



VISIONARY AFRICA - ART AT WORK - KAMPALA

Conference

How art and architecture can make city development inclusive and sustainable

Concept Note

Tuesday September 18, 2012

9:00-17:00

Royal Imperial Hotel, Kampala

1. CONTEXT of the CONFERENCE

As the process of urbanization unfolds, encompassing the entire world, the phenomenon of the city reveals its primary essence. The city represents a creative endeavour to generate, harness and access the advantages of localization and agglomeration. Whatever the historical genesis – be it military, political, religious, or communication, the central dynamic underlying the development of urban centres has been the quest for nurturing and improving avenues for generating prosperity. The city is therefore a human artefact, shaped, steered, and composed by engagements, transactions and interactions among people. It embodies human creativity and visions, needs and desires, as well as tensions and compromises.

Driven by this momentum of nurturing and fostering prosperity, the city has been historically a locus of innovation, dynamism, transformation, increasing efficiency, productivity as well as value addition. It has also provided a liberating milieu, improving the quality of life and promoting higher forms of aesthetic and cultural representation. In contrast to rural life the city has increased social accommodation and fostered heterogeneity. Much of the societal surplus has been invested in cities and this, coupled with the increase in productivity, has promoted higher levels of affluence, albeit benefitting only a small segment of the urban population. (Extract from concept paper of UN Habitat World Urban Forum, Naples, 1-7 September, 2012).

In a post-colonial context, the African metropolis faces rapid and extraordinary changes in terms of development of formal and informal economies and urban fabrics, cohabitation of urban and rural populations, and relationship to culture and identity. The phenomenon is global, as urban populations of the informal sector, now estimated at one billion people in the world, are expected to double by the year 2030¹. This phenomenon is particularly fast in African cities, which migrated from rural towards industrial and services capacities in less than 100 years, and explains the importance of regionalization efforts under way to balance such development. Yet the urban landscape of African cities varies from one place to the next, reflecting a diversity of planning approaches, and, the growing roles taken by culture and the arts in the informal sectors primarily.

¹ UN-Habitat (2003). "The Challenge of Slums. Global Report on Human Settlements 2003", United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Earthscan Publications, London

In 2009, a colloquium organized in Brussels gathered politicians and culture professionals from all over the world, to conclude in the **'Declaration of Brussels'** the undeniable role of culture as a vector of development, and the importance of the status of artists (conclusions further reinforced by the 2010 **Creativity report** produced by the United Nations).

The current conference attempts to include architecture and the arts together in the equation, towards a 'Declaration of Kampala'. It is proposed in the context of **Visionary Africa – Art at Work**, a travelling platform exploring the link between art, culture and public spaces in African capitals. This project is organized by the **European Commission**, together with the **Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR)** of Brussels, and two leading figures in the world of African arts: Paris-based independent curator **Simon Njami** (Cameroon) and London-based architect **David Adjaye** (Ghana). **Art at Work** includes: a temporary pavilion as a new physical space for art in the city, exhibits free to the public; and a showcase of local artists; workshops **on contemporary artistic practices**; and an artist residency. **Art at Work** is in Kampala from **Sept. 18th to Oct 14th. 2012** (a timing that encompasses other cultural events: the **Bayimba Festival** Sept 21st – 23rd, Architecture Exhibition at Uganda Museum end of October, **KLA ART 012** Oct. 7th – 14th, and the **Uganda Jubilee celebrations Oct. 9th**).

This conference is therefore the opportunity for an unprecedented inclusive debate among cultural and city stakeholders of the region together with international experts, to discuss the challenges and choices East African Capitals face today in their development and the role of art and architecture in it,

2. OBJECTIVES of the CONFERENCE

Urbanism, architecture, and the arts have always been **drivers** of economic development, urban growth, and identity builders. What can their **roles and responsibilities be in the current context of the UN Millenium Development Goals for reduction of poverty and securisation of environmental sustainability?**

This conference challenges urban planners, architects and arts managers on their capacity to respond to the current challenges of sustainable and inclusive growth in the African city. **The objective is to reverse the current lack of ownership presently dominant in many cities, towards a new dynamic association of urbanism, architecture and culture.** The discussions will address the following key questions:

- 1. What are the roles and responsibilities of authorities, urban planners, architects, and arts managers in the development of a strategic vision for their city and in the planning process?*
- 2. What are the actions, tools at their disposal to guarantee a sustainable and inclusive development of African cities?*
- 3. What are the initiatives needed to so that urban planners, architects and arts managers can have a decisive role in the sustainable and inclusive development of their city?*

In order to answer these three questions, morning presentations will address:

- *Visions for urban development: David Adjaye, Ngone Fall*
- *Inclusiveness and sustainability in urban planning in Kampala: Barnabas Nawangwe, Allan Birabi, Bruno Ruganzo*
- *Case studies from the region: Francesco Siravo, Joy Mboya, Marilyn Douala Bell*

To lead the **afternoon discussion** towards a *Declaration* and *Recommendations*, speakers from the morning session will engage audiences and panellists in four discussions on key elements for a collaborative and dynamic vision of sustainable and inclusive development, in Kampala, and in the region:

- Institutional framework for architecture
- Urban planning processes and key environmental and social criteria
- Institutional framework for art and culture
- Dynamic collaboration between arts, architecture and urban planning

The conference will conclude with the '**Declaration of Kampala**', which will be proposed for discussion at various future fora (ACP culture ministers meeting in October 2012, African Union, ArchiAfrika conferences, etc); and **specific Recommendations for the city of Kampala's future growth**.

Note: In addition to the program, abstracts, and a selected reading, participants will receive the project's introductory publication *Visionary Africa, Art at Work. Une plateforme itinérante pour l'Afrique* prior to the workshop, and other proposed readings as introductory basis for the discussions. These workshops will feed a final publication, the *Atlas manifesto*, at the end of the project's itinerance.

This conference is part of the *Visionary Africa - Art at Work* initiative launched by the European Commission and the African Union in the framework of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the independence of numerous African countries. The initiative, developed by the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels (BOZAR), proposes a travelling platform that explores the link between art, culture and public spaces in African capitals. It was already presented in **Ouagadougou, Addis Ababa, Cairo, Harare, Bujumbura**, and is now hosted in **Kampala September 18-October 14, 2012**.

http://www.bozar.be/activity_world.php?id=12592