

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

INVESTIGATING CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART:  
THREE ARTISTS FROM DAK' ART 2012

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts in Art,

Art History

by

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December 2012

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the California State University, Northridge Art Department for making this thesis possible. I would especially like to thank Dr. Meiqin Wang, Dr. Owen Doonan, and Dr. Mario Ontiveros for their assistance and support.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my graduate advisor, Dr. Peri Klemm. Her knowledge, dedication, and encouragement guided me, not only throughout this process, but through my travels to Africa and back, and inspired me to turn a passion into a new career. Thank you Peri.

I am also grateful to my co-workers and colleagues who shared this experience with me. I would particularly like to extend my appreciation to Cindy Hansen for her cooperation and understanding. Her sense of humor made the journey even more enjoyable.

Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Donald Moss for his love, patience, and confidence. His unwavering support makes everything that I do possible and I dedicate this thesis to him.

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the work of Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Muteleksha, and Wanja Kimani at the 2012 Dakar Biennale. The Biennale itself, marketed as a pan-African event, evolved out of the cultural policies of President Léopold Senghor seeking to expose the world to authentic African art. Though initially aimed at creating cultural purity, his views differ only slightly from the Western construct of authenticity, which is still utilized today to determine inclusion or exclusion of contemporary African art in museum collections, galleries, and exhibitions. In addition, its logic is also utilized by non-Western critics, curators, and collectors seeking an authentic African aesthetic experience. However, this study will show that the notion of authenticity, ambiguous at best, is utilized by today's artists as a catalyst to move beyond its limitations. Creating work that is both local and global in scope, they work within a shared space that recognizes cultural diversities, differences, and histories, resulting in work that is extremely complex, rich, and meaningful.

## INTRODUCTION

This study examines the work of Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani at the 2012 Dakar Biennale. Focusing on the work of artists born on the African continent, the Dakar Biennale arose out of the political policies of Senegalese President Léopold Senghor and others wishing to establish an “authentic” African art. While seemingly restrictive, these artists move beyond this classification and utilize the platform of the Biennale as a springboard onto the international artistic arena. Transitioning between both local and global space, they produce work that is simultaneously simple and complex, emphasizing the fluidity of boundaries as well as the mixture of cultures, and creating a space for the viewer as a participant in and contributor to the art. This thesis will explore their work which includes multiple narratives, past histories, and the breakdown of cultural assumptions.

The notion of authenticity as it applies to contemporary African art includes criteria based upon the cultural, ethnic, and racial origins of the artist.<sup>1</sup> Art made by artists who were born in Africa but who live and work in the Diaspora is often seen as inauthentic by Western collectors, patrons, and museums, as well as some African artists and critics.<sup>2</sup> As is the case with “traditional” African art, or that which was created before the introduction of colonialism and first contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples on the African continent, these arguments influence the inclusion or exclusion of contemporary African art in museum collections, galleries, and that of private collectors.

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<sup>1</sup> Shannon Fitzgerald and Tumelo Mosaka, *A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad* (St. Louis: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2003), 2-6.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, “African Art and Authenticity: A Text with a Shadow,” *African Arts*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr., 1992): 40-53, 96-97.

But can contemporary African art be negotiated without reference to or outside of the boundaries of Western art discourse? How do collectors, curators, and critics negotiate between contemporary work created by academically trained artists, one of the underpinnings for inclusion in museum and private collections, and the untrained, “visionary outsider?” How is one’s Africanness revealed, debated, or manipulated in contemporary global culture?<sup>3</sup> Proponents may prove to have other agendas predicated upon dismantling colonialist narratives, assigning value to specific works, or the fact that many artists have been negotiating “two cultural territories from a very early age.”<sup>4</sup> As is the case with Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani, these artists challenge the very definitions not only of authenticity but of contemporary art itself, creating work that completely distances itself from the utopian ideals of modernism, post-colonial political and cultural policies into what Thomas Fillitz calls “contemporary” globalization.<sup>5</sup>

As opposed to current understandings of the world as a shared space in which technology allows for instant communication, high speed of travel, and the resulting cultural blending or homogenization, Fillitz describes “contemporary” globalization as the same shared space but one in which cultural diversity, multiple histories, and differences add to the richness of our interactions.<sup>6</sup> Underpinning this argument, Nicolas Bourriaud’s theory of relational aesthetics describes art as a dialogue between the artist and viewer. Consisting not only of shared experiences but also new relations, the work

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<sup>3</sup>Fitzgerald, *A Fiction of Authenticity*, 3.

<sup>4</sup>Mark Hudson, “Art That Gets to the Heart of Africa,” *The Telegraph*, January 22, 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3635402/Art-that-gets-to-the-heart-of-Africa.html> (accessed 4/7/2012).

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Fillitz, “Contemporary Art of Africa: Coevalness in the Global World,” in *The Global Art World*, ed. Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 126.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

acts as a mechanism allowing us to break free from the bonds of mass communication, into a shared local and global space.<sup>7</sup> Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani take this even further. Well versed in Western art historical discourse in which institutions dictated what qualifies as art, as well as past challenges to the sanctity of art by artists like Duchamp who placed artistic concept above artistic creation or craftsmanship, they simultaneously respect the space of the artwork and embrace the viewer as a vital component to its meaning.

Born in Morocco and living and working in Casablanca and Brussels, Younes Baba-Ali utilizes sound to create new relationships between the viewer and object. His installation, “Call for Prayer – Morse,” consists of a loud speaker broadcasting the Muslim call to prayer into Morse code, making it acultural.<sup>8</sup> Victor Mutelekesha was born in Zambia and lives and works in Oslo. His sculpture, “Rise to the Ashes,” questions the breakdown of environments and corresponding cultures, asking viewers to question their position as consumers and participants in our global world.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Wanja Kimani, born in Kenya, educated in England, and living and working in Ethiopia, creates artwork that questions our notions of memory. Her installation, “You Have Not Changed,” consists of the dress that she wore the last time she saw her estranged father. Embroidered within its lace skirt are phrases and thoughts that she exchanged with him during their last meeting. Her work questions the relationship that we have with time and recollection, which is often fallible and therefore unreliable, but which acts as a determinant of our perceptions of ourselves including identity and place.<sup>10</sup> While

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<sup>7</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (France : Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 22.

<sup>8</sup> Younes Baba-Ali, interview by author, May 14, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Victor Mutelekesha, interview by author, May 17, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Wanja Kimani, interview by author, May 14, 2012.



educated, working, and traveling outside of the African continent, these artists were nonetheless chosen as representatives of Morocco, Zambia, and Kenya respectively to participate in the Biennale.<sup>11</sup> It is my contention that these artists have creatively utilized the international platform of the Dakar Biennale to promote and display their art, expanding upon the current understanding of “contemporary” globalization as defined by Fillitz, and moving away from the framework of authenticity imposed by some organizers, curators, and critics.

However, while seemingly immaterial, the contentions surrounding authenticity still shape the discourse of exhibiting contemporary African art. As Wanja Kimani aptly stated, “We must still fit into boxes.”<sup>12</sup> Some of the issues surrounding authenticity can also be found in past exhibitions such as “Magiciens de la Terre” in 1989, “Africa Explores” in 1991, and more recently in curator Shannon Fitzgerald’s exhibition, “A Fiction of Authenticity: Contemporary Africa Abroad” at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis from September 20, 2003 to January 4, 2004, which examined several assumptions of authenticity and contemporary African art.<sup>13</sup> “The Global Africa Project,” curated by Lowery Stokes Sims and Leslie King-Hammond (2010) takes an interdisciplinary approach to design, craft, and art created on the African continent and beyond in an attempt to emphasize the widely held belief that boundaries are permeable in contemporary art.<sup>14</sup> As we will see, “The Global Africa Project,” while a move in a more desirable direction, had its limitations as it was held outside of Africa itself. Venues

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<sup>11</sup> Gérard Senac, ed., *Dak’Art 2012* (Dakar, Senegal : La Rochette, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Wanja Kimani, interview by author, May 14, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Fitzgerald, *A Fiction of Authenticity*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Lowery Stokes Sims and Leslie King-Hammond, *The Global Africa Project*, ed. Martha D’Alton (New York: Museum of Arts and Design; Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2010).

such as the Dakar Biennale present a more visible international platform for today's contemporary artists although it is marketed as a pan-African event.

In consideration, the history of the Biennale will be explored including its initial purpose as a means of showcasing Senegal's rich artistic landscape but more importantly, as a method of promoting Senegal's cultural policies. Though seeking cultural purity as opposed to the ideology used by art critics and others, Senegalese President Léopold Senghor's brand of authenticity employed many of the same prejudices as that of Western art critics seeking authentic African art free of Western influences. Utilizing Elizabeth Harney's work, "In Senghor's Shadow," I will demonstrate that while initially visualized as a means of disseminating Senghor's philosophical visions of negritude, Senegal's avant-garde artists such as Papa Ibra Tall and Iba N'Diaye, were pivotal in transforming these views, resulting in the evolution of the event into what we now know as the Dakar Biennale.<sup>15</sup> Their practice of questioning government patronage laid the groundwork for later artists such as Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani to exhibit work which questions not only the definition of African art but of contemporary art itself.

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<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004).

## CHAPTER 1

### Authenticity

Defining authentic contemporary art, whether it is African or otherwise, is itself fraught with problems. Generally, there is the sense that contemporary art marks the starting point of postmodern attempts at breaking down the grand narratives of modern art and its utopian ideals. This includes the distinction between the modern continuation of classical representations of art, i.e. easel painting and forms of sculpture, versus the hybridization and conceptual nature of contemporary art. But the cornerstone of this difference is the validity or “authenticity” of contemporary art in the first place.

As we will see, this dialogue extends to art institutions who themselves often dictate what the public sees as “authentic” art. The power of these organizations and their control over these definitions extends to curators, art historians, critics, and collectors who make decisions on our behalf. But more importantly these groups attempt to maintain command over the socio-cultural exclusions built into the way these objects have historically been mediated by art establishments and their participants.<sup>16</sup> These classifications are exclusionary and limiting, and they put us in danger of rejecting work that would otherwise be included.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, these definitions still influence the inclusion or exclusion of contemporary art in museum collections, galleries, and that of private collectors.

#### 1.1 What is Authentic African art?

There is a general assumption when looking at African art of the before and after scenario in which art made by and for indigenous use created before the contact and

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<sup>16</sup> Fitzgerald, *A Fiction of Authenticity*, 55.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

colonial eras is “authentic” and that made after, having been tainted by the advent of a cash economy and the desires of patrons, is “inauthentic.”<sup>18</sup> The inclusion or exclusion of African works in major art galleries and encyclopedic art museum collections is still determined by the object’s age and original use; precontact pieces made by and for a small-scale society, particularly those used in ritual contexts, are far more likely to be sought and exhibited.<sup>19</sup> This practice continued well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and the U.S. Curators from various museums sought ‘traditional’ cultural representations that were studied and described as static and unchanging in style, form, and meaning, ignoring the historical developments related to the introduction of Islam, bronze casting, and the arrival of the Portuguese, for example.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the mass gathering of “traditional” African art during the contact and colonial period by travelers and colonial government’s, ignored identifying the names of artists, adding to its mystique as an exceptional and ultimately unknowable object.<sup>21</sup> This anonymity allows the collector to adhere his/her own desires, beliefs, and understanding to the work, often playing into preconceived ideas rooted in popular Darwinism of the “exotic” and “other.”<sup>22</sup> While seemingly only applicable to “traditional” African art, these opinions still serve as the basis for what gets collected of postcolonial painting and sculpture.

When Duchamp produced the first ready-made, he could not have imagined the consequences. Initially an attempt at challenging the sacredness of the art object, his denunciation of the art establishment extended beyond to a “range of heterogeneous

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<sup>18</sup> Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, “African Art and Authenticity: A Text with a Shadow,” *African Arts*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Apr., 1992): 41.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

strategies and statements that have devoted themselves as expressions of artistic intentions outside the framework of objects and images.”<sup>23</sup> His artistic practice opened up the floodgates for questions about gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and most pertinently, race and identity. This has led to current debates surrounding identity formation and the absorption and homogenization of non-Western cultures, including those of contemporary African art.

Many contemporary African artists engage these issues by creating work that is both local and global, and encompasses multiple cultures. They attempt to obliterate the stereotypes that appeal to those wishing to canonize what they perceive as the exotic and shamanistic qualities of African art by exposing viewers to the complex experiences of colonization, decolonization, and globalization through their work. As they struggle to open the mindset of Western collectors and curators, they also motivate African art professionals to discard their own cloaks of authenticity.

Critics such as Dr. Odiboh Freeborn, at the University of Benin, argues that African art should reject “Western critical practice” including the “damage” to its development through the “formation of an international elite corps of African artists,” mainly referring to those educated in Western schools of art.<sup>24</sup> Though critical of Western definitions of authenticity, Freeborn utilizes its same biases to support his belief that African art should be “free of Western constraints” and be an “expression of the African peoples according to their historical, socio-cultural, political, and environmental

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<sup>23</sup> Fitzgerald, *A Fiction of Authenticity*, 55.

<sup>24</sup> Odiboh Freeborn, “The Crisis of Appropriating Identity For African Art and Artists: The Abayomi Barber School Responsorial Paradigm,” *GEFAME: Journal of African Studies* vol. 2, no. 1 (2005): 1, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-index?c=gefame;view=text;rgn=main;idno=4761563.0002.103> (accessed April 25, 2012).

experiences.”<sup>25</sup> Writing in 2005, his work echoes that of earlier scholars such as Susanne Wenger, Frank McEwen, and Pierre Romain-Desfossés who argued against the contamination to African artists through exposure Western art.<sup>26</sup>

Citing internationally established African artists such as Yinka Shonibare, Freeborn laments that some artists are unknown in the countries of their birth, yet are seen as “visual vocalization of African thought.”<sup>27</sup> He is also critical of the many artists living in the Diaspora who are therefore deeply cognizant of and educated in Western art paradigms, believing that this negatively influences their work.<sup>28</sup> Mimicking Senghor’s belief in artists as advocates for pan-Africanist pride, Freeborn maintains that artists have the responsibility of using African art as a medium for addressing social issues.<sup>29</sup>

While his views are not unique, his argument that African art should focus solely on the issues experienced by African peoples contains the glaring omissions of the effects and influences of colonization, decolonization, and the political legacies of past and continued interactions between Africa and the West. But he is not alone in his approach as revealed by past and recent exhibitions.

## 1.2 Early Exhibitions of African art

“Magiciens de la Terre” in 1989, was conceived in response to the process of biennials in which representatives of each participating country would select work that met their own cultural criteria.<sup>30</sup> Initially endeavors at creating meeting places for interaction of artists all over the world, biennials were nonetheless susceptible to the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, *Contemporary African Art*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Odiboh Freeborn.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Buchloch, “The Whole Earth Show,” *Art in America*, no. 5 (May 1989): 150.

same presumptions and classifications seen in Western art history. Attempting to displace this practice, curators such as Jean-Hubert Martin selected 100 artists from various countries in an effort to ensure that all cultures were equally represented.<sup>31</sup> However, the selection criteria focused on those working on the “margins” and “periphery” of the art world, the classification of which ultimately served to reinforce the practice it meant to displace.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the title of the exhibit itself positioned the artists as magicians or shamans, further neo-primitivizing their work.<sup>33</sup>

Along the same vein “Africa Explores,” in 1991, created new categories for African art such as: Traditional, New Functional, Urban, International, and Extinct.<sup>34</sup> But instead of providing a better means of understanding for audiences, it was criticized for creating categories and grand narratives based on modernist concepts that were simply not applicable to the work.<sup>35</sup> Criticized by Clémentine Deliss, these sub-divisions served to stifle artists and “entrench arguments about the pre-eminence of the self-taught over the academic artist.”<sup>36</sup>

Though these exhibitions should be noted as early attempts at presenting the contemporary art of Africa, their focus on work and/or artists that fit within Western art historical or critical paradigms is problematic.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the push towards depicting self-taught artists over the European or American trained pupils, or on artists living on

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Vogel, *Africa Explores: 20<sup>th</sup> Century African Art* (New York: Museum for African Art, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 233.

<sup>36</sup> Clémentine Deliss, ed. *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa* (Paris-New York: Flammarion, 1995), 16.

<sup>37</sup> Odiboh Freeborn.

the continent itself to the exclusion of those in the Diaspora, is inexplicably connected to a desire for a pure, authentic African artist and by extension, African aesthetic.

Favoring native over Diaspora artists in an attempt at presenting work made for and by a local tribe, uncontaminated by commodification and the Western idiom, fails to acknowledge not only the historical impact of Western economic and aesthetic influences on the continent, but also the fact that many artists have been negotiating “two cultural territories from a very early age.”<sup>38</sup> According to art critic Simon Njami, art created during post-colonialism was closely tied to emancipation but younger artists today have an entirely different approach. Rather than attesting to their Africanness, there’s an admission among the younger generation that each of them is comprised of many things.<sup>39</sup> In response, there have been attempts at addressing the impact of these histories in later exhibitions such as “The Global Africa Project.”

### 1.3 “The Global Africa Project”

“The Global Africa Project” held at the Museum of Design in New York from November 2010 through May 2011, took an interdisciplinary approach focusing on art, craft, and design created by artists from the African continent.<sup>40</sup> It also highlighted artists in the Diaspora in order to demonstrate the nomadic careers of artists of African descent and heritage.<sup>41</sup> It sought to blend the distinction between professional and artisan and to present “various intersections between traditional techniques and forms and

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<sup>38</sup> Mark Hudson, “Art That Gets to the Heart of Africa,” *The Telegraph*, January 22, 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3635402/Art-that-gets-to-the-heart-of-Africa.html> (accessed 4/7/2012).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Lowery Stokes Sims and Leslie King-Hammond, *The Global Africa Project*, edited by Martina D’Alton (New York: Museum of Arts and Design; Munich: Prestel Publishing, 2010), 6-13.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



contemporary designs.”<sup>42</sup> In addition, it did not seek to define an “overarching African identity or aesthetic.”<sup>43</sup> Instead, the exhibition sought to “reveal stories of individuals working in the psychic and physical space that is known as ‘Africa’ in the world today.”<sup>44</sup> Blending both academically trained and self-taught artists, the exhibition focused on the source of African identity in association to place rather than to cultural difference.<sup>45</sup>

Of particular note, the exhibition wanted to answer the question, “What is global Africa?” given the “nomadic, even migratory nature of artistic careers today.”<sup>46</sup> According to the curators, a global Africa can accommodate academically trained and self-taught artists, art and craft, traditional techniques and contemporary design, and challenges the usual distinctions between “professional” and “artisan” as in previous exhibitions.<sup>47</sup>

While a pointed attempt at addressing the issues raised by past exhibitions and recognizing the current artistic landscape, “The Global Africa Project” catered to Western audiences and may not have been a true representation of global Africa due to the fact that it was held outside of Africa itself. This exhibition went a long way towards addressing the criticisms of previous shows such as *Magiciens de la Terre* and *Africa Explores*, but failed to convey the atmosphere of international shows such as the *Dakar Biennale*, held on the African continent itself. But some countries lack the infrastructure necessary to host traveling exhibitions so large scale shows such as “The Global Africa

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Project” are essential. This assessment also lends itself to the call for the support of biennials over mega shows.<sup>48</sup> But are biennials truly the best platforms for large scale exhibitions? In theory, biennales held in locations such as Dakar should provide an area free from the pressures and Western defined categorizations found in European international events.<sup>49</sup> However, it must be noted that biennales are generally political events, vulnerable to the authority of the host government.<sup>50</sup>

While the structure of Dakar Biennale as a pan-African event can be interpreted as political rather than aesthetic due to its selection process, its frame of reference is the biennale system of the international art world.<sup>51</sup> The purpose of Dak’Art is to provide a platform for artists from Africa, as opposed to African artists, on the global stage. In addition, it does not in any way “regulate what is presented as artistic expression in the Biennale.”<sup>52</sup> Instead, it attempts to provide an area to convene the most current forms of artistic expression through a juried process.<sup>53</sup> Held since 1990, The Dakar Biennale is one of the only historical venues that has been held steadily on the African continent that provides an international platform for contemporary African artists.

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<sup>48</sup> Laurie Ann Farrell, “The Twenty-First Century and the Mega Shows: A Curators’ Roundtable,” moderated by Chika Okeke-Agulu, introduction by Salah M. Hassan, *Nka*, Spring/Summer 2008, 187.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor’s Shadow*, 236.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, interview by author, August 7, 2012.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 2

### The Dakar Biennale

Held since 1990, the Dakar Biennale was initially created as an event showcasing not only artists from the continent, but also a number from several European countries. However, this has shifted into what is known as a pan-African event, reminiscent of Senegal's initial early cultural policies. We will see that it has evolved over the past twenty years into an exhibition highlighting artists from Africa with truly international outlooks.

The Dakar Biennale was first conceived by President Abdou Diouf as part of his role as the benefactor of Letters and Arts in an effort to promote Senegal's cultural policies.<sup>54</sup> This initial exhibition, in 1990, included art work by Senegalese artists as well as music and dance. It also included artists from other countries. In 1992, the focus moved towards the visual arts and highlighted the role of Senegalese artists as participants on the international stage. It was here that the Biennale of Dakar, Dak'Art, was truly born. In an attempt at capitalizing on the international arena of biennales, it also included artists from eight European countries including North America, South America, Italy, and Germany.<sup>55</sup> However, this approach changed in 1996 when the format became fundamentally Afrocentric, showcasing only the art of Africa.<sup>56</sup> To this end, "participants had to be citizens of an African state in order to be considered for the official venue,"

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<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 221.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Fillitz, "Contemporary Art of Africa: Coevalness in the Global World," in *The Global Art World*, ed. Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), 126.

while international artists could participate under Dak'Art Off, a loose grouping of venues, artists, and interventions without any “qualitative selection criteria.”<sup>57</sup>

Inevitably, these first attempts were criticized for lack of adequate funding and structure, but more so due to the fact that they did not compare to past events led by Senegalese president, Léopold Senghor. Established by Senghor in 1966, the First World Festival of Black Arts provided the interpretive framework for Senegalese art, resulting in the aesthetic now known as the *École de Dakar*.<sup>58</sup> While President Diouf was seen as the successor to Senghor's policies and ideals, President Senghor left an indelible mark and long shadow on the cultural practices of Senegal both during and after his presidency.

## 2.1 Senghor's Legacy

Elected in 1960 as the first president of Senegal, Léopold Senghor's philosophical visions of negritude left a lasting impression on the cultural history of the country.<sup>59</sup> Influenced by fellow poet, politician, and friend, Aimé Césaire, Senghor's brand of negritude was impacted by a wide array of experiences.<sup>60</sup> In essence, Senghor sought to take back the “primitive,” differentiating the African essence as “emotive, expressive, and rhythmic” and a reflection of “biological factors.”<sup>61</sup> Seeking “authentic” African art, his contentions mirrored those of earlier scholars such as Suzanne Wenger who argued that African culture is intuitive versus intellectual, strengthening the classification of the untrained, visionary artist.<sup>62</sup> Critics such as Manthia Diawara weighed in calling him

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>62</sup> Kasfir, *Contemporary African Art*, 50.

racist for reinforcing colonial stereotypes as well as creating the outline for the Senegalese to self-primitivize the psychic aspects of Africanness.<sup>63</sup>

However, Senghor's vision of negritude was more complex. For, while his views were grounded in the "negritude of the sources," they were also balanced by a form that positioned itself as a mediator between African tenets and contemporaneous political struggles, and fostered the blending of European modernist vocabulary into artistic expressions.<sup>64</sup> As such, Senghor's vision of authentic African art was different from that of Western art critics and collectors as it was based not only on his philosophies of negritude, but also in his responsibility for building a new nation, with artists providing the visual vocabulary of a modern identity.<sup>65</sup> In addition, it was important for Senghor to secure foreign aid for the development of the new country. As such, Senghor was tasked with presenting a culture to powerful states whose support he needed that was modern, civilized, and focused on the future in the midst of criticism that his philosophy was a mask for "accommodationist policies."<sup>66</sup> While it is not the purpose of this study to debate the pros and cons of Senghor's approach it is important to note that his philosophy was a catalyst for later anti-negritude movements spearheaded by some of Senegal's most influential artists which had a lasting impact on the formation and evolution of Dak'Art today.

## 2.2 Senegal's Avant-Garde

In response to Senghor's philosophy, Papa Ibra Tall sought to create a new vocabulary through the language of pan-Africanism. Seeking pure visual forms, he

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<sup>63</sup> Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*, 41.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

worked to “undo” the learned habits of artists trained in European art schools.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to the authenticity construct encasing the international market for African arts, Tall’s definition of authenticity is centered on the need to reach back to past forms and traditions, as the foundation for new, authentic styles.<sup>68</sup> But opponents such as Iba N’Diaye argued that even this idea of an “authentic” African art is centered in the notion of a “pristine, closed, and ‘real’ African culture,” inextricable from the ideas of the primitive.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, N’Diaye believed in the importance of technical training and believed that authenticity “came from attention to skill and materials and sincerity in practice.”<sup>70</sup> Aimed at organizing these discussions, the Laboratoire Agit-Art in Dakar was founded and its main goal, as its name suggests, was to “agitate” and critique the institutionalization of negritude.<sup>71</sup> In 1974 artist Issa Samb took over the Laboratoire Agit-Art, advocating collaboration and artistic exchange.<sup>72</sup> Working against the “banal search for exoticism,” the Laboratoire participants paved the way for various new forms of artistic expression in Dakar’s artistic scene.<sup>73</sup> Utilizing Senghor’s philosophy as a springboard, Tall, N’Diaye, and Samb were instrumental in creating Senegal’s avant-garde by scrutinizing governmental policies and challenging the status quo. The spirit of the avant-garde continues to be influential in today’s artistic practice.

### 2.3 Evolution of Dak’ Art

Through the experiences of Senghor’s state sponsored patronage and the resulting movements against government control, artists have learned to adapt by taking advantage

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 148.

of the limited opportunities granted to them and by making their own.<sup>74</sup> As a result, their approach has changed from one of creating authentic African art to a “color-blind globalism” that focuses on interconnectedness and a shared space.<sup>75</sup> This has left a huge impact on Dak’Art itself. While still marketed as a pan-African event, it has matured into a venue for artists of African heritage, but with global viewpoints. As a platform for contemporary African art, it stresses that one of the keys to understanding the selected work is the move away from the ideals of modernism and postcolonial utopias towards the context of “contemporary globalization” that recognizes cultural diversity, shared global space, multiple histories, differences, and complexities.<sup>76</sup> As we will see, the work presented at the 2012 Dak’Art does not fit neatly within a single category as it encompasses multiple narratives, histories, and a blending of various cultures adding to its richness and meanings.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Fillitz, 123.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Artists of Dak' Art 2012

For the past twenty years, the Dakar Biennale has been advertised as a pan-African event showcasing African artists in the international format of a biennale.<sup>77</sup> While seemingly restrictive, the Biennale board of directors seeks to reject the homogenous nature of contemporary art exhibitions where one finds the same players who, though talented, dominate the contemporary art scene in these venues.<sup>78</sup> Instead, the Biennale does not invite artists but chooses them among the applications it receives.<sup>79</sup> This selection process enables the Dakar Biennale to stand on its own with a unique vision that does not focus on aesthetics specific to Africa, but on a balance of vernacular contemporary visual language.<sup>80</sup> The aesthetics that define the African visual language has unanimously centered on conceptual art. According to curators such as Christine no other art form, apart from conceptual art, “illustrates this in the most exemplary way.”<sup>81</sup> Though a Western art “creation,” conceptualism, or conceptual art, is grounded in the strategies of found objects, installation, performance, and use of text, long established in non-Western artistic practice.<sup>82</sup> To this end, the selection committee of the 2012 Dakar Biennale chose forty-two African artists living on the continent or in the Diaspora whose work contained strong conceptual components.<sup>83</sup> Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha,

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<sup>77</sup> Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, “The Artists and Dak’ Art: Competing or Consensual Agenda?” *International Association of Art Critics* <http://www.aica-int.org/spip.php?article1069> (accessed March 12, 2012).

<sup>78</sup> Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche, “Dak’ Art, An African Specificity,” in *Dak’ Art 2012*, ed. Gérard Senac (Dakar, Senegal: LaRochette, 2012), 18.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Christine Eyene, “On the Process,” in *Dak’ Art 2012*, ed. Gérard Senac (Dakar, Senegal: La Rochette, 2012), 14.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Nadira Laggoune-Aklouche, “Dak’ Art, An African Specificity.”



and Wanja Kimani are just three of the artists whose work adhere to this approach, and also exemplify the international focus of contemporary African artistic practice today.

### 3.1 Younes Baba-Ali

Younes Baba-Ali was born in Oujda, Morocco in 1986.<sup>84</sup> He graduated from the School of Decorative Arts, Strasbourg in 2008, and currently lives and works in Brussels and Casablanca.<sup>85</sup> Utilizing multiple mediums including sound, video, photography, and installation, he seeks to transform everyday objects from their original functions, changing our relationship to them.<sup>86</sup> Two installations, “Horn Orchestra” and “Call for Prayer – Morse,” selected for the 2012 biennale, exemplify this approach.

Installed in the courtyard of the IFAN Museum of African Arts in the center of Dakar, Senegal, “Horn Orchestra” appears at first glance to be a simple type of installation consisting of a small, square room with a single entrance. Once inside, I noticed a series of six small black “car horns,” suspended from the ground on stiff cables, connected to several boxes of electronic equipment. The wall text listed the artist, title, and dimensions but nothing more. My only experience with car horns consists of the small taps that I give on my own when driving or their sound in traffic in cities such as New York and Dakar. Never having seen one out of context, separated from a car, I wondered if there was something more. If this was a type of sculpture I was missing the message. Out of curiosity, I stepped closer. Suddenly, all six blasted so loudly that I became startled and could feel the physical force of the sound waves hitting me. Rather than my normal auditory experience, Younes Baba-Ali had transformed my usual

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<sup>84</sup> “Younes Baba-Ali: Biography,” Younes Baba-Ali website, accessed August 31, 2012, <http://www.younesbabaali.com/en/>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Gérard Senac, ed., “Younes Baba-Ali,” in *Dak’Art 2012* (Dakar, Senegal : La Rochette, 2012).

interaction into one that was tangible and somewhat physically disturbing. Even more striking was the power of the interaction, which literally forced me out of the room. However, “Call for Prayer – Morse,” was a different experience altogether.

A large majority of the population in Dakar are Muslim with mosques dotted throughout the city. Adhan, the Islamic call to prayer, is called out by the muezzin five times a day and can be heard over the hustle and traffic of the city broadcast via loudspeakers. “Call for Prayer – Morse,” alters this relationship significantly. Installed on the upper landing of the front of the IFAN is a loudspeaker much like the ones seen at the mosques. At the prescribed times corresponding to those of the city of Dakar, the call to prayer is broadcast in Morse code, its tapping sequences recognizable to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. While I am always struck by the beauty of the sound of the muezzin calling adhan, I cannot understand the recitation. However, by utilizing Morse, I felt a closer connection to the call even though I cannot decipher the code. Younes Baba-Ali stated that his goal was to decontextualize the message, making it universal rather than only recognizable by a particular group.<sup>87</sup> His use of Morse code standardizes the message, removing the barriers of language, religion, and culture, altering our relationship to this daily occurrence. The simplicity of his piece is brilliant and he was awarded the Léopold Sédar Senghor Great Prize, presented by the President of the Republic.<sup>88</sup> His work allows the viewer to move between cultures enabling him or her to become part of a shared space, as seen in the work of Victor Mutelekesha.

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<sup>87</sup> Younes Baba-Ali, interview by author, May 14, 2012.

<sup>88</sup> “Awards,” Dak’Art 2012 website, accessed August 31, 2012, <http://www.biennaledakar.org/2012/spip.php?article110>.

### 3.2 Victor Mutelekesha

Victor Mutelekesha was born in Zambia in 1976 where he received his first formal art training.<sup>89</sup> He graduated in 2005 and 2007 respectively, with a BA and MA in Fine Arts from the National Arts Academy Oslo, where he now lives and works.<sup>90</sup> His work includes the use of photography, video, installation, sculpture, and performance, and his work is housed in multiple collections around the world.<sup>91</sup> Working very much within the realm of relational aesthetics, he utilizes art to alter our understanding of the relationships we have with technology which he believes we often use to our disadvantage.<sup>92</sup> In keeping with Bourriaud's opinion that computer science, video technology, and atomic energy "represent threats and tools of subjugation as much as improvements to daily life," Victor seeks to raise our consciousness by helping the viewer make alternate connections which heightens awareness, usually through the use of the universal language of statistics and population data.<sup>93</sup>

"Rise to the Ashes" is a wood sculpture in the form of a topographic map of the world. Built layer upon layer, it represents the average concentration of GDP by country, including the location of large, open pit mines.<sup>94</sup> While countries of the world are easily identifiable on the "map," the inclusion of the mines completely alters the landscape, opening our eyes to the impact that we as a population, and our use of technology, has on our planet.

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<sup>89</sup> "Victor Mutelekesha: CV," Victor Mutelekesha website, accessed August 31, 2012, <http://mutelekesha.blogspot.com/#!/p/cv.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Victor Mutelekesha, interview by author, June 21, 2012.

<sup>93</sup> Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 65.

<sup>94</sup> Gérard Senac, ed., "Victor Mutelekesha," in *Dak'Art 2012*, (Dakar, Senegal: La Rochette, 2012).

Of particular note is the fact that the Fondazione de Venezia, in Italy, refused to lend the sculpture to the organizers of the Dakar Biennale. As a result, Victor created a video projection filmed from above, which he then projected onto the floor in the gallery space of the IFAN.<sup>95</sup> While many may believe that this would hinder the impact of the piece, the opposite is true. Standing “above” the projection rather than at eye level, altered my perspective of the piece, to the point that I felt that I could look down into the bottomless depths of the pit mines. In this instance, the image was reminiscent of sand and I could imagine the sides of the pits caving into themselves with the slightest tremor, making the situation and impact on the inhabitants and environment even more precarious. The feelings of fragility reverberate in the work of Wanja Kimani.

### 3.3 Wanja Kimani

Born in Kenya in 1986, Wanja Kimani is a photographer, film maker, and performance artist based in Ethiopia.<sup>96</sup> She received a BA in Fine Art from the University of the Creative Arts, Canterbury, UK in 2008, and a MA in Theory and Practice of Human Rights from the University of Essex, UK in 2010.<sup>97</sup> Her work focuses on the perception of memory, home, and identity.<sup>98</sup>

“You Have Not Changed” is an installation piece consisting of the dress that she wore the last time she visited her estranged father when she was eight years old. Embroidered within its lace skirt are phrases and words that they exchanged as she remembers them. As an object of memory, the dress questions the power of recollection that informs our perceptions and identity. Based upon her seemingly stationary view of

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<sup>95</sup> Victor Mutelekesha, interview by author, May 17, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> “Wanja Kimani: CV,” Creative Africa Network website, accessed August 31, 2012, <http://www.creativeafricanetwork.com/attachment/31103>.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

this last exchange, the object reminds us that memory is imperfect, allowing us to “remember” events in positive or negative ways. As a cure for disappointments, the fallibility of memory coupled with the passage of time, allows us to alter our perceptions of the event and the resulting construction of identity.

Unfortunately, the piece disappeared from the IFAN on May 13, 2012. In response, Wanja staged an “intervention” asking anyone to bring both, “loved or unloved clothes” to a performance entitled, “You Have Changed” on May 15, 2012.<sup>99</sup> She also penned a message to the “person who has my dress” asking it to be returned with no questions asked, or for them to leave a photo of the girl that is now wearing the dress, inviting her to keep it.<sup>100</sup> Participants hung t-shirts on a line along with a pair of sunglasses, shorts, several scarves, and even a single sock with tags indicating the previous owner. Directly impacting our memories of her work and her loss as well as our connections to favorite, pleasing, comforting, or even disliked objects, Wanja’s intervention opened the door for us to completely change our relationships to these objects, and to question the ephemeral nature of memory and validity of our perceptions.

While all three artists take different approaches, their work is highly conceptual and indicative of not only the thrust of the 2012 Dakar Biennale, but also steeped in the language of relational aesthetics, one of the underlying themes evident in contemporary art today. Local and global in nature, composed of multimedia, and created by artists who live, work, and are exposed to many cultures, their main focus is not on a single message, but upon the experience of the encounter itself.

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<sup>99</sup> Wanja Kimani, interview by author, May 14, 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### One World or Shared Space?

The concept of globalization suggests one world in which the advances of technology allow for instant communication, speed of travel, and rapid human connectivity, fostering the integration of ideas and viewpoints as people and cultures mix. But in reality, the expected homogenization of beliefs, thoughts, and blurring of international boundaries has not occurred. Instead, the advances of technology and dissemination of “rational” thought resulted in a world that is more fragmented than ever with financial disasters and human atrocities more prevalent than before.<sup>101</sup> In essence, the experiment of modernity with its promises of progress, emancipation, and utopian ideals has not returned the expected results. But the project of modernity with its goals of changing culture, improving social conditions, and spreading reason is not dead, just its idealistic version.<sup>102</sup> Case in point, today’s artists. Using as examples the work exhibited at the 2012 Dakar Biennale, it is evident that instead of trying to move forward with modernity’s imaginary one world, they are focused on “learning to inhabit the world in a better way,” their art modeling possible universes and multiple realities.<sup>103</sup>

#### 4.1 “Art is an Encounter”

*Nicolas Bourriaud*

Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani focus on the possibilities of human interactions rather than the private, symbolic space of art as we have known it.<sup>104</sup> Evolving from the birth of urban culture and the growth of the city model, new groups have arisen which sever themselves from “colonialist memories and

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<sup>101</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 12.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

nationalist fictions,” and the ideals of the “indigenous” and “authentic,” to a shared space in which national identity is made up of multiple cultures, viewpoints, and policies.<sup>105</sup> Its emergent art forms are representative of this space, rejecting a “homogenizing identity,” creating areas of exchange.<sup>106</sup> Manifesting as formations rather than forms, contemporary artistic practices invite the viewer to participate in a dialogue, with each piece a “proposal” to live in a shared space, creating conditions for interaction.<sup>107</sup> Performance, installations, and multimedia presentations, all require contact with the viewer in which the artist informs the piece and the viewer defines it, the resulting interactions altering the “piece” with each successive interface.<sup>108</sup>

The collaboration between the artist and viewer brings to mind the work of artists such as Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Inviting viewers to partake of pieces of his work such as piles of candy representing a friend who died of AIDS, participants become authors, owners, and creators of the work, adding and taking away meaning based upon their past experiences and knowledge.<sup>109</sup> For some, the candy is simply a sweet. For others, the diminishing pile represents the disappearance of a person. Their actions shape the work physically through its disappearance but also metaphorically, as meaning is infused and exchanged within and around the work. Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani, acutely aware of the work and discourse created by artists such as Gonzalez-Torres, embody this spirit of contemporary art today, creating work that is

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<sup>105</sup> James Holston and Arjun Appadurai, “Cities and Citizenship,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (1996): 189.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>107</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 23.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>109</sup> Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003), 50.

conceptual and ephemeral in nature, that has an interrupted physical existence, and that will and is expected to change through the actions of its viewers.

#### 4.2 Artist's Viewpoints

Younes Baba-Ali stated that his goal for “Call for Prayer – Morse,” is to transform our relationship to the traditional adhan.<sup>110</sup> By amplifying it in Morse code, he decontextualizes it making the message “universal.”<sup>111</sup> But he is also inviting the listener to add his/her own interpretation, bringing with him/her preconceived opinions and beliefs, for how a non-Muslim understands the call is much different than an adherent to the faith. Instead of removing the cultural connotations as one might expect, he invites listeners to participate in several ways, culturally and socially, opening up dialogues through their interactions, enhancing meaning and understanding. In addition, his work changes based upon its physical location as the timing of the adhan is based upon the city in which it is placed, each locale contributing its own unique culture and physical variables, changing meaning with each successive interaction. His goal of fostering new relationships and creating spaces within which to promote new dialogues is echoed in the work of Victor Mutelekesha.

Victor Mutelekesha does not believe in art for art's sake.<sup>112</sup> He believes there is hybridity in all things and that which informs or inspires a work of art transcends one's own culture.<sup>113</sup> He constantly interacts with his environment wherever he is in the world and lives in “real time” as he describes contemporary reality, providing for “multiple

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<sup>110</sup> Younes Baba-Ali, interview by author, May 14, 2012.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Victor Mutelekesha, interview by author, June 21, 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.



points of departure” with his work.<sup>114</sup> “Rise to the Ashes,” with its gaping chasms, is a potent reminder of our collective impact on the environment. As echoed by Nicolas Bourriaud, he cites the splitting of the atom as one of humankind’s greatest accomplishments, but laments the fact that we used it to build the atomic bomb and is preoccupied by the notion that “as human beings, we seem not to live up to the standards of civilization we claim to have attained.”<sup>115</sup> In response, Victor uses art as a vehicle that opens up spaces to “inspire greater consciousness” about the world, people, and issues around us, in an effort to “transform the human condition.”<sup>116</sup> His work, “Rise to the Ashes,” beautifully conveys this goal, opening up a dialogue questioning the complicity of our actions and impact on the world’s environments.

On a more personal note, Wanja Kimani uses performance and the objects she creates as “sites of exploration,” with Kimani at the centre, as a means of identifying her place within the world around her.<sup>117</sup> Born in Kenya, educated in England, and living in Ethiopia, she is a “product of these cultures fused together.”<sup>118</sup> Accordingly, her work is intimate, inviting the viewer into a private space which speaks of her own experiences and to those of others.<sup>119</sup>

I first met Wanja on May 14, 2012 one day after her installation was stolen from the IFAN. Her shock was evident as the disappearance of her work was something that she had not expected. Her brilliant response, “You Have Changed,” created a place for exchange where participants became authors, owners, and creators of the new

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Wanja Kimani, interview by author, June 22, 2012.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

installation. Acting as a place of reflection, the interaction emphasized our collective human need to move on, each participant bringing with them past experiences of loss, suffering, and healing. The intervention altered her memory of the event itself and soothed the pain of her loss.

“You Have Not Changed” transcends boundaries to an experience common across cultures. Questioning the validity of memory in identity formation, her work reminds us that recollections are ephemeral, taking on false readings and interpretations over time. In addition, the fact that her work “changed” due to the disappearance of the piece itself cements this notion even further.

## CONCLUSION

While some of the assertions surrounding authenticity are still being used as a means of including or excluding art in collections, galleries, museums, and exhibitions, it is no longer a framework that shapes contemporary African art. As we have seen, today's artists accept these labels as a technical classification "meant to make identifying easy," but only to a certain extent.<sup>120</sup> For identifying where these artists are "from" is not easy, as many are based in countries and continents they were not born in.<sup>121</sup> Influenced by the legacy of Léopold Senghor, The Dakar Biennale rejects stereotyped presentations of African art and seeks to present work that is original and innovative, and that reflects the diversity of the continent.

Following this line of thought, biennales can be considered spaces "which allow for greater reciprocity between different art worlds," adopting "particular forms of classification for diverse, globally produced contemporary art."<sup>122</sup> Consequently the Dakar Biennale, while initially staged as a platform for the exhibition of Senegal's nationalistic aesthetic practices and currently pan-African in its focus, provides a cultural intersection for contemporary artistic production.<sup>123</sup>

Consequently, artists such as Younes Baba-Ali, Victor Mutelekesha, and Wanja Kimani, take advantage of the platform offered by the Dakar Biennale to exhibit work that is not only local and global in nature, but highlights the interrelatedness and connections that we have to each other. Utilizing the aesthetic space from which to speak, they open up dialogues and create places of interaction that recognize our cultural, social,

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<sup>120</sup> Victor Mutelekesha, interview by author, July 4, 2012.

<sup>121</sup> Wanja Kimani, interview by author, June 22, 2012.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas Fillitz, 124.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

political, and economic differences, blending them into new conversations containing multiple perspectives with numerous histories. The dislocation inherent in this perspective is welcomed by these artists, whose aim is to reject the idea of a unifying history, and instead to concentrate on specific historical narratives, resulting in a multiplicity of trajectories.<sup>124</sup> Our past experiences add to the richness and complexity of the interaction, making the encounter all the more meaningful.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 129.

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## Appendix



Figure 1, Horn Orchestra, 2009, Younes Baba-Ali, variable dimensions. Photo: Juliet Moss, 2012



Figure 2, Call to Prayer - Morse, 2011, Younes Baba-Ali, variable dimensions.  
Photo: Juliet Moss, 2012





Figure 3, Rise to the Ashes, 2009, ©Victor Mutelekesha, wood 60x145x120cm



Figure 4, Rise to the Ashes, 2009, Victor Mutelekesha, projection 180x125cm.  
Photo: Juliet Moss, 2012



Figure 5, You Have Not Changed, 2011, ©Wanja Kimani, 80cmx65xmx20cm

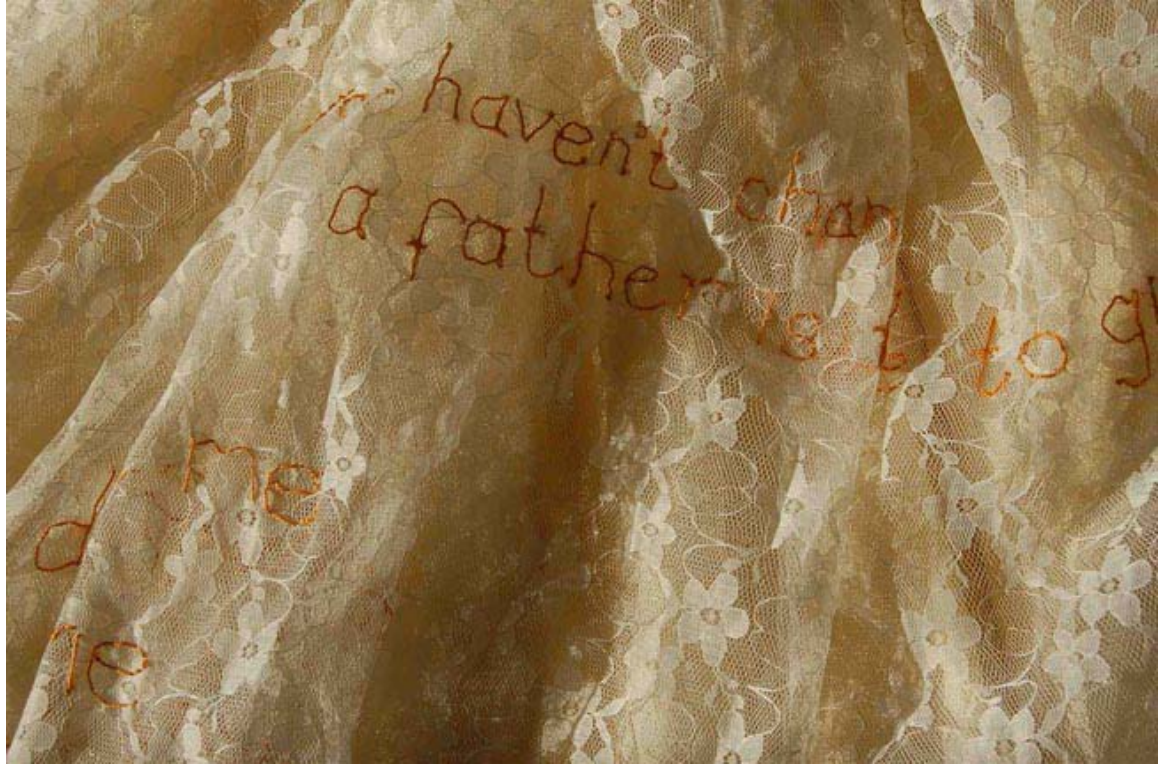


Figure 6, You Have Not Changed (detail), 2011, ©Wanja Kimani, embroidery  
80cmx65xmx20cm



Figure 7, You Have Changed, 2012, Wanja Kimani, variable dimensions. Photo: Juliet Moss, 2012



Figure 8, You Have Changed (detail), 2012, Wanja Kimani, variable dimensions.  
Photo: Juliet Moss, 2012