

ZALIWA

By Valerie Asiimwe Amani

Zaliwa is a costume that was birthed with water and a poem. She symbolises the harmonious contradictions of nature, specifically inspired by the whale shark found on the coast of Mafia Island. As a shark with no teeth, they exist between definitions, an anomaly of both shark and whale. Zaliwa calls us to reflect on our communal relationship to the natural environment and the sense of ecological grief we are experiencing parallel to nature (although a part of it). Often we reject things that exist outside our scope or reason and understanding, the alien, the other.

Zaliwa is a manifested, re-textualization and recontextualization of our differences, and the possibilities of existing within the in-between.

biography

Valerie Asiimwe Amani is a Tanzanian visual artist and writer.

Her practice interrogates the ways in which body erotics, language, place and perceived reality are used to situate (or isolate) the self within community. She has exhibited internationally including group shows in Lagos, Paris, Cape Town and Leipzig with recent shows being a solo performance at South London Gallery in collaboration with the Roberts Institute of Art as well as a solo exhibition at Alliance Française, Dar es Salaam.

Amani holds a MFA from The Ruskin School of Art where she is currently reading for a PhD in Practice with a Clarendon Scholarship. She is the 2023 Honoree for the Foundwork Art Prize, a winner for the 2022 Ingram Art Prize and is the recipient of the 2021 Ashmolean Museum Vivien Leigh Prize for a work on paper. She has been featured in Art Monthly, Hyperallergic and BBC amongst others. Amani has given various talks on Art and Activism including SOAS, University of London with The Royal African society. She is also an art writer focusing on emerging African artists, on Emergent Art Space.

SANDS OF TIME

By ALA PRAXIS

Sands Of Time is a dystopian vision of the consequences of constant sand mining through the POV of an Astronaut who is visiting his home in a bid to turn back time. It forms part of The Sands Of Time Project, a multi-sensory installation combining research, visuals and an expansive audio archive reflecting thoughts on the commodification of sand and reimagining of new futures

biography

Ala Praxis is a research driven art collective engaging with cultural preservation, technology, ecology and everything in between. At the center of their work is the transformation of ideas into practical practices by developing projects that are rooted in the principles of environmental sustainability and earth centered technology.

RELIC 2

By LARRY ACHIAMPONG

The third film in what is currently a quadrilogy, 'Relic 2' forms part of Relic Traveller: Phase 2, a multi-disciplinary project by Larry Achiampong, which manifests in performance, audio, moving image and prose. Relic Traveller takes place across various landscapes and locations; the project builds upon a postcolonial perspective informed by technology, agency and the body, and narratives of migration.

biography

Larry Achiampong's solo and collaborative projects employ imagery, aural and visual archives, live performance and sound to explore ideas surrounding class, cross-cultural and post-digital identity.

With works that examine his communal and personal heritage – in particular, the intersection between pop culture and the postcolonial position, Achiampong crate-digs the vaults of history. These investigations examine constructions of 'the self' by splicing the audible and visual materials of personal and interpersonal archives, offering multiple perspectives that reveal entrenched socio-political contradictions in contemporary society.

His 'Relic Traveller' is a multi-disciplinary multi-site project that builds on themes of lost testimony, fallen empire and displacement by deconstructing the architectures of colonialism.

DIJAY BLAKI PRESENTS: TENET

By DIJAY BLAKI

Rajab 'Black' Mangula (DJ Black) is a prolific translator (or dubbing artist) based in Dar es Salaam. He has translated over 50,000 films into colloquial Swahili and a handful into regional dialects.

Kuna Mende Kwenye Mashine is one of his catchphrases which this exhibition employs as a point of departure for thinking about diverse visual approaches –from the experimental and makeshift, the popular and participatory, the abstract, challenging, whimsical–may coexist.

biography

Rajab Mangula, aka DJ Black, is a film narrator, performer, actor and professional cinephile living and working in and from Buguruni, Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania. He is a member of the film collective Ajabu Ajabu and is one of the stars of the award of the winning Apostles of Cinema. He has performed his unique film narrations at various venues locally and internationally, and worked with institutions such as the Zanzibar International Film Festival and SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin. Along with Ajabu Ajabu, he is currently working on a long term passion project to translate films into Bena, the language from his home region. He also moonlights as a writer and editor to his over 30,000 followers on the Kiswahili film and history blog JE WAJUA

UZI WA NYAKATI [thread of time]

By MERVKI REP

Through the lens of fashion, we explore how East African societies reflected their understanding of the universe, their place in the world, and their cultural transformations in response to pivotal historical moments. As an art collective, MERVKi Rep aims to transverse time, focusing on the lived realities of the past, of the people who lived south of the Sahara desert across various locations, engaging in diverse economic activities, predating the advent of Christianity and Islam and transforming with the arrival thereof. East African cosmology is dynamic, constantly transforming, integrating, resistance, survival and adaptation. It is about uncovering the East African cosmology at different times through mediums such as fashion, designs, accessories, objects, artistic fashion performance, visual arts, drawings, and sculptures, as a means of East African storytelling.

1. Stone Age: 4000 B.C. – The Age of Earth and Ancestors

The Stone Age marks the dawn of human society in East Africa, where early communities were deeply connected to the earth and their ancestors. Cosmology at this time centered on the elements—earth, water, fire, and air—believed to sustain life. This reverence for nature and our ancestors is reflected in their clothing, which was made from animal skins, plant fibers, and stones. Simple, utilitarian garments adorned with symbols of protection and fertility reflected the people's intimate relationship with the natural world and their spiritual beliefs.

UZI WA NYAKATI [thread of time]

By MERVKI REP

2. 18th/19th Century: The Colonial Era – Threads of Resistance and Adaptation

The 19th century, the age of revolution, the Victorian age, brought European colonization to East Africa, drastically altering the region's way of life and cosmology. Traditional beliefs began to intersect with foreign religions and ideologies. As missionaries and traders introduced Western fabrics and designs, local fashion became a site of both, adaptation and resistance. During this time, African cosmology remained rooted in community, spirituality, and respect for elders. However, the garments of this era reflected a blending of identities. Traditional attire made from natural materials, beads, and vibrant kitenge was mixed with colonial styles—coats, hats, and European silhouettes. This visual juxtaposition spoke to the tension between embracing modernity and maintaining a sense of self and cultural heritage.

3. 21st Century: The Globalized Era – Fashion as Identity and Expression

In the 21st century, East Africans are redefining cosmology and their relationship with the world in the face of globalization and technological change. The cosmological worldview is now one that embraces both local tradition and global influence. Today, fashion has become an expressive medium, where individuals use clothing to assert their identities, combining traditional motifs with global trends. Modern East African fashion reflects a celebration of heritage and innovation. Kitenge and khanga fabrics, once worn for special occasions, are now repurposed for high fashion and streetwear. There is also a resurgence of interest in pre-colonial cosmology, with contemporary designers drawing inspiration from the spirituality of ancient times and infusing it into their modern creations.

THREAD OF TIME

By MERVKI REP

biography

Meraki Rep is a collective of visual creatives, producers, and interdisciplinary artists dedicated to exploring and redefining Tanzanian identity through a fusion of diverse artistic practices. Rooted in Tanzania, the group employs a multidisciplinary approach that spans design, performance, research, and photography, creating immersive experiences and thought-provoking works that reflect the complexity and richness of African Identity.

I TAKE MY PLACE IN HISTORY, CATHEDRAL, I TAKE THE STAIRS

By SAMSON KAMBALU

Samson Kambalu's Nyau Cinema Rules 1. Nyau film must be conceived as a clip no longer than a minute. 2. Performance should be spontaneous and site/specific to found architecture, landscape, or object. 3. There must always be a conversation between performance and the medium of film. 4. Costume must be from everyday life. 5. Acting must be subtle but otherworldly, transgressive, and playful. 6. Editing must be limited to the aesthetics of primitive film and silent cinema. 7. Audio must be used sparingly, otherwise it must be performed live at film screenings. 8. Screening of a Nyau film must be in specially designed cinema booths or improvised cinema installations that complement the spirit of the films. 9. Nyau cinema must encourage active participation from audience.

biography

Samson Kambalu is an artist and writer working in a variety of media, including site-specific installation, video, performance, and literature. His work is autobiographical and approaches art as an arena for critical thought and sovereign activities. Born in Malawi Kambalu's work fuses aspects of the Nyau gift-giving culture of the Chewa, the anti-reification theories of the Situationist movement and the Protestant tradition of inquiry, criticism and dissent. He has developed a praxis around Cinema which includes site specific installations, lectures and intervention on social networking sites online

CITIZEN CANVAS & RUSTED WALLS

By AJABU AJABU

CITIZEN

CANVAS

The citizen canvas is short documentary, with visuals by Getrude Malizeni, Sound by DJ Seche, and original music by Temela Hassan and Otieno Wakake. At the center are text extracts, drawn from a variety of scholars, writers and thinkers, which are performed by Bernie Mshana and Jesse Gerard Mpango as prompt or form of inquiry into modern urban inequality

RUSTED

WALLS

Written and performed by Habib Diliwa, Rusted Walls is an examination of a collective amnesia that has deepened under the pressures of neo-colonialism, and the subtle, enduring struggle to conform to the very powers Africans once resisted. It confronts the seeking of approval from outside forces, and the eroding sense of identity and sovereignty dissolving under the elements like the rusted walls of our forgotten monuments. This loss runs deeper than just neglecting history; it reflects a gradual disengagement from the ideals once held as the foundation of our independence

biography

Ajabu Ajabu is a studio and screening space in Dar es Salaam operated by a collective of culture practitioners whose work engages the preservation, production and presentation of audio visual forms. Their current focus is building avenues of communal experience for underrepresented stories, supporting the production of experimental moving image work and strengthening audience led approaches to film circulation.