it too sketchy in some places. Together, we discussed and probed into the manuscript. After we had edited his draft it added up to 7,000 Chinese characters. Previous publications on pigeon whistles had never been so detailed or so penetrating in exploring their mysteries. It is certainly the most important extant document on pigeon whistles.

However, Wang Xixian's *Old Tales about Pigeon Whistles* seemed to have been written for the cognoscenti. Some basics, such as the types of pigeon whistles, the material used, how the whistles are attached to the pigeon were ignored. Apparently, the author thought these were too elementary to be noted down. Today, however, even those who have pigeons and whistles may not be very clear on these matters, much less those who know nothing about the practice. Moreover, as to the types of whistles, one has to see them before one can learn their names. One has to learn the stylistic particulars and the logos of each maker before one can discriminate between the authentic and the imitation. All these aspects can only be explained and seen clearly with a generous amount of pictorial illustration. It was only recently that books like this could be illustrated with pictures. For all these reasons, I edited and prepared this booklet. Apart from giving a systematic introduction to the subject it also contains anecdotes and stories of famous artisans and famous whistles as written in *Old Tales about Pigeon Whistles*. This booklet may also be considered as a memento to cherish the memory of my old friend Mr. Wang Xixian.

TYPES OF PIGEON WHISTLES

Before we explain the types of whistles, let us see how a pigeon whistle makes a sound. The pigeon whistle is a wind instrument, like a flute or an ordinary whistle of a basketball referee. One blows through a slit of a flute or a referee whistle; it will create a sound. An empty glass bottle with a small opening will also create a sound when one blows through the opening. Similarly, when a pigeon flies, the air rushing by it will go through a slit of the whistle attached to its tail and the whistle will generate a sound just like a flute, a referee's whistle or a bottle. This principle holds for all types of pigeon whistles. From high-school physics, we also know bottles of different sizes and shapes make tones of higher and lower pitch. Whistles with different shapes will also give different pitches. That is why there are many types of whistles. The different types of whistles have never been systematically classified before. Here they are grouped into four major types according to their shape: gourd type – those made from round gourds; tubular type – those made with a row of lined-up reed tubes or bamboo pipes; platform type – those made with many rows of lined-up tubes attached to a platform that serves as a base; combined type –those made with a combination of gourd and a number of tubes and pipes.

Each type can be subdivided into various minor types and altogether there are35 different types of pigeon whistles. However, this does not include those conceived and custom-made by pigeon fanciers or created by master craftsmen.

The following is a more detailed list of combined type (also called star-and-eye type): 1. seven-star; 2. nine-star; 3. eleven-eye; 4. thirteen-eye; 5. fifteen-eye; 6. seventeen-eye; 7. nineteen-eye; 8. 21-eye; 9. 23-eye; 10. 25-eye; 11. 27-eye; 12. 29-eye; 13. 31-eye; 14. 33-eye; 15. 35-eye types. Fifteen types in all. These whistles, no matter whether they are called 'star' or 'eye', have an oval body at the middle of the whistle called the 'star belly'. This body can be made in two ways:

1. Use the top belly of a gourd with a narrow waist; split it vertically in two and cut away a portion slightly less than one third; then glue the two pieces together. The gourd that was spherical now has an ovate shape similar to an egg standing up.

2. The star belly can also be made with bamboo. Take two thick pieces of bamboo, cut and file them into the desired shapes and glue them together. The first method is more labour saving and more common, whereas the second method is used in making the so-called 'all-bamboo' whistle which requires much more work and costs three or four times more than those made by the first method.

When the star belly is finished, the cap is glued on top and the tang below. An arrow tube is placed in front of the body and a pipe at the back. Smaller tubes are then added to the two sides of the star belly. The minimum number of tubes on the sides is two on each side. Together with the star belly, and the front tube and back pipe, the total number of whistle is seven, hence the 'seven-star'. An additional tube on each side makes it a 'nine-star'. When the number of whistles exceeds nine, the whistle is called an 'eye' whistle and thus there are eleven-eye, thirteen-eye, up to 35-eye whistles. The small tubes are always increased by pairs, one on each side of the body in order to maintain structural balance. Sometimes, but very rarely, a pair of small tubes is in front of the body instead of one, thus making the number of whistles an even number. The whistle known as the '28 Constellations' mentioned in *Old Tales about Pigeon Whistles* has 28 whistles. However, extant combined-type whistles with even number of tubes are extremely rare. They may be considered as a variation of the combined type.

An increasing number of tubes, on the two slides of the 'star belly', will take up space no matter how one makes the tubes and that of course affects the sound. So when the number of eyes becomes more than 21, the star body is filled up and the sound that comes out is very weak. The 35-eye whistle literally resembles a hedgehog and cannot produce any sound. Strictly speaking, the combined-type whistle of more than 21 whistles is looked down upon by the true connoisseurs, even though their makers attempt to show-off their skill, and their collectors the completeness of their collection. Wang Xixian mentioned a man named Li who owned a pair of 39-eye whistles which 'were large in size and gave forth a loud sound'. They could issue a large sound because they are large, but large whistles are not suitable to be attached to pigeons too often.

The combined type has a gourd, a pipe, and many tubes making a sound with soprano, baritone and bass tones. It is a 'chorus' by itself.

The total of four types with 35 types is naturally not a complete list. For example, there are gourd whistles made to resemble the fictional characters such as the Monkey King or Zhu the Pig from the novel *Journey to the West*, and the '28 Constellations', and combined-type with more than 35 eyes. Yu Fei'an's book has a chapter on 'Bells Attached to Pigeons' mentioned the Eighteen Stars and the Mother-and-Child Type. They are rarely seen, so are not included in my list. Mr. Yu called the fourteen types he listed (including the above-mentioned Eighteen Stars and Mother-and-Child) as one 'set'. If one or two types were missing, he considered the set incomplete. However, this view was not held by pigeon-fanciers of Beijing.

I checked with Wang Xixian and whistle merchants Dui'r Bao (also known as Erbao) and Ruisi. They all said that there were collectors who after collecting ten or twenty pairs processed by famous master craftsmen with logo of *hui* or *yong* would place them in a brocade box sometimes with a glass lid and called their collection 'a set'. But without the strict restriction as to the number and types in each set. Since the beginning of this century, such masters as the ones with the *Xiang* logo and the Wen logo usually made whistles on commission. The number of whistles and the number of types were always determined by the whim of their patrons and were in great divergence. Neither Wang Xixian nor Erbao and Ruisi had ever heard of Eighteen Stars and Mother-and-Child Type. If what Yu Fei'an wrote was true, then a set should consist of fourteen types including the Eighteen Star and Mother-and-Child types. So what Yu wrote did not conform to the practice of this century. He probably recorded some gossip and recorded it without further investigation thus resulting in this fallacy. I added this to clarify the matter and to prevent further circulation…

MASTER ARTISANS

Beijing pigeon whistles have a long history and were produced by professional artisans from an early time. But historical evidence of time and place and actual examples still await discovery. We know that by the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), the making of excellent whistles with brilliant tones was already known to many. However the first person to be acknowledged as a head of a school of whistle-making wasan artisan whose products bore the logo Hui in the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (1796–1821). After him, there were seven other artisans whose products bore the logos *Yong* (Yong the Elder), *Ming, Xing, Yong* (Yong the Younger), *Xiang, Wen, and Hong*. Thus, the total number of master artisans is eight. All logotypes are designated by a Chinese character. For *Hui* whistles, the logo is the Chinese character *hui*. Other less famous artisans will not be recounted in this booklet though they and their logos were mentioned in Wang Xixian's *Old Tales about Pigeon Whistles*.

The Xiang logo belonged to a person named Zhou Cunquan (1874–1956). He was a man of short but sturdy nature with a heavy beard. For many years he lived near the Baita Si (Temple of the White Dagoba). Every time I visited him I would watch how he proceeded with his work. He would describe in detail how he prepared his materials, cut openings, tuned, glued and applied lacquer. Probably he knew that I was an amateur, so did not hide his technical know-how from me. His movements were dextrous and precise. When he made many gourd whistles at the same time, he made them in a mass production process. He would first split bamboo slabs, arranging the caps of the same size on the same piece of slab. Because bamboos labs come in long strips, they are easy to hold and to hollow out the caps, and itis possible to regularise sizes of the slits. Once the back of the cap is hollowed out, then a few vigorous strokes with a file, and the forms of all the caps are roughly completed. After this is done, the bamboo is sawed into separated caps and can be placed over the gourd to cut the holes to fit. With such a process, of course the whistle caps and the gourd's holes always matched exactly.

Toa Zhuowen who made the Wen logo whistles, used exactly the reverse process. He made each whistle separately. First he cut an opening on the gourd, and then he would carve out the whistle's cap. This made wielding the knife difficult, as the bamboo could not be grasped firmly. Moreover, he had to compare the size of cap and the opening repeatedly. A little carelessness or one cut too deep and the cap opening would be too large for the cap, thus wasting all the previous efforts. I repeatedly explained Zhou's process to Tao, but he would only smile and say nothing. Artisans apparently have an unalterable habit, and would not condescend to change their practice. However, both Xiang and Wen whistles were excellent, though Wen whistles could command a higher price. Those who knew said that even though Wen whistles were more expensive, but because Zhou made his whistles in a more efficient way, his sales were better and he had a higher monthly income than Tao.

In my youth, I loved to raise chirping insects in winter. I caged various kinds of crickets, *youhulus* (a kind of chirping insect a little bigger that the cricket) and katydid in gourds. Moreover, I liked to heat-engrave designs on the gourds with a hot needle. I heat-engraved on pigeon whistles as well. Only gourd whistles were heat-engraved, as other types of whistles do not have enough space. Whistles come in pairs, and the two gourds should match in shape and size. I used to buy gourds by the hundreds, as there were a multitude of considerations in selecting gourds for heat engraving. I used to send these gourds to Xiang, Wen, or Hong and asked them to lacquer the caps only, while the gourd bodies were to be left plain for me to heat engrave. Landscapes, human figures, flowers, birds, animals, and ancient scripts were the designs I engraved. These whistles would be arranged in rows in boxes made of camphor wood for people to view. In the seven or eight boxes totalling about one hundred pairs, some 70 per cent came from Xiang's hand (plates 1–2) and the remaining 30 per cent from Wen's and Hong's. Zhou Cunquan's Xiang whistles dominated my collection because Zhou was prompt in delivering goods. Moreover, Zhou was actually superior in making gourd whistles than the other two artisans. Wang Xixian also agreed with me in this respect without prior consultation. Zhou Cunquan was a Muslim, but once made a gourd in the shape of Zhu the Pig (as told in the novel *Journey to the West*) as a gift to me. Had we not been good friends for many years, he would not have made a pig-shaped whistle even with the offer of a large sum of money. To ask him to make such a work to order would have been denied. When I was a university student, I had my picture taken with him in a studio. Much to my regret, the picture was lost during the Cultural Revolution.

Zhou Cunquan was also an innovator. Many of his products have various patterns on the base of the whistle body and are lined with silk and the effect was most pleasing. He also carved or hollowed designs on knobs and supports on star and eye whistles and one could see his sculptural ability. Tao Zhuowen, the maker of Wen whistles, was condescending toward these works, saying, 'What do these have to do with the tone?' Literati have the habit of looking down upon each other; it is not surprising that artisans do also.

The artisan who made the *Hong* logo whistles was named Wu Zitong (1894–1968), a man of immense physique. When he made whistles for me, he was about 40 years old. He lived alone all his life in the East Wing of Guanying Temple in Jishikou Qitlao outside of Chaoyang Gate. In those years, apart from making gourd whistles for me for heat engraving, he also custom made two-pipe, three-tube

and seven-star and fifteen-eye whistles for me. Each type came in five different sizes. Altogether I have 40 pairs of his work. As traditional gourd whistles have tubes and never have small gourds for their sub-whistles, I thought up this innovation and asked Wu Zitong to make such a pair for me. I engraved this pair of gourds with lotus blossoms. It can be said that this pair of whistles has a unique style all its own.

Wu Zitong whistles commanded a price about one half of Toa's whistles. It was also cheaper than Zhou Cunquan's. His workmanship was less refined though his whistles have excellent tone. After Zhou died and Tao laid down his implements in old age, Wu was the sole master for a time. Unfortunately his good days were short. Due to changes in human events, pigeon raisers became fewer and fewer and the sale of whistles dropped also.

I wrote a short article called 'Pigeon Whistles Make Aerial Music'. It was published in the English edition of *China Reconstructs*. After this, I received a few letters from abroad asking where to buy pigeon whistles. I sent out letters to a craft export corporation and recommended Wu Zitong to make the whistles. He was commissioned and his whistles were exported. But very shortly after this business also ended. During the Cultural Revolution, there was a political movement called 'Abolish the Four Olds' where old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits were to be abolished. Strange as it may seem today, pigeon whistles were listed as one item of the things that were to be destroyed. Those who owned whistles were so intimidated that they destroyed them themselves before the Red Guards came to destroy them. My old schoolmate, the famous surgeon Gu Yuzhi, had Wen whistles that he particularly cherished. But he trotted down on them and threw them into the fire. To this day he cannot speak of this without remorse and contempt. I often thought of Wu Zitong and wondered what could have happened to him. One day after I was released from the 'cowshed' where I was kept during a period of time of the Cultural Revolution, I passed Jishikou Qitiao where Wu used to live. I encountered an elderly neighbour of his who told me that Wu died in poverty and had long since been buried in a ditch somewhere.

This essay was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #10 in 2003. It is an excerpt from Beijing Pigeon Whistles, by Wang Shixiang, published in China by Liaoning Education Press in 1999.

Five Hong whistles, from the left, two eleven-eyed,
a nine-starred, a two pipe and a seven-starred.
Photo Beijing Pigeon Whistles, Liaoning Education Press, 1999.

A Xiang gourd whistle, with partitioned-slit, with chrysanthemums heat-engraved by Wang Shixiang.

A Xiang gourd whistle, with plum blossoms heat-engraved by Wang Shixiang. Photos from Beijing Pigeon Whistles, Liaoning Education Press, 1999.

This picture shows how the whistle is attached to the pigeon. *Beijing Pigeon Whistles*, Liaoning Education Press, 1999.

A SECOND LOOK AT CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

ADRIAAN VAN DER STAAY

The discussion on culture and development seems to have entered a new, more cultural phase. It is nearly half a century ago that Margaret Mead published her *Patterns of Culture and Technical Change* (1955). In it she drew attention to the anthropological context into which modernity was injecting itself. But nobody yet seemed able to imagine that modernity could reach so far and so deep and that the new culture of modernity could replace and wipe out cultural forms that had existed for centuries, if not millennia.

From the 1950s onwards culture would be seen as a factor of resistance, a formidable opponent to change. The traditional way of life was an obstacle to be overcome by any possible means, if one wished successfully to reap the fruits of modernity: wealth, health and respect in an ever-widening circle of developed nations. Economic development could be achieved as a matter of course by ignoring culture. Villages could be uprooted and displaced, religious sensibilities counted for nothing measured against the promised gains of development. Monuments as ancient and sacred as the temples of Abu Simbel in the Nile valley could not stop new nationalist leaders from adopting Russian models of development: flooding whole areas irrevocably and building dams for the production of electricity. Europe, and the still mainly European UNESCO, tried to mitigate the cultural consequences of ruthless development. In saving the temples of Abu Simbel, culture was recognised as being important but also museum-ised. Culture could be saved as a legacy from the past, but the future clearly belonged to development.

One cannot say that there was a fundamental change in this attitude, but the practice became more sophisticated. The brutal eradication of existing culture, if it stood in the way of development, seemed lacking in intelligence and efficiency. The costs were relatively high. The disaffection of the population, even local resistance and revolt, told the developers that the going was not that easy. Taking culture into account to a certain degree might be advisable and smooth the path of progress. Could local customs and institutions not be used, and harnessed to the yoke of development? Out of the studies of culture as an adversary grew a new appreciation of culture as a factor in development. People and their values might prove beneficial to the development process after all. This clearly was not a sufficient change of heart. It left intact the paramount doctrine of development as an unquestionable benefit in itself.

Yet out of this approach of taking account of people and their culture grew an awareness that people mattered after all. In this, the insight of the Dutch development adviser, Prince Claus of the Netherlands, struck a clear note. People, he told international development organisations, cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. This brought a fundamental change of perspective to those who share his views. Not only were people made interesting, and no longer seen as obstacles, or merely collaborators in development, they were the originators of development. People and their cultures were not only recognised, they were seen as the prime movers of the development process. This of course tied in with the widespread movement of empowerment, starting in the 1970s, which saw the giving of power to minorities as one of the tools of development. The poor, women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities had to be empowered to achieve their own liberation.

This was at least the belief in progressive circles. It was a minority belief not widely shared, and certainly not in the centres of power related to development, by governments, the Monetary Fund or the World Bank.

However, the recognition of the importance of people and their values was a decisive step forward in thinking about development as such. If people were to be empowered to develop themselves, they should be given the right to impose their own values. Values became important as an expression of self, of identity. If development was after all something not imposed on people but wanted by them as opposed to the former dogmatic top-down development, would not development have to take into account their diversity of cultures? Indeed a number of more or less declamatory roads to development were proclaimed: non-aligned development, Burmese development, Islamic banking, Asian values supporting Asian Tigers, and so on.

This people-power reasoning led not only to a diversification of the meaning of development, but also to the proverbial Tower of Babel, i.e. to mutual incomprehension and the danger of relativism. Relativism is here meant as giving up any hope of finding common values in the achievement of development. This relativist, even cynical approach to the multifarious ways to development, in which development could be the means to any cultural result, struck a deep hole in the centre of development. It meant that development was no longer in possession of some guiding culture, Western or otherwise. Development had briefly entered its nihilistic phase and had become in a sense valueless, without value. An aim only unto itself.

This crisis at the centre of development philosophy was bravely tackled at a large conference on cultural policies held in 1982. The Mexican hosts of this conference (Mondiacult) may not have foreseen the wide-ranging implications of the reversal of values that was embedded in its Declaration of Mexico. Basically, the message was very simple. If economic development had lost its way, some central core of belief should be reinstated. Culture should be the aim of development, not its means. On the global level, values should be found to guide development. After all, if people's lives were the aim of development, the collective will of the people should guide the development process. Culture beats economics.

As a participant at this conference, I must admit having overlooked the far-reaching impact of our Declaration and the watershed-like divide that this reversal of roles between culture and development indicated. On the one hand, it was easily observable that power in the world was still, as it is today, in the hands of the economic elite that gathers at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The crowing of cultural luminaries like France's Jacques Lang (then Minister of Culture and prominent at Mondiacult) could be constructed as a symptom of weakness. Moreover, the failure of political hegemony over economic development in the Communist countries did not bode well for a new attempt to ride the economic tiger. All this made for scepticism. I returned from Mexico with the depressing feeling that we had achieved not much more than the pitting of the word culture against the manifest realities of economic development.

Somehow I was wrong. In the twenty or so years after Mexico the discussion of the relationship between culture and development seemed to change, just as the triumph of economic development seemed to become almost complete. Perhaps it was the very success of economic development in certain countries that made obvious a hollowness in the development process. Though the means might deliver the wished-for effects and nobody seemed to wish to change course completely, world capitalism started to look at itself in the mirror and did not quite like what it saw. It saw a world in many ways out of control, with dwindling natural reserves, a devastated ecology, growing pollution and global warming. It saw persistent inequities in the distribution of power, economic or otherwise. It saw huge population shifts away from traditional agriculture into the broken-back economy of megacities. It also increasingly had to cope with public opinion and critical movements which rattled its cosy self-confidence. Most importantly, people all over the world were worried. They did not reject the brave new world of economic development and indeed were voting by their feet and flocking to the biblical fleshpots of Egypt, wherever these appeared. But they felt worried nevertheless, not about the past, but about their future and that of their children.

I think this is much the situation today. The twin regulatory processes of the market and democracy have acquired great prestige, the first for its efficiency, the second for its avoidance of insoluble strife and as a platform. If one wants efficiency and harmony in the development process, one should clearly lean towards the market and democracy, and forget about command economies or dictatorships. But both regulatory frameworks tell us little about the future. At any moment the market or democracy may go haywire. Therefore there is a great cultural challenge at the core of present-day thinking, to define the future of mankind as a whole. How far can the population, indeed the economy, grow; can geo-sphere and biosphere deteriorate; can cultural traditions disappear; can values be left out of the development equation without courting catastrophe? These are important questions which have to be debated.

There is no world parliament to effectively debate all this, since the structures of the United Nations family of organisations is, as the word implies, an assembly of states, sending their diplomats and occasionally experts to peacefully settle differences. The United Nations is not a world parliament. Whatever may be globalised in this world, it is not the will of the people. There is not a single forum for the *vox populi*. The world may not be ready for this type of gathering; one would still be at a loss to assemble the founding fathers for it. But the clear need exists to take into account the wishes of the people and their values, if one wants to solve the battle between culture and development.

Within this wide framework of future construction, a small book (or rather a small part of a medium-sized book) took up the challenge of answering the question as to which values should guide development. The book was the result of a contorted process of decision-making that started with the strangely heroic Mondiacult conference of 1982. It goes under the innocuous title of *Our Creative Diversity* and was the result of work by a committee of international experts. It tried to act as an embryonic world parliament by listening to countless shouts and murmurs in many corners of the world. It tried to define the outlines of global ethics, a set of common values that should guide development. For this we must thank the economist Paul Streeten, who conceived this non-economic approach to development. In recent years the ethical approach to the process of development has gained in prestige, while the status of the purely economic approach to the world's future has been questioned. The Nobel Prize awarded to the Indian economist Amartya Sen has confirmed this alternative approach.

One should perhaps descend a little way from these Olympian heights and ask oneself where this leaves a relatively small organisation named the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. If one takes seriously what was described above and considers culture as the prime mover in the development process, at least for the time being, one should have the courage to state a few obvious facts. People all over the world are struggling to find answers to new problems. It is quite probable that certain answers will be more successful in coping with these problems than others. The answers will not only be different from those of the past but also not immediately widely known or respected. It behoves good governance to make these good practices known as quickly as possible, and to discuss their implications and values. This can only be done by intelligent scouting. There is no bureaucratic formula for this scouting process. It depends on scouts in many parts of the world, a network that carries the information, platforms of communication for testing the value of these solutions, but of all things it depends mainly on the eyes, ears and noses of people to discover them. It is this avant-garde, in a world of as yet virtual culture and development that the Prince Claus Fund should seek to befriend.

This paper was written for a brainstorming session of the Prince Claus Fund's board, and published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #3 in 1999.

CATALOGUING WOMEN'S HAIRSTYLES: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF J.D. 'OKHAI OJEIKERE

DAPO ADENIYI

J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere's almost wholesale coverage of women's hairstyles using the medium of photography is especially captivating as a practice, precisely because his work elevates what has belonged in the general feature of everyday life to the status of a high art. Women's hair art is viewed, and wrought, in assortments of forms. They are even quite outspoken about societal issues and devise their own representations of observed phenomena in the environment.

The inception of high-rise office block buildings in the cities for example was met by a set of designs that imitated the steep rising of architectural forms in hair design. Yoruba women found an apt name for the set of hair patterns – *Onile gogoro*. Nigerian bridges – from mere girders to full-length and the outsized, such as the Niger bridge in Onitsha – were given different expressions in hairstyles. Road networks are simulated in woven designs, key events of social and political significance are documented; names of infamous rulers have been known to inspire suggestive constructions. Even international pop stars have occasionally had hairstyles named after them. It needs saying that social commentary through the medium of women's hairstyles is not pursued with any seriousness of intent. They are construed rather in the comical mode. These are visual modes designed or conceived to effect a comical relief and provide content for conversations among women. They resemble the bite of social commentary we may find in a newspaper's political cartoons. They emerge from a vast creative resource pool that is inexhaustible. It is a collective enterprise whose key architects are hardly identifiable. They are spontaneous and instant in their dissemination and spread. Without Ojeikere's kind of documentation, patterns are easily formed, used, enjoyed and as with all fashions, rapidly discarded to pave way for new entries of ideas. Ojeikere himself reports in his coffee-table photo book devoted exclusively to women's hairstyles that he witnessed a phase during the 1950s when hairstyling in Nigeria was on the verge of extinction. This was the period when city fashion dictated the use of wigs; as a consequence, the numbers of those continuing the hairstyle tradition became quite marginal. Fortunately, it was not for long that hairstyles returned and even more detectable styles were improvised. Now aged 74, Ojeikere has a photo archive of thousands of women's hairstyles mostly from southern Nigeria; even so, as he began to tour more Nigerian cities in the north, he found also a wealth of hairstyles to include in his store. Before André Magnin, the curator who was to stage Ojeikere's exhibition, discovered this image-bank, any attempt to get the collection published on a local or international level were frustrated, as publishers misplaced or damaged photographs. Ojeikere however keeps his original negatives and has over time devised a most impressive photo tracking system within his studio – with the aid of serial numbering he retrieves even commercial photo-snaps taken as far back as the 1950s.

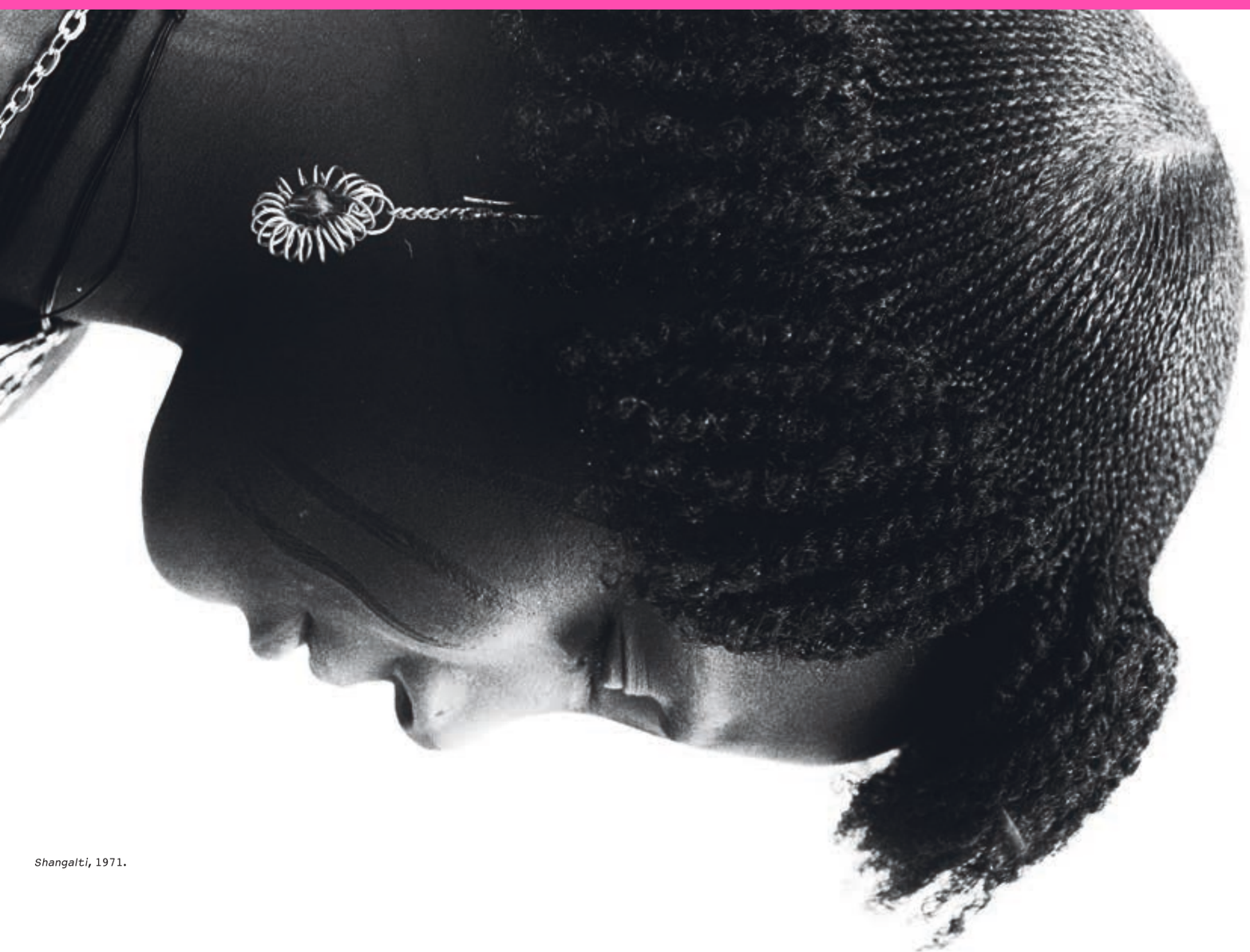
The photographer comments in his 157-page album that he began by making painstaking notations of the names and origins of the hairstyles; in the end, he changes his mind completely: 'I preferred not giving them any title. The concept and the names of the hairstyles aren't important and don't influence our enjoyment.'

Ojeikere's first publication, a massive photo book on Lagosian architectural landmarks and open spaces, was commissioned by the Mandilas corporation. Its founder Mr. Mandilas started his business in Nigeria in the 1940s and came to consider himself a son of Lagos. He funded Ojeikere's first book as a tribute to a fast evolving city. Ojeikere's photographs on African hair design continues in this tradition.

This text, and these images, were published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #10.

All photographs by J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere. Courtesy the artist's estate.

Ito Lozi, 1971.



Shangalti, 1971.

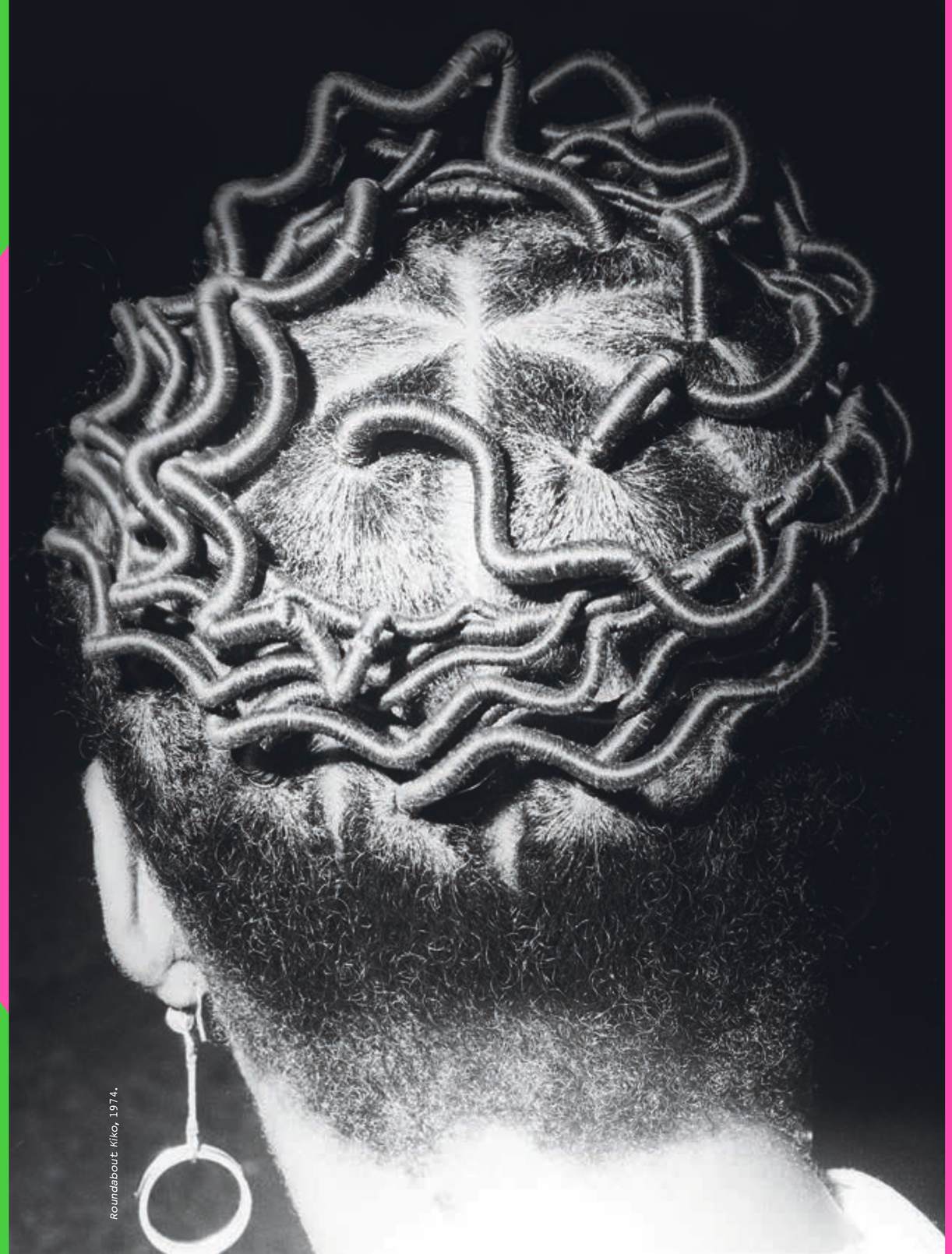
Ojo Npeti/Kiko, 1970.

Star koroba, 1971.

Udoji, 1975.

Traditional Ceremonial Suku, 1974.

Ogun Pari, 1970.



Roundabout Kiko, 1974.

Pineapple, 1963.

WHO AM I WITHOUT EXILE?

MAHMOUD DARWISH

Stranger on the river bank,
like the river, water binds me to your name.
Nothing brings me back from this distance to the
oasis: neither war nor peace.
Nothing grants me entry into the gospels.
Nothing. Nothing shines from the shores
of ebb and flow between the Tigris and the Nile.
Nothing lifts me down from the Pharaoh's chariots.
Nothing carries me, or loads me with an idea:
Neither nostalgia, nor promise.
What shall I do? What shall I do without exile
and a long night of gazing at the water?

Water binds me to your name.
Nothing takes me away from the butterflies of dream
Nothing gives me reality: neither dust, nor fire.
What shall I do without the roses of Samarkand?
What shall I do in a square, where singers are
worn smooth by moonstones?

We have become weightless,
As light as our dwellings in distant winds.
We have, both of us, befriended the strange beings in the clouds.
We have both been freed from the gravity of the land of identity.
What shall we do?
What shall we do without exile
and long nights of gazing at the water?

Water binds me to your name.
Nothing is left of me except you.
Nothing is left of you except me –
stranger caressing the thighs of a stranger.
O stranger, what will we do with what is left
of the stillness and the brief sleep between two myths?
Nothing carries us: neither path nor home.
Was this the same path from the beginning?
Or did our dreams find a Mongolian horse on a hill
and exchange us for him?
What shall we do?
What shall we do without exile?

This poem was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #11, 2004. It is excerpted from the book Unfortunately, it was Paradise: Selected Poems *by Mahmoud Darwish; translated and edited by Munir Akash and Carolyn Forche with Sinan Antoon and Amira El-Zein; published by University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 2003.*

CULTURAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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INTRODUCTION

Should culture be rescued after disaster? In times of war, how can cultural heritage be protected? Surely human life is far more important than a painting and the right to basic shelter a more pressing need than saving an ancient mosque? These are the questions that are constantly asked at the Prince Claus Fund and Cultural Emergency Response, the cultural aid agency set up by the Fund in 2003.

It was in 2001, shortly after the Taliban blew up the two Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, that the Prince Claus Fund began considering the role international cultural organisations could play in preserving cultural heritage from these kinds of disasters. The Bamiyan statues – with respective heights of 36 and 52 metres, and dating from the 5th century AD – had survived more than 1,500 years of turbulent history before tanks and dynamite demolished them forever because they did not fit in with the Taliban's religious and political ideology. The wilful destruction of cultural heritage is a strange and senseless act, and the whole world was shocked by this incident. Here, the question is 'why'. Why are we so appalled at the ancient Buddhas' devastation or the looting of the National Museum in Baghdad? Why did the Nazis organise their *Entartete Kunst* ('degenerate art') exhibition in Munich in 1937? And why have the abstract paintings of Barnett Newman been repeatedly vandalised?

Let us first begin with the Bamiyan Buddhas. Blowing them up caused such outrage because it was an act of pure destruction and a sign of intolerance. These ancient statues, which represent the cultural heritage of Afghanistan and Buddhism, belong to the cultural heritage of the world. They were the tallest standing statues of Buddha. They were extraordinarily beautiful and they had survived for 1,500 years.

All these arguments combine to form the answer as to why the entire world felt such revulsion at the loss of this exceptional and priceless heritage. Yet which of them most clearly accounts for this mass indignation? It is not so much the destruction itself, the fact of intolerance or the statues' sheer size. One of the most important motives behind this indignation seems to be the value that we people attach to culture and cultural heritage. As based on their creative depiction of the ideas of 5th century Buddhist 'Afghanistan', the statues' value is determined by their inclusion as an important part of the world's cultural heritage along with the historic and symbolic significance that they embody for a single individual, a group of people or even the entire human race. After all, the Buddhas outlived centuries of different civilisations, including those that did not adhere to Buddhism. For the local and regional populations, the Buddhas were the focus of reverence, emblematic importance and everyday reality until 2001. For them, the statues were beautiful, magical and impressive: an aesthetic experience that was shared by many. Here, beauty is the sum total of mythical, symbolic and formal qualities. The combination of all these aspects determines its aesthetic and, therefore, its material value for humankind.

Cultural artefacts, and 'culture' in the broadest sense of the word, form our cultural heritage, represent our values and norms, imbue us with identity, *and* represent, interpret and analyse our history and ideas. Their beauty enriches our lives and makes them more enjoyable. To quote Socrates: 'Beauty is what gives us pleasure'. Or, as Elaine Scarry wrote in her 1999 book *On Beauty and Being Just*, 'Perceiving something beautiful confers on the perceiver a gift of life.' If culture represents these values and this aesthetic experience, then it must be worth protecting and rescuing.

THE AESTHETIC AND SYMBOLIC VALUE OF CULTURE

If culture is worth rescuing, it is also worth destroying. The Buddhas' destruction is an example of this. But world history is also their witness. To destroy someone's culture is to undermine their identity, faith and right to exist. Emperor Leo III the Isaurian banned the worship of images in 730 AD. To combat idolatry, between 726 and 730, he ordered the removal and destruction of a famous icon of Christ that hung above the palace gates in Constantinople.

There have been many periods and incidents throughout history where items of cultural value have been wantonly destroyed. During the 16th century, Calvinists in Europe demolished Catholic churches, monasteries, convents and abbeys along with their statues, candelabras, altars, paintings and frescos. The French Revolution (1789) also distinguished itself through the widespread damage and obliteration of culture that symbolised the power it opposed. Much more recently, the Nazis tried to banish Jewish culture through actions that included the burning of synagogues during the notorious *Kristallnacht* (9–10 November, 1938) or the exhibiting of degenerate art as a showcase of ugliness. A current Dutch example of this sort involves Geert Wilders, the leader of the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (a right-wing and anti-Islamic faction), who wants to ban the Koran. This is regarded as an attempt to silence Muslims in the Netherlands by opposing their culture.

This much is clear: people who wish to oppress, banish or destroy other people, partly achieve this by damaging or obliterating their culture and cultural heritage. That is why the Serbs intentionally besieged and destroyed the library in Sarajevo. Libraries in Iraq have also been completely annihilated. Not only American bombardments have been responsible for this, but also internal, religious disputes.

Aesthetics play an important role in the destruction of art treasures. A cultural heritage will gain importance and influence if it is valued aesthetically. A book that is read and appreciated by millions of people, a painting that is venerated *en masse*, or a building that is frequently visited, all have a symbolic significance through the combination of form and content. The painting *Guernica* (1937) by Pablo Picasso, which he created as an indictment of the fascist dictatorship in Spain, or the book *The Satanic Verses* (1988) by Salman Rushdie, which caused riots, murder and a fatwa because of its alleged criticism of Islam, mean more because they are not only significant but also beautiful. They are beautiful in the sense of being impressive, magnificently designed, beautifully painted or exquisitely written. The beauty of the object intensifies its meaning, and the item of cultural heritage will lead increasingly a life of its own, a life that is no longer directly connected with its maker, its era and immediate content. It has become a symbol: it represents more than it depicts.

An object's symbolic and aesthetic values can also be intensified during times of crisis. Artefacts can acquire new aesthetic functions, because people need them. After the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, the city was wiped out completely. All that remained standing was the skeletal dome of the Chamber of Commerce. It has been there ever since and has become a symbol of hope and memory for both the city and the country. In 1996, it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in remembrance of the atrocities caused by the bomb and a non-descript building, through circumstance, has become an object of heritage. This, in turn, is reminiscent of the mosque in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, which was the only building left in the desolate landscape following the 2004 tsunami. The white building in this bleak and endless plain became a symbol of hope and belief in a better future.

Through circumstances, places and objects acquire a greater aesthetic and symbolic significance than they originally had. They have become places where trauma can be processed, where people can come together and exchange experiences. You could say that, because of what has happened to them, these inanimate objects have gained an 'increased moral value'.

THE ALLURE OF DESTROYING CULTURE

'We will glorify war – the world's only hygiene – militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman. We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism (…).' This may sound like a quote from some nationalist general or dictator in fact, it is a part of the *Futurist Manifesto* ('Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo') by the Italian writer and poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, which was published in *Le Figaro* in 1909. Marinetti was not the only artist to glorify war, struggle and death in the years leading up to World War I. These ideas emerged in an era of industrialisation and the modern age of the machine. This resulted in a cultural movement which opposed luxury and tedium and regarded war as progress. It is no coincidence that the term 'avant-garde' has its roots in the language of militarism.

A new *Zeitgeist* had pervaded a modern society. The Italian Futurists were the most convinced of the advantages of war, but the Germans also felt that their *Kultur* should conquer the world and that war was something typically German. Hence, the famous writer Thomas Mann wrote in 1914 about the 'toxic comfort of peace' and argued that: 'Germany's whole virtue and beauty, as we have seen, reveals itself only in war.' His compatriot and contemporary Werner Sombart, an intellectual and a supporter of the philosopher Nietzsche, was also an 'enthusiast for war'. In 1915, Sombart described his identification of 'German militarism' with 'German culture' as follows: 'It is *Faust* and *Zarathustra* and Beethoven scores in the trenches. For the *Eroica* and the *Egmont Overture* are also truest militarism.' In his opinion: 'Germany was a warrior people. The heroic philosophy of life finds its highest consecration in heroic death.' It is surprising that a part of the cultural intelligentsia of the nations involved in WWI not only venerated and subscribed to war but also – like Marinetti – propagated culture's destruction. Nonetheless, most people opposed the war, especially when it began to take longer, and the misery and suffering of both soldiers and civilians became increasingly obvious.

Two cultural events which caused uproar at the beginning of the First World War, and were partly responsible for Germany's negative image, were the destruction of the University Library in Louvain (in August 1914) and the devastation of the Cathedral of Rheims (in September 1914). Published at the same time as the texts of the pro-war writers and artists, the newspapers of the day were horrified by the ruin of these cultural monuments. In August 1914, the Germans entered Louvain and transformed this Belgian town into an operating base. However, in the same month, an incident occurred for reasons that have remained obscure. The Germans claimed that they were being shot at; the Belgians maintained that, out of pure barbarism, the Germans began to execute young men and 'suspect' people. The town was subjected to a wave of violence. A major part of this hostility involved the wilful eradication of Louvain's internationally renowned University Library. The Germans entered Rheims a month later. Here too, many civilians lost their lives. The city's French Gothic Cathedral was subjected to heavy shellfire. Mass murder and cultural destruction seemed to go hand in hand in this modern war. The new potential of innovative materials appeared to encourage the annihilation of both people *and* their culture.

Many people talked and wrote about their outrage at the loss of the Library and the Cathedral. It was the Cathedral's senseless and wanton devastation that made the biggest impression. 'The Germans use it as a vent for their irritation. When things go wrong for them at other parts of the front, they shell Rheims Cathedral. It has absolutely no military interest, but it is beloved by civilized mankind, and therefore is a means of offence.' Arnold Bennett, who visited Rheims during the war, clearly states here that the Allies regarded WWI as a means of protecting and defending civilisation against German barbarism, cultural or otherwise. Granville Fortescue endorses these ideas in his reflection on 'The Bombardment of Rheims': 'How any commander could have trained his guns on the Cathedral of Rheims passes human understanding… It is one of those crimes which are so great that they stand outside the human catalogue. For this scandalous sacrilege there is no atonement.'

It is interesting to observe the arguments that were used to describe the degree of outrage experienced through these acts of cultural destruction. According to the *New York Times,* they were 'barbaric, uncivilized, monstrous and unchristian'. The Germans were even accused of taking delight in violence and annihilation: 'Without being able to invoke even the appearance of military necessity, and for the *mere pleasure of*

destruction, German troops have subjected the Cathedral of Rheims to a systematic and furious bombardment.'

Germany's image of being a nation of barbarians was largely the result of these two cultural disasters at the beginning of the war. The *New York Times* wrote: 'At this hour the famous basilica is but a heap of ruins. It is the duty of the Government of the Republic [of France] to denounce to universal indignation this revolting act of vandalism, which, in giving over to the flames this sanctuary of history, deprives humanity of an incomparable portion of its historic patrimony.' The dismay at the loss of Rheims Cathedral had the same causes as the dismay resulting from the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. Here too, it was about pure vandalism and aggression. Moreover, it was a sign of xenophobia and intolerance: in this case, Protestants (the Germans) against Catholics (the French and the Belgians). The Cathedral represented the cultural heritage of not only France but also the world. It was one of the greatest cathedrals of Europe, and was considered to be extremely beautiful. As the Spanish journalist Gómez Carrillo wrote at that time in his essay *Under the Bombs of Rheims*: 'The barbarism of every age but our own had respected it.' In short, destroying prominent cultural heritage was also used here as a means to destroy the enemy while at the same time it created an image of an aggressive attacker of a 'lower cultural and moral order'.

The development of new machinery and society's modernisation provided the Germans with the potential to combine violence against people with the devastation of their culture. This was not simply due to the availability of these new technologies but also to the realisation that wiping out prominent cultural heritage could inflict a loss of identity. However, the Germans had apparently failed to take into account the international outcry that could result from the assault on the Cathedral of Rheims.

It is a recurring fact in the history of war that more fuss is sometimes made about the loss of cultural heritage than of human life. This occurred not only when the Cathedral of Rheims was destroyed, but also when cultural heritage was lost during the French Revolution and when Baghdad's National Museum was looted during the Second Gulf War in 2003. These cultural artefacts' national and international symbolic significance sometimes represent and communicate revulsion at war's atrocities in a more effective way. Killing soldiers is a part of war, but the destruction of something valuable and beautiful is judged and condemned as being 'truly' barbarous. By contrast, the appreciation of culture and aesthetic perception is experienced as being high-minded *and* hopeful. These experiences constitute reasons why people rescue culture or preserve it under difficult circumstances.

The Taliban used these historic and contemporary experiences. The international abhorrence and attention the Buddhas' devastation would cause, was a part of their deliberate political (and cultural) strategy. Moreover, they destroyed the Buddhas in such a way that it would be impossible to restore them. Hence, there was no question of restoring identity and/or self-respect, either cultural or otherwise.

CULTURAL DESTRUCTION AS POLICY

The fact that the destruction of culture can cause such international commotion and impact, means that it can also be exploited by rulers. Adolf Hitler, himself a failed painter and artist, frequently spoke and wrote about the arts in Germany. He even developed an arts policy to support his ideological image of the German Reich. For him, art was an important means for waging party politics. Art had to toe the party political line: it had to be nationalist, Germanic, anti-Semitic and preferably figurative or 'faithfully portraying reality'. He also indicated the aesthetics that did not reflect the party line: this art was 'a conspiracy of incapacity and mediocrity against better work of any age'. Those who contradicted this were 'cultural vandals and criminals', who ought to 'finish their days in a prison or in a madhouse. For such 'artists' the time is past… And let no one talk of a 'threat to the freedom of art'', Hitler declared, referring to all contemporary artists who failed to portray reality faithfully by depicting 'fields of blue, the sky as green and clouds as sulphurous yellow'. The Führer then continued: '… in periods of rapid revolutionary development, such an assimilation needs to be ordered and guided from above.'

This challenges the notion that dictators lack cultural vision. Indeed, Hitler and his Minister of Culture, Joseph Goebbels, clearly maintained a cultural policy. However, those who did not subscribe to their cultural ideology were either exiled or even murdered. In Afghanistan, the Taliban also developed a cultural policy, which was based on Islamic ideology, where cultural productions that were not in line with this were to be destroyed. The Taliban's cultural policy was less developed when they came to power in 1996. However, in 2000, when their international role and support had become more important, their relative tolerance changed into the exclusion of everything that was not 'Islamic'. 'The real God is only Allah, and all other false gods should be removed', said the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar. According to *Architectural Review*, 'All things modern and Western were suspect and all representations of living beings were perceived as idolatrous … .' These statements marked the beginning of a period of massive destruction. 'The Buddhist and Hindu images that survived in the Kabul [National] Museum because they were too large to loot were smashed. Paintings of animals and people in the Kabul Gallery were torn to pieces … and the 1,000-year-old Buddhist Minar-i-Chakari was toppled. What became clear is that the Taliban, in their last days, were not only destroying images of living things – an abuse of Koranic texts – but they were also attacking history and memory.' The Taliban had developed dictatorial art politics. Apart from the Koran, many books were regarded as sinful and, except for decorative ornamentation, every image and artwork was an indictment against God's creations. The Taliban was not seeking a cultural policy that would reinforce its own politics, as Hitler had done; it simply eradicated all art that did not fit in with its religious and political way of thinking.

Both dictatorial governments led to the destruction of cultural history on an unprecedented scale. However, Stalin's Russia and Mao's China left a comparable and possibly even more devastating cultural wasteland in their wake. The Chinese Cultural Revolution was ideologically anti-intellectual, pro-worker and completely nationalist. The Russian dictatorship was similarly single-minded. Like Hitler, Stalin was also a failed artist – in his case a poet – who, as based on his political ideology and paranoia, either supported artists and cultural movements or rejected and persecuted them.

All these dictators in some way use culture and cultural banishment and destruction as a part of their power politics. This meant that rescuing, renovating and/or restoring art and culture sometimes constituted acts of resistance. The discussion surrounding stolen Jewish cultural heritage during the Second World War and the restitution of collections to surviving relatives, could hence be regarded as a form of anachronistic resistance against not only the dictatorial system but also the people who make use of that system.

ART, POWER AND IDEOLOGY

In some cases, dictators such as Hitler and Stalin assumed that art could strengthen their power for all eternity. Hitler endorsed the theory of his house architect, Albert Speer, concerning the value of the ruin (*Theorie vom Ruinenwert*, 'Theory of Ruin Value'). The *Nation Master Encyclopaedia* describes it as follows: 'The theory was an extension of Gottfried Semper's [German architect, 1803–1879] views about using 'natural' materials and the avoidance of iron girders. Speer's memoirs reveal Hitler's thoughts about Nazi state architecture in relation to Roman imperial architecture: 'Hitler liked to say that the purpose of his building was to transmit his time and its spirit to posterity. Ultimately, all that remained to remind men of the great epochs of history was their monumental architecture'.' Hitler and Speer were in agreement about the fact that, so as to create a future bridge to the past, architects had to work with materials that would leave behind beautiful ruins in the future. For them, examples included Roman ruins that attest to the mighty Roman Empire and its rulers. Speer included this theory in his essay *Stone not Iron*, which was published in the *Four-Year Plan* of 1937. Next to a photo of the Parthenon, he says: 'The ages-old stone buildings of the Egyptians and the Romans still stand today as powerful architectural proofs of the past of great nations, buildings which are often ruins only because man's lust for destruction has made them such.'

Hitler's Germany consciously created architecture for the future, even if it would disintegrate or be destroyed. Hence, it was taken into account that cultural heritage would not necessarily survive the ravages of time or human destructiveness. However, the result of this strategy failed. The Nazis also exhibited what they considered to be either good or bad art, just as the communists did in Russia and Mussolini in Italy. In their *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in Munich in July 1937, this 'degenerate art' was shown in the storage spaces of what was then known as the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst*, where the first Great German Exhibition of approved art was also being held. The 'degenerate art' was predominantly modernist, Jewish and anti-nationalist. An interesting aspect here was that the Germans not only destroyed their 'degenerate art', they also collected it and sometimes even sold it for a great deal of money. Hence, they banished or murdered the artists, but remained well aware of the works' value. This contrasts with the Taliban adherents, who placed ideology above money. The Taliban used hammers and chisels to smash the artefacts of Kabul's National Museum into thousands of pieces.

CALL FOR ATTENTION AND STRATEGY

Sometimes art's destruction comes from an unexpected quarter. In 1986, *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue? III* (1957), the enormous abstract painting by the American artist Barnett Newman, was destroyed at Amsterdam's *Stedelijk Museum* by Gerard Jan van Bladeren, an indignant visitor. This large, red colour field, framed by bright stripes, had provoked his fury because he felt that abstract art was a complete con and had no place in Amsterdam's modern art museum. He described his action as an ode to Carel Willink, a Dutch magic realist painter who wrote the anti-modernist essay *Painting in a Critical Phase* (1950), which Van Bladeren quoted from during his trial. Later he was to do exactly the same thing to Newman's blue monochrome *Cathedra* (1951). This wanton vandalism of modern artworks is not restricted to some isolated incident. It happens more frequently, both subtly and aggressively. In his book *The Destruction of Art* (1997), Dario Gamboni defines a number of reasons for the destruction of both modern art and art in museums: 1) the public is becoming increasingly diverse, and visitors to museums do not always have the necessary cultural baggage to understand the (contemporary) works; 2) that modern art has become increasingly distanced from both society and the public; 3) the assailant's desire for media coverage and attention following his or her action; 4) the affirmation that he or she receives from a public that also does not understand (modern) artworks.

Generally, the reaction of the museums, the media and judges is that the assailant is 'crazy' or abnormal. However, there are a number of arguments that have been used for many hundreds of years to explain iconoclastic actions, which can also be applied here: that the assailant regards the work as being powerful and/or as symbolising an underlying thinking or idea. For these reasons, he or she wishes to damage or destroy it. Alternatively, and this particularly applies to erotic images and nudes, the viewer is overwhelmed by a sense of vicarious shame that can drive him to destruction. Hence, when the work *Spring* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1886) was attacked at the Omaha Joslyn Art Museum in 1976, the assailant described this painting of a naked lady with little angels as being 'dirty'. That was why he threw one of the museum's bronze sculptures at the canvas. Previously, in 1891, a religious maniac had thrown a chair at the painting because he felt that it belonged in a brothel. This particular perpetrator committed suicide after his conviction, where he was declared insane. An interesting detail here is that the painting's owner exhibited the damaged work together with the weapon (the chair) before returning it to the artist for restoration. Here, the desire for attention involves not only the perpetrator but also the owner and the artist.

The *Stedelijk Museum's* two paintings by Barnett Newman were not the only works by this artist to be destroyed. Four years previously, on 23 April 1982, a veterinary student, Josef Nikolaus Kleer, entered the *Nationalgalerie* in West Berlin where he attacked *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue IV* with the small plastic cordon protecting the painting. Later he admitted that he had also kicked the painting. He placed texts, a magazine (*Der Spiegel*) and a pharmaceutical catalogue in front of the work, and described himself as an installation artist. Kleer also said that the painting frightened him: that it was far too expensive (the *Nationalgalerie* had bought it for 2.7 million Deutsche Marks) so that it therefore symbolised the 'dance around the Golden Calf'. He wished to destroy that symbolic (and financial) value. The role of the work's financial worth and its symbolism – namely that it represents a wealthy elite who can exclusively relate to

this work (an argument that had also been used during the French Revolution) – should not be underestimated, and accounts for an important part of some visitors' aggression. Moreover, it intensified a general discussion about the value of modern art. The restoration of *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue? III*, the painting damaged in Amsterdam, was to lead to an even fiercer debate. Daniel Goldreyer used a paint roller to restore the painting, which had been originally created out of millions of dots. Art connoisseurs argued that it had lost its value forever.

Of course, what is interesting here is that these destructive acts actually make the artworks more famous (and possibly more valuable) so their destruction achieves the opposite of the intended effect. Therefore, destroying cultural heritage becomes a part of *and* an instrument in a struggle. Museum vandals sometimes express this explicitly. In 1959, a man threw acid at Peter Paul Rubens' *Fall of the Damned* at Munich's *Alte Pinakothek*. When the judge asked him why he had done this, he answered that he wanted to make an impression on a world that only watches TV. 'A forest fire is a sensation too, but how long does one talk about that?'

ICONOCLASM AND IDOLS

Iconoclasm, which implies both the prohibition of the representation and worship of depictions of living and divine creatures and the encouragement of the destruction of these images, has existed throughout the ages: from Byzantium to the Medieval Islamic world, from the Reformation to the French Revolution. It has also affected our era through the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas. There are multiple reasons for destroying culture: religious fanaticism, moral or aesthetic discord, a particular individual or objective's cry for attention, a part in or of a struggle, and the desire to banish a culture (along with the people who represent that culture). Usually a number of these reasons are involved and it is often difficult to define an unequivocal goal or point of view.

Both Christianity and Islam have experienced periods of iconoclasm. In Islam, the Hadith explain why you must not either make or venerate figurative images. The arguments are that you cannot appropriate the powers of the Gods, and that you may not worship them through images. The Hadith also indicate how you can render an image 'harmless' by, for instance, depicting figures on the fabric of clothes, or through 'decapitation': the portrayal of figures without heads. Here, the aim is to create a neutral image, or to neutralise an 'incorrect figurative representation', or to rob it 'of its soul'. Islamic iconoclastic actions involved the actual beheading of representational figures. Alternatively, a line was drawn at neck level to indicate that they had been symbolically decapitated.

In 14th century Delhi, the orthodox Islamic Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351–88) wrote: 'Under Divine guidance and favour I ordered all pictures and portraits to be removed from these things [from all kinds of textiles and objects in palaces and other buildings], and that such articles only should be made as are approved and recognised by Law (*shari'a*)'. Sultan Tughluq subsequently ordered the destruction of Hindu icons at the public place where executions were also held, as if they were living creatures. This is a recurring feature of iconoclasm throughout the centuries: images are treated as if they are alive or lifelike. William of Tyre wrote in the 11th century during the Seljuq occupation about how he saw damaged Christian images in the churches of Antioch: 'The pictures of the revered saints had been erased from the very walls (…). On these the Turks had spent their rage as if on living persons, they had gouged out eyes, mutilated noses, and daubed the pictures with mud and filth.' A more recent event concerns the story of a Taliban fighter who, on seeing a semi-naked Bodhisattva in Kabul Museum, punched it in the face. This parallels Josef Kleer, who not only admitted that he was afraid of Barnett Newman's painting but also that he had kicked it. Feelings of guilt and shame, frequently vicarious, motivate destruction. The fact that these images are treated as if they are alive, or as symbols of a way of thinking that differs from that of the assailant, are important characteristics of iconoclastic activities. The previously mentioned beheading of depicted figures is also an example of this.

The recent attacks on museum art are generated by criticism of the current 'adoration' of art as combined with a fear of the mighty and power that these artworks exude and symbolise. The anthropologist Alfred Gell describes this in his book *Art and Agency*: 'I cannot tell between religious and aesthetic exaltation; art-lovers, it seems to me, actually do worship images in most of the relevant senses, and explain away their de facto idolatry by rationalising it as aesthetic awe. Thus to write about art at all is, in fact, to write about either religion, or the substitute for religion which those who have abandoned the outward forms of received religions content themselves with.' It is also this aesthetic veneration that the Taliban resisted by blowing up the Bamiyan Buddhas. Apart from the fact that Mullah Omar said that he would tolerate no Gods other than Allah, the Taliban opposed the cultural fetishism that is allied both to the museum as the 'locus of contemporary iconolatry' and the market, as FB Flood writes in *Between Cult and Culture*. When Philippe de Montebello, the Director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, offered to include the statues in the Museum as art objects rather than as religious artefacts, Mullah Omar responded on Radio Shari'a with the public question: 'Do you prefer to be a breaker of idols or a seller of idols?' Here, Mullah Omar was referring to the 11th century Sultan Mahmud Somnath, who had used these same words in India – 'Would you like to be a breaker or a broker of images?' – when he propagated iconoclasm during plundering raids in approximately 1025 AD. Mahmud stole and destroyed artefacts, but did not sell them. Moreover, Mullah Omar was also referring to history – because Mahmud's palace was packed with looted 'forbidden objects' – and to the current pillaging of cultural heritage for the international market. At auctions everywhere and in international collections we constantly encounter exquisite, stolen artworks from Afghanistan. Naturally – as has already been said – the Taliban was focusing on the international community when they blew up the Buddhas. It was a means of communication for conveying the Taliban's message and displaying their power; it was a resource both in and of their struggle. As Flood writes, 'In this case, the eventual transport of Western journalists to the site to record the void left by the Buddhas' destruction suggests that the intended audience… was neither divine nor local but global:… this was a performance designed for the age of the Internet.'

BEYOND DESTRUCTION

Clearly the destruction of cultural heritage is as old as civilisation. Does that therefore mean that its rescue is also an ancient activity? We know that the artefacts looted by Sultan Mahmud were exhibited in his house and garden. This would therefore appear to be one of the world's first concepts of an educational museum: stolen, forbidden images were shown not only for their beauty and exoticism but more especially because they exemplified all that was 'wrong'.

There have always been those who championed the salvage of cultural heritage. During the French Revolution, when a great deal of art was lost, many people worked to save cultural items because they were well aware of the aesthetic and historic value of these objects. Artworks and artefacts depicting or representing the royal family, the nobility and the church, were victims of the French Revolution. The Bastille was the symbolic apogee: despite the fact that it was no longer in use, it remained the symbol of power. Just like the demolition of the Berlin Wall (1989), pieces were kept as souvenirs of the fort and its destruction.

Abbé Grégoire – who wrote three reports in 1794 on cultural destruction during the French Revolution, in which he introduced the word 'vandalism' for this new iconoclasm – and the painter Alexandre Lenoir defended the preservation and rescue of art or its 'transformation'. They fought for the protection of endangered artworks and argued for their 'reuse'. Lenoir turned what was once the *Petits Augustins* monastery into his *Musée des Monuments Français*, where the public at large could view, enjoy and learn about rescued cultural objects. Art was no longer exclusively associated with power; instead it belonged to everyone and was well worth admiring. This is a major turning point in the perception of art and beauty. Enjoying culture became a democratic right; culture suddenly belonged to all of us. 'The transformation by Lenoir of the notion of monument from an instrument of domination into one of instruction, together with Grégoire's appropriation of monuments as works of art and his condemnation of their destruction as 'vandalism' made it possible – at least in theory – to go beyond destruction and to renounce it,' writes Gamboni.

A century later, John Ruskin (England, 1819–1900) and William Morris (England, 1834–1896) campaigned for the preservation and/or restoration of material cultural heritage. In 1877, the artist and theoretician William Morris wrote his manifesto on the restoring and conservation of cultural heritage. He opposed the idealised restorations of his era, and described the intrinsic value of buildings and monuments: 'For what is left we plead before our architects themselves, before the official guardians of buildings, and before the public generally, and we pray them to remember how much is gone of the religion, thought and manners of time past, never by almost universal consent, to be Restored; and to consider whether it be possible to Restore those buildings, the living spirit of which, it cannot be too often repeated, was an inseparable part of that religion and thought, and those past manners.' In 1877, he jointly founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings with Philip Webb. John Ruskin also argued for the protection and preservation of historic heritage with the emphasis on protection and preservation rather than on restoration: 'Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is *impossible*, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.'

Ideas about restoration and conservation became more highly developed and cultivated through not only Ruskin and Morris' writings but also the ensuing debate. Following the two World Wars, during which a great deal of cultural destruction occurred, this discussion resulted in the formulating of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which took place in 1954 in The Hague. The Convention covered the protection of both immovable and movable cultural heritage. Its point of departure is 'to preserve cultural property situated in occupied territory and damaged by military operations', which in turn implies 'the cultural property of all peoples' (the Convention's Preamble). In Article 4.3 of the Convention, cultural destruction is explicitly forbidden: 'The High Contracting Parties further undertake to prohibit, prevent and, if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism directed against, cultural property.'

The Venice Charter was drawn up ten years later in Venice. The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites was drafted in 1964 during the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments. The Preamble reads: 'Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognised. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.' Many people now realised that our culture needed to be preserved and protected. The ideas that Morris wrote down on paper in 1877 were being increasingly endorsed, partly because of the 20th century's violent history. Morris wrote: 'It is for all these buildings, therefore, of all times and styles, that we plead, and call upon those who have to deal with them, to put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care, to prop a perilous wall or mend a leaky roof by such means as are obviously meant for support or covering, and show no pretence of other art, and otherwise to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands … Thus, and thus only, can we protect our ancient buildings, and hand them down instructive and venerable to those that come after us.'

CONCLUSIONS: RESCUING BEAUTY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY

The cultural and political community is aware that legislation and money are needed to rescue and protect cultural heritage. Yet in times of crisis, culture is still all too often forgotten. Not everybody agrees that culture is a basic human need. And certainly not warring governments and/or emergency relief organisations. This needs to change.

Culture offers people what is lacking in a valuable human life: beauty, hope, respect and a sense of purpose in life. Enjoying a concert, admiring a painting or reading an extraordinary book: *these* are the things that make life worthwhile. The fact that the Bosnians in Sarajevo endangered their own lives by keeping their theatres open during the war, that Afghans hid the collection of the National Museum during the Taliban regime, and that painters continued to make critical paintings under the

tyranny of the Third Reich attests to the importance of art and beauty. Art and culture give people a place in the world, a reason to live. After all, cultural roots define who, where and why you are.

Beauty is a complex concept. Its enjoyment is something that people have in common. There is probably no single, universal idea of beauty; but a universal idea of aesthetic perception certainly does exist. It is clear that *Cathedra's* assailant did not share the same aesthetic ideas as the many people who had come especially to the Museum for that painting, that the Islamic fundamentalists experienced no aesthetic problem with the destruction of the large Buddhas or other non-Islamic artefacts, and that the Nazis had a completely different idea of beauty than the so-called 'degenerate' artists. Yet everybody knows and recognises the individual satisfaction that is created through experiencing something beautiful, something religious, something exceptional. Beyond this, aesthetic experience is reinforced by the symbolic and historic meanings that cultural items have to a greater or lesser extent, such as the Cathedral of Rheims, the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra, the painting *Guernica* by Picasso, and the icon of Christ, which hung above the palace gate in Constantinople.

From the above, we can conclude that symbolic and aesthetic qualities play an important role in the destruction and the rescue and the protection of culture. Let us now return to Elaine Scarry's intriguing quote at the beginning of this essay: 'Perceiving something beautiful confers on the perceiver a gift of life.' This is an essential statement for interpreting people's cultural actions in times of crisis. She goes even further: 'Beauty is lifesaving. It adrenalises. It makes the heart beat faster. It makes life more vivid, animated, living, worth living.' That beauty is 'lifesaving' to some extent explains why people will risk their own lives so as to save art and culture, why they appreciate its restoration and why they long for it when it is scarce. Scarry's references to this are varied but her description of the longing of Homer's Odysseus for Nausicaa, the beautiful daughter of King Alcinous (Alkinoos) of the Phaeacians and Queen Arete, is revealing. The shipwrecked Odysseus experiences Nausicaa's beauty, who is doing her laundry on the shore, as being not only gorgeous but also as a safe haven where he is free from life-threatening circumstances and fear. Homer writes: '… it is as though one has suddenly been washed up onto a merciful beach: all unease, aggression, indifference suddenly drop back behind one, like a surf that has for a moment lost its capacity to harm.' This sense of safety and security, *this* is what people long for in times of turmoil and chaos. It gives you something to hold on to and a place in the world.

In times of disarray, rescuing culture provides respect for the people who give or have given meaning to aesthetic artefacts. It gives them 'a gift of life' in situations where death and the fear of death are everywhere. Henri Matisse, the French impressionist painter, expressed his creative wish as follows: he wanted to make paintings 'so serenely beautiful that when one came upon them, suddenly all problems would subside.' The artist's awareness that art can lead to a serenity that makes problems disappear involves the idea of art's vibrancy and lifelike qualities. Vibrancy is generated when there is a relation between the viewer and beauty. Odysseus wanted to see his Nausicaa, but he also wanted her to look at him, that she would return his gaze and see him. That would give him not only safety and peace but also a mutual life force. 'Beauty is a contract between the beautiful thing or person and the perceiver: the beautiful thing gives the perceiver the gift of life, the perceiver confers on the beautiful thing the gift of life. Each welcomes the other, each comes in accordance with (the) other's will.' This is also the reason why people treat art objects as living things. They have returned the aesthetic gaze and have therefore imbued something beautiful with the force of life. This 'gift of life' is again reciprocated so that the individual not only imbues his life with meaning but will also take pleasure in life.

Some people regard the ability to see and enjoy beauty as something high-minded, religious and even elitist: 'Beauty offends the inferior beings who are conscious of their inferiority', wrote Louis Réau in his *Histoire du Vandalisme* (1959). Along with others, he views this as a provocation for destruction. Criticasters describe these deeds as philistine and primitive. After all, philistines do not understand the value of these cultural artefacts. Yet aesthetic perception is for everyone. Also for the philistines. On the other hand, the perpetrators are certainly aware of the value of culture. And for them, this is precisely the reason for destroying it. They realise all too well that a work's aesthetic qualities will boost the impact of its destruction. Hence, this is consciously (and also unconsciously) used and deployed.

From rulers to the seething masses, from top down to bottom up, people have destroyed and saved culture for a variety of reasons. The iconoclasts protested against atheism, the *sans-culottes* against elitist power, and Josef Kleer against the value and might of the image. Hitler used culture as the confirmation of his ideas, the Taliban to present the world with their message and Sultan Mahmud to show how 'correct, religious' depictions should be made. Some people take; others give. Some people destroy culture; others create it. The new creations are the cultural heritage of the future that we must preserve, support and protect, just like our ancient cultural heritage.

However, culture's protection and rescue must not become a religion. Ludovic Vitet wrote in 1836 that he regretted that French cathedrals were still being used intensively because 'use is a kind of slow, imperceptible, unheeded vandalism, which ruins and defaces almost as much as a brutal devastation.' Evidently, Vitet took the protection and preservation of culture to an extreme. Sometimes culture should also have a chance to become worn. Aesthetic appreciation changes over the course of time, as does the use of culture and cultural artefacts. These changes and 'disappearances' are not simply negative. Naturally, we want to preserve the Iranian sand city of Bam, the Italian Mona Lisa and Indonesia's Borobudur for all eternity, and with good reason. But sometimes we must live with wear and tear, and natural damage. This creates space for new work and different cultural concepts. However, intentional destruction is intolerable and, where possible, must be opposed with conscious cultural resistance. Fortunately, an aesthetic experience can continue to live in the minds of people. The immaterial archive of aesthetic experiences is immense, and can be referred to at any point in time. Just ask the artist, philosopher, soldier, professor, relative, friend, acquaintance or colleague. They will consult this mental archive with love and tell you about the beauty they find there.

This essay was published in Cultural Emergency Response in Violent Conflict and Disaster*, edited by Berma Klein Goldewijk, Georg Frerks and Els van der Plas (NAI, 2011). The book was part of the Prince Claus Fund Library series.*

SUSTAINING LIFE IN A GEOGRAPHY OF ADVERSITY

REMA HAMAMMI

For almost three years, from March 2001 through December 2003, the final leg of a commute between Birzeit University and Ramallah entailed a one- to two- kilometre walk across the Surda military roadblock that had been imposed across the main road by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Commuters were forced to disembark from transit vans that jammed both ends of the no-drive zone; then, skirting rubble and concrete blocks, they would trip down the valley, hold their breath as they passed the Israeli soldiers, before finally trudging up the incline to the vans on the other side. Thousands made the walk every day. In the morning, the flow of modishly dressed students on their way to the university crossed the flow of residents from the surrounding 35 villages heading into Ramallah for work and for services that can only be found in a city. In the afternoon, the pattern would repeat in reverse. On the worst days all movement would stop when trigger-happy soldiers suddenly prohibited pedestrian traffic and stranded everyone on the wrong side of getting to work or home. More commonly during its last year, soldiers only dropped in at the checkpoint for a few hours a day, asserting their authority by stopping all – or a select few – for interminable identity card and baggage checks and re-imposing 'order' by ramming the chaos of commuter vans and informal peddler stands with their jeeps.

The Surda roadblock was only a single node in the ongoing web of more than 600 physical blockades and checkpoints the IDF imposed around Palestinian communities within the West Bank during the second uprising. Although media attention has tended to focus on the more dramatic instances of aerial bombing and re-invasion of Palestinian towns, this 'geography of incarceration' has been the most permanent and far-reaching feature of Israel's anti-insurgency efforts in this *intifada* until the building of the 'Separation Wall'. Its effects on the Palestinian economy have been devastating; the World Bank has cited Israel's continuing 'closure regime' as plunging more than 60% of Palestinians into poverty – a jump of more than 40% in pre-intifada poverty levels. But other than the work of macro-economists and human rights analysts, there has been little attempt to understand what the regime of checkpoints as a spatial regime means both in terms of the technologies of power and modes of Palestinian resistance.

Michel Foucault has proposed that surveillance is a critical prerequisite for the exercise of modern forms of power. Creating spatial systems and forms of knowledge that bring subjects into the eye of the state is what differentiates modern forms of social and political control from the pre-modern techniques of disciplinary authority acting through public spectacle and bodily punishment. But surveillance as a means of control presupposes particular types of spatial framing; to bring the population into purview necessitates its being marked off into spatial fields that make it visible to the official eye.

Foucault's historical reading of the various forms of power was initially seen as quite dichotomous and teleological, concerned with archaic forms of disciplinary power and the ways in which its obvious violence gives way to the more benign and hidden technologies of biopower and governmentality in the modern era. More recent theorists (including Judith Butler, Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri) have focussed on the continuities: how disciplinary violence enacted over racialised Others located in a juridical 'state of exception' is actually the ongoing norm, and constitutive of modern biopolitical power and sovereignty. Singularly among these theorists, in his article 'Necropolitics', Achille Mbembe proposes the colony as the paradigmatic location of the modern 'state of exception', where '… the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended – a zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of civilization.'

It is in this paradigmatic state of exception, of what Mbembe calls 'modern colonial occupation', that the logic of spatial control to enact power becomes particularly violent – because space itself becomes the material through which biopolitical and disciplinary power are deployed in the service of sovereignty.

The carceral geography made by Israeli military roadblocks and checkpoints is a case in point. On the one hand, it creates the spatial possibility to enact a much greater degree of surveillance over the subject population, or what has been called 'staging', that is, making up for the inability to observe everyone all the time (as in a real prison) by concentrating the official gaze on one location or activity through which all must pass. At the same time, the military checkpoints and roadblocks are spaces in which public exhibitions of Israeli power and its ability to discipline Palestinian bodies are constantly and most profoundly enacted. Checkpoint spaces present a constant spectacle of the pedagogy of power, of soldiers publicly disciplining individual 'rule breakers' in an attempt to make the larger population (represented by the hapless bystanders waiting to pass) internalise a 'lesson' about the proper order of control and submission. Through both these processes, the IDF is thus able to powerfully and violently rewrite a landscape of Israeli sovereignty over Palestinian geography.

But how do the victims of checkpoints and roadblocks, the vast majority of the population who must pass through them in order to reach home, work or school, deal with their effects? Inasmuch as individual checkpoints and the whole geography of incarceration has its scales, dimensions and range of impacts, the reactions to them are similarly multiple, varied and in constant states of change. But the difference between what checkpoints do and what people do with them are of differing orders of power – the power of the former being akin to what Michel de Certeau, in his theory of the relationship between power and space, has called 'strategy', and the latter being what he has identified as 'tactics'.

Strategies are how governments enact their power spatially; as in Foucault's notion, they are techniques involved in the production of abstract space – visualising and textualising techniques which make space transparent and movement predictable and controllable. Strategies depend on a 'proper place', a spatial or institutional localisation that serves as the basis for generating relations with an 'exteriority composed of targets or threats'. Tactics, on the other hand, comprise those techniques which are involved in the consumption of space, practices which are pragmatic in nature and rely on non-abstract experience of actual lived space.

A tactic is 'a calculus which cannot count on a proper locus' but is a clever trick that depends on time and waiting to manipulate any emerging opportunities in a structure of domination. Thus, while strategies can create, arrange and control spaces, tactics can only use, manoeuvre and invert them. As such, the tactical consumption of space has the possibility to subvert, albeit not to transform, forms of spatial domination.

The first reaction to the imposition of the Surda roadblock was the organisation of a protest against it by the university – an attempt to get rid of it through collective action. Since Birzeit has a long history of civic action under military occupation, it was well-placed to mobilise a peaceful march to the site that brought together a wide range of Palestinian civil society organizations, public figures and local and foreign media along with the university community. The day's outcome was that more than eighty participants were injured by teargas and rubber bullets; one person was shot dead by the IDF. Moreover, in reaction, the specific regime at the checkpoint actually worsened. Two more demonstrations were mounted by the university over the following months, with more or less the same outcome in terms of injuries and exactly the same logic of spatial intensification of the existing checkpoint regime. Collective resistance was unable to overthrow the checkpoint because of the strategic power the space embodied– which is why the space itself was restructured in order to impose further punishment. The failure of collective action set the stage for the struggle to enter the arena of tactics.

A first area of tactical resistance to the immobility that checkpoints and roadblocks cause is the detour – an attempt to elude them altogether. But a detour in this case is not simply taking an alternate road; the same week that Surda was imposed, the military blocked all other regular arteries into Ramallah. Thus commuters, and in particular the drivers of the ten-seater mass-transit vans that form the backbone of Palestinian public transport, forged new and improbable routes along agricultural tracks, over hills and valleys to try and get around the nexus of closure. Ziad, a mass-transit driver, was one such 'king of the detour':

'When the roadblocks came, I started working on a line we called Wadi Burham, it's a route that goes deep down into the valley. We made it a new route when the Atara bridge was completely sealed. Then they put a roadblock between Dur al-Qara and Ein Yabrud, so we opened another route and got people from Ein Yabrud to Jawwal. Then sometimes the Atara bridge would be open so we'd use that. You'd go, you know, according to where and when, what was closed or open.'

Ziad's description suggests the way in which such tactics work, through attempts to remake space, here, for instance, by drivers turning a rocky valley, Wadi Burham, into a new transportation route. But it also suggests how ephemeral these changes are, that they remain at the level of a cat-and-mouse game – between the army trying to enforce its spatial control and commuters attempting to find or make holes in it. In the final instance, the military has the greater power due to its array of resources (planes, aerial maps and other tools of surveillance as well military vehicles and weaponry on the ground). In contrast, the population has only local knowledge of the terrain, civilian transport and the odd bulldozer or two. Throughout the West Bank, this cat-and-mouse game was played out at countless numbers of attempted detours. But these myriad and everyday attempts by people to reshape the landscape as a means to evade the checkpoint regime soon failed. Thus, like elsewhere, after a few weeks, in order to reach Birzeit University and the surrounding villages on one side and Ramallah on the other, everyone was finally forced to pass according to the army's will, through the one staging point they had constructed at the Surda roadblock.

Where before resistance had attempted to challenge the wider geography of control, now the structure of opportunity was narrowed to the confines of the roadblock itself. Given the outcome of overt collective action against it, it was also clear that the modes of possible resistance at the roadblock had also narrowed. The sight of thousands of individuals stumbling across a rubble-strewn, two-kilometre military zone in order to try and continue with their lives and livelihoods does not seem to offer much hope for, or evidence of, resistance.

At first glance it seems to suggest only the most basic will to survive. But while basic material needs are what propel the quest for survival, the struggle to achieve them is a dynamic one – the process itself produces a sense of agency which in turn allows people to give different and oppositional meanings to their actions. In simple terms, people imbue survival with both a sense of agency and defiance. While this reclaiming of agency through making new meaning works at the level of the individual, collective experience also produces collective discourses of it. Palestinians have a particularly rich legacy of resistance ideology and rhetorical forms with which to work. Thus, at the level of everyday discourse, the historic referent for Palestinian passive resistance – *sumud*, or steadfastness – has in this intifada been given a renewed and now proactive meaning. Where in the past it meant refusing to leave the land despite the hardships of the occupation, in the context of the checkpoint regime it has come to connote resisting immobility, refusing to let the army stop you from simply continuing your normal life. To be steadfast means to simply keep going. Hiba, a twenty-year-old English literature student at the university (who was a target of sexual harassment in particular by soldiers at the checkpoint because of her good looks), provides an example:

'I never feel the soldier is stronger than me. The situation isn't comparable between us. All he has is a gun, fine, he confronts us students with a gun, but on the cultural level, I feel stronger than him, and I try and make them feel that. I'm provoking them with the fact that I'm going back and forth to the university even though the checkpoint's there. He's standing there saying [through the way he looks], "I can close the checkpoint on you

and make you wait in a long line." They try all the time to make us feel that that they have this power, but in spite of it I hold my books and I'm going to the university, so they feel that you're stronger than them in that. If they were in our place they'd never leave their house if there was a closure on them, or something dangerous, they'd stay home. Look at us and how hard and dangerous the checkpoint is – but it doesn't stop us …'

The meaning of continuing to go through the checkpoint to reach the university has been inverted: instead of Hiba's forced walk through the checkpoint being a sign of her victimhood, it is she who chooses to continue to go through, and in this process it is she who has taken the power away from the soldiers, who are now little more than powerless and cowardly shadows. But while the meaning she has produced can carry her through – the sense that she has defeated what the soldiers represent – it does not, in fact, defeat or even impact on them or on the checkpoint regime. In an interesting reading of de Certeau, Ian Buchanan has posited that tactics might actually operate primarily at level of belief: 'Tactics refers to the set of practices that strategy has been unable to domesticate. They are not in themselves subversive, but they have a symbolic value which is not to be underestimated: they offer daily proof of the partiality of strategic control and in so doing they hold out a token hope.'

But the hope offered by individual (and willy-nilly) collective remaking of the meaning of passing through checkpoints is only one level of possible tactics. This is because the players at checkpoints are not only those imposing them (the soldiers) or those trying (or choosing) to pass through them (the commuters), but also those who make it possible for people and goods to keep passing through the checkpoint workers. Besides creating immobility, checkpoints create immense chaos by shattering the myriad circuits through which the host of social and economic relations flow that make life possible. It is not simply that goods cannot reach the market, or students their schools, but that the entire web of relations that make education achievable or production and selling possible are suddenly severed, and each broken thread has ripple effects throughout. To survive means reconstructing these linkages by creating transport circuits for people and goods to and from the checkpoint and some means to get goods across the no-drive zone. With the inability of the Palestinian Authority to undertake this, throughout the West Bank it is networks of informal sector workers which have stepped in and created alternatives to the formal systems that have been shattered.

First, there are the transport workers who move in order to pick up and drop off people from both ends of the checkpoint. They had to reorganise the dissolution of their regular transport routes and systems – highly complex systems of rights and rules – and in their place create new, informal ones at the lawless frontier of the checkpoint. Then, porters with three-wheeled pushcarts, most of them from the Ramallah wholesale market, began to arrive, seeing the need for individuals and merchants to cart goods from one side of no-drive zone to the other. Both the transport workers and porters arrived spontaneously and began to work despite the military but not in open confrontation with them. The transport workers constantly pushed the boundaries of the checkpoint in order to more quickly or efficiently pick up or drop off commuters or create more room for vans. In the process, they set off a new cat-and-mouse game with the soldiers who wanted them to wait far beyond the rubble mounds marking the no-drive zone. Daily, soldiers would charge up the road to try and catch a van that was 'too close', often ramming the assembled vehicles to 'teach them a lesson'.

But despite the likelihood of getting rammed by a jeep, the drivers continued to 'break the rules'. Similarly, porters stealthily chipped away at the edges of the rubble mounds, and under cover of night shifted concrete blocks a few inches further in order to make more room for the passage of their carts. That they secured the economic interdependence between city and village is attested to from what they carried on only one summer morning: meat from the Birzeit slaughterhouse; fresh mulberries; packaged foods for a supermarket; glasses and plates for a housewares shop; fabric for a clothier; luggage; wood; cans of white paint; a glass showcase; a stonecutting machine; a car engine; and the day's edition of al-Quds newspaper. They also carried people: children too small to walk the distance and too big to be carried by parents, and the elderly and sick (including six dialysis patients from the villages) and, on numerous occasions, people wounded at the checkpoint itself. After working for more than a year, a few of porters decided to take a chance on the army's logic of permissible mobility and bought a horse and cart. Mustapha, its driver, describes what happened:

'When we first went down to the checkpoint, the soldiers kicked us out. They saw the horse and went crazy. We tried again and they threatened to take the horse. So we waited, and then the platoon changed a few days later and we tried again and they thought it was normal – they didn't know.'

Within a month two other porters were using horses and carts, and by the end of the year there were ten of them offering rides to weary commuters for two shekels a go to and from the no-drive zone. The less-organised informal sector that sprung up at Surda comprised individual peddlers, the majority of them workers or small merchants who had lost their jobs or businesses elsewhere. During the summer commuters could select from a range of cold drinks and the two competing brands of ice cream offered by mobile sellers, or buy a sunhat or sunglasses ('freshly stolen from Tel Aviv', according to the sales pitch of one seller). In the spring, stands of produce would be set up in the only 'free space' left – the no-drive zone itself – thus always incurring the risk of being ploughed over by an army jeep. More improbably, at various times peddlers set up stands to sell shoes, carpets, toys and even heavy tools.

The tactics by which networks of informal sector workers stepped in to 'organise' the checkpoint are best expressed by Asef Bayat's concept of 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary', a term he used to describe how the urban poor were able to take over and remake areas of Tehran to meet their needs. This process was not through collective, direct action but through everyday practices of survival, which were mostly individual and spontaneous but, when protracted and taken together, created a kind of molecular change in urban space despite the overwhelming power of the state. Similarly, checkpoint workers were not primarily motivated by politics but by necessity and a quest for dignity in the face of the destruction of their regular livelihoods. Through myriad daily tactics they crept into the spaces of opportunity that existed between the whims and violence of the military and the various needs of the community. They could not undo the strategic power of the checkpoint, but they could 'poach' it back from being a space of pure brutality and oppression to one in which their own dispossession could be redressed while creating a means to sustain the entire community. But not only that: by the last year, the informal sector at Surda (including the drivers, porters, horsemen, peddlers and 'service sector for the service sector'), through constant tactical energy and sheer numbers, were able to ultimately flood the space of the checkpoint with new meaning. From its being originally an experience of extreme military violence, they subverted the space into a lively (if surreal) urban streetscape, where military violence became relegated to a punctuation of the normal, rather than the dominating norm.

The Surda roadblock was arbitrarily cleared away by the Israeli military one early morning in December 2003 – one of the first checkpoints and roadblocks to have been disbanded. Today, 470 others still remain in place, similar to Surda, the majority dividing Palestinian communities from each other rather than from Israel. Whether Surda's disappearance represents a victory for the 'quiet encroachment of the ordinary' is anyone's guess. Can the everyday tactics of hundreds of checkpoint workers ultimately wear an army down, making a checkpoint unsustainable within the calculations of energy necessary to enforce an overall geography of incarceration? As the Separation Wall continues to snake its way around Palestinian communities and bury the very possibility of hope, perhaps we should believe they can.

This essay was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #13, 2006.

All photographs by Rula Halawani. Courtesy the artist.

THE MUSEUM OF HOPE AND OMARA KHAN MASSOUDI

JOERI BOOM

Amidst the perils of war, Omara Khan Massoudi, Prince Claus Fund laureate 2004, rescued part of the cultural heritage of Afghanistan reminding us that adversity is ephemeral against long term hope chiselled in stone.

What was once one of Kabul's most respectable districts is now a barren wasteland with mountains of rubble and battered houses. Every building is scarred with grenade fragments and bullet holes. The former Ministry of Defence was housed in a structure that resembled a palace, which has now been reduced to a pile of stones and the occasional wall. Yet, on the other side of the street is a gleaming, white building with a well-tended garden. It is completely intact and has apparently been recently renovated. Here is Afghanistan's National Museum, which is full of archaeological and ethnographic works.

You could view it as being a powerful message to the Afghan warlords, the leaders of the various militias which attacked each other after the Russians were driven out. Civil war raged in and around Kabul between 1992 and 1996; the inhabitants of the Afghan capital desperately tried to survive between the rocket and mortar attacks. Yet the resilience of Afghan art and culture is demonstrated by the fact that, rather than the Ministry of Defence, it is the National Museum, the refuge of Afghanistan's ancient treasures that has risen from the ashes.

The National Museum's resurrection also attests to the indomitability of its director, Omara Khan Massoudi. Massoudi is a man with a mission, a cultural mission of courage and tolerance. His museum houses works from both the prehistoric and classical periods: works with Buddhist, Islamic and Hellenistic influences that fuse into extraordinary hybrids. Massoudi wants to prove to his nation that different faiths and cultures can exist alongside each other in a single country. He never wastes an opportunity to convey his message. The museum's entrance is flanked by two small plinths bearing a text engraved in marble in English and Dari: 'A nation survives if its culture survives.'

Massoudi and his staff risked their lives to save the art treasures first from the violence of war and then from the pulverising hammers of the fundamentalist Taliban, which ruled the country between 1996 and November 2001. He was delighted to hear last year that he had been chosen as one of the Prince Claus Fund's laureates. He said: 'I'm very pleased and happy that the Prince Claus Award will draw attention to our culture abroad, because we still need help so that we can repair what has been destroyed.'

Massoudi took me on a guided tour of the National Museum and its ancient sculptures, or what was left of them. There were thousands of fragments, both large and small. Restorers were patiently working to piece together everything that had fallen into the hands of the Taliban. Unfortunately, he is able to exhibit almost none of the works that are still intact or which have already been restored, because of a shortage of the extremely expensive display cases needed to protect these treasures. Clearly, the €25,000 the museum has received as part of the Prince Claus Award can be put to good use here.

Massoudi was in the Netherlands in 2005 at the joint invitation of the Prince Claus Fund, the VeerStichting, the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden and Leiden University's Research School for Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS). 'Courage is a Must' was the theme of the VeerStichting's annual conference. Massoudi was one of the speakers.

Massoudi speaks softly. He laughs in a friendly way and accepts another cup of tea. Afghanistan is currently going through a difficult time, but he remains undaunted. He has a sacred mission, and gesticulates dramatically when we discuss his country's rapidly deteriorating security situation. Behind Massoudi's relaxed appearance must lurk boundless energy and great determination. He spent the years of the Taliban's cultural barbarism hiding art treasures; once the Taliban had been driven out, he worked feverishly on acquiring international support for restoring the museum and its valuable collection. But his country is again under threat, just at the very point where he is almost able to exhibit the collection. There is renewed resistance to the US and NATO troops which have been in Afghanistan since the end of 2001. In addition, there are rumours of a new generation of mujahideen with links to the Iraqi resistance, and the country is in more turmoil than at any point since the Taliban was ousted.

One thousand, five hundred people have been killed over the last year, and there are an increasing number of suicide bombings. Kabul has also become a terrorist target. The walls around the National Museum have been reinforced, and concrete blocks have been placed in front of the entrance to obstruct attacks with vehicles. Massoudi is worried about the transportation of his valuable glass display cases. They will have to travel overland from Jalalabad, on the Pakistani border, to Kabul, which involves crossing a mountainous area with bad roads and many rebels. 'But I still believe that it will be OK,' he says. 'A new, safer road is being built between Kabul and Jalalabad. If necessary, we'll wait until it's ready.'

Our conversation revolves around the ideas of Achille Mbembe. In September 2004, the Cameroonian Professor of History gave a lecture at a conference on the World Cultures Report, an event that was held at The Hague's Peace Palace and jointly initiated by the Prince Claus Fund. Mbembe focused on negative developments that drive people apart: nowadays we tend to think in terms of cultural inequality; the downside of globalisation and increased contacts is a growing inclination to protect individuality. We are also apt to view people from different cultures (Mbembe calls them 'the others') as threatening strangers, a process that maintains images of hostility. Mbembe feels we should consider fellow human beings simply as neighbours. His remarks can be all too easily applied to the situation in Afghanistan.

In his lecture at the Peace Palace, Achille Mbembe emphasised the need for a 'critical humanism'. The relationship of people with the cultures that influence them and the societies in which they live, he said, should be constantly imbued with form. Dogmatism and intellectual stagnation must be avoided. He feels, therefore, that it is important to opt for a 'politics of hope' and that it is impossible to foster solidarity if there is no positive common goal. Here, Mbembe used the example of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. People who used to fight and kill each other are now given the opportunity to redefine their relationship in positive terms.

When we met last year at your museum, you were only able to exhibit a small part of the collection that had been saved or restored. What is the current state of affairs?

OMARA KHAN MASSOUDI The museum is doing well. We're on schedule with the restoration work that we started in April 2004. We are being helped by Western specialists, who are investigating how we should treat the prehistoric objects. We now have the materials to restore them, and have also begun to repair the ethnographic pieces. A French specialist is assisting us. The textile products are in a particularly bad state. Fortunately we have received an offer to have some of our staff trained in Italy. This will enable them to increase their knowledge and skills, which will help us enormously. Ultimately we want to have a well-trained restoration department that is able to take on this kind of work. The Netherlands is also supporting the museum. We only have four display cases at present, but more than a hundred are on their way from Holland. The Japanese were also involved, but they've dropped out for various reasons, including the security aspect. We're very happy that the Dutch haven't been scared off. We now have enough restored pieces that can be shown. I want to fit out four rooms with the display cases from the Netherlands.

Your country has been at war for 25 years, during which various groups have attacked each other. What's the relationship between the various ethnic groups in your land? Is there a cultural struggle now that the guns have been silenced?

OKM Afghanistan occupies an extraordinary geographical position. It's located on what used to be the Silk Road. Chinese and Indian merchants visited Afghanistan and brought their cultures with them. That was a strong influence. Buddhism spread from India to China via Afghanistan. Merchants from Rome and Greece also travelled through Afghanistan. Our country was a cultural crossroads. These influences were absorbed because the merchants depended on the local Afghan inhabitants for their security, supplies and accommodation. The Afghans did not resist these influences; instead, they used them. They copied what they saw and used what they had learnt in their art and daily life. This led to all kinds of cultural hybrids that nobody felt bothered about. At that time, the Afghans had no issues with that extraordinary idea of purity that dominates so many cultures nowadays. The results were miracles of beauty. There was nothing negative about it. We are a family. It is the museum's task to confront people with the facts. We must restore and exhibit as much as possible, so that the Afghans will realise just how much they have adopted from each other and from other cultures. Then they will recognise that there are no differences between the ethnic groups. In the past there was never any animosity between Afghans of different ethnic backgrounds. They lived together in peace. Now there is tension because of the civil war. But most people still have no problem with other ethnicities. That's something that has been generated by the fighters of the warlords, who are after influence, power and wealth. They have used illiterate people to spread hate, just to serve their own interests. Fortunately, after all the wars we've been through, most people in Afghanistan have acknowledged that hating each other is not going to get us anywhere. It's simply madness. We need unity, and I feel that most people understand that now. Hamid Karzai won last year's presidential elections, which is a hopeful sign. Karzai supports unity. He is not a warlord and protects the interests of all Afghans, rather than those of a particular ethnic group. He tries to show that everyone is equal and that Afghanistan is a single nation.

Is there a need in Afghanistan for national reconciliation?

OKM I don't think so. A parliament has been elected. If the parliament will function well, the Afghans will see that we are all equal: male and female, from every ethnic group. There are no real differences; these only exist in people's minds. Look at our history, at the power that all the Afghan peoples have gained through learning about each other's cultures. Take me, for example. I'm a Pashtun. I live in Kabul, where many Hazaras and Tajiks also live. But it's not a problem. We respect each other. The warlords would say that I'm living amongst enemies, but there are no enemies. I have never listened to the warlords and have never acted as if people were fundamentally different. Fortunately, I am not the only one. I respect people for their humanity. It's about that way of thinking. Once we realise that there are no enemies, that there never was a problem between the different ethnic groups, and that all that animosity was simply created by people with bad intentions, then we will be able to live together with no difficulty whatsoever.

Afghanistan is full of Western soldiers and aid workers. Do you feel that the West is imposing its cultural ideas?

OKM We have an extremely strong culture. It always has been and it still is. We only adopt positive things. Anything that's imposed won't work here. The Western influence generally has nothing to do with culture. People are trying to help us with reconstructing our country. We need technology and computer skills, and we must learn to speak English. That's good, because it opens up our country. The Afghans take what they need, and for the rest they will just continue in their own way. The same applies to accepting international aid for our museum.

Did the Taliban impose its culture on the population?

OKM They had no culture. They destroyed old sculptures and artworks. They're barbarians. They forced women to wear burqas. Music was forbidden, just like every other form of art.

But how did the fact that the Taliban destroyed culture influence the way in which Afghans regarded their culture?

Didn't they think: 'If it's so easy to destroy our historic sculptures and artworks, what does our history and culture really amount to?'

OKM The Taliban maintained a civilised approach to culture during the first three years of their regime. I think that there were political reasons for wanting to destroy our art – and by that I mean that foreign influences were involved … I don't want to name names. Historians must first solve this first. I can express any particular opinion. It was a political game. That was definitely my impression. And that's why the Taliban deployed a politics of destruction rather than a politics of hope. I think that many Afghans understand that what the Taliban did, was more a matter of political despair than of religious belief.

Last year you told me that you particularly wanted to persuade young people to visit the museum. How's that going?

OKM We are trying to employ young people at the museum. We need archaeologists and chemists for the restoration work. We want to bring the new generation into the museum so that they can learn about our culture and tell other people about it. We are inviting recent university graduates to come to the museum in order to see our treasures for themselves. Schoolchildren can also visit for free. All young people must be given the opportunity to discover what they have inherited from previous generations. In this way, they will be able to recognise the unity of all the peoples of Afghanistan. Instead of fighting, we must learn from each other's cultures. Our museum is more than simply a collection of objects. It is a museum of hope.

This interview, which took place in October 2005, was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #13 in 2006. It has been condensed and edited for clarity.

WE LIVE IN A COUNTRY OF PARALLELS, WHERE EACH STRUCTURE OR OFFICIAL PROCESS HAS ITS CLANDESTINE COPY, WHICH IS OFTEN THE ONE THAT TAKES CHARGE, IN THE SHADOW OF ANONYMITY. WE, WOMEN AND MEN PREOCCUPIED WITH THE COUNTRY'S PATHS, WHO KNOW THAT OFTEN THE UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THE WRONGS OF TODAY ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE PAST, WE HAVE THE RIGHT AND DUTY TO DEMAND CLEAR EXPLANATIONS, AND TO ACCEPT NO FALSE ARGUMENTS.

PEPETELA, EXCERPT FROM SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE 1999 PRINCE CLAUS AWARDS AND PUBLISHED AS *CREATING SPACES OF FREEDOM*, IN PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL #4, 2000.

A MAP OF LATIN AMERICAN DREAMS

MARTÍN WEBER

Latin America, like many other regions of the world, is a place of contradictions and broken dreams. Ordinary people often find limited space to exercise freedom of speech or to vent their desires and dreams. Martín Weber has been working on the *Map of Latin American Dreams* since 1992. Following the success of his journey through Latin America (Argentina, Cuba, Tijuana–San Diego, Peru and Nicaragua) the Prince Claus Fund collaborated in the expansion of the collection into new areas of Latin America (Guatemala, Brazil and Mexico). Weber's camera captures the moment in which the real world and the world of dreams are confronted, as the participants portrayed in these photographs reveal their dreams on chalkboards.

This photoessay was published in the Prince Claus Fund Journal #13.

'Know the truth of what happened to our relatives, so that justice is done and the torturers do not remain free.' – Brazil

'I want a rabbit and a squirrel.' – Chiapas, Mexico

'Cement the terrace and get a loan to fertilise the cornfield and some vitamins for our health.' – Guatemala

'I want my country to be free of political and domestic violence.' – Guatemala

'To have three children.' – Guatemala

MIGRATION CAN EVOKE
A SENSE OF THREAT AND
FEAR AS WE HAVE RECENTLY
EXPERIENCED IN THIS
COUNTRY. THIS CAN LEAD
TO DRAMATIC FRICTION
AND CONFRONTATION.
THIS IS NOT NEW, IT IS AS
OLD AS MIGRATION ITSELF,
AND WILL BE OVERCOME.
HOWEVER, THIS REQUIRES
LEADERSHIP, CONSTRUCTIVE
CONTRIBUTIONS BY ALL
THOSE AFFECTED AND TIME.
TIME FOR ADJUSTMENT.
TIME FOR LEARNING.
TIME FOR TOLERANCE.
TIME FOR RECONCILIATION.
TIME FOR UNDERSTANDING.
IT IS A CHALLENGE, BUT
WE HAVE TO SEE THIS FROM
A POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE.
THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE
OVERCOME BY BUILDING

BRIDGES, BY EXPLORING
MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL
OPPORTUNITIES AND BY
PATIENCE. CULTURE CAN
PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN
THIS PROCESS. CULTURE
HELPS US UNDERSTAND
THAT THERE IS NO CLASH
OF CIVILIZATIONS AT THE
LEVEL OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
IT UNDERLINES THAT AT
THE END OF THE DAY WE
ALL WANT THE SAME.
ONCE OUR BASIC NEEDS
OF WELLBEING AND
SECURITY HAVE BEEN MET,
WE ALL WANT:
JUSTICE,
FREEDOM,
RESPECT,
BEAUTY,
KNOWLEDGE,
AND
LOVE.

HRH PRINCE FRISO (1968–2013), SPEECH AT THE PRINCE CLAUS AWARDS, 2004.

THE SAHEL OPERA

LILIAN GONÇALVES-HO KANG YOU

Bamako November 2009, the end of the African tour of the Sahel Opera.

It is deathly quiet in the hotel. The concierge calls to say that there are visitors. I am not expecting anyone. Then all of a sudden, the Minister of Culture of Mali is standing in front of me, accompanied by his son. Two men in magnificent traditional robes of shimmering white cotton with gold. They are holding a large silver tray. On it lies half of a roasted lamb. Yes, it is *Id al-Adha*, the grand Muslim feast. The 'Feast of Sacrifice' and they are going to share their lamb with us.

I feel slightly shy, honoured and deeply moved. It also makes me feel homesick. In my motherland, Suriname, we used to celebrate the Feast of Sacrifice with our Muslim friends. Ibrahim Sukrula, our family friend, would bring us a lamb from the ritual abattoir and my mother would prepare it under his strict instructions.

We sit down to a sumptuous banquet in the hotel restaurant that evening. One of our fellow diners is vegetarian, another one does not eat such huge portions of meat. So, I end up celebrating the Feast of Sacrifice with the entire hotel staff. It feels good.

This gesture by the Minister symbolises in an unforgettable way the place that the Sahel Opera has held. The feeling that I, as chair of the Prince Claus Fund, was allowed to be part of this sacrificial feast as family.

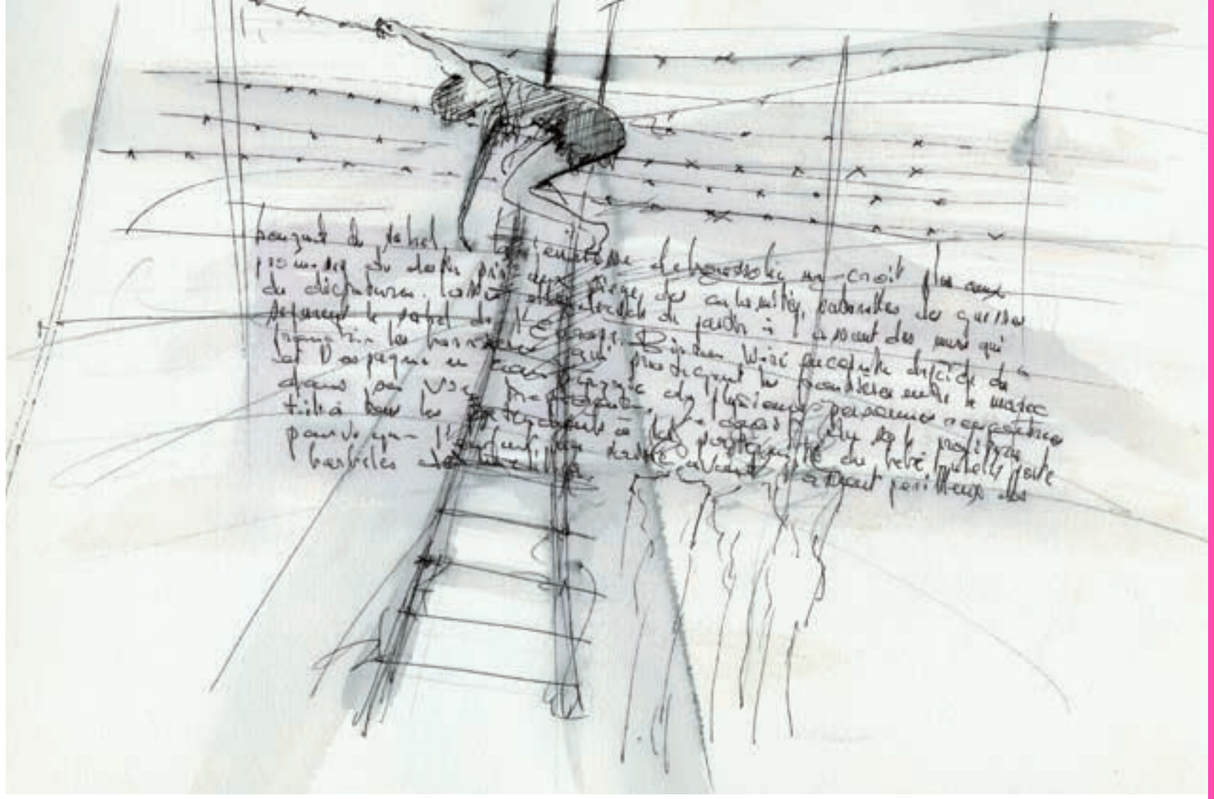
I attended the last performance of the African tour of the opera and spoke with Djénéba Koné, who played the lead role of Bintou Wéré, a former child soldier. She had a gorgeous, untrained voice, one that seared through heart and soul. At the beginning of the project, she only spoke her native language. Now she had learned French she told 'mama', as she respectfully called me, that she was doing well. On YouTube, you can see her shine in Paris, the world at her feet. Not long after, she lost her life in an accident.

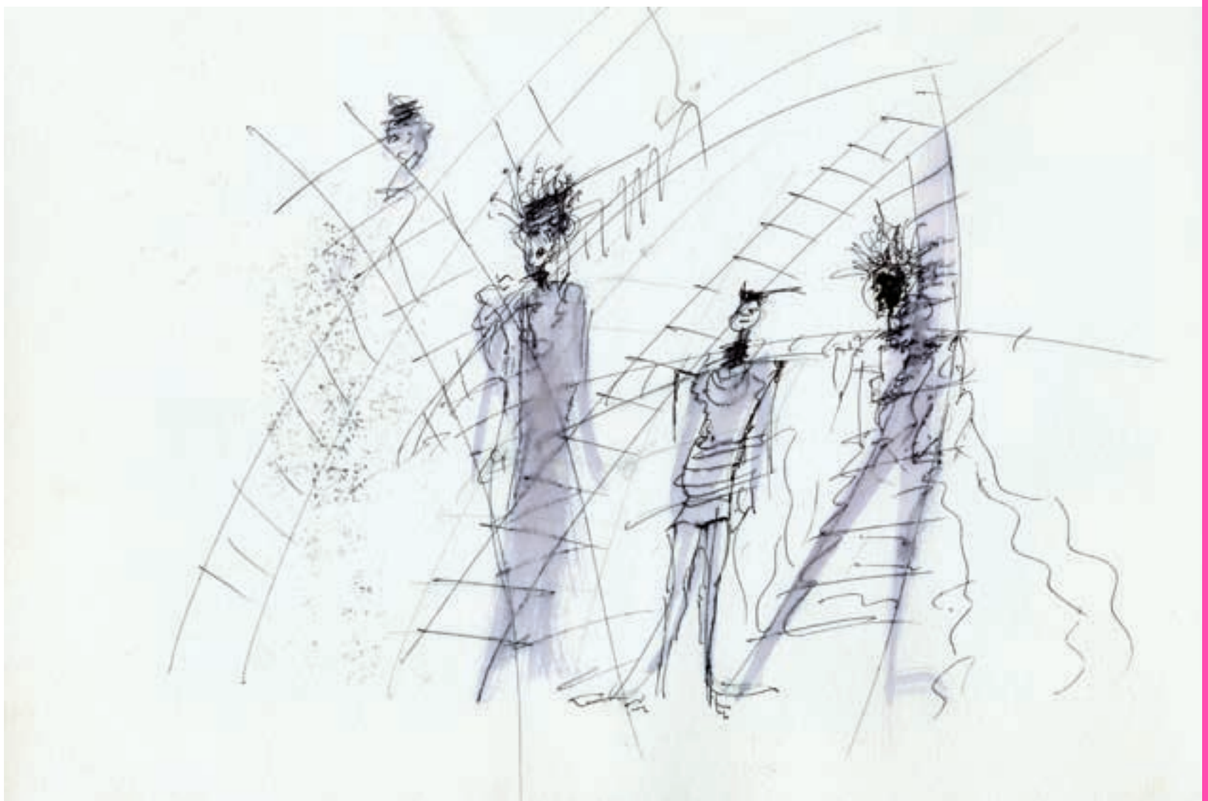
The libretto by Koulsy Lamko tells the story of migration from the Sahel to Europe. Bintou Wéré is part of this group of migrants and is pregnant. Once they reach the border town of Melilla, she needs to give birth. She has a choice of where her child can be born. She chooses not to have her child in Europe, but on African soil instead. This is a migration story told from an African perspective. Nobody simply ups and leaves their home, family and even the burning sun to risk life and limb to reach the cold and snow of Europe.

Prince Claus had a dream, a Sahel Opera, and it has come true. The beauty of dreams is that everyone is able to interpret them in their own way. The Sahel Opera provided a platform for singers, musicians, dancers, poets and filmmakers from the Sahel to give shape to their dreams as they see fit. To savour their own culture and sense of dignity. We could feel that in the Châtelet Theatre in Paris with the thousands of people in the audience; it was like a triumphant procession past the former colonial powers. A manifestation of human dignity and a silent summons to Europe that the colonial past really must become history now.

Translated from the Dutch by Helen M. Crowe.

Sketches courtesy Wasis Diop.





BINTOU WÉRÉ, AN OPERA OF THE SAHEL

KOULSY LAMKO AND WASIS DIOP

When you are an African living in a country devastated by drought, dictatorship or war, you dream of going to Europe, where they say life is less hard, even for the poor. You leave; you try to cross the borders. You do what some of the poorest Europeans did in previous centuries to escape from poverty. You leave your native land to build a new life, elsewhere. You may be fooling yourself, but you never despair. (*La Croix*, 6 October 2005)

Sung in four languages:
Wolof (Senegal), Bambara (Mali), Malinké (Guinea-Bissau), African Creole (Guinea-Bissau).

Bintou Wéré, an Opera of the Sahel, premiered on 17 February 2007 in Bamako, Mali. The libretto was published in the book *African Opera,* in 2017.

ARTISTIC TEAM

Wasis Diop, *Artistic director*, Senegal
Zé Manel Fortes, *Composer and conductor*, Guinea-Bissau
Koulsy Lamko and Wasis Diop, *Libretto*, Chad and Senegal
Jean Pierre Leurs, *Director*, Senegal
Massambou Wélé Diallo, *Musical director*, Mali
Germaine Acogny, *Choreographer*, Senegal
Flora Théfaine, *Choreographer*, Togo
Oumou Sy, *Costume and set design*, Senegal
Jean Philippe Delavault, *Artistic advisor*, France

CAST

BINTOU-WÉRÉ, *The child of terror* (soprano)
DIALLO, *The ferryman* (bass)
JÉLI-KOUYATÉ, *The griot* (baritone)
SARZAN-NDIAYE, *The village chief, war veteran* (baritone)
FATA-MAYA, *First suitor* (baritone)
MC SAMAFOU, *Second suitor* (baritone)
DRAMANE-ZIÉ, *Hunter-poet* (tenor)
BALLA, L*eader of the group of migrants* (bass)

OTHER ROLES

Rejected suitor
Woman following her husband
Repatriated undocumented migrant
The Diva
The Paris-Dakar Rally participants
The Little Savannah People
The Ladder People
Male Chorus
Female Chorus
Mixed Chorus
Dancers
Musicians

The Sahel Opera has:
7 leading roles
5 supporting roles
15 musicians
20 choir singers
12 dancers

Preference is given to instruments from the Sahel's traditional heritage.

THE FOLKTALE

A small town in the Sahel. Young people, completely disoriented and caught up in a tangle of natural disasters, wars and dictatorship, no longer believe in the future and in what it holds for them. Totally disheartened with this wearying state of affairs, they decide to storm the walls separating the Sahel from Europe.

Bintou-Wéré, a former child-soldier, is expecting a 'natural child'. Along with some of the people she met during her frenzied existence, she decides to force her way through the barriers protecting the borders between Morocco and Spain. Will the *jus soli* be beneficial for all the putative fathers, each claiming the baby she is bearing as his own?

It can only be hoped that the child's birth take place after the perilous onslaught against the barbed-wire fences of Melilla.

Let us make ladders in the desert and march onward!

People from the Sahel of every social station come together in this modern-day odyssey.

Those taking the roads of exile meet those returning from it and taunt each other through songs. From the Fulani shepherd to the juvenile delinquent with a criminal record, from the woman following in her husband's footsteps to the enigmatic smuggler, a key piece in this puzzle.

The tops of the ladders point to the stars, there seems to be no stopping the momentum.

Then, as the ladder people settle on the sand dunes, contestants in the Paris-Dakar rally begins to pass by.

Chorus and melodies. The song of the Sahel wind, the song of the crickets, the song of water, or a requiem.

The wisdom of a glorious past will rise to the skies, in crystal clear or solemn tones, to tell the tragic tale. Will its voice be heard?

ACT I

SCENE 1

Marketplace.
A tuné player breaks the silence, indicating the presence of dignitaries. Multicoloured loincloths are arranged in rolls on the floor; some are hanging on a clothesline. Merchants and customers come and go. The sound of tam-tams. Village dignitaries on their way to celebrate Independence Day have to pass through this chaos. Enter Jéli-Kouyaté the griot, in ceremonial attire.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Independence!
Were I to retrace your lineage
What should I say?
You were born from Mother Courage
Who shed her blood
On all the altars liberty!
Independence!
You were born of the labour of slaves
In droplets their sweat on your face
runs down
The salty sweat of cotton fields!
You are the son of our struggles
The daughter of our stubborn hopes!
This day will be engraved in collective memory!
(Introduces the dignitaries)
Now behold our honourable leaders
With the beauty of the ibis and the serpentaria
Come forward ye lions, buffaloes, elephants
Scions of a thousand virile empires
Come forward and honour
This land of your forefathers.
(Ballet of dignitaries, all superbly dressed. Solemn gestures)
What is it I see?
Those who tamed fire and water?
Those who dare to bore
Into the womb of the earth?
Spring up ye warriors and hunters!
Blow the horn
And let the fishermen farmers and cattle breeders dance!

CHORUS OF WOMEN
The sun rises
It rises every day.
Yesterday's sun rose with joy
That cloud of red dust
Wasn't lingering in its wake
The sun rises every day
It rises every day.
In our calabashes we preserve
The sun of today.
And we offer it to you
Out of the kindness of our heart

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Sahel, humble humus-rich soil
Land that was once fertile!
Why do you keep breeding
Aborted dreams?
You gave birth to Mansa Moussa
Who spread the gold of your entrails
Over the four corners of the world
To the Pyramids of Egypt.
On your waters sailed Aboubakari's canoe
Sailing sailing sailing
To the ends of the earth.
Land of Sundiata Keita, Soumaoro Kanté, Samory
Land of the thousand virile empires
Home of the brave rebel queens Sarahounia, Yennega
Nobody will ever forget Segu
The glory of Timbuktu and Jenneh
On the Salt Road Jenneh
Fabled city whose story Ibn Batutta told!
Land of Lat Dior!
You stretch between sea-blue lakes and forests
Lakes of white sand and palm-groves
One day you will breed fertile dreams
You will give birth…

SCENE 2

Under the palaver tree. SARZAN-NDIAYE, holding a stick, walks around the palaver tree, then comes to a sudden halt.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Speak wise old man
Speak ye all, liberation war heroes!
Everybody is listening.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
This night life escaped from the clutches
Of this gigantic knotted body.
Only yesterday its roots
Were still swollen with sap
Its peak was scolding the sky

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Are the spirits cross?

SARZAN-NDIAYE
Shouts of joy have never offended anybody.

(Sarzan-Ndiaye steps forward, stick in hand. Carefully, he hits the trunk of the palaver tree. A swarm of grasshoppers that were hanging from the branches fly off accompanied by strident music. He cries out in a desperate voice)

SARZAN-NDIAYE
The locusts are paying us a visit.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
On Independence Day of all days!

FEMALE CHORUS
This is a conspiracy…
Another plot spun by the powers that be!

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Are the high and mighty so powerful
That they can bend the course of these insects
Toward our land?

FEMALE CHORUS
When one can make dolphins dance
One can do anything.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
Everything withers under the sun of *depindance*
On that day the earth stood still.
(The great sacred drum sounds the alarm; its solemn tones send the last dead leaves falling to the ground. People wonder what is happening. The drumbeats sound ominous)

SCENE 3

Bintou-Wéré makes a sensational appearance. She is wearing an old oversized suit and is flanked by two determined young men.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Speak you impudent girl!
Why did you beat the warning drum?

(Bintou-Wéré, hands on her hips, a smile on her face. Crescendo music. Two young hunters among Bintou-Wéré's companions, sing a song to her glory. The song extols the lion's bravado. Bintou-Wéré nods with a smile. She can finally respond to Jéli-Kouyaté)

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I don't talk to whitened graves.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Fair enough given the raucous life
You have been leading
Have you no shame?

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Do you yourself not feel some embarrassment
In the midst of this gathering?

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
I am the master of ceremony
In case you weren't aware
You impudent creature!

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I'll make you swallow back your words

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Hold your bitchy tongue

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Do you want me to tell everybody here
and now…

JÉLI KOUYATÉ
That you put your little behind up for grabs?
Everyone knows that already.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
What nobody knows yet…

JÉLI KOUYATÉ
Shut up!
Someone silence this harlot
She is perversion incarnate!

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
What nobody knows yet
Is that you were the first one
To taste my little bitchy ass
To suck my little bitchy breasts
To rend my bitchy hymen apart.
Do you remember my blood
Mixed with your semen oozing on my belly…
My then little thirteen-year old belly?
Do you remember my scream?
(The Little People of the Savannah look astounded)

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
(Feeling the sting of contempt, he crawls away and vanishes into the group of dignitaries. He is the object of ridicule.
An old mad woman in rags, a mango in her mouth, goes toward him and jerks her body around in front of him, to express the crowd's reprobation. Laughter and boisterous shouts)

SARZAN-NDIAYE
Brave little child soldier
With the strength of your 15 years
You carried weapons
You set the villages on fire
You set the trees ablaze
You set the forests on fire
You drained rivers
You scorched the earth
To avenge yourself on its inhabitants.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Let bygones be bygones.
I toyed with fire
Bartering my future against the tranquillity
Of an immobile chaos
I thought the moon was made of green cheese.
But let bygones be bygones…
I toyed with fire
In order to give… I gave my all
My childhood my dreams my hopes my doubts
To make a gift of my ovaries.
But I got it all back in my face
Dirty and nasty tricks crooked ways
spite and spits.
All of that has made me strong…

(The two young hunters sing for Bintou-Wéré. Jéli-Kouyaté comes back on stage and moves toward Sarzan-Ndiaye)

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
This heavy purple cloud is threatening us.

LITTLE SAVANNAH PEOPLE
The locusts!

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
The flying locusts!

LITTLE SAVANNAH PEOPLE
Monsters with powerful mandibles,
Nothing can stop them, nothing!

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
The locusts always fly in the wrong direction

LITTLE SAVANNAH PEOPLE
Why do they lose their way like this?
This is neither Mecca
Nor Rome
Nor Jerusalem.

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
We are a cursed anthill
A channel for dubious calamities
Sterile land delta of misery.

LITTLE SAVANNAH PEOPLE
Why don't these locusts fly to the setting sun
To the Levant or the North
To those prosperous lands.

Where victuals spill over
From the rich man's garbage?

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
(speaking to Dramane-Zié)
You Dramane
You who learned everything from this new world
Where they join iron to wood
Can you decrypt this omen?

DRAMANE-ZIÉ
Of the omen I can read the signs
These creatures with sharp mandibles
May be well-meaning spirits
That the harmattan wind.
Generously brings us.
Maybe we are rich in privileges
Not yet revealed
Rich in secret messages
They come to deliver.
Open your eyes nostrils and ears…

SARZAN-NDIAYE
Man listened to the wind of old
Paths were drawn by nature
Accessible to all.
Today rivers are diverted…

DRAMANE-ZIÉ
Sarzan-Ndiaye
I can see you dislike progress.
You don't believe in man's genius.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
Why divert the flow of rivers
Worlds older than us?

DRAMANE-ZIÉ
To bring to Light
Into the darkness of our Night!
A dam produces energy
Better that than prayers
Tossed into rivers in vain.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
He who declares the earth his friend
Will never be betrayed
But when the earth is in flames
The rain itself knows fear.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I have set trees ablaze and many houses.
Will Mother Earth abandon me?

SCENE 4

(Men slowly form into a group. A one-legged man named Balla starts singing a song that gradually fills the whole marketplace)

BALLA
The earth only abandons
Those she is weary of bearing.
Since our expulsion from her warm bosom
My friends and I know what to do
On this Independence Day
From now on our future will be played out
On the green pastures of the present.
(The whole group is holding him)
We'll go to Nantes, Bordeaux Barcelona London
Where the sweat of our fathers flowed
To forge Liberty.
We'll find work there!
Come let's go! Forward!

DIALLO
(Diallo, who has been laying low since the beginning, finally makes an appearance. His face and head are wrapped in a turban)

Did I hear well?
So the monkey wants to climb down the tree
That has lost its leaves and fruit?
This is a historic decision! Congratulations!
Now tell me:
Have you ever felt how the scorpion's venom
Insinuates itself in your whole being
When your body is scorched by the desert sand?
When the winds of hellfire overheat
your nostrils?
When your eyes swollen with sand
Can no longer make out sky and earth?
Have you ever heard the agony of
a waterless well
Crying in the middle of the desert?
Madrid, Bordeaux, Paris, Nantes
What a journey!
Few will make it alone.
The barriers of Ceuta and Melilla are insuperable
But I Diallo the Smuggler can help you through!

(Gently cajoling, and coquettish, Bintou-Wéré advances toward Diallo to seduce him. Diallo goes along with her, and tries to grab her. Everybody joins in the dance of seduction. The dancing becomes more and more contagious, frantically climaxing in a trance. Dance of seduction)

SCENE 5

(Same location)

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Listen to me everybody, listen!
(The music fades out)
Since you have all had your wicked way with me
I announce to you all that I am with child.
That is why I beat the sacred drum
I am expecting a child though
it doesn't show
And I know not who is the father
Understandably since you have all possessed me.
(She advances in the midst of the men and grabs one by the collar)
Where are you looking white collar?
With your white eyes you are a man possessed
Your white eyes will be the death of you
Your head is full and fatuous
I'd rather you had everything down there
In the centre of virile gravity
(She advances toward Fata-Maya)
You too have possessed me
I was deeply hurt
By the thrusts of your scimitar
Your gigantic virile member
Your mom sure massaged it well
When you were a boy.
In my pain I was screaming mad
But it excited you even more.
(She puts her hand on Fata-Maya's lower abdomen)
A rolling stone gathers no moss
Right?

DIALLO
What wonderful news
The birth of this child!
Do you know what they call *jus soli*?
Should the child of Bintou-Wéré
Be born the other side of the border?
Its mother and father will be protected
by the law of the land
True a child can have only one mother
But it can have many fathers.
If you follow me
You illustrious companions of Bintou-Wéré
I promise you all a residency card
And other advantages of Europe.
Provided that the child
Be not born this side of the border.
It's your call.
So just who is the father of the child
That this little lady here is bearing?
(Men advance in a concerted movement and dance to accompany Balla's paternity claim)

BALLA
Remember Bintou-Wéré
One night you were pursued
By young soldiers no older than yourself
Who during this dirty war
Wanted you dead
You found refuge in my little hut
And at night we made love
Don't you remember?
I'm the father of this child.

SCENE 6

(Same location)

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I know you're all crouching
In the dark night of secrecy
What do you want from me then?

CHORUS
If I were a bird
I would fly with you
To the sky.

DRAMANE-ZIÉ
(Moves toward Bintou-Wéré while reciting a kind of ode to woman, then goes on to sing of the ills plaguing the Sahel)
Woman,
What is Woman for us men?
We are nothing without Her.
She is Mother Perseverance
She is Mother Protection
She is the Motherland
She is the mother of our Future
However brave and intrepid he may be
A King is born of the womb of a woman
She brings into this life the brave warrior
She brings into this life the coward
There is nothing like the blessing
of our mothers.
I promise to combat the locusts
I promise to make the rain fall!

FATA-MAYA
Bintou-Wéré,
I never suspected you were an adulteress.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I have never belonged to anyone.

FATA-MAYA *(beats the tam-tam)*
And yet you used to say I was your only love.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
That was the game of seduction.
Only dimwits could…

FATA-MAYA
Give me the child. He's mine!

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
You'll have to kill me
Tear me from limb to limb
If you want to take this foetus from me.

FATA-MAYA
You're crazy, depraved woman
I hate you!

MC SAMAFOU
Come on now, Bintou
Tell us who is the father
Of the child you're bearing.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I know as much as you do.

DIALLO *(to Bintou-Wéré)*
Those who claim to be the child's father
May follow us
I'll get you across this Sahel and this desert
That I know by heart
You'll carry the child until we reach Spain
He'll be born in golden bed sheets
Once Melilla is behind us!
But careful!
The fences at Melilla are so high
They'll make your head spin.
You'll march ahead
And when we draw close to the barbed-wire
The guards won't dare to open fire
On a pregnant woman.
Here is the wonder child, a future European citizen!
But as true as none of us has three eyes,
It's still warm in the swollen belly of its mother.
The mother bearing it in her entrails moves with difficulty.
But she is not alone.
The turtle and the snail are also sluggish
They carry such a burden on their backs.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
He who wants to be the father must deserve it.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
To flee one's country and the love
Of one's own kin
For fear of hunger
Shame on you!
All you think of is to flee
Where is your courage and dignity?
Far away are the songs of warriors
Ringing in your fathers' heads
Until they dropped dead

BALLA
The elephant's graveyard is a myth.
Elephants withdraw from life
When they no longer feel their place.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
The poor man who fears the sun,
Fears a benefactor.
Europe is not your land!

DIALLO
Europeans conquered America
To escape from poverty starvation
and epidemics.
And we still await the day
When slave ships will drop anchor on our shores
And invite us to come aboard.

SARZAN-NDIAYE
You say you're going to conquer Europe?
Where are your weapons?
Where your wide open spaces?
Don't listen to this charlatan
Who wants to ensnare you in his net.
To sweep the sidewalks in all the cities
of Europe
Is that your dream?
Not long ago this desert was green
For every tree planted
Was the work of man.
If you dream of freedom
You won't find it by running away.
Stand tall and defend yourselves
It's the only way to salvation.

DIALLO
The sidewalks in Paris
Are no more dirty than any other city.
I open the desert
For those fleeing from poverty
Diallo the Smuggler!
Diallo the Smuggler of Migrants…
I'm no charlatan!
Trust in me, and you'll see!

JÉLI-KOUYATÉ
Don't listen to this deceiver
Every charlatan is gifted
With the power of words.
All he tells is lies.
He only wants to snare you in his net
Let him turn dead branches into snakes!
Then he'll gain credence with me.
In this country there was once a wise man
Djitoumou Balla a true magician
He would perform extraordinary miracles
But he was also a wise man
His clarity of vision was unmatched
But you, you're nothing but a pompous fool
And pretentious charlatan!
(Laughter in the crowd)

DIALLO
I will transform those sticks, yes
But I'll turn them into ladders
To hoist them over the barriers of Melilla
Ladders to climb to the sky!

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

Wide expanses of sand dunes, stretching as far as the eye can see. A lone tree in the midst of this sandy ocean: The Tenere tree, sole survivor in this desert wasteland. Silhouettes of men and women, each holding a huge ladder, emerge from behind the dunes. After turning in a centrifugal movement, the Ladder People begin a snail formation, a kotéba [a circular form of dance] formation. The procession is grandiose for the ladders seem to pierce the sky. The Ladder People are scantily dressed in dirty clothes, rags even. A striking contrast with the beauty of the ladders. As the people move, the ladders seem to brush against the sky. A long, poetic ballet. Diallo the smuggler with the turban is standing to one side, as if he were conducting an orchestra, alternately dominant and condescending. In front of him, a little basket of unleavened millet cakes, round bread rolls eaten during tajëboon, the Wolof New Year's Eve, celebrated by travelling back in time, in an allegory of the inner journey, both personal and collective.

DIALLO
(intones the tajëboon hymn)
tajëboon….
layoumeu
taj-tajëboon … allayoumeu
degbobeulé … allayoumeu

THE LADDER PEOPLE
(Keep moving in snail formation, singing, no music. Mystical ambience)
tajëboon…
allayoumeu
taj-tajëboon … allayoumeu
degbobeulé … allayoumeu
sou nou ney y ndey … allayoumeu
theu leu ngou dane nane … allamouyeu
tajëboon
Let us praise God
There was once an abundant spring
Let us praise God,
Where our fathers' fathers praise God
Let us praise God
Where our mothers' mothers went to drink.
Let us praise God!

DIALLO
Come unto me, come to the spring!
Come to the crystalline water
The water of the 'stony' source
Under the watchful eye of granite rocks
Generously the source gives of itself
May the thirsty migrant find it
It will quench and nurture his soul.
But woe unto the impure who seek
to draw from it.
The guardian spirit of this water
Is a woman with seven breasts
Which no-one may touch
Not a single one!
(Gestures an order that the ladders be put away. The Ladder People obey his order. Singing resumes with renewed force. Then the circle expands. The ladder people pass by Diallo, who puts a little round bread roll in everyone's mouth. Thanks, gestures of gratitude and humility toward the sky and the earth. After the procession to take the tajëboon host-bread, the Ladder People pass by Diallo again, in single file. This time to give him money)

DIALLO
Money, here, give me the money.
Here, put it in here, come on people, come on!
(Fata-Maya, standing aside, watches those who fumble in their ragged clothes to retrieve a crumpled and torn bill stitched in the lining. Some have no more money to satisfy the Smuggler's demand)

SCENE 2

(Bintou-Wéré, looking very different. Her belly is now protruding. Her suitors form a sort of Praetorian Guard, keeping watch over her)

FATA-MAYA
Now that I'm my father's age,
Now that I'm my father's size,
The only thing which I lack
Is that I am not well dressed.
The only thing which I lack
Is that I have no work
I wake up every morning at the same time
Meet the same people
Sitting around doing nothing.
When people are generous with me
I say a kind word
Always the same one
Then I wait
I wait for the coming of Hope
Alas, Hope never does arrive
One day, tired of waiting, I decided to leave
A pack on my back
I left, I had no choice
May I live or die
So be it.

(After his singing, he draws close to Bintou-Wéré's group. He holds a newspaper, from which he reads an article)
Two young Senegalese men hid under
the landing gear
Of an Airbus A330
The temperature was minus 82 degrees
One survived, lucky boy!
And was repatriated after being treated
To a hot soup
He did it again three months later
But this time his luck was out
The icy cold sky got to him
He fell to the tarmac
Frozen solid as a stone

MIXED CHORUS
What was he thinking about
As he hung to that landing gear
When in business class
They were serving champagne?

FATA-MAYA
Nobody could have imagined
That a human being was traveling
Under the wings of the Airbus
At minus 82 degrees.

MIXED CHORUS
Nobody could have imagined
That a human being was traveling
Under the wings of the Airbus
At minus 82 degrees.

MC SAMAFOU
Oh, come on! You guys still speak of him
as a human being?
He's a superman
His name will be engraved in golden letters
In the Guinness Book of Records

(Arrival of men and women, all carrying empty, half open suitcases. A ballet group sings an eerie song announcing another departure; a convoy of carriers evoke the clichéd images of Pullman porters and colonisers. In reality they are migrants returning, expelled from Europe. These ghostly figures put down their empty suitcases)

DIALLO
Welcome, welcome! Poor devils!
I bet you didn't have the right technique.
Put down your suitcases and take it easy.
We're among friends here
If you want to go back, I'm entirely
at your service
Secure your grip: the ladders.
For he who wants to reach the sky
Will need a ladder.
The search for eternal life never ends
Go back to where you've come from!
Go back!

THE REPATRIATED WOMAN
Go back there? Never again!
When a heavy burden weighs you down
You get rid of it!
They expelled us after three years
Three full years of our lives
Just when we thought we'd made it
We were sitting, and not on our heels!
Then one day, a police crackdown
Caught us in the net
'Your ID, let me see your ID!'
In no time we were on a charter plane
Not even time to pack the bare necessities

THE REPATRIATED UNDOCUMENTED
Rotten weather, this luckless life!
A blank horizon, no promise in sight!
(Mimes the mourning dance)
To think that I almost made it
I couldn't even set foot
On the rocks the other side
I was almost there, but
When I tried to scale the second fence
My foot got stuck

THE REPATRIATED WOMAN
They can keep their Europe of Debauchery and Din
A dog's life!
And they want me to bark my misery?
You cannot listen to the silence
With the pneumatic drill going all day long.
It's cold and they're watching out for you
To accuse you of all and sundry
White people don't like us…

THE WOMAN FOLLOWING HER HUSBAND
Why should they like us?
Are we some sort of sweet, to be loved?
Don't be ungrateful!
They brought us everything and still do!
How many families back home
Live on the money earned by immigrants?

THE REPATRIATED WOMAN
Go live there first,
Then we'll see what you have to say!

THE WOMAN FOLLOWING HER HUSBAND
It's no better here.
That's why we're leaving.

DIALLO *(to all the repatriated women)*
Keep going, if you're so sure of yourselves.
Our footprints are still fresh
They won't be hard to spot
Unless the evening wind
Has blown them away
In which case you're done for!
If you have the slightest doubt
You'd better follow me.
But for that, you'll need some money
Just a little!
(Diallo walks toward Bintou-Wéré)
Dough, more dough
The child you're bearing is not the key
To the mighty gates of paradise.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
You told my friends
They have nothing to fear
That all you asked
Was that the child be born
At the other side of the border.

DIALLO
Yes, but time is running out.
For months we've been marching
Under this scorching sun
At every village, chiefs wanted their due.
You're lucky I have taken pity on you
Otherwise I'd have abandoned you a long time ago.
Bintou-Wéré has something to pay off her debt.
Such is not the case for the rest of you.
Bintou-Wéré holds her promise,
The child is still in her belly.
If you have nothing in your belly
You must have something in your pockets
Show me the money! Come on, quick!

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Master of the dunes and the endless spaces
They have lost everything.
Look at the knots tied on their loincloths
They have nothing but what you see.

DIALLO
(Refuses to take the CFA bills someone is handing him)
This is mere paper! It has no value!
It's toilet paper, their CFA
A rag to blow your nose into
Faded, devalued, no CFA for me!
I want US dollars!
Crisp greenbacks is what I want!

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Have mercy on us!
Master of dunes and pathways
They can only give what they have

DIALLO
Then let them borrow from their companions
Tomorrow they will pay back
When they reach heaven.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
They have nothing else
You took everything.

DIALLO
No money, no crossing
I want the women to rummage
In their hair

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
There is nothing in their hair.

DIALLO
Then let them search between their breasts.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Why don't you search between our breasts?
And you'll see for yourself.

DIALLO
Let them search between their legs
and buttocks.
They're all hiding something.
(*General raucousness*)

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Do it yourself
Between their legs and buttocks.
It will do you good, if you're a man!

DIALLO
You're riling me, Bintou-Wéré
Don't think that because of your status
As a fragile woman whom no one can beat
That you can just blackmail me.
Beware, for I'm the one
Who holds your fate in my hands.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
I know what you want.
To get me across the border
And usurp the father's role
To get papers you can sell to others.

DIALLO
(gets angry)
Lies!!!
If I wanted to stay on the other side
I would have done so a long time ago.

FATA-MAYA
They say that those who fail repeatedly
Become touts before graduating to smugglers.
Man with the turban, what do you want?

DIALLO
Tell me, you grumpy fellow
Who d'you you think you are?

FATA-MAYA
Someone who paid his fare many times
Without knowing where the train was taking him

DIALLO
Have you ever heard of hell?
It's where I'm taking you to, my friend!
One morning you wake up, fleeing from horror,
Only to find yourself in another hell
I'm sorry to tell you that
I'm not hell's gatekeeper
If you want to die in peace,
I wish you a safe trip.
If you want to die in peace,
I wish you a safe trip.

FATA-MAYA
Life is an endless stream of choices
He who steps into the marigot
Doesn't mind getting muddy
But in all truth
You're tricking us, you're robbing us

DIALLO
You're insulting me, you ignominious
little jackass!

FATA-MAYA
Now that I'm my father's age,
Now that I'm my father's size,
The only thing which I lack
Is that I am not well dressed.
The only thing which I lack
Is that I have no work
I wake up every morning at the same time
Meet the same people
Sitting around doing nothing.
When people are generous with me
I say a kind word
Always the same one
Then I wait
I wait for the coming of Hope
Alas, Hope never does arrive
One day, tired of waiting, I decided to leave
A pack on my back
I left, I had no choice
May I live or die
So be it.

DIALLO
Enough talk!
If you don't want to pay
You can go back to your wretched life.
I'm leaving you all here! Let the devil be
your guide!

FATA-MAYA
(He grabs a ladder and threatens Diallo with it. Diallo pulls out his cutlass. Rising tension. The showdown is inevitable. A rope around the two protagonists facing each other. The Ladder People split and form two camps, one on Diallo's side, the other on Fata-Maya's, and confront each other in a choreography inspired by Senegalese baak *dances. A moment of intense adversity captured by the frantic, raging beat of the drums and tam-tams. The wind blows, a long drawn-out wailing sound rises to the heavens)*
Don't move, whatever you do!

MC SAMAFOU
Enough of disputes, violence and hatred
Listen! Silence! Don't you hear anything?
The wind is rising, listen to its song!
Wind of Sahel, elevate our spirits
To the invisible limits of the sky!
That rain may inundate the desert
And fill the parched wells.
That water may run through the streets.
(The sound of engines is heard in the distance. Sounds like a helicopter)

DIALLO
Smile, you're on camera!
It's the Paris-Dakar rally!
(The noise gets louder, accompanied by the music. A fog of white smoke engulfs the stage. MC Samafou and Bintou-Wéré fall to the ground. The noise of the helicopter is still audible, and then it moves off. Ditto for the rally trail. A rally participant, completely devastated by the accident, is trying to find his way back. Diallo gives him directions)

SCENE 3

The Ladder People are in mourning. The scene opens with a body wrapped in a white shroud and lying on the ground, in the middle of the stage. Not far away, Bintou-Wéré lies wounded. Her belly, like a huge burden propped up over her body, keeps her immobile. Her head is resting on someone's knee, her face turned toward the sky, in a beseeching gesture. Visibly worried and feeling that something is going wrong with his plans, Diallo doesn't know what to do.

Pagan liturgy. Fata-Maya presides over the mourning ceremony. A distant song draws near and gradually fills the stage. Enter men and women, wearing magnificent traditional clothes, and taking up various positions on the stage.

SCENE 4

Another song raises into the air, performed by a diva, a weeper. It's the song of the pilgrim.

'Tounkaranké'
Bold adventurer, you sacrifice your life
for the village's happiness.
The young men from Lambidu are good.
Their path is traced by the wind.
'Tounkaranké'
When the adventurer
Is far away from home
When he sees neither sky nor earth
When night and day become one
'Tounkaranké', the griots will sing your praises.
(Another song. Voice of Dramane-Zié)
Nothing more dreadful than Death
O Death, why do you destroy everything
And leave nothing in your wake?
Why are you so cruel?
Who can resist you, Death?

SCENE 5

Some of the people lift MC Samafou's body, wrapped in a shroud, and exit with it.

FATA-MAYA
(Starts singing, joined by the Ladder People)
I'll stay here
Maybe I'll go with you
I'll go wherever you go
I'll be wherever you are.
Remember Sambaye Mbayane!
Hands do not unfold for nothing
Sambaye Mbayane's hands are never open.
Sambaye Mbayane never begs.
Sambaye Mbayane is a lord
And a lord doesn't beg.

SCENE 6

New setting. We are outside of time. A nascent moon emerges from behind the stage, rises toward the sky. Barbed-wire fences. Border patrol. Guards on watchtowers. Huge search-lights sweeping through the night. Two of Bintou-Wéré's companions start singing the song dedicated to her. Bintou-Wéré suddenly gets up. Her hair is completely white. She walks slowly, the Ladder People following behind her, ready to storm the fences.
Spanish civil guard, la Guardia. Some guards carry rifles, others manipulate the huge searchlights. Sobriety.
Nearby, a group of Red cross volunteers holding stretchers.

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
Look over there! It's Europe!
(The movement of the moon excites the Ladder People, who shout in unison)

LADDER PEOPLE
Europe! Europe! Euro…!
(Bintou-Wéré moves forward and with her bare hands grasps the fence, under the watchful eyes of Diallo the Smuggler. She stands precariously on the top of the wall. A torch sheds light around her, following her every move. She bends over for a long moment, then slowly straightens up. She heaves a cry of deliverance, and holds up the child, like an offering.
She seems to be partly entangled in the barbed-wire.
Her only concern is the fate of the child she holds in her arms.
Will she throw the child on the African side of the border, or on the European side?)

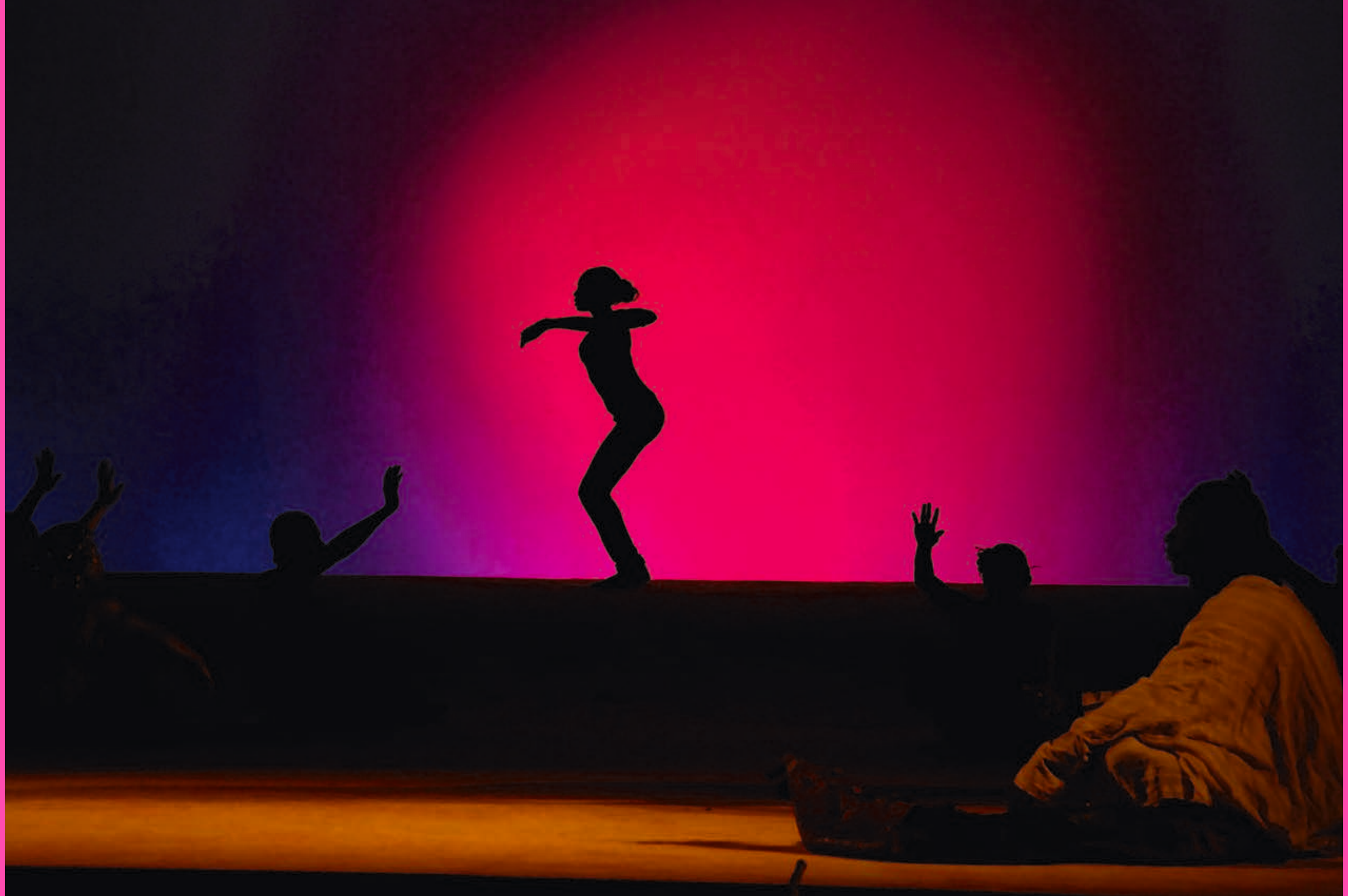
DIALLO
Bintou-Wéré, the long-awaited moment has come
You have heard the agony of the dry well
In the heart of the desert
You have offered your body to the loved ones
Who accompany you.
We are at the gates of Europe
Madrid, London, Paris, Nantes,
So many miles covered.
Throw the baby over to the other side
So that I can give the signal to cross

BINTOU-WÉRÉ
(Responds by singing a song taken up by the Ladder People)
Go, you'll wear hot sand on your heels
You'll meet morning fog, mist and dew
You'll encounter the resilient ruins
of former lives
You'll sleep at the gates of ancient palaces
You'll set your footprints in those of horses' hooves
You'll tread in the footsteps of warriors
Soumaoro, Soundjata, Samory
Blood will seal the acts of courage
Enfolded in your steps
Telling the fascinating story of the people
of the gates of the desert.
Go where the sun will defile the hymen
of the scarlet earth
The Earth moans in pain,
Its crust is violated
Sound and fury of the winds
Earth soaked wet and panting after
the hurricane
Land of the Dogon peasant sowing millet
Against adversity, despair and cowardice.
Over there, zebus drowse in the shade
of a dune,
Muffles laze at the oasis well
The water in the well
Ripples to the mooings of heifers
Oh, the hum of the crook!
You will walk in the mist
In the footsteps of the Fulani shepherd
On the paths that wind up the flanks
of the earth,
Towards distant green meadows
Maybe you should go
To the forests of Okoumé and Lambaréné,
The Baluba or Zulu country
Maybe you should try your luck in the Levant
Further than the Pyramids
(At the end of the song, Bintou-Wéré let's go of her child, who lands in Fata-Maya's lap, at the foot of the ladder. She collapses on the barbed-wire.
Her dead body basks in a white light.
Heavy silence.
The Ladder People cast away their ladders and, in single file, make their way home.
As if for a gallant last stand. Loud singing)

MIXED CHORUS
Go, take your steps on the road
The tortuous road to the unknownStrewn
with joy and sorrow
Tears and laughters
Fear and madness
Winding pathways to the land of Hope.
You will encounter darkness, kiss it for me
You will encounter the stars, send them my best
You will cross the path of fire, stroke it for me
You will cross the path of the morning dew, give it my love.
(*On the other side, members of la Guardia, moved to compassion, join the chorus, to express their solidarity with those they are supposed to repel. It is impossible to remain indifferent! Only Diallo doesn't move.*
Meanwhile, the Ladder People withdraw, back into the heart of Africa)

END OF ACT II

Following pages:
Bintou Wéré, an Opera of the Sahel, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 2007.
Photography by Marie-Noëlle Robert.



SHAKING THE TREE

MARCUS TEBOGO DESANDO
DIRECTOR OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

Culture can give an individual with a burning voice a vehicle to express themselves, and more importantly, to be heard. As a young man from Pretoria, South Africa, raised in an environment that had more barriers to existence than to freedom – where even the freedom to just be was threatened – the discovery that I could immerse myself in culture gave me purpose. This purpose was rooted in the need to see more than just my narrow surroundings; to experience more than what was given to me.

It is this belief that drives me to wake up every morning, and work on giving back towards the growth of development work for culture and the creative arts in general. This is also the reason why I accepted my appointment as Director of the Prince Claus Fund.

I am very honoured to join an organisation that has done so much for the support and celebration of culture and its practitioners. The past 25 years of the Prince Claus Awards is a who's who of individuals and organisations who have dedicated their time, and in some cases their lives, for the betterment of their work and the communities from which they come.

The idea of funds to support the growing need for acknowledgement and investment for artists and cultural actors that are looking to 'shake the tree' is one that makes my role as the director of the Prince Claus Fund very fulfilling. Shaking the tree is not about destruction but the need to see the truth of our society through culture and art. This book is not just a celebration of the work we have been doing for 25 years but it is also a tool of highlighting what is possible if cultural support pays things forward. It is also a challenge to us who are working at the Fund to hold ourselves to account to carry forward the legacy of the last 25 years into the future.

I look forward to another 25 years at the Fund, investing in individuals that are giving of themselves, their talent and ambitions to the uplifting of humankind. I hope that in the coming years we will be able to match and even surpass, if that is possible, the work highlighted in this book, with a clear focus of growth towards sustainable cultural and creative industries.

I would also like to thank Prince Claus and the rest of the Royal Family for giving such importance to this work, and making it possible for all of us to dedicate ourselves to working towards these goals and the idea of culture as a basic need.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CULTURE

ILA KASEM
CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

In 2021, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, the Prince Claus Fund adopted a new strategy. The world today stands at a crossroads – in search of new systems and solutions to address global challenges into the future. In the global south, growing youth populations are under increasing pressure. Today's youth is key in the advancement of new ideas. Culture creates space for dialogue and inclusion, for critical reflection, innovation and new perspectives. The people that the Prince Claus Fund supports are themselves best positioned to engage with and challenge the problems and realities of their own contexts.

We believe in the transformative power of cultural expression. Thus, the Prince Claus Fund seeks to play a key role in nurturing and recognising the people who are making change; to stimulate talent that demonstrates exceptional skill as well as the capacity for innovation, in contexts where culture is under pressure. We support these engaged cultural practitioners to inspire and positively transform their communities and societies, trusting them to develop their own practice and connecting them to other changemakers.

We stand firm, now and in the future, with those who create, who believe in the transformative power of culture, who advance new ideas and develop new perspectives.

FOR
25 YEARS

GERSHWIN BONEVACIA

Culture is not an idea, but a body,
a seashell, a circumambulation towards more, a surrendering,
the thread you want to return by when you are stuck,
when you no longer dare rise, when very slowly you have grown vulnerable.

The Prince Claus Fund was called to life so that we
could be a part of a cultural movement,
a communal adventure.
Feeling through the framework
all intangible worth in you rising.

We are a magical collection,
a necessary connection between art,
culture and society, and this right across the world.
From Africa to South America, we connect.

Culture is not a moment,
but the feeling that resembles looking at an empty spot in the air
knowing one day light will shine there, the feeling that resembles closing your eyes
but not being scared of falling, feeling everything in you rising,
culture is not an image, not a passage, but a landscape
arranged like flowers to the rhythm of the people and the arts.

To stay alive, we must swap the ticking
of our watches for the beating of our hearts.
That we can live in a wish of the present,
without putting the wishes of future generations in danger.

Let this not be a struggle, in which only the strongest survive,
but a composition, in which every living being contributes a part,
like instruments in an opera or words in a poem.
Let us exist in relation to each other.
Today we celebrate 25 years.

Poem commissioned by the Prince Claus Fund, 2021.

PRINCE CLAUS AWARDS

1997–2021

1997

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Zimbabwe International Book Fair, Zimbabwe

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Abdeljelil Temimi, Tunisia
Bruno Stagno, Costa Rica
Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, Senegal
Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, Tanzania
Index on Censorship, UK
Jim Supangkat, Indonesia
Joseph Hanson Kwabena Nketia, Ghana
Malangatana Valente Ngwenya, Mozambique
Sardono W. Kusumo, Indonesia

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Professor of cultural politics and cultural critique at the Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Dr. Lolle Nauta, Emeritus Professor of Social Philosophy at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands
Anil Ramdas, journalist & essayist, the Netherlands

Ceremony
The 1997 Prince Claus Awards speeches were delivered by Kwasi Wiredu and Yvonne Vera.

1998

Principal Prince Claus Laureates
Tetteh Adzedu, Ghana
Alphadi, Nigeria
Oumou Sy, Senegal

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Baaba Maal, Senegal
Carlos Monsiváis, Mexico
David Koloane, South Africa
Heri Dono, Indonesia
Jean-Baptiste Kiéthéga, Burkina Faso
Jyotindra Jain, India
Kumar Shahani, India
Nazek Saba-Yared, Lebanon
Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Iran
Redza Piyadasa, Malaysia
Rogelio Salmona, Colombia
Tian Zhuang Zhuang, China
Ticio Escobar, Paraguay

Theme: The Art of African Fashion

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Charles Correa, architect & planner, Mumbai, India
Emile Fallaux, scriptwriter and president of the Hubert Bals Fund, the Netherlands
Mai Ghoussoub, artist and Director of Al Saqi Bookshop and Publishing House, UK / Lebanon
Gaston Kaboré, film-maker, Burkina Faso
Gerardo Mosquera, art critic & curator, Cuba / USA

Ceremony
The 1998 Prince Claus Awards performance was an African Fashion Show.
The 1998 Prince Claus Awards speech was delivered by Carlos Fuentes.

1999

Principal Prince Claus Laureates
Fellag, France/Algeria
Al-Jazeera, Qatar
Vitral, Cuba

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Cheick Oumar Sissoko, Mali
Cildo Meireles, Brazil
Claudia Roden, UK/Egypt
Dessalegn Rahmato, Ethiopia
Juana Marta Rodas and Julia Isídrez, Paraguay
Ken Yeang, Malaysia
Patrick Chamoiseau, Martinique
Paulin J. Hountondji, Benin
Pepetela, Angola
Tsai Chih Chung, Taiwan

Theme: Creating Spaces of Freedom

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Professor Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Professor Charles Correa, architect & planner, India
Emile Fallaux, script writer & President of the Hubert Bals Fonds, the Netherlands
Mai Ghoussoub, artist, writer & Director of Al Saqi Publishers and Bookshop, UK / Lebanon
Gaston Kaboré, film-maker, Burkina Faso
Gerardo Mosquera, art critic & curator, Cuba / USA

Ceremony
The 1999 Prince Claus Awards performance was by William Kentridge.
The 1999 Prince Claus Awards speech was delivered by Albie Sachs.

2000

Principal Prince Claus Laureates
Jaime Lerner, Brazil
Francisco Toledo, Mexico
Viva Rio, Brazil

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Arif Hasan, Pakistan
Ayu Utami, Indonesia
Bhupen Khakhar, India
Bush Radio, South Africa
Communalism Combat, India
Cui Jian, China
Film Resource Unit, South Africa
Komal Kothari, India
Van Leo, Egypt
Werewere Liking, Ivory Coast

Theme: Urban Heroes

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Charles Correa, architect & planner, India
Emile Fallaux, scriptwriter & President of the Hubert Bals Fonds, the Netherlands
Mai Ghoussoub, artist and Director of Al Saqi Bookshop and Publishing House, UK / Lebanon
Gaston Kaboré, film-maker, Burkina Faso
Gerardo Mosquera, art critic & curator, Cuba / USA

Marlous Willemsen, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2000 Prince Claus Awards performance was a film and performance by Wu Wenguang.
The 2000 Prince Claus Awards speech was delivered by Ismail Serageldin.

2001

Principal Prince Claus Laureates
Peter Minshall, Trinidad
Stichting Zomercarnaval, the Netherlands

Further Prince Claus Awards
Antoun Maqdesi, Syria
Chris Abani, Nigeria / USA
Duong Thu Huong, Vietnam
Elena Rivera Mirano, Philippines
Ibrahim Salahi, Sudan / UK
Iván Thays, Peru
Jahan-e Ketab, Iran
Mehri Maftun, Afghanistan
Samuel Fosso, Central African Republic
Talingo, Panama

Theme: Carnival

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Charles Correa, architect & planner, India
Mai Ghoussoub, artist & Director of Al Saqi Bookshop and Publishing House, UK / Lebanon
Gaston Kaboré, filmmaker, Burkina Faso
Gerardo Mosquera, art critic & curator, Cuba / USA
Bruno Stagno, architect & founder of the Institute for Tropical Architecture, Costa Rica

Marlous Willemsen, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2001 Prince Claus Awards performance was by Peter Minshall and the Callaloo Company.
The 2001 Prince Claus Awards speech was delivered by Rex Nettleford.

2002

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Mohammed Chafik, Morocco

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Ali Ferzat, Syria
Amira Hass, Israel
Ferreira Gullar, Brazil
Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial, Indonesia
Marcelo Araúz Lavadenz, Bolivia
Virginia Pérez-Ratton, Costa Rica
Walter Tournier, Uruguay
Wu Liangyong, China
Youssou N'Dour, Senegal

Theme: Languages and Transcultural Forms of Expression

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan Van der Staay (Chair), Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Aracy Amaral, art historian, art critic & curator, Brazil
Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, philosopher, Syria
Goenawan Mohamad, journalist & poet, Indonesia
Pedro Pimenta, filmmaker, Mozambique / South Africa
Claudia Roden, culinary historian & journalist, UK / Egypt
Bruno Stagno, architect & founder of the Institute for Tropical Architecture, Costa Rica

Marlous Willemsen, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2002 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by Youssou N'Dour with Senegalese and Moroccan rappers.

2003

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Wang Shixiang, China

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Arab Human Development Report, 2002
Biboki Weavers and Yovita Meta, Indonesia
Carlinhos Brown, Brazil
District Six Museum, South Africa
G.N. Devy, India
Hasan Saltik, Turkey
Mathare Youth Sports Association, Kenya
Mick Pearce, Zimbabwe
New Argentinian Cinema: Lita Stantic, Argentina
Reyum Institute of Arts and Culture, Cambodia

Theme: The Survival and Innovation of Crafts

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Adriaan van der Staay (Chair), Emeritus Professor of Cultural Politics and Cultural Critique at the Erasmus University, the Netherlands
Aracy Amaral, art historian, art critic & curator, Brazil
Sadik Al-Azm, philosopher, Syria
Goenawan Mohamad, journalist & poet, Indonesia
Pedro Pimenta, filmmaker, Mozambique / South Africa
Claudia Roden, food historian & writer, UK
Bruno Stagno, architect, Costa Rica

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2003 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by Heri Dono.

2004

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Mahmoud Darwish, Palestine

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Aminata Traoré, Mali
Bhutan Archery, Federation Bhutan
Farroukh Qasim, Tajikistan
Halet Çambel, Turkey
Ivaldo Bertazzo, Brazil
Jawad Al Assadi, Iraq
Memoria Abierta, Argentina
Omara Khan Massoudi, Afghanistan
Tin Moe, Myanmar

Theme: The Positive Results of Asylum and Migration

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Niek Biegman, (Chair), photographer, former Dutch representative to the United Nations, the Netherlands / Croatia
Aracy Amaral, art historian, art critic & curator, Brazil
Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, philosopher, Syria
Goenawan Mohamad, journalist & poet, Indonesia
Mick Pearce, architect, Zimbabwe / Australia
Pedro Pimenta, filmmaker, Mozambique / South Africa
Claudia Roden, culinary historian & journalist, UK / Egypt

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2004 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by Carlinhos Brown.

2005

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Jonathan Shapiro alias Zapiro, South Africa

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Abdul Sheriff, Tanzania
Chéri Samba, DR Congo
Ebrahim Nabavi, Iran
Edgar Langeveldt, Zimbabwe
Joaquín Salvador Lavado alias Quino, Argentina
Lenin El Ramly, Egypt
Michael Poghosian, Armenia
Nièdè Guidon, Brazil
Opiyo Okach, Kenya
Slamet Gundono, Indonesia

Theme: Humour and Satire

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Niek Biegman, (Chair), Photographer, former Dutch representative to the United Nations, the Netherlands / Croatia
Aracy Amaral, art historian, art critic & curator, Brazil
Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, philosopher, Syria
Goenawan Mohamad, journalist & poet, Indonesia
Mick Pearce, architect, Zimbabwe / Australia
Pedro Pimenta, filmmaker, Mozambique / South Africa
Claudia Roden, culinary historian & journalist, UK / Egypt

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2005 performance was by Jant-Bi, with choreography by Germaine and Patrick Acogny.

2006

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Reza Abedini, Iran

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Al Kamandjâti, Association Palestine
Christine Tohme, Lebanon
Committee for Relevant Art, Nigeria
Erna Brodber, Jamaica
Frankétienne, Haiti
Henry Chakava, Kenya
Lida Abdul, Afghanistan
Madeeha Gauhar, Pakistan
Michael Mel, Papua New Guinea
National Museum of Mali, Mali

Theme: 10 Years of the Prince Claus Fund

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Niek Biegman (Chair), Photographer, former Dutch representative to the United Nations, the Netherlands / Croatia
Selma Al-Radi, archaeologist, American Institute for Yemeni Studies, Iraq / Yemen
Manthia Diawara, Professor of Comparative Literature, Editor-in-chief of *Black Renaissance*, author & filmmaker, Mali / Ghana / USA
Amitav Gosh, author, India / USA
Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, photographer, editor, Mexico
Mick Pearce, architect, Zimbabwe / Australia
Virginia Pérez-Ratton, artist, curator, Director of TEOR/éTica, Costa Rica

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2006 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by the stars of the Sahel Opera.

2007

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Faustin Linyekula, DR Congo

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Ars Aevi, Bosnia & Herzegovina
Augusto Boal, Brazil
Emily Jacir, Palestine
Godfrey Mwampembwa alias Gado, Kenya
Harutyun Khachatryan, Armenia
Hollis Liverpool alias Chalkdust, Trinidad & Tobago
Óscar Hagerman, Mexico
Patricia Ariza, Colombia
Radio Isanganiro, Burundi
The Sudanese Writers Union, Sudan

Theme: Culture and Conflict

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Peter Geschiere (Chair), cultural anthropologist, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Selma Al-Radi, archaeologist, American Institute for Yemeni Studies, Iraq / Yemen
Manthia Diawara, Professor of Comparative Literature, Editor-in-chief of Black Renaissance, author & filmmaker, Mali / USA
Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, photographer, editor, Mexico
Mick Pearce, architect, Zimbabwe / Australia
Virginia Pérez-Ratton, artist, curator & Director of TEOR/éTica, Costa Rica

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2007 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by Hollis Liverpool, alias Chalkdust and by Faustin Linyekula and Serge Kakudj.

2008

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Indira Goswami, India

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Carlos Henríquez Consalvi, El Salvador
Dayanita Singh, India
Elia Suleiman, Palestine
Jeanguy Saintus, Haiti
Li Xianting, China
Ma Ke, China
Ousmane Sow, Senegal
Tania Bruguera, Cuba
Uchechukwu James Iroha, Nigeria
Venerable Purevbat, Mongolia

Theme: Culture and the Human Body

Prince Claus Award Committee
Peter Geschiere, (Chair), cultural anthropologist, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Manthia Diawara, Professor of Comparative Literature, Editor-in-chief of *Black Renaissance*, author, & filmmaker, Mali / USA
N'Goné Fall, curator, architect & cultural consultant, Senegal / France
Elias Khoury, novelist, writer & journalist, Lebanon
Rahul Mehrotra, architect, urban designer & Professor of Architecture at MIT, India / USA
Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, photographer & editor, Mexico
Virginia Pérez-Ratton, artist, curator & Director of TEOR/éTica, Costa Rica
Patricia Valdez, social scientist, human rights consultant & Director of Memoria Abierta, Argentina

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2008 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by Ma Ke and by Ayikodans.

2009

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Simon Vélez, Colombia

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Desiderio Navarro, Cuba
Doual'art, Cameroon
El Anatsui, Nigeria/Ghana
Gastón Acurio, Peru
Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamericana (IHNCA), Nicaragua
Jivya Soma Mashe, India
Kanak Mani Dixit, Nepal
Liang Shaoji, China
Sammy Baloji, DR Congo
Santu Mofokeng, South Africa

Theme: Culture and Nature

Prince Claus Award Committee
Peter Geschiere, (Chair), cultural anthropologist, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Manthia Diawara, Professor of Comparative Literature, Editor-in-chief of *Black Renaissance*, author, filmmaker, Mali / USA
N'Goné Fall, curator, architect & cultural consultant, Senegal / France
Rahul Mehrotra, architect, urban designer & Professor of Architecture at MIT, India / USA
Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, photographer & editor, Mexico
Laksmi Pamuntjak, poet & writer, Indonesia
Patricia Valdez, social scientist & human rights consultant, Director of Memoria Abierta, Argentina

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2009 Prince Claus Awards performance was given by The Omnibus Ensemble.

2010

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Éditions Barzakh, Algeria

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Ana Maria Machado, Brazil
Aung Zaw, Myanmar/Thailand
Decolonizing Architecture institute, (DAi) Palestine
Dinh Q. Lê, Vietnam
Gulnara Kasmalieva and Muratbek Djumaliev, Kyrgyzstan
Jia Zhang-Ke, China
Kwani Trust, Kenya
Maya Goded, Mexico
Mehrdad Oskouei, Iran
Yoani Sánchez, Cuba

Theme: Frontiers of Reality

Prince Claus Award Committee
Peter Geschiere (Chair), cultural anthropologist, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
N'Goné Fall, curator, architect & cultural consultant, Senegal / France
Rahul Mehrotra, architect & Professor of Urban Design and Planning at Harvard University, India / USA
Laksmi Pamuntjak, poet & writer, Indonesia
José Roca, curator, Colombia

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2010 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Dinh Q. Lê, Thi To Phuong Nguyen and the +84 Contemporary Dance Group.

2011

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Chimurenga / Ntone Edjabe, South Africa / Cameroon

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Ilkhom Theatre, Uzbekistan
Kettly Mars, Haiti
Nidia Bustos, Nicaragua
Rabih Mroué, Lebanon
Regina José Galindo, Guatemala
Rena Effendi, Azerbaijan
Riwaq, Palestine
Saïd Atabekov, Kazakhstan
The Book Café, Zimbabwe
Tsering Woeser, Tibet/China

Prince Claus Award Committee
Peter Geschiere (Chair), cultural anthropologist, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
N'Goné Fall, curator, architect & cultural consultant, Senegal / France
Rema Hammami, cultural anthropologist, Birzeit University, Palestine
Rahul Mehrotra, architect & Professor of Urban Design and Planning at Harvard University, India / USA
Laksmi Pamuntjak, poet & writer, Indonesia
José Roca, curator, Colombia

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2011 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Neo Muyanga and UZUbandi, and by Fernando Arias and Patrick Acogny.

2012

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Eloísa Cartonera, Argentina

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Boniface Mwangi, Kenya
Habiba Djahnine, Algeria
Ian Randle, Jamaica
Maung Thura alias Zarganar, Burma
Maxamed Warsame alias Hadraawi, Somalia
Phare Ponleu Selpak, Cambodia
Sami Ben Gharbia, Tunisia
Teresa Margolles, Mexico
Widad Kawar, Jordan
Yassin al Haj Saleh, Syria

Prince Claus Award Committee
Bregtje van der Haak (Chair), documentary filmmaker & journalist, the Netherlands
Rema Hammami, cultural anthropologist, Birzeit University, Palestine
Salah Hassan, Professor of African Art History and Visual Culture, Sudan / USA
José Roca, curator, Colombia

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2012 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Rabih Mroué, Rima Khcheich, and by Pablo Inza and Moira Castellano.

2013

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Ahmed Fouad Negm, Egypt

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Alejandro Zambra, Chile
Carla Fernández, Mexico
Christopher Cozier, Trinidad & Tobago
Idrissou Mora-Kpaï, Benin
Lu Guang, China
Naiza Khan, Pakistan
Orquesta de Instrumentos Reciclados Cateura, Paraguay
Oscar Muñoz, Colombia
Teater Garasi/Garasi Performance Institute, Indonesia
Zanele Muholi, South Africa

Prince Claus Award Committee
Bregtje van der Haak (Chair), documentary filmmaker & journalist, the Netherlands
Rema Hammami, cultural anthropologist, Birzeit University, Palestine
Salah Hassan, Professor of African Art History and Visual Culture, Sudan / USA
Kettly Mars, writer, Haiti
José Roca, curator, Colombia

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2013 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Carla Fernández, Mona Anis, and Victor Gama with Yetzabel Arias Fernandez, Té Macedo and the Oophaga Ensemble

2014

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Abel Rodríguez, Colombia

Further Prince Claus Laureates
FX Harsono, Indonesia
Gülsün Karamustafa, Turkey
Ignacio Agüero, Chile
Lav Diaz, Philippines
Lia Rodrigues, Brazil
Museo Itinerante de Arte por la Memoria, Peru
Rosina Cazali, Guatemala
SPARROW (Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women), India
Tran Luong, Vietnam

Prince Claus Award Committee
Bregtje van der Haak (Chair), documentary filmmaker & journalist, The Netherlands
Rema Hammami, cultural anthropologist, Birzeit University, Palestine
Salah Hassan, Professor of African Art History and Visual Culture, Sudan / USA
Kettly Mars, writer, Haiti
Gabriela Salgado, independent curator, Argentina / USA
Ong Keng Sen, theatre producer & artistic director, Singapore

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2014 Prince Claus Awards performance was choreographed by Lia Rodrigues, and a film and music performance conceived by Fernando Arias with musicians Urián Sarmiento and Pedro Ojeda.

2015

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Newsha Tavakolian, Iran

Further Prince Claus Awards
Amakhosi, Zimbabwe
Etcetera, Argentina
Fatos Lubonja, Albania
Jean-Pierre Bekolo, Cameroon
Jelili Atiku, Nigeria
Latif Al-Ani, Iraq
Oksana Shatalova, Kazakhstan
Ossama Mohammad, Syria
Perhat Khaliq, China
Y'en a Marre, Senegal

Prince Claus Award Committee
Bregtje van der Haak (Chair), documentary filmmaker & journalist, the Netherlands
Suad Amiry, architect & writer, Ramallah, Palestine / USA
Salah Hassan, Professor of African Art History and Visual Culture, Sudan / USA
Kettly Mars, writer, Haiti
Gabriela Salgado, curator, Argentina / UK
Ong Keng Sen, theatre producer & artistic director, Singapore

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2015 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Perhat Khaliq and Djily Bagdad with Keyti.

2016

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Thailand

Further 2016 Prince Claus Laureates
Bahia Shehab, Egypt/Lebanon
Kamal Mouzawak, Lebanon
La Silla Vacía, Colombia
PeaceNiche / The Second Floor (T2F), Pakistan
Vo Trong Nghia, Vietnam

Prince Claus Award Committee
Emile Fallaux (Chair), Chair of the Board of the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Netherlands
Dinh Q Lê, visual artist, Vietnam
Neo Muyanga, composer & musician, South Africa
Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Sharjah Art Foundation & curator, Emirate of Sharjah
Manuel de Rivero, architect & urbanist, Peru
Suely Rolnik, psychoanalyst & cultural critic, Brazil

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2016 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Kinan Azmeh, Kevork Mourad, and a film installation by Apichatpong Weerasethakul.
The 2016 Prince Claus Awards speech was by Bert Koenders, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs (2014–2017).

2017

Principal Prince Claus Laureates
Ma Jun, China
Vincent Carelli, Brazil

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Amar Kanwar, India
Brigitte Baptiste, Colombia
Diébédo Francis Kéré, Burkina Faso
Khadija Al-Salami, Yemen
L'Art Rue, Tunisia

Prince Claus Award Committee
Emile Fallaux (Chair), cultural advisor, filmmaker & journalist, the Netherlands
Defne Ayas, curator & Director of Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, The Netherlands
Solange Farkas, curator, Brazil
Dinh Q. Lê, visual artist, Vietnam
Neo Muyanga, composer & musician, South Africa
Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Director Sharjah Art Foundation & curator, Emirate of Sharjah
Manuel de Rivero, architect & urbanist, Peru

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2017 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Faustin Linyekula, Hlengiwe Lushaba, Jeannot Kumbonyeki and Isryel Jules.

2018

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Market Photo Workshop, South Africa

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Adong Judith, Uganda
Eka Kurniawan, Indonesia
Kidlat Tahimik, Philippines
Marwa al-Sabouni, Syria
O Menelick 2° Ato, Brazil

Next Generation Prince Claus Laureate
Dada Masilo, South Africa

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Solange Farkas (Chair), curator and Director of Associação Cultural Videobrasil Brazil
Defne Ayas, curator, the Netherlands & Germany
Tejumola Olaniyan, Professor of African and English Languages and Literature, USA
Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Director Sharjah Art Foundation & curator, Emirate of Sharjah
Manuel de Rivero, architect & urbanist, Peru

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2018 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Dada Masilo and The Dance Factory, and Xola Wille.

2019

Principal Prince Claus Laureate
Kamala Ibrahim Ishag, Sudan

Further Prince Claus Laureates
Ambulante, Mexico
Anocha Suwichakornpong, Thailand
Bill Kouélany, Congo-Brazzaville
Djamila Ribeiro, Brazil
Mariam Kamara, Niger

Next Generation Prince Claus Laureate
Mónica Ojeda Franco, Ecuador

Awards Committee
Manuel de Rivero (Chair), architect & urbanist, Peru
Sandra den Hamer, Director of the Eye Filmmuseum, the Netherlands
Amar Kanwar, visual artist & filmmaker, India
Tejumola Olaniyan, Professor of African and English Languages and Literature, USA
Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Director Sharjah Art Foundation & curator, Emirate of Sharjah
Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

Ceremony
The 2019 Prince Claus Awards performances were by Nai Barghouti, Djily Baghdad and Mahsa Vahdat.
The 2019 Prince Claus Awards speech was by Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

2020

Principle Prince Claus Laureate
Ibrahim Mahama, Ghana

Prince Claus Laureates
Açik Radyo, Turkey
Diamantina Arcoiri, Colombia
Fendika Cultural Center, Ethiopia
Tunakaimanu Fielakepa, Tonga
M7red, Argentina

Prince Claus Next Generation Laureate
Hira Nabi, Pakistan

Prince Claus Awards Committee
Manuel de Rivero (Chair), architect & urbanist, Peru
Amar Kanwar, visual artist & filmmaker, India
Hoor Al Qasimi, Director Sharjah Art Foundation & curator, Emirate of Sharjah
Neo Muyanga, composer & musician, South Africa
Sandra den Hamer, Director of the EYE Film Museum, the Netherlands

Fariba Derakhshani, Awards Programme Coordinator & Secretary to the Awards Committee

2021

In 2021 the Prince Claus Fund initiated the Prince Claus Impact Awards, the Prince Claus Mentorship Awards and the Prince Claus Seed Awards. The Impact Awards are presented every two years. The 2021 Mentorship Awards include the Arab Documentary Photography Programme (with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture and in partnership with the Magnum Foundation), Cultural & Artistic Responses to Environmental Change (with the Goethe Institue) and Building Beyond (with Creative Industries Fund-NL). The Seed Awards allow 100 emerging artists to explore new perspectives and develop their practice on their own terms. For more information see princeclausfund.org

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Charlotte Huygens, Head of Exhibitions and
Education at the National Museum of Antiquities,
the Netherlands
Gerd Junne, Chair of International Relations,
Political Science Department, University of
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Maya Meijer-Bergmans, art historian, Director
of Stichting Den Haag Sculptuur and Westergas-
fabriek Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Ole Bouman, Director of the Netherlands
Architecture Institute (NAI), the Netherlands
Rene Grotenhuis, Director Cordaid,
the Netherlands
Paul Meijs, consultant and former Director
of CARE Nederland, the Netherlands
Sjoerd Koopman, Professional Programmes
Director, IFLA, the Netherlands
Ila Kasem (Observer), Director of Van de Bunt
Adviseurs and Chairman of the Marokko Fonds,
the Netherlands

Eléonore de Merode, Secretary to the Steering
Committee Cultural Emergency Response

2012

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Boris Dittrich
Bregtje van der Haak
Sadik Harchaoui
Patricia Spyer

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Christa Meindersma

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Director of Museo de Antioquia, Colombia
Davide Quadrio, Co-founder and Director
of ArtHub Asia, China / Thailand
Edi Muka, Co-director of Tirana Institute
of Contemporary Art (TICA), Albania
Etienne Minoungou, Director of La Compagnie
Falinga, Burkina Faso
Félix Madrazo, architect, Supersudaca,
the Netherlands
Gloria Magambo, Co-director of University
Centre for Arts and Drama (UCAD), Rwanda
José Carlos Mariátegui and Jorge Villacorta,
Presidents of Alta Tecnología Andina (ATA), Peru
Laurence Hughes, Director of International
Alliance of Independent Publishers, France
Laxmi Murthy, Associate Editor at Southasia
Trust, Southasia Director of Hri Institute, Nepal
Peter Karanja, Director, Mathare Youth Sports
Association (MYSA), Kenya
Shahidul Alam, photographer, Founder and
Director of Drik Picture Library Ltd., Bangladesh
Virginie Dupray, Executive Director
at Studios Kabako, DR Congo
Yto Barrada, Director of Cinémathèque
de Tanger, Morocco
Zeina Arida, Director of Arab Image Foundation,
Lebanon
Ziad Khalaf, Director of Qattan Foundation,
Palestine
Daravuth Ly, art lecturer, Director of Reyum
Institute of Art and Culture, Cambodia

Joumana El Zein Khoury, Secretary to
the Network Committee

Steering Committee Cultural Emergency
Response (CER)
Marieke Sanders-ten Holte, (Chair), former Member
of the European Parliament and Honorary Consul
of Botswana in the Netherlands, the Netherlands
Charlotte Huygens, Head of Exhibitions and
Education at the National Museum of Antiquities,
the Netherlands
Gerd Junne, member of the Supervisory Board
of War Child, Director of Triple L.E.G., President
of The Network University, the Netherlands
Maya Meijer-Bergmans, art historian, Director
of Den Haag Sculptuur and Westergasfabriek
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Ole Bouman, Director of the Netherlands
Architecture Institute (NAI), the Netherlands

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Steering
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2013

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Sadik Harchaoi
Patricia Spyer

Director of the Prince Claus Fund
Christa Meindersma

Steering Committee Cultural Emergency
Response (CER)
Charlotte Huygens (Chair), former Head
of Exhibitions and Education at The National
Museum of Antiquities, the Netherlands
Gerd Junne, Member of the Supervisory Board
of War Child, Director of Triple L.E.G., President
of The Network University, the Netherlands
Maya Meijer-Bergmans, Director of Den Haag
Sculptuur and Westergasfabriek Amsterdam,
the Netherlands
Ole Bouman, Creative Director at the Shenzhen
Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, China
Valerie Sluijter, former Netherlands Ambassador
to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Netherlands

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Steering
Committee Cultural Emergency Response

Network Committee
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of Museo De Antioquia, Colombia
Edi Muka, Co-director of Tirana Institute
of Contemporary Art (Tica), Albania
Etienne Minoungou, Director of La Compagnie
Falinga, Burkina Faso
José Carlos Mariátegui and Jorge Villacorta,
Presidents of Alta Tecnología Andina (Ata), Peru
Joseph Osae-addo and Tuuli Saarelaco, Directors
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Laxmi Murthy, Associate Editor at Southasia
Trust, Southasia Director of Hri Institute, Nepal
Orwa Nyrabia and Guevara Namerco, Founders
of Dox Box, Syria
Vide Quadrioco, Founder And Director
of Arthub Asia, China/Thailand
Virginie Dupray, Executive Director at Studios
Kabako, Congo
Laurence Hugues, Director of International
Alliance of Independent Publishers, France
Yto Barrada, Director of Cinémathèque
de Tanger, Morocco
Zeina Arida, Director of Arab Image Foundation,
Lebanon
Zoe Butt, Executive Director at San Art, Vietnam

Joumana El Zein Khoury, Secretary to
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2014

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Patricia Spyer

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Christa Meindersma

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of Museo de Antioquia, Colombia
Edi Muka, Co-director of Tirana Institute
of Contemporary Art (TICA), Albania
Jama Musse Jama and Ayan Mahamoud, Director
and Project manager at Redsea Online Cultural
Foundation, Somaliland
José-Carlos Mariátegui and Jorge Villacorta,
Presidents of Alta Tecnología Andina (ATA), Peru
Joseph Osae-Addo and Tuuli Saarela, Co-directors
of ArchiAfrika, Ghana
Laurence Hugues, Director of International
Alliance of Independent Publishers, France
Laxmi Murthy, Associate Editor at Southeast
Trust, Southeast Director of Hri Institute, Nepal
Marcel Pinas, Director of Kibii Foundation, Suriname
Orwa Nyrabia and Guevara Namer, Co-directors
of Dox Box, Syria
Virginie Dupray, Executive Director
at Studios Kabako, Congo
Yto Barrada, Director of Cinémathèque
de Tanger, Morocco
Zoe Butt, Executive Director at San Art,
Vietnam

Bertan Selim, Secretary to the
Network Committee

Steering Committee Cultural Emergency
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Mondriaan Foundation, international curator
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Gerd Junne, Chairman of the Board of The
Network University (TNU), Board member
of War Child Holland, the Netherlands
Maya Meijer-Bergmans, art historian, member
of the Board of MeyerBergman and chairman
of Westergasfabriek, the Netherlands
Valerie Sluijter, former Netherlands Ambassador
to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Netherlands.
Ole Bouman, Creative Director at the Shenzhen
Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, China,
the Netherlands

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Steering
Committee Cultural Emergency Response

2015

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Patricia Spyer

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Joumana El Zein Khoury

Network Committee
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Laxmi Murthy, Associate Editor at
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Malika Chaghal, Executive Director
of Cinémathèque de Tanger, Morocco
Marcel Pinas, Director of Kibii Foundation, Suriname
Laurence Hugues, Director of International
Alliance of Independent Publishers, France
Orwa Nyrabia and Guevara Namer, Co-Directors
of Dox Box, Syria
Virginie Dupray, Executive Director
at Studios Kabako, DR Congo
Ana Piedad Restrepo, Jaramillo Director
of Museo de Antioquia, Colombia
Edi Muka, Co-Director of Tirana Institute
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Steering Committee Cultural Emergency
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Evert Meiling, Van Ede and Partners,
the Netherlands
Michelle Parlevliet, Research Fellow in Human
Rights and Peacebuilding, University
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Ole Bouman, Founding Director at Shekou Design
Museum, China / the Netherlands
Valerie Sluijter, former Netherlands Ambassador
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Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Steering
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2016

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Eppo van Nispen tot Sevenaer
Patricia Spyer
Lionel Veer

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Evert Meiling, Van Ede and Partners, the Netherlands

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Jama Mussee Jama and Ayan Mahamoud, Redsea Online Cultural Foundation, Somaliland
Orwa Nyrabia and Guevara Namer, Dox Box, Syria / Germany
Laxmi Murthy and Kanak Mani Dixit, Southeast Trust, HRI Institute, Nepal
Virginie Dupray, Studios Kabako, DR Congo
Edi Muka, Tirana Institute of Contemporary Art (TICA), Albania
Marcel Pinas and Donovan Pramy, Kibii Foundation, Suriname

Bertan Selim, Secretary to the Network Committee

2017

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Edi Muka, Tirana Institute of Contemporary Art (TICA), Albania
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Joseph Osae-Addo, ArchiAfrika, Ghana
Kanak Mani Dixit & Laxmi Murthy, SouthAsia Trust (Hri Institute), Nepal
Marc Schmitz & Dolgor Ser-Od, Land Art Mongolia, Mongolia
Marcel Pinas & Donovan Pramy, Kibii Foundation, Suriname
Orwa Nyrabia, Dox Box, Syria / Germany
Virginie Dupray, Studios Kabako, DR Congo

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Sada Mire, Assistant Professor Archaeological and Anthropological Theory and Practice and Cultural Heritage Studies, Leiden University, the Netherlands
Valerie Sluijter, former Netherlands Ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Netherlands

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2018

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Nani Jansen Reventlow
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Eroll Bilibani, Dokufest, Kosovo
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Marcel Pinas, Kibii Foundation, Suriname
Joseph Osae-Addo, ArchiAfrika, Ghana
Loreto Garin Guzman & Marilina Winik, CRIA, Argentina
Marc Schmitz & Dolgor Ser-Od, Land Art Mongolia, Mongolia
Vasyl Cherepanyn, VCRC, Ukraine

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Next Generation Network
Agnesia Linda Mayasari, Cemeti Institute for Art & Society, Indonesia
Aulonë Kadriu, Kosovo 2.0, Kosovo
Avni Sethi, Conflictorium, India
Darina Manasbek, Art Group 705, Kyrgyzstan
Demi Walker, NLS Kingston, Jamaica
Gabriel Lima, Escola Livre de Dança da Maré, Brazil
Khaled Abdelhadi, Aman, Jordan
Lina Attalah, Mada Masr, Egypt
Lorraine Charlotte Bgoya, Magamba, Zimbabwe
Maria Rodriguez Collado, Platohedro, Colombia
Njoki Ngumi, The Nest, Kenya
Roberto Guillén Salinas, Managua Furiosa, Nicaragua

Mechtild van den Hombergh, Secretary to the Next Generation Network

Cultural Emergency Response Network
Salma Samar Damluji, Daw'an Mudbrick Architecture Foundation, Yemen
Yasmeen Lari, Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Pakistan

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Cultural Emergency Response Network

2019

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Eppo van Nispen tot Sevenaer
Lionel Veer

Director of the Prince Claus Fund
Joumana El Zein Khoury

Next Generation Network
Amadou Fall Ba, Africulturban, Senegal
Aulonë Kadriu, Kosovo 2.0, Kosovo
Avni Sethi, Conflictorium, India
Deborah Anzinger, NLS Kingston, Jamaica
Dimaz Maulana, Cemeti Institute for Art & Society, Indonesia
Fadi Zumot, Aman Space, Jordan
Gabriel Lima, Escola Livre de Dança da Maré, Brazil
Lina Attalah, Mada Masr, Egypt
Lina Mejía, Platohedro, Colombia
Lorraine Bgoya, Magamba, Zimbabwe
Njeri Gitungo, The Nest, Kenya
Roberto Guillén, Managua Furiosa, Nicaragua
Talgat Berikov, Art Group 705, Kyrgyzstan

Mechtild van den Hombergh, Secretary to the Next Generation Network

Cultural Emergency Response Network
Carmen Bettina S. Bulaong, Escuela Taller, The Philippines
May Al-Ibrashy, Athar Lina Groundwater Research Project, Egypt
Salma Samar Damluji, Daw'an Mudbrick Architecture Foundation, Yemen
Samuel Franco Arce, Cultural Emergency Centre (CEC), Casa K'ojom, Guatemala
Yasmeen Lari, Heritage Foundation Pakistan, Pakistan

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Cultural Emergency Response Network

2020

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Nani Jansen Reventlow
Alexander Ribbink
Marietje Schaake
Eppo van Nispen tot Sevenaer
Lionel Veer

Director of the Prince Claus Fund
Joumana El Zein Khoury

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Arte Mujeres Ecuador, Ecuador
CRIA, Argentina
Despina, Brazil
Dokufest, Kosovo
Khoj International Artists' Association, India
Kinani, Mozambique
Land Art Mongolia 360°, Mongolia
Music In Africa Foundation, South Africa
Private Print, North Macedonia
Studio 8, Jordan
Tbilisi Photo Festival & Multimedia Museum, Georgia
Visual Culture Research Center, Ukraine

Bertan Selim, Secretary to the Network Committee

Next Generation Network
Africulturban, Senegal
Aman Space, Jordan
Conflictorium, India
Mada Masr, Egypt
Cemeti Institute for Art & Society, Indonesia
Kosovo 2.0, Kosovo
NLS Kingston, Jamaica
The Nest, Kenya
Magamba, Zimbabwe
Platohedro, Colombia
Managua Furiosa, Nicaragua
Art Group 705, Kyrgyzstan
Escola Livre de Dança da Maré, Brazil

Mechtild van den Hombergh, Secretary to the Next Generation Network

Cultural Emergency Response Network
BEC Megawra, Athar Lina, Egypt
Cultural Emergency Centre, Casa K'ojom, Guatemala
Daw'an Mudbrick, Architecture Foundation, Yemen
Escuela Taller de Filipinas Foundation Inc., the Philippines
The Heritage Foundation Pakistan, Pakistan

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Cultural Emergency Response Network

2021

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Interim Director of the Prince Claus Fund
Louise van Deth

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Arab Media Lab, Morocco
Arte Mujeres Ecuador, Ecuador
CRIA, Argentina
Despina, Brazil
Dokufest, Kosovo
Khoj International Artists' Association, India
Kibii Foundation, Suriname
Kinani, Mozambique
Land Art Mongolia 360°, Mongolia
Music In Africa Foundation, South Africa
Private Print, North Macedonia
Redsea Online Cultural Foundation, Somaliland
Studio 8, Jordan
Tbilisi Photo Festival & Multimedia Museum, Georgia
Visual Culture Research Center, Ukraine

Bertan Selim, Secretary to the Network Committee

Cultural Emergency Response Network
BEC Megawra, Athar Lina, Egypt
Cultural Emergency Centre, Casa K'ojom, Guatemala
Cultural Heritage without Borders, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina
Daw'an Mudbrick, Architecture Foundation, Yemen
Escuela Taller de Filipinas Foundation Inc., the Philippines
The Heritage Foundation Pakistan, Pakistan

Deborah Stolk, Secretary to the Cultural Emergency Response Network

PRINCE CLAUS FUND OFFICE

1996–2021

Randa Alatas, Laura Alexander, Joanne van Altena, Ana Arciniega Iriarte, Liesbeth van Biezen, Emma Bijloos, Frans Bijlsma, Annick Bettink, Ricardo Burgzorg, Ana Burmeister, Saskia van Boheemen, Elodie Chavrot, Iwana Chronis, Keefe Cordeiro, Fariba Derakhshani, Lot Dercksen, Louise van Deth, Hélène Diao, Marije Fokkema, Vanessa Fraga Prol, Linda van der Gaag, Tessa Giller, Mette Gratama van Andel, Adriana González Hulshof, Noura Habbab, Soebhana Hamidullahkhan, Charlotte van Herwaarden, Nathalie Ho-Kang-You, Franck van der Hooft, Mechtild van den Hombergh, Heleen de Hoog, Helen Hoogenboom, Slavica Ilieska, Dilara Jaring-Kanik, Katinka de Jong, Petra Koeman, Jorn Konijn, Celien Koranteng-Kumi, Jeannette Kruseman, Sanne Letschert, Gitta Luiten, Ilaria Manzini, Christa Meindersma, Caro Mendez, Eléonore de Merode, Jacqueline Meulblok, Angus Mol, Marianne de Moor, Fernand Pahud de Mortanges, Nat Muller, Lotte Niks, Evelyn Onnes, Merel Oord, Tijn Pieren, Nicole Planjer, Els van der Plas, Alma Ploeger, Nimalka Passanha, Vivian Paulissen, Sonja Rambharse, Ana Ramos Barretto, Evely Reijnders, Esther Roschar, Sebas van der Sangen, Rosa Schinkelshoek, Adrienne Schneider, Jacobine Schwab, Bertan Selim, Ginger da Silva, Sarah Smith, Deborah Stolk, Cora Taal, Marjolein Tummers, Laura Urbonaviciute, Jenneke van Veldhuizen, Lieke Vervoorn, Geerte Wachter, Christine Wagner, Charlotte Waltz, Carla Wauman, Eveline de Weerd, Martine Willekens, Marlous Willemsen, Joumana El Zein Khoury, Leonie Zitman.

PRINCE CLAUS FUND ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITIONS THE HAGUE

Meshac Gaba
Romuald Hazoumé
Henri Dono
Bhupen Khakhar
Eduardo Padilha, Claudio Goulart, Flavio Pons
Angele Etoundi Essamba
Bouchaib Dihaj
Exhibition of the Vereniging Ons Suriname (Association Our Surinam), 2001
Amazwi Abesifazane (Voices of Women), by Andries Botha, 2002
Alexander Valle, 2003
Abu Mansaray, 2003
F.X.Harsono, 2003
Claudio Goulart, 2003
World Press Photo on Migration, 2004–5
Jila Najand, 2005
Narda Alvarado Beltran, 2005
Lu Luo, 2005
Gamal Ez, 2005
Chéri Cherin, Mfumu'Eto, Sim Simaro and Emmanuel Botalatala, 2006
Jonathan Shapiro, Zapiro, 2006
Shaidul Alam, 2006

PRINCE CLAUS FUND GALLERY AMSTERDAM

2008
Fire, Flesh and Blood, James Iroha Uchechukwu

2009
The Secret Life of Syrian Lingerie, Gilbert Hage & Rana Salam
Recording the Truth in Iran, Kaveh Golestan
Niño Perdido, Ilán Lieberman
Liang Shaoji, Liang Shaoji

2010
Gentleman of Bacongo, Daniele Tamagni
Scars & Other Remnants, Dinh Q. Le

2011
Fragments of Tradition, Beauty and Hope, Photographs by 13 Young Men and Women from Bamiyan, Bamiyan Photography Project
Becoming Van Leo: a work in progress, Van Leo
Lives Behind, Rena Effendi

2012
Culture in Defiance, Continuing Traditions of Satire, Art and the Struggle for Freedom in Syria, Ali Ferzat
Carnal, Teresa Margolles

2013
Out of the Ruins, Bam Photography Rescue Project
'fo(u)nd', Zanele Muholi

2014
Portrait(self)portrait, Óscar Muñoz
Hopes and impediments, Invisible Borders
Mogage Guiju, Abel Rodriguez

2015
Freedom, Theatre and the Oppressed
Return of the Soul, Showcase Arab Documentary Photography Program
I Know Why the Rebel Sings, Newsha Tavakolian

2016
Meyina, El Anatsui

2017–2018
Three Crossings, Ibrahim El-Salahi, David Hammons, Stanley Brouwn

2018
By His Will we Teach Birds How To Fly, Ibrahim El-Salahi

2018–2019
A Sheet of Paper can Become a Knife Regina José Galindo, David Goldblatt, FX Harsono, Amar Kanwar, Naiza Khan, Teresa Margolles, Cildo Meireles, Zanele Muholi, Oscar Muñoz, and Newsha Tavakolian

2019
Women in Crystal Cubes, Kamala Ibrahim Ishag

CONFERENCES

1999
'Beauty in Context', Mexico City and New Delhi
'Role of the Intellectual in the Public Sphere', Bombay

2000
'Role of the Intellectual in the Public Sphere', Beirut
'Truth and Reconciliation', The Hague

2001
'Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation', collaboration with Documenta 11, New Delhi
'Culture and Development', Rotterdam
'African Aesthetics, Beauty in Context', Capetown
'Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State', Patna

2002
'Living Together', Zanzibar
'Diverscity Lecture', The Hague
'Roses in the Desert', Amsterdam

2003
'Nieuwe Beeldenstormen (New Iconoclasms)', The Hague
'Creating Spaces of Freedom', Poetry International, Rotterdam

2004
'Cultures, Globalisation Processes and Development', The Hague
'The Positive Results of Asylum and Migration', The Hague

2006
'Culture is a Basic Need: Responding to Cultural Emergencies', The Hague

2008
'Resisting Urbicide; Restoring Palestinian Heritage', The Hague
'Boundless Curiosity', Rotterdam

PRINCE CLAUS FUND JOURNAL

Journal #1, 1998
Journal #2, 1999
Journal #3, *Creating Spaces of Freedom*, 1999
Journal #4, 2000
Journal #5, 2000
Journal #6, 2001
Journal #7, *Callaloo*, 2001
Journal #8, *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State*, produced in association with *Biblio: A Review of Books*, India, 2002
Journal #9, 2002
Journal #10, *The Future is Handmade*, guest editor Iftikhar Dadi, 2003
Journal #11, *Asylum and Migration*, produced in association with *Biblio: A Review of Books*, India, 2004
Journal #12, *Living Together*, produced in association with *Kalam*, Indonesia, 2006
Journal #13, *Culture of Hope*, 2006
Journal #14, *Culture is a Basic Need*, 2006
Journal #15, *Cultural Conflicts in China*, produced in association with *Art Today*, China, 2008
Journal #16, *Flowers*, produced in association with *Bidoun*, 2009

PRINCE CLAUS FUND LIBRARY

1998
The Art of African Fashion
Els van der Plas and Marlous Willemsen
Published with Africa World Press & Red Sea Press, Trenton, NJ

1999
Het verleden onder ogen; Herdenking van de slavernij
Gert Oostindie

2001
Authentic / Ex-centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art
Salah Hassan and Olu Oguibe
Published with Forum for African Arts, Ithaca, NY

The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994
Okwui Enwezor with Museum Villa Stuck
Published with Prestel, Munich

Outlet: Yogyakarta within the Contemporary Indonesian Art Scene
Jim Supangkat, Sumartono, Asmudjo Jono Irianto, Rizki A. Zealani and M. Dwi Marianto
Published with Cemeti Art Foundation, Yogyakarta

2002
Facing Up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe
Gert Ooostindie
Published with Ian Randle Publishers, Jamaica

Against the Wind: Politics of Iranian Cinema
Hamid Reza Sadr
Published with Zarrin, Tehran

Creating Spaces of Freedom
Els van der Plas, Marlous Willemsen and Malu Halasa
Published with Saqi, London

Mirando al futuro
Northon Flores Troche
Published with Thoth Publishing, Bussum

Experiments with Truth: Transnational Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation, Documenta 11_Platform 2
Okwui Enwezor, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash and Octavio Zaya
Published with Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern

2003
Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes
Gilane Tawadros and Sarah Campbell
Published with Insititute of International Visual Arts (inIVA), London

2004
Portrait Photographs from Isfahan: Faces in Transition, 1920–1950
Parisa Damandan
Published with Saqi, London

2006
Beautiful Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics
Sarah Nuttall
Published with Kwela, Cape Town, and Duke University Press, Durham, NC

Iranian Cinema: A Political History
(new and revised edition)
Hamid Reza Sadr
Published with I.B.Tauris, London

Turkic Speaking Peoples. 2000 Years of Art and Culture from Inner Asia to the Balkans
Ergun Çagatay and Dogan Kuban
Published with Presetl, Munich

2007
Kaveh Golestan 1950–2003. Recording the Truth in Iran
Malu Halasa and Hengameh Golestan
Published with Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern
Hidden Afghanistan. The Collections of the National Museum Kabul, Dari and Pashtu editions
Pierre Cambon
Published with Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, and Oxfam Novib

2008
Diaspora Memory Place. David Hammons, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Pamela Z
Salah Hassan and Cheryl Finley
Published with Prestel, Munich

Lida Abdul
Renata Caragliano, Stella Cervasio, Nikos Papastergiadis, Virginia Pérez-Ratton, Els van der Plas
Published with Hopeful Monster, Turin

Iranian Photography Now
Rose Issa
Published with Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern

Transit Tehran. Young Iran and Its Inspirations
Malu Halasa and Maziar Bahari
Published with Salis Verlag, Zurich (German edition), and Garnet Publishing, London (English edition)

The Secret Life of Syrian Lingerie: Intimacy and Design
Malu Halasa and Rana Salam
Published with Chronicle Books, San Francisco

Bagdad Arts Déco. Architectures en brique 1920–1950
Caecilia Pieri
Published with L'Archange Minotaure, Apt

2009
Damascus: Tourists, Artists and Secret Agents
Reloading Images
Published with The Green Box, Berlin

Darfur and the Crisis of Governance in Sudan: A Critical Reader
Salah Hassan and Carina Ray
Published with Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY

Mazaar, Bazaar. Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan
Saima Zaidi
Published with Oxford University Press, Karachi

2010
Oumou Sy: Sand and Silk
Katharina von Flotow
Published with Association Suisse Afrique Design

Open Shutters Iraq
Eugenie Dolberg
Published with Trolley Books, London

African Film: New Forms of Aesthetics and Politics
Manthia Diawara
Book and DVD
Published with Prestel, Munich, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

2011
Cultural Emergency Response in Violent Conflict and Disaster
Els van der Plas
Published with NAi010

BIOGRAPHIES

DAPO ADENIYI started his career on radio and television. His first play was broadcast on BBC World Service in 1986. He became a British Council Fellow in Downing College, University of Cambridge in 1994. He was appointed to write the television adaptation for the famous childhood memoir by Wole Soyinka entitled *Ake* by the Nigerian Television Authority, which he eventually adapted for film and directed and screened in Lagos and Cannes in 2016. He has also been a prominent name in Nigerian literature and journalism and has translated indigenous literature to English and also served as editor for arts and culture for the Nigerian Times. He was a visiting editor to the *Times Literary Supplement* of London.

SHAHIDUL ALAM is a photographer, writer and curator and Time Magazine Person of the Year 2018. Alam has championed human rights throughout his career. Recipient of the Shilpakala Award, the highest national award given to Bangladeshi artists and a former president of the Bangladesh Photographic Society, Alam's work has been exhibited internationally. Alam is a visiting professor of Sunderland University and RMIT and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. He was arrested in 2018 for criticising his government and spent 107 days in jail, but was released on bail following a massive international campaign. In 2020 Alam won the International Press Freedom Award conferred by the Committee to Protect Journalists and, in 2021, the inaugural CASE Award for Humanitarian of the Year. He is currently setting up a centre for investigative journalism in Bangladesh.

SAMMY BALOJI has been exploring the memory and history of the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2005. His work is an ongoing research on the cultural, architectural and industrial heritage of the Katanga region, as well as a questioning of the impact of Belgian colonisation. His video works, installations and photographic series highlight how identities are shaped, transformed, perverted and reinvented. His critical view of contemporary societies is a warning about how cultural clichés continue to shape collective memories and thus allow social and political power games to continue to dictate human behaviour. He lives and works between Lubumbashi and Brussels. Baloji was a Laureate of the Prince Claus Fund Awards in 2009.

GERSHWIN BONEVACIA is a poet and spoken word artist. Since March 2019 Gershwin has been the city poet of Amsterdam. Gershwin Bonevacia writes a monthly poem in *Het Parool* and is regularly part of cultural programmes. His poetry debut *I Bought a Bicycle* was self-published in 2017 and made into an underground classic by selling more than 6,000 copies. This year, his new poetry collection *When I was Little, I wasn't Afraid* was published by Das Mag and he translated the children's book *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem* by the renowned American poet and spoken word artist Amanda Gorman.

JOERI BOOM is an award-winning Dutch journalist and editor.

MAHMOUD DARWISH (1941–2008) was a poet and author regarded as the Palestinian National Poet. Over his lifetime, Darwish published more than 30 volumes of poetry and eight books of prose. He received many international awards for his work and served as the editor for many Palestinian literary publications. Darwish was a laureate of the Prince Claus Awards in 2004.

WASIS DIOP is an internationally renowned musician from Senegal, famous for blending traditional Senegalese folk music with modern pop and jazz. His first solo album came out in 1992, the soundtrack to the iconic film *Hyènes*, which was directed by his brother, Djibril Diop Mambety. Diop is viewed as one of the major international artists from Africa today, and alongside his solo career he has produced the soundtracks for many films.

ADRIAAN VAN DIS is an acclaimed Dutch writer, journalist and presenter. His novels have received numerous awards, as have his documentaries. He was an editor and writer for NRC Handelsblad, and for a decade hosted a literary talk show on Dutch television. Van Dis was on the board of the Prince Claus Fund in 1999, and co-editor of the volume *Het verleden onder ogen: Herdenking van de slavernij* ('Coming to terms with the Past: Commemorating Slavery').

CARLOS FUENTES (1928–2012) was a Mexican novelist and essayist, the author of books including *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1962), *Aura* (1962), *Terra Nostra* (1975), *The Old Gringo* (1985) and *Christopher Unborn* (1987). One of Mexico's most celebrated authors, his many literary honors include the Miguel de Cervantes Prize as well as Mexico's highest award, the Belisario Domínguez Medal of Honor (1999). In 1998 he gave the speech at the Prince Claus Fund Awards Ceremony.

MAI GHOUSSOUB (1952–2007) was a Lebanese writer, artist, publisher and activist. She was the co-founder of the Saki bookshop and publishing house in London, the first to specialise in Arabic works. An important member of the Prince Claus Fund's network, Ghoussoub was on the Prince Claus Fund Awards Committee from 1998–2001.

PAUL GILROY is an English sociologist and cultural studies scholar. The founding Director of the Sarah Parker Remond Centre for the Study of Race and Racism at University College, London, Gilroy is one of the foremost theorists of race and racism working and teaching in the world today. Author of foundational and highly influential books such as *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), *Against Race* (2000), *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005) and *Darker Than Blue* (2010) alongside numerous key articles, essays and critical interventions. In 2019 he was awarded the prestigious Holberg Prize.

LILIAN GONÇALVES – HO KANG YOU is a Surinamese-Dutch jurist and human rights activist. Following the 1980 coup in Suriname, her husband became an outspoken critic of the military regime. After his assassination in 1982, she was forced to flee to Amsterdam with her daughter Valérie and was granted political asylum there. She has since become an inter alia councillor of the Dutch Council of State, is also a former Chair of the Prince Claus Fund as well as a former Chair of Amnesty International. She served on two advisory boards to the Netherlands government that dealt with the Restitution of Colonial Heritage and with the Dutch Slavery Past and its continuing impact on contemporary society.

RULA HALAWANI holds a BA in Advanced Photography from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada (1989); and a Master of Art degree in Photographic Studies from the University of Westminster, London (2001). Halawani is based in Jerusalem. Halawani's work has been exhibited extensively internationally, and her photographs are held in numerous international museum collections. *Palestine* (2008), the artist's first monograph, was published by La Lettre Volée, Brussels in conjunction with her mid-career retrospective at the Botanique Museum. In 2016, Halawani received a residency fellowship at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France.

REMA HAMMAMI is an associate professor of anthropology at Birzeit University where she has been a faculty member in the Institute of Women's Studies since 1995. Her publications cover a wide array of issues as they relate to the Palestinian context, including: gender, nationalism, and armed conflict; NGOs, politics, and civil society; and everyday geographies of spatial control and resistance. She was appointed as the Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity for 2005–2006 at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague. Hammami was a member of the Prince Claus Fund Award Committee from 2011–2014.

HOU HANRU, is an international curator, critic and prolific writer, based in Paris and Rome where he has been Artistic Director of MAXXI, Italy's National Museum of 21st Century Arts, since 2013. Born in Guangzhou, China, Hou graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and moved to Paris in 1990. After 16 years working as an independent curator and critic, he moved to the US and became Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs and Chair of Exhibitions and Museum Studies at the San Francisco Art Institute, positions he held until 2012. During the course of his career, he has curated and co-curated more than 100 exhibitions at leading institutions and events around the world. Hou also consults for and advises numerous cultural institutions, serves on arts juries, lectures at international institutions, guest edits art journals and is the author of many articles and books.

SALAH M. HASSAN is Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in Africana Studies, at Cornell University, and Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE. He is an art critic and curator, and editor and co-founder of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Duke University Press). He authored, edited and co-edited several books *including Darfur and the Crisis of Governance: A Critical Reader* (2009), *Diaspora, Memory, Place* (2008); *Unpacking Europe* (2001); *Authentic/Ex-Centric* (2001); and *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist*, (2012) and most recently *Ahmed Morsi: A Dialogic Imagination* (2021). He curated several exhibitions including The Khartoum School: The Making of the Modern Art Movement in Sudan, 1945–2016 (2016–2017), and When Art Becomes Liberty: The Egyptian Surrealists (1938–1965) (2016). He is the recipient of several grants and award, including the J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship, the Sharjah Art Foundation, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Andy Warhol Foundation and Prince Claus Fund. Hassan has been honoured as the 2021 Distinguished Professor by the College Art Association.

ILA KASEM is Chair of the Board of the Prince Claus Fund. He is Managing Partner of Van de Bunt Adviseurs. From 2005 to 2014 Kasem served on the supervisory board of WWF The Netherlands and since 2014 he is a member of the Board of Trustees of WWF UK. He is Chair of the Board of Amnesty International Netherlands, Chair of the charity The Morocco Fund, and Chair of Society Impact (an NGO dedicated to the development of links between public and private institutions to promote social impact in the Netherlands). He is also a member of the Supervisory Boards of Het Mauritshuis and of the Giving Back Foundation.

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE is internationally acclaimed for his drawings, films, theatre and opera productions. Kentridge's work has been seen in museums and galleries around the world since the 1990. He has participated a number of times in Documenta in Kassel (2012, 2002, 1997) and the Venice Biennale (2015, 2013, 2005, 1999 and 1993). Kentridge is the recipient of honorary doctorates from several universities including Yale and the University of London. In 2010, he received the Kyoto Prize. In 2012 he presented the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University. In 2017, he received the Princesa de Asturias Award for the arts, and in 2018, the Antonio Feltrinelli International Prize. In 2019 he received the Praemium Imperiale award in painting in Tokyo. In 2021 he was elected as a foreign associate member to the French Academie des Beaux Arts.

OMARA KHAN MASSOUDI is an Afghan museum director. He has been instrumental in protecting Afghan cultural heritage during the country's instability over the last three decades. Since 2001 he has been director of the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul. He was a laureate of the Prince Claus Award in 2004. In 2013 he received an honorary doctorate from NYU, New York.

KOULSY LAMKO is a playwright, poet, and author of short stories, narratives, and screenplays. He was exiled from his native Chad in 1983. Lamko has won many prizes for his writing. His plays have been produced throughout Africa and Europe and in Canada. He founded the Kaleido Culture Project in Burkina Faso, and has led playwriting workshops and conferences in this capacity. From 1998 to 2002, he was director of the University Centre for Arts and Drama in Butare, Rwanda, and taught creative writing and performing arts at the National University of Rwanda. Lamko currently lives in Mexico City, where he is the Coordinator of Cultural Diffusion in the Universidad Autonoma de la Ciudad de Mexico.

ACHILLE MBEMBE, born in Cameroon, obtained his PhD in History at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1989 and a D.E.A. in Political Science at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. He was Assistant Professor of History at Columbia University, New York (1988–1991), a Senior Research Fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C. (1991–1992), Associate Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania (1992–1996), Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar, Senegal (1996–2000). He was also a Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley (2001), at Yale

University (2003), at the University of California at Irvine (2004–2005), at Duke University (2006–2011) and at Harvard University (2012). He has been awarded numerous awards including the 2015 Geschwister-Scholl-Preis, the 2018 Gerda Henkel Award and the 2018 Ernst Bloch Award. A co-founder of Les Ateliers de la pensee de Dakar and a major figure in the emergence of a new wave of French critical theory, he has written extensively on contemporary politics and philosophy, including *On the Postcolony* (2001), *Critique of Black Reason* (2016), *Necropolitics* (2019) and *Out of the Dark Night. Essays on Decolonization* (2020).

ZANELE MUHOLI is a visual activist, humanitarian and photographer from Umlazi, Durban. They currently live and work in Umbumbulu. Muholi is invested in educational activism, community outreach and youth development. Muholi studied Advanced Photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, and in 2009 completed an MFA: Documentary Media at Ryerson University, Toronto. In 2013, they became an Honorary Professor at the University of the Arts/Hochschule für Künste Bremen. They have been the recipient of numerous international awards, including the 2013 Prince Claus Award, and their work has been shown globally and is in many international collections.

ANKE NIEHOF spent five years of her late childhood in the culturally diverse country of Surinam. She studied cultural anthropology and Indonesian studies. Upon graduation, she lived and worked in Indonesia as a researcher and as a consultant during three periods, for altogether ten years. Based on fieldwork in Madura, Indonesia, in 1985 she obtained her doctorate at Leiden University. In the Netherlands, she worked for the Indonesian Studies Program and at the Policy Preparation Bureau for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her portfolio – Culture and Development – was of great interest to Prince Claus, and she benefited from his knowledgeability and ideas. During 1993–2013, she was a Professor of Sociology at Wageningen University, where she worked on rural sub-Saharan Africa and had many African PhD students. In 1996, she became the first Chair of the Board of the Prince Claus Fund.

JD 'OKHAI OJEIKERE (1930–2014) was a Nigerian photographer known for his work with unique hairstyles found in Nigeria. His series of photographs of hairstyles numbers almost 20,000 negatives and 1,000 prints, intended to document what Ojeikere first believed to be a vanishing art. As the project continued, however, he discovered how local traditions were changing and adapting. His photographs have been internationally exhibited and are to be found in many well-known collections.

ONG KENG SEN is artistic director of TheatreWorks and the artspace 72-13 in Singapore. He founded the Arts Network Asia and the international Curators Academy. He created the nomadic, international artist residency, The Flying Circus Project. Ong is the Founding Festival Director of the all-new Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA). He was a Fulbright Scholar and was awarded the Fukuoka Asian Arts and Culture Prize in 2010. He recently inaugurated an international, digital lecture programme for the Curators Academy with the lecture series 'Curating No-thing'. Since the 2020/2021 season he has been a member of the Artistic Advisory Board of the Gorki Theatre. He holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. Ong Keng Sen was a member of the Prince Claus Awards Committee from 2012–2015.

ELS VAN DER PLAS was the director of the Prince Claus Fund from its inception in 1997. She was the founding director of the Gate Foundation, and director of Premsela, the Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion. In 2012 she was appointed general director of The Amsterdam Music Theatre, De Nederlandse Opera and Dutch National Ballet. Van der Plas was a member of the Supervisory Board of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (2004–2009) and the Supervisory Board of the Museum of Bags and Purses, as well as a member of the juries of the Curry Stone Design Prize in New York (2008) and the Princess Margriet Award (2011–2014). Since 2020 she has been business director of the Bonnefanten Museum.

DJAMILA RIBERO holds a degree in Philosophy and a Masters in Political Philosophy from the Federal University of São Paulo. A writer and editor, she is also a visiting professor at the department of journalism at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) and currently a fellow at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany. She is a columnist for *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper and ELLE Brasil magazine. She was awarded the 2019 Prince Claus Award and was considered by the BBC as one of the 100 most influential women in the world. In 2020, she won the Jabuti Prize, the most important in the Brazilian literary world. In 2021, she was the first Brazilian to be honoured by the BET Awards, given by the black community of the USA.

ALBIE SACHS is a South African activist, lawyer, writer and a former judge who served on the first Constitutional Court of South Africa. After twice being detained in South Africa for his anti-apartheid activities, in 1966 he went into exile in England. Later he lived in Mozambique, where he was the victim of a car bombing executed by the South African security services. He lost his right arm and vision in one eye. In 1990 Sachs returned to South Africa to help write the Constitution of South Africa and later to serve for fifteen years on the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Sachs gave the speech at the Prince Claus Awards Ceremony in 1999.

SALMA SAMAR DAMLUJI is a British-Iraqi architect, author and professor at the American University of Beirut since 2013 as Binladin Chair for Architecture in the Islamic World. In 2007 she founded with colleagues in Hadramut Daw'an Architecture Foundation (Yemen), for earth construction. The Foundation has been engaged in emergency and post-war reconstruction in Hadramut, in partnership with the Prince Claus Fund's Cultural Emergency Response (CER) & Network since 2008. Her publications include *The Architecture of Yemen and its Reconstruction* (2021), *Hassan Fathy: Earth & Utopia* (2018), *The Architecture of the UAE* (2006) and *The Architecture of Oman* (1998). Damluji was elected Member of the Académie d'Architecture in 2017, received the Académie d'Architecture's Silver Restoration Award in 2015 and the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture in 2012.

WANG SHIXIANG (1914–2009) was a researcher of traditional Chinese culture, leading art collector, poet, and Chinese character calligrapher. Wang was known for his extensive study of a wide range of cultural relics, artifacts, and manifestations, including furniture, Chinese lacquer art, bamboo carvings, pigeon whistles, a large number of traditional crafts and music. Altogether, he published over forty books. *Classic Chinese Furniture: Ming and Early Qing Dynasties* is considered his most important work and is the first book about Chinese classical furniture to be written by a Chinese author. He was a laureate of the Prince Claus Awards in 2003.

ADRIAAN VAN DER STAAY is emeritus professor at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, at the Faculty of History and Art, and is chairman and member of the board of numerous cultural institutions in the Netherlands and abroad. In the past he has published extensively on the subject of cultural politics. Van der Staay was on the board of the Prince Claus Fund from 1998–2003 and the chair of the Culture and Development Committee from 2005–2007.

NEWSHA TAVOKLIAN began working for the Iranian press at the age of 16, covering wars in Iraq and a range of social issues in her native Iran. Through her lens, Tavakolian explores social experiences in her homeland and human conflicts close and near. Tavakolian has photographed female guerrilla fighters in Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria and Colombia, prohibited Iranian female singers and the lives of people living under sanctions. Tavakolian was the fifth laureate of the 2014 Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Award and the principle laureate of the 2015 Prince Claus Award. Tavakolian's work has found its place within the private collections of international institutions and collectors. Tavakolian became a Magnum Member in 2019.

MARCUS TEBOGO DESANDO is the Director of the Prince Claus Fund. He has been CEO of The Arts and Culture Trust, Johannesburg, since 2017. Prior to that, he was the CEO of Gauteng Opera in Johannesburg and Artistic Director of BTE VO1SS (formerly Black Tie Ensemble). He is a professional singer who has directed, conducted and performed in South Africa and with international companies such as Really Useful Artists and New York Harlem Productions. Marcus Desando has become a driving force in the development and training of young South African artists and aspiring arts administrators.

JAMES IROHA UCHECHUKWU originally trained as a sculptor before beginning to work with photography. As regards technique, his approach is largely construction and deconstruction of the visual plane trying to find the relationship and the workability between two and three dimensional design. His work was presented at Okwui Enwezor's landmark exhibition at the International Center for Photography New York titled Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography in 2006. He was awarded the Prince Claus Award in 2008. He curated 2018 and 2019 Abuja Photo Festival. Iroha works as a conductor at Photo. Garage Lagos an office the provide logistics as well as offers an indigenous platform for domestic and global intellectual photography exchanges. He lives and works between Houston, Texas and Lagos Nigeria. Uchechukwu was a Laureate of the Prince Claus Fund Awards in 2008.

MISHA VALLEJO PRUT is a visual artist and audiovisual storyteller whose work lies on the border between documentary and art. He has an MA in Documentary Photography from the University of the Arts London. He was a recipient of the Goethe Institut and Prince Claus Fund programme for Cultural and Artistic Response for Environmental Change in 2018, the Photo Europe Network Prize at the PhotOn Festival in Valencia in 2018 and the Ecuadorian National Arts Prize Mariano Aguilera in 2015. His work has been exhibited in galleries, cultural centres and festivals around the world and has been published in a wide range of media. He has published three award winning photobooks and the interactive web documentary. Currently he is working on his first feature documentary film Light Memories in Ecuador and works in other art projects throughout Latin America and Europe.

MARTÍN WEBER is a multimedia artist. *Map of Latin American Dreams*, his first film won in 2021 Best Document at the Guanajuato International Film Festival, Jury Prize at Ismailia Film Festival and Special Mention at the Semana de Cine de Lugo. In 2020 won Prix Documentaire Cinélatino/Toulouse, Best Documentary Feature/Seattle Latino Film Festival, Best International Documentary/Festival Ícaro, and Menção Honrosa/Brasilia International Film Festival. In 2019 Weber received the International Award in Photography/CRAF, and in 2016 the Grand Prize on Installations and Alternative Media in Argentina. He also received grants from the Prince Claus Fund, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Magnum Foundation Fund, Silver Eye Award, No Strings Foundation, Hasselblad, The Fundación Klemm, Fondo Nacional de las Artes, and Mecenazgo. His work is featured in three books: *Mario. Saved Calls*, *Map of Latin American Dreams* and *Echoes from the Interior*.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRINCE CLAUS FUND

Published and produced by the
Prince Claus Fund, Amsterdam
Editors: Fariba Derakhshani, Thomas Roueché
Design: Irma Boom with Anna Moschioni, Frederik Pesch
Editorial assistants: Fernando Montiero, Kerem Çelikoglu, Kavya Venkatraman
Printing: Zwaan Lenoir, Wormerveer

Printed and bound in The Netherlands

Kingsfordweg 151
1043 GR Amsterdam
Netherlands

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princeclausfund.org

The Prince Claus Fund wishes to thank:
All organisations and individuals who supported us throughout 25 years.

We would especially like to thank:
Our Funding Partners
The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The Dutch Postcode Lottery

In-kind donors
KLM
Luxury Hotels of Amsterdam
De L'Europe Amsterdam

Special thanks
Irma Boom for her long term support of the Fund and support with this publication.
Malu Halasa for her long-time involvement with the publications of the Fund, and her help with the archival production of this publication.

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ISBN 978-90-830350-3-1

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