

*Under Siege:
Four African Cities, Freetown,
Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*

Platform4_Documenta11

Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos

Documenta11 is a constellation of five platforms. The first four platforms address specific issues at different venues. The fifth platform is the exhibition in Kassel. All of the platforms will be documented in publications forthcoming in 2002 at Hatje Cantz Publishers, Stuttgart.

Platform1: *Democracy Unrealized*

Vienna, March 15 – April 20, 2001

Berlin, October 9 – 25, 2001

Platform2: *Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation*

New Delhi, May 7 – 21, 2001

Platform3: *Créolité and Creolization*

St. Lucia, January 12 – 16, 2002

Platform4: *Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*

Lagos, March 15 – 21, 2002

Platform5: *Exhibition Documenta11*

Kassel, June 8 – September 15, 2002

Platform4 has been organized in collaboration with the Goethe Institute Inter Naciones, Lagos and Munich, CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal, and with generous support from the Ford Foundation, New York.

Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos

Introduction

Rather than a generalized and diffuse discussion on cities all over the world, this conference will focus on the specific example of four African cities: Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, and Lagos. The aim of the conference is to examine the vital place of these cities in the political, social, and cultural economy of the region and to focus on the nature of their social destabilization whether from war, crime, urban decay, AIDS, and population explosion. But more than serving as testament for further deracination of the African continent, the conference will also be concerned with the analyses of how to reinvent the urban imaginaries of these cities as places that still hold great potential for human vitality, creativity, and inventiveness. Our quest will be consolidated around the notion of an ethic of living that places great value on the need to include on the global terrain these areas of neglect. The main thrust of the conference is to produce a discursive site through which to address issues that have affected our perception of cities in the 21st century, using the four African cities mentioned above as a locus for such discussions. The conference will be interdisciplinary and will draw from the ranks of urbanists, architects, sociologists, political scientists, economists, artists, NGOs, criminologists, writers, and intellectuals based both in Africa and abroad for a vigorous encounter and exchange of theories, methodologies, and proposals.

Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos is a conference in a series of public dialogues in six cities in Europe, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa, being planned as part of the core of Documenta11, which opens in Kassel, Germany on June 8, 2002. The conference also represents the fourth platform within five distinct, thematic areas of Documenta11 which proposes to engage in dialogue and to examine intellectual and historical processes that are implicated in differing strategies of cultural production. By inaugurating this process of exchange between the exhibition based in Kassel and other locations outside Europe, it is our intention and commitment to embark on an extensive relocation of discourses of globalism and culture to the specificity of sites within which particular questions and issues are inscribed. By operating first on the local level (Vienna, Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, and Lagos) and by allowing these public dialogues and critical exchanges to precede the exhibition more than a year before the official unveiling of the Documenta11 in Kassel, our hope is to dramatize and demonstrate on an immediate level the interdependence of the global paradigm, by revealing how local specificities create new orientations in the global discourse.

Additionally, Documenta11's proposition is to expand on the notion of the mutuality which binds artistic praxis, the mega exhibition model, and contemporary art as vehicles of a globalized discourse that requires new interpretative agents. This conference, thus, represents one agent in the complex dynamics of a changing global orientation. Our hope is to bring art and artists into a productive relationship with cultural and intellectual activities that often are seen to be outside the necessity of exhibition practice. In so doing, Documenta11 wishes to also highlight another element in its primary conception, which has to do with the relationship between subjectivity and agency, between artistic practice and intellectual discourse, and between institutions and social spaces, all of which are intimately connected to the ways we conceive of notions such as civil society and citizenship.

The Micro-Politics of Cities as Locations of Global Citizenship

What then constitutes civil society? And what is citizenship? What binds the production of these highly incommensurable denominations to the creative intercourse of cultural and artistic praxis? We would like to believe that, while the notion of nation states remains the conceptual axis around which such questions revolve, it would be necessary to tease out its evolution through the study of the micropolitics of cities, as primary locations where they are fused.

The question of the city has served as one of the fundamental vectors for the range of experiences we attribute to modern life. The consequence of this has meant that for quite some time agglomerations of people, histories, languages, identities, religions, commodities, cultures, etc. in cities have brought about increasing tensions and demands for a better and more efficient management of the spatial dynamics of our cities. It is from these that a set of initiatives (some based on the notion of sustainable development, others more obedient to the pragmatic economic demands of global capitalism), that a critical interrogation of urbanism and urban expansion have risen. New theories of this rise in urbanism and the pressure points of expanding populations we have witnessed in the last half century have seen many cities transformed, their social fabric recut to fit the changes that make urban spaces dynamic and volatile at the same time. This tension will continue to be one of the challenging features of metropolitan life in the foreseeable future.

Global Urbanism and the Urban Economies of the "Third World"

Nowhere is this dynamism and volatility more apparent than in the cities of the "third world." The processes of industrialization and rapid urbanization in these economies have contributed to the principal shifts which can be seen not only through the decline of the rural areas, and which are clearly linked and exacerbated through patterns of migration and

relocation to cities. On the next level, social and political upheavals have also produced another kind of script within which the narrative of civic, systemic, and institutional destabilization has been written. Migration, relocation, dislocation, destabilization have become the main features of cities. In turn, they have produced new theories and cartographies of space, forms, and iconographies of living and dwelling, strategies of survival, concepts of citizenship, typologies of difference, new demographics of identity and community, and a situational aesthetics which throw into relief dislocations in the syntax of the cities' urban narrative and iconography. Whether in Asia or Africa, the move to reverse the trends that now threaten the foundation of civil society in these regions have spurred considerations for how new imaginative processes could be used to intervene in the unstable spaces of their cities.

Urban Density and Population Explosion

Induced by economic, political, cultural or religious demands or insufficiencies, "third world" cities have exploded. Whatever might be the case, much of this astounding rise is driven by the overwhelming urban expansion that has not been adequately planned, anticipated or properly managed. In the early 1950s, close to 300 million people, or 16 per cent of the "third world" total population, lived in cities; ten years ago it was already 1.5 billion, or close to 30 per cent. And today, more than one third of the city residents live in some 300 cities comprising more than one million population each.

Within this picture, some assert that Africa is becoming an increasingly urban continent. But to say that urbanization is taking place at an accelerating speed in Africa is an understatement. Between 1950 and 1985, the world population trebled, and in some instances they have quadrupled. Today, in many African cities such as Lagos, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka or Kinshasa, the population has multiplied sevenfold. Today, forty per cent of the African population lives in cities, an explosion that is dangerously approaching a cataclysmic crisis.

Many of these cities are collision points between tradition and modernity, between African development and external pressures; the new site for the reformulation of old and new influences, and the opportunity for the symbolic production of post-colonial identities. They reflect the unstable confluence of divergent paths and agendas (political, social, economic, cultural, infrastructural, institutional, etc.). As a consequence of their colonial legacy, many African cities still remain administrative systems, although disconnected from the city dynamics. Colonialism was indeed a transformative trauma, marking a moment of profound historical discontinuity and rupture. In any case, the syntax of these cities today is not defined by the "modern" grammar inherited from colonialism, nor

by the assumption of an organic connection between individual and collective memory, of testimonies and beliefs. In these cities, everything is interpreted and outlined by the apparent chaos of the everyday, where forms of self-organizing procedures, parallel and informal economies, and the resilience and inventiveness of urban dwellers have relentlessly kept many cities still functional.

The Mottled Screen: Africa's Urban Vision

Because Africa's political scene has been characterized almost exclusively by civil wars, military coups, and disorders of every sort in the media, we fail to see the complexity of a situation that needs reformulation rather than demonization. Thus the instability that forms a large aspect of the media distortion has been associated, promoted, and reinforced with pictures of persistent misery, famine, and insecurity in the selective account of the West. But the issue is not to question whether these simplifications have or have not its basis in reality. Clearly, African urban and social fabrics are under severe strain and the continuous human flow from the countryside to the city has virtually shifted poverty and environmental degradation to urban areas. Some analysts point to this shift as an example of the increasing urbanization of poverty. And they also argue that the high unemployment, housing shortages, inadequate sanitation, lack of planning and of investment in social services are partly the result of the "structural adjustment" measures imposed by the World Bank during the 1980s as part of the debt repayment plans.

As any other urban space around the world, African cities are of course centers for the migration and refuge of increasing numbers of people. As such they are also the meeting place and battleground for two conflicting worlds of power and impotence, wealth and poverty, corruption and hope, center and periphery. But the issue we want to emphasize is that African cities are not only outlined by these troubling bifurcations. Nor do we wish to reproduce only the image of cities riddled with crime, grinding poverty, overcrowded suburbs, and shanty towns, congested living spaces which usually lack essential services and are breeding grounds of disease, ethnic violence, high mortality rate, or the persistent degradation of their environments. These are certainly important issues which need addressing. Yet, our attention is persistently called to focus on the ethical accounting of these cities' dynamism as hosts of great potentials which challenge the often gloomy, doomsday pictures painted by the popular media. As part of the complexity of the issues at play within these urban conditions, there may be a need to highlight the reality of these cities as vibrant spaces that foster "the series of operations in and through which people weave their existence in incoherence, uncertainty, instability and discontinuity," (Mbembe) recapturing the possibility for self-constitution.

Exploring the Rift/Shift in the African Urban Paradigm

By more than a few accounts, the African city is the site for the challenge to the political and at the same time the location for negotiations and agreements where new organizations and services, freedoms and autonomous spaces are emerging and developing. This emergence and developments simultaneously propose a modernizing cultural revision and a rearrangement of many of the essential elements of familial identification and authority. Out of these transformations, many of which are improvisatory, new types of relations and exchanges, development and subsistence, forms of solidarity and resistance are produced. On different levels, they reflect the expansion of the so-called informal economy, with its small traders, black markets, recycling, and all the numerous forms of urban survival which emerge as radical restructurings of the organizational forms of economic activity. With unemployment and underemployment rates of 70 per cent the norm for most African cities, the ways in which income is generated require constant provisionality and innovation. And it is in the polymorphous and apparently chaotic logic of the postcolonial city that we may find the signs and new codes of expression of new urban identities in formation.

While there is no question that African cities are remarkably different, the web of histories, styles, cultural productions, aesthetic vocabularies, and identifications that distinguish each urban center are clearly being unraveled by emergent forms of urban street culture that reshuffle and reinvent those webs from city to city. In many of these cities, the proliferation of religious associations is significant; some analysts consider religious expression and organization to be the predominant local initiative in urban Africa. In some cities, within the heterogeneous and multi-ethnic context, the ethnic and group identification resembles the fluid and shifting choices of the informal economy. And yet in other cities, old institutions and local associations are reassembled to suit the needs of the neighborhood.

Conclusion

What can be gleaned from the foregoing is that there can be no neat histories of urban dwelling in Africa, nor of any other region around the world for that matter. Cities in their present context are modern inventions, and as the new electronic pathways that crisscross the globe circulate and readapt images of the modern city, they also produce a desire for tourism that fuel new contacts and movements within already clogged global travel circuits, unraveling the strict hegemonic tendencies that have always made it difficult to read the narrative of spatial difference. To this end, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, and Lagos are good examples of these kinds of unraveling, reformulation and innovation. *Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos pro-*

poses to examine the roots of these unravelings and social undoings of the four cities. Equally, it will aim to shine a bright critical light on the approaches in these four cities that open up new paths of agency, creative reappropriation of resources, and the new subjectivities they produce. We must take new measures to articulate the reductionism of afro-pessimism, which often understands these new series of operations primarily as emanations or reactions to the West. We must ask ourselves whether there are modernities outside the reactive “alternatives” to the West; modernities that emerge out of postcolonial histories and global phenomena. But which also engage different kinds of understanding of wealth, subjectivity, and the social sphere so often taken for granted when approaching modernity and globalization.

Okwui Enwezor

Program March 15 – 21, 2002

Goethe Institute Inter Naciones Lagos

March 15, 2002

Arrival

March 16, 2002

Workshop *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*

CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal

Chair: Sheila Bunwaree, Adebayo Olukoshi
closed to the public

March 17, 2002

Workshop *Urban Processes and Change in Africa*

CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal

Chair: Sheila Bunwaree, Adebayo Olukoshi
closed to the public

March 18, 2002

10.00 a.m. Welcoming address

Okwui Enwezor, Artistic Director of Documenta11

Adebayo Olukoshi, Executive Secretary CODESRIA, (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal

10.30-11.30 a.m. Keynote Lecture

AbdouMaliq Simone, Graduate Program in International Affairs, New School University, New York and the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
An Urban Politics of Invisibility: Sustaining African Cities

11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. Carole Rakodi, International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, UK
Order and Disorder in African Cities: Governance, Politics and Urban Land Development Processes

12.30-14.00 p.m. Lunch break

14.00-15.00 p.m. Onokome Okome, Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Bayreuth, Germany

Writing the Anxious City: Images of Lagos in Nigerian Home Video Films

15.00-15.15 p.m. Tea break

15.15-16.15 p.m. Lindsay Bremner, Chair of Architecture at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Contemporary Johannesburg: Cultures, Spaces, Identities

16.15-17.15 p.m. Koku Konu, Lagos Urbanist Group

17.15-17.30 p.m. Tea break

17.30-18.30 p.m. Panel discussion

March 19, 2002

9.30-10.30 a.m. Rem Koolhaas, Architect, Rotterdam, Netherlands

10.30-11.30 a.m. Thierry N'Landu, Professor of Anglo-American Literature, University of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and socio-political activist

Kinshasa: Beyond Chaos

11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. Ibrahim Abdullah, University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

Culture, Space and Agency in Contemporary Freetown: The Making and Remaking of a Post-colonial City

12.30-14.00 p.m. Lunch break

14.00-15.00 p.m. Maxine Reitzes, Research Director on the Democracy and Governance Programme at HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council), Johannesburg, South Africa

15.00-15.15 p.m. Tea break

15.15-16.15 p.m. Filip De Boeck, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium

The Second World and The 'Invisible City' of Kinshasa

16.15-16.30 p.m. Tea break

16.30-18.30 p.m. Panel discussion

March 20, 2002

9.30-10.30 a.m. Babatunde A. Ahonsi, Senior Program Officer at Ford Foundation's Office for West Africa, Lagos, Nigeria

Popular Shaping of Metropolitan Forms and Processes: Glimpses and Interpretations from an Informed Lagosian

10.30-11.30 a.m. Alfred Babatunde Zack-Williams, Reader in Sociology Department of Social Studies, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK

11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. Antoine Bouillon, Institute of Development Research (IRD), Paris, France

12.30-14.00 p.m. Lunch break

14.00-15.00 p.m. Samba Mukoko, Adjunct Coordinator DSRP, Ministry of Planning and Reconstitution, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

15.00-15.15 p.m. Tea break

15.15-16.15 p.m. Tade A. Aina, Governance and Civil Society Programmer for the Ford Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya, and Deputy Executive Secretary for Publications for CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal

16.15-16.30 p.m. Tea break

16.30-18.30 p.m. Panel discussion

March 21, 2002

Departure

Conference languages will be English and French. Simultaneous translators will be at hand. Seating is limited. Final program is subject to change.

Speakers

Ibrahim Abdullah

Ibrahim Abdullah was born and raised in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and studied history at the University of Toronto, Canada. He has taught at universities in Africa and North America and has widely published in the area of African social and labour history. His current research project “Subalternity, Insurgency and Post-conflict Strategy: An Alternative Reading of the Sierra Leonean Conflict” is being funded by the Social Science Research Council in New York. Abdullah is a member of the Scientific Panel of the Council for the Development of the Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and the South African History Project – a ministerial committee of historians tasked with rewriting South Africa history.

Babatunde A. Ahonsi

Babatunde Ahonsi is the Senior Program Officer responsible for the Human Development and Reproductive Health portfolio of the Ford Foundation's Office for West Africa. He holds a B.Sc (Sociology) first class honors degree from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a Ph.D in Population Studies from the London School of Economics. In the four years preceding his appointment with the Ford Foundation in 1997, he was based at the University of Lagos, where he taught various courses in Sociology and Demography. He was also actively involved in research and technical assistance to a number of Nigerian NGOs working on gender equity, reproductive health, environmental sustainability, and youth development. He has published numerous essays in scholarly journals and books. Amongst other professional engagements, he is currently a member of the Gender Advisory Panel of the WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research.

Tade A. Aina

Tade Akin Aina is Governance and Civil Society Programmer for the Ford Foundation, Nairobi, Kenya, and Deputy Executive Secretary for Publications for CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), Dakar, Senegal. Aina has published widely, including the books *Globalization and Social Policy in Africa: Issues and Research Directions* (1997), *Quality and Relevance: African Universities in the 21st Century* (1994), *Child Development and Nutrition in Nigeria: a Textbook for Education, Health and Social Service Professionals* (1992), *Towards Industrial Pollution Abatement in Nigeria* (1992), *Environmental Consciousness for Nigerian National Development* (1992), and *Africans Look at Contemporary Africa: an Examination of some Works of African Social Scientists on African Politics and Society in the 1980's* (1985), and the essays “Petty Landlords and Poor Tenants in a Low-Income Settlement in Metropolitan

Lagos, Nigeria,” *Housing Africa's Urban Poor* (ed. Philip Amis and Peter Lloyd, 1990), “Organized Labour and Politics in Nigeria During ‘The Second Republic’ (1979-1983)”, *Zeitschrift für Afrikastudien* (1990), “Popular Settlements in Metropolitan Lagos, Nigeria: a Socio-economic and Structural Survey of the Habitat of the Urban Poor”, *Third World Planning Review* (1989), and “The Commercialization of Housing Tenure in a Low Income Settlement in Metropolitan Lagos”. *African Urban Quarterly* (1989).

Filip De Boeck

Filip De Boeck is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and currently a Visiting Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego. Since 1987, he has conducted extensive research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). His current theoretical interests include processes of state collapse and local subjectivities of crisis, postcolonial memory processes, and youth and the politics of culture in Central Africa. De Boeck is co-editing (with Alcinda Honwana, Social Science Research Council, New York) a volume on children and youth as emerging categories in postcolonial Africa, and is working in collaboration with photographer Marie-Francoise Plissart on a book project dealing with the city of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Antoine Bouillon

Antoine Bouillon was born in 1948 at Beauvois-en-Cambrésis, France, and studied from 1966 to 1978 Philosophy and Social Sciences at the Universities of Lille, Strasbourg, Paris-Nanterre and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. From 1968 to 1973, Bouillon taught Philosophy in Paris and Antananarivo, Madagascar, and received his PhD in Sociology in 1978. He was Co-founder (1975), General Secretary (1979-1982), and Chairperson (1984-1991) of the French Anti-Apartheid Movement, and worked as a freelance journalist and editor of several Southern African focussed anti-apartheid publications. He is Co-founder of OFAS, a “Platform for Cooperation” between French and South African NGOs (1993-1999). His research interests focus on the ideological invention of the Malagasy, South African history and sociology of sport, music, mass media and public space in the newly independent Zimbabwe (1983-84), urban redevelopment projects and people's participation in Durban (1993-95), and Francophone African immigrants in Johannesburg (1993-1996). Currently, Bouillon is Director of Research of the French *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* in a research programme on economic development, democracy and governance in the metropolis of Abidjan, Durban and Marseilles. He has worked in that context for three years in Durban on the local and foreign migrants' insertion strategies in the centre-city, with the objective to question from there citizenship issues in a transforming South Africa. Bouillon has published

widely, including "The Place of the Poor in the Central City. The Relocation of the 'Ark' Shelter as a Case Study of Citizenship Issues in a Mutating Durban (South Africa)", *Governance, Urban Dynamics and Economic Development: A Comparative Analysis of the Metropolitan Areas of Durban, Abidjan and Marseilles* (2002), "Citizenship and the City. The case of Durban Centre-City in 2000", *Transformation* (2002), *Immigration Africaine en Afrique du Sud. Les Migrants Francophones des Années 90* (Ed. 1998), *New African Immigration to South Africa* (1998), *Afrique du Sud, Irlande du Nord, Proche-Orient: Désirs de Paix, Relents de Guerre* (with S. Dayan-Hertzbrun, and M. Goldring, 1996), "Au Titre de la Race", *Les Temps Modernes* (1992), and *Madagascar, le Colonisé et son 'Âme'* (1982).

Lindsay Bremner

Lindsay Bremner is currently Chair of Architecture at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Cape Town, a Masters of Architecture from the University of Witwatersrand and is currently registered for a Senior Doctorate at the same University. Bremner has contributed to a number of conferences and has been invited to lecture in Argentina, Cuba, Germany, South Africa, and Turkey. She has published widely and is the co-editor of the forthcoming book *Emerging Johannesburg*. From 1993 to 1997, she served on the Executive Committee of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, during which time she chaired the Planning, Housing, Urbanisation, and Environmental Management Committees.

Koku Konu, Lagos Urbanist Group

Koku Konu was born 1959 in Lagos and holds a BA and a DipArch in Architecture. He is the Director of dkr associates – architects and designers, Lagos, and the Director General of the Creative Intelligence Agency (CIA), Lagos, which promotes creativity in the fields of architecture and urbanism. Recent activities include *Lagos 2000*, an urban regeneration proposal for downtown Lagos, *What is all the fuss about? Euro-tour 2000*, an art, architecture, and culture tour through six European countries, and *Barcelona Debate 2001*, which searched for a response to the premise that African cities grow through destruction and are organised through chaos.

Rem Koolhaas

Rem Koolhaas was born in 1944. Working initially as a journalist and screen writer, Koolhaas studied architecture at the Architectural Association School, London, and the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, New York. Since 1975, when he created the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), he has been working as an architect. Realised projects include the *Netherlands Dance Theatre* in The Hague, *Nexus Housing* in Fukuoka, Japan, the *Kunsthal* in Rotterdam, the master plan for

Euralille and the *Lille Grand Palais* in Lille, France, and the *Guggenheim Museum* in Las Vegas. Several residential projects include the *Dutch House* in the Netherlands and the *Villa dall'Ava* in Paris. More recently, OMA finished the *Educatorium*, a lecture hall for the University of Utrecht and the *Maison à Bordeaux*. Current projects include a commission for a master plan and two buildings for the *Samsung Corporation Centre for Social Studies*, the *Museum of Korean Art* and the *Seoul National University Museum* in Korea, a master plan for Universal Studios in Los Angeles, a master plan for the City Center in Almere, Netherlands, the master plan for the *Hanoi New Town* in Vietnam, the *Netherlands Embassy* in Berlin, a master plan for the *Song Do New Town* for Incheon, Korea, and the new *McCormick Tribune Campus Centre* for the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture have been the subject of numerous publications, monographs, and several documentary films. The work of the office has been exhibited internationally, including retrospectives such as *the first decade* in the museum Boymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam in 1989 and *Rem Koolhaas and the Place of Public Architecture* in the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1995. Koolhaas has published *Delirious New York* (1978), *S, M, L, XL* (1995), and since 1995, he has been professor at Harvard University, where he is leading a series of research projects for the "Harvard Project in the City", a student-based research group studying different issues affecting the urban condition. Recent projects include the following studies: Five cities in the Pearl River Delta in China, "The Roman System", focusing on the ancient Roman city, "Shopping", an analysis of the role of retail consumption in the contemporary city, and "Lagos", a study of the African city, focusing specifically on Lagos, Nigeria.

Samba Mukoko

Samba Mukoko is Adjunct Coordinator for the Ministry of Planning and Reconstitution (DSRP), Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and works in the Graduate Program of the Institute of Socio-economic Planning, University of Tsukuba, Japan. His publications include "National Urbanization Strategy and Socioeconomic Development of Zaire", *African Study Monographs* (14,1, 1993).

Mayamba Thierry N'landu

Mayamba Thierry N'landu holds a PhD in English Literature from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and is Professor of Anglo-American Literature in the English Department at the University of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is a dramatist, a socio-political activist with Groupe Amos in Kinshasa, and Program Officer for Law Group.

Onookome Okome

Onookome Okome is currently the Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. He earned his PhD in cinema and theatre studies from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in 1991, and has been teaching at the University of Calabar since 1989. Widely travelled, Okome has given lectures in Brazil, Switzerland, Ireland, the UK, the USA, and Israel. His publications include *Cinema and Social Change in West Africa* (with Jonathan Haynes, 1997), *The Sight of Sound: Sound in the Media and on Stage* (with L. O. M. Enendu et al, 1994). *Before I am Hanged: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Literature, Politics and Dissent* (2000), *Ogun's Children: The Literature and Politics of Wole Soyinka Since the Nobel* (2002), and *Writing The Homeland: The Poetry and Politics of Tanure Ojaide* (2002). His essays have appeared in *African Literature Today*, *Research in African Literatures*, *World Literature Today*, *CinemAction*, and *Glendora*. He is currently researching popular video films in Africa.

Carole Rakodi

Carole Rakodi recently took up a post as Professor of International Urban Development in the International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, UK. A geographer and urban planner, she worked for many years for the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University. She has professional and research experience in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana, and India. Her main research interests are in urban planning and management, urban land and housing markets and policy, and urban poverty and household strategies. She has published widely on these issues and is author of *Harare – Inheriting a Settler-colonial City: Change or Continuity* (1995) and editor of *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Largest Cities* (1998) and *Urban Livelihoods: a People-centred Approach to Reducing Poverty* (2002).

Maxine Reitzes

Maxine Reitzes holds an MA *cum laude* in Social and Political Theory from Sussex University, UK. She was also awarded a Cambridge Research Fellowship on the Global Security Programme in 1996. She began her career as an academic, lecturing at a range of universities, both in South Africa and overseas, including at the Centre for Black African Studies in Bordeaux, France. After the 1994 democratic elections, she joined the policy community, and focused on policy research, evaluation, and formulation. She has worked for a number of NGOs and managed projects funded by a range of foreign political donors. She has informed the policy debate on migration, the restructuring of local government and inter-governmental relations, and the role of civil society in policy making. She is currently a Research Director on the Democracy and Governance Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council, where she is conduct-

ing research on the interface between civil society and government discourses, concerning local government and intergovernmental relations. Her main research interests are the construction of citizenships and identities, human rights, civil society and migration. She has researched and published widely in all these fields.

AbdouMaliq Simone

AbdouMaliq Simone presently holds joint academic appointments at the Graduate Program in International Affairs, New School University, New York and the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Witwatersrand. He has taught at the University of Khartoum, University of Ghana, University of the Western Cape, and the City University of New York, and has worked for several African NGOs and regional institutions, including CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. He has been the recipient of Rockefeller and Ford Foundation visiting fellowships at New York, Columbia and Yale universities. Key publications include *In Whose Image?: Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan* (1994), "Urban Social Fields in Africa", *Social Text*, 56, 1998, "Straddling the Divides: Remaking Associational Life in the Informal African City", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25,1, 2001, and the forthcoming book, *For the City Yet to Come: Changing Urban Life in Africa*.

Alfred Babatunde Zack-Williams

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Selected abstracts

Ibrahim Abdullah

Culture, Space, and Agency in Contemporary Freetown: The Making and Remaking of a Post-colonial City

The apartheid discourse from above, which shaped the making of the colonial city, was soon confronted with its antithesis: a contestatory discourse from below. The construction of different spaces for different social, racial, and ethnic groups, the segmentation of the labor force, and the concentration of political and economic power in the city became the loci of intense negotiations and reordering as the post-colony and its dominant power group were plunged into crisis after crisis. At the center of these negotiations were subaltern groups – workers, women, immigrants/migrants, and the urban poor – posing poignant questions about their social, cultural, economic and political place in the city. How can they survive in a city that does not provide affordable housing for the less fortunate? What is the relationship between making/not making a living and taxation? Who represents the interests of the increasing number of young unemployed/unemployable in an expanding urban space complicated by a senseless war that has driven more than half of the population away from the rural areas? To what extent is the popular discourse from below a reflection of a new cultural paradigm seeking to reconfigure the city in the interests of the have-nots? Are we witnessing the emergence of an alternative modernity from below? This paper on contemporary Freetown begins to explore some of these questions in the hope that we could begin to understand, in outline form at least, the emerging paradigm from below.

Babatunde A. Ahonsi

Popular Shaping of Metropolitan Forms and Processes: Glimpses and Interpretations from an Informed Lagosian

As chaotic, disfigured, unstable, and disorganized as metropolitan Lagos may look and feel to visitors, unengaged urbanists, and recent migrants, it is not really fundamentally perceived or experienced as a dysfunctional city by those of us, Lagosians, who have been part of its social, demographic, spatial, political, and ecological transformation for much of the last 25 years. The paper seeks to demonstrate the “rhyme and reason” in the madness of Lagos and provides pointers to those positive dimensions of urban development in Lagos that could be harnessed as a foundation for enhancing the productive and socio-political capacity of Lagos as the economic nerve center of Nigeria and, indeed, West Africa. The analysis, which focuses on popular responses to two key urban development challenges facing Lagos – waste collection and disposal and local governance – rests on the provision of an answer to the question: What state

would metropolitan Lagos have been without the entrepreneurial and collective efforts of the poor majority to make it liveable, functional, and dynamic? This is done with sufficient attention to the socio-pathological and unproductive processes that characterize the structure and functioning of Lagos. Yet, the conclusion is reached that while Lagos may not be working properly or optimally, it cannot be said not to be working. Moreover, the analysis underlines that the seeds for making Lagos work better for the majority of its residents and the rest of Nigeria already exist for cultivation and nurturing.

Filip De Boeck

The Second World and The ‘Invisible City’ of Kinshasa

In 1997, historian D. Gondola wrote his *Villes miroirs. Migrations et Identités Urbaines à Kinshasa et Brazzaville 1930-1970*, a history of the twin-cities Kinshasa and Brazzaville, which mirror each other across the Congo river like an imperfect materialization of the city of Valdrada described by Italo Calvino in his *Invisible Cities*. Picking up the idea of reflection and mirror-image, I will look at the various levels of mirroring which fracture Kinshasa’s urban world into a series of kaleidoscopic, multiple, but simultaneously existing cities. Some of these levels of mirroring are quite obvious: Between Kinshasa and the diaspora (for example the Congolese neighborhood of Matonge in Brussels), between the urbanity of Kinshasa and the rural hinterland, between local and global realities, or between the qualities of the “traditional” and the “modern.” While taking into account all these levels which constitute Kinshasa’s “ecology” today, I intend to focus on yet another, and more fundamental, mirroring process: that between the visible city of the “first world” and of the day, on the one hand, and a Kinshasa that exists in what Kinshasians themselves refer to as the nocturnal “second world” or “second city”, a city of the occult, on the other hand. The experiential frame of urban Congolese life is marked by the widespread feeling that what you see is not what you see, what is there is not what is “really” there, or more importantly, is not what matters most. “If there can be a better way for the real world to include the one of images, it will require an ecology not only of real things but of images as well,” wrote Susan Sontag. I therefore propose a reading of the urban scape of Kinshasa and its specific meaningful sites (the “parcelle”, the bar, the church, the street) not only as a visible, geographical, and physical urban reality but also, and primarily so, as a state of mind, a topography of the local Congolese imagination. It is in the slippage between visible and invisible, between life and death, between reality and its double, its shadow, specter, reflection, or image (*ellili* in Lingala) that Kinshasa, more than ever before, takes place today. I contend that much of the current Congolese societal crisis, the subjectivity of which is lived and experienced most strongly in precisely this urban locale, situates itself in this slippage, in the changing qualities of junction

and disjunction (and hence of the role of the imaginary, which operates that disjunction or dedoublement).

Antoine Bouillon

Between Euphemism and Informalism: Inventing the City

Firmly set in the dialectical reality of citizenship, between transcendence and contingency, performance and inheritance, praxis and status, we will look at a part of citizenship that is defined by its relationship to a local city. As a matter of fact, I will talk not of Johannesburg but Durban, a dislocation that might help to better grasp in return the peculiarities of Johannesburg and better figure out South African generalities. The symbolical configuration inherited from the established white monopoly of the city (town) and citizenship is actively transformed through the processes unleashed by the democratic transformation of the whole country. But this is not without reproducing the hegemony of a self-euphemistic city, quintessence of decency and modernity, regularity and normality, based on racially connoted class hierarchy, social homogenisation and spatial segregation, panoptical visibility and social respectability. In the process, Africanity is re/disqualified as an elusive, ambivalent, ubiquitous informality, against which citizens are to be, by definition, embattled in the name of the holy war against crime. "Clean up" and other expurgation devices reinstate local citizenship as qualified membership, to which only the self-respectable (and dis-located) residents are entitled. Meanwhile, what kind of city are those marginalized able to invent? Looking at accommodation practices of in-migrants in the city, one will see how much they sustain their insertion on the acknowledgement of social hegemonic values, and as much as possible, their re-appropriation at their benefit. But, while they are busy, like all others, founding their membership of the city on the exclusion of the unqualified, in instating spaces, rules and ways of use of all sorts, the founders and users of the centre-city shelters for homeless and destitute are actively inventing the city within the city: a city for citizenship.

Lindsay Bremner

Contemporary Johannesburg: Cultures, Spaces, Identities

Johannesburg is reinventing itself. Like most cities in South Africa, it has undergone major changes over the last ten years. The end of legislated apartheid, the beginnings of democracy, the entry into the global economy, and the burgeoning neo-liberalism have, in many ways, created a new city. Its streets and offices, suburbs and parks, once manicured and controlled, have taken on the character of most cities in the developing world: they are crammed with unregulated informal activity, survivalist street trade, small scale manufacturing, cross border trade. Ethnic enclaves find their place in the shadows of corporate headquarters. Middle class residents secure themselves behind electric fences, guardhouses,

and patrols. Edge city developments spin out of control. The casino economy takes hold. The city has become more fragmented, more polarized, and more diverse than ever before. On the other hand, it has become a city for the first time. Its leaders struggle to establish what this means. This paper will record and interrogate some of these new geographies, new communities and new spaces. Through telling the stories of some of Johannesburg's people, institutions and practices, it will construct a lens through which to frame a view of its rapidly transforming landscape.

Koku Konu, Lagos Urbanist Group

The talk will center on the urban regeneration proposals proposed by the Creative Intelligence Agency (CIA) for downtown Lagos. It investigates the indigenous response to the problems of the contemporary African city and how culture is a possible tool to overcome these issues.

Mayamba Thierry N'landu

Kinshasa: Beyond Chaos

This paper is based on everyday experiences that translate my perception of Kinshasa – a city not easy to grasp, moving forward and backward with currents and undercurrents that merge into each other. The exploration of the condition of this "modern city" is obviously a rich and challenging experience that reveals an environment longing to become a space where life is "good for everyone". As a city-dweller caught prisoner in a distorted and dichotomist city, I refuse to reduce Kinshasa to a no-man's land or a space of tragedy. Consequently this narrative will present various aspects of Kinshasa's life insisting not only on the inclination of the "ville", the urban, and the "cité", the suburban, to oppose in a potentially destructive way, but on the need to relate these two opposite poles, revealing their mutual enriching. My intent is to share the perceptions of its inhabitants, the "Kinois", men and women without history, whose personal stories reflect on facts, experiences, and second hand accounts woven into the fabric of daily life that constitutes Kinshasa. Aiming to understand the forces, which shape and determine their lives, not only in the context of loss but of hope that rises above the chaos. Facing fundamental ruptures and breaches, they are subjects of the city confronted with the challenge of moving beyond dichotomised alternatives. Obviously a new art of living is developing in Kinshasa based on simple lifestyles, love and concern for the other, my neighbour, my brother and sister.

Onookome Okome

Writing the Anxious City:

Images of Lagos in Nigerian Home Video Films

Africa's new cinema – the video film – has already defined a new and interesting space of social and cultural negotiations for its enthusiastic

public(s). Barely twenty years in existence, this cinema began in relative isolation from the capital flow of world cinema practice, offering to its teaming enthusiasts localized dramas of everyday life. Its technology is often crude and obsolete, yet it is very popular. The entire industry manages a depleting economic base to create local narratives about a postcoloniality that speaks to the people of the continent, especially Ghana and Nigeria “about things that matter to people... things that people want to hear.” (Karin Barber) Essentially, video films deal with social narratives of daily life in the cities of Africa. As part of what Barber describes as the “vast arena of cultural production that can be classified as either ‘traditional’ or ‘elite’,” the art of video film in Nigeria reveals a remarkable affiliation with what Arjun Appadurai describes as “grass-roots globalization” or “globalization from the bottom.” The different kinds of home video films are examples of an African locality responding to “the eccentric current of the world order” (Jean and John L. Comaroff) and they “proceed independently of the action of corporate capital and the nation-state system (and its international affiliates)” (Appadurai). This is an obvious marker of an episteme generated in the city of Lagos outside government intervention.

I am interested in the relationship that exists between the texts of video films and audience in Nigeria. The ultimate aim of this paper is to show how the texts of video films, dictated primarily by the people of the city, define the anxieties of the local in a global context. The central quest of my paper will be posed around three questions: (1) do we have in the practice of the video film in Nigeria a distinct cinematic sphere? (2) what is the role of the public(s) in the formation of this sphere? (3) In what ways and why do video films produced in Lagos, the bastion of video practice and a typical exemplar of the postcolonial city in Africa, privilege the confrontation and the dialectics of exchange between the local and the global?

Carole Rakodi

Order and Disorder in African Cities: Governance, Politics, and Urban Land Development Processes

African cities are often regarded as having descended into or being threatened by chaos. That residents and enterprises are able to access land, (some) services, the fact that utilities continue to function, and that social and political relationships are not anarchic in many cities belies this diagnosis and raises questions about the conception of order on which it rests. With reference to prevailing conceptualisations of political and physical order, the characteristics of urban governance and politics and land development processes will be reviewed. The relative roles of formal/state and “informal” institutions (or rules) governing social relations

with respect to political and land development processes will be analysed, and the implications of the analysis for developing improved conceptual frameworks and policy explored.

AbdouMaliq Simone

An Urban Politics of Invisibility: Sustaining African Cities

Across urban Africa there is a great preoccupation with death. Death not so much as the termination of life – although the intensifying difficulties faced by people in proliferating conflict, economic debilitation, and HIV/AIDS do amplify such a connotation. But more powerful is the sense of death related to the capacity for sudden transformations, of being able to completely transform oneself into something else, to go somewhere else. Cities are full of stories of sudden and inexplicable transformations and resurrections – of people who have nothing suddenly accumulating massive amounts of wealth only to lose it overnight and then have it “resurrected” at a later time. These oscillations are embedded in a context where the horizons of a reasonably attainable future and the capacity to imagine them have disappeared for many youth – now the region’s largest population group. They appear increasingly uncertain how to spatialize an assessment of their life chances – i.e., where will they secure livelihood, where can they feel protected and looked after, where will they acquire the critical skills and capacities? This paper addresses some of the general dynamics whereby Lagos, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, and Freetown mark specific trajectories of a “speeding-up” of urbanization – where temporalities, sectors, representations, and economies are intersected in ways that produce indiscernible fields of social collaboration and livelihood. In each of these cities, little can be taken for granted, as their destructive capacity and the labor intensity of everyday survival amplifies a capacity for “getting by” and an achievement of “sustainability” that largely remains inexplicable. In cities where livelihood, mobility, and opportunity are produced and enacted through the very agglomeration of different bodies marked and situated in diverse ways, the challenge is how permutations in the intersection of their given physical existence, their stories, networks, and inclinations can produce specific value and capacity. As such, it is difficult to ascertain in these cities just what social practices, alliances, and knowledge can be mobilized sufficient enough to produce outcomes conceptualized in advance. Similarly, the rapidity through which impressions can be fixed in the popular imagination, unanticipated resourcefulness organized, and the dispositions of behavior transformed often doesn’t permit any certainty as to the identities of the ingredients or processes involved.

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