

Alternative kinds of [effective] artistic education in Kenya: *Kasi ya Paa*

Raw Material, Dakar, Condition Report 2 - 26-28 June 2014

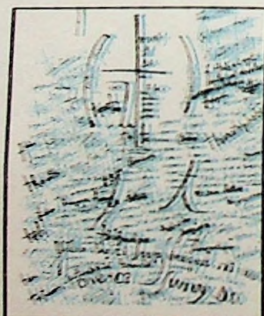


Nairobi 2006
adze & 3
paa/gazelle



13.12.13 Kuona Trust Centre for Visual Artist's Jubilee Day:
wa Kinyoti reading his memoir *Art 50*; T Ogonga, L
Kateete; above left S Gachie, M Otieno – "Fun Facts"
cf. CCAEA/*Amnesia*, Paa Ya Paa Photo: A Wachira, KT

Prologue: Triangle Arts Trust" TAT/Triangle Network in Africa



Issa Samb's drawing, INIVA,
London, June 2014 'Triangle'

MAP 2014 _ Triangle Network
Green – present partner
Blue – past partner
Now 12 countries in Africa;

4000 artists have participated
in 100 workshops world-wide
[Loder, 2005]



Phases:

- 1982 International Artists' Workshops <learning by exchange>
north America; 1985 RSA; co-founders R Loder & A Caro
Zenith mid-2000's; N = 19 in Africa; conditions have changed
- Art Centres RSA, Botswana, Kenya, eg. 1995 Kuona Trust, Nbi
- 2009 shift 'Network'; grant, specific training 'Knowledge &
Skill Sharing' (+ internet; - funding)

KENYA

- longevity of culture, immense cultural diversity; horizontal; politically driven tribalism
- medium development mixed economy, regional hub, good infrastructure
- underdevelopment of visual art in formal education – “rootless” modernization
- 21st c increased cultural consciousness^{**}; curriculum reform underway – reinsert ART;
- National Museum reinvented >> national narrative & contemporary art



• Population: 41.2M
 • GDP (PPP) per capita: \$1,100
 • HDI: 0.541
 • Life expectancy: 67.1 years
 • Literacy rate: 76.5%
 • Youth population: 36%
 • Children population: 42%
 • Official languages: English, Swahili
 • Religion: 85% Christianity, 10% Islam, 5% Other

*New Constitution 2010

Article 11

- YOUTH 36% & Children 42% = 78%
- Increased insecurity



Ambiance conveyed in the novel *DUST* by Y Owaror:

“Kenya’s official languages: English, Swahili and Silence. But there was also memory.”

“What endures? Starting again.”



The Silent Room: Portable, public installation on the Kenyan identity; Kenya Cultural Centre; St. Verhoest; B. W. Kamukoko 1990; 2012/13



50th Anniversary Monument,
 2013: Gerard Mburu HSC
Hero's Mower: Focussed, heavy and swift; secured on infrastructure:
 Heroes Corner, Uhuru Gardens,
 National Museums Kenya; 1994 – KU





• **KASI YA PAA** "to tighten the rope... to raise the roof ... to intensify" to sharpen art ... ref Paa ya Paa Gallery Art Centre (1965) to raise modern art above tourist art/paa = gazelle; >> research on effective art education: Akamba apprenticeship and Kuona's broad provision

ART inclusive, all kinds of practices; flag relational dynamic within an art world and between them; art that makes things happen

ALTERNATIVE - main providers, less a kind of resistance

KINDS - Art NGOs, NGOs instrumental use of art, 'cells' - Nest, Pawa254, iHub Nairobi, Creative Garage, commercial schools, peer teaching; external (Dak'art 5:5)

EDUCATION in art, also **THROUGH ART** (H Read) Kenya '8'-4-4

With EFFECTIVE ART EDUCATION, the learner

- develops **SKILLS**, knowledge of materials & tools = 'good' work;
- creates work that expresses an idea, **SYMBOL**, feeling;
- knows **SOURCES**: material culture, art history, "use that heritage to create something new that is adapted to h/h own needs" (Sembene, 05);
- has professional **SUPPORT**.
- highly creative artists (H Gardner: *Creating Minds*, 2011; Godown).




KEY POINTS ON KAMBA WOOD SCULPTURE MOVEMENT

- **OLD** Started during WW 1, Kamba carrier corps Mutisya Munge was exposed to commodity art in Tanganyika; also in Akamba tradition of carved objects.
- **LARGE** c 80,000 carvers - *fundi*
- The carvers have developed their own representative imagery *mavisa*, associated with their lives, local cultures and nationhood. Their work is accessible and appreciated by Kenyans and recognized internationally.
- The Akamba movement's socio-economic system is characterised by camaraderie (men's society, KiKamba), discipline, productivity, flexibility; gender specificity.
- **Now** in decline, with shortage of wood, 75% decline in sales; very few apprentices. (Choge & Cunningham: 2005).

Top: Musau Munge (1926-2013) son of pioneer with *Ndula* dancer c.1935; trader, carver, standardized apprenticeship system;
Giraffes: rosewood J Munyao, 2006; Ocean Sole I Mbathia, 2011

KAMBA APPRENTICESHIP & PROCEDURE FOR CARVING



STAGES in carving production technique & tool in

>kiKamba; mastery of repertoire

Research & kiKamba advisor: M Mutisya

1-3 >Kwatua preparing wood:

selecting, cutting >ithaka axe

>musumeno saw

measuring >kithimo kya metho: eyes & hands

4-5 >Kuvaka roughing out object:

>ngomo nene: big adze, roughing out form

6-9 defining the object: >kumba create

>kuvuthuanga carve, >ngomo nini, >ngomo ntheke

small & skinny adzes, >tuva file

>kavyu knife; >kwasuvya smooth

10-12 finishing the object:

can be carried out by non-carvers, women

>musasa sanding,

>kuvaka mauta polishing,

>kukuna langi colouring,

KUONA Technical Workshop 6-10 Nov 2006 WOODCARVING 2nd Workshop,

Led by ANTHONY WANIAU - taught by his father Samwel; demonstration; no theme.

STAGES used by AW: (1) rough out with adze (2) "balance, shape" with chisel

(3) "shade", define with chisel (4) finish with knife, rasp, sand paper

(5) wax/oil Woman artist: Esther Mukuhi at Godown



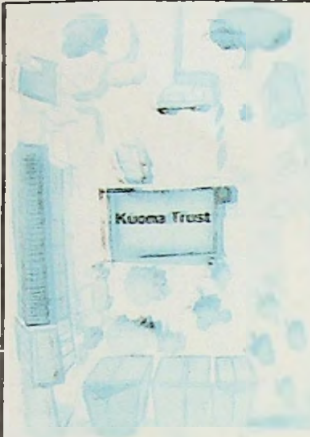
Saturday lessons 2014

SCULPTING WORKSHOP Beginner's Class

30th April - 3rd May 2014
10am - 3pm, at Kuona Trust
Medium: Wood
Ksh. 1000 per day
(includes knife & materials)

KUONA TRUST

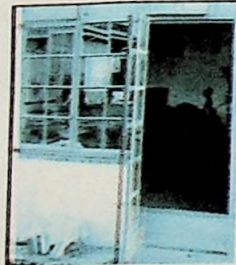
Kuona Trust, Street Level, Old Dents, P.O. Box 100, Nairobi
KSH 011 2522 835 or info@kuonatrust.org

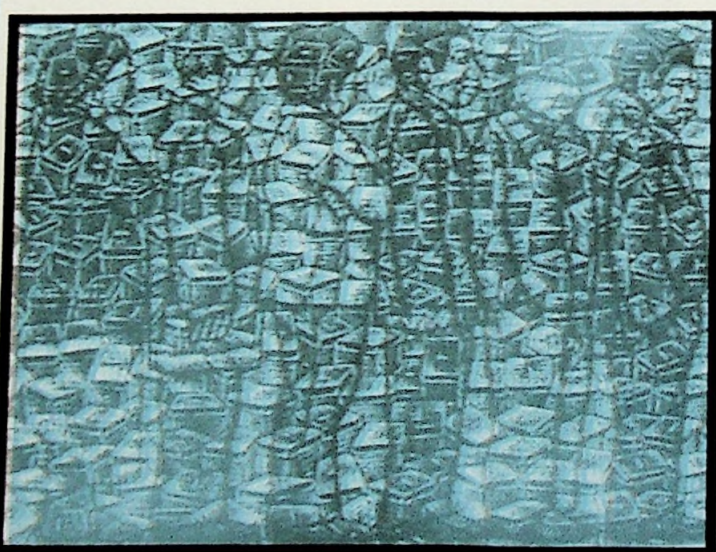


KUONA TRUST ARTS CENTRE
Kuona to see, perceptive, knowing through the senses.

- Founder: Rob Burnet w Triangle mentoring – premises of the National Museum Studios until 2004, oversubscribed;
- 2004-08 at Godown Arts Centre, Danda Janolmjek, director 1997-2011 – 10 International workshops
- 2008 - own premises main building w offices, library, gallery & 27 studios; umbrella for 1200 artists; curatorial alternatives 2009 Triangle Africa Conference & Exh *Beyond Borders*
- 2012 Sylvia Gachie, director, stable, best Kenya@50 events







PETERSON KAMWATHI'S STUDIO 2006 (Kuona at Godown) shared with sculptor G Kaigwa MA; upper left stone cow from a Wanjau workshop. PK developed his 2-D skill at Kuona technical workshops 1990's, supplemented by overseas residencies, several in printing. *Voters' Queue* - K's Constitutional Referendum 2010. In 2014, he started a diploma in A & D at KU.

Development of an alternative pedagogy based on material culture – objects – by S Somjee at Ins Af Studies, U Nbi, KIE (now KICD) and National Museum Ethnography.

Categories allow comparisons between groups and over time;

by purpose:

- Containers
- Tools
- Weapons
- Body covers
- Ornaments
- Furniture
- (• Dwellings)

Documentation procedure used widely. 1994 – conflicts pastoralist communities – SS devised a 'relational' Material Culture Project which led to the Community Peace Museums (1998, 2002, CPMHF).

Objects "base line", practices, interethnic events; art expressions

Masaai – *ornuatot*
 • Woman's ear flap
 • Watch
 • Woven cotton



"New Awake" Journeys of Peace project, a touring exhibition and programme to share local peace practices and objects, 2013-14: 8 venues, 4000 visitors, sponsored by Material Culture without Borders NGO. Community Peace Museums Heritage Foundation (15 museums). Timothy Gakanga, chair CPMHF, Kyanzazu, Ukambani. Peace Clubs - schools. Photo: M Mutisya.

**THESE ART EDUCATION SYSTEMS – IN THEIR OWN WAYS – ARE EFFECTIVE,
BECAUSE they:**

- +Recruit appropriately (re learner's potential for art-making)
- +Focus on learning-by-doing, usually project-based
- +Provide sufficient training to master patterns of learning
- +Attend to culture/art history and understanding the art world

- +Have good professional models, mentors
- + "Learn by exchange" with other artists
- +Develop capacity for modification, new ideas, new designs

- +Engage the learner-artist in a ongoing social group like "Economy of Affection" (Hyden), but with focus on "what you know", strong sense of community
- +Celebrate achievements+

- do NOT practice a makeshift, informal or casual *jua kali* aesthetic (re: academic tendency to group together kinds of 'popular' art)



Thank you — Merci beaucoup — Asanteni sana

Djibril Sy, montage re his Delphina Residency, London. 1997; '95 YSP photo essay on-line;
Patrick Mukabi, repurposed metal roof, *Siasi Mbaya* - politics bad 2008 [studio at the Godown]