



SHARED SPACES:

CONNEXION KIN  
KINSHASA CONNECTION

connexion kin



FESTIVAL  
THEATER-  
FORMEN

**connexion kin**

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# EDITORIAL

In the beginning there was a declined application: in 2011 the KVS in Brussels, together with partners submitted a project for funding by the EU program “Investing in people”. The objective was to start a project to support a sustainable participation in global cultural exchange of artists especially from countries in the South. Although the project was not granted funding, the partners involved did not want to give up the idea. They decided to create at least an informal network – Shared Spaces. To define common goals and decide on modes of operation a first founding meeting was necessary, which in terms of participation was not to be held in Europe. So the meeting was set up for June 2013 in Kinshasa.

For this meeting of the network partners we were able to gain the support of the German Federal Cultural Foundation, which enabled the cooperation of the festivals Connexion Kin and Theaterformen on a certain number of concrete projects. The International Academy of Festival Grant Holders offered non-academic advanced training to nine young artists in form of a collective trip to the festivals in Kinshasa and Hanover. Numerous discussions, lectures and artistic exchanges were set up. Above all, four plays, coproduced by both festivals were at the centre of this first Shared Spaces platform. Brett Bailey, Faustin Linyekula, Dieudonné Niangouna and Boyzie Cekwana are four artists from the African continent who live the participation in global exchange already today. Their experiences, their doubts and especially their artistic positions were the guidelines for the establishment of Shared Spaces.

In Kinshasa, Shared Spaces became an open and informal project, based on direct action and the expertise of its members, and concretely started working. Sincere thanks to the German Federal Cultural Foundation for the substantial support!

The next Shared Spaces network partner meeting will be held in Ramallah in April 2014.

# CONTENT

<b>Editorial</b>	02
<b>Chronology of events</b>	04-12
<b>City of spectacles!</b>	13-14
<b>COPRODUCTIONS</b>	
<b>Drums and Digging</b>	15-22
<b>In Case Of Fire, Run For The Elevator</b>	23-26
<b>La fin de la légende</b>	27-28
<b>Congo Connection</b>	29-31
<b>Macbeth</b>	32-35
<b>SHARED SPACES</b>	
<b>Network Partner Meeting</b>	36-43
<b>Challenges of intercontinental networks in the theatre</b>	44-55
<b>Colloquium</b>	56-63
<b>Academy of festival grant-holders</b>	64-72
<b>Press</b>	73-74
<b>Participants</b>	75-85
<b>Imprint</b>	86

# CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS



## CONNEXION KIN FESTIVAL IN KINSHASA

7.-16.6.2013

FRI 7.06.



### 18H TIMBILA TRACKS

#### Video-concert

Matchume Zango performs live on various percussion instruments accompanying shoots from Mozambique by Walter Verdin.

Production **Videolepsia (Ex-Corban) 2010**

### 19H BOYOKA

#### Dance

"Only my body knows my story" Dinozord says. It is his body which tells the story of the boy expelled as a "witch child", who found his language and identity in dance, music and sculpture.

By and with **Dinozord, Yann Leguay** Mentoring **Faustin**



**Linyekula, Papy Ebotani** Light **Virginie Galas** Production **Studios Kabako**  
Coproductio **KVS Brussels, Parc de la Villette** With support from **Institut Français Halle de la Gombe, Cultural Centre Les Bèjarts**



### 20H TOUT GRAND BASOKIN

#### Concert

Since 30 years the orchestra TG Basokin unites traditional congolese sounds with contemporary influences into an exceptional style.

SAT 8.06.



### All day BIENVENU CHEZ NANGA

#### Exhibition

Bienvenu Nanga invites into his studio und presents his newest robots and spaceships – all of them built with collected material from the streets.



16H  
MUTATIONS / KOLWEZI

**Exhibition**

In the spaces and gardens of the artistic collective Collectif Sadi the work of two important congolese photo artists are presented: Sammy Baloji shows photo compositions in which he contrasts the exploitation of mineral mines in Katanga with chinese advertising posters. Kiripi Katembos photographs discover hidden surreal beauty in the self-organised urban spaces of Kinshasa.

Photos by **Sammy Baloji, Kiripi Katembo** Production **KVS Brussels, 11.11.11., Theater an Zee**

18H  
BOYOKA

**Dance**

19H  
MACBETH (PRESENTATION)

**Music theatre, work in progress**

A troupe of refugee-performers from the Eastern Congo discovers musical scores, costumes and recordings of Verdi's opera "Macbeth". Based on this fiction Brett Bailey develops a contemporary version of this opera in cooperation with the composer Fabrizio Cassol. In Kinshasa he presents initial ideas and concepts of the production, which will be staged in 2014.

See pages 32-35

20H  
MJ 30

**Concert**

R&B Rumba "Mastavoice", garnished with traditional music influences of the Congo.



SUN 9.06.

All day  
BIENVENU CHEZ NANGA

**Exhibition**

18H  
BOYOKA

**Dance**



19H  
GUINCHE

**Dance**

Guintche is what Marlene Monteiro Freitas named the character that undergoes ongoing expressive metamorphoses and change of personality.

By and with **Marlene Monteiro Freitas** Light **Yannick Fouassier**

Music **Johannes Krieger, Cookie, Otomo Yoshihide, Anatol Waschke** Costumes **Catarina Varatojo** Production **Bomba Suicida**



20H  
KINSHASOUND

**Concert**

Dinozord and his friends from Bandal create an urban contemporary sound: Slam, Rap, Rock – wake-up music!

MON 10.06.

18H  
ENTRE DEUX...

**Dance theatre**

The solo of the young performer Dorine Mokha is a dialogue: "between me and me, between you and me, between my Dad and me, politics and me, between silence and sound, voice and movement..."

By and with **Dorine Mokha** Sound **Franck Moka dit F.M**

Production **Studios Kabako**

19H  
REV'ILLUSION

**Dance**

The Moroccan choreographer Taoufiq Izzeddiou trusts the language of dance in order to tell about political, personal and social rejections in his home country.

Choreography **Taoufiq Izzeddiou** with **Taoufiq Izzeddiou, Fany Broyaux,**

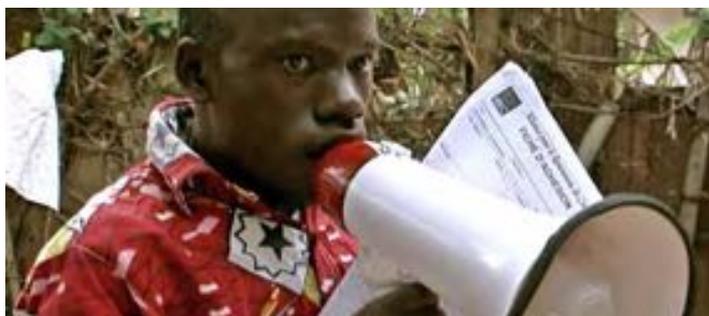
**Said Ait El Moumen, Kamal Aadissa** Stage **Hassab Darsi** Music **Carmen Blanco**

Principal Light **Gregory Rivoux** Sound **Jeremy Trossat** Production **Compagnie**

**Anania**

19H  
BOYOKA

**Dance**



19H  
ATALAKU

**Documentary**

Dieudo Hamadi documents the elections in 2011 by following simple citizens from Kinshasa who get politically involved – moving and fascinating!

20H  
BASI NA MIZIK

**Concert**

Resulting from a development project aiming at supporting Congolese female artists Basi Na Mizik has immediately developed into a high professional, pure female band.

TUE 11.06.

10H  
SHARED SPACES NETWORK PARTNER MEETING

**Conference**

Meeting for the foundation of the intercontinental cooperation network Shared Spaces with Key Notes from Faustin Linyekula (Studios Kabako, RDC), Ntone Edjabe (Chimurenga, South Africa) and Elvira Dyanghani (Tate Modern, UK). Round-tables for information and exchange on the situation and needs of the artists in Kinshasa and the african continent. With input from Djodjo Kazadi, Toto Kisaku, Jolie Ngemi, Dinozord, Sello Pesa, Taoufiq Izzeddiou, Boyzie Cekwana and Billy Kahora.

Sponsored by the German Federal Cultural Foundation

Thanks to **Cultural Centre Les Bèjarts Kinshasa**

See pages 36-41

18H  
DRUMS AND DIGGING

**Dance**

The Congo that Faustin Linyekula grew up in does not exist anymore. But what has remained? On journeys, in songs and memories he searches, together with his artist friends, for the fragile identity of his disenchanted home country.

See pagee 16-22



19H  
MOZIKI LITTÉRAIRE

**Dramatic reading**

Three young Congolese authors share the passion of telling about life and dreams in Congo although they live on three different continents: Papy Mbwiti lives in Kinshasa, Fiston Mujila in Austria and Bibish Mumbu in Canada. For some time now they publish texts under the title Moziki Littéraire together, on the website Africultures. They perform together for the first time.

By and with **Bibish Mumbu, Fiston Mujila, Papy Mbwiti**



20H  
JUPITER & OKWESS INTERNATIONAL

**Concert**

Jupiter's international fame does not disconnect him from his roots: the music on the streets of Kinshasa. Political and social topics combined with traditional Congolese rhythm, funk and rock are his recipe for success.



19H  
LA LANGUE DE MA MÈRE / FORTERESSE EUROPE

**Dramatic reading**

The renowned Belgian author Tom Lanoye performs the stage version of his autobiographical novel. In a dense monologue he tells about his mother's aphasia and his childhood in a working-class district.

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**WED 12.06.**

10H  
SHARED SPACES NETWORK PARTNER MEETING

**Meeting of the network**

Discussion about principles and goals of Shared Spaces with the founding members

Valerie Baran, Eduardo Bonito, Boyzie Cekwana, Anja Dirks, Virginie Dupray, Fred Frumberg, Jan Goossens, Henrike Grohs, Patricio Ieretic, Paul Kerstens, Frie Leysen, Sandro Lunin, Mark Murphy, Nisreen Naffa, Joanna Nuckowska, Sello Pesa, Carla Peterson, Gabrielle von Brochowski, Katharina von Ruckteschell, Thomas Walgrave, Marÿa Wethers and Natasa Zavolovsek

See pages 42-43

18H  
DRUMS AND DIGGING

**Dance**

19H  
MOZIKI LITTÉRAIRE

**Dramatic reading**



20H  
BEBSON DE LA RUE & TRIONYX

**Concert**

The rapper, singer and MC Bebson is one of the most inspired artists in Kinshasa. The movie Kinshasa Kids made him internationally famous – at home no one has to introduce him anymore.

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**THU 13.06.**

18H  
LA FIN DE LA LÉGENDE

**Performance**

Dieudonné Niangouna combines texts by Heiner Müller, Sarah Kane and Bernhard-Marie Koltès as well as improvisations of his actors from three different African countries to a fulminant farewell on myths and legends of any kind. Chaos, life and energy in African mega cities inspire the artists to create an alternative draft.

See pages 27-28

19H  
MOZIKI LITTÉRAIRE

**Dramatic reading**

19H  
ATALAKU

**Documentary**

20H  
NSANG

**Concert**

In the Bunda language the idiom "Nsang" means a gathering of wise men facing a cultural issue. The question is: what to do with traditional music? The answer is also the style of "Nsang": add new sounds, mix languages, ready is the "sauce congolaise"!

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**FRI 14.06.**

18H  
LA FIN DE LA LÉGENDE

**Performance**

19H  
BOÎTES EN CARTON

**Dramatic reading**

Boîtes en Carton, the novel that became his breakthrough, is presented by Tom Lanoye in a scenic reading as well. The story of a coming-out in post-war Belgium.



20H  
RUSSEL TSHIEBUA

**Concert**

Well known as the singer of the legendary Les Washiba Orchestra by Moïse Ilunga, Russel Tshiebua is involved in several artistic projects today – for example with his own band.

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**SAT 15.06.**



18H  
RÊVE D'ALLER RETOUR

**Dance**

Patrick Haradjabu and Didier Ediho are from the universe of the Sapeurs, the Dandies of the slums for whom the right look means the promise of an utopia. Dreams of a back and forth between different poles are the starting point of their work.

19H  
IN CASE OF FIRE, RUN FOR THE ELEVATOR

**Dance theatre**

Three messed up super heroes, some living chicken and a portion of chicken wings – with few tools and undaunted sarcasm Boyzie Cekwana stages annoying subjects in a cheerful way. North-South, poor-rich, hungry-sated; with subtle humour he subverts common clichés and stereotypes.

**See page 23-26**



19H  
SNAKE DANCE

**Documentary**

In his documentary Manu Riche tells about the development of the nuclear bomb, starting in the mines of Katanga until the airdrop over Hiroshima, as a tale about the human being and the decisions he makes.

Script and direction **Manu Riche**, Patrick Marnham Video editing **Michèle**

Hubinon Camera **Renaat Lambeets** Sound **Luc Cuveele** Production **Manu Riche**



19H  
TOUT PUISSANT MUKALO

**Concert**

The young band from Ndjili fascinates the audience with their energy and creativity each time they perform.

20H  
CARTEL YOLO

**Concert**

Known since 2005 and because of their hit Molo Tshangwe Cartel Yolo developed from rap to a much wider music style which they call OKS: "Originale Kulture du Son".

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**SUN 16.06.**

18H  
LA LANGUE DE MA MÈRE / FORTERESSE EUROPE

**Dramatic reading**

19H  
IN CASE OF FIRE RUN FOR THE ELEVATOR

**Dance theatre**



20H  
BAKA FORME

**Installation and performance**

The Collectif Sadi stages a spectacle with 11 Sapeurs from Kinshasa

– the ultimate show-off about the five principles of the SAPE: harmony, style, performance, language and music. In short – it's about the art of living and the one big performance.

Production **Collectif Sadi** With support from **KVS Brussels**

20H  
TOUT PUISSANT MUKALO

**Concert**



FOCUS KINSHASA CONNECTION  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF  
FESTIVAL THEATERFORMEN HANOVER

20.-24.6.2013

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**THU 20.06.**

18H  
CONGO CONNECTION

**Audio exhibit**

Developed from interviews and documentary material, the Berlin-based Agentur Kriwomasow has created a multi-layered audio installation in the State Museum Hanover in which Hanover and the Congo are superimposed in unexpected ways.

See page 29-31



18H  
VIVA RIVA!

**Movie by Djo Tunda wa Munga**

His pockets full of money, Riva throws himself into the dazzling nightlife of Kinshasa and meets Nora, who is both beautiful and fatal. This is the start of a breath-taking and thrilling hunt through the third largest city in Africa...

20H  
DRUMS AND DIGGING

**Dance**

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**FRI 21.06.**

10-17H  
CONGO CONNECTION

**Audio exhibit**

17H  
KINSHASA SYMPHONY

**Documentary by Claus Wischmann / Martin Baer**

The Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste is the only symphony orchestra in Central Africa. This film is about people in Kinshasa and the power of music.

19H  
ON THE RUMBA RIVER – WENDO

**Documentary by Jacques Sarasin**

Moving music documentary about the legendary musician Papa Wendo.

19.30H  
IN CASE OF FIRE, RUN FOR THE ELEVATOR

**Dance theatre**

20H  
DRUMS AND DIGGING

**Dance**



21H  
BENDA BILILI!

**Documentary by Renaud Barret / Florent de La Tullaye**

Uplifting music-documentary about the amazing success story of a band of street musicians consisting of paraplegics from Kinshasa.

22H  
BUGARO INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

**Concert**

Twelve musicians from Congo, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, Germany, Spain and Poland, living in Hanover, present a beautifully wild, worth hearing and willing to move mix of rumba, reggae and merengue which is catchy and makes you dance.

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**SAT 22.06.**

10-17H  
CONGO CONNECTION

**Audio exhibit**



14.30H  
WHY KINSHASA?

**Colloquium**

Exchange, coproduction, and networks: it initially sounds like a good idea. Recently, several German cooperation programmes have been directed at the African continent. But what do artists expect of an "exchange"? What is "cooperation"? What can be made feasible by a coproduction? How can the success of these projects be measured? What role do racism and exoticism play in the mutual perception?

**Round Table 1**

What role does theatre play in which societies?

With the international festival grant-holders

**Round Table 2**

Artistic coproduction. Laboratory for dialogue, exchange and innovation?

With founding members of the Shared Spaces network

See pages 56-58

18H  
IN CASE OF FIRE, RUN FOR THE ELEVATOR

**Dance theatre**

18H  
VICTOIRE TERMINUS

**Documentary by Renaud Barret / Florent de La Tullaye**

Every day, Martini, Jeannette, Hélène und Rosette train in the boxing ring of the old stadium where the legendary Rumble in the Jungle took place in 1974. Vibrating with energy, this film is about sports, politics and survival.



19.30H  
NINE FINGER

**Dance theatre**

Through the eyes of a child soldier in a non-specific African country two brilliant performers tell the story of the perversity and consequences of war.

Choreographer Alain Platel, dancer Fumiyo Ikeda and actor Stijn van Opstal convey in an intense interaction of movement, language and sound what it must be like to be part of the machinery of war in which one gradually loses ones mind.

By **Fumiyo Ikeda, Alain Platel, Benjamin Verdonck** With **Fumiyo Ikeda, Stijn van Opstal** Set and light **Herman Sorgeloos** Costumes **Anne-Catherine Kunz** Production **KVS Brussels, Rosas Brussels** Coproduction **De Munt/La Monnaie** Translation **Rosemarie Still** Tour Management **Nicole Petit**

21H  
LA FIN DE LA LÉGENDE

**Performance**



22H  
AWESOME TAPES FROM AFRICA

Six years ago, the New York music ethnologist, blogger and cassette DJ Brian Shimkovitz, returned from Africa with a suitcase full of cassettes. Impressed by the musical diversity of the continent, his cassette DJ set reveals an unusual mix of traditional music from

the Maghreb, as well as hectic House rhythms from South Africa all collected in the streets and shops of Africa. Awesome!

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**SUN 23.06**

10-17H  
CONGO CONNECTION

**Audio exhibit**

11H  
WHY KINSHASA?

**Colloquium**

Panel discussion "Opportunities and hurdles for cultural cooperation"  
With Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider (University of Hildesheim); Jan Goossens (KVS Brussels), Alex Moussa Sawadogo (Festival Director Afrikamera / Aktuelles Kino aus Afrika and Moussokouma Festival, Berlin) Mariano Pensotti (Director / Buenos Aires)  
Presentation **Anja Dirks (Festival Theaterformen)**

See pages 59-63

18H  
BLOOD IN THE MOBILE

**Documentary by Frank Piasecki Poulsen**

For a long time, there has been a war going on in Eastern Congo. And this highly brutal war is financed by all involved groups through illegal dealing with minerals. This movie searches for the connection between this trade and mobile phones.

19H  
LA FIN DE LA LÉGENDE

**Performance**

19:30H  
NINE FINGER

**Dance theatre**

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**MON 24.06.**

17H  
CONGO RIVER – BEYOND DARKNESS

**Documentary by Thierry Michel**

A fascinating journey from the mouth to the source of the Congo River.

## CITY OF SPECTACLES!



A few words for a great lady whom I have known since I was little. Who saw my face day in, day out. The old dear with whom I grew up, studied, loved, cried and worked. The capital of the Congo, known as Kinshasa...

Kin is a theatre-city with its own codes, its own logic, its frenzies, its artists and its very own people. Kin la belle has character. Two keywords define her: noises and smells!

Take a taxi-bus and wander through the her harsh streets and you'll see. Or take an express taxi and go for a meal in the ngandas, or order a drink on one of the terraces full of pretty girls and rich men. If you enjoy travelling, as much as I do, take the bus and hang around the market. Within one hour you will have journeyed through China and the Senegal. You will see Fulas who will try to sell you their fabrics, called bazin, and who will swear that they come directly from Dakar; I will take you to Beirut, to the Lebanese fast food restaurants that have mushroomed in the centre of town. Or if you prefer, we can just go around the corner to the 3615, and eat a steak, medium rare.

Kinshasa is an incessant trial of strength. Between policemen and civilians, political and social, vendors and shoppers, traffic and driver, motorists and pedestrians, rulers and the governed, Christians and

pagans, private cars and taxis, husband and wife, father and son, man and woman... They are all saturated by the smells of grilled meat from the alleyways, the noise of traffic and the sound of the horns, the din of the vendors, in the pursuit of thieves or transport vehicles, in long political and religious discussions and the persistent trials of strength.

You can't be coy at the market, you must simply be alert and pay attention to your bag. If you don't like being pushed, touched, brushed, then you shouldn't go there. It isn't exactly a bed of roses, but it's a very lively city. Something is always going on. I can see the geared wheels of the city, they take hold; I know its twists and bends, the continuous flow, the naughty children who burgeon everywhere.

The large productions and guest appearances at festivals in Africa and Europe are the result of meticulous and diligent work. Life here is a permanent performance. Over there are luxury cars, and there, tottering taxi-buses. And there are schoolchildren and mothers, door-to-door pedlars. I can't say where to go and where not: all the images are one-of-a-kind.

The city overflows with artists, natural talents. It flows effortlessly, without even trying. From N'Djilito Gombe going through Binza or

Bandal, or even Lemba or Kingabwa, neighbourhoods and municipalities of Kin; they are out in droves. Despite the fact that the government remains blind to it, too preoccupied with a war that refuses to end, even that barely affects the "Kinois" temperament that struggles to imbue its daily life with beauty. Kinshasa remains, despite the current socio-economical and socio-political configuration as welcoming as its reputation. Its neighbourhoods and municipalities, Matonge, and increasingly Bandal, always provide the capitol with their cabris, kamundele, dindon, "ya jean", tige, a variety of different meat dishes that are worth discovering. Kin's proliferation of theatrical groups, its revivalist churches or music groups remain a vendor of dreams for everyone. The city resembles a village that is both friendly and cheerful, hard and enduring, inventive and frenzied. I always and continuously want to convey its finest moments, the city of a thousand faces, Kinshasa, centre of my village. I have 243 reasons - it is the Congolese prefix - to introduce you to this urban area, and you will have just as many ways of discovering all

its attractions. I am more than attached to this huge city, even though I have a good mind to handcuff all the cell phone thieves in the city.

Kin, city without peer, Kin, you will not give way, Kin, not the least bit commonplace... where everything can be bought and sold, absolutely everything, commencing with water - the elixir of life!

One might think and believe that I am in conflict with Kin. But we are one... I am simply Kin's disturbing silence...because my culture is the culture of noise.

Silence is disturbing. It is heavy. It always conceals something. It brings bad news. It announces electricity cuts and disasters that plunge everything into silence. However, when you observe the people, watch them live, you see how they reject the silence...

Just like those of you who are reading me now! I'm quite sure that you will yet again break my silence.

Am I mistaken?



# COPRODUCTIONS



# DRUMS AND DIGGING

Stories from a disenchanted country



Faustin Linyekula returned to his home country twelve years ago. Despite the legacy of terror, war and fear, he founded the Studios Kabako: a lab for research, training and production, and a visionary space for art, beauty and dreams. A courtyard under the open sky is the rehearsal stage, fenced in by bamboo canes, exposed to the noise, life and activities of the adjoining street. This is where the play begins with questions: Why hadn't we left long ago? What keeps us here? What had we hoped for?

Once upon a time, there was a marshal with a leopard skin toque. He built himself palaces in the jungle and was the president of a country named Zaïre. Véronique, whose family belonged to Mobutu's entourage, recalls the gardens of Gbadolite. In the 1970s, Mobutu expanded his home village of Gbadolite into a residential city. He didn't just build palaces for himself and his family, but turned Gbadolite into a second capital along with Kinshasa, from where he could reign in an emergency. After Mobutu was ousted, Gbadolite was taken over by the rebels. Today, the palaces and gardens remain, plundered, overgrown and abandoned.

Once upon a time, there was a village in North-Eastern Congo, 80 kilometres from Kisangani, close to the equator: a few houses, a

church, a football field, train tracks that connect the village with the outside world. There, in Obilo, they had dances for every occasion. Faustin lived there as a child. He remembers that he was not permitted to take part in the secret, nocturnal dances. Today, the residents of Obilo have turned to Christian sects. They no longer dance at night.

Faustin Linyekula, Véronique Aka Kwadeba and their allies take the audience on a journey back to their childhoods: What remains of the dreams of this country? What remains of a childhood? The piece is based on the artists' own memories. But questions about forgetting, about repressed memories, are also at the centre of the production. What is left for them, for their families and friends, after the terror, the years of war and economic collapse?

A narrator called Kabako initiates the search for traces of the past. He is a storyteller who doesn't want to tell only stories of misery in the Congo. Looking for a "fresh breeze", he attempts, together with a group of six dancers, actors and musicians, to dig into their own his-

tory and that of the Congo, and to find stories beyond the suffering of the past. Its title "Drums and Digging" is the leitmotif of the production. Using dance, song and language, the performers dig into their own stories, backed by the driving sounds of drums from Obilo. From autobiographical passages, old songs, new dances and surrealistic dream narratives, they construct their fragile dream of the Congo.

Artistic Director **Faustin Linyekula** With **Papy Ebotani, Véronique Aka Kwadeba, Rosette Lemba, Faustin Linyekula, Pasco Losanganya, Yves Mwamba, Pansas Stage Bärbel Müller** Lighting **Virginie Galas** Assistant director **Dorine Mokha** Costumes **Ignace Yenga** Production **Studios Kabako – Virginie Dupray** Coproduction **Festival d'Avignon, KVS Brussels, Théâtre de la Ville Paris, Theaterformen Hannover/Braunschweig, Pamoja – a Studios Kabako project within the framework of the ACP-UE assistance programmes in the cultural sector financed by the European Union**



# EXTRACT FROM DRUMS AND DIGGING

Gbadolite. Gbadolite was initially a village that belonged to the Lité group from the colonial times into the first era of the Republic. The Lité group consisted of the following villages: Gbado, Nganza, Tudu, Bambu, Pangoma, Moanda, Kawele and Molegbe, a dependant territory of Mobayi- Mbongo.

On Friday October 13, 1963, on the eve of his thirty-third birthday, Major General Joseph Désiré Mobutu, chief of staff of the Congolese army has a dream.

A dream in which he sees four cats dancing around a well, four cats who invite him to look at the bottom of the well.

Intrigued, he advances and sees his village, Gbado, become a city. And he hears singing, Gbandi songs.

Upon awaking, everything is ready for a banquet in his honour, a banquet he declines in order to take a plane headed for the Mobayi-Mbongo territory where he is greeted and lodged in Molegbe. From Molegbe, he drives to Gbado to meet the traditional Lité chief. And to share his dream with him.

But the latter beats him to it: «Son, I have been expecting you, you and your dream. You were chosen by the ancestors to make a city out of this village; it will be the first city to be built by black men after the white man has left».

Satisfied with this exchange, the chief of staff Major General Mobutu decides that the future city will be baptised, Gbadolité, in honour of the traditional Lité chief.

On Wednesday November 24, 1965, the Lieutenant General has the same dream again; four cats dancing around a well and inviting him to look at the bottom. Yet again, he sees his village become a city, he sees the roads and he hears the singing, the Gbandi songs. The next day, convinced that he has been promised great things, he sends white men to Gbadolité, Belgians, among them M. Tricon who prepare the groundwork for what will become the arteries of the future city.



On Saturday May 20, 1967, he who has now become President of the Republic has the same dream again; four cats dancing around a well and inviting him to look.

Yet again, he sees his village become a city, he sees brick and cement buildings grow, and he hears the singing, the Gbandi songs. The next day, he decides to found a company, the Sakumo Company that becomes the Centre for Agricultural Development and is in charge of urbanising Gbadolite instead of the state. Major work begins.

On Wednesday October 27, 1971, Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Banga has the same dream again: four cats around a well inviting him to look.

He still sees the village become a city, but he has to listen hard to hear the Gbandi songs that are distant now.

He hardly notices and decides to continue work: the roads are asphalted, running water is installed. The first surveys for the Mobayi-Mbongo dam, a large hydro-electric dam that will see the light of day a few years later have been conducted.

On Sunday May 14, 1978, he has the same dream again, but strangely enough there are only three cats dancing around the well and inviting him to look.



He sees that his village has become a city, but the singing, the Gbandi songs have been replaced by voices, discussions, maybe arguments in Gbandi.

After awakening, he immediately boards a plane that takes him to the Mobayi Mbongo territory to meet with the traditional Lité chief and discuss the new developments in his dream.

«Son, I have been expecting you, you and your dream... Continue, the ancestors are encouraging you, but you have to think bigger...». This time it is an airport, an airport to link Gbadolite to the rest of the world, the international airport of Moanda, an airport that can welcome a supersonic plane, the Concorde from Paris! And since a new Pope has just arrived in Rome, we ought to build a chapel, a chapel made of white marble, with delicate stained-glass windows, a crypt, a majestic organ of blazing copper, and a choir that will sing in Latin in the tropics...

On Wednesday December 3, 1980, it is still the same dream but this time there are only two cats dancing around the well and inviting him to look.



He leans over and sees that his village has become a city, but he hears rumours, he senses movements, an agitation that comes from other cities in the Republic.

The next day, to chase the bad dream away, he decides to build two palaces in Gbadolite, one in Kawele and the other in Gbado.

On Tuesday April 24, 1990, the dream returns, but there is only one cat nervously moving around the well. Thrown off, the Marshal President cranes his neck and sees protest marches, demonstrations, shouts, protests; insults in all the languages of the country replace the Gbandi songs.

Frightened, he takes the plane back to the Mobayi-Mbongo territory and decides to relocate his capitol to Gbadolit ; from then on the Republic will be managed from his village turned city...

«Why not ? Nothing is missing here, we have our international airport, our hydro-electric dam, our large avenues illuminated all night long, our cathedral, our parks...»

On Friday May 16, 1997, the same dream returns, but not a trace of a cat, only the cursed well. Weakened and already ill, the Marshal moves towards the well with difficulty, but there are only lynchings, lootings, fire and blood at the bottom of the well. The airport is plundered, the palaces are plundered, the chapel is plundered, the tombs are opened...The chapel, my chapel, the last resting place of my greatest love and our children.

The Marshal removes his leopardskin toque, takes off his large tortoiseshell glasses, and wipes away a tear, «Understand my emotion...» Then he moves while repeating: «There is no gravity, there is no gravity...»

The Marshal will never relive the cats or the well.

«There is no gravity,» it is said that the last words he uttered from the depths of his exile were: «There is no gravity, there is no gravity...» and that he then remained silent until his death.

# INTERVIEW WITH FAUSTIN LINYEKULA

during the working process



**Renan Benyamina** Digging signifies breaking up, turning over, or removing. What were you looking for when you began with the Drums and Digging project?

**Faustin Linyekula** It began in 2011. I had been back in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for ten years after spending several years between Kenya, Réunion, Rwanda and Europe. Ten years in which I had embarked in the Studios Kabako adventure. I needed to take stock. I was aware of a constancy in my work: the insatiable desire to express my relationship to this country, to relate what I observed around me, of how the people continued to live, dream and dance within this political context.

As a consequence, I felt the need to return to myself, to dance, to what dance could become before or after the words, and I thought about Obilo, the village where I lived with my father who was a teacher until I was eight years old. My first memories of dance took place there. Something could develop by going there, to these dances. I returned for the first time in January 2011, for a week during which I met Hanabouton again, the great master drummer of my childhood. Meanwhile he had become a minister in a Protestant church and as a result he was not allowed to play the drums anymore. This replicated the bans imposed by the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 19th century who declared that the ancient traditions were demonic.

The Sunday before I left, I organised a celebration and invited another drummer, a pupil of Hanabouton to attend. The latter arrived and sat

next to the musicians. Once in a while, he got up and spurred them on with encouragements that can be translated as "Dig the drum!". Everything got started from there... Everything was not lost. If I were to return there to dig, then the sound of the drum would reawaken.

**RB** So you returned to Obilo to prepare your performance?

**FL** Yes, together with the entire team. And maybe the old master might play again...

While planning the trip I let my imagination run wild. Maybe he would be able to play provided that he took us deep into the forest, far from the sight of the community. But the sound of the drums carries far. We would have to move further away, maybe until we got lost. In thinking of this journey through the forest, reality soon caught up with me. In 1997, many Rwandan Hutu refugees were massacred in this area. After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, over two million Hutus had found refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During Kabila's triumphant march to seize power in Kinshasa in 1997 with the help of the Rwandan army, the army, in places, attacked the refugees. If we got lost in this forest we would possibly come across their ghosts.

While thinking about the drummer, I was reminded of a few verses written by the 8th century Chinese poet Meng Jiao: «What is left to be said when the sounds have disappeared? Once hope has died, the songs are in vain.» They seemed to express the situation of the old

music master: without hope, he must have wondered what was left to sing.

When I look back at my own path in the Democratic Republic of the Congo I ask myself similar questions. What can I tell that hasn't yet been told? We have been retelling the same stories, the same miseries, the same betrayed hopes and the same aborted dreams for the last ten years. How can we go on? Another artist I am very fond of, the Nigerian musician, Fela Kuti, wrote the following in his song "Confusion Break Bones" (1980):

IF I SING I SAY FOOD-U NOTHING  
NA OLD-U NEWS-EE BE DAT  
DEY OLD-U NEWS-EE BE DAT-OH  
IF I SING-EE SAY, WATER NO DEY  
OLD OLD OLD NEWS BE DAT-EE-OH  
IF I SING-EE SAY, ELECTRIC-EE LIGHT NO DEY

OLD OLD OLD NEWS BE DAT-EE-OH  
IF I SING-EE SAY, INF-I-LATI-ON  
IF I SING-EE SAY, MISMANAGEMENT  
IF I SING-EE SAY, CORRUP-U-TION  
IF I SING-EE SAY, STEALING BY GOVERNMENT  
OLD OLD OLD NEWS BE DAT-EE-OH

Which basically means, nothing changes, no matter what I sing. However, Fela and his band keep the rhythm alive with their voices, drums, guitars and brass; the beat goes on.

**RB You follow the footsteps of your own history. Do you also examine your performers' history?**

FL Maybe this project is simply a way for my performers and me to question ourselves about the possibility of a circle. This image could be a stereotype of Africa and is particularly interesting for this project: dancing and singing in a circle, trying to make the energies circulate to create a community. I am wary of and fascinated by this image. Because in a country like ours it is impossible to really speak about a circle. Unless it is a broken circle, fractured, that needs to be rebuilt. But where do you find the strength to keep standing, to move on? Véronique Aka Kwadeba belongs to the Mobutu family, to dethroned nobility. What does living in this country today mean to her? She personifies the link between an individual examination and what unites us as a people. Mobutu, for better or for worse, represented the ultimate dream of greatness and majesty to us all. Looking back we know what it led to, but he let us dream. What happens when Mobutu is mentioned in our circle through Véronique who belongs to his family?

Let us now imagine a procession wandering through the forest following a master of music who is not allowed to play. That gets lost in the forest until it connects Obilo, a village at the east of the country,

to Gbadolite, the village that became a city in 1969 at the will of a single man, Mobutu. Gbadolite has its airport where a Concorde could land, its sumptuous palace where, every year all of the clan gathered to celebrate the holidays with the Leopard Marshal. Véronique was part of it. How was it for her to return for the first time after Mobutu's fall to this city that can only be reached in a eight or nine hour motorcycle journey on a dreadful path?

**RB How will you translate these experiences for the stage?**

FL I don't intend to describe our journeys, but I want to bring back what we capture by opening our antennas in the sites of our youth and our dreams. I want to use as few words as possible. However, Véronique is an actress and Pansas is a rapper. But I would like to deprive them of words so that our presence is embodied through our bodies, our breathing. So that our stories surface, like the foundations of the play and resound with the image of the circle, but also with the image of the procession. In the forest one can only walk in single file.



There will be seven of us on stage: four dancers and three voices, one of whom is an actress who will sing several traditional songs from the Mongo, another people who came from the forests of the Equator province. I also envisage many silences as well as recorded drum explosions. I see the forest as well as the courtyard of the Studios Kabako in Kisangani where we will rehearse after our travels. Two families live their day-to-day lives in this outdoor space. When we work, there are always children watching and mothers crossing the courtyard to reach the water point. I hope to be able to capture and keep the energy of this courtyard. During this stage of the creation process I only have wishes and work paths, but I know that I will recognise the form when I meet it.

**RB You regularly evoke the heaps of rubble on which you dance. You have invited an architect for Drums and Digging. What do you want to build on the stage?**

FL Perhaps this play is a way of describing what Studios Kabako create in Kisangani, small dream spaces, both mental and physical. But how can you find the strength to dream when the context is so fragile? One possible answer is in the awareness that we are not alone. How can you show this community on stage? Bärbel Müller, the architect who works on our resident, research and production project in Kisangani created a transient construction made of simple materials for the set. Therefore, every night on stage, we will build ourselves a shelter, a space, a setting, something unique.

**RB Working outdoors isn't commonplace. What kind of impact does it have on your thoughts about theatrical performances?**

FL Should we regard the stage as a space that is isolated from the world therefore allowing us to examine it, or is it possible to stay at the centre of the City, and find the necessary distance from there? Are you still at the theatre when you can't close the door and when on the first day of work you are exposed to the public eye? The theatre is

above all a place where ideas, emotions and visions circulate. However, I live in a country in which the speech does not circulate freely in public places. In the courtyard we work in, we try to create a climate of confidence in which speech can circulate, so that theatre becomes manifest. Borges wrote: "I write for myself-, for some friends, and to alleviate the course of time." It's a bit like what we are trying to do: remain standing and dream with a few friends in a courtyard.

**RB You spend a lot of time on tour. How do you experience your nomadism?**

FL I feel privileged to be able to travel even though I sometimes feel like a stranger everywhere, because for many Congolese I am not really one of them anymore. But all in all, this lifestyle nourishes me. It encourages me not to take anything for granted. If you face an audience that shares all your codes you risk falling asleep. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the audience only shares some of my codes. The same applies here, in Europe. And that's all the better.

Interview **Renan Benyamina (Festival Avignon)**



# IN CASE OF FIRE, RUN FOR THE ELEVATOR

A silent musical about nourishment and taste



Influx control was the name given to laws passed in South Africa in 1923. These measures were used to regulate the inflow of Black Africans into the urban areas, thus restricting their access to culture, education, economy and power. They were abolished in South Africa at the end of the Apartheid. Inspired by the metaphor that today these laws are valid worldwide, Boyzie Cekwana has created a trilogy about cultural identity, Apartheid and global colonialism. Cekwana is a choreographer, performer and artistic chronicler of worldwide neocolonial realities, and one of the most important performing artists in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Part I & II of Influx Controls were performed at Festival Theaterformen 2010 in Braunschweig. The third part is concerned with our creature comforts: it is a story of nourishment, food and stomach politics. Whereas hardly any topic better demonstrates the inequality in the world, Boyzie Cekwana is never simple or straightforward. He gives an intelligent and emotional story of food and its intricate, uneven and invisible poetics. Three "Universal" characters representing love, power and privilege, comment on the disquiet of angry stomachs grumbling at the deafening din of culinary correctness.

On stage, there is a small shed with three chickens in it. In front of the shed, there is a trampoline with three chairs next to it, at the



back of the stage there are carefully arranged heaps of costumes and props. At the front of the stage, there is a microwave and above all this the provoking inscription “Vegetarians go home” is projected. Dressed in casual rehearsal clothes, the performers welcome the audience with an apology: Of course, everything was supposed to be quite different, better, more representative, more artistic – but it hasn’t turned out that way. A few minutes later, they turn into shabby caricatures, like an overweight Spiderman or a strange mixture of Sapeur and Michael Jackson. There is no pose, no attitude, no representation that will not sooner or later be subverted with sarcasm.

Absurd dialogues about the world of eating: “Is” a person fat, or do they just “walk” in a fat way? Has chicken been declared a vegetable? Do chickens really only drink bottled water? The chickens are taken from their shed and placed on the stage, in all their unpredictability, and are made to jump on the trampoline. There is dancing, singing, eating and pouring – and all intentions fail miserably.

At the end of this “silent musical”, the performers cast one last glance back at themselves and their origins. They perform movements reminiscent of tribal dances, stomp on the floor continually



and strike up South African songs in perfect harmony. This presentation of an exotic Africa holds up a mirror to their European audience and thus serves to fuel their interest in looking behind the facades of this cliché.

Choreography and Direction **Boyzie Cekwana** With **Bhekani Shabalala, Bheki Khabela, Boyzie Cekwana** Lighting **Eric Wurtz** Dramaturgy **Guillaume Bernardi** Technical Manager **Matthews Phala** Production **The Floating Outfit Project** Coproduction **Zürcher Theater Spektakel, Les Rencontres chorégraphiques internationales de Seine-Saint-Denis, Centre chorégraphique national de Montpellier Languedoc Roussillon – Programme Résidences, Festival Theaterformen Hannover/Braunschweig, KVS Brussels, Fabrik Potsdam**



## FRONT

**The Following Text should be printed on both sides of one page and handed to the performers who will then hand it to the public as part of the performance.**

“For a brief, hopeful moment, the hush in the room grows into a cacophony of percussive expectation as the protagonists reach into shallow pockets for a compromise. Under the gaze of gleeful, flirtatious stars history awaits. It needs an answer. History demands an answer.

Once and for all, a compromise to settle an age-old argument: was it the egg or the chicken that did it? But, woe betides the finger that digs so deep into these pockets, for it will be met with the shards of a broken truth that wishes only to lie untold. Each eye that dares poke its gaze into the darkened chambers of caged truth is in danger of being impaled by flying shrapnel of a feathered kind.

For, those in the know already know: This is it... our chicken bees knees. This is war. And the paltry poultry is in the front line. No one is safe, at least, not in the noisy, messy din of dining room politics. No one is safe.

With hollow eyes and saggy jowls, veterans of a failed history greet each other with the raspy fervor of anorexic vultures on the haunches of an elephant carcass. The survivors of the madness of said history have forgotten the tune to their song of redemption. But those who have outlived the scourge of food and its excesses will happily get on their feet and leave the room.”

**Boyzie Cekwana**

In Case of Fire, Run for the Elevator



BACK

## RIDICULOUS SONGS

### **Donkey Cock**

Oh how I wish, I had a cock like a donkey!  
And the balls of a Kangaroo!  
I would have fucked all the women in the country  
And sent all my children to the zoo...

### **One**

We say one, two, three, four, five...  
Six, seven... eight nine ten  
Eleven, twelve, thirteen...

### **Thokozile**

Did you hear that life needs money?  
Money...  
Did you hear, my boy... that life needs money?  
I feel sorry for the lazy  
I feel sorry for the crook.  
When you go out  
Holding your iPhone, walk with your 16V chick next to you  
Hey, life needs money  
Money...

He took my Thokozile...  
Now I am alone, there's no one by my side  
Money  
He took my Thokozile  
Because I have no money  
He came with his fried hair  
Driving a Citi Golf  
Thokozile fell for his charm  
Thinking of money  
He came with his hair in a perm  
Carrying a box of Kentucky Fried Chicken  
Thokozile fell for his charm  
Because he had money  
He took my Thokozile  
Because I've no money



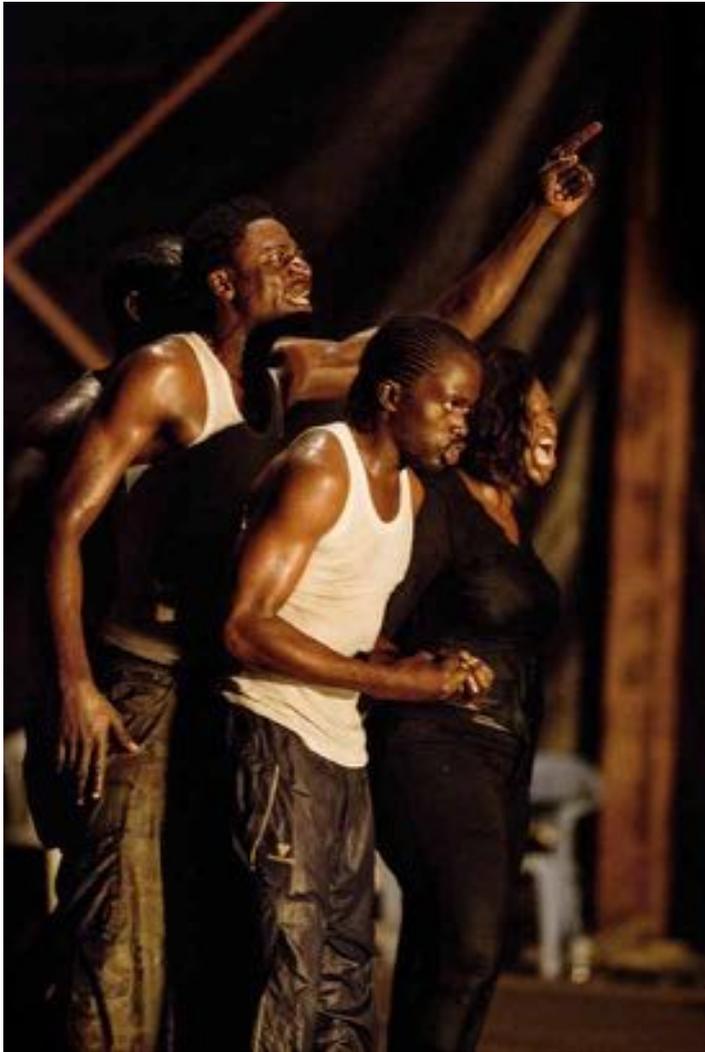
# LA FIN DE LA LÉGENDE

A thunderous declaration of love to the art of everyday life

Snack bars, kiosks, stalls, bush taxis, a wrestling ring, a VIP lounge, a police station, a hairdresser and a revivalist church: The End of the Legend is a theatrical research project inspired by the atmosphere conveyed by African megacities such as Brazzaville, Ouagadougou and Kinshasa. Actors from three African countries further develop the form of this performance from venue to venue. This performance will be adapted for a blackbox theatre for the first time at Festival Theaterformen. Niangouna's guiding theme is the street. His art and a provocative language with explosive power originates there. Cascades of poetic, classical and common words question the violent history of the Congo from a present-day perspective. However, Niangouna's theatre offers more than powerful words. His stage is a building site where theatre is forceful, loud, filthy and extremely physical.

Artistic Director **Dieudonné Niangouna** Director's Assistant **Criss Niangouna** By and with **Innocent Bolunda, Sorel Boulingui, Miachel Disanka, Joseph Kikukama, Adama Kongo, Stella Audrey Loko, Ludovic Louppe, Pierette Mondako, Fabrice Mukala** Set **Papythio Matoudidi** Sound **David Malonga** Lighting **Cléo Konongo** Production **KVS Brussels** Coproduction **Festival Theaterformen Hannover/Braunschweig, Festival Mantsina sur Scène** Special thanks to **Cercle Sony Labou Tansi, Brazzaville and the Institut Français Halle de la Gombe, Kinshasa.**





## EXTRACT

- Can you define the term legend for me?
- A legend is ... is ...the sequence of past events that had an impact on history ... names ... people who made an impact on history...
- A legend is ... a selection of ideas characterised by dictatorial policies...
- A legend is ... a series of legendary events...
- The Sovereign National Conference was summoned by Paul KAGAME and MUSEVINI. The idea was to create "spirits of the dead" (bus drivers in Kinshasa) in the 207 buses and strengthen the kulunas (armed urban gangs), over the entire surface of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Songhay Empire was brought down in 1563 thanks to Dieudonné NIANGOUNA and his MANTSINA army located in the oriental province of Kisangani, precisely in Ndjili...

Michael JACKSON died as a result of table excesses. A mixture of tartar and beans, in addition to two glasses of bicarbonate of soda, as well as cassava leaves. The result: vomiting and diarrhoea...

The Empire of GHANA was brought down in 1706 thanks to Antony BOULONGUI, the older brother of Criss NIANGOUNA, the paternal uncle of Pasco LOSANGANYA, Pius XIII and his aunt Véronique AKA KWADEBA, all members of the Adama KONGO family, the grandmother of Paul KERSTENS and cousin of Valérie BARAN.

- As I said, a legend is a series of legendary events...
- You create a performance about the end of a legend and you don't know how to define a legend...



# CONGO CONNECTION

An audio exhibit about the Congo in Hanover

Paul Panda Farnana, one of the first Congolese civil rights activists arrived in Hanover in 1916 as a prisoner of war. Inspired by his life story, Congo Connection demonstrates how closely connected to global contexts our history and everyday life are. The Congo exists more in Hanover than it appears and not only in the form of coltan, a valuable mineral found in our cell phones.

How can we grasp what appears foreign to us and put it in relation to ourselves? In the Congo, they traditionally used "fetish" figures. These figures were endowed with supernatural powers and used to resolve conflicts. The essence of foreigners who came to the Congo were also captured in these figures. Several of these wood sculptures are on exhibit in the State Museum Hanover. One of them, pale-faced and standing at attention, is wearing a German military uniform. Developed from interviews and documentary material, the Berlin Agentur Kriwomasow has created a multi-layered audio installation in which Hanover and the Congo are superimposed in unexpected ways.

Concept and Realisation **Agentur Kriwomasow (Andreas Kebelmann und Anja Mayer)** Production **Festival Theaterformen Hannover/Braunschweig** in Cooperation with **State Museum Hanover** Interviewee **Ignace Isekemanga, Ntotila Mfoa, Douglas Ngoma, Véronique Okyta, Betty Tschimpanga, Amissi Vary Valentin** Narrator **Oliver Bender, Nils Nellessen, Uve Teschner, Gundi Eberhard** Audio Realisation **Schieffer und Schieffer** Soundart and Soundmixing **Daniel Griese** Music Museum **Christoph Scheppenheim** Music Radio Drama **Bugaro International Music** Illustration and Art Design **Daniela Paß** Assistant writer **Robert Schmidt** Translation **Daniel Belasco Rogers** Assistents **Fanny Frohmeyer, Klaas Werner**

Sponsored by the **Klosterkammer Hanover**



## SUMMARIES OF THE FIVE AUDIO STATIONS IN THE EXHIBITION

### STATION 1: 1854 – 1920

Narrator **Paul Panda Farnana**

Paul Panda Farnana from Congo was taken to Belgium at the age of 12 and studied Tropical Botany there. He fought for Belgium in the First World War and worked in Hanover as a German prisoner of war. In 1919, Farnana established the "Union Congolaise" in Brussels; he worked for the colonial government in his native Congo and fought racist animosities all his life:

"Now I understand what they are shouting, Kudjabo. They want to repatriate us... to send us back to the shade of our banana trees... I mean, didn't we risk our lives for you?"

The group of Congolese living in Hanover, whom we talked to in this project, tell us about the history of the Congo from the former kingdom Congo to the expedition of Henry Morton Stanley. They talk about the 1885 Berlin "Congo Conference" under Bismarck's leadership, which laid the foundation for Belgian King Leopold II's private colony, and they tell family stories about the construction of the railroad. And they talk about their wish to build a museum in the Congo and to return their country's treasures from Europe.

"There was this conference with Bismarck and Leopold the Second, who said: Listen, we have to share Africa like a gorgeous cake, a little juicy, chocolate, hmm, delicious! And then you shared it all out like that, yes."

Quote **Amissi Vary Valentin**



### STATION 2: 1920 – 1960

Narrator **Vladimir Drachoussoff**

Belgian agricultural engineer Vladimir Drachoussoff worked as an officer of the colonial government in the Congo during the Second World War. He was assigned a region of 10.000 km<sup>2</sup> and it was his job to collect taxes in the form of rubber:

"I keep asking myself, for what? For what are we meeting the targets from Brussels every year? Raise the quota! Increase production! To keep driving the greedy war machine. What right did we have to drag them into our war? Not a single one."

The Congolese in Hanover talk about the time when their ancestors were Christianised. They describe ancestral worship and the diverse interests of the generations. They talk about their experiences with witchcraft and traditional medicine and about what it was and still is like to return to the Congo.

"Many people will say, when you can't diagnose an illness: 'No, that's some kind of witchcraft or curse'. In the Congo, people really believe this. And that's why they open their doors to these priests who just fuck them over (...): 'Oh, Pastor, I think I've been cursed, pray for me'. And the Pastor says: 'Okay, just leave 50€ in the collection box!' Just like the Catholic Church used to do."

Quote **Ignace Isekemanga**

### STATION 3: 1960 – 1996

Narrator **Norman Mailer**

American writer and journalist Norman Mailer was a keen boxer and a fierce critic of the United States of his time. His reportage on the legendary fight between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali in Kinshasa in 1974, which was critical of Mobutu, was published in his book "The Fight":

"As you can hear, the atmosphere is terrific and the weather is playing along, too. The rainy season should in fact have started, but, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in Africa after all, one of the multitudes of gods and spirits is sure to protect us from the lowering clouds."

The Congolese in Hanover remember the times of the Mobutu regime; they remember corruption and the boxing match that made Zaire famous all over the world. They talk about their fathers' survival strategies and about their own experiences with the police and military. And they translate their song about coltan mining, which ruined an entire region and cost many lives.

"It was a very corrupt system. Once you had bribed the right person, the one who really had the right kind of authority, you could achieve quite a bit. Of course, it also mattered who you were related to."

Quote **Véronique Okyta**



### STATION 4: 1996 – 2013

Narrator **Rachel Mwanza**

Congolese actress Rachel Mwanza, who received the Silver Bear award at the 2012 Berlinale film festival for her portrayal of a child soldier in "Rebelle", lived on the streets of Kinshasa as a child

and could neither read nor write when she was discovered by Canadian director Kim Nguyen:

"We are a very hospitable country, a torn, beautiful, conflicting and sometimes incomprehensible country... but you will not see any of this unless you go there... that side is never talked about, never shown abroad..."

The Congolese in Hanover talk about their departure from Congo, their first steps and experiences in Germany and their activities as musicians of the international band "Bugaro International Music".

"I came over as a stowaway on a ship, a containership, from Congo to Marseille. And I remember that I bought myself 12 rolls and put peanut butter on each of them, with two bottles of water. Into the container, bam, and after two days, of course the rolls were gone."

Quote **Ntotila Mfoa**



#### **STATION 5: 2013**

A discussion with the Congolese in Hanover at the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover (State Museum of Lower-Saxony in Hanover) about the Nkisi and Colon sculptures from Congo in the museum's Ethnological Collection and about the importance of historical knowledge, the accountability of European museums, their activities in associations and the danger of post-colonialism in cultural projects.

"For example, I see that the Europeans used to put Africans, among them Congolese, into the museums, actual people. For me, that isn't humanity: putting a person into a museum, to be stared at like an animal. And today, that wouldn't be possible anymore. Now when I hear my voice in this museum, there doesn't seem to be

much of a difference. And whoever does this is sure to have their own interests and I'm not sure if that is an interest in the Congo or maybe in the person behind it. And I've been wondering if that isn't maybe some sort of modern colonisation all over again."

Quote **LG**

"The question for a European, when you're aware of Africa's history, the exploitation and everything that's going on has to be: What can you do about it? People die every day in our country and that's really terrible and there has to be an end to it some time. And this end has to hit home in Europe. They have to realize at some point: These are people. Why do these people have to die? Something has to happen."

Quote **Amissi Vary Valentin / Douglas Ngoma**

"We are really looking for ways now to organise ourselves, apart from through music, and also for ways to help people in the Congo through these things. And to make sure that people's eyes here are open and that they know what's going on over there."

Quote **Amissi Vary Valentin / Douglas Ngoma**

"I have a different way of giving space to my idealism, for instance through the association. Being over there personally, physically is not possible in a way. Unless you seize the power yourself. It's difficult to be silent. The association is called "Nkento Association des Mamans du Congo". "Nkento" is Congolese and means "woman". We are active in four fields, which are also our objectives: culture, education, integration and understanding among nations. As a migrant with 30 years of migration experience, I can say that without personal development, there can be no integration at all. First of all, I have to feel good. And if you don't take care of this, people won't feel good. And then they won't be ready to open up and to accept things and especially give something back. Personal development is important to then get to know the German way of life too."

Quote **Véronique Okyta**



# MACBETH

Musical Theatre about warlords in war about minerals



A troupe of refugee-performers from the Eastern Congo discovers musical scores, costumes and recordings of Verdi's opera "Macbeth". Based on this fiction Brett Bailey develops a contemporary version of this opera in cooperation with the composer Fabrizio Cassol. In Kinshasa he presents initial ideas and concepts of the production which will be staged in 2014.

With **Brett Bailey, Thina Meni, Thandiwe Cleopatra Mesele, Nolusindiso Jacqueline Manciya, Philisa Aretha Sibeko, Bulelani David Madondile, Edward Phiri** Music **Fabrizio Cassol**, adapted from **Verdi's Macbeth** Conducted by **Premil Petrovic** Production **Third World Bunfight** Coproduction **KVS Brussels, Festival Theaterformen Hannover/Braunschweig, Barbican Centre London, La Ferme du Buisson, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Wiener Festwochen, Kunstenfestivaldesarts**

With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union

## Brett Bailey about macbEth

Kinshasa, June 2013

The opera – based on the drama written by English playwright William Shakespeare – is set in a country in conflict, with insurgencies on many fronts. Macbeth, an heroic army general, and his fellow officer, Banquo are returning from a battle when they encounter a group of witches who make a prophecy: Macbeth will become king of the country, but Banquo's sons will ultimately rule. This prediction sets off a chain of events that sees Macbeth and his wife killing the king and usurping the throne. Later they have Banquo killed, and then launch a reign of terror on the country as Macbeth becomes increasingly paranoid and obsessed with power. Eventually Lady Macbeth dies insane, consumed with guilt at the many murders she has orchestrated, Macbeth is killed by a rebel army, and a new king is crowned.

The drama deals with ambition, greed, corruption, megalomania, violence, tyranny, paranoia, remorse.

So a group of Congolese refugees has occupied the stage; they gather in the shadows, in the rubble, around the small chequer-board stage in the centre of the big stage that you see in the picture; to dramatize the Macbeth drama they pull on the costume of their particular character and then step onto the small stage on cue.

The first piece of music you heard this evening, the Refugee Chorus, *Patria Oppressa*, was the key to telling this story from the viewpoint of Congolese refugees. I asked Fabrizio to pull the chorus out of the beginning of Act 4 and to rather use it to bookend the opera: as an opening and a closing, so that the entire opera is held within the arms of this song.

My motivations in setting Macbeth in the conflict-ravaged eastern Congo are to put a spotlight on a zone of complexity and tragedy that barely receives global media attention; to scratch beneath the surface and show who is implicated in the atrocities in this contemporary underworld; to reveal that the present situation has not arisen in isolation, but is yet another chapter in a long history of rapacious parasites feeding off Africa and leaving destruction in their wake.

But when I enter this terrain I don't take the role of a journalist or a social worker or an activist, I'm a story-teller, a performance-maker, a visual artist, sifting through the information I gather and working it into the shifting shapes and dark glittering metaphors of an artwork – imposing a dramaturgical structure on a mass of seething human material.

But with this Macbeth my creative process is shadowed by questions around the ethics of using human misery for artistic expression. The crisis in the eastern provinces of the Congo is not some fictional



or distant historical situation: the conflict is continuing, millions of people are living with terrible loss and injury right now, in fear in the forests, in refugee camps, or in exile in foreign countries: how do I turn their despair into art in a way that is respectful, in a way that honours them?

After months of reading books, articles, blogs and reports on the conflict in the eastern Congo I have some idea of what is going on, but it is so complicated and multi-headed that I reckon very few people have a real grasp of it. Low intensity ethnic and territorial tensions were ignited in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, when around a million Hutu refugees together with the perpetrators of the genocide, the Interahamwe, fled across the border into the DRC and destabilized the region. The subsequent wars and on-going violence have seen the deaths of around 5.4 million people – the largest number in conflict since World War 2. Several countries have been involved at various points, and Uganda and Rwanda to this day are up to their arms in the strife. Millions of people are displaced. Militia with ethnic and national affiliations fragment and realign themselves. Warlords arise and gather thugs and child soldiers around them and terrorize civilians. Rape and sex-slavery are epidemic.

One of the prime causes of the continuing crisis is the extreme mineral wealth of the eastern Congo, which has vast deposits of gold, tin, tungsten and coltan: an essential ingredient in cell phones,



computers and other electrical goods. Rival militia battle each other for control of the mines. They force local men, women and children to work the mines at gunpoint. They tax them daily, leaving them barely enough to survive on. When a new militia group takes control of a mine, it massacres, maims, and rapes to assert its power. Orphaned children are conscripted into the mines or the armies. The ore of tin and tantalite is carried in 50kg bags on people's heads on footpaths for days to transport hubs. These sacks of ore should be symbols of hope and prosperity for the Congo, but actually they keep the conflict smouldering. The ore is taxed by militia at every stage. The taxes that are collected – and at some mines we are talking amounts of up to US\$25 000 a day– are used to sustain operations, and to buy arms and supplies. The wealth is smuggled out of the country into Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi avoiding any government taxation. It brings no benefit at all to the local populace, only excessive suffering. It's all pretty bleak. That's the context.

In this Congo version of the drama, the world is anarchic. The rule is the barrel of the machine gun. The place is awash with arms. With bored and violent testosterone-filled youths and men. Misogynistic, brutal, fearful. Dog kill dog. Held together tentatively by greed, ethnicity, loyalties, fear and desperation. Riven by factions and insecurity.



Macbeth and Banquo are two soldiers in a jungle-bound mining town that has been raked through by marauding armies over the years. Macbeth himself is a wild-eyed, cunning, ruthless young man. The murder of his king is his coming of age. He is uneducated, prone to superstitions, and irrational behaviour, but sharp as a bayonet. Insecure to a paranoid degree. Ambitious, dandyish, arrogant, cold, distant, secretive.

After hearing the predictions of the witches in the forest he and his wife murder the chief of the local militia, Duncan, and later also Macbeth's rival, General Banquo.

He becomes a brutal warlord, his thugs forcing the local citizenry into toiling in the muck of the goldmines, taxing them, raping them, harvesting cash and buying arms and ammunition. When a rebel force gathers in the forest he unleashes terror on the local community: burning, hacking, killing.

In all this swirl of themes and plots there's one question that has nagged me as I have tried to position Macbeth within the post-colonial order: who are those witches that met with Macbeth and Banquo in the jungle, and set these catastrophic events in motion? What were they doing there, and what was their agenda?

Because in African thinking there is this constant tension between the wilderness and the homestead or the village – the agents of destruction come from the forests or the savannah, and they are forever threatening to destabilize and destroy the fragile order of society; and famine, or death, or disease, or disaster are often blamed on witchcraft. The witch is the person who opens the gate to let these horrors in; she wills the destruction of the village.

And so at the intersection of this cosmology, and of the Macbeth drama, and of this setting within the on-going war in the Congo – where these three meet – who are these witches?

The war in the eastern Congo is about money. Two inter-dependent systems are in operation.

Consumer society is the motor of this system. The multinationals pour cash into the first system, sustaining the militia that feed them the minerals they need, and in some cases facilitating the transfer of arms and ammunition to them.

Author Ben Rawlence, in his analysis of the situation, says: 'Some Congolese believe that the fighting is deliberate, that it suits the capitalist thirst for minerals: without law and order the system can exist in its purist form.'

So who are the witches then, in this post-colonial Macbeth? They are the agents of this system: a cabal of suited businessmen from multinational corporations, out to strip the land of its resources, to make profit at any cost. They settle in the Congo on leathery wings, and implement the age-old colonial strategy of divide and conquer:

corrupting Macbeth and inspiring him to kill his king. War and instability are good for business. They are aware of the atrocities being committed. They see the civilians fleeing. They see the dogs tearing them apart. But it is collateral damage. The dogs supply the minerals. So the dogs must be paid. One cannot be sentimental. Profit is at stake. And after-all, are these primitive Congolese forest dwellers really fully human anyway?

'Heart of Darkness', Joseph Conrad's look at the looting of late 19th century Congo, provides source material for these witches: describing the Eldorado Exploring Expedition that arrives at the Central Station on the Congo River, he writes: "To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe." In one scene my witches are all decked out in the garb of that period. Kurtz, the epitome of the colonial gloves-off monster in the novel, proclaims: "I'll carry my ideas out yet – I will return. I'll show you what can be done."

In actuality these guys have never really left the Congo.



# NETWORK PARTNER MEETING

JUNE 11TH AND 12TH 2013 KINSHASA, RDC



# WHAT IS SHARED SPACES?



Shared Spaces is an informal network of artists and individuals active in institutions in the field of contemporary performing arts worldwide. Initiated by Anja Dirks (Festival Theaterformen) and Jan Goossens (KVS) and with the financial support of the German Federal Cultural Foundation, a first network partner meeting was held over two days in the frame of Festival Connexion Kin 2013 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The goal was to give space to the voices, opinions, projects and needs of artists from RDC as well as from other African countries, and, with these in mind, to define goals and ambitions as well as the structure and way of functioning of the Shared Spaces network.



## DAY 1

The first day of the network partner meeting was held on June 11th 2013 in the “Centre Culturel Les Béjarts”, a local performing arts centre in the district of Bandal in Kinshasa. It was open to anyone and attended by:

**ARTISTS** Simon Allemeersch (Belgium), Vishnupad Barve (India), Boyzie Cekwana (South Africa), Zhao Chuan (China), Dinozord (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Taoufiq Izdediou (Morocco), Djodjo Kazadi (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Faustin Linyekula (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Humphrey Maleka (South Africa), Dorine Mokha (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Marlene Monteiro Freitas (Cape Verde / Portugal), Jolie Ngemi (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Sello Pesa (South Africa), Ula Sickle (Belgium / Canada), Dalia Taha (Palestine)

**INDIVIDUALS ACTIVE IN INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF PERFORMING ARTS** Valerie Baran (Le Tarmac, France), Eduardo Bonito (Festival Panorama, Brazil), Anja Dirks (Festival Theaterformen, Germany), Virginie Dupray (Studios Kabako, Democratic Republic of the Congo), Elvira Dyangani (Tate Modern, Great Britain), Ntone Edjabe (Chimurenga, South Africa), Fred Frumberg (Amrita, Cambodia), Jan Goossens (KVS, Belgium), Henrike Grohs (Goethe-Institut,

South Africa), Patricio Ieretic (EU), Billy Kahora (Kwani Trust, Kenya), Paul Kerstens (KVS, Belgium), Toto Kisaku (KMU Théâtre, Democratic Republic of the Congo), Michael Kranixfeld (University of Hildesheim, Germany), Frie Leysen (Wiener Festwochen, Austria), Sandro Lunin (Zürcher Theaterspektakel, Switzerland), Papy Mbwiti (Les Béjarts, Democratic Republic of the Congo), Nisreen Naffa (Qattan Foundation, Palestine), Joanna Nuckowska (Nowy Teatr, Poland), Carla Peterson (New York Live Arts, USA), Gabrielle von Brochowski (Independent counselor, Belgium), Katharina von Ruckteschell (Goethe-Institut, South Africa), Jasper Walgrave (Pro Helvetia, South Africa), Thomas Walgrave (Alkantara Festival, Portugal), Maríya Wethers (New York Live Arts, USA), Natasa Zavolovsek (Exodos Festival, Slovenia).

JOURNALISTS Christine Dössel (Süddeutsche Zeitung, Germany), Renate Klett



(Independent writer, Germany)

## 1. INTRODUCTION BY ANJA DIRKS AND JAN GOOSSENS

The first concrete step of Shared Spaces is the present platform. It includes the cooperation between two festivals, the network partner meeting as well as an international academy of young artists attending both Connexion Kin and Theaterformen. In the centre of the actual activity are four productions, which both festivals coproduced alongside with many other partners, and the artists who make these productions. This is only one possibility of a Shared Spaces activity; others are to be found. There are twelve active partners so far. They have not been selected, but the network has grown organically and it is an open group.

## 2. KEY NOTES

Three personalities active in the exchange between the African continent and the rest of the world were asked to give keynote statements, particularly focusing on the necessities but also pitfalls of international networks and North-South and South-North dialogue.

**FAUSTIN LINYEKULA** has seen attempts for setting up networks and ran away from that. He and other artists were selected to work in African networks initiated from somewhere else because they were African. Instead, he has been setting up guerrilla networks, with people with whom he shares values. He sees a real need for solidarity – not help! – in the sense of knowing that others are somewhere fighting battles he can identify with. In RDC artists are very isolated and, as its still in a colonial state, all legitimacy has to come from outside. Also to survive one needs to be able to make money outside. That situation creates tension, as the stories that set him in motion are in the Congo, but the money needs to be found outside. Any network starts with long-term conversations with individual people about the work and about how to work together with respect. Respect is a key word in this setup. Regarding cultural policies in the post-colony, usually the main discourse is: how can we help these Africans. So it is not easy to talk about respect with European partners. Africans have been brought up believe that everything that comes from Europe is the truth. So in much cooperation Africans put themselves in the position of the receiver. Also most of the time, the Europeans have the money. So how to even pretend to talk as equals when one side has the money and the knowledge? Africans need to put themselves in a situation where they value what they bring on the table just like what comes from the outside. Twelve years ago he wrote the first manifesto of Studios Kabako together with Bibish Mumbu. They defined it as a space where to search, to sometimes find, where “the pettiness of art can resist the ugliness of life”, as a mental space first of all. They declared that it still is possible to dream from here, and yet be very aware of all the ruins and desperation around them. The focus was on people and on presence. Studios Kabako has become a lab for experimenting with the act of believing in one self. It’s an attitude first of all. And

when you're tired and ready to give up, it is in knowing that the others are there, that you find the energy to continue. In this kind of guerrilla network, one can find the strength.



**NTONE EDJABE** does not participate in North-South dialogue. He questions the terms and what they represent and finds it such an old conversation. It doesn't make it irrelevant, but it sort of limits the level of penetration that many of his colleagues have been able to make in destabilising the concept of North and South. The collaborative work that Ntone is involved in functions in the cracks. It functions with people who have either a degree of mobility that destabilizes the idea of North and South, or with artists who are very involved in not representing a denomination such as that one. He lives and works in South Africa, which is historically both the North and the South. If one is to use South Africa as a reference, which is usually around race, to identify the North and the South, he brings up a school of thought that suggests that the one contribution that white people can make to imagine what South Africa could be tomorrow is to keep quiet. This thought takes into consideration who has the microphone, who has capacity to disseminate, who has capacity to produce imaginaries and project them into the world. The only imaginable conversation should be on an institutional level and it should be about money. It is possible to subvert the language of artistic collaboration and speak about what could possibly bring people together: One partner has money and another needs it. How is it possible to have this conversation without collapsing in the rhetoric of development? Working in a capitalistic system, Ntone is requesting to be paid for talking to Europeans. As he is already involved in conversations on the African continent, he does not want to be talking to white people about what he is doing because he doesn't really feel like he needs them. He needs their money.



**ELVIRA DYANGANI** emphasizes on a strong sense of identity and community that has determined her career ever since she realized that she was a postcolonial subject. She discovered that artists were doing through their work what she was doing in her personal life. She started questioning how to give visibility not only to the auratic individual artist but also to things that were done collectively with an impact in the social environment. Being the bridge between the North and the South is a difficult role she had to play for a while. In order to keep her integrity, she tried to subvert the systems and to challenge the contexts where she was invited to do things. At Tate, she is enhancing the visibility of contemporary African art in an existing collection. The establishment already has a canon in which this work does not appear. Things that are sold as new to a western audience have often been there for a long time. The work at every institution, every project is an opportunity to get the message across. People keep asking the same questions about African art. The only way to overcome this is either to not respond or to respond with other questions that will challenge the conversations. Part of her agenda is giving opportunities to local scenes, finding other more circular ways of functioning, that grow and shrink according to necessities. Also setting up meetings not only with a festival as a backdrop to provide the entertainment, but sometimes just gather in order to exchange and connect. Elvira describes her way of functioning by referring to how she used to be a referee in basketball, and thought



of herself as both a player and an interpreter of the game.

### 3. ARTISTS FROM KINSHASA PRESENT THEIR WORK WITH REGARD TO THEIR NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS TOWARDS A GLOBAL NETWORK:

**DJODJO KAZADI** is a choreographer and dancer from Kinshasa, active both in France and Congo. **TOTO KISAKU** is an actor and the director of KMU Theatre Company who runs a venue in the district of Ndjili in Kinshasa. **JOLIE NGEMI** is a dancer from Kinshasa just about to start her education in PARTS. **DINOZORD** is a dancer, choreographer and visual artist from Kinshasa.

All four of them speak about the fact that a scene for contemporary dance and theatre is only emerging in Kinshasa. Solitude and isolation are a central problem for local artists; and often the encounter with an artist from outside the country has been a key impulse to start developing own work (as the encounter with Dieudonné Niangouna for Toto Kisaku for example, or the moment when Faustin Linyekula came back to Congo for others). There is a lack of information, as well as a permanent meeting point for the local scene is missing. At the same time they describe Kinshasa as a city full of talent and creativity. Each one of them made the experience that only taking the initiative oneself can make a difference. For instance Djodjo Kazadi has organised festivals and workshops with dancers from the local commercial and mainstream dance scenes or Toto Kisaku has invested his own money in order to start a company and open a venue. Some of them describe the danger of moral corruption being too dependent of foreign institutions, nevertheless help from outside is needed, as there is no support whatsoever from the Congolese government. They emphasize on the necessity of circulation of productions, but also of information and knowledge, and on the need for local connection

to start with.

### 4. PRESENT AFRICAN ARTISTS PRESENT THEIR WORK WITH REGARD TO THEIR NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS TOWARDS A GLOBAL NETWORK:



**SELLO PESA**, choreographer from South Africa, and **TAOUFIQ IZEDDIU**, dancer and choreographer from Morocco both describe the necessity of self-organization. Sello Pesa has made himself independent of institutional support by creating site-specific work as the “In House Projects”. This gives him access to new audiences as well, as he takes the performance to where the people are. Taoufiq Izzediou has launched a contemporary dance scene in Morocco, as it was inexistent before he started. Through open-calls for workshops, through teaching and a festival format he has formed both a first audience for contemporary dance as well as a second generation of dancers. He has felt the pitfalls of depending on foreign aid when in 2005 when a new director was appointed at the Institut Français of Marrakech who did not want to continue the teaching program. With regard towards a network, Sello Pesa describes his main interest being the opportunity to meet other artists much more than financial support, which is often not durable. Taoufiq Izzediou also sees a need for capacity building especially in the domains of administration and techniques.



**BOYZIE CEKWANA**, choreographer from South Africa as well, brings up the terms of community with individuals, of trust, in opposition to the idea of a network. He insists on the necessity of real relationships to individual people instead of schematic modes of functioning. He describes the problem of the same narrative that keeps regurgitating because networks produce a lot of narrative but not much space to truly listen and hear what the needs of for instance African artists are. Humanitarian efforts, where people do "projects in Africa" to "assist artists in Africa" are unacceptable to Boyzie Cekwana. Artists living on the African continent, but also in Latin America, in Asia have similar biographies: They all need assistance and money, but they need it differently. He has the vision of a concept of community that deals with the questions about our world in a humanistic sense – not a humanitarian.



**BILLY KAHORA**, writer and editor, describes the impact that the founding in 2001 of the Kwani trust publishing house in Nairobi, Kenya has had. Things that needed expression in times of political upheaval were given a space there. Starting with an anthology they moved into small publishing, producing novels and single stories. The essence of the project was a particular kind of sensibility and aesthetic, a narrative that needed to be formalized. In Congo he has met with local artists to find out about their common interests. There will be a publication next year based on face-to-face encounters with Congolese writers, so it has been immediately fruitful. To Billy Kahora, the most productive thing in a network is commitment and meeting people.

## DAY 2

The second day of the Network Partner Meeting was held on June 12th 2013 in the garden of the residence of the director of the Centre Wallonnie Bruxelles in Kinshasa. It was open to the Network Partners, and everybody who wished to become one.

It was attended by **Valérie Baran, Eduardo Bonito, Boyzie Cekwana, Anja Dirks, Virginie Dupray, Fred Frumberg, Jan Goossens, Henrike Grohs, Patricio Ieretic, Paul Kerstens, Michael Kranixfeld (as an observer), Frie Leysen, Sandro Lunin, Mark Murphy, Nisreen Naffa, Joanna Nuckowska, Sello Pesa, Carla Peterson, Gabrielle von Brochowski, Katharina von Ruckteschell, Thomas Walgrave, Marýa Wethers and Natasa Zavolovsek**



### GOALS AND ACTIVITIES OF SHARED SPACES

In a first open round the following questions and problems are discussed.

A number of tools and goals were brought up and defined. It is suggested to follow examples of good practice such as Dancar o que é nosso, the IETM satellite in Asia, the ANA (which had set up a panel between six Asian countries) or the Studios Kabako. Many of the members prefer to not institutionalise the network but rather use structures that already exist, such as national cultural institutions for example. The network should focus on, listen to and include artists and try to overcome unbalances through personal relationships. It should therefore be a network of people and not of organisations. The activity should start with simple interventions such as one or two meetings per year in order to stimulate exchanges and create opportunities for encounters. Information about events and funding lines as well as knowledge about different contexts should be shared and distributed within the network. Capacity building and training can be other tools, lobbying for access another activity of the network. Instead of speaking of North and South, the network will focus on intercontinental exchange, with flexibility and solidarity. It will focus on performing arts but open to other disciplines punctually. It will operate project-based and apply for money on specific occasions. A useful tool could be an emergency fund in order to have the possibility to quickly react where immediate help is needed. All of this should happen in order to amplify intercontinental touring, give visibility to artists with less access, create space for exchange and collaborations. The network will share not only projects and ideas, but also artists and their work – to help local realities to connect and be promoted. Shared Spaces should be a tool to tell the Other Stories and create new opportunities.





MEMBERS OF SHARED SPACES AS OF JUNE 12TH 2013

- Valérie Baran, France, Le Tarmac**
- Eduardo Bonito, Brazil, Panorama Festival**
- Panaibra Gabriel Canda, Mozambique**
- Boyzie Cekwana, South Africa**
- Anja Dirks, Germany, Festival Theaterformen**
- Virginie Dupray and Faustin Linyekula, RDC, Studios Kabako**
- Fred Frumberg, Cambodia, Amrita**
- Jan Goossens, Belgium, KVS Brussels**
- Paul Kerstens, Belgium, KVS Brussels**
- Frie Leysen, Austria, Wiener Festwochen**
- Sandro Lunin, Switzerland, Zürcher Theaterspektakel**
- Gregory Maqoma, South Africa, Vuyani**
- Mark Murphy, USA, Red Cat**
- Nisreen Naffa, Palestine, Qattan Foundation**
- Joanna Nuckowska, Poland, Teatr Nowy**
- Carla Peterson, USA, New York Live Arts**
- Gabrielle von Brochowski, Belgium**
- Katharina von Ruckteschell, South Africa / Brazil, Goethe-Institut**
- Marja Wethers, USA, New York Live Arts**
- Natasa Zavolovsek, Slovenia, Exodos Festival**
- Sello Pesa, South Africa**
- Thomas Walgrave, Portugal, Alkantara Festival**

The vision of Shared Spaces will be to cooperate not just for the money. Artists should be empowered to create their own (guerrilla) networks and individual relationships between individuals on different continents should be deepened. Shared Spaces should be a place to set up a series of fantasies and wish lists and collectively imagine what could be done could function like a spiders web, where, if a problem is dropped in the network, all work to solve it. The network shouldn't be the aim but a tool, creating opportunities to give space to artists.

There should at least one annual meeting, preferably not in the US or Europe.

The present participants are the actual members of the network. It is agreed that Shared Spaces is not a network about funding projects even if it is not excluded that at some point it will apply for support for the network as a whole. Only people not institutions can be a member.



# SHARED SPACES CHALLENGES OF INTERCONTINENTAL NETWORKS IN THE THEATRE

Excerpts from a Bachelor Paper, Department for Cultural Politics, University of Hildesheim

By Michael Kranixfeld



A horde of young men breaks in upon the gardens of the Institut Français de Kinshasa one early evening. Their outfits combine fur hats with black leather coats, golden belts with large sunglasses and pleated skirts with severe collars. They can be sure of everyone's attention for this spontaneous performance, as they "[celebrate] a high mass of their faith in Gaultier, Dior, Armani, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana", as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung described it. The Sapeur movement, which began as a provocation against Mobutu's anti-Western "Authenticité" campaign, today is subculture, religious persuasion and a subversive play on the codes of a global market economy, all at once. These processes of appropriation and reinterpretation of formerly foreign objects by curious artists serve to uncover the global traces of cultural exchange.

93 years before, the young dancer Marie Wiegmann had founded a school for modern dance in Dresden. Dancers from around the globe came to the banks of the Elbe to learn "New German Dance" from her, an expressionist free dance that saw itself as the obverse of classical styles which were felt to be superficial. Wiegmann made this expressive dance famous all over the world and thus it became possible for Harald Kreuzberg, one of her students, to impress the 40 year old Japanese sports teacher Kazuo Ohno so much, almost 30 years later, that he dedicated his life to dance from then on. His style of dance, Butoh, which was to make Ohno world-famous as the "old man dancing in women's clothes" was thus created, in an interesting analogy, after the Second World War as a reaction to the domination of Western entertainment dance in Japan. It is characterized by dark, traumatic and surrealistic phantasies. In time, Butoh itself becomes a point of reference: In 2012, the Lithuanian company No Theatre presented a performance which excessively referenced Butoh motives. The company's aim: retaliation against the superficial entertainment theatre of their country.

In Kinshasa, Vilnius and Tokyo, there are people for whom a globalised world isn't a fictional scenario of intimidation, but their daily reality and has been for a long time. They "live in one place, but at another at the same time, they are present in one place, but absent at the same time – they have frozen in the state of movement, as it were", as Mark Terkessidis puts it. Of these routes, however, many only work in one direction. Being an artist with a German or a Congolese passport doesn't just mean growing up with a different native language. It means a totally different experience of the world's obstacles. As Christine Dössel writes in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "The biggest problem faced by African artists [is] their isolation. Breaking this isolation, giving them access to other artists' work and enabling them to exchange ideas with their colleagues – both internationally and within their own country or continent – is something that Festivals like Connexion Kin or Theaterformen, or an initiative like 'Shared Spaces' can really achieve."

Shared Spaces was initiated during a platform, supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, which connected the two festivals Connexion Kin (Kinshasa) and Theaterformen (Hanover). It sees itself as an intercontinental association of individuals with the aim of involving artists from regions that are usually not at the focus of attention of international exchange. As one of nine young artists, I had the opportunity of visiting both festivals and of taking part in the two-day foundation meeting in Kinshasa, where the guidelines of cooperation were discussed. The basis of my paper, which argues the potential of a network like Shared Spaces and discusses the challenges which it creates for cultural politics, is informed by my observations and conversations during this time.



### THE UNEASE TOWARDS NETWORKS

In his book "Together", sociologist Richard Sennett describes how growing material insecurity and social isolation have caused us to lose our ability to deal with differences: "We are losing the skills of cooperation needed to make a complex society work." The idea of a network seems to provide a suitable alternative: With its structural diversity, it could make for better understanding. Dancer Boyzie Cekwana, however, who was coproducing a piece within Shared Spaces, was sceptical: "Networks as such are not that interesting for me unless they are dealing with human beings who are not hidden under the myth of networks. (...) The very reason that I was visiting the meeting was based solely on the fact that there were individuals involved that I like, that I trust, who like me, who trust me."

Interestingly, a joint scepticism towards traditional networks was the first similarity among the members of the group. The Artistic Director of Theaterformen and one of the meeting's initiators, Anja Dirks, also confessed: "I have always kept a certain distance from networks." These, she said, could quickly become an end in themselves, "full of [beautiful] speeches that sound great, but mean nothing."



The idea of an intercontinental network was also met with scepticism because of the manner in which international development cooperation is usually implemented. Cekwana, who lives in South Africa, had this to say about the actual effect of these aids: "To me aid speaks of a forced generosity. It speaks of a culture of building mini colonies of nongovernmental organizations that go out and pursue foreign policies that only exist to perpetuate the very situation (...) [they] pretend to address."

It is the aim of Shared Spaces to create an informal network without expensive administration, which can adapt flexibly to local circumstances and which grows organically through personal acquaintances. Instead of having an elaborate structure of administration, the network is intended to constitute itself anew with each cooperation.

And yet it remains doubtful whether Shared Spaces, founded jointly by curators and artists, can take their diverse interests into account. Chinese author and director Zhao Chuan, member of the network Asia meets Asia, which was founded by artists, believes that this could cause a conflict of interests: "Networking people mostly need changing cards to network, to share facilities and to share resources, that's why they get to know the artists." Artists, however, Chuan says, need practical encounters such as workshops, discussions and the possibility of seeing each other's work. "From my experience this kind of collaboration or network really needs a kind of depth. Depth means you spend more time. I spend time with you, not just with you but also with your friends. Then I get to know what you're doing, we share ideas, maybe one day we can work together."

Furthermore, as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt point out, the economic difference between the partners will be an issue: Those holding the capital could "[use] the mere option of backing out as a negotiation instrument" at any time. From the perspective of Shared Spaces, personal contacts between members, their trust and their friendship are the only option of overcoming these structural power differences.



### A NETWORK OR A RECIPROCAL GROUP?

One of the most crucial working terms of the first Shared Spaces platform was "guerilla network", an expression introduced by choreographer Faustin Linyekula. He uses it for a circle of people on whom he can always depend and who thus make him independent of the patronage of foreign backers. Guerilla networks develop alternative structures in which the resources aren't financial funds, but rather the commitment and loyalty of friends. This makes them similar to the "small circles of reciprocity", which Paul Frijters defines in a new economic theory which includes love and loyalty in its considerations. These small circles consist of equal individuals who know each other personally and follow a common goal which serves more than just their own well-being. Frijters writes: "Behavior is reciprocal in the sense that members receive gifts and return gifts, following the implicit score sheets, rather than being determined by hierarchical power structures and clear enforcement mechanisms."



Only a few members who strongly believe in the group's ideals would suffice to keep the others from fulfilling their own selfish wishes. This effect was evident among the members of Shared Spaces: People like Faustin Linyekula and Frie Leysen, who, due to their wealth of experience, got more attention, were able to use their powers of persuasion to include their ideals into the group's codex. This codex must be adhered to consistently by all, and passed on to new members. Frijters continues: "The main price of making a small reciprocal group work is the effort involved in generating and maintaining group cohesion."

Frijters sees networks as the counter model. For him, they are exclusively functional connections which facilitate the exchange of information or products and follow no common ideals.

That is why in the case of Shared Spaces – as in that of all informal networks – the archetypes of networks and reciprocal groups overlap. Cooperation is based on a trade of cultural goods and the distribution of information. But the information is exchanged for the purpose of informal and personal support. And there is also close contact with the producers of choreographies and performances which is based



on a mutual interest in this particular person. Boyzie Cekwana puts it this way: “My interest is partnership. (...) We are not selling things, we are building things.”

Hence informal networks are deeply involved in the kind of radical communality which Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri ascribe to our times: “Our economic and social reality is defined less by the material objects that are made and consumed than by co-produced services and relationships. Producing increasingly means constructing cooperation and communicative commonalities.”

According to Frijters, contact makers are placed at all important hubs of these decentralized production venues. They can draw on extensive contacts for their work and share “detailed information about the parties involved, including details about psychological compatibility, trustworthiness, and so on”.

Shared Spaces currently includes around 20 people from all over the world. Beside a significant ratio of curators from the so-called Western countries, people from Warsaw, Ramallah, Rio de Janeiro, Kisangani, Phnom Penh, Ljubljana and Johannesburg are involved. New members are to be added to this circle slowly and carefully.

#### **REQUESTS FOR SHARED SPACES**

The members of Shared Spaces have differing approaches to intercontinental cooperation: While Jan Goossens and Paul Kerstens (KVS Brussels) have constructed a continual joint platform between Kinshasa and Brussels, Eduardo Bonito (Panorama Festival, Rio de Janeiro) mainly invites international guests to his festival to give fresh impulses to the local scene. And Frie Leysen (Wiener Festwochen) is constantly traveling between the continents to support individual artists and to convey the view of the world which she has acquired in her long career to a European audience. Nevertheless, they framed a number of common requests in Kinshasa which will be systemized in the course of this paper.

#### **POWER SHIFTS**

Christine Dössel is very clear about one thing: “There may be a wealth of talent in Africa – but the conditions are abysmal and the others have all the money.” The others: In the case of the performing arts this means Europe. After all even famous companies from New York make their money mainly by touring the second-smallest continent of the world. The fact that those who supply the funds have a significant influence on the chronically underfinanced festivals is confirmed by Anja Dirks: “For the last few years, I have tried to steer Theaterformen against the current of illustrating the economic inequality of the world in festival programmes.” For festivals with a chronically tight budget, it is of course much easier if the Canadian Embassy or the Goethe



Institut step in to support a guest performance. At the same time, there is the risk that artists from regions that receive little attention and have little money try to adapt to the taste of the international curators in order to get any recognition at all. A conversation with playwright Papy Mbwiti from Kinshasa illustrates that this is no hypothetical risk: He distinguishes clearly between those productions which his company develops as quasi-commissions for NGOs and those which he is invested in as an artist. This means that Shared Spaces has to stay adaptive both within the network and in cooperation with local theatre scenes, and has to actively produce shifts in power.

The KVS in Brussels, which professes sustainability, long-term commitment and reciprocity in all its Congo-projects, could be a model here. It follows a concern of many trans-local projects, as Peter Mörtenbeck and Helge Mooshammer put it: "In recent years, groups with experimental approaches have increasingly converged in platforms, which are meant to counter the quick consuming of one place after the other with a model of self-organized creation. (...) The alignment towards a location is thus changing into a creative participation in trans-local spaces of activity." A focus on new places must be connected with a long-term process of active participation in their scene, be it in the form of own projects or long-term support of local artists. That is why Shared Spaces has decided to act only in places where at least one of its members has personal contacts and knowledge about local conditions.

### LEARNING EFFECTS

One of the most important catch phrases of current development cooperation is Capacity Building. But how can we deal with the fact that constant political upheavals in unstable states are permanently threatening the slow process of developing an autonomous cultural scene? Elvira Dyangani Ose, whose post as Tate Modern-curator is financed by the large Nigerian Guaranty Trust Bank, offers a solution: The Spanish curator invests as much of her budget as possible in local knowledge generation. This was withheld from Africans during colonial times, to cement their dependence on external development measures. David van Reybrouck describes the effects of this policy in his chronicle of the Congo: "On the day the Congo became independent, sixteen of its inhabitants had a university degree. There were hundreds of well-educated nurses and administrative employees, but in the Force Publique there wasn't a single black officer. There was neither a native doctor, nor an engineer, a lawyer, agronomist nor economist."

In Dyangani Ose's view, this makes it so important today to support an autonomous and local process of structuring and distributing knowledge, instead of only harnessing this knowledge for oneself. Moroccan dancer Taoufiq Izzediou agrees that instead of furnishing theatres with expensive equipment, it would make more sense to promote education programmes in the technical and administrative fields. These would have to be adapted to the local circumstances, however, emphasizes Marya Wethers of New York Live Arts. Maybe a suggestion made by South African Ntone Edjabe could be useful in this context: The most helpful thing that white people could contribute to his country's future would be to simply shut up.

### LACK OF INTENTION

Listening is a lost art, as Boyzie Cekwana has had to find out. He is frequently asked to talk about Africa, but has found that nobody listens properly, because it has all been said before somehow. That is why one of the special qualities of Shared Spaces' first platform lay in the unplanned conversations that took place in the lunch-queue, on the bus to the festival centre or at the end of an official discussion. "Maybe it's important to not always have your eye on the results, but rather to just bring people together, for the sake of being together", says Anja Dirks. "We all know from our own careers how many coincidences turned out to be important." If you want to promote intercontinental cooperation, you should therefore not only invest in specific projects. By promoting encounters, Shared Spaces gives room to the unforeseen. This form of artists' promotion means to accept that you might not see any immediate result at all. Or that the result may not be an international one, but simply another local one, which was influenced by the common experience. Again, KVS supplies an example of what this might mean: In March 2010, the "Institute for Provocation" brought together five Chinese and five Congolese artists to investigate how China's economic and political power was changing

Africa's traditional connection with the international community. On a three-week journey to Kinshasa and Guangzhou in China, they met local knowledge carriers. "This art project is about to see, to research, so you can make your own choice what you want to do, who you want to see, what the possibilities [are]. And also it's like a field work so we really had to go out", Zhao Chuan describes the process. No results were expected of the artists, just a public presentation of the impressions they had received was to form the conclusion. But because the Congolese artists were refused entry into Germany, Chuan refused to read his text. Only the mute surtitles were projected above his head.

**SOLIDARITY**

Shared Spaces is focused entirely on the potential for action of its members: Which specific cooperation projects can be realized? The work is not to be encumbered by good intentions or weighty theories. The aim is cooperation beyond the typical logic forced by a project-based cultural policy. In this context, solidarity is more than a premise for work with artists; it is a precept for working with each other: How can individual members' potential be tapped so that there is gain for all partners? "Together, we are a little stronger. If you have a number of partners, you can feed each other lines at times. It shouldn't be too many partners, but it can help sometimes – when dealing with donors, funders and so on." What Anja Dirks describes is nothing less than a syndicate.

**THE NETWORK AS SYNDICATE**

Criminals find unusual ways of dealing with the systems of rules we live by. The Texan Prison Entrepreneurship Program sees these skills as the best foundation to begin living an orderly life: Risk-taking and creativity are in demand in the market-place. With each graduating class of this unusual business education, the "fraternity of underdogs" who take care of each other outside of prison grows.

Shared Spaces can also be seen as such a positive group of conspirators. In order to effectively implement the requests described above, the members have to become accomplices who develop work methods beyond the established Western-dominated system of cultural production. Seeing themselves as a syndicate will allow participants to increase their scope of activities and renders them less dependent on their respective contexts of cultural politics. "It is crucial that the quality of relationships is described as 'open to possibilities' here, which places an emphasis on the situative and dynamic character of the social component", says cultural theorist Gesa Ziemer, who is working on a theory of creativity which adapts the concept of complicity and uses it to describe "[cooperative] forms of cooperation." "Accomplices form an alliance to produce alternative systems which are at times hard to predict, often conspiratorial and clandestine, but efficiently achieve their impacts."



It is part of Shared Spaces' foundation myth that an initial application for funds for the network was declined by the European Union. In retrospect, Kerstens and Dirks are relieved: Their activities would have been codified for years ahead instead of being permanently able to adapt organically to the situation, as KVS' Congo-projects illustrate so successfully. Moreover, the implementation of the network's projects would have meant creating a new institution. This would have impeded the intended ability to react spontaneously and the informality of relationships. The network's coordination will now be located in individual institutions where members are in positions of power. Since informal networks question and define themselves anew with every project, common initiatives are a vital tool for developing one's own objectives by means of specific common experiences in the platforms.



This could help Shared Spaces to avoid the fate of many institutionalised networks which continue to exist despite a lack of commitment of its members. "You can be a member of a network without contributing actively. Complicity, however, demands conscious and active participation. (...) One can see complicity as a more intensive form of networking", says Ziemer. How much fun it can be to establish alternative structures which are inherent in complicit interlacing is demonstrated by an idea which was an immediate success on the second day of Shared Spaces' foundation meeting: In connection with its cooperation with Alain Platel's dance company Les Ballets C de la B, KVS organized an emergency fund. Both parties set aside a certain part of their funds in order to facilitate things for which there are no funds, or no funds that can be activated quickly. Among other things, a young dancer's journey from Kinshasa to an audition at the Brussels P.A.R.T.S.-college was financed. This idea, entitled "Fire Brigade" was made into the fourth official aim of Shared Spaces, beside Creation, Mobility and Training. This aim includes all activities which are characterized by a creative handling of the members' institutional resources and are activated as soon as a member needs assistance. When all accomplices fully exhaust their potential, a pool of surprising oppor-

tunities and creative detours emerges. Such alliances are becoming more and more important for European partners, too, as Goossens underlines: "Europe is in a huge crisis. We're still much better off in the cultural sector than partners around the world but the question is really how much longer." Solidarity from affection, not from a feeling of duty – this demand of Jan Goossens' is repeatedly articulated by the artists of the first platform as a requirement for their cooperation with the international art scene. With their demand for sincere relationships, they refuse to enter into a dependency on well-financed backers. This attitude is often the result of specific experiences in their artistic biographies. Taking two theatre makers as examples, who both contributed artistic performances and critical advice to the first platform, I will investigate the option of applying a political concept of love to the work of Shared Spaces.



#### **FAUSTIN LINYEKULA**

Choreographer Faustin Linyekula is tired of the dark stories about his home country, as he breathes into the dark scenery of the beginning of his piece "Drums and Digging". In Kisangani, the city where the Belgian occupation began, Faustin Linyekula created a downright utopian place: Kabako studios supply about 30 people with a place to rehearse, to present, to discuss and to live. Together with German architect Bärbel Müller, Linyekula asked himself how a place would have to be designed to enable them to communicate with the citizens of Kisangani through the means of contemporary art. Their solution: If you occupy more than one place, architecture can work like acupuncture and truly have an impact on an entire city. That is why the studios consist of a public place for performances in the city centre, an internal laboratory, and a Think Tank which is located in the most neglected part of Kisangani. Linyekula sees himself as a member of civil society. With his colleagues, whom he considers family, he wants to let the studio's activities grow and to build infrastructure.

Faustin Linyekula consciously doesn't differentiate between family and network. For him, loyalty and respect are the highest virtues

in cooperation. In the Congo, where dancing is not accepted as a profession, artists need to know that they have allies who will always be there for them. They get together because they share the same values and so they inspire each other to go on, despite the sometimes seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the Congo.

With this attitude, Linyekula has encouraged quite a number of young dancers to put together something of their own. Linyekula's family extends beyond the Congo and so finds an astonishingly informal way to break the isolation. He rejects networks that were designed on a drawing board. Often, he says, they are products of a non-African initiative, whose members share nothing else than living on the same continent. He frequently meets people who pose as experts on Africa after three projects on the continent and who are invited to discussion events. On the other hand, Africans are all too ready to assume the role of the ones receiving aid without questioning the self-righteousness of the Europeans. Initiatives like this show that we are still living in a colonial context.



#### BOYZIE CEKWANA

Whereas Linyekula shows all his new productions in Kisangani before he goes on tour, Boyzie Cekwana doesn't perform in South Africa at all. In contrast to Faustin Linyekula, he would not need to build himself a stage, but "what doesn't exist is the climate to make it possible that those spaces are filled with our work." As a result, most of Cekwana's network is outside his home country. "In a way it's a very privileged way of living. It's an ideal way because then people

are not based on sharing a common history because we are black, but no, we share something because we share something." A very important contact for him is Anja Dirks, who has been accompanying his work for many years. "Her motivation is to deal with people and to deal with real situations that people are working with. Whether they are European or South American or North American, whoever, doesn't matter. You are dealing with people. And so how do you use this impersonal 'thing money' – it has very impersonal rules, puts people into boxes and numbers – how do you take this thing, that's dehumanizing, and humanize it?"

Boyzie Cekwana too is looking for personal relationships rather than solely investing in contacts that hold the promise of a short-term career. "I think for me it's really like a relationship. (...) And you find ways to go deeper into this and then start to build things." He developed this attitude as a reaction to working with a festival which coproduced his work, but didn't want to present it once it was finished. Instead of retreating after this hurtful experience, Cekwana developed new principles for his work. He no longer offers his new projects up for coproduction; if festival directors want to join him, they have to make the first move. This is due to his interest in real, intellectual partnership, but he also wants to prevent ever losing the power over his creation to the festival circus again. "Because from the very beginning it was clear to me that I wanted to find a different way. For sure more difficult, but also more free." Furthermore, Cekwana now explicitly reflects the clichés which are projected on him as a black South African man in his performances, thus addressing the powerful inequality between himself and his European audience. When the idea for his trilogy "Influx Controls" was developed, it was Sandro Lunin and Anja Dirks who were courageous enough to go down that new path with him. "I think it has a lot to do with trust. And also, I think, friendship and loyalty which is very rare and I was very fortunate to have that from them."

#### SOLIDARITY AND FRIENDSHIP? THE PROCEDURES OF LOVE

Paul Frijters considers love to be an "attempt of the unconscious mind to bargain with something that is believed to be capable of fulfilling desires and that is perceived to be too powerful to be possessed by direct means." Love is thus just another form of greed, but one that doesn't work within the usual practices of appropriation, and which neutralizes structural imbalances of power. This makes it a seemingly suitable principle for Shared Spaces: Both curators and artists are hungry for new worlds that they have not yet conquered, but they refuse to be overwhelmed in the course of the impending conquests or to act as overwhelmers. Friendship, loyalty and trust seem to be most effective means of achieving their goals. This strategy is described in a publication for documenta 13, in which Michael Hardt is looking for a political concept of love. Love appears to him to be a "simultaneously anti-institutional and institutional process", because it both overrides all rules and prohibits any

change. Hence, Hardt is looking for a third way, “[a] love which has both the transforming power of an event and the continuity of a commitment.” This is exactly what the idea of an informal network aims at, which Shared Spaces would like to be. To understand what this path might look like, we first have to look at how people get together. “Love comes as a surprise to the individuals involved: While they can manipulate the degree to which they are vulnerable to love, they cannot simply choose to love something”, Frijters says. Nonetheless, love is not an incident predetermined by fate, over which we have no influence: According to Hardt, every individual consists of a multitude of characteristics which can combine with those of its partner. The individual remains the same, even if it stresses different traits in different relationships in order to construct them into similarities. This means that agreement is not limited to an ideal coupling but “rather illustrates the ability of two multiplicities to enter into the same context and form a new body”. At least at the level of a society, these connections aren’t stable but tend to form pluralistic contexts over the course of time, “which always tend to disintegrate and to dissolve into smaller multiplicities before meeting up again in new encounters.”



Shared Spaces is such a pluralistic context. All members have some kind of connection with certain other members of the network. In order to reconcile their varied interests, Shared Spaces organizes platforms which are mainly intended to facilitate encounters. In these encounters, love can develop, but in order for it to have an

impact outside the sheltered framework of the platform, according to Hardt we have to find ways to “[force] a new rhythm [onto] time.” The literary scholar finds this in the works of French author Jean Genet, who claims that ceremonies are the most important “mechanism for the extension and repetition of encounters.” Only ceremonies help us to stabilize long-term loving relationships without having them freeze into a clear form. By constantly questioning the reasons of being together and reminding us of our joint past, ceremonies give us the options of both leaving the union because it no longer lives up to our own ideas or to strengthen it anew. “Genet’s idea of the ceremony of love implies a fascinating idea of the institution. Love is a kind of ritual which lets us return to people and things with whom we are in agreement in the sense of Spinoza, that is to say those with whom the multiplicities we are made of can enter into productive contexts.” By setting itself the task of regularly meeting at platforms modelled on the first one, Shared Spaces has laid the foundation for a common ritual. Shared Spaces thus becomes an institution which not only promotes a trade of performances, but also specializes in the production of love.

#### A CHALLENGE FOR CULTURAL POLITICS

Shared Spaces is a network which evades existing balances of power in various ways: Not only does it rely on equal relationships among people from various continents, but it also seeks to be autonomous with regards to the standards set by funding institutions. It can therefore be of interest for concepts of cultural policy to observe which working models Shared Spaces will be promoting as an alternative and to derive a practice-oriented strategy for culture. One of the greatest challenges for intercontinental networks is the fact that cultural funding is still predominantly seen as a regional or national issue, with a rather conservative interpretation of these terms to boot. The German Federal Cultural Foundation launched the TURN-programme in 2012, which aims at “providing German institutions and players with [...] incentives to expand their profile by including new issues, working methods and perspectives.” And in the opening speeches for the 2013 Theaterformen, the festival’s positive reflection on the international character of the city of Hanover was stressed. In both cases, foreign artists are not seen as part of “our” cultural scene. They remain temporary guests who introduce the “German” audience to new topics, ideas and formats. Whether the partners from both sides will enter into these concepts remains to be seen, but the funding institutions’ rhetoric is unambiguous. They still see culture as a national organizational unit, whereas artists like Cekwana and Linyekula are operating within global networks and have in fact long since become part of the German cultural scene. Their reality is that of many people in a world where mobility has been rapidly increasing. The intercultural city described by Mark Terkessidis has expanded beyond its geographical borders in astonishing ways. Shared Spaces member Jan Goossens feels this too: “I think Brussels and Kinshasa are enormously linked. If

there is trouble in Kinshasa we feel it very directly in several areas of Brussels.“

Instead of limiting oneself to the promotion of an imagined German culture, Mark Terkessidis suggests the implementation of a principle of multiplicity (Michael Hardt speaks of multitude), “whose smallest unit is the individual as a nonconformist entity, as a bundle of differences. Multiplicity has to be designed so as to give this individual a framework which grants full access and an opportunity to exhaust all its possibilities.” Instead of forcing artists to be guided by communal concepts which have no meaning for them, a cultural policy which aims at a local boom should be thinking translocally. As a first step in this direction, a moderate cultural policy could start to support artists who have a local connection rather than a local residence.

The foundation of networks like Shared Spaces shows that it is high time to stop thinking in terms of regions, nations or continents and to start developing a cultural strategy that is as mobile as its players. An exchange of best practice examples can be the basis of a dialogue about common problems. Because national cultural funding itself, as a significant component of public budgets, is



permanently being challenged. And this doesn't only go for unstable states: The examples of the Netherlands or Hungary show just how dependent the art scene is on the political intent of its government. On the one hand, thus, the task is to form unusual alliances and to support each other in the local struggles for political recognition. On the other hand, the constitution of a strong civil society must be aimed at everywhere, which can rescue artists in an emergency and will thereby ensure a real freedom of the arts. However, getting involved in other people's art scenes will not be without consequences, as Günther Hasenkamp sums up: “It remains our wish, and sometimes it is wishful thinking, that it might be enough to just get projects going and then, after ‘empowering’ our partners abroad, to leave the projects in their sole care.” Intercontinental cooperation projects work in a world that is getting ever more tangled up in itself and where a retreat into the national sphere is gradually becoming impossible.

From the side of the artists, Shared Spaces identified the demand for easier mobility. Reformed immigration laws or cost-free visa for artists would be a starting point. Cultural policy should review its basic parameters in order to supply intercontinental cooperation projects with ideal spaces for activity. Furthermore, more investment in residencies with no fixed intentions should be made. Only these residencies will ensure that “a debate about one's own perspective and that of others will take place in the mode of individual encounters.” The fact that Anja Dirks has so far only been able to realize the important Theaterformen scholarship programme as an appendage to other projects illustrates the need for investment in this field. Such projects alone will enable international festivals to develop a purpose beyond that of presenting exotic worlds. Furthermore, Shared Spaces shows how important friendship, solidarity and complicity are for artistic work on an equal footing. A contemporary cultural policy should be just as interested in the quality of the collaboration as in the result at the end of the process. But this means that decision makers will have to leave the seclusion of secret funding sessions and enter upon relationships of their own.



An involved, not to say loving cultural policy knows its partners onstage and behind the scenes very well, knows about their stories and opportunities for development. In order to give them the ideal support, it will do one thing above all: It will listen and organize “recurrent enjoyable, beneficial social encounters” (Michael Hardt). That Shared Spaces members repeatedly spoke against funding concepts with strong restrictions on content and form should not be seen to argue against any initiating cultural policy per se. But it suggests that funding institutions are not flexible enough to react to new developments and not sensitive enough to the actual needs of the artists. Anja Dirks proposes a return to open funding without limitations regarding artistic disciplines and topics, modelled on the Federal German Cultural Foundation: “I, as a so-called curator, have always found the most exciting topics by talking to the artists. (...) In this sense, society – in the form of sponsors and financial backers – should stay much more reactive to the input that comes from talented artists.”

Festival scholarship holder Simon Allemeersch underlines that truly new things can only emerge when artists have the opportunity of choosing the contexts, formats and places in which they want to work. A true promotion of artistic innovation will emerge from the question of how creativity can be enabled rather than steered. Cultural policy will have to surrender control and follow a credo of Mark Terkessidis: “Change is not a task for humourless pedagogy, but a game of radical imagination.”



## SUMMARY

Reciprocity, complicity and love – by attempting to apply these terms from other disciplines to Shared Spaces in this paper, a significant distinction from the generally prevailing concept of networks was gained. This newly founded network has the potential of becoming a model for organic and de-layered institutions. From a strongly moral analysis of the inequalities between global dance and theatre scenes, it develops a primate of personal relationships. Establishing and maintaining friendships is thus the biggest challenge faced by intercontinental networks. They are the vital foundation for the realization of the members’ hopes for power-shifts, sustainability, common learning effects and solidarity. The more unfamiliar the terrain of our activities, the more we have to take care of these basic processes of human relationships. The most important strategy has been shown by networkers’ experience to be a lack of intention. Trusting in the power of the encounter shifts away from targets and gives artists and curators the necessary space to follow spontaneous impulses and to process the impressions they have received. Travelling programmes with no fixed intention account for trans-local reality and support artists who see themselves as citizens of the world.



One of Shared Spaces’ most ambitious – and least clearly defined – projects is the idea of the Fire Brigade, a collectively run emergency fund that will help projects that have fallen through the funding institutions’ grid. For these institutions, the project is of special interest: On the one hand, through its personal contacts, Shared Spaces is able to react very precisely to urgent requirements and challenges. On the other hand, the operational areas of the Fire Brigade will serve to highlight the gaps in the current cultural funding.

The biggest challenge for Shared Spaces will be to keep up the ethical principles developed during the first platform bindingly for all future projects. The intended informal working model will demand a special commitment from its very busy members. They will have to expand the potential of their complicity, open their institutions to

unforeseeable uses, promote a lack of intention, build cooperation links with external actors and develop alternative financing models – without being able to rely on an organisation in the background. Shared Spaces will exist as long as there is a real interest in cooperation among its members. If not, it will simple disappear – quite organically.



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# WHY KINSHASA?

A colloquium of Festival Theaterformen and the UNESCO-Chair "Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development" of the University of Hildesheim about the sense and nonsense of international theatre productions

Exchange, coproduction, and networks: it initially sounds like a good idea. Recently, several German cooperation programmes have been directed at the African continent. But what do artists expect of an

"exchange"? What is "cooperation"? What can be made feasible by a coproduction? How can the success of these projects be measured? What role do racism and exoticism play in the mutual perception?



June 22nd, 2013

## WHAT ROLE DOES THEATRE PLAY IN WHICH SOCIETIES?

With the festival grant-holders

Presentation Dr. Daniel Gad



### Excerpts

**Daniel Gad** This first round table is entitled "Which role does theatre play in which society?" which intends that theatre has some kind of connection to society. Theatre is said to be a way of communication. So art is a form of debating society. Within this understanding, artists can play a crucial part in development processes in society.

I will add a short quotation from a report to German Parliament about 'Culture in Germany'. It says: "The arts enable people to take up themes of social interactions. In this way the arts have an effect on society far beyond the sphere of artistic communication because they help to give people a meaning in life and determine human intents and purposes."

How would you describe the connection between theatre and society in your situation?

**Djodjo Kazadi** I come from a country where theatre does not occupy a large space in society. There is a form of popular theatre that is also on television where family stories or stories about witchcraft are being told. Theatre spaces like this one with artistic ambitions don't really exist much in Congo, so audience often only know the stuff that's on TV.

Therefore we have a difficult relationship with audience. At Connexion Kin for example, the audience is mostly friends and people who know each other. That is why part of artistic work consists of teaching and finding young people to whom you try to transmit knowledge. The festival that I organized, the choreographic meeting of Kinshasa for urban dances, was also partly started because I was always feeling alone with what I wanted to say.

**Dorine Mokha** I reread this question also as: how to be an artist in a world, where art does not exist. If you would have to find a place for the artist within our society, it would be even below unemployed people.

For me, an artist is maybe just a centre of a circle. And then, there are a lot of elements that gravitate around him. It is up to the artist to feel concerned about what is happening around him. We artists will not be able to change our country. But we can change our own lives and those of a few around us.

**Marlene Monteiro Freitas** What I can say about Cape Verde joins what Djodjo was telling about the place of theatre in Congo. For example, we also do not have a real relation to theatre. We don't find buildings in cities or villages where theatre or repertoire pieces would be performed, be it from popular theatre or whatsoever.

But we do have a relation to dance and music. It serves to structure peoples lives. It's a reason for gathering and gives place to collective emotional experience.

There are as many Capverdians living in the country, as there are, living as migrants. A lot of the work done on music and dance therefore happens outside the country as well. So I would rather describe the situation of theatre as in constant metamorphosis, than really defining fixed parameters and try to find an identity.

**Simon Allemeersch** In Belgium, everyone is producing something on his own special field of meaning and text. We have Flemish politicians that produce Flemish identity. And we have relevant political theatres that produce relevant political theatre. But to whom are they talking? It's a very, very small percentage of the population that they directly talk to. I think theatre in Belgium has a large symbolical wealth. Every time there are elections, people discuss how much money will go to theatre. But the people who discuss almost never attend theatre.

In discussions with people from our group, it occurred to me that often, the crucial question is choosing the context and the place, the city where you work. How can your talents interact with the circumstances that you choose for yourself? And what do people need to do so? I think in the first place it's not about money. It is about the ability to choose those sorts of contexts, those sorts of space that you can work in. And by which you are challenged to develop whatever you do. Very often the cultural industry is very narrow and doesn't have enough open space for many people.

**Vishnupad Barve** India is shouldering a baggage of traditional theatre and that's a big challenge. In India most of the theatre is made for entertainment, it is very commercial. So if we are talking about the role of theatre in the societies, I'll say it's most importantly community bonding. There is one kind of theatre that is produced locally each year in every village. It is presented on stage in front of the temple, where people from the village come together. There are around 5000

plays like that produced every year. They don't travel, they don't go outside their village, but they perform. And that is very important thing while looking at the theatre and its role in society.

**Zhao Chuan** My big challenge is to try and avoid the word 'politic' inside and outside of China. So we call ourselves social theatre and we are really enjoying a kind of freedom. We basically make theatre with no funding. That way, we get rid of all problems around funding. Our work is not capital driven, so we start from no money. If today we decide to do something, we can start tomorrow. And that is a kind of freedom many other theatre makers I've met do not enjoy. The entrance is free as well, audiences gives donations, as they are willing to. That way, censorship to a certain degree is not really working on us, because we don't ask for permission to perform.

**Dalia Taha** In Palestine the reality of colonialism and occupation and disposition of lands and all this stuff is very dominant, so that sometimes it conceals other realities. Artistic work is instigated by this political agenda, but it's not owned by it. It is shaped by it. Theatre is poor in this classical form but if we talk about performance, it has a strong existence in Palestine on a daily basis. And it stems from a different need and a different place, it stems from the form of demonstrations. Demonstrations constitute a strong component in the daily life of people and it uses the public space. In these gatherings people can reclaim the space and use their bodies to express themselves and their demands. For example in Ramallah, my city there's every day something going on in the public space, performances which are at the same time a political act. They fool the power, because they are conveying all these political statements but under an artistic form, so power can't intervene.

**Humphrey Maleka** I come from a very complicated society. And there are societies within the societies. So I don't know if I have mastered that to connect all the needs of local people. My questions are rather around mastering my needs as an artist.

**Michael Kranixfeld** We are in different places in the world but the struggles are the same. I can only work in the social context that I come from. It's great to have this international experience now because it broadens my horizon, but it's important for me for my artistic work here in Germany. As an artist, I have to consider my own country as being in development all the time.



June 23rd, 2013

**Panel discussion**

**OPPORTUNITIES AND HURDLES FOR CULTURAL COOPERATION**

with Jan Goossens (Artistic Director KVS), Mariano Pensotti (Director), Alex Moussa Sawadogo (Afrikamera and Moussokouma Festival Berlin), Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider (University of Hildesheim) Presentation Anja Dirks



**Excerpts**

**Jan Goossens** I'm the artistic director of KVS, which actually means Royal Flemish Theatre, artistically in charge of the KVS since 2001. We have developed quite an extensive exchange programme with artists in Kinshasa, in the DRC in general, and more and more with artists on the African continent. Connexion Kin, the festival that Theaterformen is associated with this year, is an annual festival that we've been organizing in Kinshasa for the past five years together with many partners from Europe and especially from Kinshasa and the Congo.

**Anja Dirks** As the director of the Royal Flemish Theatre of Brussels one could think that your mission is about Flemish identity and culture. So what the hell are you doing in Kinshasa and Ramallah?

**JG** The motivation is to try and to be very Flemish, but Flemish in a way that is linked to today. Our engagement with Kinshasa starts in Brussels. KVS is a Flemish city theatre founded in the 1880s at a time, when Brussels was a city of a Flemish majority and a small francophone minority that had all the political and cultural power. That was the general situation in Belgium at that time. The Flemish community started a process of emancipation by building a political and cultural life of its own and founding cultural institutions like

KVS. The problem is that KVS has been fulfilling that same mission for more than a hundred years, not noticing that the world around the institution was changing quite dramatically. From the 1950s on, huge waves of migration passed through Brussels. The Flemish population moved out; so from a city with a Flemish majority it has become a city with a tiny Flemish minority. Even the francophones are not a majority anymore. Huge waves of migration from southern Europe, from northern Africa, from central Africa, from all the European countries (because of the EU) and from North America (because of NATO) have just completely changed the demographics of the city. Today about 50% of the Brussels population is not of Belgian origin, more than a hundred languages are spoken, and most households are linguistically and culturally very mixed. And so within that context, KVS was still going on according to the same mission: "Let's be Flemish, let's have a Flemish artistic director, with a Flemish ensemble of actors doing quite classical repertoire in Flemish." And so no audience was coming anymore. On top of that KVS missed everything that started in the Flemish performing arts in the late 70s, early 80s with an incredibly talented generation of artists emerging, people like Jan Fabre, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Wim Vandekeybus, Alain Platel, Needcompany. All of these people founded their own independent companies in reaction against the big institutions like KVS. So not only did KVS not have a connection with the city of Brussels anymore, it had also completely missed the train of the fascinating, contemporary, Flemish performing arts. And so towards the late 90s many people in the performing arts and in cultural politics in Belgium said: "Let's just get rid of these big institutions." Fortunately not everyone thought like that. Also fortunately, in the late 90s, when I started working at KVS, because of renovations the theatre had to move outside of its historic building in the centre to a very 'rough' part of Brussels where no one spoke Flemish and where the theatre became even more of a UFO than it had been in the centre. Then the project, that I wasn't running yet, I was a dramaturge then, completely collapsed. The crisis emerged in full visibility.

And that's where the interesting discussions started. With a number of young people we talked to the board and said: we still think that the possibilities that this kind of institution has, and also the history of this theatre, that they can still form the basis for a really interesting project today. But two things need to be done: Artistically the house needs to be opened up in terms of disciplines. The repertoire should not only be the existing classical 20th century texts, but focus as well on new repertoire of artists that work here. And secondly, we need to reconnect with the city and turn this place into a vibrant city theatre: multilingual, connecting with artists and audiences from all the communities in Brussels, taking into account what Brussels is today: a city that saw waves of migration from other parts of Europe, from Africa, both poor and really rich immigrants. And Brussels also is a city with a very heavy history and presence linked to central Africa. Most of

the big urbanization projects in Brussels that took place during King Leopold II's reign were directly financed from the Congo. And at the same time Brussels is still partly a Congolese city today. Only that is not reflected in cultural or political life at all. We wanted to reflect this part of reality as a Flemish institution, which had played an important role in the emancipation of the Flemish community in Brussels throughout its history. But as this battle has been won, we can now try and play a role in the emancipation of other communities. The central African communities were a clear point to start from. An important step was the staging of a piece by the most famous 20th century Belgian author and playwright Hugo Claus, written in 1969 about the life and works of Leopold II that was never performed in Flanders. Our production of it in 2001 made a big stir artistically and politically. But as it's still a piece written by a white Belgium who feels guilty, set in Brussels, with only one Congolese character on stage – whose name is Bongo Bongo and who never speaks – we said, that's not enough. Let's also connect with Brussels' artists from African origin that are living in this city today. That's what we started in 2001 and some of these artists are still part of the large KVS family that works with the theatre today.

In 2005 after overcoming some financial difficulties, we started working internationally again. We decided that our international programme should not only be about prestigious European capitals like Paris, Vienna, Berlin and Hanover. Our international programme should be a continuation to what we do in our own city. So let's go and look at a couple of places in the world where some of these Brussels artists of foreign origin that we are working with now have their origin. Kinshasa was one of the first places to think of. I went there in 2005 for the first time without a master plan. I only had a few names and phone numbers of artists I wanted to meet.

That first trip of 10 days during which I travelled through this enormous city of 10 million people was an incredible experience, making clear to me that we could make a difference here. Not in terms of going there and teaching artists what theatre or dance or performing arts are, because they very well know that themselves. But they work in total isolation. Kinshasa is on the one hand a globalized city connected with the rest of the world but it's quite difficult to get in and out of it. You can only fly. Kinshasa based artists hardly ever leave their city, and are connected to the rest of the world through the Internet. And they work in very difficult conditions. To break this isolation we started a very artist driven collaboration between KVS, its artistic team and artists that are based there in three stages. It is a long term and reciprocal collaboration, set up to last as long as we are in the theatre. It needs to go both ways. We went to Kinshasa but from the beginning invited artists based in Kinshasa and the Congo to come to Brussels as well. And so in the first two to three years we went to Kinshasa with productions that we considered interesting European performing arts productions, so that the artists

could see what we do and who we are. And then we started inviting artists, like Faustin Linyekula for example, to come to KVS on a regular basis. Artists started meeting each other, connecting, wanting to make new work. And so the second stage was us trying to produce, coproduce and help make that new work emerge.

And then in 2009 we saw the need of a platform where that work can also be shown in Kinshasa. So that's when we started developing the idea of the festival. Together with numerous partners in the city, numerous European partners or Flemish-Belgium partners to begin with. And from a three to four day festival it has now become an 11 day festival that happens on an annual basis. And that has a strong connection to Kinshasa, but that's also really opened up to artists from other African countries and from around the world. Connecting the local with the international in Kinshasa is crucial for us. So we only want to show the Congolese work on the horizon of the rest of the world.

Some of our board members: let's just drop that name, we are not a Flemish theatre, it has such a heavy history. We said, no no, let's keep it! Given what is politically happening in Belgium today, with mainly right wing nationalists wanting to claim that adjective Flemish, we said we're going to stick to it. But we will give it our own content and we'll make it multi-lingual and very connected to the world in order to make the point that this is what we think is our Flemish cultural identity today.

**AD** Thank you. What you described could be the future of some German city theatres as well. Now this conversation is about chances, but also hurdles. Given the history, isn't it a delicate situation to be a Belgian institution - with the money, with the power, with the passport - making a festival in Congo? People there are of course very sensitive about power relations. How do you deal with it?

**JG** You can never really solve that. The first important thing is to always make a lot of space to openly discuss that, because there are no final answers to these questions. It is of course much easier to do nothing, to not go there and to leave them in their isolation and rough conditions. That is the easy solution, that most Belgian political and cultural communities choose today. The overall attitude is, oh Congo, we made so many mistakes there, the best thing we can do now is stay away, ignore them and hopefully they will find a way out of their trouble at some point themselves, but who really cares. But I was born in 71, the Congo became independent in 1960. No one in my family has a past with the Congo. There is no point in me feeling guilty about that past. There can be a point in acknowledging it and taking it as a starting point for what could hopefully be a different kind of, more equal, relationship today. And that's what we've been aiming for. Have we managed? Is there no

inequality in that relationship? Of course there is, because we come with the money. But as always with money and power, I think there is no point in being against them as such. You need them in this world and everything depends on how you use them. And so we try and use them in an interesting way. Our relationship with Congolese artists is long term. Someone like Faustin Linyekula has been working with us at KVS for seven years now. We had been active in the Congo for four years when we started the festival, which had five editions now. It all takes time, it is in a way a life's work. It is reciprocal: the Congolese coming to Brussels are changing the institution KVS from the inside as well. You need an in-depth investment in partnerships that are based on openness and that allow mutual trust to develop. Difficulties and intentions need to be openly discussed. Through these long term, reciprocal, open relationships we have tried to create partnerships with organizations and especially with artists who now, I think, are to a certain extent, co-owner of what we are doing in Kinshasa. And I think that is still better – I'm not saying it's perfect – but more interesting and courageous than to ignore the Congo, 'cause we've messed it up and it's an even bigger mess now than it was in 1960, so let them just figure it out themselves. Brussels and Kinshasa are enormously linked. If there is trouble in Kinshasa we feel it very directly in several areas of Brussels. So saying that we're not connected that we can ignore the past and the present that we share with the Congolese is in my opinion cheap nonsense. But everything depends on how you establish that relationship today.

Here in Europe when it comes to collaborations with African artists or artists from other continents, we still easily think that only we are the strong ones. And that only we are the ones, that have things to offer and that they are only receiving. It might be nice to have this illusion but it's not true anymore. The binary oppositions of 'North/South', 'money vs. no money', 'offering/receiving' in which we keep on framing these discussions are not up to date anymore. Europe is in a huge crisis. We're still much better off in the cultural sector than partners around the world but the question is: how much longer.

The funding that I can find in my own country for what we're doing in Brussels and in Africa is going down year by year, so more and more I also have to look for partnerships in and outside Europe. So what is North and South today? Who is the North and who is the South? The South is very present in Brussels today. Faustin Linyekula or other artists – they are the North! Maybe not on the level of their financial means, but on the level of their talent, their ideas, their connectedness to the world... Where is Faustin from? Of course he is based in Kisangani and a great Congolese artist. But that is not all he is today. So: who develops whom? For me that is a really big question. Of course we can bring things to the Congo, but what artists have given to KVS – on the content level,

on the artistic level, organizing a festival with them in Kinshasa – that has also majorly developed us. Artists from outside of Europe are bringing great things to Europe today. For example some of the first pieces that we showed in KVS from non-European artists were pieces from Faustin and from Lemi Ponifasio from Samoa and New Zealand both productions that were commissioned to do by Peter Sellars at the New Crowned Hope Festival in Vienna.

The starting point of that festival Mozart how was born 250 years ago, ok, let's look at his heritage but not in the sense that we're going to redo his pieces one more time but let's look at what he's brought to European culture and let's try and revitalize and reinvent that. And the starting point of Peter Sellars was, Europe needs new requiems for example today. Europe needs to think about what it is to have this kind of spiritual exercise. But Peter's starting point was also, European artists today are not so capable of doing that so let's invite Faustin to come and bring us a Requiem for his city of Kisangani. Let's invite Lemi Ponifasio to come and bring us a requiem for some of the islands in the pacific around Samoa that are disappearing into the sea because of climate change. The bottom line could be maybe we think we develop and maybe on the formal level we have all kinds of things to offer in the arts but who has the content today. I'm not sure that the content is here. And so this whole money matter is of course also a crucial thing but to only think of this intercontinental exchange in terms of money is also reducing it to a level that is not allowing to think it in all its richness. Cause what these African artists we are working with bring to KVS, it's not the money, but it's a hundred times more important to me than any money could be. So in that sense some of the binary distinctions around notions like South/North, development/money – they are much more blurry and complex and interesting than we continue to phrase them.

**Anja Dirks** Would you please introduce yourself as well?

**Mariano Pensotti** I am a theatre director from Argentina based in Buenos Aires. I am presenting a new play here, it's going to start tonight. I've been working the last 10 years in a mixture between site specific performances and stage performances. And since maybe 6 or 7 years ago I started to present my work not just in Argentina but also abroad. And I usually work with a group of Argentinian actors or a group of Argentinian artists I associate with.

**AD** Now people are asking themselves, what Mariano is doing here, he is not from Kinshasa, not even from Africa. But you are someone who is working a lot in intercontinental exchange or cooperation. You are based in Buenos Aires but your work is coproduced and

shown by arts institutions in Europe. How do you experience being an artist that has to be up to the expectations of European institutions that are inviting you in their context of representation?



**MP** I try not to think that much about it. In Buenos Aires there is a huge independent theatre scene. We don't have any, or only very symbolic funding from the state. There are just two city theatres for a city of 10 million and of course they are very conservative. But there are around 200 small theatre venues in Buenos Aires today with maybe 50 or 60 seats. So they're rather tiny, but the independent theatre there is quite vibrant. It has been like that since 80 or 100 years. To devote yourself to theatre in Argentina, you have to assume that you're going to need another job in order to make your living, because you're not going to earn money from theatre. And it's going to be really tough to find money to do your own project, or your project has to be really small in order to make it easy. Then 20 or 25 years ago, suddenly some international festivals, mainly from Europe, started to coproduce performances and films in Argentina. That concerned the previous generation, not mine. And it was a complex thing because on one hand it allowed a lot of creators to create new films and new theatre pieces that were not possible before due to the non-existing state funding. But on the other hand we started to feel that all those productions were somehow focused on how to represent our situation in Argentina or in Buenos Aires for European audiences. Everything was focused on the suffering of the poor South American people, full of dictatorships, economic crisis... it was mainly that. So during 10 years, films and theatre plays in Argentina basically funded by European international festivals were focused on those issues, even though those issues were not so present in the society anymore.

**AD** Do you think that they really made it for...?

**MP** I don't know if they made it consciously, but somehow they were not naive at all. And then, at a certain point our suffering was out of fashion. International festivals were now focusing on Albanian or Iranian or East European movies. This raised the question about our identity again. How do we present ourselves to foreign eyes? I think in a way Buenos Aires is a very complex city because it's very multicultural if you can use that word there. But historically Buenos Aires has referred to Europe much more than to the rest of Latin America. Many middle class people of Buenos Aires, I think, still see themselves sort of as Europeans in exile, which is very weird and stupid. But then, when we started to present our works to Europeans, we realized how Latin American we were.

And suddenly something started to change. When my generation started to produce performances in Argentina we were not trendy anymore internationally, which was really good for us, because we were feeling at odds with the previous generation and this idea of selling ourselves to foreign eyes. Also my generation of creators in Buenos Aires has much more bastard origins. We came from film, visual arts or literature. We are not that much related to the history of theatre in a way. And only later we started also to be coproduced by international festivals, because there is no other way to produce some plays or some films in Argentina nowadays. What changed me most was when I was first invited to produce a piece in Europe. It was a site specific performance, which was invited to perform in Kunstenfestival in Brussels. It's composed of 9 different scenes which take place in a real street where there are 16 actors playing ordinary life situations. The idea was to tell all the hidden stories in public places. It was related to the economic crisis in Argentina in the beginning of 2001 or 2002; somehow this pushed us to the streets. How fiction and reality was connected was again a meaningful question.

So when I produced that piece, it was of course only aimed to be shown in Buenos Aires. But then I got this invitation remake the same piece in Brussels but with Belgium actors, and I first thought, this is not possible at all. These are small Argentinean stories and they are very much related to some specific city. We will need to make a huge adaptation of the stories and everything is going to change. And indeed we did an adaptation of the stories to add more local background. But what surprised me the most was that we didn't change that much. Of course it has to do with globalization and these universal topics but everything seemed to be much more similar to what I originally thought.

And it was really important for me to have this first experience of collaboration or exchange on that level. Not just pop up to show a

thing and then leave again, but to have the chance to collaborate with local artists, to go deep into the stories of the play. In the end you didn't know if that was a South American production or a European production or whatever. So every time that I write or direct a piece that I know to be coproduced by some international festival, I do not try to think that much about it. I think it's a kind of exercise that I impose to myself.

For example the piece that we're going to show tonight tells the story of four film makers in Buenos Aires and the four films that they are making during one year. It's full of local stories. I try not to think that much about that international collaboration in order not to make my work a kind of commodity or merchandise for international audience, because I don't have any clue what it is to the international audience.

**AD** Do you think that for an artist it is important to be somehow prepared when he suddenly gets the attention of the international scene and gets invited? Or at least to have some artistic stabilization in your work before you go abroad?

**MP** Yeah, I think it's really important. When I started to present my work abroad, I had already made about ten plays in Buenos Aires. That was really important for me. If I was starting to travel with my first or second production, it could have been weird in some artistic way to my future production.

# INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF FESTIVAL GRANT-HOLDERS

Shared Spaces – The Festival Theaterformen grant has been providing shared (time) spaces to young theatre makers from all over the world since 2010. Within the context of the Shared Spaces foundation platform, the program has ripened into a truly exceptional experience for the young artists. Together they travelled to the Connexion Kin Festival in Kinshasa before coming to the Festival Theaterformen in Hanover. Two experienced mentors accompanied

the grant holders to all the performances, encounters, meetings, talks and discussions. The three-week, non-academic training programme on two continents increased the perceptive awareness of the new young artists. The sustainable effects of this collective experience will most certainly be reflected in their future works and provide an expansion of horizons for tomorrow's theatre!



## THE GRANT-HOLDERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES



**Michael Kranixfeld – Germany**  
MULTIPLICITIES

When we were sitting together in the courtyard of a small snack bar in Kinshasa after our long journey and realized that we would be spending the next few weeks together, I blurted out: “I have no idea what we are going to do here. But I just came anyway.” The others laughed; they felt exactly the same way.



The Shared Spaces scholarship is like being asked out on a blind date. In a place which is unfamiliar to all of us in different ways, our unfamiliarity becomes our first similarity. In a way, we spent the rest of the time doing nothing but getting to know each other in constantly new and different ways. We held grand monologues about our artistic work, tried out our (variously gifted) bodies in dance workshops and marveled together at Kinshasa and Hanover. We found out who is good at being late together and forged unlikely humour alliances across the globe.

This scholarship's greatest gift is its lack of intention. Because there was no plan for us, we had ample space to follow spontaneous impulses and to process new impressions at our leisure. The academy is a temporary, organic institution that reinvents itself every time. It is the sum of congruencies that we can agree upon and it challenges us to always look for common ground. In this sense, the time of the scholarship was exceedingly romantic for me.



**Dorine Mokha - Democratic Republic of the Congo**  
INTERNATIONAL SPIRIT

I must admit that when I was asked to participate in the international academy project, I was initially frightened by the idea of working with performers from three different continents and publicly expressing my opinion about the performances at the Festival Connexion Kin in Kinshasa and at the Theaterformen Festival in Hanover.

The first two days in Kinshasa were rough; I was very uncomfortable with my simple English. But after a while a spirit of exchange and cohesion set in that made us particles of a single entity. We named it "L'esprit international" (The international spirit) after "L'esprit Kinois" (the Spirit of Kinshasa), a popular advertising slogan for Ngoyi beer that appealed to more than one of us.

We ended up as a family: we slept in the same hotel, we ate at the same table, we took the same bus, we spoke the same language, and we shared the same stage...we spent entire days without ever being apart.

It was a fantastic experience. I revisited Djodjo's Kinshasa, and while remaining in Kinshasa, I visited Michael and Fanny's Germany, Zhao's China, Vishnu's India, Marlene's Cape Verde, Simon's Belgium, Dalia's Palestine, Humphrey and Jasper's South Africa and

I showed them around my native Lubumbashi and opened my world to them.

The "rencontres" (encounters) were the centre of this experience. We visited the workshops of very committed artists and spoke to influential individuals such as Frie Leysen whom I have greatly admired since 2011.

I emerged from this gathering of giving and taking with a new perception of stagecrafts, of my writings and my choreographic research.

As a choreographer, I learned from this experience, especially in Kinshasa where I presented my solo creation and discussed it with all the members of the academy and the different choreographers who had come from all over the globe for the festival. And each of them contributed something to help me develop this personal project.

However, after the Kinshasa stage, the issuance of my visa was delayed and I began to lose hope of being in Hanover with the entire team. Luckily though, our "international spirit" had the will to survive.

Our family was complete in Hanover, and it was more closely welded. At one point, during a "Shared Spaces Project" session, I was asked what it felt like to be in Europe for the first time. I replied: "I am not in Europe. I am in an international space, a shared space..." because the question of the physical space had become less important in



view of the mental one intertwined with the international academy.

In Hanover, the greatest experience was that each of us led a workshop for the other members. Taking part in the discussions at the "Festival Breakfast" was very constructive simply because we were encouraged to take the floor.

Generally speaking, what I appreciated about the project was the idea of reuniting artists from various different countries, not to set up an immediate project, which would be easy and very fragile, but to give them the opportunity to build strong ties, share individual experiences within a larger scheme and develop an international network that breaks physical borders and provides opportunities for mutual projects. I am sure that by doing so, the international spirit will be stronger and more lasting.

We are the fingers of a same hand, we have confronted our differences with a fist of iron, we have broken through mental borders, so that physical borders can no longer instill us with fear.

We are a single entity, antennas in all four corners of the globe, we are the international spirit and share the same space, we are the first step of a wonderful, artistic journey, and we are the citizens of the world.

We have broken the taboos, we have made a strong diversity from our differences, because religion, politics, language and nationality will not divide us, no they will help us learn to experience and accept ourselves...

And especially to build our Shared Space, thanks to the international spirit.

**Written in Kisangani, August 2013**



**Marlene Monteiro Freitas - Cape Verde**  
**THE UNSWEPT ROOM**

A room with a table and a group of people around it.

This room may be a garden, a theatre, a broad square between theatres, stairs, a bar, a terrace, a technical support room, a kitchen, etc. The group seats several times around a table.

As to the table, it had different shapes, sizes and materials (the latter ones coming with no exception from within the earth), and it/they became places of social, political and cultural exchange. Around it, the participants have shared their heterogeneity, forming an impure, mestizo or disordered body. This group-body became the recipient of performative acts, desires, poetry, attempts to reinvent the world, etc, altogether forming like a fragmented tapestry, a puzzle of the contemporary world.

This brings me to a mosaic in 1833 in Rome, now at the Vatican Museum, likely contemporary of Adrian. It is called "The unswept room", as in this floor mosaic are represented the debris of a meal.

"The unswept room" relates to the Roman Banquet: a meal, a social ritual, where entertainment, poetry, music and dance, even philosophy, surely politics, would take place. It had disorderly side, as indeed producing such debris, to which was given the highest importance, as they were the focus of fears, hopes and divinatory practices. In fact, with it one can identify practices, beliefs and superstitions such as omens (the prediction of the future), the evil eye, the surplus (to take the present to the future), never leaving the table completely empty, to leave that which falls in the floor (as it belongs to the dead), not sweep the floor, etc. The attention to the representation of the debris is an attention to the disorder, randomness (it stays as it falls), that conceals the fate and order of the social world.

At the platform that participated in the festivals Connexion Kin and Theaterformen, I felt as a small tessera (stone) of marble of an unswept room.

At the place of the fragmented composition of chicken bones with

urchins and squid head, rooster with apple peels, I see another fragmented composition: the intriguing small sculptures from Dinozord with the engrossed and expressionist characters from Konstantin Bogomolow, the bittersweet She She Pop with the radicalism of the Sapeurs, the carnivalesque creatures of the Boyzie Cekwana with the dizzy, vertiginous dancers of MJ30, the moods and charisma of my colleagues with the work of the technicians for each show, the Kinshasa cooks against the Hanover ones, the conference brunch against the football table (at the distance of a few steps only), the fate of the Kinshasa debris and of the Hanover ones... A sequence of heterogeneous events, a path of encounters and divergences, twists and turns, a cabinet where unforeseen relations were possible. Something of the realm of the multiple and of imagination, very much like "The unswept room".

Lisbon, 31 August 2013.



**Zhao Chuan - China**  
SELECTED NOTES ON KINSHASA

One day in 2010 in a dusty lane in Kinshasa, a Congo companion of mine stopped someone thin who wore a full suit on a day one'd feel hot even in a T-shirt. It was obvious that the man's suit was quite sophisticated. Even before we had managed a few words, he had begun showing me the brand name of every piece, very carefully, to such an extent that he even loosened his belt and revealed the brand of his underpants, only to demonstrate that those were all famous brands. Shortly after, he disappeared in the lane. The Congo companion was my interpreter, whose English was limited. My understanding then was that despite its poverty the country had no lack of fashion extremists.

A few years after, when we had a discussion on the lawn with Young

Artists Academy, at the French Institute in Kinshasa, more than a dozen people emerged in garments that could only be described as weird. They not only walked but also did so by accompanying it with strange physical limb movements to show off what they wore. On questioning them closely we found that they were what is called 'Sape', derived from the word 'Sapeur', an acronym of "Société des



Ambianceurs et Persons élégants", meaning that they were people elegantly dressed who created taste and atmosphere. From head to toe, they were dressed in brand European clothes, which, in this most impoverished city by world economic standards, were expensive and hard to come by.

They were not just people who acted in a funny way but ones whose origin, unknown, and whose ways of thinking, legendary, had different versions told of them. According to some, they first appeared in the 1920s and 1930s when they wore white men's high-quality clothes and would quickly enter into European clubhouses that ordinary black people would not go. It is said that such high-brow and cryptic behavior seemed an attempt to show off in their pursuit of fashion but also their wordless resistance to the colonizers who entered into the social space. Another version, adopted by quite a few Western media, goes that they began in the 1960s and 1970s with civil disobedience in opposition to Mobutu, the then president of Zaire (which, in 1997, changed its name to the Democratic Republic of

Congo). In his days, Western clothing was associated with the history of Western colonization and, as a result, suit and tie were abolished, people having to put on reformed clothes similar to Mao's jackets that we had to have.

In these versions of origin, no one ever doubts that they must have heavily influenced by French fashion tradition, on one hand, and, on the other, one wonders if their act of showing-off is not a questioning of inequality within their body with the quality of their external clothing in opposing colonial and racial oppression. Or is it their opposition to the oppression brought on the pursuit of individuality and materialistic gains by their fight against colonialism for independence? The historical change has given people different experiences of suffering and coping. Or are both equally applicable?

These days the cynics wearing expensive clothes appear in some quarters of Brazzaville and Kinshasa on either bank of the Congo River, who have their own unique spots to show themselves and compete, such as a local bar. But, eventually, they'll have to sleep in their own simple and deficient huts. The tragedy, though, is that African independence has been going on for many years when people, elegantly or poorly dressed, have been chewing over the subject of colonialism for countless times although they have never been able to achieve equality with those clothes that still represent power, their expensive Western brands still equipped with wonderful glamour. Apart from smells of resistance in history, is 'Sape' a unique



aesthetics created by self-indulgence in the colonial experience or do their postcolonial bodies still cling to their complicated heart journey of resistance?



#### **Humphrey Maleka - Soweto - South Africa**

Halo, first and foremost, I would really like to thank Connexion Kin and Theaterformen for the opportunity that they have afforded me and other artists to be part of the International Young Artists grant holders, it was a real pleasure to be part of the group and also with the experiences of both the festivals in Kinshasa and Hanover, and to thank Jasper Walgrave and Elisabeth Schack our facilitators for their patience when dealing with us and for all their efforts in trying hard to make things work during our encounters and not forgetting Fanny Frohnmeyer for her communication, efficiency and skill of organizing things. It was really great to meet with fellow South Africans abroad, because most of the time we don't see each other in the country because of the busyness, and it was an eye opener to see how they deal with stress when travelling if things are not going as expected. The other thing that was inspiring for me in Kinshasa was to see how the Congolese people work against their hardships to make interesting things to happen, and to hear them speak about how they have achieved that and what inspires them to keep on pushing I would have loved to walk the streets of Kinshasa by myself but because of language barrier and my paranoia I couldn't, which was a pity, but maybe next time when I can speak fluent French and having defeated my paranoia, it will happen, it was a really nice mix of the Young International Artists, coming from different countries, backgrounds experiences, and different view points, which made the whole group very interesting. The other important part was the face to face encounters with festival directors, programmers, theatre makers, performers and technicians. It was a really great thing, because we met with them and discussed things at a deeper level

and it really helped to hear their insights about the future of theatre. Them coming to meet artists at a lower level and lending an ear to the artists grievances was big, and I commend them for that. All the best for the future, hope we see each other soon.  
Kind Regards Humphrey

**Simon Allemeersch - Belgium**  
LAGGING BEHIND

It was after we tried to visit the stadium of the Rumble in the Jungle and Humphrey and I were lagging behind from the rest of the group - and our walk around the stadium became a larger circle around this area of Kinshasa with the school for sailors and that other Portuguese school - until we reached Place Victoire from the other side from where we had seen it some nights before. It was then - just before we arrived at Place Victoire that Humphrey and I really got lost. Luckily I speak French cause I'm Belgian and one of 'les oncles'.



I have a beard and the night before a lady came to me at the festival site asking very politely if she could ask me: 'vous êtes juif monsieur?' And I answered her with a lie: 'je suis un bon Chrétien comme vous madame.' It was a lie that comforted her. But she still wanted to know: then why the beard? So the next day Humphrey and I talked about the religion thing when we saw the painting of the mundele Jesus on the Portuguese façade - him handing out painted breads and holding this painted book. Some school children stopped us and asked me if I was Jesus Christ? But only because of the rare beard and the blue eyes, and some other people asked for money. And one week later in Hanover I would say 'that they only see you as a bag of money' - to which Dalia objected very 'objectively'. Boy - could she object fiercely. I tried to stand my ground in

the discussion but was ashamed for saying this. I tried not to show that to Dalia. I think I was just tired when we were in Germany and a bit home sick too, but I mean: home sick for Kinshasa. And when Humphrey and I stopped to look at the beard of the painted Christ we imagined Jews being only strange biblical people in this city. And then Humphrey told me you have Black Jews in South Africa. And they don't agree with the White jews. But I thought that was too far fetched to be true and for the first time I thought Humphrey was, beneath this very calm look of his, that he was just making it all up. All these crazy stories from Soweto about the liquor people and the fancy dressing up. But when we walked on he told me about these religions in South Africa and perhaps he was right. We stopped to watch Fanny buy sugar cane. So I guess Fanny and the rest of the group was still just ahead of us. And Humphrey told me about the girl he knew who was from this Black jews family - and we talked about values and family. I spoke about my father and his leftist may 68 ideas, my atheist education and 'Enlightenment in Europe'. But these words sound strange in the main street leading to Place Victoire with this constant market going on, the lite ace Toyota vans and people in their best clothes because it was Saturday. And it was the noise and this confusion that made my words sounds silly and made up. It is not Africa that is lagging behind, it's the European cities that have to catch up - one famous architect once said. Humphrey



watched it all with his calm smile and I'm not having the guts to ask him how he lost that one tooth. Very calmly he decided the others were too far away and that we were lost. I was still thinking: perhaps he meant Black muslims instead of Black jews. Like Muhammed Ali himself. Perhaps we should have gone right I say, trying to get back to the atelier of Bienvenu. And it was then that this kinois man wearing a beautiful suite came to us and he said that ,the mundeles have gone that way'. Luckily I understand French. And the next moment we were walking in this traffic jam of white vans and I realised that it was not a traffic jam but that they were actually moving. I'm from Belgium and I thought this trip would be between me and the RDC, but then there was this small group of nice people. My brother my sister I'm so confused. But it's such a pleasure to be confused. It was only fifteen minutes in the streets around Place Victoire, but it's such a pleasure to get lost. Zhao, you still have my little booklet about the Rumble in the Jungle.



#### Vishnupad Barve - India

Who am I? Why me? What am I supposed to do? What should I say? Questions – questions and questions with me, before I depart my country. The country with strong colonial past, present and even might be future. Intellectually, politically, socially, economically and in many ways artistically too. Artist from the country where they still lives with lots of stamps, [some of them they said people eat humans flesh in India, yes at informal meeting in Europe]. I know it might sound bit nasty and self indulged. But its true. And I started my journey with all this notions [still experiencing some of them].



One thing was clear that I was guest, outsider, a mere observer who can witness and if there is a chance than can react. I was artist. Artistic observer, I will say. But great relief was I will be with someone, with one group, who are guest too.

The first country which I visited was DRC [democratic republic of Congo], first time I was visiting any African country. And once I stepped in I found the whole community over there was very known, was very intimate to me, was as if my neighborhood. Ullalla

And then I met here my whole group, writer, Dancer, Choreographer, Theater maker, Director....."We" yes we. Here after till today its we.

And I really love it. We saw, we discussed, we laughed, we criticized, and we meet artist, funders, festival makers, curators, writers, publishers, directors, designers, and almost every one over there. We fought, we argued, we eat, we danced, we smoked, we broke the law [how can I forget the photography incidence at Stadium], and over everything we remained we...Three kisses to DRC...

Was it different at Hanover, yes a lot ... not in relation to We, but now it was much different... artistically, culturally, weather, freedom, almost everything ...

Festival at both venues were really carefully curated, helped me to get open up with world stage. Rather I will say school of thoughts, school of body, school of technology, schools of politics, and schools of culture, schools of whole performance scenario. They were all looking for something which have common goal and bonds...I can't express in words but I felt it. Crossing all boundaries but still having base of their own. Great ...

I was entitled with badge "Grant Holder" and that was my entry pass, I took advantage of it, in meeting people artist, and specially as designer – director visiting spaces, city spaces, venue spaces and very important, when they putting up the stage, lights and all other technical riders...thanks for that.

I don't know whether I got all answers for what I was looking for but I will say I received a lot of inspiration...in tons. Which supports me and ask me to work, work hard, very hard and work objectively hard

Thank you theaterformen [ when I told my friend that I am about to visit this festival they said you will get bored as it is only for men... joke is they pronounce it like theater for men.] I am really grateful to you for this opportunity.

One word which I am taking from is Shared Spaces...



## Drums and Digging in Kinshasa

The Congo is a desolate country, but its artists are hugely versatile and creative – a visit to the Connexion Kin Theatre Festival

By Christine Dössel

The small cultural centre in Kinshasa - Les Bèjarts - has certainly never so far seen so many international guests as it did on this sunny June day. Passengers climb aboard clapped-out mini buses, part of the local street scene since time immemorial, and are dropped off in Bandal, an area teeming with people and cars - traffic jams were invented here! - all set against a background of market stalls, piles of rubble, puddles, murky sewage pipes running like a small rivers over the untarred surfaces of the streets. These passengers are the theatregoers who have come from every corner of the globe to join in the Festival atmosphere. They've travelled all the way from Rio de Janeiro, Ramallah, Brussels and New York, from Lisbon, Warsaw and Zurich, from Germany as well as from France, Poland, Cambodia and Slovenia, not to mention African visitors from Nairobi, Johannesburg and Cape Town. They're there to compare notes and share something of their experiences and know-how with each other. And not just that, but also to represent the theatres and places they hail from.

This ambitious project is called "Shared Spaces" - and has been set up to establish a worldwide informal cultural network between North and South. Its aim is to remain in permanent dialogue, strengthen and concentrate contacts, create common platforms, make it possible to put on productions and co-productions and promote the exchange of these shows. This morning in the courtyard of the very small cultural centre of Les Bèjarts, we're attending the opening session of this project in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, set in earth which is dusty earth but which also has an enormous sense of creative - but no financial - resources. Connexion Kin takes place during the ten-day Festival. Now in its fifth year, it was started in Kinshasa by Jan Goossens and his Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg (KVS), the Royal Flemish Theatre in Brussels.

There is now no way of just passing Africa by for anyone with a desire to approach cultural developments in a global perspective.

That so many international artists as well as theatre directors and trustees could make the journey is ultimately thanks to the Federal Culture Foundation which supports - to the tune of €192,000 - "Shared Spaces" of this "totally exemplary Project" as part of the Theaterformen Festival in Hanover. For, as Hortensia Volker, the Artistic Director of the Federal Cultural Foundation, says, "There is now no way of passing Africa by for anyone with a desire to approach cultural developments in a global perspective."

Theaterformen on the other hand, alternating between Braunschweig and Hanover - this year it's in Hanover -, has a major foothold in the 5th Connexion Kin Festival even to the extent of being a partner, because the German event itself has a main Kinshasa focal point in the programme. The title of this is "Kinshasa Connection" - not just any old trite, hackneyed theme on some corner of Africa, currently the "in" thing at many Festivals, but a concentrated variety of artistic forms ranging from theatre, film and music both in and around Kinshasa as well as in other locations throughout the Congo - this multi-faceted, contradictory country in the heart of Africa so shamefully abandoned by its government.

So at the moment three African productions can be seen in Hanover. These have been co-produced by Theaterformen and were previously put on by the Connexion Kin Festival. "Drums and Digging", the new piece by Faustin Linyekula, perhaps the best known Congolese stage artist (in July he's also appearing at the Avignon Festival); "La fin de la légende", a wild, theatrical performer-based research project involving the burying of legends with extracts of texts by Heiner Müller and Sarah Kane, staged by Dieudonné Niangouna who was born in 1976 in the Congolese city of Brazzaville. He is himself a writer and usually builds the explosive power of language into his pieces, as already suggested by the very name of his company - Les Bruits de la Rue, Street Noises. This year he's the first black African artist - an "artiste associé" - in Avignon.

And then thirdly there's "In case of fire, run for the elevator", an ironic comedy based on the theme of eating and diets by Boyzie Cekwana. Although he doesn't actually come from the Congo, but from South Africa, he's a close friend of Faustin Linyekula and his works are regularly featured at the Connexion Kin Festival.

Notwithstanding "Heart of Darkness", Kinshasa is extremely lively, even if not all that well lit!

A fourth co-production, Brett Bailey's "Macbeth", after the opera by Giuseppe Verdi, interpreted by black singers and actors as a story from East Congo - and now, for this occasion, newly orchestrated by Fabrizio Cassol - has been put off till next year. It's a major international co-production, involving the participation of many renowned Festivals and theatre companies - from Vienna, via Paris, all the way to Cape Town. Brett Bailey, that white South African whose world-wide touring installation "Exhibit B" with "black human exhibits" just as they were commonly put on display in the People's Shows and "Human Zoos" of the 19th century, is attracting a great deal of attention and last year in Berlin - even if only there apparently - triggered a debate on racism and post-colonial hierarchies.

His post-colonial "Macbeth" was also bound to polarise, because there was a great deal of talk and debate after an initial presentation of even just an extract from the presentation of the Project. Individual vocal scenes are (still) so redolent of typical European town-theatre productions - in the atmosphere of the opera based on Shakespeare, Bailey comes across as highly political, beginning with a choir of Congolese refugees then using a "child soldier" as narrator until he finally ends by making concrete references to the bloody history of the Congo. Even when the already mad Lady Macbeth is sleep-walking and tears open bags, in which she finds not ore but a heap of chopped-off hands - the chopping-off of hands was common at the end of the 19th century, as part of the gruesome punishment and disciplinary measures implemented to drive forward the systematic exploitation of the Belgian Congo colony under Leopold II.

But even today's exploitation of East Congo - rich in gold, tin, ore and coltan, that mineral indispensable for our mobile phones - is a theme picked up by Bailey in his work. Thus, he portrays Macbeth as a scrupulous warlord, incited by the Shakespearean witches in the form of profit-seeking and greedy representatives of large multi-national conglomerates. It's hard to say where the critical artistic aspect ends and the wooden mallet of the street pedlar begins.

Bailey, whose anger and earnest severity can only be fully appreciated by attending one of his talks, also invokes in his Macbeth the spirit of Joseph Conrad, who in his famous novella of 1899 "Heart of Darkness" describes the looting of the Congo Free State under the Belgian colonial overlords thus - "To rip out the treasures from the very innards of the country is what they wanted, tainted with no more moral scruples than burglars faced with tackling the problem of how to open a safe." In truth, says Bailey, guys like Kurtz, whom Conrad describes as a "monster-Colonialist" would never have left the Congo.

Poverty, misery, ethnic conflicts and war - it's actually only negative associations which the Congo, even in its form nowadays as a "Democratic Republic", sends out to the First World. The title "Heart of Darkness" by its very name has played a part in this. The Congo, and certainly not Kinshasa, is not that "dark" - even if street lighting in the evening does leave something to be desired! The whole area has its bright sides.

Kinshasa, for example, even with all its visible slum areas, is an extremely vibrant city, full of creative people, whose enthusiasm and extremely ingenious spirit just blow your mind all the time. There are cultural centres like Les Bèjarts or the bustling K-Mu Theatre in the N'djili district, which against all odds, fitted only with the most basic equipment and facilities - and I really mean the essential bare minimum - plastic chairs in the open air in a whole range of inner courtyards - put on theatre productions, show films and organise concerts, readings and workshops.

There's the "Sapeurs", who strut their stuff in chic designer gear in the midst of extreme poverty and show these smart clothes off as they dance - and tap dance too! - in trendy performances. There are artists like Freddy Tsimba, who makes very promising sculptures from cartridge cases, rusty spoons and other bits and pieces of scrap metal as well as torsos of pregnant women, for instance, as "a constant sign of a new life that

keeps starting out on a new journey”.

Or Bienvenu Nanga, known as “l’artiste de la poubelle”, the dustbin artist, because he knocks up his cheerful robots, UFOs and futuristic sci-fi objects from whatever he finds in the street. Or a photographer like Kiripi Katembo, who shows magnificent, unusual large-scale views of his town either shot from above or reflected in water - images which create an almost surreal impression.

Not to mention the music scene in Kinshasa, from traditional Soukos, with their debt to the rumba, right through to modern afro beat, folk rock and R&B variations: Kinshasa rocks - and dances. It’s constantly on the move. The live concerts at Connexion Kin exuded the power of this very special Kinshasa sound. They were put on every evening in the garden - incidentally perfumed with the gentle aroma of anti-mosquito spray! - at the Institut Français, the Festival’s main venue. Here you can enjoy highly acclaimed local lady “matadors” like MJ 30 or the girl-band Basi na Mizik, as well as cool fun groups like Jupiter & Okwess International, and Bebson “de la rue”, the rapper and street kids’ friend from the fantastic documentary “Kinshasa Kids”, appeared with his band Trionys - all world-class.

This is the pulsating, artistically creative side of Kinshasa, which Theaterformen Director Anja Dirks would like to highlight at her Festival in Hanover: “the enormous potential there is to be discovered there.” Dirks finds that “in our heads there still lingers a sort of colonial mind-set, almost as if in Africa there was no culture, at least not any that we Europeans hadn’t first introduced”. For her, it’s all about giving equal billing in the programme to African artists who quite clearly and just as validly appear alongside artists from other countries. What she wants to avoid is the reaction “Ah yes, Africa, well!” - a sort of niche effect, but also without any gesture along the lines of the notion that “so now we’re at least helping them a little”.

There might well be a wealth of talent around in Africa, but you quickly get back into thinking along lines of providing development aid.

But this is not quite so easy to put into practice. In Africa, there might well be a wealth of talent around, but conditions are abysmal and it’s always other people who have money. In any joint collaboration you quite quickly and willy-nilly get back into thinking along lines of providing development aid. And who pays the piper calls the tune. “At the end of the day, we’re still a colonial state,” says Faustin Linyekula in a down-to-earth tone of voice. “How can we talk to each other as equals if it’s you that’s got the money?”

Ntong Edjabe from Cape Town, Publisher of the pan-African culture magazine Chimorenga, expresses it more radically at the “Shared Spaces” event, “It’s your money I need, not you!”

One way out of this post-colonial dilemma perhaps lies in what Linyekula and Edjabe describe by the key word “Respect”. Otherwise, what can be heard from all sides, the biggest problem for African artists is isolation. To tackle this problem, open up access to the work of other artists and interact with colleagues - internationally as well as within their own country or even continent - is something which festivals like Connexion Kin or Theaterformen or an initiative like “Shared Spaces” can actually provide. “It’s so important to get to know other perspectives”, says polyglot Linyekula. “Just look at how the people here live. Most of them think it’s normal. They don’t know anything else.”

Linyekula, who has appeared on the world’s stages, has consciously decided to go for life in the Congo.

Twelve years ago he returned to his homeland and founded the Kabako Studios as a centre for the Performing Arts and Dance, a laboratory for research, training and production, which since 2006 has had its home in Kisangani in the North of the country. “The Kabako Studios are first and foremost a place for the mind,” says Linyekula, “an ideal place to show that it’s still always possible to dream beyond the borders of this stricken country.” What is particularly experimented with here is the use of “Art” to make us believe in ourselves”. Faustin Linyekula is a good speaker and he puts his ideas across absolutely convincingly and authentically.

The slim 39-year old is seen as a shining light in the young African dance and theatre scene. Quite a few colleagues have much to thank him for - the 25-year old dancer and hip-hopper Patrick Mbungu Boyoka, for example, who calls himself Dinozord and for six years shared the fate of the street kids of Kinshasa called the “Shegue” who were disowned by their families because they were thought to have been bewitched. In his dance solo “Boyoka”, he tells the story of this life.

It was Linyekula, who established Dinozord as a dancer and cast him in a great many productions. With the already slightly older piece “Sur les traces de Dinozord” they are guesting at the beginning of July at the Foreign Affairs Festival in Berlin. As so often with Linyekula, the question is, “In the war-ravaged and crisis-afflicted Congo, what’s become of the dreams people had?”

“Drums and Digging” is a sad story, but not a hopeless one. There’s an atmosphere of creation in the air.

In “Drums and Digging”, his new piece, he hits a fatalistic note. “I’m in a blind alley and I no longer know how deep it is,” says Linyekula, who as the “story-teller”, wearied by the distressing story of his country, himself appears on stage; at the beginning, sitting helpless and perplexed on a bank next to a mute wooden puppet, thinking back to Obilo, the village of his childhood, he recounts how the village has changed, how the new religions, the New Apostles, the New Evangelists have demonised and driven out the old traditions. Even there, in good old Obilo, the narrator can no longer find any trace of his “search for dreams, for a fresh wind”. It then falls to the strong-voiced dancer Véronique Kwadeba, to think back to the place of her childhood. In her case, this is Gbadolite, which was also the home village of Mobutu Sese Seko, the dictator with the leopard skin cap. In the ‘70s, as President of Zaire, he turned the small village of Gbadolite into a “Versailles of the Jungle” - with three palaces, two power stations and an airport for Concorde. The story of this overwhelmingly huge building project is told like a fairy-tale, as the dream of a President who has lost any connection with reality and his fellow human beings.

The timid movements of the dancers, the songs in Mongo and Ngbanci, ethnic languages which even in Kinshasa hardly anybody understands, then the Afrika-Sound-Collage created from boxes, the sound of drums as if from the depths of night - all these combine to lend something wonderfully archaic, poetic and timeless to a very personal, historically and politically nuanced search for traces of the past. “Ruins are all around us, but they’re also in us. <TH>.<TH>.” - “Drums and Digging” is a very sad story in its view of the Congo. But it’s not a hopeless story, something Faustin Linyekula makes a point of stressing. During the performance, he and his dancers build the framework for a house out of wooden slats. That’s what’s meant to remain in the mind - the act of creating something together.

“Drums and Digging” - the title is a pretty good description of how Congolese artists generate their materials and always question and challenge themselves about the history of their country. The Performing-Arts-Scene, which has grown up there in the last twenty years, as well as in countries like Mali or the theatre-crazy Burkina Faso, is described by the Head of the “Zürcher Theater Spektakels”, Sandro Lunin, as “hugely exciting and rich in its form of speech and versatility”; the only problem is though that it is yet again threatened by Islamism and spreading fundamentalist Christianity.

Lunin is an established expert with a proven track record of the (west)-African theatre scene and, as such, a member of the Jury for the “Turn” Fund, which the Federal Cultural Foundation has recently set up: The sum of 1.4 million euros is being made available in 2013 to promote exchanges and cooperation projects between German institutions (from all sectors) and African partners. A totally meaningful and sensible business: combining commodities trading with culture.

# PARTICIPANTS

Caption **CK = Connection Kin, NPM = Network Partner Meeting, TF = Theaterformen, FG = Festival Grant**

## **Agentur Kriwomasow – Germany (TF)**

is an independent and trans-disciplinary production collective formed by the director and author Andreas Kebelmann, the video artist Anja Mayer, the sound and lighting designer Peter Goehler, the writer and director Robert Schmidt and the social scientist and publisher Dominik Scholl. Since 2005 the Agentur Kriwomasow develops installations and performances between theatre, film, visual art and ethnographic research in close cooperation with institutions, other artists and spectators. The urban realities provide the raw material from which the Agentur develops different narrative formats (theatre, performance, intervention, text, audio drama, film).

<http://www.agenturkriwomasow.de>



## **Simon Allemeersch – Belgium (FG)**

studied English and Dutch literature in Leuven and directing at RITS School of the Arts in Brussels. During his studies he worked at Nieuwpoorttheater in Ghent in various productions and socio-cultural projects. For his performance, "Marre de Boire" (2006)

he was awarded the prize for Young Theatre of the Theateren Aan Ze Festival. Since then he worked with various theatres and groups in Belgium and abroad, making his own productions. With his last piece about Saint Christopher he was invited to the national theatre festival in Belgium.

## **Awesome Tapes From Africa – USA**

(TF-Concert)

<http://www.awesometapes.com/>



## **Martin Baer – Germany (TF-Film)**

(b. 1963) is a cameraman, writer and director. He has realized documentaries especially on historical topics and Africa, including "Befreien Sie Afrika! und Weiße Geister – der Kolonialkrieg gegen die Herero." (1999). He is the author of several texts on the history

of Africa, including "Eine Kopfjagd – Deutsche in Ostafrika." His documentary "Kinshasa Symphony (2010)" was nominated for the Deutscher Filmpreis and the Grimmepreis.



## **Brett Bailey – South Africa (CK, TF)**

is a playwright, director, designer, and artistic director of THIRD WORLD BUNFIGHT from South Africa. In recent years, he attracted attention mainly with site-specific productions. He was invited two times to Festival Theaterformen (2010 "Exhibit A" and 2011

"Orfeus"). Theme of his emotionally charged and visually expressive works are always the brutal realities of the post-colonial world. By 2011, he was also artistic director of the festival "Infecting the City" in Cape Town.

## **Sammy Baloji – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

(b. 1978 in Lubumbashi) is a photographer, who showed his work e.g. in Cape Town, Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels. He began his career as a cartoonist before turning to video art and photography. His works are mainly created in Katanga, the province where he grew up and studied literature. He works on subjects such as architecture, urbanism and exploitation of land. He won several awards, including the African Photography Encounters Award and the Prince Klaus Award in the Netherlands.



## **Valérie Baran – France (NPM)**

is the director of the theatre TARMAC in Paris. The TARMAC is the theatre venue for international francophone stage art.

# PARTICIPANTS

Caption **CK = Connection Kin, NPM = Network Partner Meeting, TF = Theaterformen, FG = Festival Grant**

## **Renaud Barret – France (TF-Film)**

(b. 1970) is a director, graphic artist and photographer. With his partner Florent de La Tullaye he developed a special interest in the urban culture of African cities. Since his first work, "La danse de Jupiter" in 2006, he filmed five documentaries, including "Victoire Terminus, Kinshasa" (2008) and "Benda Bilili!" (2010).



## **Vinshnupad Barve – India (FG)**

(b. 1985) studied at the National School of Drama in New Delhi. He worked for various theatre productions as director, designer and actor and was invited to festivals in India, China and Germany. He currently works as a space-, light- and media-designer and performer in India.

## **Bebson Elemba aka Bebson De La Rue – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK-Concert)**

(b. 1990) is a singer, MC and frontman of the group Tryonix. He originates from Kinshasa and became internationally famous with the movie "Kinshasa Kids" (2012), in which he participates as an actor and is responsible for the music.



## **Eduardo Bonito – Brasil (NPM)**

is the director of the festival Panorama de Dança in Rio de Janeiro/ Brazil. He also works as a curator, producer and visual artist.



## **Gabrielle von Brochowski – Belgium (NPM)**

worked at Festival Récréâtrales / Burkina Faso for the EU and works as a freelance consultant, i.a. for the European Commission.



## **Panaibra Gabriel Canda – Mozambique (NPM)**

studied theatre, dance and music in Mozambique and Portugal. Since 1993 he developed his own pieces and founded the cultural-centre CulturArte in Maputo in 1998. He presents his award-winning work in Africa, e.g. at the Biennale "Danse

l'Afrique danse" and in Europe, for example at the Kunstenfestival-desarts in Brussels.

## **Cartel Yolo – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK-Concert)**

founded in 2003 with nine musicians, Yolo Cartel has developed its own style: a mix of hip hop and Congolese folk, sung in Lingala and French.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2Dvf6Bffu0>

## **Fabrizio Cassol – Belgium (CK)**

(b. 1964 in Ougrée) is a composer, jazz saxophonist and clarinetist. After studying at the Conservatory in Liège, he learned from various jazz legends. Between 1984 and 1992 he played with the "Trio Bravo" and then with Michel Hatze-giorgiou and Stéphane Galland in the fusion band "Aka Moon". The group recorded albums with musicians from West and Central Africa and India. Since 1989 he teaches improvisation at the Etterbeek Academy. Since 2013 he worked with Brett Bailey on the opera "Macbeth".



## **Collectif Sadi – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

is an interdisciplinary collective of young Congolese artists from different art forms: visual arts, performance, video, photography and design. Its works are presented in public, urban spaces, not in traditional cultural institutions.

<http://sadicollectif.blogspot.de/>



## **Boyzie Cekwana – South Africa (CK, NPM, TF)**

as a dancer and choreographer he has been a wanderer between the first and the third world for many years. Since 2009, he developed more performative formats that include his own texts and discuss the contradictions and inner conflicts

of the post-colonial world. In 2010, he had a residency at Theaterformen and showed Part 1 and 2 of his trilogy Influx Controls there.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## Bugaro International Music – Germany (TF-Concert)

<https://soundcloud.com/bugaro>



### Zhao Chuan – China (FG)

works in Shanghai as an author, art critic and theatre director of alternative and political theatre. In 2005 he founded the theatre collective "Grass Stage". As an author, he received the Unita Prize for New Novelists in 2001. His articles on contemporary art in Shanghai have been published

in various media in China and abroad.

## Dinozord – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK, NPM)

(b. 1987 in Kinshasa) is a dancer and musician. Influenced by traditional Congolese dance as well as rap he started his career, that, after many workshops brought him on the international stage. Since 2006 he works continuously with Faustin Linyekula and performed in the production, "more more more ... future", that premiered 2009 in Brussels. He also established the music label and recording studio "Kinshasound" in Kinshasa with whom he performs regularly in Kinshasa.



### Anja Dirks – Germany (NPM, TF)

is artistic director of the Festival Theaterformen since 2009. She previously worked for the Wiener Festwochen, the theatre-house Gessnerallee in Zurich and Theater der Welt 2002.

## Christine Dössel – Germany (NPM)

studied theatreology, politics and philosophy in Munich. From 2004-2007 she was a jury member at the Berliner Theatertreffen. Since 1990 she has worked as a cultural journalist and theatre critic for the Süddeutsche Zeitung. She writes for the Theater Heute and other journals and is co-author of dtv-Theaterlexikon.



## Virginie Dupray – France (NPM)

Since 2003 manager of the Studios Kabako, after working at the Institut Français in London and the Centre National de la Danse in Paris in the communication department. She also writes for e.g. Africultures, African Art and Soldes. Since 2012 she is head of the program "Pamoja", funded by EU.



### Elvira Dyangani – Spain (NPM)

(b. 1974) is curator for International Art at the Tate Modern since 2011. There she curates the annual Guaranty Trust Bank project. She is interested in African art and the creation of a worldwide-perceived platform for African artists.

## Didier Ediho – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)

is a dancer and choreographer. He began his career at Compagnie "Diba Dance" and worked with Faustin Linyekula and the KVS Brussels.



### Ntone Edjabe – Cameroon (NPM)

(b. 1970) moved to South Africa in the 90s, where he works as a journalist, author and DJ. In 2002, he founded the Chimurenga Magazine, which is devoted to arts, culture and politics, in and about Africa. Edjabe is co-founder of the DJ collective Fong Kong Bantu Sound System.

<http://www.chimurenga.co.za/>

## Fanny Frohnmeyer – Germany (FG)

(b 1983) studied applied theatre studies in Giessen. She works as production manager and coordinator, dramaturge and assistant director for several productions and at festivals such as the Ruhrtriennale and Theaterformen in Hanover.



# PARTICIPANTS

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She is currently working for the performance collective She She Pop and Neukölln Opera in Berlin and accompanies Heiner Goebbels "When the mountain changed its clothing" on tour.

## **Fred Frumberg – USA (NPM)**

is Director of Production at the Singapore International Festival of Arts since 2013. Previously, he lived and worked in Cambodia since 1997. In 2003, he founded AMRITA Performing Arts, a nonprofit organization based in Phnom Penh.

The goal of AMRITA is to offer contemporary dance and theatre from Cambodia a production venue and make it visible for local and international audiences.



## **Daniel Gad – Germany (TF)**

majored in cultural studies and works as a research fellow at the Institute for Cultural Policy at the University of Hildesheim since 2011. His work focuses on the areas of foreign cultural, educational and media policy, international cultural policy and culture and development. He worked for Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst, the German UNESCO Commission, the Goethe-Institut and the Heinrich Böll Foundation.



## **Jan Goossens – Belgium (CK, NPM, TF)**

(b. 1971). After his studies in Leuven and London, he worked as assistant to the directors Peter Sellars and Wim Vandekeybus. Since 1999 he was dramaturge at Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg (KVS) in Brussels, where he transformed the theatre into a

multilingual and boundary transcending municipal theatre. He was appointed artistic director there in 2001. Goossens is one of the founders of the KVS Congo projects and co-initiator of the Shared Spaces network.

## **Henrike Grohs – Germany (NPM)**

was responsible for the program in the department of culture and development at the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg from 2008 to 2014. Previously, she worked as cultural manager in intercultural projects with her agency and in the education program of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin as well as for the Berliner Philharmoniker.



## **Dieudo Hamadi – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

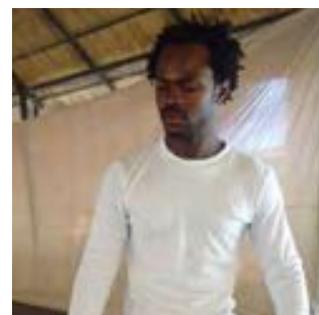
(b. 1984) is trained to be a film maker at Studios Kabako since 2007. He has worked as producer, assistant director and editor, primarily with Suka! Productions (Cape Town). In 2013 he produced his first feature-length documentary film:

"Atalaku".

## **Patrick Haradjabu – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

is a dancer and choreographer from Kinshasa.

[http://performancelab.gaaraprojects.com/pages/interviews\\_p.html](http://performancelab.gaaraprojects.com/pages/interviews_p.html)



## **Fumiyo Ikeda – Japan (TF)**

(b. in Osaka) is a dancer. In 1979 she went to the École MUDRA, the dance school of Maurice Béjart, where she met Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker. In 1983, she joined her company ROSAS and worked in every production for the following nine years. Besides her work for

this company she worked with Steve Paxton and was involved in other film projects and plays. In 1997 she returned to ROSAS and was involved in all following productions, such as "Just Before", "Drumming" and "Cassandra".

## **Taoufiq Izzeddiou – Morocco (CK, NPM)**

is a dancer and choreographer from Morocco. He discovered his love for contemporary dance in his home city of Marrakesh. In addition to his career as a dancer Izzeddiou produced his first choreography in 2000 and today is one of the most important choreographers of Morocco.

<http://taoufiqizeddiou.com/>



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Jupiter & Okwess International – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK-Concert)**

Jupiter Bokondji (b. 1965) is a musician from Kinshasa. He and his band released their first album *Hotel Univers* in 2013 in the UK. The band was founded in 1990. In 2006 the documentary *Jupiter's*

Dance told their story.

<http://jupiter-okwess-international.com/>

## **Billy Kahora – Kenya (NPM)**

is editor in chief of "Kwani?", a literary network founded in Kenya. It is dedicated to the development and distribution of a creative industry by publishing African literature. Previously he worked for eight years in South Africa and as an editorial assistant for *AllAfrica.com* in Washington DC.



## **Kiripi Katembo Siku – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

(b. 1979 in Goma) is a photographer and the coordinator of the film and photographic collective "Yebela" in Kinshasa. Originally a painter, he turned to video art at the age of 27. He shot the movie "Voiture en carton", which was shown at the

Centre Pompidou in Paris, with a pocket camera. Other exhibitions at Afrikaribu and KVS in Brussels followed.

## **Djodjo Kazadi – Democratic Republic of the Congo, France (FG)**

(b. 1979) After acting studies in Kinshasa Kazadi worked at the Les Béjart theatre in Kinshasa. At a workshop with Faustin Linyekula he discovered dance for his work. Since 2003, he organized e.g. a hip-hop competition in Kinshasa and works as a choreographer. As a dancer and choreographer he continues working with Faustin Linyekula and Meg Stuart and tours through Africa and Europe. Since 2007 he has his own company called *Kazyadance*.



## **Andreas Kebelmann – Germany (TF)**

After various assistances and studies of theatre directing in Hamburg, he is working as a freelance director and author of radio plays and a member of the *Agentur Kriwomasow* since 2003. The focus in recent years has been on radio plays and features for the SWR, NDR and Deutschlandradio, along with audio walks, video installations and documentary films for festivals and transdisciplinary art projects at theatres and venues in Germany and Switzerland. He was guest lecturer for the European Ethnologists at the Humboldt University in Berlin, at the department for comparative literature, FU Berlin and at the *HafenCity University Hamburg*.



## **Paul Kerstens – Belgium (CK, NPM)**

studied in Antwerp, Ghent and Bayreuth and has been working for 25 years in the cultural sector in- and outside of Africa. Since 2005 he developed the Congo projects of KVS, together with Jan Goossens and various African artists.

Kerstens works closely with artists in Kinshasa, where he spends several months a year. Among other things, he there organized the annual festival *Connexion Kin* since 2009, where the *Shared Spaces* network was established in 2013.

## **Toto Kisaku – Democratic Republic of the Congo (NPM)**

(b. 1978) studied acting at the Institute for Art in Kinshasa between 1999 and 2002. He is a theatre director and actor as well as head of the *K-MU Theatre Kinshasa*, which he founded in 2003. This theatre is a center for research and artistic work in urban areas and serves as a meeting place for young people in Kinshasa.

<http://www.rnw.nl/africa/article/k-mu-a-creative-collaboration-between-holland-and-drc>

## **Renate Klett – Germany (NPM)**

is a theatre and dance critic. She lives in Berlin and worked as a dramaturge (Frankfurt, Tübingen, Cologne, Stuttgart, Hamburg), as programme director/artistic director for the *Festival Theater der Welt* (Cologne, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Munich) and as a theatre and cultural correspondent in London, Paris, Rome and New York.



# PARTICIPANTS

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## Michael Kranixfeld – Germany (NPM)

from 2009 to 2013 he studied Cultural Studies, Aesthetics & Applied Arts in Hildesheim. He organizes festivals for young theatre makers, including transeuropa 2012. For the young artists program “Schredder” he founded an advisory board with citizens from Hildesheim, that invited to talk about “cross-cultural imaginations”.



## Tom Lanoye – Belgium (CK)

(b. 1958) is a Flemish writer. He lives and works in Antwerp and Cape Town. He works in various genres, e.g. novel, essay, drama. In 1985, he published his first text “A Butcher’s Son with Spectacles.” Further works include, “The Divine Monster”, “Black Tears”, “Spiteful Tongues” (a trilogy about Belgium and Europe) and “The third marriage”. He has won numerous awards for his work, including the Gouden Ganzenveer in the Netherlands.

## Yann Leguay – France (CK)

(b. 1981) is a sound designer and lives in Brussels. His works include installations, performances and visual art. He worked with Ula Sickle, Studios Kabako and Tangible Craft in Kinshasa, Amsterdam, Hong Kong and Brussels. Under the label Phonotopy he creates sounds that deal with the issues of materiality, division and tautology and can be heard at live performances or on records.



## Frie Leysen – Belgium (NPM)

(b. 1950) founded the multidisciplinary Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels in 1992 and curated, i.a. the festival Meeting Points 5 in the Arab world in 2007. Leysen was artistic director of Theater der Welt 2010 in Mülheim and Essen and at the festival foreign affairs in Berlin in 2012. In 2014 she is the director of theatre and performing arts at Wiener Festwochen and won the Erasmus Prize 2014.



## Faustin Linyekula – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK, NPM, TF)

is a theatre maker and choreographer. His career began in exile, first in Nigeria, later in Europe. In 2001 he returned to the Congo and since then establishes there the “Studios Kabako”. His artistic work, located between dance and

theatre tours worldwide. At Theaterformen he presented “Pour en finir avec Bérénice” and, as part of the thematic weekend “The Presence of Elsewhere - here and now”, the piece “Le Cargo” in 2010.

<http://www.kabako.org/>

## Sandro Lunin – Switzerland (NPM)

was director of the Schlachthaus-Theater Bern and co-founder of the festival “Blickfelder - Theater für ein junges Publikum”. He is artistic director of Zürcher Theaterspektakel since 2007. In 2012, he, together with his co-directors launched the series “Short Pieces”, in which short solos and duos of young artists from all over the world can be seen.



## Humphrey Maleka – South Africa (FG)

began his artistic career with street dance forms and Pantsula before he turned to Afro-fusion, flamenco and contemporary dance. Humphrey’s work focuses on the development of living installations and site-specific, investigative performances.

## Dorine Mokha – Democratic Republic of the Congo (FG)

Began to dance in Lubumbashi and has been working with Studios Kabako of Faustin Linyekula, as a dancer and choreographer since 2008. In 2013 he assisted Faustin Linyekula in “Drums and Digging”, and finished his studies in Economics and Social Law at the University of Kisangani in the same year. In 2014 he was granted a fellowship of the Akademie Schloss Solitude.



# PARTICIPANTS

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**Gregory Maqoma – South Africa (NPM)**  
is a dancer, choreographer, director and writer. He studied at P.A.R.T.S. in Belgium. In 1999 he founded the Vuyani Dance Theatre. In 2010 he was Associate Artist Director at the Dance Umbrella Festival in Johannesburg and artistic director of the Afro-Vibes Festival in the

Netherlands. Among others, he worked together with Brett Bailey, Akram Khan and Faustin Linyekula.

## **Patrick Marnham – UK (CK)**

(b. 1943) is an English journalist and author of biographies and travel books. He wrote biographies about Diego Rivera, Georges Simenon, Jean Moulin and Mary Wesley. His journalistic work includes articles for The Times, Daily Telegraph, Guardian and The Observer. He won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award and the Marsh Biography Award. 2012 the movie "Snake Dance", which he produced together with Manu Riche, was released.

## **Anja Mayer – Germany (TF)**

studied Ethnology and Theatre studies at the Freie Universität Berlin (majored about Mali, West Africa) and at the International Film School in Sydney. Since 2005 she produced transdisciplinary projects between art and science. Her artistic focus is on video/audio- installations, documentaries and film editing. Video works at the Thalia Theater Hamburg, Maxim Gorki Theater Berlin, Hans Otto Theater Potsdam, Theater und Philharmonie Thüringen, Schauspiel Hanover and Theater Magdeburg. She is longtime member of the Agentur Kriwomasow.

<http://www.anjamayer.de>

## **Papy Mbwiti – Democratic Republic of the Congo (NPM)**

(b. 1978) is an actor, director and dramaturge from Kinshasa. He is artistic director of the Mbila Kréation Théâtre, managing director of the cultural center Les Béjart and collaborates with the Compagnie Utafika théâtre. He worked together with Faustin Linyekula several times, as assistant director and actor.



## **Moya Michael – South Africa (CK)**

(b. in Johannesburg) is a dancer. After a classical ballet training and studies in African and contemporary dance at Tswane University in Pretoria she completed her training at P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels. She was a founding member of the Akram Khan Company. Own work include "Hatch" (2005) and "Babel" (2010). From 2005 to 2010 she was a dancer of Rosas.

## **Thierry Michel – Belgium (TF-Film)**

(b. 1952 in Charleroi) is a documentary filmmaker and professor at the Brussels Institut des of Arts et Diffusion, where he also studied. Since 1973 he has produced numerous films for the Belgian television. Later he made movies and documentaries in Brazil, Africa, and Asia, including: "Pays noir, pays rouge" (1975), "Zaire, le cycle du serpent" (1992), "The Last Colonials" (1995) and "Congo River" (2005).



## **Marlene Monteiro Freitas – Cape Verde, Portugal (FG)**

(b. 1979) is co-founder of the dance group Compas. She has worked in several projects with the musician Vasco Martins. Freitas studied dance in Brussels and Lisbon. In addition to her own work as a dancer and choreographer, she regularly works together with Emmanuelle Huynn, Loic Touzé, Tânia Carvalho and Boris Charmatz. She is a member of the collective Bomba Suicida in Lisbon.

<http://cargocollective.com/marlenefreitas/marlene-monteiro-freitas>

## **Alex Moussa Sawadogo – Burkina Faso (TF)**

is a curator and festival director. He studied History of Art in Ouagadougou and Cultural Management in Hamburg, specializing in dance and film. He worked in a number of cultural institutions in Burkina Faso, including the Pan-African Film Festival FESPACO. In 2005 he moved to Berlin, where he worked as press and cultural representative of the Embassy of Burkina Faso. In 2011 he curated the dance festival "Border Border Express"; Moussokouma (Hebbel am Ufer). Since 2007, Sawadogo is artistic director of the film festival Afrikamera.



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Fiston Mwanza Mujila – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

(b. 1981 in Lubumbashi) is a writer and lives and works in Graz. His work brought him to Kinshasa, Nairobi and Brussels. His first play "Te voir dresser sur tes deux pattes ne fait que mettre l'huile au feu..." was honored in Lyon in 2009. He was writer-in-residence in Graz and a fellow of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

## **Marie-Louise Bibish Mumbu – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

(b. 1975 in Bukavu) is a journalist and writer. After studying in Kinshasa, where she graduated in 2002, she worked for Africultures and the Studios Kabako. She works as a production manager for various international artists. She lives in Montreal.



## **Mark Murphy – USA (NPM)**

is managing director of the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theatre (RED-CAT). Previously, from 1984 to 2001, he was artistic director of On the Boards, a center for contemporary art in Seattle.



## **Nisreen Naffa – Palestine (NPM)**

(b. 1978) has a bachelor's degree in business administration. Among other things, she worked as a program coordinator at the Al Kasaba Theatre in Ramallah and was responsible for the production coordination for the short film "Neighbours" by Georgina Asfour. Since 2006 she is production manager and committee member at Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival, as well as director and coordinator of the culture and art program of A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah.



## **Bienvenu Nanga – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK)**

(b. in Kinshasa) is a Congolese artist. The sculptor uses found materials and waste to create space shuttles, robots and aliens. With his work he reflects the tensions and differences between the modern machines and the socio-economic realities of



the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## **Jolie Ngemi – Democratic Republic of the Congo (NPM)**

(b. 1989 in Kinshasa). She had her dance training at the National Institute of Arts in Kinshasa. In addition she attended workshops organized by KVS. In 2010 she was involved in the work "Mists" by Thomas Steyaert (former Ultima Vez). She also dances for the rapper Lexus and the musician Lokua Kanza.



## **Dieudonné Niangouna – Republic of the Congo (CK, TF)**

(b. 1976) is a writer, actor and director. He began his theatre work on the streets of Brazzaville and founded the group "Les Bruits de la Rue" with his brother Criss in 1997. Each year he organizes and manages the Mantsina-sur-Scène International

Festival in Brazzaville, with provocative theatre, contemporary dance, performances, seminars and discussions. 2005 Niangouna was one of four selected African playwrights for a residence in the prestigious Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier and was invited to the Festival d'Avignon with his monologue "Attitude Clando" in 2007. In 2013 he was associate artist and artistic codirector of the Festival d'Avignon where he presented his work "Shéda".

## **Joanna Nuckowska – Poland (NPM)**

is a curator and production manager at the Nowy Teatr in Warsaw.

## **Stijn Van Opstal – Belgium (TF)**

is an actor. He studied theatre at Studio Herman Teirlinck in Antwerp. With Tom Dewispelaere, Ben Segers and Geert Van Rampelberg he founded the collective Olympique dramatique in 1999. In addition to commitments as actors in various theater groups they try to stage at



least one production per year. The idea of the collective is to get rid of the interventions of the director. Since 2006, the Olympique dramatique is based at Toneelhuis in Antwerp.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## Mariano Pensotti – Argentina (TF)

(b. 1973) The director and writer studied film, visual arts and theatre in Argentina, Spain and Italy. After producing several movies (including "El camino del medio", 1994 and "Soñar lobos y jirafas", 1996) Pensotti and his company Grupo Marea developed more than fifteen

international successful theatre productions in the last ten years. In 2010, he was invited to Theaterformen with his production "El pasado es un animal grotesco".

## Sello Pesa – South Africa (NPM)

(b. in Soweto) is a choreographer and dancer. He is founder and artistic director of Ntsoana Contemporary Dance Theatre, which works site-specific and produces interdisciplinary projects which tour around the world. Sello Pesa regularly hosts workshops for young choreographers and teaches contemporary African dance and improvisation internationally.



## Carla Peterson – USA (NPM)

is artistic director of New York Live Arts since 2011. Previously she was director of the Suitcase Fund, an international artist exchange program and business manager of Movement research, a dance laboratory in New York.

<http://www.newyorklivearts.org/#/home>

## Frank Piasecki Poulsen – Denmark (TF-Film)

(b. 1975) is a filmmaker and activist. After studying at the National Film Academy of Denmark he worked as a director, screenwriter and photographer, mainly for the Danish television. His work focuses on human rights and the influence of the western world, especially in Africa. Movies include "Review" (2003) in Ghana, "Democracy" (2006) in South Africa and "Blood in the Mobile" (2010) in the coltan mining in eastern Congo.



## Alain Platel – Belgium (TF)

(b. 1959 in Ghent) is a choreographer and director. In 1984 he founded his company Les Ballets C de la B in Gent. In 2007, he developed the work "Nine fingers," together with Fumiyo Ikeda and Benjamin Verdonck, based on the book by Uzo-dinma Iweala. Further works include: "pitié!" (2008), "Out Of Context - für Pina" (2010), "C(H)ŒURS" (2012). In 2004, Platel was awarded the lifetime achievement award of the European Theatre Prize.



## Manu Riche – Belgium (TF-Film)

(b. 1964) is a documentary filmmaker. He has worked for the famous documentary magazine "Strip-Tease", which was produced by the Belgian TV channel RTBF. In the nineties he worked on several independent films in Europe. In addition, he works on the relationship between

fiction and documentary by looking on the personalities of King Baudouin I. and Georges Simenon. 2012 the movie "Snake Dance", which he produced together with Patrick Marham, was released.

## Katharina von Ruckteschell – Germany (NPM)

studied History of Art, German studies and Comparative Literature in Bonn. In 2002, she took over the management of the Goethe-Institut in Bangkok. From 2008 to 2013, she was in the same position at Goethe-Institut Johannesburg, that is, as a regional institute, responsible for the coordination of the work in sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2013, she is head of the Goethe-Institut São Paulo.

## Jacques Sarasin – Switzerland (TF-Film)

(b. 1955 in Geneva) is a documentary filmmaker. Before he started making films, he was, i.a. ship-broker, export entrepreneur and committed in humanitarian aid in Africa and Latin America. In the 90s he founded the production company "Fair Bleu" and produced various short films and documentaries alongside cultural projects. In his film "On the rumba river Wendo" (2007) he traces the story of the famous Congolese musician Papa Wendo.



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Elisabeth Schack – Austria (FG)**

(b. 1977 in Vienna) studied Theatre Studies and Spanish at the University of Vienna and then Cultural and Media Management at the University of Music and Theatre, Hamburg. She worked as an assistant dramaturge and production manager in various theatres in Austria and Germany (Burgtheater, Klangbogen, Theater an der Wien, dietheater, Kampnagel...) and for the Österreichische Kulturforum in Rome. From 2003 to 2007 she was the assistant to the director of theatre and performing arts at the Wiener Festwochen. From 2007 to 2013 she worked as a dramaturge at the Wiener Festwochen, in the team of director of theatre and performing arts Stefanie Carp. Since autumn of 2013, she is, among other things, in charge for the new Festwochen-Centre. In the context of Shared Spaces, she was mentor of the festival grant-holders of Theaterformen in Hanover.



## **Dalia Taha – Palestine (FG)**

studies architecture at Birzeit University, Ramallah. She is one of the most famous representatives of a young generation of poets and writers in Palestine. Her play *Keffiyeh / Made in China* was translated into four languages and was presented in e.g. Brussels and

Palestine. Taha participated in the International Playwriting Residency at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Besides plays she also writes novels and poetry. Two books with poetry have already been published.

## **Russel Tshiebua – Democratic Republic of the Congo (CK-Concert)**

became famous as singer of the legendary Les Washiba Orchestra of Moïse Ilunga. Today Russel Tshiebua is participating in many different artistic projects as well as with his own band.

<http://en.starafrika.com/music/artist/tshiebua-kadima-russell>



## **Wolfgang Schneider – Germany (TF)**

(b. 1954) works as director of the Institute for Cultural Policy at the University of Hildesheim. He holds the UNESCO-Chair Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development. From 2001 to 2009 he also was Dean of Cultural Studies and Aesthetic Communication. His work and

research interests include cultural policy, cultural promotion, cultural education, municipal cultural policy, foreign cultural policy, international cultural policy, cultural policy for children, theatre policy, film policy and socio-cultural policy. He published numerous papers about these topics.

## **Florent de la Tullaye – France (TF-Film)**

(b. 1971) began his career as a photographer and then started to work on documentaries with musical background, especially in Kinshasa together with Renaud Barret. Tullaye and Barret made possible for Okwess International and Jupiter's Dance to record their first albums.



## **Ula Sickle – Canada (NPM)**

is a choreographer and performer who lives and works in Brussels. Her works range from film to installation and live performance. Since 2008, after completing her training at P.A.R.T.S., she travels regularly to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and collaborated with Dinozord and Jolie Ngemi. As a result, "Solid Gold" and "Jolie" where produced. Currently she works on two new pieces, including "The Kinshasa Project", which will premiere in 2014 at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts.



## **Djo Tunda Wa Munga – Democratic Republic of the Congo (TF-Film)**

(b. 1972) is a Congolese director and producer. He studied film at the film academy INSAS in Brussels. After graduating, he returned to Congo, where he worked for various European TV-stations (BBC, Arte, Danish TV). His first feature film "Viva Riva!"

(2010) won several awards at the African Movie Awards and the MTV Movie Awards.



## **Jasper Walgrave – Belgium (NPM)**

(b. 1974) Is the director of the liaison office of the Swiss Pro Helvetia Foundation in Johannesburg. Prior to his time at Pro Helvetia, he was project coordinator for the South African-Flemish project of the Ministry of Arts and Culture in Pretoria. Walgrave studied History,

# PARTICIPANTS

Caption **CK = Connection Kin, NPM = Network Partner Meeting, TF = Theaterformen, FG = Festival Grant**

Political Sociology and Development studies in Brussels. For the Dancas Na Cidade (today Alcantara) Festival in Portugal he worked with partners from Mozambique, Cape Verde and Brazil.

## **Thomas Walgrave – Belgium (NPM)**

is a stage designer from Antwerp and artistic director of Alcantara Festival in Lisbon since 2009. In the 90s, he joined the Belgian theatre collective TG Stan as a stage designer and still works with them.



## **Natasa Zavolovsek – Slovenia (NPM)**

is director of Exodus Ljubljana, an independent theatre and dance venue, since 2000. The Exodus-Festival, the largest international festival for Performing Arts in Slovenia takes place there for ten years now. In 2003 she also was appointed managing director of the Slovenian dance platform Gibanica/Moving Cake.



## **Maríya Wethers – USA (NPM)**

is the international project coordinator of the Suitcase Fund program at New York Live Arts and has worked in their program department since 2007. In the last three years, Wethers has developed an exchange program with partners in Africa, which now covers

10 countries. She did research in Senegal and Mali. She is also a performer, choreographer and dancer.

## **Claus Wischmann – Germany (TF-Film)**

(b. 1966 in Witten) is an author and director of documentaries. He studied law and music in Frankfurt am Main. He has made over forty documentaries, features, concert recordings and portraits for many European broadcasters. His documentary "Kinshasa Symphony" (2010) was nominated for the Deutscher Filmpreis and the Grimmepreis.



## **Cândido Salomão "Matchume" Zango – Mozambique (CK)**

is a composer and performer of traditional and experimental music. He works for theatre, film and dance. He mainly plays instruments that he built himself, for example the Timbila, Mbira, Xitende and Diembe drums. He has toured with various artists in Asia and Europe.

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