


THE
SPECTATOR
Nairobi
kenya

The Great RePair

The Great Repair: umunyu

Exhibition venue: The Mall, Westlands
Duration: July 31 – October 25, 2026
Opening ceremony: Thursday, July 30, 5 pm
munyu Acts of Repair: Public Programme
Opening hours: Tue – Sat, 12 – 6 pm, closed on Sun & Mon
Admission: free

archplus.net/en/the-great-repair

munyu.ing

Participating artists: Limbo Accra, Omi Collective and Mogasam, Kader Attia, Atelier Bow-Wow & Tsukamoto Laboratory of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Cave Bureau, Manuel Chavajay, Jonathan Fraser, Kairos Futura: Abdul Rop & Daniel Nuru, Prof. Florian Hertweck with Hamza Haidam and Julia Anna Paszkot, Sam Hopkins, Dr. Makau Kitata & Prof. Kenny Cupers, Dr. Margaret Ngima Macharia Kedogo & Going Down Nairobi River University of Nairobi 5th year studio, Folke Köbberling & Martin Kaltwasser, Lutivini Majanja, Anthony Muisyo, Dr. Lydia Muthuma, James Muriuki, Mũthoni Mwangi & Rosie Olang, Sheila Nakitende, Sharon Neema, Marjetica Potrč, Bas Princen, Social Justice Centres Travelling Theatre, Center for Spatial Technology, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Wajukuu Artists' Collective: Shabu Mwangi & Ngugi Waweru, Khalid Yuutdem.

Curated dialogically between munyu and ARCH+

The Great Repair exhibition explores the contradictions between growth and ecology through the material culture of architecture. The exhibition presents positions from art and architecture as well as spatial practices in which repair becomes tangible as a new societal and design paradigm. Through spatial discourse, processes and places of maintenance and care are made visible and suggest new norms and values for living together.

The Great Repair concept is a collaborative project by ARCH+, ETH Zurich (Prof. Milica Topalovic), the University of Luxembourg (Prof. Florian Hertweck) and the Akademie der Künste. The exhibition was first shown from October 2023 to January 2024 at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. It included more than 40 international artistic contributions from art and architecture and an extensive programme of events. It was followed up by exhibitions at the Pavillon d'Arsenal, Paris and at Form/Design Center, Malmö.

While alluding to Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation, the Great-ness in the exhibition title refers to a multitude of reparative practices rather than prescribing a universal, all-encompassing policy.

The curatorial framework of this Nairobi iteration is reflexively and collaboratively adapted. A body of ten repertoire works from The Great Repair exhibitions – previously shown in Berlin, Paris and Malmö – is presented alongside sixteen contextually resonant works selected by munyu.

On the occasion of the exhibition, a series of events is conceived under the title Acts of Repair as a means to expand the dialogue and broaden civil and political discourse. The accompanying events, organized in cooperation with local partners, will serve to increase the exhibition's visibility, create spaces for public and professional discourse, and foster joint engagement with the exhibition's core themes. The objective is to raise public awareness of a reparative, resource-conscious approach to architecture and everyday life, climate protection, and the potential for civil society.



Magadi Saltern #2
© Sharon Neema



Magadi Saltern #5
© Sharon Neema

Munyu is a type of salt made from the ashes of dry plant matter. It goes by many names in many different cultures. How it is used also varies – from food preparation and medicine, to spiritual practice. But the method of producing largely remains the same.

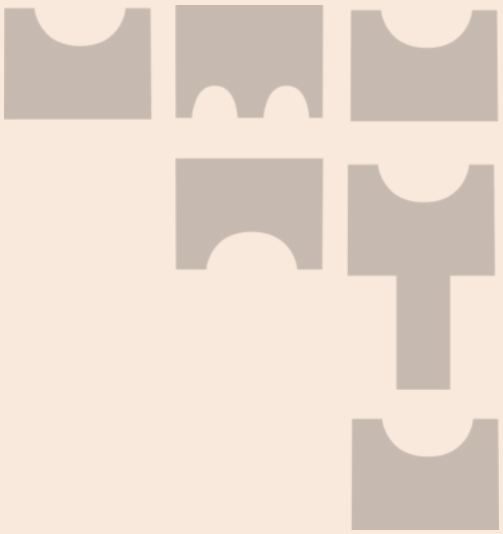
In this context we would refer to the method by which it is made by the Luhya community and those who have spent time living alongside them in present day Kenya. Munyu is made from the ashes of plant material that would otherwise be discarded or composted. Often maize husks, bean shells or banana stem fibres. Water is filtered through the ashes and this can be used as is or the water evaporated to leave behind the *munyu* crystals.

We define *umunyu* as this way of being. A methodology that engages with material that is present in everyday life and a system of production that is embedded within this way of living. This methodology is one that *munyu*, the space and team, models and strives to emulate in its existence and is also one that offers a response to the thoughts of the Great Repair exhibition. Umunyu also offers a framework by which we have selected work from the catalogue of the Great Repair and the new contributions. Propositions that engage with the everyday, seek value in what is often overlooked and attempt to seamlessly embed these into a way of living and working.

munyu is a specific noun. Referring to munyu the salt, the ashes, the space and the people. In Kiswahili when the prefix ‘u’ is added before a noun, it becomes a collective/abstract noun, referring to an idea.

Moja - means one. Umoja - means oneness/ togetherness.

umunyu is not a word that exists, it translates to an idea/abstract concept that references munyu. munyu-ness.



We contrast munyu with magadi.

Magadi is a word that is used in Kiswahili and some rural areas around Nam Lolwe to refer to the salts made from plant ashes.

The word magadi also refers to the mineral known as trona that occurs naturally in the area around Lake Magadi. Trona is the key component in the production of soda ash, which is used in the manufacture of glass, paper, soap and other industrial processes.

“The capitalist industrial economic system is based not only on “the process of separation of producer and the means of production,” as Karl Marx described, but also on the separation of production and repair, resulting in commodities that are interchangeable black boxes bereft of any social relationships.”

- The Great Repair, politics for the repair society[1].

We read this change in the use of the word *magadi* as a distancing from the ultimate means of production, the land, and use it as a case study to engage with related themes from *The Great Repair* exhibition.

[1] Hertweck, F., Hiller, C., Krieger, M., Nehmer, A., Ngo, A., & Topalović, M. (Eds.). (2022). The Great Repair: Politics for the Repair Society. ARCH+ Verlag GmbH.

The exhibition expands notions of repair through perspectives from the fields of art, design and architecture. Processes and places of maintenance and care are made visible and suggest new norms and values for living together from infrastructural and material aspects, to the use of language. *The Great Repair: umunyu* understands itself as an invitation to reflect on repair as “doing” or – more familiarly in the fields of art, design or architecture – repair as “practice”; placing emphasis on actions and emerging behaviors that are creative and transformative,, on collaborative processes and encounters, on reworlding and shaping visions.

Jonathan Fraser writes about the plant *Cucusta campestris* – the *Field* or *Golden Dodder* (English) or *Thĩna* (Kikuyu) and how they exert their agency to reflect on the ways in which our language categorization or expressions describing repair, restoration, sustainability are further framing devices that influence our engagement with the world. The exhibition considers the adaptive frameworks that shape the way we engage with repair.

Sam Hopkins offers a reading of the social and technical practice of Kenyan repair, with the people as (maintenance) infrastructure, through the study of its improvisation-based materiality: the tying, wrapping and binding of old bicycle inner tubes, commonly known in Nairobi as *bladda.*

With **James Muriuki**’s work, we build an understanding of the relationship between materiality and time; we can trace both the raw and the remains as informative to determining subsequent restorative action.

“When we respond to concrete institutions or even concrete physical structures within that world, we can ask questions which give us different ways of thinking about repair.

Once we think of repair in this expansive way, we’re not even chained to the past at all. We can just skip to the question of who should have energy access. Maybe we expand energy access by repairing or expanding the existing grid. Maybe we build entirely new grids. But in either case we are guided by forward-looking decisions based on our political commitments. What do we want the world to look like and how do we make things accordingly? Physical things like grids, institutional things like organizations, moral things like norms. How do we make those in a way that meets our new design principles in a world that has been built on bad organizing principles?”
Olúfémi O. Táíwò



Magadi Saltern #3
© Sharon Neema

It has only been a few years since we came out of a global pandemic. In Nairobi, we witnessed catastrophic floods and nationwide protests in June 2024/25/26, opening up many old wounds: land injustice, corruption and failed governance structures. On a continental scale there has been an immobilizing stagnation, collapse of democracy, civil freedoms and climate crisis among others. World over, catastrophic destruction of livelihoods and ecosystems of Indigenous communities.

Manuel Chavajay's work addresses the suppression of traditional practices and millenia-old knowledge systems by capitalist modernity, while simultaneously articulating an awareness of the dependence of Indigenous communities on an extractive system that destroys their livelihoods. ***Tu Industria tu basura*** is an account of social action/refusal and demands that corporations take responsibility for the waste they produce and that the state recognize nature's juridic personhood and protect natural resources.

Bas Princen shows the earth buildings of the Great Mosque of Djenne, noting how the disruption in circular socio economic cycles along the Niger Delta brought about by climate change have caused people to resort to less sustainable materials for building.

Kader Attia's work, *Hypomnemata*, names cultural appropriation among other colonial plunder beyond bodies and land, tracing it as still visible in an aesthetic haunting our consumerist landscape in the form of packaging materials for everyday goods.

Through her pioneering practice **Mierle Laderman Ukeles** highlights the essential value of everyday maintenance work suggesting that care work operates in an in-between space that cannot be fully complete. Instead, it requires consistently being present, staying mindful and active engagement with the persistent breakdown of stable forms. Echoing what Ukeles has radically proposed: to view repetitive, physically engaged gestures of care and contact as central to the artistic process.

In *What about Mending?* **Rosie Olang and Muthoni Mwangi** ask what remains? Which "anchor practices" do we return to practice kinship and connection with both our human and non-human communities? They revisit these questions to create an accessible collection of resources on transformative justice.



Magadi Saltern #3
© Sharon Neema

Sheila Nakitende invites us to the place of preparation as a site of repair emphasizing that more time spent in preparation reduces the need for repairs.

Wajukuu Artists Collective call for giving attention to the present ruptures, naming them, to practice holding together, and consider the processes of decay and reclaim as a generative site of renewal.

With *Satoyama*, **Atelier Bow-Wow** makes a case for return to active maintenance and management of centuries-old cultures of repair that are vital to the regeneration of these unique anthropic ecosystems that now lay in decay due to population decline, urbanisation or industrialisation.

Sharon Neema writes about translation through the language of knotting, weaving, and other practices of mending. Looking into what translation seeks to repair, not merely as a score intended for re-enaction. An unfolding transformative prose

Khalid Yuutdem's reimagining of the popular plastic polypropylene *uhuru* bag is reminiscent of a time when humanity's relationship with land and material was much closer than it is now. Hand woven cotton - rather than machine woven strips of polypropylene - mimicking the colour profile of the bags that have become such a firm fixture in the daily lives of citizens. Yuutdem proposes that a repair need not be a complete return to old ways. Instead, a response to what we need in the moment, while learning from what came before to produce a new paradigm.

Anthony Muisyo meditates on the idea of emergent behaviour, how independent individuals following a simple set of rules can come together to form large complex systems, without the need for a centralised authority. This behaviour is seen in the mesmerizing murmurations of starling birds. How might this method of coming together offer ways of organizing ourselves and our communities?

Folke Köbberling and **Martin Kaltwasser** challenge the car-centric design of cities and invite participants to reappropriate urban space. Prioritizing participatory processes, the participants acquire a critical awareness of a new, more socially and ecologically just world.

Abdul Rop and **Daniel Nuru** of **Kairos Futura**, reuse and transform found material to create a set of shared conditions and collective experiences to gesture spatial reclamation and urban repair as both an environmental and social practice.

Moving with intention and action to demand for responsibility and protection of resources, **Social Justice Centre Travelling Theatre (SJCTT)** ask us to look at the ecological, social, economic and political catastrophe that has resulted from urbanization, consumerism, social degradation and displacement. Through their work, we witness a landscape shaped by community care, creativity, and collective repair. It asks critical questions: What does repair mean when communities have been forced to live alongside environmental harm? Who carries out repair when institutions fail? How can art, culture, and collective action contribute to repairing both landscapes and social relationships?

Dr. Margaret Ngima Macharia Kedogo, PEARLS Project (2025-2028) & 2025-2026 University of Nairobi Bachelor of Architecture 5th Year Studio focus on the Nairobi River, urbanization, human settlement activities and the public space potential along the river. The work highlights the restorative aspects that exist and how the regeneration of the river speaks to the various urban issues we're grappling with in the city.

Highlighting the restorative and regenerative potential of failure or brokenness, **Center for Spatial Technology** gives witness accounts in the reconstruction of an obliterated infrastructure for purposes of justice, memory and potential rebuilding. The adaptability of existing cultural infrastructure as shelter gives instruction to serve us presently.

In *Kamĩrĩĩthũ Afterlives*, **Dr. Makau Kitata** and **Prof. Kenny Cupers**, in collaboration with interior designer **Cella Were**, develop thematic posters covering the context, process, repression, and afterlives of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ theatre project. A community-built and run theatre in Limuru, Kenya; it was the venue for the critical play *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, written by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mirii. Its production led to their arrest and detention by the Kenyan government and the subsequent demolition of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ Theatre.

Limbo Accra revitalize abandoned structures and make visible their innate potential, particularly in light of the lack of public spaces in many African cities. Rather than top down visions of how these voided spaces can be utilized, Limbo Accra envisions their, redistributive, and community-led development.

Prof. Florian Hertweck with **Hamza Haidam** and **Julia Anna Paszkot** consider the forward-thinking, policy-led urban restoration taking place in Casablanca– a framework to identify and protect, to integrate, adapt, regenerate, transform with care and more importantly to actively resist speculation, demolition, densification, and gentrification.

Marjetica Potrč's works propose a new, egalitarian coexistence of humans with the natural world, whereby we not only understand and accept our interconnectedness but also consolidate this mutual relationship through law. Urging us to stop seeing rivers as objects for utilization, trade, and thus exploitation. Reversing this anthropocentrism, the work suggests instead recognizing rivers as our kin, as subjects with their own agency and legal rights. If rivers and other natural resources are accepted as rights-bearing entities, then our role towards them shifts from user and owner to steward and guardian. They become planetary goods to be shared by the entire living world of plants, animals, and humans.

What might Kenya's historical narrative reveal through its monuments? **Lydia Muthuma** provides an aesthetic analysis of spatial politics and visual culture, examining Kenya's political and social past by way of Nairobi's landmarks. Spanning colonial-era statues to post-independence commemorative structures, the capital's public memorials expose evolving concepts of authority, governance, dissent, and national belonging. Informed by art history, visual studies, and the politics of space, Dr. Muthuma contemplates which figures receive public recognition and why certain histories wait years, even decades, to be officially memorialised.

In the same vein, **Lutivini Majanja**'s essay *Fifth Avenue* speaks to the politics of invisibility and visibility: what it means to live in a place than merely pass through it, and how one becomes attuned to surroundings after escaping alienating spaces. She reflects on the layered, fragmented nature of urban space in Nairobi to explore class segregation, infrastructure, and belonging. Affirming the ordinary magnificence of a neighborhood that endures constant dissolution.

Cave Bureau's *Cow Corridor* is a speculative structure modelling a rural-urban infrastructure in the city where what is important to us and those we live alongside are considered and prioritised. In conversation with the Nairobi Expressway and responding to the regular flooding; Cave Bureau offers us a vision and a question.



Magadi Saltern #3
© Sharon Neema

Creep

Jonathan Fraser

Imagine a tree.

A tree takes on a form. A jacaranda whose branches taper off in fine alternating leaves, the crotons with their lichen covered trunks or a ficus with its dense trunk and dense canopy. A tree is a tree, invariably; a cluster of roots > the stem coming up > branches reaching out. Now imagine that draped over this variable arborescent form is a mesh or tangle of slender, yellow vines. These vines run over leaf and branch so thickly that you would be forgiven for thinking of it as a badly woven fabric. Hold in your mind the image of a tree so cold that it covers itself with an untidy shawl. Pale to golden yellow lines trace their way down from that shawl and, swinging on the wind, seem to almost be reaching out. Out perhaps to another tree or shrub.



Image courtesy of Jonathan Fraser

This untidy yellow shawl is a creeping plant from the genus *Cuscuta* commonly known in English as field or golden dodders. These plants are incapable of producing their own energy through photosynthesis, the preserve of those so honoured with chlorophyll as to materialise light into chemical energy. They adopted a different strategy instead; *Cuscuta* plants grow around their hosts' leaves and stems and insert specialised root-like structures known as haustoria into the plant's vascular system to absorb nutrients. As a successful genus with worldwide distribution, *Cuscuta* have tremendous economic and ecological significance since infestation by some of its species can result in major yield losses in numerous crops. "Many species, such as *Cuscuta campestris Yunck*. and *Cuscuta pentagona Engelm*., can parasitize hundreds of plant species, including important agricultural crops like alfalfa, tomato, sugar beet, and legumes." [1]

This is particularly problematic given how readily the plant propagates through a combination of factors including adaptive characteristics (how it identifies its hosts), dispersal capabilities (it can grow from dormant seeds or cuttings), environmental requirements (human agricultural practices and environmental modification).

Although the adaptations and behaviours of this genus designate it as a parasite, I have purposefully avoided using the term as I am aware of the capacity for villainization that such categorisation engenders. The Gĩkũyũ[2] name mainly used for these plants is thĩna, literally translating to troubles, misfortune, problems; an association which is reinforced with each use of the word. Problematic naming notwithstanding, it should be noted that these plants also possess the therapeutic potential to treat various illnesses and specifically skin disorders within Agĩkũyũ herbal uses. [3]



Remnants of *Cuscuta campestris* in a Nairobi suburb. Cuttings should be destroyed once removed as the plant can re-establish itself from vegetative fragments.

Though worthwhile, I will not be exploring the economic or therapeutic impact of this genus here. Instead I will present an observation of this plant and its form - what image does it generate as it continues its creep across Nairobi's flora? - and consider as well, through its form and behaviour, how boundaries around categorisation may be blurred. Hopefully, we can arrive at a new perspective from which to consider repair and preservation.

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[1] Zagorchev, Lyuben, Tzvetelina Zagorcheva, Denitsa Teofanova, and Mariela Odjakova. 2025. "Methods of Control of Parasitic Weeds of the Genus *Cuscuta*—Current Status and Future Perspectives" *Plants* 14, no. 15: 2321. https://doi.org/10.3390/plants14152321

[2] The Agĩkũyũ people are a Bantu ethnic group native to Kenya whose language is Gĩkũyũ.

[3] Gachathi, Francis N. 2007. *Kikuyu Botanical Dictionary: A Guide to Plant Names, Uses and Cultural Values.* revised second ed. N.p.: Tropical Botany.
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It was once understood that parasitic flora and fauna were generated spontaneously from the hosts themselves and you could see how one would arrive at this conclusion given how dependent a parasite is on its host.

The *Cuscuta* plant, one will note, has no roots.

It just grows and grows and grows over the tops of hedges and trees often cascading down the sides as it reaches outward for new hosts. The vines run along, under and over themselves[4] with no apparent order and emerging from this dense overlay, the shape of what lies beneath.

Volumes jutting out at differing heights and shapes are joined by the vines to form planes and voids creating an inadvertent sculpture of the most affected trees and shrubs. The sculpture is sometimes a long, overgrown hedge caught under the meager weight of the *Cuscuta* and when viewed from certain angles, the forces trapped beneath the membrane of the ocean's surface can be found here too.



A hedge along James Gichuru Road, Nairobi.



Illustration by Kenyan artist, Sharon Neema.

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There is a solitary light somewhere.
In all of this night,
the darkness has stained everything;
there will be no clear edges and no lonely selves,
in the family of all things.
From a motorbike's gleaming eye, a solitary light
intrudes on this oneness,
cutting long shadows, dissolving outlines, and establishing new definitions.
The striding man, the crossing dog, the infinite shrubbery.
Shadows and shapes contort.
Briefly, something new is born.

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We might never know how plants form an embodied experience of the world. How do the *Cuscuta* gather information and formulate an "image" of the world they inhabit? Research suggests that they are able to locate and grow toward compatible, healthy hosts. In their endless creeping and twining, can they tell apart the leaves of a bougainvillea from a fig tree? And if so, how? By touch, chemical cues, genetic markers? Following that, is it even worthwhile to question if these plants have a sense of place and the passage of time? There are no easy answers so perhaps it is more germane to invert the question and ask how the plants themselves can be markers of place and the passage of time.

In his series of etchings from 2018, *Numbers and Trees, Tiergarten Series 3*, American artist Charles Gaines depicts various trees from specific locations in the USA and Germany; an orchard in California, public parks in New York City and in Berlin. The tree's silhouettes are simplified and captured on a grid with colours and numbers to describe their form with each subsequent print in the series built progressively by layering trees, one on top of the other. The first print is of a single tree and by the fourth print, six trees are rendered one over the other in a series of ethereal halations. A top layer of numbers printed on the face of a plexiglass box encloses the prints and each one is titled with a different month.



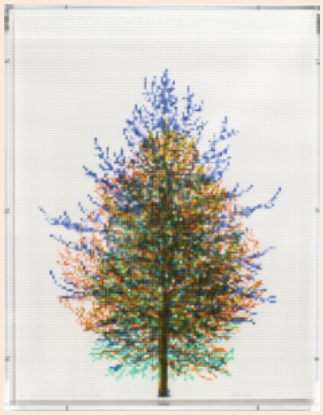
Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #1, April (2018)



Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #2, May (2018)



Tiergarten Series 3: Tree #4, July (2018)



Tiergarten
Series 3: Tree #6, September (2018)

Gaines has been using grids and numbers to systematize the graphic representation of real things in the world since the 1970s, returning frequently over the years to trees as subjects in his work. The trees are not intended to be stand-ins for nature or culture[5] but as a recognizable locus to consider how one might relate the objective and the subjective realms Gaines trafficks in. The trees are trees (in New York, in California, in Berlin) which are invited as signifiers of time and place, yes, but also as a focus for how one might conceptualise information in the world. They are vehicles for his theoretical strategy as an artist.

Here is a brief exercise to observe changes in Nairobi; in place of Gaines's grid plane, let us employ the *Cuscuta* as an improvised marker to highlight these changes. The following images illustrate recent *Cuscuta* growth compared to images from previous years using Google Maps archive of images.



Raila Odinga Way (formerly Mbagathi Way), Nairobi, February 2023



Raila Odinga Way (formerly Mbagathi Way), Nairobi, July 2024



Murang’a Road (above Globe roundabout), Nairobi, August 2021



Murang’a Road (above Globe roundabout), Nairobi, June 2026



Riara Road, Nairobi, February 2023



Riara Road, Nairobi, April 2026



4 Mbaru Road, Nairobi, February 2023



4 Mbaru Road, Nairobi, March 2026

This small sample of images may suggest that the *Cuscuta* is establishing itself in greater numbers within various parts of the city. Albeit anecdotal, this propagation is clearly observed by those of us operating daily within Nairobi's limits. In shifting our focus to consider the rapid progression of *Cuscuta* plants from tree to tree to shrubbery, both the passage of time and human activity become difficult to ignore. After all, the plant's dispersal methods rely on a combination of environmental factors and human activity through, "habitat-modifying activities such as agriculture, hedge establishments and infrastructural developments which have previously been shown to create alternative dispersal routes and contribute to the spread of other invasive weeds."[6] Children often play with the vines, gardeners are unable to control the plants once they are established, and the city's outdated drainage systems distribute the plant cuttings further afield.

Will the *Cuscuta* still be a part of the shifting image of the city in another year or two and if so, how much farther will it have crept across the map? Furthermore, if we substitute this plant for another familiar and similarly creeping phenomena (the green construction safety netting, election campaign and advertising posters, the herd of cows) how else could the action of time and human agency in Nairobi present itself?

Ultimately as I think of the ways this city changes, my position is unsettled and if this is to be a conclusion, it is open ended. I find myself attracted to this plant, its alien form and how its presence sharpens my experience of the ecological and temporal shifts in Nairobi catalysed by human (in)action.

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[4] Costea, Mihai, and François J. Tardif. "Cuscuta (CONVOLVULACEAE)—THE STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS: A HISTORY OF ITS NAME, USES AND PARASITISM CONCEPT DURING ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL TIMES." *SIDA, Contributions to Botany* 21, no. 1 (2004): 369–78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41969017.

[5] Gaines, Charles. 2018. *Interview: Charles Gaines*, on the occasion of his solo exhibition at Galerie Max Hetzler, Bleibtreustraße 45, Berlin. video. https://vimeo.com/307863324?fl=pl&fe=sh. Accessed on 24/05/2026.

[6] Masanga, J., Oduor, R., Alakonya, A., Ngugi, M., Ojola, P., Bellis, E. S., & Runo, S. (2022). Comparative phylogeographic analysis of Cuscuta campestris and Cuscuta reflexa in Kenya: Implications for management of highly invasive vines. Plants, People, Planet, 4(2), 182–193. https://doi.org/10.1002/ppp3.10236



Cuscuta vines floating in a ditch. Where will it go next?

Limbo Accra with Omi Collective & Mogasam

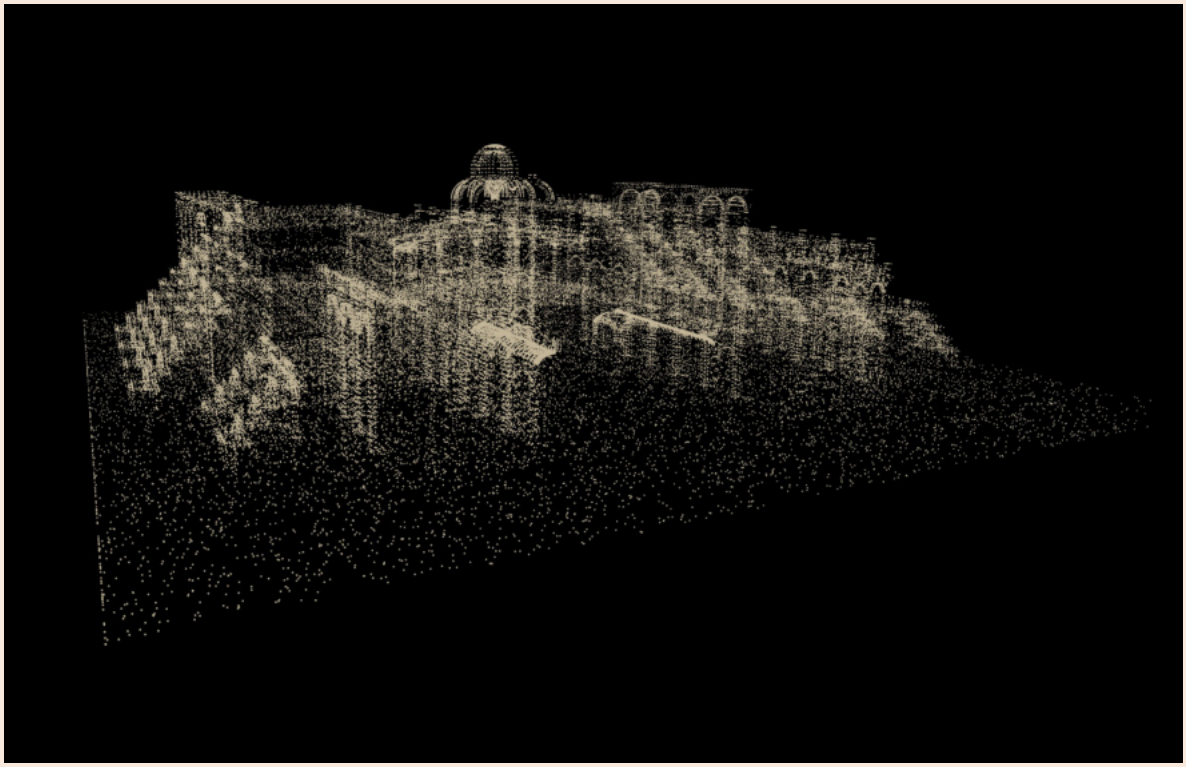
Into the Void

2026; 3 channel installation; mixed media; videos, colour, sound

Curated by Limbo Accra

This exhibition in the exhibition brings together practitioners from Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt working at the intersection of architecture, memory, heritage preservation, and digital reconstruction. Through photogrammetry, moving image, and archival research, the exhibition explores how emerging technologies can be used to document, preserve, and reimagine vulnerable architectural histories across the African continent.

Presented as a multi-channel installation, the exhibition examines acts of recording and reconstruction as forms of care, asking how architecture can function as a living archive shaped by memory, displacement, repair, and collective knowledge.



A point cloud of the shell of the Ndiouga Kébé Palace in Touba, Senegal.
© Limbo Accra



3D scan of the Nabil Darwish Pottery Museum, Cairo, Egypt
© Mogasam



Digital twin of the Tafawa Balewa Square gates. Lagos, Nigeria
© Omi Collective



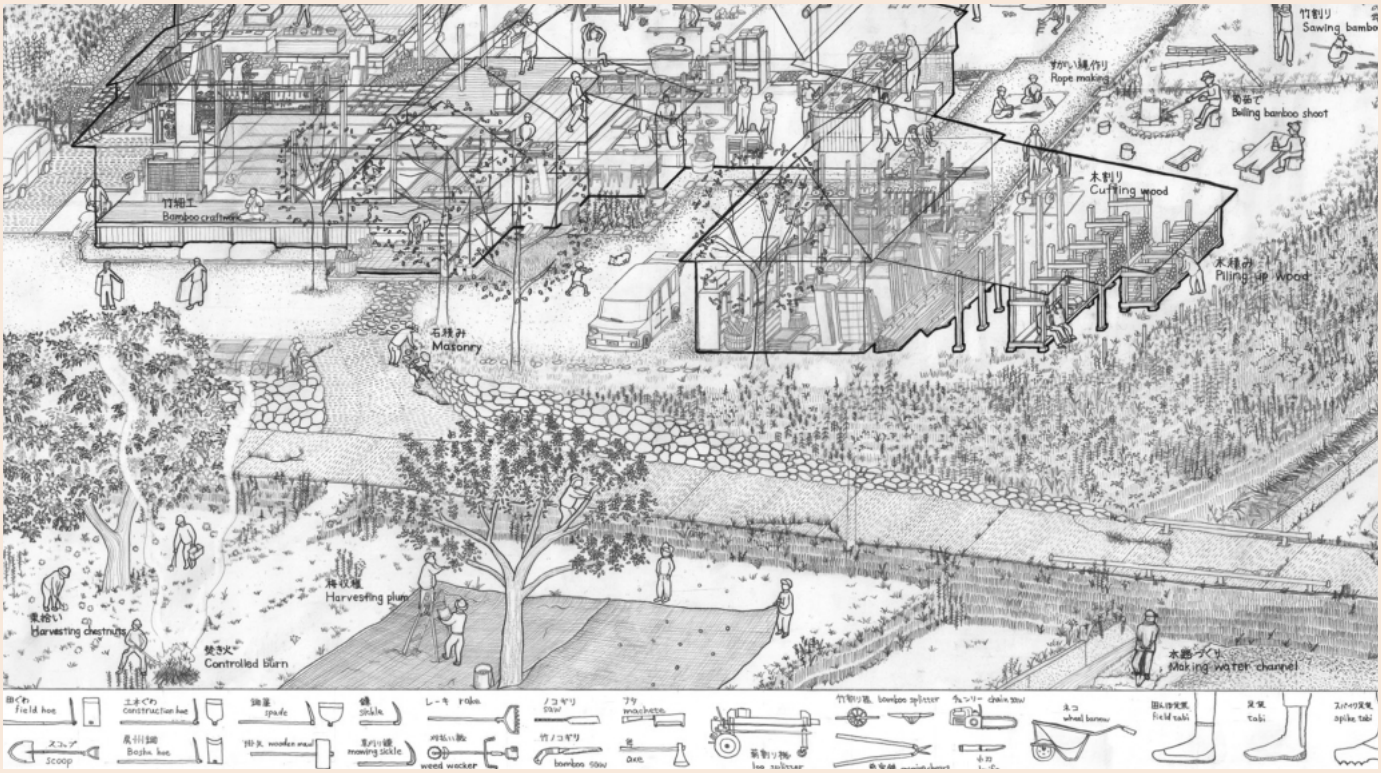
Film still from Kader Attia – Hypomnemata
© Kader Attia

Kader Attia

Hypomnemata

2023; Printout postcards and Video, Color, sound; 4:50min
Courtesy Kader Attia

Prehistoric carved bones or USB sticks are hypomnemata: material externalizations of human memory. Memory, both individual and social, is materialized in artifacts. Kader Attia characterizes the earthen architectures of the M'zab Valley in the Algerian Sahara Desert as such hypomnemata. For millennia, it has transmitted construction know-how from one generation to the next. In the early 20th century, Western architects like Le Corbusier appropriated the aesthetic and functionality of these architectures without naming the vernacular origins of modern architecture, such as the buildings of the M'zabite people. Today, Attia argues, traces of this cultural appropriation are still visible in an aesthetic that haunts our consumerist landscape in the form of packaging materials for everyday goods.



Detail of the drawing Small Earth
© Tsukamoto Lab, Tokyo Institute of Technology

Atelier Bow-Wow & Tsukamoto Laboratory of the Tokyo Institute of Technology

Small Earth

2022; Pencil drawing, print on canvas; 150×415cm

In Japanese, the word *satoyama* is used to describe agricultural fields and forestry between mountain foot-hills and arable flat land. However, the term doesn't just describe a certain type of rural landscape and its geographical setting; it also bears an anthropological denotation referring to its management and maintenance through the active work of a farming community. The drawing *Small Earth*, realized collectively by the students of the Tsukamoto Laboratory of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, is the result of meticulous field research carried out in the village of Kamanuma. It presents all the tasks that are necessary to maintain the *satoyama* and ensure its regeneration, from felling trees to making charcoal, from plowing the earth to mowing grass and har-vesting, etc. Each task requires know-how, both in terms of handling tools and in terms of understanding the natural life-cycles that enable resource extraction in a manner that does not deplete the ecosystem.



Cow Corridor - Flood & Reservoir Manangement Infrastructure
© Cave Bureau

Cave Bureau

Maasai Cow Corridor Part II: "Ngombe Soft Life"

2026; Sisal, Medium Density Fiber Board, Stainless Steel; Site Specific Installation

ACT 01: The Sisal-scenema installation presents a short film tracing Nairobi's Maasai Cow Corridor infrastructure as a speculative reverse-future documentary. It imagines a city in which the original custodians of Enkare Nyarobi, "the place of cool waters," are once again able to find refuge, movement, and grazing grounds for their cattle within the urban fabric.

Through this proposition, Nairobi is reimagined as a sponge earth-city: an adaptive landscape infrastructure capable of responding to climate change-induced droughts, floods, and ecological exhaustion, while also confronting the longer history of ancestral displacement experienced by the Maasai people. The film is staged within an immersive sisal environment, positioning the material as both a pastoral veil and herding threshold. It is accompanied by a large-scale physical part-model of the corridor, positive-propaganda prints, and a stainless-steel cow-crossing road sign, each operating as fragments of an infrastructure that does not yet exist, but urgently needs to be imagined. Together, these elements invite Nairobians, tourists, policymakers, and passersby to consider the corridor not as fantasy, but as a civic, ecological, and reparative possibility. Cave_bureau invites you to manifest this future in both mind and action.

ACT 02: Constitutes a migratory exhibition through the literal movement of Maasai cows into Kilimani, Nairobi, where they will find temporary respite at an adjacent abandoned site leased by Cave_bureau studio for six months. This activated ground becomes a living extension of the Maasai Cow Corridor: part refuge, part prototype, and part public invitation to imagine a city that can make room for pastoral life once again. The site will be intermittently animated through Manyatta prototype structures built in collaboration with Maasai women, whose knowledge of material, form, and ritual grounds the work in ancestral practice. Manyattas are quintessential migratory dwellings, traditionally constructed from locally sourced intertwined branches and hand-rendered with mud, cow dung, urine, and ash. Characterized by a single entrance and a curved protective profile, they are designed to be built, inhabited, dismantled, and rebuilt quickly, in rhythm with nomadic movement. Through this temporary settlement, ACT 02 repositions Kilimani as a contested ecological and cultural threshold, asking how Nairobi might repair its broken relationship with the Maasai, cattle, land, and the deeper memory of Enkare Nyarobi.

ACT 03: Constitutes a migratory experience in the form of a guided city walk through
Nairobi with Maasai herdsmen and their cows. Moving slowly through the urban centre, this silent protest and public procession reframes the city as both an inherited Maasai landscape and a contested civic terrain. The walk draws attention to the restrictive laws, municipal attitudes, and urban planning legacies that continue to limit the movement of Maasai pastoralists and their cattle within Nairobi, despite the city's origins within Enkare Nyarobi, the place of cool waters. By bringing cattle into spaces from which they have been systematically excluded, ACT 03 transforms the everyday spectacle of traffic, tourism, and commerce into a living encounter with displacement, memory, and rights to the city. The procession also invites residents, tourists, policymakers, and passersby to witness the contradictions of a capital that celebrates Maasai identity as cultural image, while often denying Maasai people and their animals practical access to urban space and municipal services. Through this guided walk, the Maasai Cow Corridor becomes a performative demand for recognition, repair, and a more inclusive Nairobi.



Film still from Tu industria, tu basura
© Manuel Chavajay

Manuel Chavajay

Tu industria, tu basura

2022; Protest, performance; Video, Color, sound; 7min
Thanks to Colectivo Tz'ununya', Maíz de vida, Samuel Cumes Pop

In 2022, representatives from the Indigenous Tz'utujil people collaborated with the artist Manuel Chavajay, who belongs to the same community, to create the performance *Tu industria, tu basura* (Your Industry, Your Waste), protesting the pollution of Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. In a ritual procession echoing traditional Mayan harvest celebrations, women balanced reed baskets on their heads, while men carried full nets. But instead of flowers and fruit or fish, they were full of trash and plastic waste from the lake, which the protesters emptied before the Chamber of Industry and Congress buildings in the country's capital, Guatemala City. They demanded that corporations take responsibility for the waste they produce and challenged the state to fulfill its obligation to protect natural resources and to recognize nature's juridic personhood.

Kairos Futura: Abdul Rop and Daniel Nuru

KMS (Kanairo Management System)

2026; Laser cut steel, 3D printed architectural elements, Custom Circuitry, LED screen; 243.84 cm x 219.46 cm x 182.88 cm.

KMS is a large-scale representation of a selected area of Nairobi using urban planning data and architectural storytelling to explore the relationship between the city's terrain, infrastructure and built environment. The model translates complex geographic data into an interactive, three-dimensional platform that allows viewers to understand the city’s terrain, urban growth, and key landmarks at a human scale.

Using 3D modelling, laser-cut contour layers, and 3D-printed architectural elements, the project demonstrates how contemporary fabrication technologies can be used to communicate spatial information in a tangible and accessible way.

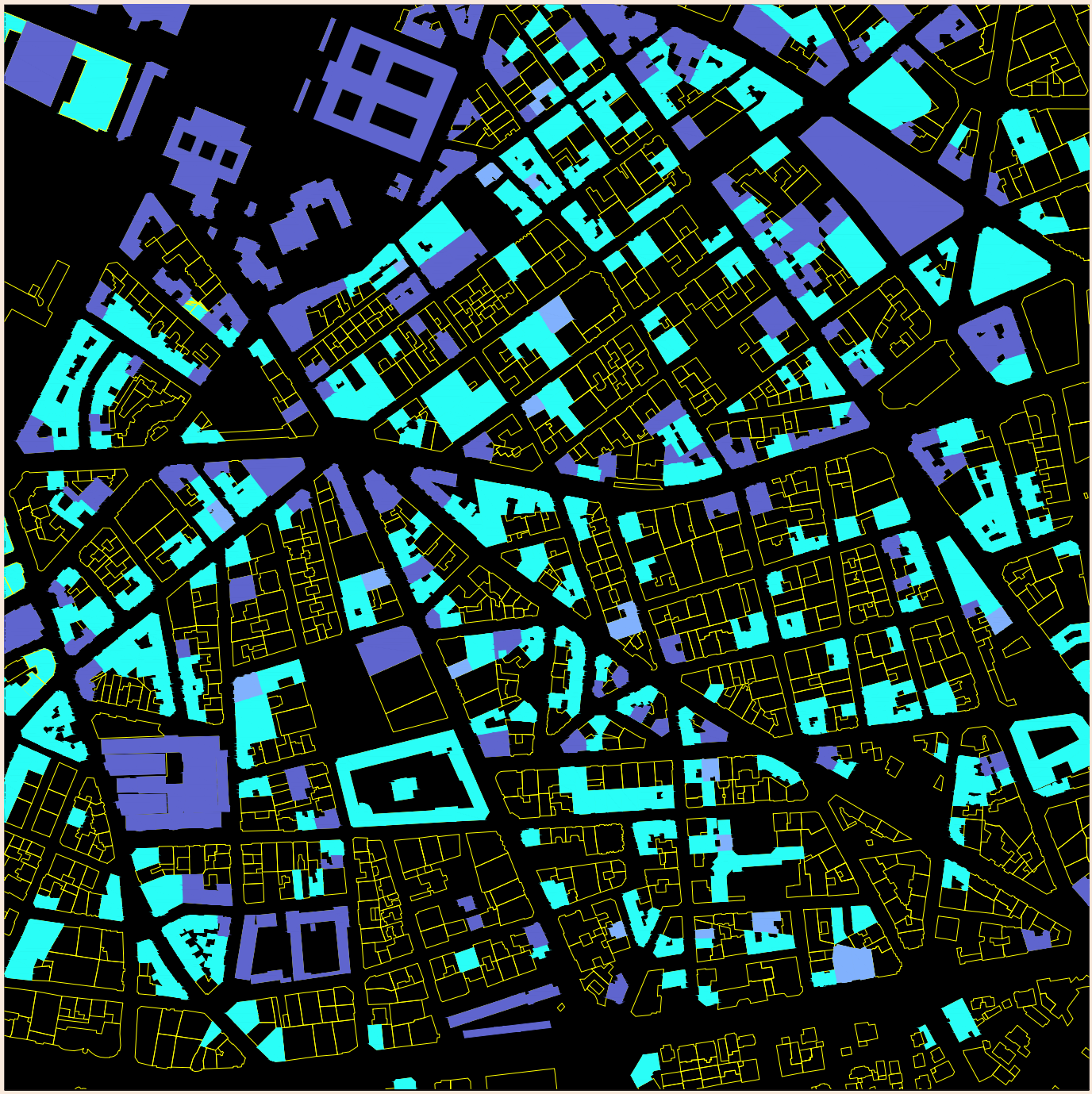
The modular construction enables individual sections to be fabricated, assembled, and studied independently while maintaining the integrity of the complete landscape.

Beyond serving as a physical map, the project acts as a conversation piece that encourages reflection on urban development, infrastructure, and the collective responsibility of shaping Nairobi’s future. It highlights the city’s complexity while promoting collaboration, innovation, and sustainable approaches to understanding and improving urban environments.

The model is intended as both an educational tool and an exhibition piece, illustrating how digital mapping, computational modelling, and fabrication technologies can bridge the gap between data and public engagement.



KMS (Kanairo Management System)
© Daniel Nuru



Mapping of heritage building value in Casablanca
© Florian Hertweck

Florian Hertweck, with Hamza Haidam and Julia Anna Paszkot

Continuing the City

2026; 16 3D-printed architectural models, printed map; 200×200cm

Casablanca's modernist architectural heritage ranks among the most significant in the world. Following the end of colonial rule, it was left to deteriorate until the local movement Casa Mémoire paved the way for the restoration of this complex heritage. Building on its efforts, one of the world's most progressive framework was implemented, organized into three categories: the first focuses on architecturally significant buildings and corresponds to traditional heritage conservation; the second concerns integration into the urban context and corresponds to conventional urban planning regulations; the third category, however, which applies to the majority of properties, corresponds to the values of *The Great Repair*: in principle, buildings may no longer be demolished, but can be renovated and many of them even extended. Repair is implemented as a large-scale regenerative and transformative process of caring for the existing built fabric, countering real-estate speculation driven by demolition, new construction replacing existing buildings, and gentrification.

Sam Hopkins

Bladda Blueprints

2026; Cyanotype Print; 42.0 × 59.4 cm

This project starts from the idea, and the belief, that in Nairobi, repair is both a practice and a technology. I am interested in how repair is seen, and in what it means to acknowledge embodied, improvised skill as a form of technology. This inquiry takes shape through one specific material technique: the tying, wrapping and binding of old bicycle inner tubes, commonly known in Nairobi as bladda.

In Kenya, repair is closely associated with *jua kali*, a term usually used to describe the so-called informal sector, but which also names an approach of making do with the tools, materials and resources at hand. Across jua kali practice one encounters forms of practical sophistication that are rarely recognised as such: from the precise regulation of oil and water in home-made furnaces for smelting iron, to jigs built to enable the mass production of furniture, to the dexterity required to bind, tension and secure bladda.

Juakali has some parallels with hacking, understood here not as cybercrime, but as the appropriation of technology for one's own purposes. But hacking and juakali differ in an important way. Hacking has increasingly come to signal creativity, innovation, even something aspirational, from hackathons to hacked furniture to hacking daily routines. Juakali is more often treated as makeshift, second-rate, or "just" a survival strategy.

But this is less about the processes themselves and more about the global hierarchies and asymmetries that they exist within.

Rewind 150 years, and technical drawing emerges as a standardised visual language for communicating industrial design, precision and repeatability. Historically, the blueprint took its name from the cyanotype process through which such drawings were reproduced: white lines on a blue ground. I wondered what a technical drawing, or a blueprint, would look like for a juakali repair practice. These prints return to that material history, but through a kind of juakali version of the blueprint: not one that would fully explain or extract the knowledge involved, because these are trade secrets held in the hands of artisans, but one that could trace and register the gestures, movements and embodied logic of this technology.

Whilst these cyanotypes borrow the visual language of the blueprint, they refuse its full legibility; as traditional blueprints they are useless. But instead of diagramming a finished object, they attempt to register a practice — how a material is pulled, wrapped, tightened and held. They are partial notations of repair, tension and movement, a means of passing something on while also holding something back.



Bladder (ˈbla:da)
© Sam Hopkins



NAIROBI RIVER AS IT FLOWS THROUGH NAIROBI'S EASTLANDS AT KOROGOCHO - KOMB GREEN
©Dr. M. Macharia Kedogo

PEARLS : PROMOTING A NEW COMMUNITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE ON PEOPLE-CENTRED AND RESILIENT SPACES RELATED TO URBAN RIVERS

University of Nairobi's Department of Architecture is collaborating with two academic partners: Norwegian University of Science and Technology and Kathmandu University (Nepal) as well as non-academic partners: Kounkuey Design Initiative and UN-Habitat, in the on-going PEARLS Project (2025-2028). The Project is promoting a New Community of Knowledge and Practice on Urban Rivers and aims for more inclusive and climate-friendly cities through people-centred and resilient urban spaces. Furthermore, it promotes new learning practices that are transdisciplinary, exploratory and informed by case-studies through contextualising solutions to address local needs. Ultimately, its thematic focus is on the relationship between urban rivers and riverine communities in times of climate change.

5TH YEAR STUDIO HOUSING PROJECT BACKGROUND

During the academic year 2025-2026 the 5 th Year Bachelor of Architecture Studio was guided by a team of tutors including Dr. Margaret Macharia Kedogo, Dr. Kigara Kamweru, Prof. Jerry Magutu, Dr. Yusuf Ebrahim and Dr. Linda Nkatha. The 1st Semester Housing Studio Project's theme focused on Integrating Housing Redevelopment with River Regeneration. As such it aimed to investigate housing conditions and socio-ecological conditions along Nairobi's riparian, urban corridor. As part of the introduction to the 5th Year's Housing Studio Project, they embarked on a field visit along the Nairobi River corridor on 17th November 2025. The aim of the field visit was to provide insights for proposing sustainable, inclusive, and ecologically-sensitive urban design interventions as well as affordable housing particularly for the existing residents as well as future residents.



A rare photo of the Kamirithu open-air theatre
(Source: Githiga Mwaura archives. Photo by Sultan Somjee)

Dr. Makau Kitata & Prof. Kenny Cupers
Assisted by: Cella Were

Kamĩrĩĩthũ Afterlives

Posters, Ngahiika Ndenda manuscript, Kamĩrĩĩthũ Theatre architectural model.

Exhibition Credits
Artist & Exhibition Production: Makau Kitata
Research: Makau Kitata & Kenny Cupers
Original Theatre Design: Kamĩrĩĩthũ Community, with architectural contributions by Sultan Somjee
Exhibition Box Design: George Orwa
Exhibition Model Realization: Daniel Ngigi

Exhibition Poster Credits
Artist & Production: Makau Kitata
Research: Makau Kitata & Kenny Cupers
Poster Design Assistance: Cella Osewe

Kamĩrĩĩthũ Afterlives explores the enduring legacy of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ theatre project.
Dr. Makau Kitata, in collaboration with interior designer Cella Were, develops thematic posters covering context, process, repression, and afterlives, as well as the central installation: a model of the original Sultan Somjee sticks-and-matches design of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ open-air theatre, displayed with the manuscript in a glass case.

Prof. Kenny Cupers contributes a research-based map of Kamĩrĩĩthũ, created with a cartographer. All contributions are integrated to create a clear, cohesive exhibition experience.

Highlight: Original Kamĩrĩĩthũ actors appear alongside a student assistant, reanimating the project as a living archive and connecting past performance to present engagement.

The exhibition combines objects, imagery, and performance to bridge archive, space, and memory.



Magadi Saltern #1
© Sharon Neema



To Carry Across the Knot

Sharon Neema

Laying the first thread : Tack the net which is to be darned, closely to the defective part, upon either oil-cloth or coloured paper and cut the edges straight to the thread.... It takes three rows of stitches to imitate the net ground; in the first place, cross-threads must be laid from side to side, carried as in darning, a little beyond the edges of the hole and so as to surround each mesh with a slanting stitch. [1]

There is a hole in my tongue.

I know enough to ask for water, *cha kuombea maji.* I know the words for cup, dog, cat, father, mother, grandfather. I know the tongue twist of sounds that is the word for mongoose — *ekenyaminyonge*. I know the word for God from my grandparents' prayers for journey mercies [*Nyasae abasesenie*]. This is not a language I was taught, instead something I scavenged — gathered scraps through eavesdropping and puzzling together something like meaning.

This not-knowing has made me curious about translation — not as a question of linguistic equivalence or fidelity but more as a process of rhizomatic weaving across language.

Laying the second thread: Secondly, beginning from one corner, threads are laid diagonally across the first layer. The cross-threads of the foundation are encircled by a stitch, made from right to left, the needle is then carried under the next horizontal bar, and the first layer of threads is overcast with similar stitches. [2]

"What is the form and substance of my language? We only recognize these distinctions when we attempt to translate. ... We learn other languages to understand our own."

— Montserrat Roig [trans. Eva Dunsky][3]

To translate is to place language beside language. Eve Sedgwick, in Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity [4] , writes: "*Beside* is an interesting proposition... *Beside* permits a spacious agnosticism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking... *Beside* comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivaling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations." These relations are where languages touch, where patterns of phonology, morphology, prosody, syntax, pragmatics, and semantics create nodes and knots. In turn, these nodes and knots construct the rhizomatic weave that is translation. Translation, in its etymological meaning, "carries [us] across" these tangled touch points.

Laying the third thread: Thirdly, threads are carried across the second and first layers. They must start, far enough from the edge, for the second layer of threads to be overcast at the same time, so that there may be no loose threads left on the wrong side. In this third journey, every diagonal thread of the foundation is to be encircled with a stitch, taken upwards from below, the cut edges being strengthened in the same way. Then, to form the little cross in the fabric, the thread must be conducted by means of a second stitch, under the single horizontal thread, outwards, to the next-diagonal thread. [5]

[Umdichtung] is a fine German word that means not a poem translated from another, but a poem woven around another; we also have Nachdichtung, an “after-poem,” a translation; and Übersetzung, a mere translation."

— Jorge Luis Borges [6]

The word "darn" comes from the Old English diernan which means “to hide, conceal”. I am, however, after a practice of translation that makes visible the mending of the hole in my tongue, that shows the wrestling-with. As a noun, as a thing already done, translations can obscure the weave of the net that carries us across. We were there and now we are here. However, in its verbal form, in the *doing* of it, in translating, one sits with the relations of *beside*. You enter the knot, walk its tangles, come to crossings and intersections, find new roots and old roots, follow threads back to their stitch.

My grandmother
says something to my mother
in Ekegusii
and I translate it as
"God is giving up on me" .
and for once in my life,
I hope that I don't understand,
that I'm lost in translation.

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[1] Thérèse De Dillmont, *Encyclopedia of Needlework* (Mulhouse, France, 1886), 62.
[2] Ibid, 63.
[3] Montserrat Roig, “A Black Velvet Curtain,” trans. Eva Dunsky, *Asymptote*, April 2026, accessed May 6, 2026, https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/a-black-velvet-curtain-montserrat-roig/.
[4] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Duke University Press, 2003), 8.
[5] De Dillmont, *Encyclopedia of Needlework*, 63.
[6] Jorge Luis Borges, *This Craft of Verse* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 74.



Fully functional cargo bike from the series Cars into Bicycles
© ARCH+

Folke Köbberling & Martin Kaltwasser

Cars into Bicycles

2010; Video, Color, sound; 8min

2009; mobile sculpture; mixed media; 183 x 62 x 108 cm; created in conjunction with the *International Summer Festival* at Kampnagel, Hamburg

Confronting and critiquing the auto-mobile-driven society was a central theme in the work of artist, archi-tect, and activist Martin Kaltwasser, who died in 2022. Together with his artistic partner Folke Köbberling, he organized performative and creative projects that challenged the car-centric design of cities and invited participants to reappropriate urban space. This bike was created in 2009 from salvaged car parts as part of a workshop in Hamburg, Germany and belongs to the series *Cars into Bicycles*, which Köbberling and Kaltwasser began in 2008. In addition to craft skills, the participants also acquired a critical awareness for developing visions for a new, more socially and ecologically just world from the remains of an out-dated society.

Anthony Muisyo

Kiumbe 1 and 2.
2026; Mild steel, electronic components, solar panels, motor, copper cables, brass, LCD screens.

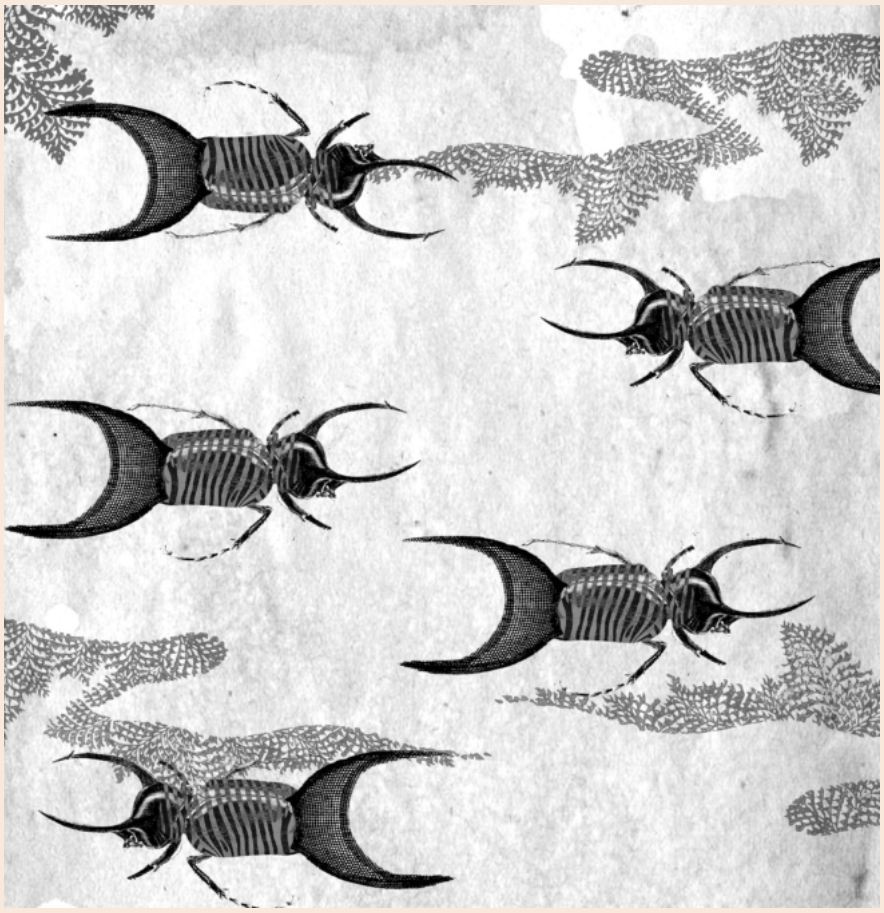
Kundi la viumbe.
2026; Steel, blockboard, ABS, PETG, aluminum, mini-computer, custom software (processing).

Viumbe (2026) was created with the intention of demonstrating how humans resort to anthropomorphosis of artificial intelligence systems to make sense of them which could prove costly in the long term. Braitenberg's vehicles (a thought experiment in the apparent intelligent behaviour of simplistic machines) provide a good grounding for how this kind of synthetic psychology works. These vehicles will be built using the philosophy of BEAM bots (Biology, Electronics, Aesthetics, Mechanics) pioneered by Mark Tilden and are built in a manner to mimic simple neurological functions. They tend to roughly follow the following rules (albeit not strictly) :

a) Use the lowest number possible of electronic elements ("keep it simple")
b) Recycle and reuse technoscrap (e-waste)
c) Use radiant energy (such as solar power)

Depending on the initial design conditions, these bots could be seen as 'alive' due to how they move.

Anthony believes this juxtaposition of human psychology against the different kinds of intelligences can act as a form of repair at a time of extreme polarisation and rapid change as it allows for a consideration of the gaps in human thinking. Rupturing long held narratives regarding this kind of tech is necessary so as to rewrite it in a new kind of understanding that is less predicated on already insidiously designed ideas. At a time in the world where there is an active battle being waged for human consciousnesses by the tech hegemony, it would benefit society to consider deeply the interiority of organisms and other kinds of life that have been largely ignored and/or exploited for gain. Evolution has afforded humanity many gifts that could be used to navigate such complex times.



Shule ya viumbe, 2026
© Anthony Muisyo



unnamed
© James Muriuki

James Muriuki

Untitled – Time, Material, Transition

Site specific installation

Modern life is defined by the delegation of our personal autonomy to external experts. From health and nutrition to housing, morality, and spirituality, we are constantly advised against self-management. Yet, we all possess a deep internal intuition that we can tap into. Too often, we trust external authority before fully exploring our own capabilities.

This work celebrates the mundane. It seeks to bridge the gap between our abundant, primary origins and the growing mountain of discarded materials generated by today's society. By utilizing "ready-to-use" materials, this project positions the self as both the director and the maker of everyday existence.

Lydia Muthuma

Monument Walks

Group walk through Nairobi CBD

Lydia Muthuma offers us a reading of monuments as markers of National identity. While at the same time questioning this idea of National identity. What does it mean? Especially in the context of Kenya which is a Nation state founded by colonial powers. What do the monuments crafted by these colonial powers say about the constructed identity of this country? That the materials and artistic styles in which they are produced, even after independence, bear aesthetic similarities to those of the colonial empire.

On Lydia Muthuma's *Monument Walks*, she takes us on a journey through Nairobi's CBD. As the administrative centre of the country, the monuments present here speak to the history of this crafted National identity. She reveals the subtle details that speak to the priorities of the powers that erected them and invites us to think about what this means for us in the present.



Askari Monument in Nairobi, located on Kenyatta Avenue
© Ngwatilo Mawiyoo

Sheila Nakitende

“AKATANDAALO I: Where Waiting Lives ”

2026; Barkcloth paper, raffia, kombucha;
100cm x 200 cm x 70cm

“Akatandaalo” is a Luganda word for the rack where utensils were washed and dried in the sun. Among the Baganda people of Uganda, it was a vital household rectangular structure, built from mutuba tree stems, reeds, and banana fibers. Durable and resistant to termites, it stood outdoors beside the kitchen, cared for by women and men alike, repaired by fathers and sons. To lack *“Akatandaalo”* was a mark of shame, to maintain it was an act of accountability and communal care.

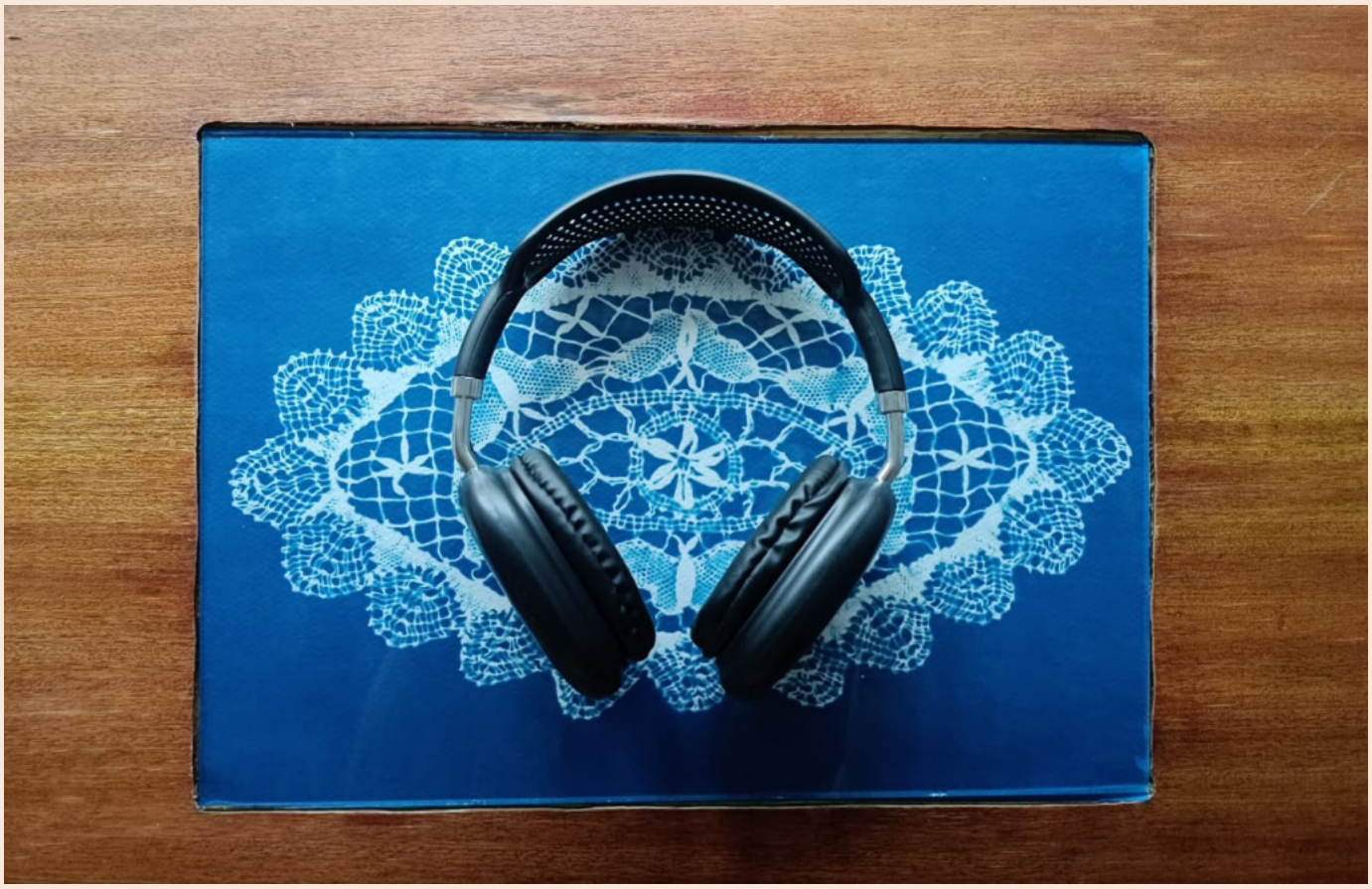


Hand Beaten barkcloth alongside shredded white barkcloth
© Sheila Nakitende

This installation reimagines "*Akatandaalo*" not as a domestic necessity but as a metaphorical architecture of waiting. Here, utensils do not hang to dry. Instead, the structure becomes a starter kit for intentional preparation inviting participants into acts of reflection, observation and listening. Barkcloth to be shredded, raffia to be woven and needles for stitching are offered as toolkits of preparation.

The artist's work made from barkcloth paper, woven raffia and kombucha placed at the top of the rectangular form is not a finished result but a prompt, a call to plant, to weave, to stitch, to mend and to continue. Waiting is reframed as active, as the slow work of restoration. Time is present and of the essence, not to be passed idly but to be inhabited deliberately. Audiences are encouraged to move beyond viewing into participation. In engaging with the materials, they enter a shared rhythm of preparation, acknowledging that waiting itself is generative. *AKATANDAALO I* thus becomes a living site where waiting breathes, where the ordinary object of a household rack transforms into a collective metaphor for preparation.

A restored mind prepares.
It gathers itself like dawn,
not waiting for the fractures of night.
It tends to silence,
to rhythm,
to the weaving of maintenance
so that repair becomes less a burden,
more a memory of what might have been.
Preparedness is its song,
restoration its ground.
In this way, the mind does not wait to mend;
it lives already whole.



Vyombo za wageni, sound, 2026. and I made this place for you. Altered dining table and cyanotype, glass. 2026. © Rosie Olang'

Mũthoni Mwangi and Rosie Olang' Odhiambo

The Long Exposure of Time

Site Specific Installation

Our art must become a process - a living, growing thing that people can relate to, identify with, be part of, understand,and not a mysterious world, a universe apart from them.
-Dikobe Martins- The Necessity of Art for National Liberation, Culture and Resistance Festival 1982

Long exposure or slow-shutter photography is a technique that allows photographers to condense an extended period of time into one photo - capturing both stationary and moving elements and combining them into a single frame.

Poetry, and what a good poem does if you let it - is to turn the reader inward to sense the full range of human emotion, and outward to find that nothing in the human experience is alien to us.

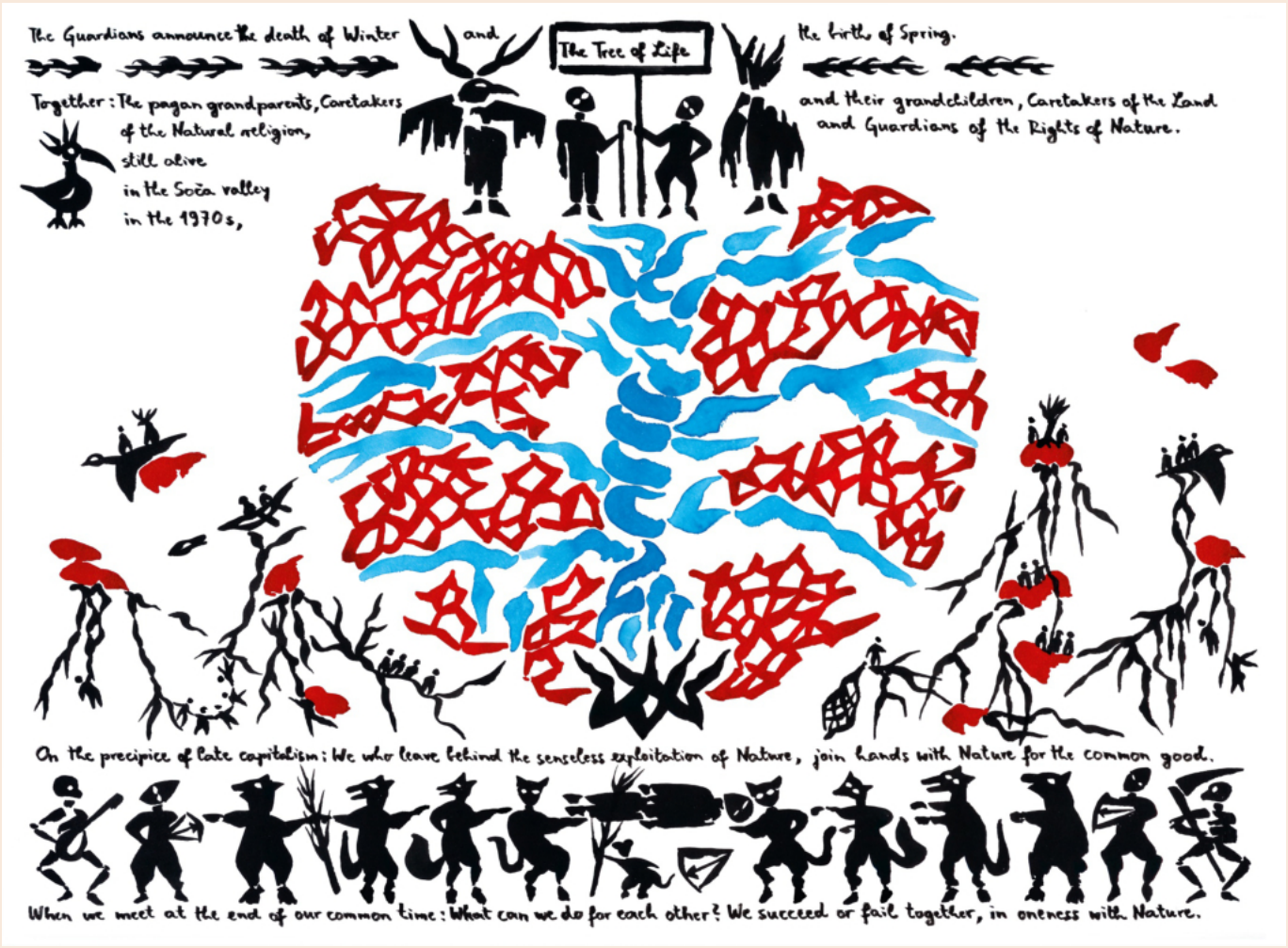
We respond to the invitation to the Great Repair thinking about long-exposure within and beyond the photographic approach and the relational nature of poetry and what these artistic genres make possible.The installation,*The Long Exposure of Time* presents a slowed temporal space and foregrounds the healing power of one's own attention through looking, listening, reading, and touch. Our loving gesture is a space to sway in, learn something new or remember something old, and possibly leave a note.

Vyombo za wageni gestures at a common Kenyan ceremony of hospitality where the household's best utensils are set out for guests; in this instance we gather at the table around sound and poetry. Within this space, the sound offerings, like the bouquet of flowers on the table, are an arrangement of sonic layers into a communal listening experience.

Bouquet of Thoughts and Feelings Listening to Cut Flowers is a weekly flower arrangement with an accompanying zine as part of the installation. Cut flowers remind us to find rhythm and balance, change the water, trim the stems, add flower food; a place for consistent attention and its rewards. Each week on Thursdays, a fresh bouquet will be arranged at the space from 12:30pm.

I Made this Place for You is an altered dining table with embedded cyanotype prints that
returns to the gesture of the ornamental doilies and placemats as a holding space for something nourishing, something precious.

Love Remains a Present Tense
Using plant remains of bougainvillea and amaranthus at various stages of decay, as well as broken glass found in and around the artists' home - the cyanotypes in the series Love Remains a *Present Tense* hold as carrier for what remains. Thorns, Shards, faultlines, double-triple exposures are detailed in the varied tones of blues and white, colours reminiscent of X-rays and other diagnostic imaging in medicine to map the internal, a place to witness, transform and tend to what is here.



The Time of Humans on the Soča River
© Marjetica Potrč

Marjetica Potrč

The Time of Humans on the Soča River

2021; facsimile drawing; 76 cm x 56 cm

Courtesy Marjetica Potrč and Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin/Stockholm/Mexico City

*****

The Rights of a River

2021; facsimile 10 drawings; each 21,0 x 29,7cm

Courtesy Marjetica Potrč and Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin/Stockholm/Mexico City

*****

Marjetica Potrč proposes the egalitarian coexistence of humans and the natural world. In her drawings and visual essays, she not only accepts our interconnectedness but also advocates for the consolidation of this mutual relationship through law.

The visual essay *The Rights of a River* is centred on the Soča River. It tells the story of the struggle for preserving Water Rights for all people and the emerging movement for the Rights of Nature in Slovenia. The narrative moves from the 2016 constitutional amendment, which made access to drinkable water a fundamental right in Slovenia, to the successful 2021 referendum called by the civil society, which overturned a new law that would have turned the country's rivers and coastline into a market commodity.

When rivers and other natural resources are accepted as rights-bearing entities, then our role towards them shifts from user and owner to steward and guardian.

The drawing *The Time of Humans on the Soča River* brings together two generations of caretakers for the Soča River in Slovenia: the followers of natural religion, who were still active in the Soča River Valley as late as the 1970s, and today's environmentalists. Both generations understand their lives as existing in an egalitarian relationship with nature. They join hands with nature for the common good.

In Mukuru, *The Time of Humans on the Soča River* is presented as a 5 x 7 m walldrawing. Created in collaboration with Wajuukuu Artist Collective, the work draws on the mural painting traditions that are widespread in the area and establishes a connection between Marjetica Potrč's work and the Ngong River in Mukuru, where social, political and ecological questions are inextricably linked.

*****

The Time of Humans on the Soča River

2026; walldrawing, acrylic paint on wall; 700cm x 500 cm

Walldrawing from original drawing The Time of Humans on the Soča River (2021)

Courtesy Marjetica Potrč and Galerie Nordenhake, Berlin/Stockholm/Mexico City

This walldrawing is a collaboration between Marjetica Potrč, Primož Novak and Wajuukuu Artist Collective

*****

When rivers and other natural resources are accepted as rights-bearing entities, then our role towards them shifts from user and owner to steward and guardian.
The Time of Humans on the Soča River depicts two generations of caretakers for the Soča River in Slovenia: the followers of natural religion, who were still active in the Soča River Valley as late as the 1970s, and today's environmentalists. Both generations understand their lives as existing in an egalitarian relationship with nature. They join hands with nature for the common good.

By connecting the stories of Soča River and Ngong River this wall drawing creates a socially conscious space that calls for collective responsibility in protecting our rivers, wetlands, and ecological systems.
It emerges from a shared understanding of environmental degradation as not a distant crisis but a reality shaped by our daily actions and decisions. The pollution and neglect of our waterways eventually return to us, affecting the health of communities, biodiversity, and the environment that sustains all life.

This collaborative project highlights the urgent need for accountability from institutions responsible for water management while encouraging active participation from communities. It recognizes that the protection of rivers cannot be left solely to authorities. It requires a shared commitment rooted in education, stewardship, and collective action.

By amplifying the voices of our rivers, this collaboration seeks to foster dialogue, inspire environmental consciousness, and strengthen the relationship between people and the ecosystems they depend upon.

When a river loses its voice, a community loses part of its future. Protecting our waters is not only an environmental duty but a social shared by all.



'Earth Pillar (Hypostyle Hall)', 2010
© Bas Princen

Bas Princen

Earth Pillar

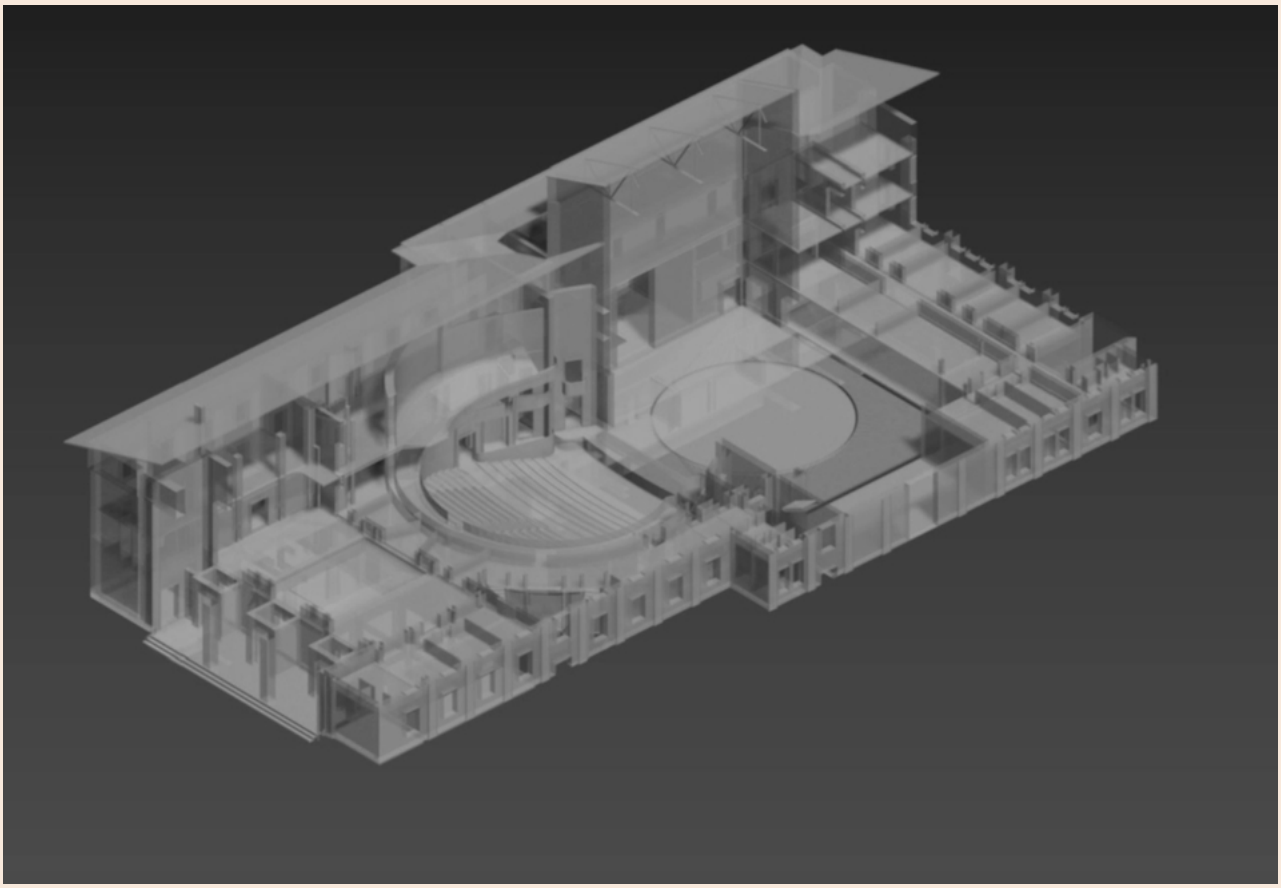
2010; print; framed; 119 × 84 cm

Djenné Mosque

2010; Photo series; 59× 42 cm

Each spring, on the day of *crépissage*, the Great Mosque of Djenné in Mali undergoes a collective act of maintenance. To protect it from the upcoming rainy season, a new plaster coat of clay slurry, sand, and rice husks is applied to the exterior of the adobe brick structure. This collective practice of repair can be traced back to the very first Great Mosque that was erected on this spot in the 13th century. After the building had fall-en into decay in the 19th century due to local conflicts, it was rebuilt on the original foundations in 1907.

The photographs were taken during a corrective reconstruction in 2010, organised by the Aga Khan Foundation. Removing the accumulated material, and bringing the building back to it’s 1907 starting point.



Digital 3D model of the Mariupol theater
© Center for Spatial Technology

Center for Spatial Technologies

A City Within a Building – The Mariupol Drama Theatre

2023; In collaboration with Forensis, Forensic Architecture; Video, Color, sound; 21min

On March 16, 2022, a Russian aircraft bombed the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater in Mariupol, Ukraine, which was sheltering as many as 2,000 civilians at the time. Subsequently, Russian forces first concealed and then demolished the ruined theater, bulldozing evidence of their war crime. Kyiv based research collective Center for Spatial Technologies teamed up with Forensic Architecture to reconstruct the bombing of the theater and its use as a shelter. They conducted dozens of hours of interviews with survivors, compiled thousands of photos, videos, and social media posts, and analyzed them using spatial research tools includingdigital models and photogrammetry. In the future, this collective memory could potentially serve as evidence in international courts—or as a source for the building's reconstruction.

Social Justice Centers Travelling Theatre

Social Justice Centers Travelling Theatre brings together theatre, exhibition, memory, and community action into a journey of reflection and imagination rooted in the lived experiences of communities in Dandora, where spaces marked by environmental injustice are continuously being reclaimed through collective action, creativity, and care. It consists of a guided performative walk in Dandora, theatre interventions, and exhibition presentation of photographs, testimonies, environmental artifacts, community archives, and visual installations of the site's history and transformation.

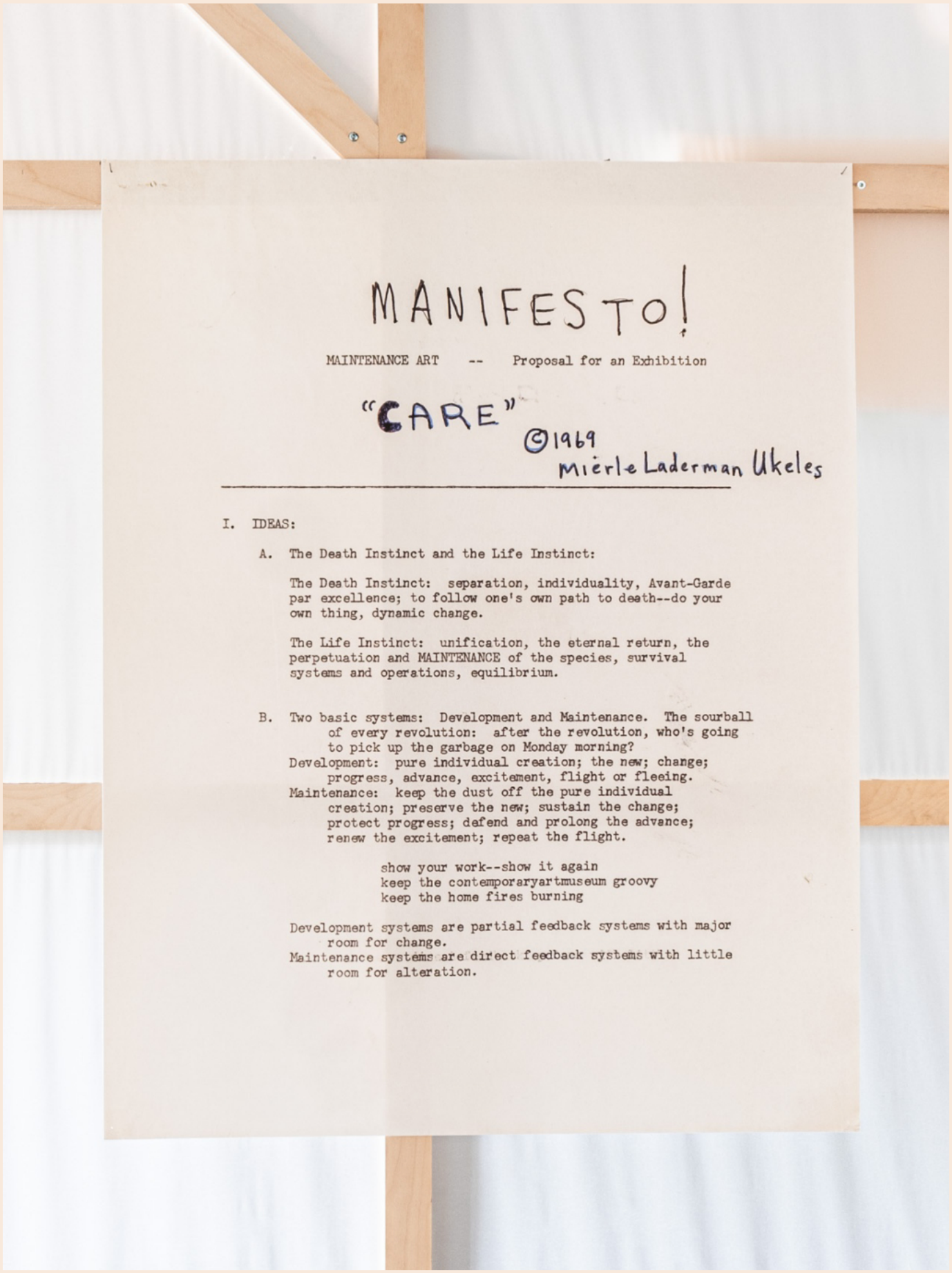
The contrast between the Dandora dumpsite and the rehabilitated community spaces give context and center these critical questions: What does repair mean when communities have been forced to live alongside environmental harm? Who carries out repair when institutions fail? How can art, culture, and collective action contribute to repairing both landscapes and social relationships?

SJCTT foreground a community space that once functioned as part of the Dandora dumpsite environment. What was previously associated with waste, neglect, and exclusion has gradually been transformed into a vibrant rehearsal ground for the Social Justice Centres Travelling Theatre and an open community space where residents gather for meetings, artistic activities, environmental initiatives, psychosocial support sessions, and collective organizing. The space itself becomes a living exhibit, a testament to the possibility of repair.
Theatre serves as a tool for activating the exhibition, allowing stories, memories, and community experiences to emerge through performance, spoken word, movement, music, and audience interaction.

Participants begin their journey at the dumpsite, encountering the realities of environmental degradation, displacement, and the histories that continue to shape the community. Along the route, performers and community members share stories, testimonies, songs, and interventions that reveal both the human and ecological costs of neglect. The walk transitions toward the rehabilitated community spaces. This movement creates a powerful contrast between two realities existing side by side: a landscape marked by extraction, waste, and abandonment, and a landscape shaped by community care, creativity, and collective repair.



Cast members stand to bow during the last scene of the play "From Mau Mau to Gen-z.
Image courtesy of Social Justice Centre's Travelling Theatre



MANIFESTO!

MAINTENANCE ART -- Proposal for an Exhibition

"CARE"

©1969 Mierle Laderman Ukeles

I. IDEAS:

A. The Death Instinct and the Life Instinct:

The Death Instinct: separation, individuality, Avant-Garde par excellence; to follow one's own path to death--do your own thing, dynamic change.

The Life Instinct: unification, the eternal return, the perpetuation and MAINTENANCE of the species, survival systems and operations, equilibrium.

B. Two basic systems: Development and Maintenance. The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?
Development: pure individual creation; the new; change; progress, advance, excitement, flight or fleeing.
Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight.

show your work--show it again
keep the contemporaryartmuseum groovy
keep the home fires burning

Development systems are partial feedback systems with major room for change.
Maintenance systems are direct feedback systems with little room for alteration.

Page 1/4 of Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition "CARE"
© Form/Design Center

Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Touch Sanitation Performance

1979–1980 Touch Sanitation: Sanman Speaks,
1979–1984 Touch Sanitation: Waste Flow,
both Video, Color, sound; 58 min

© Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Courtesy Mierle Laderman Ukeles & Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

Since the 1960s, feminist and multi-disciplinary artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles has consistently high-lighted the essential value of everyday maintenance work. In 1977, she joined the New York City Department of Sanitation as an (unsalaried) artist-in-residence. Her first work in this context was the citywide performance *Touch Sanitation* (July 1979–June 1980, preceded by 1.5 years of intense research), in which she met and shook hands with every single one of New York City's 8,500 sanita-tion workers, personally thanking them with the words, "Thank you for keeping New York City alive." Two videos document the year-long performance: *Touch Sanitation: Sanman Speaks* focuses on the artist's encounters and conversations with the sanitation workers, highlighting their expertise; meanwhile, *Touch Sanitation: Waste Flow* traces the journey of waste from the streets to the landfill, emphasizing the waste material itself as the primary actor.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles

Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969! – Proposal for an exhibition "CARE"

1969; 4 typewritten pages, each 28×22cm; Reproduction 84×59cm

© Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Courtesy Mierle Laderman Ukeles & Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

In 1969 artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote the *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART, 1969!* Proposal for an Exhibition *"CARE"*, in which she rigorously declared maintenance and care work to be art. Her manifesto proposes exhibiting the most-ly invisible labor processes involved in maintaining the home, the museum, and the city, but also bringing the specific materiality of carework into the museum setting: items such as "the contents of one sanitation truck; a container of polluted air; a container of polluted Hudson River; a container of ravaged land." In 2023 she reflects on her manifesto, written more than 50 years ago:"My *MANIFESTO* was something absolutely new and naked in the art world in 1969 and, I believe, from what people say and how it has spread internationally, that its ongoing call is still potent. I see it as a CALL for a World Revolution!—a world movement for survival—where real advanced culture includes the presence and voices of all the workers of survival."



2024, In the Absence, Ngugi Waweru and Shabu Mwangi
Image courtesy of Ian Gichohi

Wajukuu Artists' Collective:
Shabu Mwangi and Ngugi Waweru

Usipoziba Ufa Utajenga Kuta
If you do not seal the crack, you will build a wall.

Site specific installation

A multidisciplinary installation unfolding within the layered crises of our time ecological instability, political tension, social fragmentation.
The proverb lingers as both warning and method. A small fracture, left unattended, widens. What begins as a line becomes a boundary, what is ignored hardens into division. The work traces these subtle ruptures across systems, communities, and everyday life, where the unnoticed slowly becomes permanent.

Reclaimed and transforming materials carry memory. They bend, rust, decay, and return. Here, decay is not an ending but a condition of becoming a generative space where loss and renewal sit side by side.

Against the weight of overproduction and the isolation of individualism, the work leans toward repair. Toward care. Toward the fragile, necessary act of holding together. It is shaped by survival structures, formed through colonial continuities and sustained inequalities within systems still named as progress.

What remains when spaces of belonging close in? Instinct. Ancestral knowledge. Residual ways of knowing that persist beneath occupation, beneath erasure.
The work returns us to this remainder. A quiet insistence on shared humanity. A reflection on values worn down, displaced, yet not entirely lost. It also reflects how colonial structures and systemic inequality shape our world, drawing on instinct and ancestral knowledge to call for urgent reflection and action toward healing social imbalances.

This is an environment of rupture and restoration,not offered as luxury, but as necessity. A space that asks: What do we choose to hold? What do we allow to break? And what does it mean to repair, before the crack becomes a wall?

Khalid Yuutdem

'It's all inter-woven'

2026; Cotton textile;
50cm x 600cm.

'It's all inter-woven' draws inspiration from the box-bottom nylon bags used in everyday life in Nairobi, carried through markets, bus stages, workshops, and homes, holding groceries, textiles, tools, and personal belongings. Often looked at as purely functional objects, these bags embody resilience, improvisation, and the layered rhythms of urban life. Their woven plastic surfaces, bright color combinations, and reinforced structures reveal a visual language shaped by movement, trade, and survival.



Street vendor uses the gunia bag as protection for his wares from sun damage
© Khalid Yuutdem

In this piece, I reinterpret the material logic of these nylon bags through textile weaving, translating their industrial patterns into a slower, hand-crafted process. The woven surface echoes the grid structure of synthetic strips while introducing softness, irregularity, and tactility. By recreating the pattern through fabric, I explore the relationship between utility and memory. Ordinary objects become carriers of social histories and collective experience.

The work also reflects on cycles of consumption and adaptation within the city. These bags are often reused repeatedly, repaired, folded, and repurposed, becoming symbols of resourcefulness in contemporary urban culture. Through weaving, I aim to honor this culture of reuse while questioning distinctions between craft, labor, and design. What is considered disposable or commonplace can also hold aesthetic and cultural significance. Ultimately, the fabric becomes both material and metaphor: a woven record of circulation, endurance, and everyday creativity in Nairobi.

Fifth Avenue

Lutivini Majanja

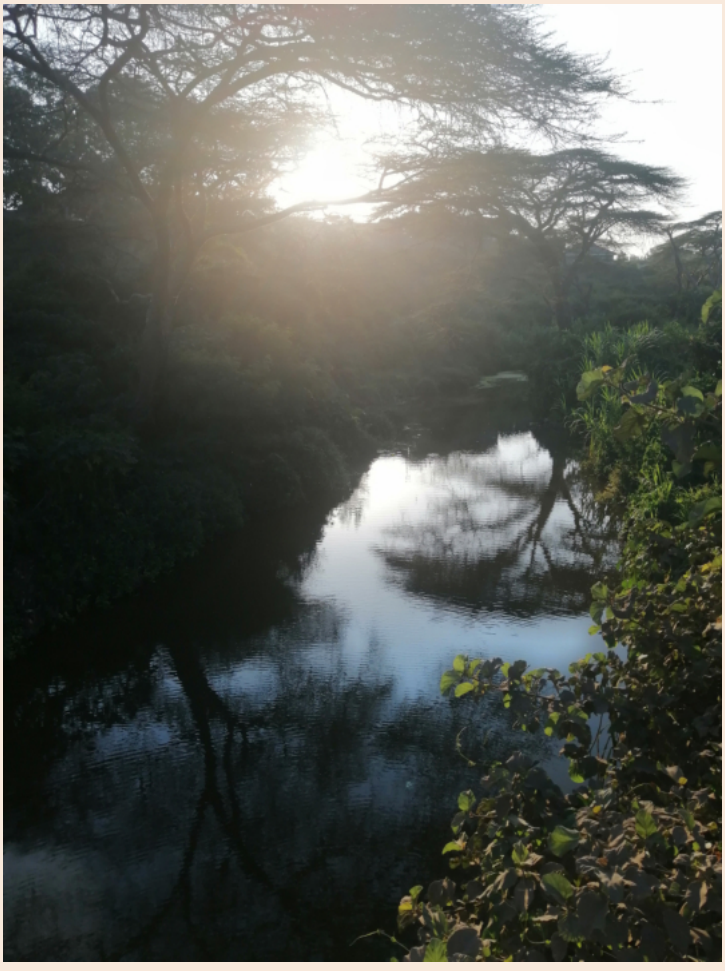
There is more than one Fifth Avenue in Nairobi. I have been to Fifth Parklands Avenue and Fifth Ngong Avenue. Both avenues once had homes with neighbouring schools, hospitals and churches. Fifth Ngong Avenue is closest to Kenya's largest public library. These two avenues are now dominated by commercial high-rise buildings for people in suits, lab coats, dust coats, and other work uniforms. People who start their days considering what clothes, shoes, jewellery, perfumes, and hairstyles are acceptable or professional. These buildings have entry ways with metal detectors with guards who insist on bag and ID inspections. The visitors' registers are full of names and contacts of people who are required to declare the purposes of their meetings; official or personal. Roadsides have dozing-off drivers in waiting taxis for busy busy people who clock out before dusk. Laundry hanging from the balconies of deteriorating flats is out of place here. Make a living here, don't live here.

So much happens on First Avenue Eastleigh and Second Avenue Eastleigh. Was there ever a Fifth Avenue Eastleigh? Maybe only on paper. Was it renamed?



My Fifth Avenue is a two kilometre murram road that is in a constant state of disrepair. Bordering this avenue on both sides are brick and concrete walls, hedges with occasional bougainvillaea, hibiscus, lantana and duranta shrubs popping at intervals. Gates along the way lead to bungalows, maisonettes and flats constructed in no specific order or style. Behind one large gate there are two long rows of single rooms four mabati walls and a window – to sublet with communal toilets and bathrooms for tenants at the end of the corridor. There are a few abandoned bungalows with overgrown grass around them. There are houses that were built too close to the road so their windows are permanently shut or boarded up. Along this road, stalls and kiosks supply everyday groceries, toiletries, and animal feeds. There's a posho mill, hair dresser, manicure, pedicure, and car wash services. There is no tailor.

It’s a quiet enough neighbourhood. On most mornings and evenings I hear birdsong, crickets, and frogs in the rainy season. Perhaps I’m overly delighted by these sounds because I once lived in a place where I was constantly woken by the beeping of reversing lorries, and their rumbling engines. Here cocks crow all the time, not just at sunrise. I once spotted a mongoose in the mid-afternoon. There are trees everywhere, and I have an exaggerated awareness of them because I have lived in treeless places and hated it. If I was to rank all the Fifth Avenues by their trees, this one always wins. Vervet monkeys hang around too. If you leave your windows open you might find your kitchen raided. So far these monkeys have stolen bananas, tomatoes, and baking flour from my kitchen. I do not understand what they wanted to do with my baking flour. My neighbour who has since moved away told me that I’m lucky that I haven’t come home to a tray full of cracked and leaking eggs; that happens sometimes. There’s a reliable alarm system that tells us when the monkeys have arrived. Children scream, and run to hide or watch and comment loudly. Dogs snarl and bark until these invaders depart.



Another neighbour settled in with a coterie of potted plants, mostly succulents. They are a draw to the toddlers around here; pots placed on the ground are just the right height for curious eyes and little hands. They pluck and uproot, offer the plants too much water, and then trail mud on cleaned floors. This neighbour’s surrendered to toddlers' activities; she pots fresh cuttings giving the soil something else to hold onto until the toddlers snatch it.

This avenue has functional street lights. A rarity, a privilege. Some gates have night guards to watch over compounds with electric fences, razor wire fences or metal wall spikes. This avenue is secure. On cloudless nights I can look up at the sky from my window to see the moon and constellations. For now, no skyscrapers block my view.

Most days this road sees motorcycles with pillion passengers, pedestrians of all ages, cars, school buses, cows, goats, and the occasional donkey cart ferrying jerricans of water. Every so often brown exhauster trucks park here and siphon effluent from septic tanks because the houses along this avenue are not connected to a public sewer system. Their stench lingers for hours then it dissipates. Kiosks only stock long-life milk, maybe because it's better not to rely on electricity supply to keep food fresh. At times the nearby transformer explodes, sometimes, all turns silent and dark for hours for lack of electricity. We are irritated but we don't rage about it. The darkness always passes, we are certain. I feel uneasy when I see men atop electricity poles attaching, or disentangling, their internet supply cables. These men can see into people's first floor rooms. I do not like that.

On Sundays a too-loud church interrupts the morning calm, and everyone who walks or drives near it quickens their pace until they are past it. Metres from the church, there's a gym that cannot sustain a regular flow of customers despite its convenient location. An upbeat gym instructor yells instructions over loud beats whenever he has customers to shout at. Right next to the gym there's a kiosk for mandazi, chapati, sugary tea and soda. Calories be damned.

This road gets too dusty during the dry seasons, too muddy during the rainy seasons. Every season unveils inferior old fixes, longer, wider and deeper pot holes for residents to pool resources together and fix with crushed rocks. Exposed and broken water pipes flood water on sections of the road. Some neighbours will only trim their overgrown fences after they are named, nudged, and pushed.

On occasion, the government's public road authorities send professional services. These professionals arrive with coarse rocks and clods of soil to address the previous season's soil erosion. Their grader compacts and flattens out the road surface. Better for breezy walking or hurried footsteps, and easy driving. These government officials mark walls and fences that have encroached on this avenue. They might unclog the roadside drain before leaving without taking away the trash drawn out from the drains. I stay hopeful that they'll soon return with tarmac; with better suited vehicles and equipment to finish their job. I am hopeful.

In this interim, road users give up their zig zag habit of moving that's practised to avoid sudden dips and exposed rock that could trip and disable. The rains return, and I am glad because dust can be so displeasing. The air gets lighter. The season passes and then it is dry again, sunshine turns abrasive, and tree cover is insufficient. The ground cracks, soil loosens, and the wind carries it away.

This avenue slopes downhill leading to a river crossing, a bridge without barriers. Every time I pass this bridge, I imagine myself falling over the edge, landing on the rocky river bed, breaking my bones, and frightening the ducks that subsist on the murky green water. I think about how I will stop myself from drowning by clinging to the reeds that withstand the heaviest rainfall. Other pedestrians and drivers appear unoccupied by such thoughts as they move along the bridge. This river exists, persistent as a thing that wants to live even if it is choking from garbage that won't wash away.

After the bridge there's a sharp climb. This hill is so steep few vehicles can surmount it. I have seen passengers tumble off struggling motorcycles. Sensible riders disembark from their motorcycles or bicycles at the bridge then push their vehicles up the hill. Some saloon cars, lorries, buses reach this point and turn back to search for alternative routes with less mud, gulleys and cracks. There are people who walk or jog up that hill as if it is nothing. They do not pause midway with hands akimbo and desperation on their faces. They do not climb with foreheads tilted to the ground, hands flailing, searching for something to grasp, or unable to speak and walk simultaneously. They do not sweat. At the top of that hill, there's a perfect viewpoint to perch and enjoy the ordinary magnificence of this neighbourhood. Rooftops, treetops and this meandering avenue.

Before I moved here, I lived in a place I had to escape to find detail.
I am now attuned to my surroundings as opposed to estranged from it.
It's likely that one day on my Fifth Avenue tall buildings will outnumber bungalows, and people will come here for work rather than rest. For now my Fifth Avenue stretches between two tarmacked roads, one busy with people and goods moving far out of Nairobi and out of the country, the other tarmac road is somewhat new and often quiet.
It exists in anticipation of an orderly and fast paced future.

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All images courtesy of the author

Curating in Dialogue

Text: Markus Krieger, Felix Hofmann, Christian Hiller

Berlin, June 2026

At the heart of repair lies a belief that, to face a broken world, requires forging new ties across spatial and social divides. Both globally and wherever we happen to live our lives. We need to become menders of tears, knitters of ties of relation. These bonds, as fragile or circumstantial as they may seem at first, can take root in a mutual understanding that we share an uneven world which is profoundly shaped by histories of colonialism, slavery, and capitalist extraction. With care, weak links strengthen, and from there grow into a powerful resource to collectively enact repair across boundaries. It is a practice that starts by noticing, acknowledging, and then supporting the struggles for repair already taking place all around us every day, rather than replacing them.

Since the start of the project *The Great Repair* in 2022 we have observed how authoritarianism, militarization, and reactionary parochialism are gaining ground where we live in the North. At the same time, care for the climate and biodiversity loss has become subdued here, where the home of the historic carbon burden lies. A nostalgic longing for a fictitious, unharmed past and an illusory sense of being able to defend one's own relative safety at the sake of the fate of others have been taking their toll. Moreover, the reality and dynamics of expanding warfare around the world have had corrosive effects on our governments; the willingness to care for human and non-human life seems to again slip from our grasp. What does it mean, in this context, to work with care and aim towards a mutual understanding across these shifting divides? How can we build transformative relations despite these growing retrenchments?

Commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office, we travelled to Kenya to set up collaborations and to pursue these questions together. We approached our first visit to Nairobi acutely aware of the historical and structural asymmetries such a constellation inevitably entails and with a sense of unease. It was clear to us, that, if this project was to be meaningful, it could not remain our own. Its ideas and provocations needed to be challenged, reappropriated, if not abandoned, and transformed into a work that could hold its own. At the same time we were curious, how a project such as *The Great Repair* with its frequent claims to universality, would resonate with a local audience. We owe it to the trust and generosity of those we met, to be reassured that a durable base – rooted in a shared reading of the world's brokenness – was already present in our work.

A few of these new friends we'll mention here: First, Makau Kitata, who was so generous to drive us again and again across the many quarters and spatial divides of the city, introducing us to various sites and contexts as well as the Kamĩrĩĩthũ theatre and its vibrant legacies such as the Social Justice Center Travelling Theatre in Dandorra. Wangui Kimari, who took the time to intently listen and intellectually challenge our notion of repair. Don Handa, who's inspiring curatorial practice made us raise our ambitions. Wajukuu Arts collective, who sharpened our understanding on the relation of arts and the ground it's made on. Kairos Futura, who helped us imagine the exhibition across segregated urban borders. Lydia Muthuma, who took us on an unforgettable walking tour of Nairobi's CBD, unearthing the city's fractured and multilayered history. Together with her, Margaret Kedogo, and Joseph Kedogo, we spent a wonderful evening thinking about Nairobi's Rivers while being introduced to Meja Mwangi's *Going Down River Road*. Raquel Jerobon, who opened the door to many making this project possible. We met many more along the way, all we cannot mention here. But we'd like to also express a warm thank you to Kerstin Pfirrmann and her colleagues from the German embassy Nairobi, without whom many of these connections would not have happened, and to Omar Degan, curator of the Panafrican Biennale, who's been a steady companion.

Of course, our biggest gratitude is reserved for munyu, without whom this project and its adaption and expansion would not have been possible. When starting out, we set out to design a "dialogic" curatorial process: The idea being that the center of curation should be situated somewhere in between our disjointed yet entangled geographies – never fully in Europe, never fully in Africa, but always moving. It is for munyu to conclude, if this has been a successful attempt. From our point of view, we can say that it is thanks to your curatorial vision and prowess that the project will have the best of chances to become what we hoped it could be. It is abundantly clear already that the project will be coming into its own and present a profound deepening of the notion of repair with your introduction of the concept of *umunyu* to the project. We are also looking forward to all of the new works you commissioned for the show as well as the newly adapted "old" works from the show's repertoire. We sincerely believe that *The Great Repair: umunyu* will further solidify your curatorial practice for the coming future.

Berlin, June 2026

Contributors

Jonathan Sölanke Gathaara Fraser
is a multidisciplinary artist based in Kenya working across various media as a means for paying careful (and especially caring) attention to his environment. Some of these modes of practice include drawing, printmaking, plant pressing, audio-visual work, and writing.

Limbo Accra
is a research and design studio founded in 2018 by Dominique Petit-Frère and Emil Grip in Ghana, West Africa. Through interdisciplinary collaborations, digital archiving, and speculative interventions, the collective reclaims unfinished and abandoned structures as critical sites for cultural, architectural, and civic engagement.

Karim Fouad
is an architectural designer and researcher based in Cairo. His work explores the intersection of architecture, social ecology, and the archiving of the built environment. In 2022 he founded Mogasam, a project that uses photogrammetry to document and reinterpret fragments of Cairo's urban fabric. Working alongside architects, Egyptologists, architectural historians, and 3D designers, he investigates the educational and visual potential of 3D scanning as a tool for urban and heritage preservation

Omi Collective
is an antidisciplinary architecture, design and research office working across architecture, urbanism, objects, and domains beyond. Founded in 2023 by Olorunfemi Adewuyi, we believe architecture is a method for producing intelligence from contradiction. Omi studies, exposes, and transforms the pressures of material life, culture, memory, and power into plat(forms) that can be inhabited, questioned, and extended.

Kader Attia
is an artist whose work explores the wide-ranging effects of Western cultural hegemony and colonialism. Central to his inquiry are the concepts of injury and repair. Attia curated the 2022 Berlin Biennale

Atelier Bow-Wow
was founded in Tokyo by Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima in 1992. Yoichi Tamai joined as partner in 2015. The firm has realized buildings across the world, taken part in numerous exhibitions, and published several books, including Made in Tokyo (2001), Graphic Anatomy (2007), Behaviorology (2010), and Architectural Ethnography (2017).

Cave Bureau
is a Nairobi-based working group of artists, architects, and researchers exploring architecture as a deep-time earth practice rooted in social and ecological repair.

Their work engages the anthropological and geological contexts of African settlements as a way to confront the challenges shaping contemporary rural and urban life.
The bureau develops systems, structures, and spatial propositions that seek to improve
both human and non-human conditions without compromising the natural environment
or the social fabric of the communities they work with. Guided by the limitless curiosity of early ancestors, Cave_bureau conducts playful yet intensive research into caves within and beyond Nairobi. These investigations form part of a broader decoding of precolonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial conditions across rural and urban habitats,
expressed through drawing, storytelling, construction, and the curation of performative acts of resistance.
Their practice also works to bridge the often-disconnected relationship between
academia and architectural practice. Through lectures, teaching, and student project reviews at schools of architecture around the world, Cave_bureau continues to weave
together traditional and contemporary forms of spatial knowledge, opening up new ways of reading, making, and inhabiting the built and natural environment.

Manuel Chavajay
is an artist and member of the indigenous Tz'utujil community. He understands contemporary art as a place of healing. His work draws on practices and spirituality associated with the Mayan cosmovision: a deep connection with nature, life, and the energy that lies within things.

Kairos Futura
is an arts futurist organization founded and run by artists. Our spaces serve as a hub for artists, designers, futurists, and community organizers who share a common passion for using the arts as a means to effect change. We believe that artistic expression can transcend cultural boundaries, ignite dialogue, and inspire collective action.

Abdul Rop
is a sociologist and artist whose practice is rooted in social justice. His journey from Egerton University to the collective Brush Tu has shaped a unique visual language that merges traditional woodcut techniques with contemporary commentary. His work challenges viewers to confront uncomfortable truths while recognising the enduring strength of the human spirit. He is a founding member of Kairos Futura, the arts futurist organisation based in Nairobi.

Daniel Nuru
is a multidisciplinary artist based in Nairobi. Working primarily in murals, installation art, print-making and biro pen drawings, he draws inspiration from geometrical structures, with early works focused on architectural drawings influenced by his love for symmetry and the built environment. Over time, his style has evolved into using bright, warm colors in murals and installations, while addressing social issues like climate action. Nuru is currently exploring digital technologies that allow the capture of three dimensional space, AR and Mixed reality, projection mapping, and Computer Aided Design.

Florian Hertweck
is an architect and urban researcher. He has been a full professor at the University of Luxembourg since 2016, where he directs the master's program in architecture, and a partner at Studio Hertweck Architecture Urbanism. He is the author of numerous books and the editor of Architektur auf gemeinsamem Boden: Positionen und Modelle zur Bodenfrage (2020). He is a co-curator of The Great Repair.

Sam Hopkins
is an artist and scholar working at the intersection of public art, media, and collaborative research. Rooted in Kenya, his practice develops long-term, co-produced projects that explore how representation is shaped by infrastructures—technical, social, and institutional—and how publics can reclaim agency over circulation, visibility, and memory. His work moves between public space, community settings, and museums and galleries.

Margaret Macharia Kedogo
is a lecturer at the University of Nairobi's Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Built Environment and Design where she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Architecture.

She obtained her Master of Human Settlements degree and PhD in Engineering Science (Architecture) from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium. Her research and teaching experience focuses on historical as well as theoretical aspects of urban design and on sustainable urban development. She is currently co-ordinating the UON PEARLS Project which focuses on promoting a new community of knowledge and practice on urban rivers. Additionally, the project aims for more inclusive and climate-friendly cities through people-centred and resilient urban public spaces.

Dr. Makau Kitata
teaches Literature at the University of Nairobi, focusing on theatre, performance, and cultural history. His research explores how community-driven theatre articulates social justice and memory. He has published on the Kamĩrĩthũ theatre's political and architectural significance and co-leads Kamĩrĩthũ Afterlives, bridging archival research with community collaboration.

Prof. Kenny Cupers
is a professor of architectural history and urban studies at the University of Basel and heads the Critical Urbanisms program. His work examines how built environments reflect social and political change. In Kamĩrĩthũ Afterlives, he integrates research, spatial design, and community collaboration to reanimate the theatre's spatial and political legacy.

Cella Were Osewe
is an Interior Architect, designer, and researcher whose work examines the intersection of space, African identity, material culture, and sustainability. She holds a Bachelor of Education (Arts) from Kenyatta University and a Bachelor of Interior Design from the University of Nairobi. Her practice spans interior architecture, design research, sustainable materials development, and community-centred initiatives, with a particular interest in how design can contribute to cultural reclamation and environmental stewardship.

Her research explores African spatial identity, circular material systems, waste valorisation, and regenerative approaches to the built environment. She is currently developing a non- structural architectural composite made from discarded textile waste, investigating how locally derived materials can support more sustainable and context-responsive design practices.

Sharon Neema (they/she)
is an artist and writer based in Nairobi. They make work that sits within a continued curiosity about process, embodiment and language

Folke Köbberling
is an artist and a professor at the Technical University of Braunschweig where she directs the institute for architecture-related art. In her works, she formulates forms of resistance against the excesses of the neoliberal economic order, such as compulsive consumption and destruction of cities, landscapes, public spaces, resources and people. For this she uses found materials, which she transforms and installs on a site-specific basis.

Martin Kaltwasser
was an artist, architect and a professor for sculpture at the Technical University of Dortmund. In his work he combined critical research with processoriented, object-like, spatial implementation and thereby addressed questions of publicity, mobility, appropriation of space, spatial regimes, resources, and sustainability.

Anthony Muisyo
is a visual artist based in Nairobi who works across a myriad of ever-growing and evolving media: video, fabric, wood, software, electronics & digital collages. He uses these elements to express his thoughts on technological infrastructures as experienced in Nairobi, and how its past, present and futures are defined by events such as the colonial conquest, the World Wars, post-independence, and the hypersensorial present moment we find ourselves in.

These infrastructures, he believes, can be defined and moulded through myth and fiction, tools he often turns to while attempting to create alternative narratives around technology and society.

James Muriuki
works mostly with photography and installation. He is interested in transitioning societies, the different knowledge systems occurring within the visual arts environments, and how these systems are enmeshed within the social fabric.

He tugs at the threads of the interdependency of circumstance in our turbulent social frameworks: the modern and the traditional; the spontaneous and the customary; the desirable and the aspirational. He experiments with and investigates the potential of images as media and the processes of making art: ultimately, as reservoirs of knowledge which he employs in his curatorial work too.

Lydia Muthuma
a senior lecturer in Visual Arts at the Technical University of Kenya. Through aesthetic critique and analyses of art histories, I examine the interplay between collective identity, spatial politics and visual culture. While my current research traces the emerging hybridity in East Africa's art, I endeavour to re-centre it by offering an insider's perspective.

Beyond the lecture hall and art studio, I contribute to UNESCO's Memory of the World programme, where I serve in the Africa Region Committee (ARCMOW), the Sub Committee for Education and Research (SCEaR) and the international Register Sub Committee (RSC). I am interested in artistic forms, the narratives they ignite and the identities they mediate.

Sheila Nakitende
is a multi-disciplinary artist and researcher based in Kampala, Uganda. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Fine Art and Design from Makerere University in 2005. Her artistic experience ranges from concept development, product and graphics design to gallery curatorial practice, coordinating arts projects, participating in local and international art workshops, residencies and exhibitions.

Having experimented with painting before exploring installation, performance and sculpture, Nakitende's practice focuses on the experiences of womanhood that include nurturing, material culture and methodological history while addressing current influences, challenges and transformations. She works with indigenous knowledge through engaging techniques such as weaving, stitching, burning and hand papermaking.

Rosie Olang' Odhiambo
is a curator and bookmaker living and working in Nairobi, Kenya. She is exploring workshops, zines, and artist's books as formats to play across various disciplines engaging with anticolonial, queer, feminist, and black radical traditions. Recent research and exhibition projects include; Bisi's Chorus with i continue to continue collective, in transit under another sky, co-curated with E.N. Mirembe (2023 - present) ,and Amplitudes of Dawn co-curated with downriverroad and friends (2022-2023)

Mũthoni Mwangi
is an independent artist researcher working within African Philosophies and Digital Heritage to deconstruct and decolonize systems of knowledge. They are a poet, zine maker and amateur textile artist. They have previously shown their work at the KLA Art festival 2024 in Kampala, Uganda and Kilele 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Marjetica Potrč
is an artist and architect based in Ljubljana. Her research investigates how contemporary architectural practices impact physical and social infrastructures. Potrč participated in exhibitions worldwide including Skulptur Projekte Münster (1997), the Venice Art Biennale (1993, 2003, 2009), the São Paulo Biennial (1996, 2006), the Yinchuan Biennial (2018), and the Biennale of Sydney (2022).

Bas Princen
is an artist and photographer. He studied industrial design at the Design Academy Eindhoven and architecture at the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam. Since then, his work has focused on urban landscapes in transition, using photography to examine the various forms, outcomes, and perceptions of changing urban spaces.

Center for Spatial Technologies
is a Kyiv-based cross-disciplinary research center specializing in spatial analysis, visualization techniques, and 3D modeling. From the beginning of 2022, CST has focused on analyzing civilian damage caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Social Justice Centers Traveling Theater
sensitizes various communities on human rights. Through theatre and other forms of performing arts, they have been able to advocate for social justice and human rights in various grassroots communities and informal settlements in many counties in Kenya. Through theatre shows and performance arts, they have been able to influence social change in more than 40 diverse communities in different parts across the country.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles
created Maintenance Art in 1969. Since 1977, she has continued as the unsalaried Artist-in- Residence of the NYC Department of Sanitation and Percent for Art Artist (since 1989) of Fresh Kills, once the largest municipal landfill in the world, being developed into a public park three times the size of Central Park

She works internationally; her multidisciplinary artwork, crashing boundaries between labor and performance, system and spirit, unveils flow connections between feminism, care, work, workers, the city, the environment, and the planet. Her works are in the permanent collections of the Whitney, Guggenheim, Art Institute of Chicago, Crystal Bridges, Wadsworth Atheneum, Kunstsammlung Dusseldorf, Migros Zurich, FRAC Lorraine Metz, and the Jewish Museum, NYC. She is represented by Ronald Feldman Gallery, NYC.

Wajukuu Artists' Collective
is a community-based collective empowering kids, youth, and the community through art, culture, education, advocacy, and financial growth.

Shabu Mwangi
lives and works in Nairobi Mwangi is concerned with the effects of structural violence in historical and contemporary contexts particularly those brought about by the farce of democracy and globalization, the isolation of capitalism and the severed interdependence that human beings have with each other and the world we inhabit. He continues to survey emotional and psychological landscapes within himself and in society to create densely layered compositions.

Mwangi has lived and worked in Mukuru, an informal settlement in Nairobi where he co-founded the Wajukuu Art Project in 2004.

Ngugi Waweru's
artistic practice is a deeply intuitive and interdisciplinary exploration of memory, material, and meaning. Rooted in lived experience, ancestral wisdom and environmental consciousness. Ngugi's work traverses the emotional landscapes of longing, fragility, and resilience.

Drawing from African proverbs, social histories, and spiritual inquiries, he engages with questions of identity, justice, and healing in a world shaped by violence, colonization, and climate collapse. Through installations, paintings, sculptures, and handmade prints, he reclaims discarded materials — worn- out knives, corrugated iron sheets, motorcycle chains — infusing them with renewed life and symbolic weight. Ngugi's practice critiques systems of power while honouring the transformative potential of community, spirituality and the human spirit.

Khalid Yuutdem

a mixed media artist working primarily within photography while also engaging in textile research and experimentation. My practice is inspired by the quiet poetry of the everyday, ordinary moments, overlooked textures, and the subtle narratives embedded in daily life.

Through photography, I document fleeting scenes and details that often go unnoticed, using the camera as a tool to slow down and observe. Alongside my photographic work, I explore textiles as a medium of inquiry and expression. I am interested in how fabrics carry memory, labour, and cultural histories, and I often incorporate textile research into my process to expand the dialogue between image, material, and context.

By moving between lens and fabric, I create work that reflects on the material and visual landscapes that shape our everyday experiences.

Lutivini Majanja

is a writer from Kenya. Her writing has appeared in Transition Magazine, The Republic, A Long House, and elsewhere.

Nyambura 'Mike' Mutanyi

is a Kinangop-based interdisciplinary artist, writer, editor, and scholar whose interests include literature, media, archives, and online spaces. They are especially keen on the intersection of gender and post-coloniality with these topics. Nyambura creates content online as 100onBooks and is a co-founder of CORPUS, the pioneer podcast focused on art from Eastern Africa. They also organise with Nairobi Bail Fund, which works towards freeing women in contact with the carceral system.

Emmaus Kimani

is interested in documenting, archiving and publishing the evolution of contemporary culture through the eyes of artists, seeing them as not just the more accurate keepers of our histories but seers of the future.

The founder of Culture Contemporary, custodian of the eaContemporary archive, Kimani researches and documents contemporary happenings in the arts as a main part of his practice. With a background in accounting, he has worked in the management and production of arts and culture since 2016.

Joyce Odondi (Joy Mala)

is a curator, art writer, and multidisciplinary creative with a growing practice at the intersection of storytelling, science, and exhibition-making. She curates exhibitions and writes critically about contemporary African art, intending to platform visual narratives and engage communities through accessible formats and immersive experiences. She examines culture, science and technologies often from a speculative lens. Her burgeoning curatorial practice took form in an inaugural exhibition titled InterDimensionals: Bodies as Homes(2025) at munyu, and continues to expand in a myriad of interdisciplinary experiments.

She is an advisory member at munyu and currently works at the arts and culture platform Contemporary And (C&) Magazine, in their Nairobi office.

Joyce is also a dynamic project manager, communications strategist, and knowledge management expert with over 8 years of experience managing multi-stakeholder initiatives in the creative, development, and media sectors. She possesses a proven ability to design and implement project workflows, lead cross-functional teams, and deliver impact-focused programs across East Africa. Adept at using technology and SOPs to drive efficiency and collaboration, she explores this especially within creative and remote teams.

Melanie Manosi

is an artist and curator whose work began as an exploration of different expressive processes from drawing and painting, particularly those stemming from writing, research, studies/ workshops and collaboration/ interactions with affiliate practitioners. She is currently a resident advisor at munyu.

Ndung'u Mbithi

is a multidisciplinary artist and musician based in Nairobi. His visual art practice focuses on weaving, installation, painting and embroidery. His weaving practice focuses on process rather than product, looking at weaving as a meditative practice. He studied music at Kenyatta University and later got into visual art, learning through workshops and apprenticeship.

Ndung'u held his first solo exhibition, Between the Bars at Munyu in May 2025, which was a personal exploration of alcoholism, mental health, suicide and recovery. He has also been a part of several group shows at Munyu including Endemic (April 2024), Orbiting (April 2025), and Echoes of Memory (November 2025) as well as Between Signals (December 2025) at Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI).

Alongside his studio practice, Ndung'u is deeply interested in the social and communal possibilities of making. He has facilitated a weaving workshop at the Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI), where he guided participants through textile-making as a means to help them slow down and be present. His work at Munyu has also allowed him to exist within an artist-led, community-oriented space, shaping how he thinks about collaboration, access, and the role of the artist beyond individual production.

As a musician, he records and releases music alongside performing as a DJ under the name chairkicker. He is the founder and curator of Meet Me, a community based collective keen on bringing artists closer to their audience. Meet Me focuses on live music events and runs a book club, film club and art club as an offering to those contemplating alternative ways to think about audiences and interactions with people in our communities.

Jepkorir Rose

is a curator based in Nairobi whose work aims to create opportunities/ spaces to encounter each other in areas of interest. She is interested in participatory design and space-making related to infrastructural forms enabling circulation of artistic practices. Her work unfolds through collaborations, processes of research and study, exhibition making, gathering, documentation and archiving.

Tizzita M. Tefera

is a Nairobi-based multidisciplinary artist, arts administrator and award winning social entrepreneur whose practice bridges institutional capacity-building with community-rooted creative programming. Drawing on 11+ years in the social impact sector and a self-taught visual arts practice, her work explores ritual, mythos, shame, and memory.

Tizzita serves as a resident advisory council member at Munyu, an independent arts space in Nairobi, where she leads external partnerships and fundraising. She is a Co-Project Manager, Fundraising & Partnership Lead for Munyu × The Great Repair; grounding a global travelling exhibition (Malmö, Paris, Berlin) in a Global South context for its 2026 edition in Nairobi.
Working across mixed media, fabric arts, printmaking, zinemaking, ritualistic performance, photography, poetry, film, olfactory art and sound art, Tizzita's practice is deeply rooted in African script, symbolism, archival imagery, and traditional fabric research gathered across Africa and Asia. Recent projects integrate AR and gamified digital experiences alongside material and olfactory work.

Tizzita holds an MSc in Social Entrepreneurship & Management (Roskilde University, Denmark), a BBA in Entrepreneurship (Kenya Methodist University), and a diploma in general studies such as ceramics, textiles, and creative processes (Rønde Højskole, Denmark). She has pursued intensive workshops in printmaking, etching, bookbinding, embroidery, sculpting, sound art, colonial photography & AI, paper-making, and games-based practice across Nairobi and internationally.

Her award winning social impact career spans co-founding Maisha ICT (a health tech social enterprise in Ethiopia), serving as Senior Communications Advisor to the Ethiopian Minister of Water & Energy, and board membership at the Social Enterprise World Forum where she represents Africa among various other milestones.

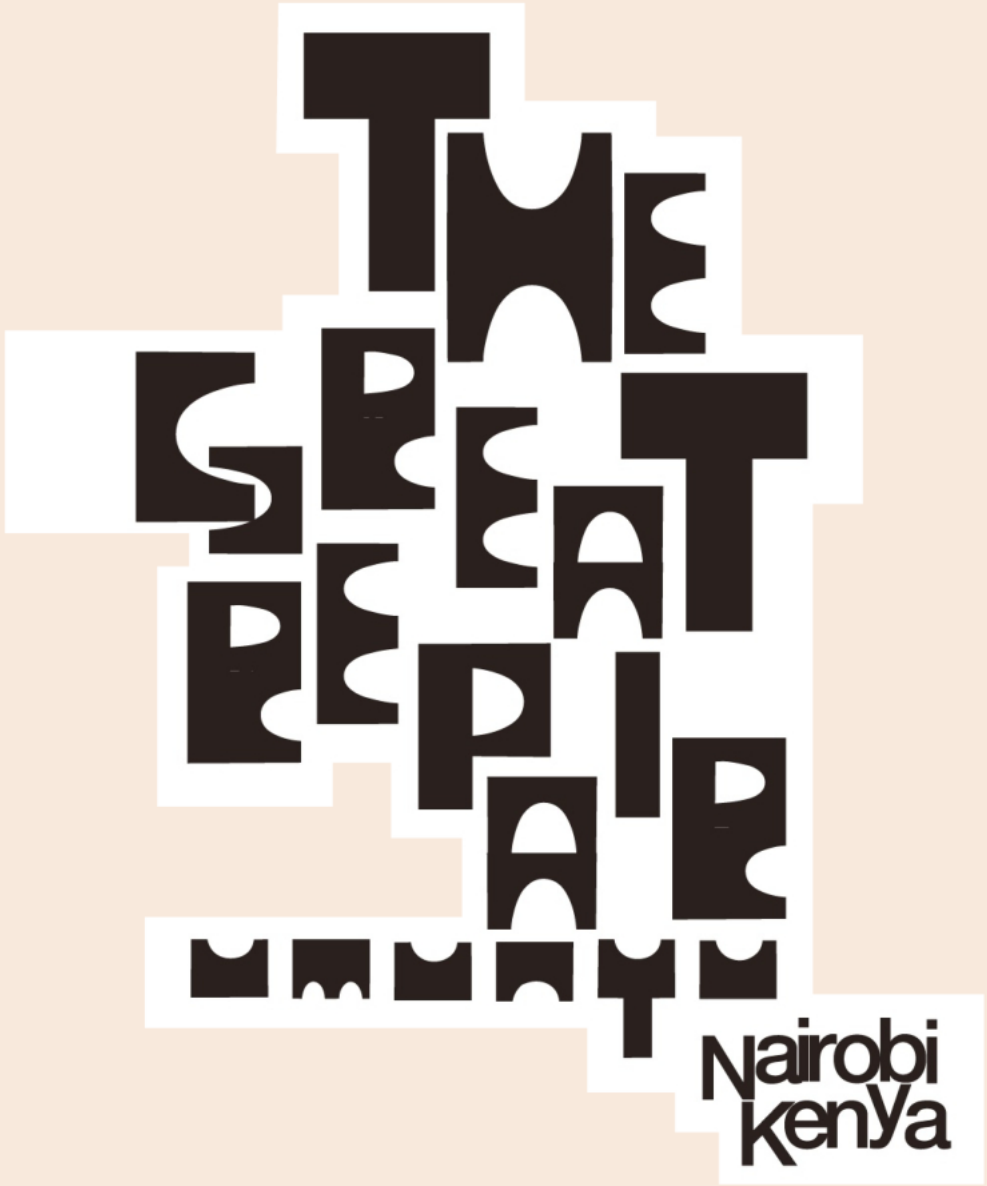
Faith Natocho

is a multidisciplinary visual artist. Her current body of work focuses on clay sculptures, often featuring figurative forms that examine how people present themselves to the world and their motivations. Through these works, she explores ideas of self-protection, belonging, vulnerability, identity, and the multiple realities that exist within every individual.
Natocho has participated in several exhibitions, including Recycle and Reprogramme; 7 Days of November (2021), an Open Studio presentation titled I Saw a Glimpse of Heaven (2022), and Fool Me Once, an exhibition at Munyu. Through her evolving practice, she continues to create works that invite reflection on the nature of being, the complexities of human interaction, and the possibility of seeing beyond.

Adam Yawe

is an object storyteller living and working in Nairobi, Kenya. His practice traverses 2D and 3D media, transitioning back and forth between the digital and the physical.

In his work he seeks out reference objects in the city, acknowledges the role they play in the present, connects them to the past and reimagines them for the future. His interest lies in telling stories, aiming to light a spark in the audience that changes their relationship with these objects and ultimately the city.



Curatorial, Public Programme, Management & Production: munyu
Team: Biki Kangwana, Emmaus Kimani, Melanie Manosi, Joy O. Mala, Ndung'u Mbithi, Faith Natocho, Jepkorir Rose, Tizzita Tefera, Adam Yawe.

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Publication Layout: Adam Yawe
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Curatorial Team ARCH+: Christian Hiller, Felix Hofmann, Markus Krieger, Alex Nehmer, Anh-Linh Ngo
Associate curators The Great Repair: Florian Hertweck, Marija Marić, Milica Topalović, Nazlı Tümerdem

Head of Programming Akademie der Künste: Johanna M. Keller
Production management ARCH+: Felix Hofmann
Project management ARCH+: Christian Hiller
Managing director ARCH+: Arno Löbbecke

<shoutouts and thanks>

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the participating artists. Their commitment, creativity, and willingness to engage in this collective endeavour are at the heart of the project.

Our special first thanks go to the Federal Foreign Office, which brought munyu and ARCH+ together and later made *The Great Repair: umunyu* possible through its generous financial support. It is due to the initiative of Stefan Rössel, that the project was re-situated in Kenya. While the advice of Guido Müntel helped the project to develop further.

The project would not have come into being without the support of the German Ambassador to Nairobi, Stefan Groth, who endorsed the initiative from the very beginning.

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As *The Great Repair: umunyu* is based on collaboration, we are grateful to all our partners for opening their spaces to us and supporting the project throughout its course: Christina Nord and the Goethe-Institut Nairobi, Wajukuu Arts Collective, Dr. Margareth Kedogo and the University of Nairobi, Omar Degan and the Panafrican Architecture Biennale as well as the Swiss Embassy and The Mall.

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Wajukuu ARTS

PAN AFRICAN BIENNALE

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

THE MALL

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the great pePair

