

Unextractable:
Sammy Baloji
invites
10/27/23–
02/11/24

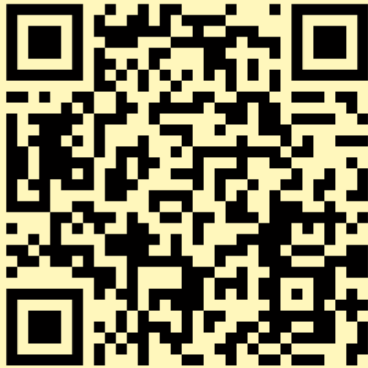
Fundi
Mwamba
Gustave &
Antje Van
Wichelen
Franck Moka
Hadassa
Ngamba
Isaac Sahani

Sammy Baloji
Nilla Banguna
Jackson
Bukasa &
Dan Kayeye &
Justice
Kasongo
Sybil Coovi
Handemagnon

Dato
Georges
Senga
Julia Tröscher

Kunsthalle
Mainz

BEGLEITHEFT IN DEUTSCH



In his artistic work Sammy Baloji investigates the history of mining in his home city of Lubumbashi, located in the southeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo. He contrasts the profound destruction of the environment and social structures to the memories and hopes of people in the Katanga region. Key elements of his artistic practice include encouraging collaboration between art producers, activists, and academics as well as bringing together many different kinds of knowledge and production. His invitation to 12 artists with whom he regularly interacts and who are from both the Democratic Republic of Congo and Europe is a continuation of this development of collective structures that he views as a strategy of resistance to extractivism, an economic model that reduces environments to raw materials that can be taken without consideration of the local consequences.

The exhibition unfolds along three thematic skeins that are directly related to Sammy Baloji's works of recent years as well as his current research. "Expropriation of land & the transformation of earth into raw materials" derives from Baloji's artistic documentation of the extractive industries in the Katanga region, which turn land into resources and treats societies merely as a potential labor pool. In works such as *Tales of the Copper Crosses Garden*, he confronts the extractive industries with the memories, hopes, and projects by people who live among the ruins caused by colonialism, industrial mining, and the global capitalist economy. Another central role in Baloji's work is played by his critical enquiry into the colonial archive: beyond the degrading representations and ethnographical assignments it contains, Sammy Baloji searches for traces of practices and historical experiences that inhabitants of the region devised and passed on through all the radical changes their societies underwent. This "confrontation with the colonial archive and its continuities" comprises the second thematic strand in the exhibition. In a series of works that constitute the third skein, precarious narrative and pictorial legacies are reinterpreted and appropriated. For example, that of the Kasala, an oral poem of the Luba people which celebrates the history of a person, or of a community by combining genealogical and biographical elements with myths and narratives on the cosmic order of the world. Another example is the way that women each year renew the paintings on the clay walls of the houses in the village of Makwacha—"Transmission through Transformation".

In a broad variety of approaches, the represented artists develop works that re-establish interrupted knowledge chains, explore the effects of global consumption and profit maximization, and show cultural memory in processes of constant reconfiguration and reinvention. The polyphonic character of the exhibition continues the long-standing endeavor of the artists and art producers in the circle around Sammy Baloji to develop collective structures in Lubumbashi. At the heart of this work stands Picha, the independent center for art and research, a platform co-founded by Sammy Baloji and carried by Congolese artists that, among other things, organizes the Lubumbashi Biennale. The works on display in Kunsthalle Mainz were developed by the artists in the context of these structures (Picha and the Lubumbashi Biennale) or in collaboration with Framer Framed Amsterdam as well as the research project Reconnecting “Objects” and are being shown in Germany for the first time.

ACTIVATING THE MEMORY OF A TERRITORY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE ARTISTIC WORK. TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH SAMMY BALOJI AND JEAN-SYLVAIN TSHILUMBA MUKENDI

Sammy Baloji, Lotte Arndt & Marlène Harles, September 12, 2023

Lotte Arndt: Sammy, rather than working on your own you started engaging in collaborative projects very early on in your artistic practice, with researchers, activists, people you met during your work, and with other artists. What role do collaborations play in your practice?

Sammy Baloji: I think I started to work interacting with others because I did not have a classical art education. My background is in science and communications, fields with strong links to the public sphere and constant interaction. In addition, colonial history is not taught at school in the Democratic Republic of Congo where I completed my studies. Although the city of Lubumbashi and the country are full of vestiges of colonization, the curriculum does not account for this. I began to question this history through collaborations. While working as a photographer at the Institut français in Lubumbashi right after graduation, I met Johan Lagae, who heads the department of Architecture at Ghent University in Belgium. Together, we started photographing places in Lubumbashi related to architecture or the city’s industrial heritage. These photographs highlighted the typology, history, and orientation of the buildings in the city, and its segregated structure, built in colonial times. They uncovered a multi-layered architectural history, which the medium of photography alone could not represent, and which needed other forms of documentation. Furthermore, our focus on architecture was often in direct contradiction with the contemporary use of the buildings by the people. My photographs showed a kind of palimpsest that allowed more than one reading of the image. I became interested in the urban through the violence inherent in the architectural history. I wanted to develop a more complex approach to this documentary work in order to go beyond disciplinary perspectives and to offer a better account of the multi-layered realities in the city in which I lived.

Marlène Harles: Quite soon after your collaboration with an academic scholar you started working with artists, for example with dancer and choreographer Faustin Linyekula whom you teamed up with for the video *Mémoire* in 2006. How did these joint projects come about?

SB: When I was studying communications in Lubumbashi, I was part of a collective of befriended cartoonists and comic strip creators. Most of the time we worked as duos consisting of a scriptwriter and a cartoonist. This led me to photography, which gave me a way of documenting the environment so that I could then translate it into my drawings. For the *Vues de Likasi series* (2006), I worked again with Johan Lagae and Belgian photographer Marie-Françoise Plissart. We took panoramic views of the town of Likasi, which in colonial times was called Jadotville. There were all sorts of Art Deco architecture, but also different styles of South African architecture. It was one of my first collaborations in photography. The one with Faustin (Linyekula) followed shortly afterwards, this time combining two different languages, namely dance and video.

LA: Only two years later, you co-founded the association Picha. As a collective in 2008 you created the *Rencontres de l'Image*, which later became *La Biennale de Lubumbashi*. Since then, Picha and the Biennale have organized workshops, meetings, a residency program, and above all long-term relationships and support between artists and people working in the cultural field. Through these exchanges, the practitioners become immersed in the creative culture that is emerging around Picha, and the works start to circulate more broadly. What motivated founding the association and why was it important to open a space that you and others have worked so hard to maintain and develop?

SB: In 2007, curator Simon Njami invited me along with Gulda El Magambo an artist friend from Lubumbashi and the future co-founder of Picha, to the *Rencontres photographiques de Bamako* (Bamako Photographic Encounters). For me, this was the first time that I found myself in a major artistic event on the African continent, together with many African and diasporic artists. We shared questions concerning the fields of photography, video, and the visual arts but also identity, politics, and economy. For me, it was a revelatory moment to find such an abundance of artistic activity on the African continent. That's when I first felt the desire to create a similar event in Lubumbashi. The city of Lubumbashi, and more broadly the Katanga region, are important and recognized economic centers because of their mining resources. However, the region's artistic practices were little known, under-supported, and under-developed. Lubumbashi has an Institute of Fine Arts, which corresponds to the level of a high school. The national art academy is in Kinshasa, 2,000 km away. One of the reasons I didn't go to art school was that my parents couldn't afford to send me to Kinshasa. There is a need to create structures for artistic creation in the

city. So, in 2008, together with the Institut français and a local patron, we started the first edition of *Rencontres de l'Image* as a collective, without an external curator. At the end of that session, we founded Picha. For the first three editions, we focused on images because our practice was based on photography and/or video. When Toma Muteba Luntumbue, an artist, curator, historian and art teacher, joined us as curator for the fourth edition (in 2015), he found the same lack of training for artists in Lubumbashi and asserted the need to open our structure up to other artistic practices. We strived to combine educational, artistic and curatorial practices in a city where a lot of things had to be reinvented—and this prompted us to rename our event *Biennale de Lubumbashi*.

LA: The concept for the exhibition at Kunsthalle Mainz can also be traced back to that biennial, more specifically to the last edition of 2022, which was organized by Picha and a number of associate curators under the title *Toxicity*. The biennial discussed issues linked to the city, extractivism, and pollution. When we started preparing the exhibition at Kunsthalle Mainz few months later, it seemed like an opportunity to continue some of the work that had started in the context of the biennial, and to extend the invitation to highlight Picha's collaborative approach. Sammy, while in your practice you often reconnect questions to Lubumbashi, and transport what you find in archives in Europe to the DR Congo, here the gesture runs in the opposite direction: The invitation (as you have done on other occasions) has gone to artists from Picha and related contexts to join in a questioning of extractivism and invent modes of transmission.

SB: With Picha, given the lack of artistic and training structures in Lubumbashi, we construed the city as an open-air museum. The city is a place where we can intervene because it's a territory which has a memory that we can activate. When the biennial activities started in the city, we sought to link urban history with the experience of the precariousness of everyday life, and to create forms of mediation that would enable us to interact with the people in the streets. Because there was no art school, we also had to create a platform that could support local artists in their production. We needed to move away from the inequality between international and local artists: While international artists came to Lubumbashi with considerable financial resources and highly developed practices that stem from their training and the spaces where they had previously exhibited, local artists cannot rely on this kind of infrastructure. And we felt these discrepancies in the exhibited work. It was these contextual needs that led us to collective curatorship.

For the exhibition in Mainz, our starting point was the research I'm currently doing as part of my artistic doctorate on the question of cultural transmission. This question is closely linked to colonial history, since, as a result of territorial policies linked to the mining industry, groups of Luba people were dispersed and established in two distinct regions, Kasai and Katanga. This has a palpable impact on transmission forms and lines, be they genealogical, mythological or cosmogonic, as these are largely based on a relationship with a land. It is on land that a community lives, and where it establishes social cohesion. It is on land that sacred spaces or burial grounds are created. When land is expropriated and broken apart, destroyed physically, spiritually and socially by mines, when communities can no longer connect to a place, when cemeteries are dismantled, then an important part of memory is also undone. With the form of the nation state based on borders drawn during colonial times, the economic valorization of land and the extraversion of the economy are imposed—and many communities lose their cultural memory as a result. My doctoral research looks at how the mechanisms for transmitting Luba memory, such as the Kasala, the mnemonic poem that features prominently in the exhibition in Mainz, and the Lukasa, a Luba memory board, have been undermined by extraction and the fact that people no longer own the land. It no longer feeds them, and social structures have been disrupted. However, there are still forms that are passed on and that persist. Sometimes this occurs by means of community membership: There is interaction between those who pass cultural memory on and those who receive it. Those who pass on are enriched by the community and vice versa. This reciprocity is also present in what we do at Picha.

LA: We are making a strong statement with the title of the exhibition: Unextractable—impossible to extract. A claim that is probably impossible to achieve, but that is driven by a desire, and indicates a direction. Given the context of Lubumbashi, given the way in which ancient African art continues to constitute the most expensive art market in the world, fueled by ongoing illicit trafficking, and moreover the way in which contemporary African works are bought on a massive scale by Western collectors is currently extending the question of restitution to the future, *Unextractable* proposes a counter-factual vanishing point, an attempt to readjust our orientation, to resist a context in which extractivism takes precedence. We argue that collective structures such as Picha—the way in which we move together in our practices and think through this violent context while at the same time putting in place other, supportive, collaborative

structures—constitute a moment of resistance. It can only emerge when a plural commitment is made, which creates a transmission.

SB: What strengthens Picha is that we are solidly committed to the context of Lubumbashi: This grounds our reflection on artistic practices, the desire to create a discourse developed locally, with the elements that are available here, with the tools we have and that we invent, based on everyday life, its difficulties, colonial history and extraction. The urban space of a city like Lubumbashi is segregated and violent by design. It was conceived to extract minerals and provide labor for the metropolis. The minerals that are mined here are never processed in the DRC. To this day, they are transported abroad, which means that the whole country is geared towards the outside world. Therefore, the public space is not conceived for the inhabitants. If you look at history, every time there have been revolts in the streets of Lubumbashi or Kinshasa, people have been shot but justice has never been made. This is not a place where people can speak out publicly. We can exist in this regard by virtue of Picha, through the collective. Of course, we are all individuals, but our mutual support enables us to create spaces for discourse and occupy spaces in repressive political territories, also by networking with the international scene. The exhibition in Mainz is the result of this.

Jean-Sylvain Tshilumba Mukendi, Lotte Arndt & Marlène Harles,
September 19, 2023

Marlène Harles: Jean-Sylvain, you are currently the project coordinator at Picha. You joined the association a little more than two years ago, with a background in art history and social sciences, and an interest in artistic practices on the African continent, in the DRC, and among the Congolese diaspora. How do your experiences resonate with the way Picha operates?

Jean-Sylvain Tshilumba Mukendi: In my research, I interrogated the importance of art centers and independent art platforms for the production of art in Africa, but also for the creation of a discourse on African art. I started working with Picha as part of this research. Initially, my role was to coordinate and liaise with the different partners of the art center and the Lubumbashi Biennial. There's always a transition period between two biennials and I joined Picha at that in-between moment. This coincided with the pandemic, which had a major impact on our operations, but also raised questions about the viability of an art center, which operates as an intermediary platform between Lubumbashi and international connections. Picha balances the organization of the biennial, which is currently in a state of re-definition, with ongoing maintenance of a long-term association. Our work is based on a solid network that brings together people close to Picha, who form its core, and constant interaction with new contacts, both locally and internationally. Picha's strength lies in its ability to foster exchanges within this network.

Lotte Arndt: You are at the heart of Picha's current transformation. Could you tell us a bit more about what's at stake?

JSTM: The Lubumbashi biennial is run by a small group of artists and friends. Each edition creates a wave of inspiration, encounters, ideas, and enthusiasm, but also raises questions about the sustainability of our structures and what we create on site. Since 2015, the introduction of the Ateliers Picha by curator Toma Luntumbue Muteba has significantly redefined the work done between biennials, with a new emphasis on interaction with and support for young artists in Lubumbashi to further develop their artistic approach. Between 2019 and 2022, the Ateliers were directed by cultural activist Lucrezia Cippitelli, who found ways of working both in Lubumbashi and with international guests, such as ruangrupa, the Indonesian collective that was preparing the documenta at the time, particularly

during the period of the pandemic. We're now devising a new way of working that will allow us to support these emerging artists all year round. However, I think it is difficult to move entirely away from the momentum of the event itself and it will continue to form an integral part of the Biennial. That said, this major moment of visibility and attention should be seen as the product of long-term effort carried out by Ateliers Picha. The Ateliers provide a space for co-creation and reflection over a longer period of time. They are also nurtured by collaborations with various organizations, such as Framer Framed in Amsterdam, which has supported the work of four artists in residence at Picha over the last few years. The Ateliers are now consolidating, and we hope that they will truly become laboratories for future editions of the Lubumbashi Biennial—a way of reinventing its shape and structure in line with the artists' proposals.

MH: Could you elaborate a bit more on your research questions and how you re-encountered them in your work with Picha, especially as regards the art center's position as a platform connecting artists in Lubumbashi with an international scene?

JSTM: The discourse that accompanies African artistic creations internationally is often far from the meanings and stakes that artists raise when elaborating their work. I wondered how we could present and produce art while at the same time mastering the ways of doing things, curating, showing and, in so doing, accompanying the way in which these creations are perceived in the context of contemporary art, and its circulation. In Kinshasa, I saw the strong desire of many artists to shine at the art world's major events. With Picha's work, I was struck by their desire to take charge of the discourse, the structures, the production of art in a specific context, and by the way we work together as a team.

MH: What does the future hold for Picha?

JSTM: Picha is an art and research center. I think that the research dimension is all the more important given that the environment in Lubumbashi remains precarious for creators. Thinking about practices from a particular context, in an ecosystem of local and international actors in conversation, means we don't give in to the mirages of an abstract global art market. I hope that we can make this a long-term commitment.



- 1 Sammy Baloji
- 2 Nilla Banguna
- 3 Julia Tröscher

HALL 1

Sammy Baloji

Sammy Baloji, *Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or The First Human, Bende's Error in Boycotting the Creation*, 2019, mixed media installation, variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist. Collection of Museum Rietberg Zurich, Switzerland.

Sammy Baloji, *Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or The First Human, Bende's Error in Boycotting the Creation*, 2020, HD Video (31:40 min). Courtesy of the artist. Commissioned by Museum Rietberg Zurich, Switzerland.

Sammy Baloji tenaciously explores colonial archives to undermine their authority and uncover hitherto inaudible stories. *Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams* gathers a series of works in which collection and museum archives tensely relate to Luba transmission practices: digital collages printed on mirrors, film, a scarified hunting horn, and an interactive digital touchscreen, which visitors can operate in Hall 3. The installation's starting point is Baloji's critical questioning of the photographic archives of German ethnologist Hans Himmelheber (1908–2003). Himmelheber collected the images during a trip to the Congo, then a Belgian colony, in 1939. In a series of collages on mirror that discreetly reference divinatory *nkisi* figures, Baloji brings together Himmelheber's

photographs with X-Ray images of various objects from the ethnologist's collection. X-ray imaging is commonly used by museums to visualize the material structure and hidden content of objects—a medical way of gaining information which he questions. He offers a counter-narrative to the translocation of artifacts which separates them from their use and cultural meaning. By inviting writer Fiston Mwanza Mujila to create a *Kasala*, a Luba poem combining the recitation of elements from the genealogy of a celebrated person with mythological, cosmological and historical fragments, Baloji joins colonial images with the experiences and practices of people from the southern regions of DRC. Accompanied by two musicians, Fiston Mwanza Mujila recites his text at the inauguration of the exhibition *Congo as Fiction—Art Worlds Between Past and Present* at Rietberg Museum, Zurich, Switzerland (2019). The performance disrupts the tranquility of the museum's stylized display of objects, which not only de-contextualizes but also silences them. The *Kasala* introduces these missing voices in the aestheticized presentations—voices that express the sufferings of Katanga's artisanal miners, the bloody repression of liberation movements, and the long list of political murders in DRC. The polyphony of these stories is linked with an evocation of Bende's error, a legendary founding figure of the Luba tradition, part-god and part-ancestor. The film intertwines the capture of the performance, the images obtained through X-ray scanner, and 3D models of objects from the museum collection combined with quotes from a famous documentary, *Statues Also Die* (Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, Ghislain Cloquet, 1953), which describes the colonial museum as the culmination of the destruction of living cultural practices. Another element of the installation is a photograph from the archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa Museum in Tervuren, Belgium, which underscores Baloji's association of collecting and hunting. In the center of a middle-class living room decorated with hunting trophies, a hunting horn is fixed on the wall. It highlights the predatory character of bourgeois opulence, the violence which unfolds outside of the frame. As a counterpoint to it, Baloji displays a scarified hunting horn in a showcase that signals both the museums' domestication and the silent incommensurability of artifacts. The horn is shaped like that in the photograph: The colonial archive generates the artwork and adds a gesture of resistance. For the scarification, Baloji uses a secret and codified language that resists colonial deciphering. Although the scarification is manifest on the object's surface, its meaning goes beyond its ornamental aspect. It is reserved for the initiated, imposing a limit to the domineering and voracious ambitions of colonial classification.

Nilla Banguna

Wankito (umwanakaji). La femme forte, 2023, printed fabrics designed and produced by Nilla Banguna, in collaboration with Patricia Banguna Kazadi, Josephine Kyungu Muloba, and Fernande Musha Sebelwa in Lubumbashi, DRC.

Single fabrics:

Mwabi. Ma chance (my luck), *La case de Benthó* (Benthó's hut), *L'époux* (the husband)
Le rêve de l'étranger (the dream of foreign lands), *Nzaka* (scrapings), *Kiondo* (dry wood)
Lutuko (local alcohol), n.t., n.t.

Nilla Banguna is a stylist and textile designer born in Lubumbashi. She launched her career in the fashion scene alongside Sikasso Kazadi at the opening of the Lubumbashi Fashion Week in 2016. In 2017, she trained in aesthetics, fabric manufacture and textile design at the Urafiki textile mill in Tanzania. Since 2018, the graduate in pattern-making also holds a diploma in textile design, styling and fashion creation from Lubumbashi's Institut Supérieur des Arts et Métiers. Initiator of the *MusNilla* fashion brand, and many related activities, she is an assistant and teaches at ISAM/Bon Berger. She is artist-in-residence at Picha, where she has been pursuing her textile research and production since 2018. As part of her long-term collaboration with the art center, Banguna works with a group of women from the Makwacha village, situated 45 kilometers from Lubumbashi. There, Picha is currently developing a residency space and building a silk screen workshop. Transmitting a pictorial practice across generations, the women of Makwacha paint the outer walls of their houses with clay drawings every year. A process, which they start anew once the rainy season arrives and the water washes the pigments away. The works developed for the exhibition at Kunsthalle Mainz are the result of a collaboration with her sister Patrizia Banguna Kazadi and two women from the village, Fernande Musha Sebelwa and Josephine Kyungu Muloba, who create drawings and silk screen prints on long fabric webs. Collectively they transpose the local pictorial practice of the wall paintings onto mobile materials, such as cotton fabric, thus valorizing the patterns and enabling them to be transmitted onwards and used in new contexts.

Julia Tröscher

Julia Tröscher, *There was a Never, there was a Yes*, 2023, 16:9 HD video (13 min).
Courtesy of the artist, with many thanks to: Jutta Machu, Johanna & Anna Tröscher, Niek Van Oosterwyck, Helia Jafarzade, Lies Jacobs, Leonie Lehmborg, Fareed Aziz, Mustaf Ahmeti, Pieter Vandenhoudt and Sammy Baloji.

Julia Tröscher, *Yes/Emotion*, 2023, wood, concrete, steel, clay, epoxy, acrylic paint,
97 × 191 × 45 cm. Courtesy of the artist, with many thanks to Tom Volkaert and Hans Wuyts,
Sammy Baloji, Britt and Robbe.

On the other side of the room, Julia Tröscher proposes a personal interpretation of a Kasala, a poem performed initially in the Luba community in DRC. Julia Tröscher and Sammy Baloji met during a workshop held for visual arts students, which Baloji has been teaching at Sint Lucas in Antwerp, Belgium, in relation to his PhD research. The workshop focused on the use of archiving processes in the process of artistic creation (identification, listing, sorting, selection, setting up rules of communication, accessibility, and management) and mnemonics (material supports or learning techniques that help to memorize information).

During this workshop, Tröscher conceived a Kasala relating to cultural references and aesthetic traditions not directly associated with the DRC context. She anchors her narrative in feminist performance practices and trans-species embodiments. She chooses the figure of a fish-human who becomes the vantage point for a genealogy of the universe that overlaps with her own. The fish-human conjures up images of the earliest land animals, the transition from water to land, and stands simultaneously at the beginning and the end of the universe. A bench, modelled after the benches set near the Rhine in Mainz, invites visitors to sit down and enter Tröscher's narrative. The bench is decorated with a relief of symbols that also appear in the film, which Tröscher created for the exhibition. In it, a ceramic fish travels from one hand to the next, from place to place, from one time to another. We follow it on its journey. While we encounter grandmothers, mothers, and daughters, we experience a poem about the past, present, and future of human and non-human inhabitants of the planet.

Jackson Bukasa & Dan Kayeye & Justice Kasongo

Jackson Bukasa and Dan Kayeye, *Mozalisi (The Creator)*, 2022–ongoing, HD Video current version (6:05 min), with the puppets by Justice Kasongo. Courtesy of the artists.

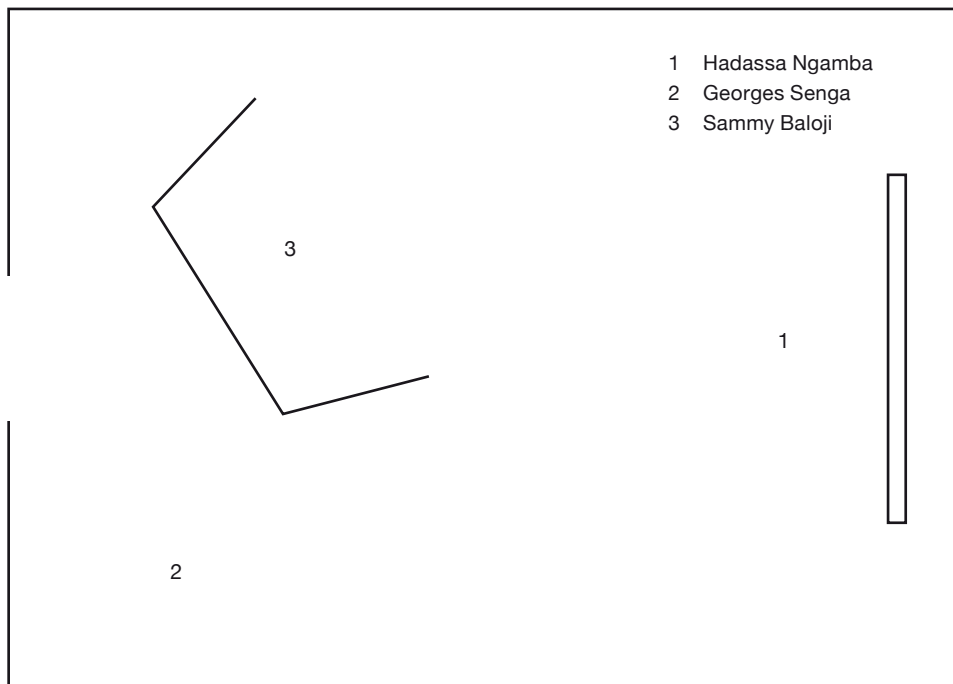
Jackson Bukasa and Dan Kayeye give us a sneak peek into their ongoing project *Mozalisi (The Creator)*, an artistic documentary film in the making, featuring fellow artist Justice Kasongo's mobile theater-carts, alongside animations, 3D renderings of the city, drawings, and documentary photography. The three artists unite their respective expertise, in documentary filmmaking (Jackson Bukasa), animation and 3D environments (Dan Kayeye), puppet-making and street performance (Justice Kasongo) to conceive a speculative film that merges the capacity of a puppet theater to conceive of worlds, with documentary elements from Congolese history, and fictional landscapes. For years, Kasongo made his livelihood pulling his hand-drawn carts around different neighborhoods in the city of Lubumbashi. The interplay of music, puppets and his voice would narrate stories of daily life in DRC. The carts, which consist of a steel frame on which puppets are mounted, can be animated with a crank. They are made using tools and materials often sourced by recycling, following a DIY process involving research, experimentation, and construction, bringing these histories to the streets of the city.

During the opening of the 2022 Lubumbashi Biennale, in a performative procession and surrounded by the audience Kasongo took his cart *Congo. Traces, trajectory, and memories* through the streets of Lubumbashi, from the art center Picha to the entrance gate of the Gécamines plant built in colonial times, when it was called Union minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK). Nationalized in 1967, it remains a decisive player in the biographies of the inhabitants (who refer to it as their mother and their father) and is omnipresent in Lubumbashi's urban life. The journey of the cart and the crowd celebrating the opening was documented by Nico Wassa, AfrikaPic (Congolese Agency of Photographers) and Kinshasa-based photographer Arsène Mpiana. The film transposes the scenes from the cart into documentary and fictional environments, by placing the puppets into drawn, filmed, or digitally generated images from the

streets of Lubumbashi, into mining pits, bars, or houses. Justice Kasongo's hands are shown at work, crafting the puppets, turning the crank fixed on a worn-out piece of cardboard with hastily written words on it: "Mozalisi", the creator. The film's title has multiple meanings: referring as much to the Gécamines and the mining industry that "created" the city, as to the artist, who creates the figures and animates a mechanical theatre of the countries trajectories.

The project was first conceived as part of Ateliers Picha under the artistic directorship of Lucrezia Cippitelli and is presently pursued with the support of the association's founding member Rosa Spaliviero, who had previously produced the animation film *Machini* (2019) by Frank Mukunday and Tétshim that was on view at Kunsthalle Mainz during the exhibition *Homosphere* (2022).

- 1 Hadassa Ngamba
- 2 Georges Senga
- 3 Sammy Baloji



HALL 2

Hadassa Ngamba

Hadassa Ngamba, *CERVEAU 2 (Brain 2)*, 2019, malachite, Katanga cassiterite, tar, charcoal, watercolors on coffee-dyed cotton, 112.5 × 245 cm. Courtesy of the artist

Hadassa Ngamba first developed her artistic practice at Ateliers Picha in 2017. She exhibited her first textile works at the Lubumbashi Biennale that year and participated in subsequent editions (2019 and 2022). While artist-in-residence at WIELS Centre d'art contemporain in Brussels, Belgium, in 2019, she won the Prix Laurent Moonens (Lubumbashi session) in the same year. Drawing on research into topography carried out in Central Congo (her native region) and in the archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, she has made cartography a central element of her practice. Now experimenting in a multiplicity of media

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such as painting, drawing, installation, performance, and video, her sculptural research articulates a sensitive reflection on the colonial history of the Democratic Republic of Congo coupled with personal elements.

CERVEAU 2 (Brain 2), a cotton canvas dyed with coffee, on which minerals are deposited, is an abstract mind map: It has no key and no geographical references. The five colors that are integrated into this rectangular canvas, which is divided into 32 spaces by straight lines painted in white, refer to different ores and the multiple resources present under the ground in Congo, including copper and cobalt.

In a sensitive mode, interweaving intimate memories, sensations, collective traumas and spatial representations based on materials from Congolese soils, Hadassa Ngamba questions the way extractivism, the global capitalist economy and their historical continuities are all interwoven. Her cartography is based on the mining industry, but also on her personal trajectory as it takes shape in a country structurally shaped by extractivism. By naming the painting *Cerveau 2*, Ngamba points to the inextricable overlap between Congolese geographical space and her own perceptual and mental reference points. She takes viewers into a composite landscape, combining the material traceability of painting with unexplored psychological and memory meanderings, proposing a unique trajectory with multiple layers and cross-references.

Georges Senga

Georges Senga, *Tshanga-Tshanga, mille bêches* (a thousand shovels), opencast mines, Manono, DRC, 2021, photographic print on Dibond. Courtesy of the artist

Georges Senga, *Tshanga-Tshanga, 300 maisons* (300 houses), the first quarter of the mining company Géomines, Manono, DRC, 2021, photographic print on Dibond. Courtesy of the artist

The Belgian company Géomines started mining in the Eastern Congolese city of Manono in the early 20th century. When industrial tin extraction ended there in the early 1980s, lasting conflict and unemployment were the consequences for the local population. Today, many international mining companies obtain concessions for new extraction sites around the city, and then erect large-scale infrastructures. Lithium, one of the key ores needed for high-performance batteries, is abundantly present in the ground around the city. While the mineral is all the rage internationally as it is touted as promising a fossil-fuel-free future, it is likely to add locally to the long history of destructive effects of extractivism for the local population.

HALL 2

In this photographic work, Georges Senga shows parts of the city caught between the vestiges of the declined tin industry, and on the verge of falling victim to the next round of exploitation.

In the series *Tshanga-Tshanga, 300 maisons* (300 houses), Senga offers a bird's-eye view of the remnants of neighborhoods that were built by the Géomines in the early 20th century. In order to be able to rely on a stock of strong workers, the company encouraged populations from different neighboring regions to settle nearby and this gave rise to a new community forged by the needs of the mine. *Tshanga-Tshanga*, which can be translated as 'mixing' from Kiswahili, refers here to a eugenic program of "breeding" workers put in place to promote the interests of the company. When production declined, conflicts arose in the neighborhood, fueling ethnic divisions.

Reflecting on the living conditions of the people surviving among the ruins of industrial mining, Senga looks at the shores of the artificial lakes around Manono that have arisen in the former mining pits. *Tshanga-Tshanga, mille bêches* (1,000 shovels) refers to a sand quarry that has been dug by hand or with artisanal equipment by the local population mining cassiterite and tantalum over the course of the last 16 years.

Sammy Baloji

Les petits chanteurs à la croix de cuivre, 1960, black-and-white photograph, dimensions variable.
Courtesy Royal Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren)

Sammy Baloji, *Tales of the Copper Crosses Garden: Episode 1*, 2017, HD video (42 min).
Courtesy of the artist. Mu.ZEE collection, Ostende, Belgium

Tales of the Copper Crosses Garden: Episode I was created in the framework of Documenta 14, Athens

Sammy Baloji's film *Tales of the Copper Crosses Garden* explores the turbulent intertwining of ongoing material exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the cultural revaluation of symbols and practices, and the weight of Eurocentric cultural hegemony and extractivism. The film shows the transformation process of ore into copper wire and ingots in a factory in the Katanga region. It follows the various stages of heating, shaping of hot metal by heavy machines, and the gestures of workers

directing the glowing wires and semi-liquid ingots through the different stations in the factory. The editing juxtaposes the industrial processing of the metals with the songs sung by the "Copper Cross Choir", which was established by Belgian missionaries in colonial times. In the choir, young Congolese boys were trained to perform Christian songs, while carrying as a decorative sign "Katanga crosses", copper crosses shaped and employed in precolonial times as a currency in the region. During Belgian colonization, many crosses were melted and used as mere raw copper in unrecognizable shapes, such as ingots. Others were integrated into the collections of European ethnographic museums, testifying to how cultures vanished under the pressure of colonial modernity (see, for example, the cross acquired by Erika Sulzmann and now part of the ethnographic collection of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz).

Drawing on the reflections of philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (who was born in the city of Likasi in 1941) on the role of the Church in the colonisation of the Congo, the film explores the connection between religious domination and the exploitation of countries' material wealth. While local beliefs, practices, and related social orders have been discredited and often destroyed parallel to the constant expansion of mining and other extractive industries, missionary schools and conversion to Catholicism participated actively in the dispossession of land and the submission of people by introducing a new belief system that legitimized the colonial order. Repeatedly, passages from Mudimbe's autobiography *The Glorious Bodies of Words and Beings: Sketch of a Benedictine Garden* (1994) in which the writer narrates his experiences as a child and adolescent attending a Catholic missionary school and devoting himself to Christianity, are interwoven with the images of the metal factory.

Sybil Coovi Handemagnon

Dessus, dessous et à travers (Over, under and through), 2023, Multimedia installation: photomontage on wallpaper fleece, pigment prints on white 42 g paper, pigment prints on 310 g, plaster sculptures, archive boxes with photographs and documents, metal shelves, cola-nuts, nitrile gloves, tissue paper. Courtesy of the artist

On the left side, Sybil Coovi Handemagnon presents an archival cabinet, containing archival boxes, a table with gloves, a large collage and images printed on semi-transparent paper. The installation joins elements from the artist's continuous research into colonial images with an ongoing collaborative investigation into museum conservation.

Coovi Handemagnon traverses the toxicity of colonial archives to "listen to images" (Tina Campt, *Listening to Images*, 2017), i.e. to create non-linear genealogies that resist historical violence. In an ever-evolving collage, which she has been working on since 2021, Coovi Handemagnon analyses the paintings celebrating the 'civilising mission' from the pyramid-shaped hall of what used to be the entrance palace at the 1931 Paris colonial exhibition. By incorporating the cast of her own hand into the collage, she positions herself in the history of anthropometry, while simultaneously investing her family's archives. She affirms the possible connections, trans-temporal solidarities and possibilities in the making, by looking for the traces of stories missing in the images.

In Mainz, Sybil Coovi Handemagnon presents boxes on archive shelves, containing images, texts and notes from an ongoing research project that the artist is currently conducting in dialogue with Lotte Arndt in several museums in Europe and West Africa. During their visits, the artist and researcher are examining the traces of 'toxic conservation', a term referring not only to the treatments with biocides to which many collections have been subjected, but also to the Western museums' attempt to endlessly conserve. By using chemicals and showcases, they keep life out, interrupt transformative cultural practices, and thus avoid any risk of decomposition of the objects. Once artifacts have been objectified in this way, are reconnections with the cultural contexts from which they originate still possible? Coovi Handemagnon is inviting visitors to put on gloves, to question the images for themselves, without being able to overcome the distancing of the conversation practice.

Research Documentation

The exhibition is suffused with elements of the artistic research that Sammy Baloji has been conducting since 2019 under the title *Contemporary Kasala and Lukasa: Towards a Reconfiguration of Identity and Geopolitics* as an artistic PhD at the Sint Lucas Antwerp School of Art, Belgium. Colonization divided the former provinces of Kasai and Katanga in the DRC, leading to a separation of the Luba people in both parts. Descendants of Luba groups from Kasai who live in Katanga are now often considered 'foreigners' and meet with hostility by those who claim to be the 'original' inhabitants of Katanga. In his long-term research, Sammy Baloji works across these colonial division lines, and creates new mnemonic devices, bringing together personal, historical and fictional elements. Central to this research is the Kasala, a ceremonial poem, recited by Luba people in several Congolese provinces. Another reference is made to the Lukasa, a memory board used in ritual performances by "men of memory" (Mbudyé) who are in charge of the transmission of historical knowledge since the Luba royal courts.

JEAN KABUTA

Video documentation of the performance of a trilingual Kasala written and delivered by the writer Jean Kabuta on the occasion of the inauguration of the public artwork *The Long Hand* by Sammy Baloji, 3 June 2022, Antwerp (30:05 min). Courtesy of the author and the Middelheim Museum Antwerp, Belgium

JEAN KABUTA

Questions in preparation of a Kasala. With kind permission of the author

SAMMY BALOJI

Kasala: The Slaughterhouse of Dreams or The First Human, Bende's Error in Boycotting the Creation, 2019, touchscreen. Courtesy of the artist. Collection Museum Rietberg Zurich, Switzerland

The video in the back documents the inauguration of Sammy Baloji's permanent sculpture *The Long Hand* in Antwerp in 2022, on the banks of the river Schelde which the transatlantic ships plied when traveling between Belgium and Congo and on which the first Congolese people arrived in Antwerp. A monumental sculpture, *The Long Hand* is derived from a Lukasa, and introduces this mnemonic device into public space in

Belgium. While classical Lukasas are made out of wood and ornamented with carvings, stones and shells, Baloji's sculpture is made of bronze (an alloy of tin and copper), bricks and recycled plastic—all of them composite materials relating to mining and trade. The brick platform under the statue is conceived as a place to sit, convene, and exchange stories.

For the inauguration of *The Long Hand*, Sammy Baloji invited scholar and writer Jean Kabuta to write a Kasala. Kabuta's performance of the poem in front of the sculpture is displayed on a screen in Hall 3. On the walls throughout the exhibition are a variety of questions to be read; they originate from a questionnaire that the writer sent to Sammy Baloji while preparing the performance in Antwerp. Ranging from factual information to more personal stories, the recited poem weaves together collective and individual memories and extends the invitation to the visitors. They are greeted when entering the exhibition with questions from a questionnaire that the writer sent to Sammy Baloji in advance of preparing the performance. The Kasala author is duty-bound to answer the questions himself prior to sending them to somebody. The performer thus links his or her trajectory to that of the subject with whom he/she enters in conversation.

An interactive digital touchscreen conceived as part of Sammy Baloji's installation in Hall 1 enables visitors to rearrange the order of the Kasala and thus intervene in the making of history. The work transposes a Lukasa into the digital sphere, and thus recalls the extent to which contemporary communication and memory depend on mineral extraction, and minerals from the Congo, such as coltan and copper, are key components of digital appliances.

ERIKA SULZMANN

Ekonda (Central Africa, Northern Congo region) – Dance festival (Nsámbo) in Isangi with several dance groups, part 1 & part 2, 1953 (publication year 1960, publisher IWF, Göttingen), digitised 16mm film (11 & 17:30 min). Courtesy of the German National Library of Science and Technology (TIB), Hanover

Internet videos with footage of folklore dance groups broadcast on Congolese (then Zaire) television as part of the „authenticity“ campaigns under president Mobutu Sese Seko in the 1970s.

SAMMY BALOJI

Rough cut of a filmic research on the folklorisation of cultural practices. 2019. Courtesy of the artist

Sammy Baloji's research on cultural transmission and the impact of colonialism and the mining industry on collective memory seeks alternatives to the folklorisation of cultural practices through colonial ethnography

and the national promotion of so-called “authenticity”. This is presented on the research table in the form of historical documents and film clips shown by Sammy Baloji as an insight into his ongoing research.

Extracts out of two short films made by Erika Sulzmann and Ernst Wilhelm Müller, titled *Ekonda (Zentralafrika, Nördl. Kongogebiet)—Tanzfest (Nsámbo) in Isangi mit mehreren Tanzgruppen* (11 & 17 min) filmed during the festivities held by the Congolese village Isangi when German visitors left it in 1953 are presented on a tablet. Exploring the continuity of folklorization from colonial times to presentday Congo, two more short film sequences are shown on this tablet: The first is a selection of dances and songs performed by professional groups and broadcast on national television under the presidency of Mobutu, and his “authenticity” politics (during the “Zairisation” period, starting in 1974). The second shows a performance by the group “Mbudje” (that alludes the traditional name of Luba guardians of memory) on a tennis court of the club “cercle Kilima” which is owned by the Gecamines factory in Lubumbashi. Sammy Baloji filmed the group performing in 2019 as part of his ongoing research on cultural transmission and the way it is affected by colonialism and the mining industry: The sports club was historically reserved for the Belgian managers of the Union Minière and their families. By filming them on the tennis court, in the vicinity of the Gecamines plant, Sammy Baloji highlights the connection between the transformation (through industrialization and the colonial economy) of indigenous cultures (here, the role of the Mbudje in Luba society) and the introduction of modern Western values (here, a sports circle).

Copper cross, craftsman not known to us today, probably Katanga region (Democratic Republic of the Congo), c. 1900 / purchased in 1979 by Erika Sulzmann in Butala at Sankuru (Shoowa, subgroup in the Kingdom of Cuba) / included in 1990 in the Ethnographic Studies Collection, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz Inv.-Nr. JGU ES 3083

Erika Sulzmann led one of the first major anthropological field research projects carried out by German scholars after World War II, namely the Mainz Congo Expedition (1951–1954). Her name is closely connected with the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at Mainz University, where she worked from 1948 to 1976; she made a total of eight research trips to the Congo between 1951 and 1979, almost all to the Lake Mai-Ndombe region. She was involved in the organization of the Ekonda dance group from village of Bobulamo in the Bikoro territory, Equatorial Province, who then took part in the performance “Changwe Yetu” at the Brussels World Fair in 1958, where the two films on display were shown at the Congo Pavilion.

Dr. Anna-Maria Brandstetter, anthropologist at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies at University of Mainz, recalls that films from the Institute for Scientific Film in Göttingen were shown as part of the curriculum for decades. She points out that they served an idea of a timeless rather than a dynamic perspective on social relations, as anthropologist Johannes Fabian trenchantly analyzes in his seminal book „Time and the Other“ (1983). Brandstetter suggests we think of the films as “scientific folklore”, and also emphasizes that the performances can be read against the grain because “the dances, even if they were appropriated differently, were cultural forms in their own right”. For the duration of the exhibition, Dr. Brandstetter, Dr. Hauke Dorsch, and students from the university will gather in the research room and continue their critical interrogation of colonial archives relating to the exhibition and beyond.

The copper cross presented in the room (called „wango“ in the Bashoowa language) was acquired by Sulzmann in 1979 during her last trip to Congo, in the village of Butálá (south of Sankuru, in the north of the Bashóówá region).

Scan of the diary of the Belgian officer Albert Lapière, documenting, among other things, a military attack in the colonised Congo in 1896. Courtesy of the collector. Private Collection, acquired 2019

Finally, a selection from the archives of Belgian colonial officer Albert Lapière is on display; in 1896, he participated in a military attack that looted several artifacts in colonized Congo, including a famous Luba mask that served for years as an informal emblem of the Royal Museum for Central Africa. In his journal the officer narrates the details of the looting. When the document was sold at auction in 2019, Congolese businessman and art collector Sindika Dokolo acquired it, and declared his intention to render its content accessible to Congolese audiences—a gesture that can be read as a step in reversing the colonial theft.

Sammy Baloji

Embossed copper plates, 2015, 60 × 42,5 cm. Produced in collaboration with workshop Eric van Hove / Fenduq, Marrakech.

Throughout the exhibition visitors will encounter several dozen copper plates with regular patterns embossed on them. They are components of a research that Sammy Baloji started in 2015. When sifting through the archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium, he became interested in photographs of scarification practices from DR Congo. While scarification takes part in systems of cultural codes, indicating the status of an individual in a given social context, ethnographic photography has marked the patterns as exotic, and has attributed fixed tribal classifications to them. Sammy Baloji proposed reconnecting with the images by relating them to people’s bodies: he started scanning a selection of them and changed the focus and the framing, cutting out the colonial setting. He then printed his photographs on a format close to the size of an adult’s torso.

Subsequently, Sammy Baloji experimented with transferring patterns from the photographs onto copper bas-reliefs. In collaboration with the metal workshop of artist Eric van Hove in Morocco, the transfer is achieved by hammering the patterns through the images, thus transposing them onto the underlying copper plates. Both materials, the photograph and the copper plates are strongly transformed by this operation. The process itself resembles scarification in that it inscribes a cultural code onto a (metal) surface.

As in many of Sammy Baloji’s works, copper, one of the minerals that shaped the mining history of the Katanga region for centuries, is used here as an artistic material. It is transformed through collective action, and shaped by the knowledge of Moroccan craftsmen, highlighting a cultural practice that exceeds by far its aesthetic dimensions.

In the exhibition, the copper plates are presented without pedestals and frames, foregrounding their status as remnants of a working process, neither a finished artwork themselves, nor residues, destined to disappear after use. Rather, they are shown here as material testimonies of a process of reappropriation: accessed via the colonial archive, the reconnection with these cultural traditions and their transmission occurs in Sammy Baloji’s work through their transformation.

Fundi Mwamba Gustave & Antje Van Wichelen

Fundi Mwamba Gustave & Antje Van Wichelen, *Ubatizo*, archive footage, 16 mm film loops, selection of films, changed every two weeks:

Film 01 _ Dr Mayeye demonstrating the difficult walk of a patient I, 420 frames

Film 02 _ Dr Mayeye demonstrating the difficult walk of a patient, 321 frames

Film 03 _ Mother in the garden at the source of toxic water, 164 frames

Film 04 _ Father with toxic water, 372 frames

Film 05 _ Woman fetching toxic water from the well, 489 frames

Film 06 _ Patients' movements in their enclosure I, 225 frames

Film 07 _ Patients' movements in their enclosure II, 168 frames

Film 08 _ Patients' movements during recreation, 268 frames

Featuring Matt Mwehu Muyumba (Dr Mayeye), Jenny Kongolo Munyongamayi (patient 01), Papa Bienveillant and his family, Sarah Mukadi Kadima (patient 02), Lambick Meli (patient 03).
Courtesy of the artists, with thanks to: LABO BxL, Peliskan, Biasasa Centre d'art, Boris Belay

The storyboards exhibited in the corridor leading to tower level 1 presage the scene that Antje Van Wichelen and Fundi Mwamba Gustave have created for Kunsthalle Mainz: *The Cabinet of Dr Fundi/Ubatizo* (the baptism). Dr. Fundi, the fictional alter ego of filmmaker Fundi Mwamba Gustave, is the main character of the experimental horror film on which the artists are currently collaborating. The doctor is introduced through his workspace, his desk, his utensils, his gloves, and his notebook. Conducting research on “monstrification”—a fictional phenomenon triggered by environmental pollution that leads to physical deformities and monster-like behavior—Dr. Fundi has recently travelled to a mining area. On site, he finds a box with rolls of 16mm negative film that document the work of his predecessor Doctor Mayeye who disappeared in 1929 while doing research on a mysterious disease caused by toxic mining. The same box also contains a 16mm camera and a projector, as well as a notebook with very precise instructions for plant-based film development.

Through this fantastic story, the artists re-enact the inescapability of toxic living conditions, which they have encountered while visiting highly polluted zones in the city of Lubumbashi where vegetables have turned yellow, and high cancer rates are prevalent among the inhabitants. The artists investigate how toxicity translates into film in the very material process of filmmaking. When they were told that the water darkened when

dwellers of a polluted region tried to disinfect it with chloride bleach, Van Wichelen experimented with developing footage in a mixture of water contaminated with sulfuric acid from a neighboring production plant, to which she added chloride bleach, vitamin C and bicarbonate. The toxic liquid revealed images that literally turned the film not only into a visual representation but a material testimony of the polluted conditions that generated it.

Franck Moka

Franck Moka, *Shimoko*, 2022/23, Multimedia immersive installation: sound, video, wood, sand, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist

Moving between and often bringing together sound, music, video, film and installation, Franck Moka's work addresses social, political, and historical issues in DRC and questions the relationships between human beings and the environment in which they live. *Shimoko* started from an article about the ubiquity of pollution caused by mining in Lubumbashi. It continued with several months of bibliographical research on environmental pollution in the city. The installation, developed in the frame of a residency at Picha in collaboration with Framer Framed, Amsterdam, and first shown at the Lubumbashi Biennale in 2022, consists of recordings of environmental sounds in mines and the responses among local people to the related pollution. In level II of Kunsthalle Mainz' tower, we encounter these recordings as snippets emanating from one of the five speakers in the room while standing on a shaking platform covered with sand and stones. The screen next to the platform complements the sound recordings with a video which shows close-up of eyes, skin, and minerals from the Katanga region.

Shimoko is the Kiswahili term for smoke. It refers to the smoke that rises from factory chimneys before ending up in the air and then being breathed by the residents of Lubumbashi. This pollution has dramatic health and environmental impacts for the local inhabitants and the environment in which they live. The shaking platform marks the presence of the mining industry and recalls the vibrations and even tremors felt during mining operations, which can also be perceived as a form of pollution. The city of Lubumbashi and its region are considered one of the country's economic centers. Industrial mining of cobalt and copper has developed strongly during the colonial period, and has built the structures still used by the current mining industry. It involves treating the soil as a source of raw materials with no consideration for the population. Franck Moka's installation invites us to physically experience sensations that convey the precarious nature of these living conditions.

Isaac Sahani Dato

Isaac Sahani Dato, *Topos*, 2022, installation of burned maps lasered in wood, aerial shots and a fanzine. Courtesy of the artist

Isaac Sahani Dato's works often explore the visibility of history, notably colonial vestiges in urban structures. His multi-media installation *Topos* is based on research on colonial maps that he found in the archive of the National Museum of Lubumbashi. Most of the maps were destroyed by a fire and only snippets remain. His choice of using wood, into which he lasers details from the maps (rivers, roads, borders, including the burned edges) is reminiscent of their destroyed state. However, it also emulates the violent process through which first the colonial, then the nation state, and international companies expropriate land, and inscribe new borders and names in the maps. Isaac Sahani Dato is concerned with the toponomy, the names of places, their renaming, and appropriation. In the colonial context of DRC, cities were built and named by colonial agents, as was Lubumbashi, which was then called Elisabethville.

Topos is a step towards unearthing the stories of those whose names were given to places in the Katanga region, but also of those whose names are not on the maps: Lusinga, for instance, was a chief from the shores of Lake Tanganyika who was decapitated by the Belgian army; or Maurice Mpolo, who fought for Congo's independence. Sahani depicts their images in a magazine, which he realized in cooperation with writers Jean Kamba and Costa Tshinzam. He assembles words, images and symbols drawn from tales, stories and legends linked to these characters. Both the maps and the magazine are fragments, snippets of history that have been eroded by colonialism. Sahani Dato's effort in identifying the places, deconstructing the colonial names attributed to them, and uncovering the erasures that these cartographic operations engendered, highlights the "toxicity" of the expropriation of land. The collaboration with the writers counterbalances this history with a poetic narrative that allows for reconnections to locally transmitted stories, and their speculative reinventions.

Kunsthalle Mainz
Am Zollhafen 3–5
55118 Mainz
T +49 (0) 6131 126936
Kunsthalle-mainz.de

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IMPRESSUM

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Yasmin Afschar (Interim director)
Stefanie Böttcher (Director on parental leave)
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Anna Marquis (PR, administration)
Lisa Weber (Head of Art Education)
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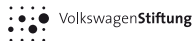
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