

Kiluanji Kia Henda

Kiluanji Kia Henda

Luanda, Angola, 1979

Lives and works in Luanda and Lisboa

Solo Exhibitions

- 2022** *There are Days I Leave My Heart at Home (Selected works from 2006 - 2009)*, Galleria Fonti, Naples
A Healing Path for Phantom Pain, Goodman Gallery, London
- 2021** *Something Happened on the Way to Heaven*, Galeria Avenida da Índia, Lisboa
- 2020** *Something Happened on the Way to Heaven*, MAN Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro, Italy
Kiluanji Kia Henda, M Leuven, Belgium
- 2019** *Concreto Blues*, Jahmek Contemporary Art, Luanda, Angola
- 2018** *The Island of Venus*, HANGAR Centro de Investigação Artística, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2017** *A City Called Mirage*, International Studio and Curatorial Practice (ISCP), New York, USA
In the Days of a Dark Safari, Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2016** *This Is My Blood*, public installation for the steirischer herbst Festival, Graz, Austria
Concrete Affection, Galleria Fonti, Naples, Italy
A City Called Mirage, Galleria Fonti, Naples, Italy
- 2014** *A City Called Mirage*, Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon
Solo show, Frieze Art Fair, London
- 2013** *Homem Novo*, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck
- 2012** *Homem Novo*, Art|43|Basel, Art|Statements, presented by Galleria Fonti, Basel
- 2010** *self-portrait as a white man*, galleria Fonti, Naples
self-portrait as a white man, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venezia
Trans It, SOSO Gallery, São Paulo, Brasil
- 2009** *Estórias e Diligências*, SOSO Gallery, Luanda, Angola
- 2008** *Portraits from a Slippery Look*, Goethe Institute, Nairobi, Kenya
Expired Trading Products, Blank Projects, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2007** *Between the two red telephones*, galleria Fonti, Naples
Ngola Bar, Centro de Arte de Sines, Sines, Portugal

Group Exhibitions

upcoming

- Sharja Biennial 15: Thinking Historically in the Present*, Emirates of Sharja
Fake news #2 - art, fiction, mensonge, La Condition Publique, Roubaix
group show curated by Marie-Laure Bernadac, Hangar Y, Paris
ERNSTHAFT? Albernheit und Enthusiasmus in der Kunst, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn
- 2022** *A Barganha*, curated by Khadyg Fares, colecao Moraes Barbosa, Sao Paulo
Il Cono d'Ombra: narrative decoloniali dell'Oltremare, curated by Marco Scotini, Maschio Angioino, Naples
Scorching Suns, Rising Seas. A public programme on environmental justice in the context of Sun & Sea at the Albany. Curated by Radical Ecology, The Albany and Serpentine Pavilion, London
The Sun is the Monument, VOLT, Bergen
- 2021** *The Mechanism of Ephemeral*, Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon
Fuckin' Globo, Globo Hotel, Luanda, Angola
Musing the Borders, Lagos Biennial, Nigeria
Hungry for Time - an invitation to epistemic disobedience with Raqs Media Collective, in the Arts Collections of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, AKbild, Vienna

- Parthenope, Lighea ed altre storie...*, curated by Galleria Fonti, Villa Doria d'Angri, Naples
A Future of Many Futures, Zurich Art Week, Zurich
Arles 2021 - Les Rencontres de la photographie, Arles, France *Projeto*
*Satellite-Anuario20 Performance Resetting Birds Memories*Galeria
Municipal do Porto, Porto
Utopia Distopia: il mito del progresso partendo dal Sud, Madre Museum, Naples
Somethin Happened on the Way to Heaven, Galeria Avenida de India, Lisboa
- 2020** *Global(e) Resistance*, Centre Pompidou, Paris
China Africa: Crossing the Color Line, Center Pompidou, Paris
Masculinities: Liberation through photography, The Barbican, London
Have you seen a horizon lately?, Macaal, Marrakech
- 2019** *Camera Lucida*, das weisse haus, Vienna, Austria
Imperfect Societies, Burlington City Arts, Vermont, USA
Artifact 2019: Parallel Crossings, Stuk Art Center, Leuven, Belgium
- 2018** *Memory Matters*, Skissernas Museum, Lund, Sweden
After the Future, The Atlantic Project – Civic Center, Plymouth, UK
Alter Ego, Galleries of Civic Affairs, Macau
2nd Yinchuan Biennale, MOCA Yinchuan, China
Busan Biennale, Busan, South Korea
Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea
Memory Matters, Skissernas Museum, Sweden
African Metropolis, Maxxi, Roma, Italy
ReSignifications: The Black Mediterranean, Cantieri Culturali della Zisa, Palermo, Italy
- 2017** *Prospect 04 New Orleans*, New Orleans, LA, U.S.
The Image of War, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm
Afrique Capitales Cape of Good Hope Here We Come, Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, France
Afrique Capitales, Parc de La Villette, Paris, France
Future Africa Vision in Time, National Museum of Nairobi, Kenya
Another Day of Life, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK
Concrete Futures, Close-Up Cinema, London, UK
South - South: Let me begin again, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Fuckin' Globo III, Hotel Globo, Luanda, Angola
- 2016** *New Revolutions*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Only In The Western World, Mario Mauroner Contemporary Art Salzburg-Vienna, Vienna, Austria
Ulla, Ulla, Ulla, Ulla! Marcianos, Intergalácticos e Humanos, Casa Nova Arte e Cultura
Contemporânea, São Paulo, Brazil
Constellations, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, UK
Fuckin' Globo II, Hotel Globo, Luanda, Angola
Built, World, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia, USA
The Incantation of the Disquieting Muse, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
New Revolutions, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg / Cape Town, South Africa
Museum (science) fictions - Museum ON/OFF, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Someplace Else Right Now, The Utility Muffin Research Kitchen – Frank Zappa Studio, Hollywood
Things Fall Apart – Red Africa, Calvert 22 Foundation, London
Kabbo Ka Mwuala (The Girls Basket), National Galley of Zimbabwe, Harare
Passages, Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh
- 2015** *Making Africa*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain
To Be Young, Black and Gifted, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
This Is Not My History, Rotor - Center For Contemporary Art, Graz, Austria
Resignifications, Museo Bardini, Florence, Italy
Making Africa, Vitra Design Museum, Basel
Art and the City Zurich:Public Sculpture Project, curated by Christoph Doswald, Zurich, Switzerland
After Year Zero, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland
2015 TRIENNIAL: SURROUND AUDIENCE, New Museum New York
Resignifications, Museo Bardini, Florence
The Divine Comedy, Museum of African Art - Smithsonian Institution, Washington
As Margens dos Mares, SESC Pinheiros, São Paulo
You Love Me, You Love Me Not, Galeria da Câmera Municipal, Porto
Fuckin' Globo, Hotel Globo, Luanda
- 2014** *Insert2014*, Mati Ghar - Indira Gandhi National Center of Arts, New Delhi
The Divine Comedy, Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt

- A Thousand of Him, Scattered: Relative Newcomers in Diaspora, Stills – Scotland's Centre for Photography, Edinburgh
 Producing the Common, Dak'Art - 11th Biennale of Dakar, Dakar
 Giving Contours to the Shadow, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (N.B.K), Berlin
- 2013** *Redesign Sintese*, 7^a Biennial of Sao Tome e Principe, Sao Tome e Principe São Tomé
The Shadows Took Form, The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York
Giving Form to the Impatiente of Liberty, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart
Close, Closer - The Real and Other Fictions, 3^a Triennial of Architecture of Lisbon, Lisbon
Mondays Begins On Saturday, First Bergen Triennial – Bergen Assembly, Bergen
Present Tense, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon and Paris
Tomorrow was already here, Museum of Contemporary Art of Monterrey (MARCO), Monterrey
The Beautiful Ones, Nolan Judin Gallery, Berlin
No Fly Zone, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisboa
- 2012** *Tomorrow Was Already Here*, Tamayo Museum, Mexico DC.
 Les Ateliers de Rennes-Biennale of Contemporary Art, Les Praires, Rennes
SuperPower: Africa in Science Fiction, Arnolfini Art Center, Bristol
You Are Now Entering, CCA_Derry, London-Derry
Double Bounded Economy- Reading the East German Photo Archive, Halle 14, Leipzig
Experimental Station, Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial Laboral, Gijón
- 2011** *Spacecraft Icarus 13 and Narratives Progressive from Elsewhere*, Basis voor actuele kunst (BAK), Utrecht
One caption Hides Another, BétonSalon, Paris
Synchronicity, Galerie Baudoin Lebon –Exhibition Program of PhotoQuai - Biental des Images de Munde, Paris
Experimental Station, Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo (CA2M), Madrid and Centro de Arte Laboral, Gijón
Other possible Worlds – Proposals on This Side of Utopia, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK), Berlin
Propaganda By Monuments, Contemporary Image Centre (CIC), Cairo
The Last First Decade, Ellipse Foundation, Lisbon
Há dias em que deixo o coração em casa..., BES Photo Prize, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo
The days of This Society Are Counted, Abrons Art Center, New York
- 2010** *There is always a cup of sea to sail in*, 29^a Bienal de Sao Paulo, Brazil
Self-Portrait As White Man, Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venice
Wild is the Wind, Savannah College for Art and Design, Atlanta, USA
Geografias Emocionais_Arte e Afectos, II Trienal de Luanda, Luanda
PICHA-Recontre de Fotografie, 2nd Bienal of Lumumbashi, RDC
Luanda: Smooth and Rave II, Museu de Arte Moderna, Bahia, Salvador
- 2009** *Black Atlantic*, ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bozen
Luanda: Smooth and Rave, Grand Theatre, Evento Bienal, Bordeaux, France; Museu Solar do Ferrão, Bahia, Brasil; Museu Nacional de História Natural, Luanda
Luanda: Anatomia da Velocidade, Experimenta Design Bienal, Braamcamp Palace, Lisboa, Portugal
4 angolan contemporary artists, SOSO Gallery, São Paulo, Brasil
Things and Stuff, Johannesburg Art Fair commissioned exhibition, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2008** *Farewell to post-colonialism*, 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China
Print '08, Bell-Robert Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
As you like it, Joburg Art Fair, Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2007** *Luanda Triennial*, Luanda, Angola
Luanda Pop_Check List, 52^a Biennale of Venice, African pavilion, Venice
Jene va travailler, Rosa Lux Gallery, Berlin, Alemanha
- 2006** *Arte InVisible*, representing Angola, ARCO Fair I Madrid, Spain
Sindika Dokolo Collection, SOSO arte Contemporânea, Luanda, Angola
SD OBSERVATORIO, IVAM, Valencia, Spain
- 2005** *AC_Angola Combatente*, SOSO arte Contemporânea, Luanda, Angola
MOVIMENTO, SOSO I LAX, Luanda, Angola
BAI ARTE 2005, Banco Africano de Investimentos, Luanda, Angola
Dipanda Forever, SOSO arte Contemporânea, Luanda, Angola

Artistic Residencies

2007 Artist-in-residency with the First Luanda Triennial, Luanda

2008 Artistic residency with Pro Helvetia and Swiss Art and Blank Projects, Cape Town

2010 Artistic residency in Venice invited by Fondazione di Venezia Foundation and Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venice

2011 Artistic residency at Cité Internationale des Arts invited by French Institute (Visa Pour La Creation) and the Center of Art and Research Betón Salón, Paris

2013 Artistic Residency invited by the Darat Al Funun – Khalid Shoman Foundation, Amman

2014 Artistic residency invited by the Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah

2017 Artistic Residency with International Studio and Curatorial Practice (ISCP), New York

Prizes

Frieze Artist Award 2017

Nominated as one of the *100 Leading Global Thinkers by Foreign Politics*

Winner of the National Prize of Culture and Arts, Ministry of Culture, Luanda, Angola, 2012

Nominated for the BES Photo Prize 2011, Lisbon

Nominated for the “Paul Huff Award 2011” and “Paul Huff Award 2013” awarded by the Photography Museum of Amsterdam (FOAM), Amsterdam

Winner of the “National Prize of Art and Culture 2012, awarded by the Ministry of Culture, Luanda

Collections

Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), USA

Frac Grand Large - Hauts-de-France, France

Kadist, Paris, France

Migros Museum, Zürich, Switzerland

Calouste Gulbenkian, Coleção de Arte Moderna, Lisboa

Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland

Tate Modern, Collection of Contemporary Art, London, England

Fondazione di Venezia, Public Collection, Venice, Italy

Sindika Dokolo, African Collection of Contemporary Art, Luanda, Angola

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia

Ellipse Foundation, Collection of Contemporary Art, Lisbon, Portugal

Collezione Sciarretta (Nomas Foundation), Private Collection, Rome, Italy

Metropolitana di Napoli, Public collection, Napoli, Italy

PLMJ Foundation, Public Collection, Lisbon, Portugal

Emile Stipp, Video Art Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa

THE ISLE OF VENUS

mixed media installation_sound, small statues, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions, 2018

During the months I lived in Venice where I created the project *Self Portrait as a White Man* (2010), on migration and the African diaspora in Europe, I was also confronted with the challenge of being a contemporary artist in a context where the excessive conservation of historical and cultural heritage had converted the city into a kind of open-air museum. Coming from a country that lives in constant metamorphosis, where access to and the preservation of history is poor and very often confrontational, it was important to me to be able to interact with this untouchable and imposing western heritage to reflect on current crises like emigration. Throughout my research, I became aware that the enslaved labour of African men had been important in building the ostentatious palaces in cities like Venice. The importance of the black Moors, both in literature and classical European art, is almost invisible, i.e. omitted. This flagrant omission certainly helps perpetuate many of the existing preconceptions surrounding emigration.

The installation at Hangar is a continuation of this project started in Venice. Besides questioning the legitimacy of a historical narrative that excludes the “other”, the project *A Ilha de Vénus* [The Isle of Venus] is also a reflection on one of the greatest human tragedies of the present day, which begins in the search for a dream that is only realised by crossing the Mediterranean. Pursuit of this dream often ends in a nightmare. The dream destination, like those who strive obsessively for love and beauty, has become an illusion printed on a postcard, one that feeds the courage and hope of whole communities to begin a journey into the unknown. The successive and uncountable tragedies in the Mediterranean have inured us to this situation, quashing our indignation. We are mere spectators of the slaughter.

As European cities gradually turn into museums and theme parks, the Mediterranean Sea has become a graveyard. With every capsized immigrant boat, and every black dot on the images of this installation, an island is born. An island originating in a continent in the south that does not embrace its children, a continent plunged in endless conflict of every kind and in the voracious decay of the common good. An island that drowns at the gates to another continent that lives encased in a kind of condom, enclosed within walls and maritime patrols, and in the eternal glory of a history riven with omissions. These archipelagos composed of floating corpses are part of a new geography of politics and disaffection. Bodies condemned to anonymity and deceived by the dream of a better life.

Kiluanji Kia Henda

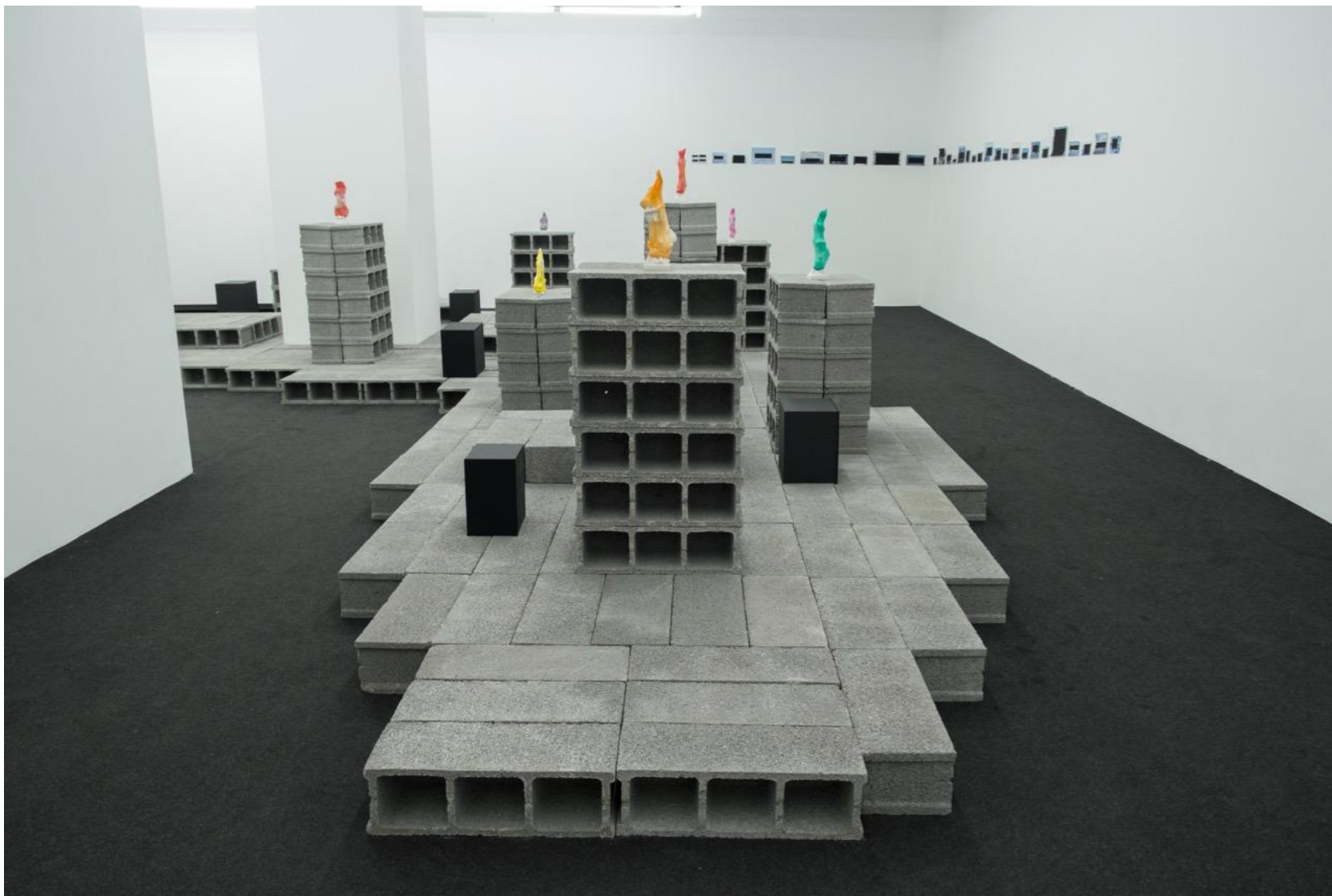


Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statuettes, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*
2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statues, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statuettes, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions

installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*
2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statues, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statues, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



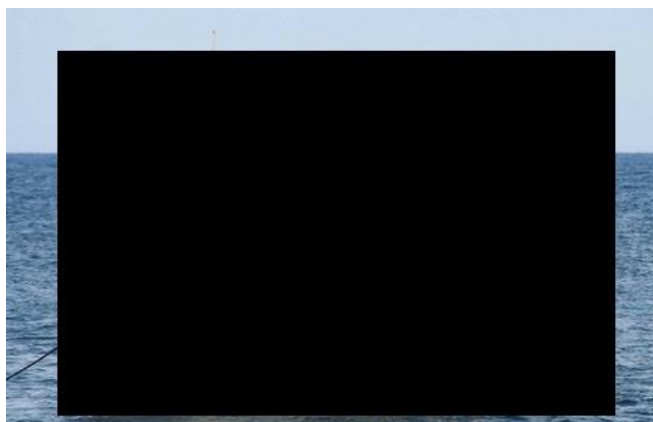
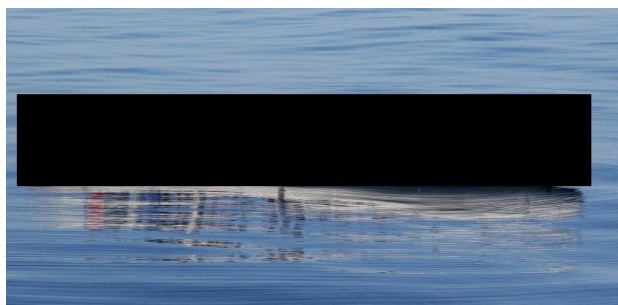
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statues, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



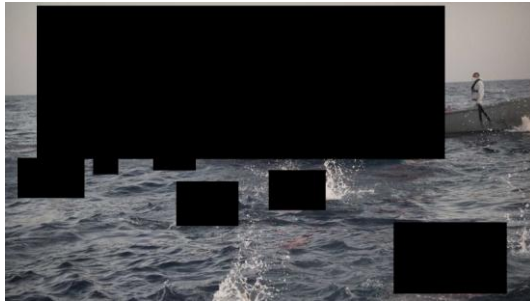
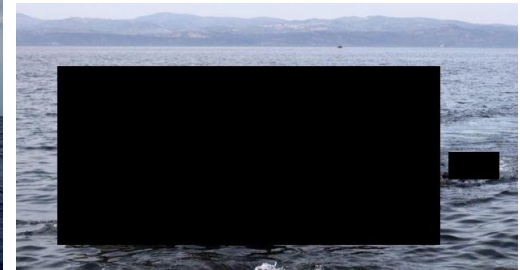
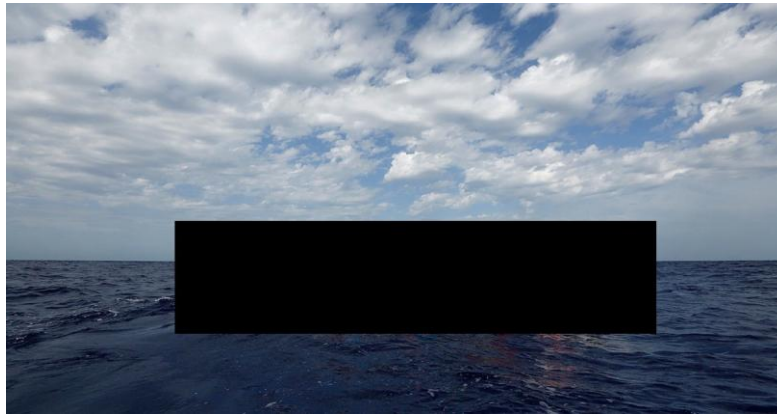
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statuettes, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statuettes, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Isle of Venus*

2018, mixed media installation_sound, small statuettes, condoms, bricks and 29 photomontage, variable dimensions
installation view, *Busan Biennale*, Busan, South Korea

INTERVIEW WITH RAPHAEL GYGAX FOR THE FRIEZE ART AWARD

RG: You live and work mostly in Luanda, the capital of Angola. In the past you lived also partly in Lisbon - and right now you're in New York for a residency. How does these two different surroundings inform your artistic practice?

KKH: Luanda is a city extremely "contaminated" by Western culture. A city that also had a crucial involvement in the creation of the culture in the Atlantic, from the time it was one of the largest slave ports in Africa, through the years of colonial oppression, to the armed conflict influenced by the Cold War geo- strategy. Events that go far beyond the narratives within the national borders or continental platforms. Traveling has become central to understanding the various historical events and social phenomena that characterize my work as an artist, but it is also part of an infinite and intimate pursuit of the self, myself in this case. In each travel I do, I find another piece of a complex puzzle of a being molded by multiple cultures. Luanda and Lisbon, or even New York, no matter how dissimilar they may seem, if we look back to a recent past there is a history that unconditionally unites them. This history made those cities and many others, a sort of a common place that we are due to share. In this common place that emerged from the many crossings of the oceans, permeated with affections and conflicts, nightmares and utopias, is where I situate much of my interest for my artistic practice and it's an endless source of inspiration.

RG: From its liberation until 2002 Angola was the place of a horrible Civil war. Could you tell me a bit more about the situation in which you grew up? How did this affect your generation of artists?

KKH: I was fortunate to have been born in Luanda, which was one of the least affected places during the thirty years of civil war. But of course, given the size and duration of the war, we lived around us a cruel social and human degradation, with the arrival of displaced people who came from the zones where the conflict was more intense. In the street where I grew up, operated the first orthopedic center of the country where hundreds of mutilated people lived. In addition to ex-military, there were also women and children who were victims of landmines. When we live in constant interaction with so much misery and suffering, our sense of humanity is constantly put to the test. The inability to change the situation makes us often indifferent to the dramas that surround us. It is an impulsive response of the immune system in order to get rid of the insanity and frustration, but at the same time, it is what gradually makes us colder and inhuman. In my generation of artists this had a profound impact on our training. To think of making a living from art in such a troubled context was seen as madness. It was an act of rebellion to keep poetry alive.

RG: I read that you're a "self taught artist" which is in the professionalized art world of today an exception. Can you tell me more about your interest in visual art and the beginning of your artistic practice.

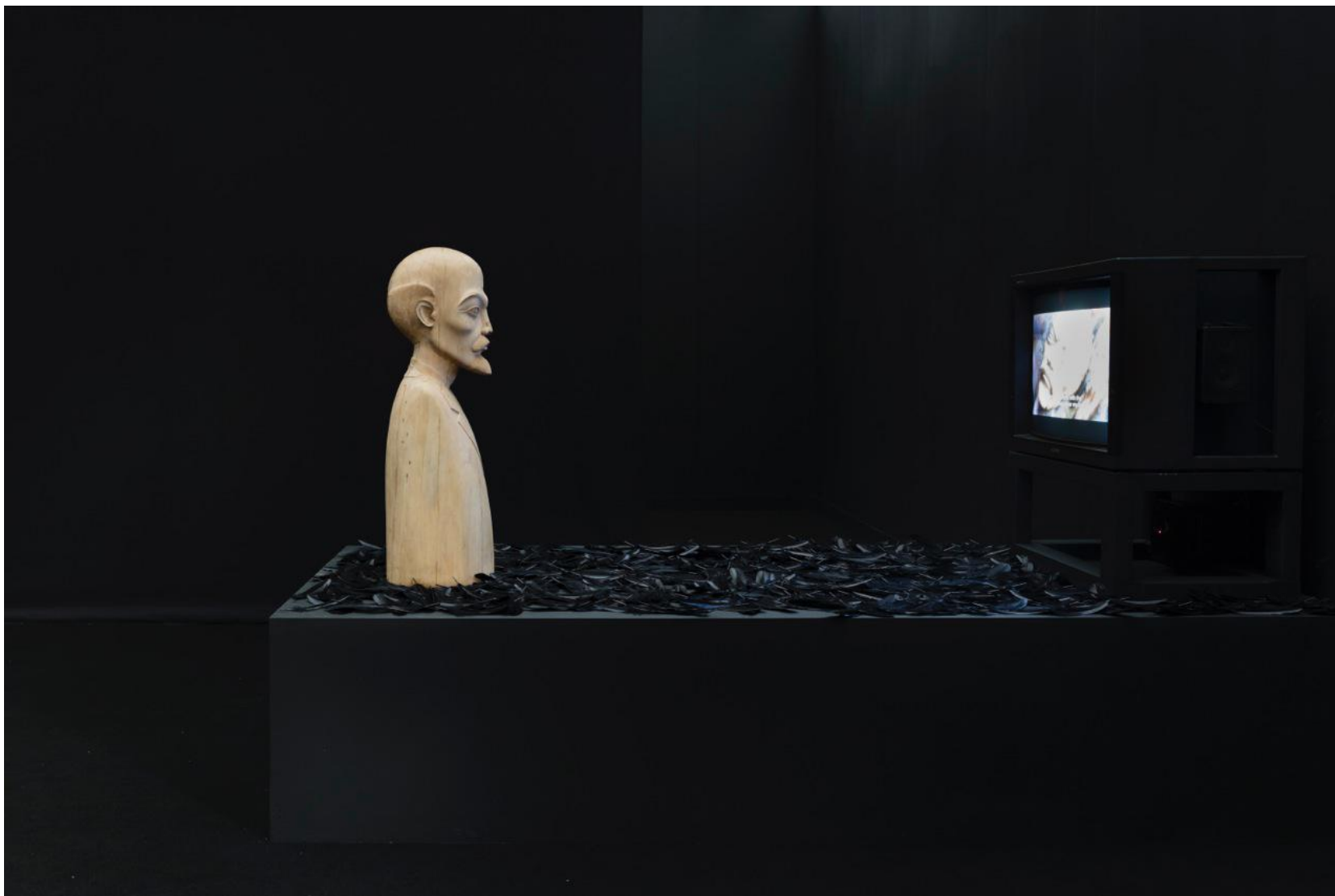
KKH: I grew up in a family environment where a passion for literature and photography was always cultivated. One of my older siblings came to have a dark room at our house with material bought in Moscow. Photography thus became the language I felt most comfortable in to materialize the stories I read and heard. During my adolescence I was also involved in music and theater projects, until I met the group of visual artists *Nacionalistas* in downtown Luanda. I then participated in the Luanda Triennale, which was an important platform at the beginning of my career. The visual arts thus became the propitious territory, where these multiple languages that were spontaneously arising in my life could coexist peacefully. But all this was a gradual process, the use of the different artistic means depends immensely on the topic that I intend to address. I have always had an enormous fascination with history, but I never wanted to be a historian. I prefer to preserve the freedom of being an artist and to be able to approach history without being bound by the rigor demanded by science. In other words, the legitimacy that fiction gives us to fantasize or even manipulate is also an excellent way of learning in such an unpredictable world.

RG: In an international art context you're known mostly as photographer. For Frieze Projects you will realized a performative installation. Can you tell us more about – why were you interested in using this medium?

KKH: The project "Under the Silent Eye of Lenin" is a reflection on the post-independence period in Angola, a country that at that time was politically of a communist tendency. But this period is also the moment when a new identity was being formed, towards the construction of a New Man. The generation that had fought for independence was finally busy with designing a new flag, composing a new anthem, painting murals and sculpting the monuments of the new heroes, in short, all the essential symbolism to create a nation. During this important historical period, art was a fundamental tool in the service of revolution. In this project, the performative element would be the most effective way of reproducing this vitality that brought about the revolution in Angola, a revolution that was greatly influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917. It interests me, how the impetuous representation of the worker and the peasant and his tools in the images of communist propaganda, abruptly diverge from the image of a body embalmed in a mausoleum, which was also one of the legacies of Soviet influence in Angola. The relation of the sculptor with the object to be sculpted has become the primary idea for this performance. The force in the arms of the individual who both, forges history and the face of an immortal myth, in the same act. In this project there is the intention to create an amalgam between two supposedly antagonistic or paradoxical dimensions, between materialism and spirituality, while at the same time speaking about the merciless interference of the Cold War superpowers in one of the bloodiest conflicts in Africa.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Under the Silent Eye of Lenin*, 2017, installation view Frieze Art Fair London



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Under the Silent Eye of Lenin*, 2017, installation view Frieze Art Fair London



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Under the Silent Eye of Lenin*, 2017, installation view Frieze Art Fair London

Concrete Affection

2016

Galleria Fonti Napoli Vulcano Solfatara Pozzuoli

Double appointment in Naples with the work by the artist Kiluanji Kia Henda.

Friday 27th of May at 6.30 pm at Galleria Fonti in Napoli the opening of the exhibition "Concrete Affection" and Saturday 28th of May at 10.30 at Vulcano Solfatara in Pozzuoli the opening of the exhibition "A City Called Mirage".

The Angolan artist Kiluanji Kia Henda (1979) who lives and works in Luanda (Angola's capital) and Lisbon, is one of the protagonists of the aesthetic wave that joins art and commitment, poetry and militancy. Different languages and tools - sculpture, video, photography, light boxes, to environmental sized works - trace, between truth and fiction, the history of his country, Angola, from 1975 year in which the Portuguese rule ends and Angola achieves independence to a long period of civil wars ended in 2002.

The artist represented his country at the Venice Biennale in 2007. He received the National Prize for Culture by the Minister of Culture in Angola in 2012 for his contribution to the internationalization of the Angolan culture and in 2014 the magazine Foreign Policy recognized him as one of the Leading Global Thinkers of that year.

At Galleria Fonti the artist presents the video installation "Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady" (2014) together with "75", a series composed by 75 photos taken from the video "Concrete Affection" and Chinese ink drawings.

Kiluanji Kia Henda's video (about 12") - presented in Italy for the first time as a side event of the 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture (2014) - is inspired by the book by the Polish journalist and writer Ryszard Kapuscinski entitled "Another Day of Life - Angola 1975". A text that documents the last days of Portuguese colonial rule in 1975 and which testifies a time of great unrest and changes experienced even in the "body" of the city of Luanda and of the whole country, followed by a long period of civil war before reaching independence. In particular, from the book by Kapuscinski, Kia Henda gets back the description of the exodus of the many Portuguese people leaving the country, which corresponds to the arrival in Luanda of thousands of Angolans forced by necessity to move from remote and rural areas to the capital city. In the midst of these movements - metaphorically between full, empty and full again - these rank "Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady" which emphasizes this "delicate and painful" step of the history of Luanda and the whole Angola.

In the video, in a completely empty city, a narrator out-field male voice, runs through streets, places, buildings, from morning to night. In 24 hours: that's the time to decide whether to remain or to leave the country. A common destiny for everybody is forced to migrate. The result? The narrator says: "All of the population's belongings are being packed. The houses are emptying and the boxes filling with furniture and trinkets. The city is being stripped of its memory. All that remains is its skeleton, the ground zero of history".

At Vulcano Solfatara in Pozzuoli, Kiluanji Kia Henda shows "A City Called Mirage".

Among fumaroles and volcanic phenomena, still active for 4000 years, has been installed "Fortress" (2014) a big structure made by iron tubes (8x 8 m) which reproduces the skyline of one of the many "City Mirage" - one for all Dubai in the Emirates - that seem to come from nothing and represent the urban boom imported from Occident to Middle East, Africa, South America. They call it "Dubalization". A strong symbol of power that becomes poetic and ironic complaint in Kiluanji Kia Henda's work.

"A City Called Mirage" is a work in progress, 2013 - 2014, composed by iron sculptures, photographs, drawings, video, installations. A complex project of more elements exhibited at the show "Art and the City Zurich: Public Sculpture Project" in Zurich in 2015, curated by Christoph Doswald.

The starting point is a journey to the south of Angola through the desert region of Namibia, where Kiluanji Kia Henda finds an abandoned building (riddle with bullet holes) with the sign "Miragem".

A sign that assumes a symbolic value and developed a series of linked projects: "Rusty Mirage (The City Skyline)", "Buildings (The Palace, The Fortress, The Temple, The Ministry)", "Instructions on How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home" and the video "Paradise Metalic".

Inside the ancient "Sala del Bianchetto" will be exhibited: the lightbox "Rusty Mirage" (2013) that reproduces the sign "Miragem"; the series of eight photographs "Rusty Mirage (The City Skyline)" (2013) that show the construction of the "city mirage" in iron in the desert of Al-Azraq in Jordan (one of that series has recently been acquired by the Tate Gallery Collection); the ironic installation of photographs Instructions on How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home; the video installation "Paradise Metalic" produced by Sharjah Art Foundation.



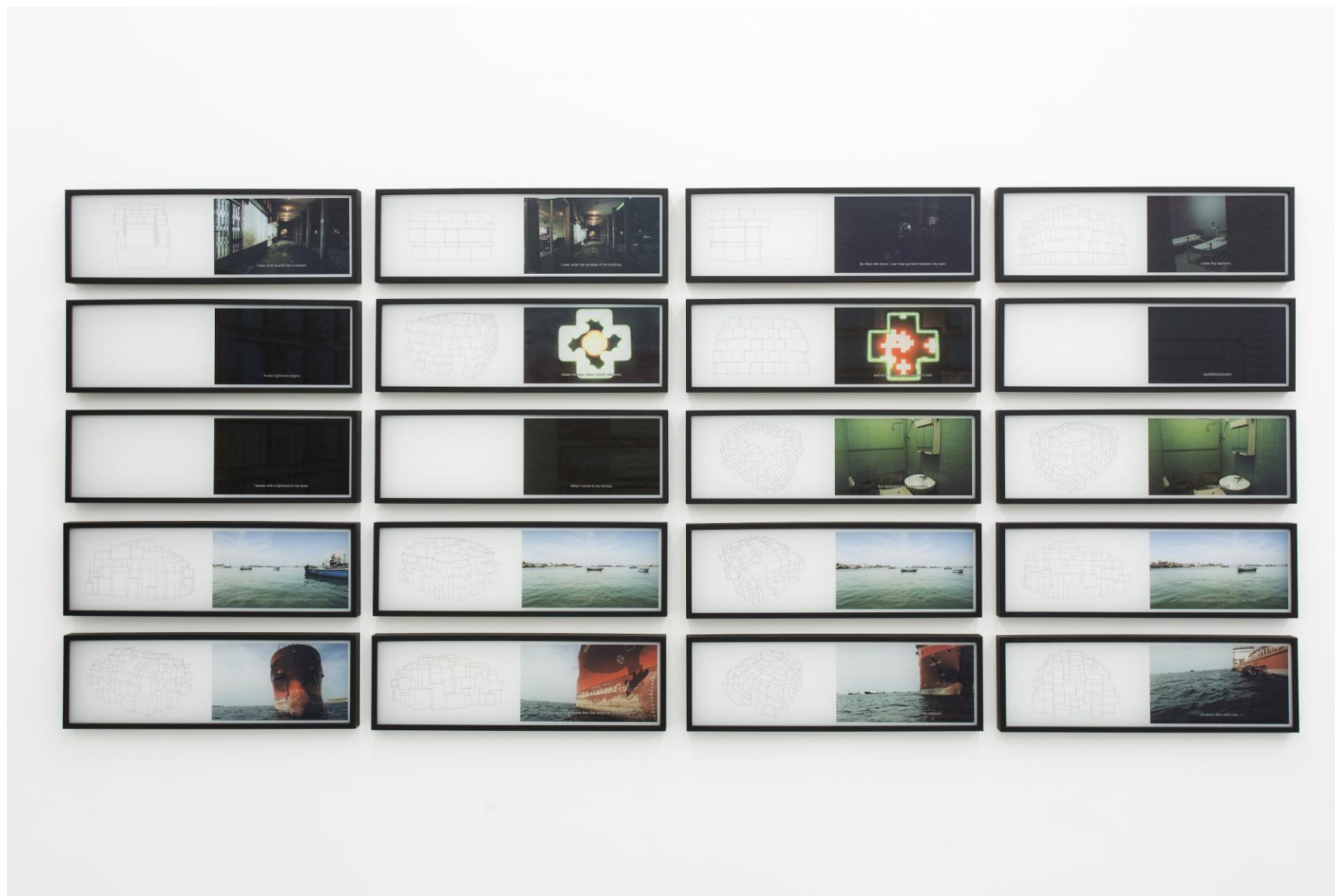
Kiluanji Kia Henda, 75, 2015 - 2016, 75 drawings with chinese ink and photograms printed on vegetal paper, cm. 18 x 63,5 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, 75, 2015 - 2016, 75 drawings with chinese ink and photograms printed on vegetal paper, cm. 18 x 63,5 each (detail)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, 75, 2015 - 2016, 75 drawings with chinese ink and photograms printed on vegetal paper, cm. 18 x 63,5 each (detail)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, 75, 2015 - 2016, 75 drawings with chinese ink and photograms printed on vegetal paper, cm. 18 x 63,5 each (detail)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady*, 2014, 12 minutes in loop, single channel, exhibition view



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Fortress (Buildings Serie)*, 2014-2016, iron, cm. 800 x 800 x 800, installation view, Vulcano Solfatara, Pozzuoli NA



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Fortress (Buildings Serie)*, 2014-2016, iron, cm. 800 x 800 x 800, installation view, Vulcano Solfatara, Pozzuoli NA



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Fortress (Buildings Serie)*, 2014-2016, iron, cm. 800 x 800 x 800, installation view, Vulcano Solfatara, Pozzuoli NA

Frieze Art Fair 2014
Galleria Fonti, Napoli

Focus Curated Section
Artist: Kiluanji Kia Henda
Project: *Rusty Mirage*

Project Description

Kiluanji Kia Henda was in the south of Angola when, crossing a city almost engulfed by the sands of the Namib desert, he noticed a rusty metal signboard on which the word '*Miragem*' (Mirage) was written. The word, eaten away by time, suddenly became a symbol – something extremely concrete and abstract. The photograph of that signboard would come to be the starting point for a series of pieces of work that formed a city called Mirage.

If there is one city which synthesises the illusory aspect of a mirage, it is Dubai. At once a pastiche and a microcosm, a model and a parody, a diagram and a mirage, Dubai is omnipresent. It is no coincidence that in various media one speaks of 'Dubaization', a reference to a series of urban phenomena based on a spectacular and virtual style of architecture with no attachment to the particular territorial context in which it is planted. This is an architecture which fills in seas, flattens hills and demolishes historic buildings to create urban projects commissioned over the internet, just like in Luanda, the artist's home town.

In *A city called mirage*, Kia Henda deals with the absence of dividing lines between the real city and its 3D model. The work exhibited cannot be clearly categorised. It consists of photographs and sculptures, performance art and video, fictional texts and documentary record all in one. It is more akin to a diagram than representation per se, since there is no distinction between expression and content.

The best examples of this multiple focus are *Rusty Mirage (The City Skyline)* – photographs of sculptures created in the Al Zaraq desert in Jordan – and the series *Buildings (The Palace, The Fortress, The Temple, The Ministry)* – silk-screen prints and photographs of sculptures created in the Maleha desert in Sharjah. The sculptures in the shape of metal lines look like drawings standing out from the landscape, silhouettes or skeletons of an imaginary city. Kiluanji based these linear sculptures on *sona*, sand drawings common to the Lunda Tchokwe culture (from eastern Angola). Storytellers draw the *sona* (plural of '*lusona*') in the sand as they tell fables. These drawings are authentic narrative constructs which condense the outline of the story told. Kia Henda transforms these ephemeral drawings into three-dimensional objects, imaginary structures in the desert. But unlike the Tchokwe, Kiluanji's diagrams trace virtual future stories unconnected to the past.

Next, and in counterpoint to the transparency and grandeur of *Rusty Mirage* and the series *Buildings*, arranged on a table is *Instructions on How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home*. These are instructions and images of megalomaniacal works of architecture built from simple everyday objects: a Palm Island made of matches, a Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest building) made of beer cans, and an undersea bedroom made of cling film. And the parody stems from the various possible interpretations. In the megalopolis, capital creates the world in its own image and likeness. Like all merchandise, cities are customised and disposable. This mass customisation is added to the production of sensory spaces. Architecture suddenly becomes a drug which bestows a 'hallucination of normality'.

In *Settings for an Imaginary Landscape*, four photographs of inorganic materials are used to construct a road in Namibia. What comes before is indistinguishable from what comes after: what is about to be used to build with already looks like it is ruined. The matter removed from below the surface and arranged in heaps seems to be part of the landscape. It is as if the underground matter has expanded on the surface. Could a repositioning of solids like this be capable of changing the Earth's axis or causing planetary collapse?

But if the city consumes the planet, it also consumes itself. The video *Mission* films workers removing the remains of a demolished building on a busy road on the outskirts of Luanda. By dumping the lorry's rubble into a mud pool, it is as if the men are freeing themselves from a corpse building.

In the same section of the exhibition is *Compacted Distance*, a photograph of a wall with two voids shaped like people. We see the landscape in the background through the two holes. Like a photographic negative, we are in the presence of an absence, the mark left by a past event. The wall is a fossil.

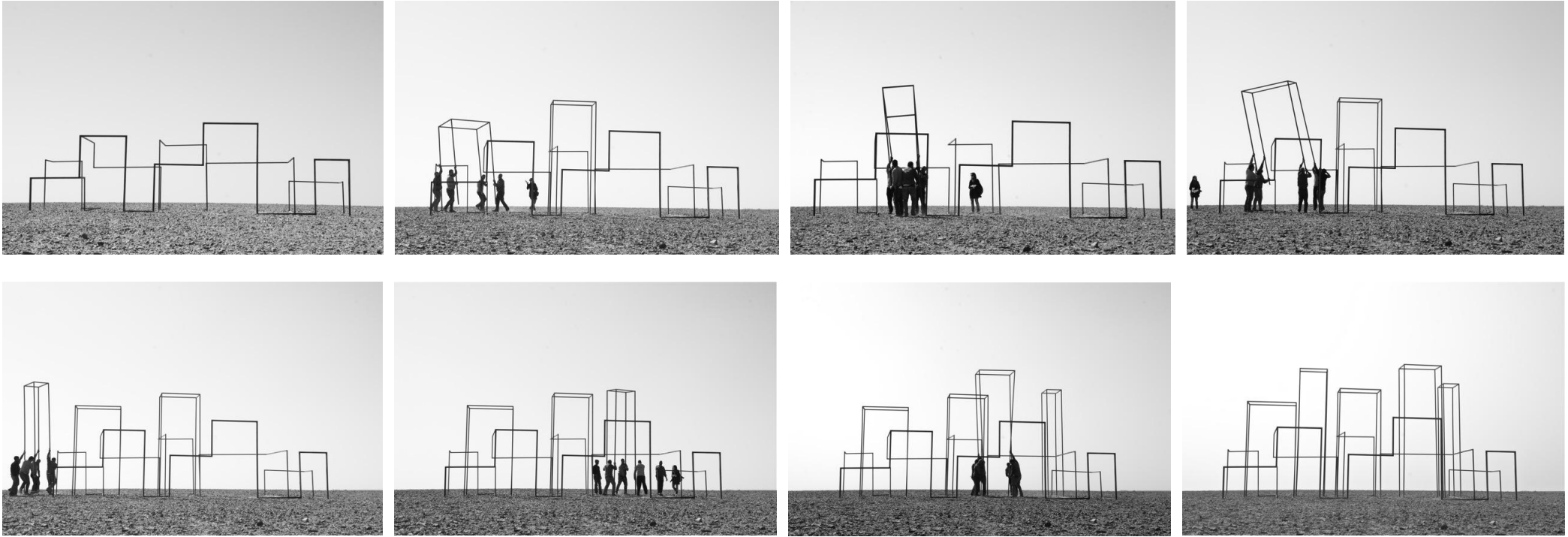
Finally, in the projection room, a video installation produces a synthesis of the exhibition. Both performance and sculpture, video installation and land art, *Paradise Metallic* tells the story of a man who tries to build an ideal city seen in his dreams. Identifiable in this video is a reference to the architectural culture of Islam which seeks to construct paradise by using geometric patterns: no other religion places as much trust in geometry as Islam.

For a year, Kiluanji took part in an international project in which he produced and collaborated with architects, artists, actors, musicians and technicians from cities like Amman, Dhaka, Karachi, Lisbon, Luanda, Manila, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Sharjah and Windhoek. *A City Called Mirage* is a complex exhibition which explores original approaches to a recurring theme in recent times: that of cities between the states of virtuality and desertification. Kiluanji uses (science and mythological) fiction and irony as ways of transcending the pessimism of hyper-criticism and the aesthetics of the ruin. Through humour we are made aware of just how ephemeral the largest human constructions are: all cities will be reduced to raw materials again, just like the metals removed from the ground will once again merge back into it.

Lucas Parente



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Rusty Mirage*, 2014, Frieze Art Fair - Focus Section, London



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Rusty Mirage (Skyline)*, 2013, eight photo prints on cotton paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 70 each, ed. 5/5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Rusty Mirage*, 2013, lightbox, cm. 150 x 50, ed. of 5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5

Instructions to create **your own personal Dubai at home**

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Create your own private Palm Island

Take a box of matches and with 18 matchsticks build your own artificial Palm Island. Carefully bend the matchsticks so they don't snap, put them together in the shape of a palm tree and use scotch tape to hold them in place. Then insert into a recipient which is permanently filled with water.

Warning: in the event of inserting the object in a toilet bowl, do not forget to remove it before flushing. This is to avoid an effect similar to a cyclone, which could cause irremediable damage to the island.

PT

Crie a sua Palm Island privada

Adquira uma caixa de fósforo, e com 18 palitos de fósforo construa a sua Palm Island artificial. Encurve os palitos de fósforos cuidadosamente para que não partam definitivamente, coloque-os juntos em forma de palmeira, e passe uma fita-cola para uni-los. A seguir coloque num recipiente onde tenha água permanentemente.

Atenção: No caso de colocar na pia (vaso sanitário), não se esqueça de retirar o objecto antes de descarregar o autoclismo para evitar um efeito similar a um ciclone sobre a ilha o que poderia danificá-la irremediavelmente.

AR

إنشاء جزيرة النخلة الخاصة بك

قم بإحضار علبة أعواد كبريت، وباستعمال ١٨ عوداً يمكنك اختلاق جزيرة النخلة الخاصة بك. كل ما عليك فعله هو ثني الأعواد بحذر وجمعهم بلاصق مناسب. ومن ثم وضعهم في إناء مملوء دائماً بالماء، تحذير: في حالة وضع أعواد الكبريت في المرحاض، يجب أن يتم إزالتهم لاحقاً قبل سحب المياه وذلك لتجنب الحالة المشابهة للإعصار التي يمكن أن تضر بجزييتك.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Customize the line of the horizon from your home as you wish

Use a roll of common kitchen tinfoil or any other shiny and malleable material and cut it into the shape of a city skyline. Then choose one of the windows (preferably one with a view of the street) and attach the skyline with scotch tape. The effect of the shiny tinfoil blocking your view will no doubt reflect positively on your day-to-day life and certainly contribute to raising your spirits.

Warning: by blocking the window in your home, it is likely that it will become hotter. It is therefore advised that you install air conditioning or some other efficient system of cooling.

PT

Molde a linha de horizonte da vista de sua casa como deseja

Use um rolo de papel de prata que é muito comum usar-se na cozinha ou outro material que seja brilhante e maleável, e recorte em forma do skyline de uma cidade. A seguir escolha uma das janelas, (que tenha vista para rua de preferência) e fixe o skyline com fita-cola. O efeito de brilho que bloqueia a sua vista por certo irá reflectir-se de forma positiva no seu dia – à –dia, e contribuirá de certeza para um melhor ânimo.

Atenção: Ao bloquear a janela de sua casa é provável que a casa se torne mais quente, por isso aconselhamos que instale um ar condicionado ou algum sistema eficiente de refrigeração do espaço.

AR

تغيير خط الأفق كما تراه من منزلك و كما يحلو لك

استعمل لفائف الفصدير شائعة الاستخدام في المطابخ، أو أي مادة أخرى ذات خصائص براقية وسهلة الاستعمال ثم قم بقصها على شكل خط الأفق لأي مدينة. ومن ثم اختر إحدى نوافذ منزلك - وبغضل أن تكون إحدى النوافذ المطلّة على الشارع - و قم بإلصاق خط الأفق الخاص بك باستعمال اللاصق المناسب. إن تأثير خط الأفق البراق هذا سينعكس إيجابياً على حياتك اليومية بلا شك كما و سيساهم في رفع معنوياتك.

تحذير: من عواقب سد النافذة في منزلك ارتفاع درجة الحرارة الداخلية. لذلك ننصح بتركيب جهاز لتلطيف الحرارة، أو استخدام أي وسيلة تبريد فعالة أخرى.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Build the most amazing tower

Organize a barbecue at home and buy three crates of beer and invite your friends around for a party. The chief aim of this is to empty the contents of the tins so you can start building your tower. As the tins become empty wait for the liquid consumed to take effect, and then carefully and gradually place one on top of the other until you have built an enormous tower.

Warning: close all of the windows in the house to avoid any potential strong winds which might jeopardise the tower's stability. Ensure the tins were all properly emptied since an accidental beer spill could make the floor slippery.

PT

Construa a mais alucinante torre

Organize um churrasco, compre três grades de cerveja e convide o seu grupo de amigos para um convívio em sua casa, com a principal missão de esvaziar o conteúdo das latas, para que se possa então dar início a construção da torre. A cada lata esvaziada, aguarde o efeito do líquido ingerido, e a seguir adicione cuidadosamente de forma gradual uma em cima da outra em ordem vertical até criar uma imensa torre.

Atenção: Fechar todas as janelas de casa para evitar supostas fortes correntes de vento que podem por em risco a estabilidade da torre. Certifique-se de que as latas foram devidamente esvaziadas, pois o derramamento acidental de cerveja pode deixar o solo escorregadio.

AR

بناء ناطحة السحاب الأكثر إنحلالاً
أقم حفل شواء لأصدقائك في منزلك. وقم بشراء ثلاثة صناديق من شراب الشعير. الهدف الرئيسي من هذا الحفل هو استهلاك محتويات محتويات علب الشراب المعدية للبدء بإنشاء ناطحة السحاب. عندما تفرغ العلب ويبدأ مفعول الشراب. قم بوضع واحدة فوق الأخرى بشكل تدريجي وبكل حذر حتى تنتهي من بناء الناطحة الضخمة. تحذير: قم بإغلاق نوافذ منزلك بإحكام لتجنب دخول أي رياح قوية قد تؤثر على استقرار وبنات ناطحة السحاب هذه واحرص على أن تكون العلب المعدية خالية تمام من محتواها حتى لا تصبح الأرضية سهلة الانزلاق.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Install an incredible artificial ski slope in your bathroom

Buy several ice trays whose cube size is slightly larger than the ice sold in shops and use kitchen utensils, e.g. bowls, to make as much ice as you can. Once you have a considerable amount, start building your ski slope in the bathtub or shower, carefully placing the blocks of ice to create the contours of the surface required. Besides being an excellent balancing exercise, this mini ski slope is also recommended as a therapeutic means of improving blood circulation.

Warning: if you live in a tropical country or a desert area, be careful to wrap up in warm clothing after spending time on the ski slope. That way you can avoid the thermal shock and major health risk caused by the extreme change in temperature.

PT

Instale uma incrível pista de esqui artificial na sua casa –de-banho

Compre várias cuvetes de gelo que o formato dos cubos sejam relativamente maiores do que o gelo vendido em lojas, e use utensílios da cozinha como tigelas para produzir a maior quantidade de gelo possível. Quando conseguir uma quantidade considerável de gelo comece a construção da sua pista na banheira ou num duche, colocando cuidadosamente as pedras de gelo criando relevos obedecendo a característica da superfície escolhida. Além de ser um bom exercício de equilíbrio, esta mini pista é também recomendada como terapia para melhorar circulação sanguínea.

Atenção: Se vive num país tropical ou em zonas desérticas, tenha o cuidado de agasalhar-se após cada sessão de deslizamento sobre o gelo. Evite o choque térmico causado pela mudança radical de temperatura extremamente prejudicial a saúde.

AR

إنشاء منحدرات جليدية مختلفة في دورة المياه الخاصة بك

قم بشراء أطباق مكعبات جليدية ذات أحجام تكبر بقليل عن تلك الشائعة في المناجر. وباستعمال أواني الطبخ. قم بصنع أكبر كمية ممكنة من الجليد وعندما تصبح هذه الكمية هائلة قم بإنشاء منحدر التزلج الجليدي الخاص بك في حوض الاستحمام مع مراعاة وضع المكعبات بحذر لخلق التدرج المرجو والمناسب. إضافة إلى أن التزلج رياضة توازن ممتازة. فإنها أيضاً طريقة علاجية لتحسين دورة الدم. تحذير: إذا كنت من سكان المناطق الاستوائية أو الصحراوية. عليك أن خذ من ارتداء ملابس دافئة بعد التزلج. وذلك لتجنب التغير أو الانتقال المفاجئ في الحرارة وما قد يسببه لك من مخاطر صحية كبيرة.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Turn your bedroom into an illusory underwater dormitory

Buy two rolls of kitchen cling film and build a kind of plastic wall and mountain it in square wood structure in your bedroom from the ceiling down to the floor, leaving a small opening so you can get into and out of it. For a more realistic effect, fill your bathtub and with your hand make smooth and continuous movements in the same direction to create waves. Record the sound and play it during the night. It may be essential to lubricate the cling film to accentuate the illusory effect. This sensation of being immersed in water is ideal for a good night's sleep and efficient for calming tumultuous relationships.

Warning: be careful when applying lubrication to the cling film as it may easily tear if too much force is used.

PT

Transforme o seu quarto num dormitório subaquático ilusório

Compre dois rolos de película aderente, e construa uma espécie de parede com uma estrutura de madeira coberta de plástico no seu quarto do tecto ao chão, deixando uma pequena abertura para que possa entrar e sair da cama. A lubrificação da película aderente poderá ser essencial para acentuar o efeito ilusório. Para que o efeito seja mais convincente, encha a sua banheira e faça suaves movimentos e contínuos na mesma direcção com a mão que causem ondas, e capte o som ponha a tocar durante a noite. A sensação de estar imerso na água é um eficiente indutor de sono, e pode ser um calmante eficaz para relações tumultuosas.

Atenção: Tenha cuidado com o processo de lubrificação da película uma vez que pode facilmente ser rompida se efectuar movimentos muito bruscos.

AR

تحويل غرفة النوم إلى مهجع وهمي تحت الماء

قم بشراء لفافتي تغليف شفافتين بلاستيكتين من تلك المستخدمة عادة في المطابخ. وقم بإنشاء جدار بلاستيكي عن طريق وضع غلاف التغليف حول هيكل خشبي مربع الأبعاد يؤطر غرفتك بدءاً من السقف وحتى الأرضية. مع ترك فراغ مناسب للدخول والخروج. عليك أن تراعي بأنّه قد يكون من الضرورة تزييت الغلاف البلاستيكي لتعميق التأثير الوهمي. لإعطاء تأثير أكثر واقعية، يمكنك ملء حوض الاستحمام الخاص بك بالماء ومن ثم تحريك الماء بيدك بنفس الاتجاه بحركات رقيقة متتابعة لخلق الأمواج. قم بتسجيل الصوت الناتج عن هذه العملية وأعدّه خلال الليل.

إن شعور الوجود مغموراً بشكل كامل بالماء كهذا يعتبر مثاليّاً لنوم هانئ. تحذير: يرجى مراعاة الحذر وجلب استخدام القوة عند تزييت الغلاف البلاستيكي لانه هين وسهل الدمج.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Magical luminous fountain in your kitchen sink

To install a luminous fountain in your kitchen, first obtain 2 100-watt spotlights, each equipped with a tripod for adequate lighting. Place as many glasses as possible into the sink and wait until they are completely full. Take the top of the tap off, leaving just the base so that the water can shoot upwards, turn on the lights and enjoy the relaxing effect of your own luminous fountain.

Warning: if you live in a region where conflicts due to water scarcity are frequent, we advise against using the fountain for more than five minutes.

PT

Fonte luminosa mágica no lava-louça de sua cozinha

Para instalação da fonte luminosa da sua cozinha precisa de adquirir 2 holofotes de 100 watts cada com os seus devidos tripés para uma iluminação decente. Coloque o número de copos possíveis de lava louça, e aguarde até os copos ficarem totalmente cheios. Desmonte a torneira, deixando somente a base para que água possa ser projectada em direcção vertical, accione o sistema de iluminação e desfrute do efeito relaxante da sua fonte luminosa.

Atenção: Se vive em zonas em que exista algum conflito para obtenção de água, tente minimizar o consumo de água, por isso desaconselhamos o funcionamento da fonte por mais de cinco minutos.

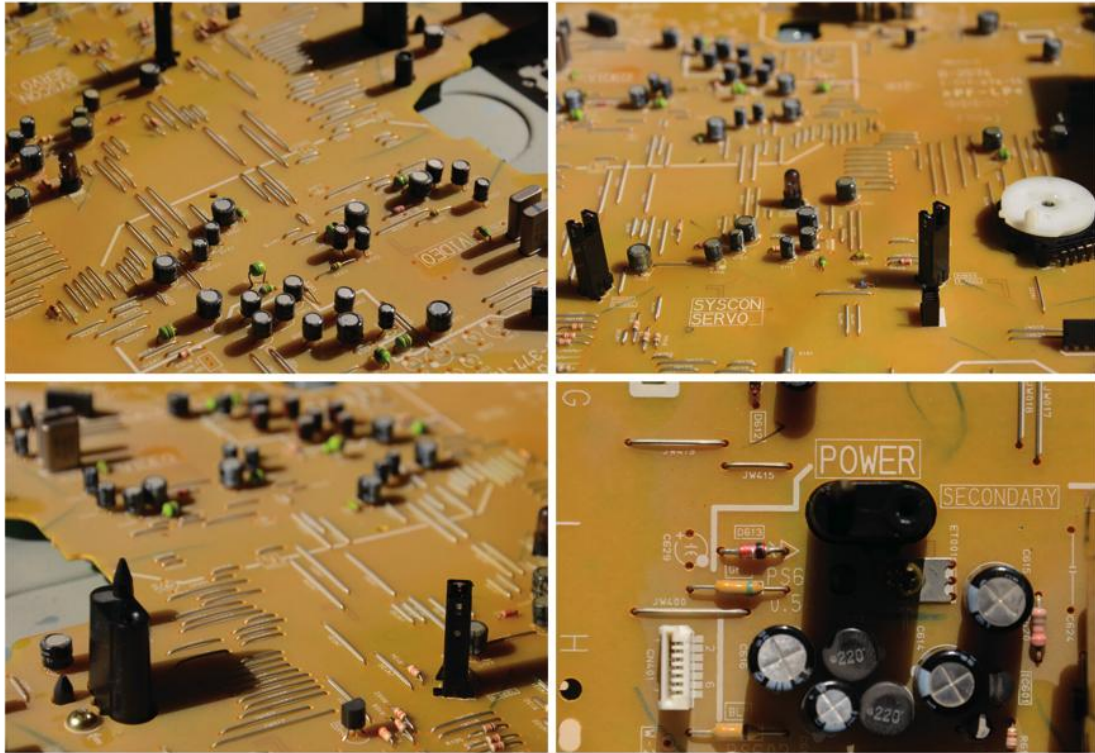
AR

إنشاء نافورة سحرية ومضيئة في مغسلة المطبخ

لإنشاء هذه النافورة، قم أولاً بإحضار ضوئين بقوة ١٠٠ واط لكل منهما. ثم أحضر منصب ثلاثي القوائم لإعطاء الضوء الكافي. ومن ثم قم بوضع أكبر عدد ممكن من الأكواب الزجاجية في حوض المغسلة وانتظر حتى تمتلئ الأكواب بالماء. قم بإزالة الجزء العلوي من صنوبر المياه الخاص بالمغسلة واترك الجزء السفلي فقط حتى تخرج المياه بقوة اندفاع متوجهة نحو الأعلى وقم بتشغيل الأضواء لتستمتع بعدها بأجواء الاسترخاء التي توفرها لك نافورتك المضيئة.

تحذير: إن كنت من سكان المناطق التي تنكثر فيها الاضطرابات بسبب ندرة المياه، ننصح بتجنب تشغيل النافورة لأكثر من خمس دقائق.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



EN

Aerial view of the city in your living room

Look through your cupboards at home for any old electrical equipment (preferably a VHS player) and remove the circuit board. Place the board on a table in the middle of the living room and illuminate with a tall floor lamp with a dimmer switch. Using the dimmer, alter the brightness of the light to suit the time of day in your home city.

Warning: circuit boards are highly toxic and some can even be radioactive. Please keep this aerial view of the city out of the reach of children.

PT

Vista área da cidade na sua sala de estar

Procure entre as antiquárias na sua casa qualquer aparelho electrónico antigo (de preferência um leitor de cassetes VHS) e retire a placa electrónica. Coloque a placa sobre a mesa de centro da sala e ilumine com um candeeiro de pé alto em que possa alterar a intensidade da luz, podendo assim ajustar as diferentes fases do dia na sua cidade.

Atenção: As placas electrónicas são altamente tóxicas, e algumas até podem ser radioactivas, por favor manter a vista área da cidade fora do alcance das crianças.

AR

رؤية المنظر الجوي لمدينتك من غرفة المعيشة

ابحث عن معدات كهربائية قديمة قد تكون موجودة داخل إحدى خزائن منزلك (يفضل أشرطة الفيديو القديمة). وقم بانزعاج لوحة الدائرة الكهربائية من الداخل. قم بوضع هذه اللوحة على طاولة في منتصف غرفة المعيشة. وقم بإضاءتها باستخدام أداة إعتام قابلة لضبط طول. باستخدام أداة الإعتام هذه. قم بتغيير قوة إضاءة الضوء ليناسب الوقت في مدينتك. حفرة اللوحات الكهربائية عالية السمية وبعضها يملك نشاطا إشعاعيا. الرجاء الاحتفاظ بهذا المنظر الجوي بعيدا عن أيدي الأطفال.

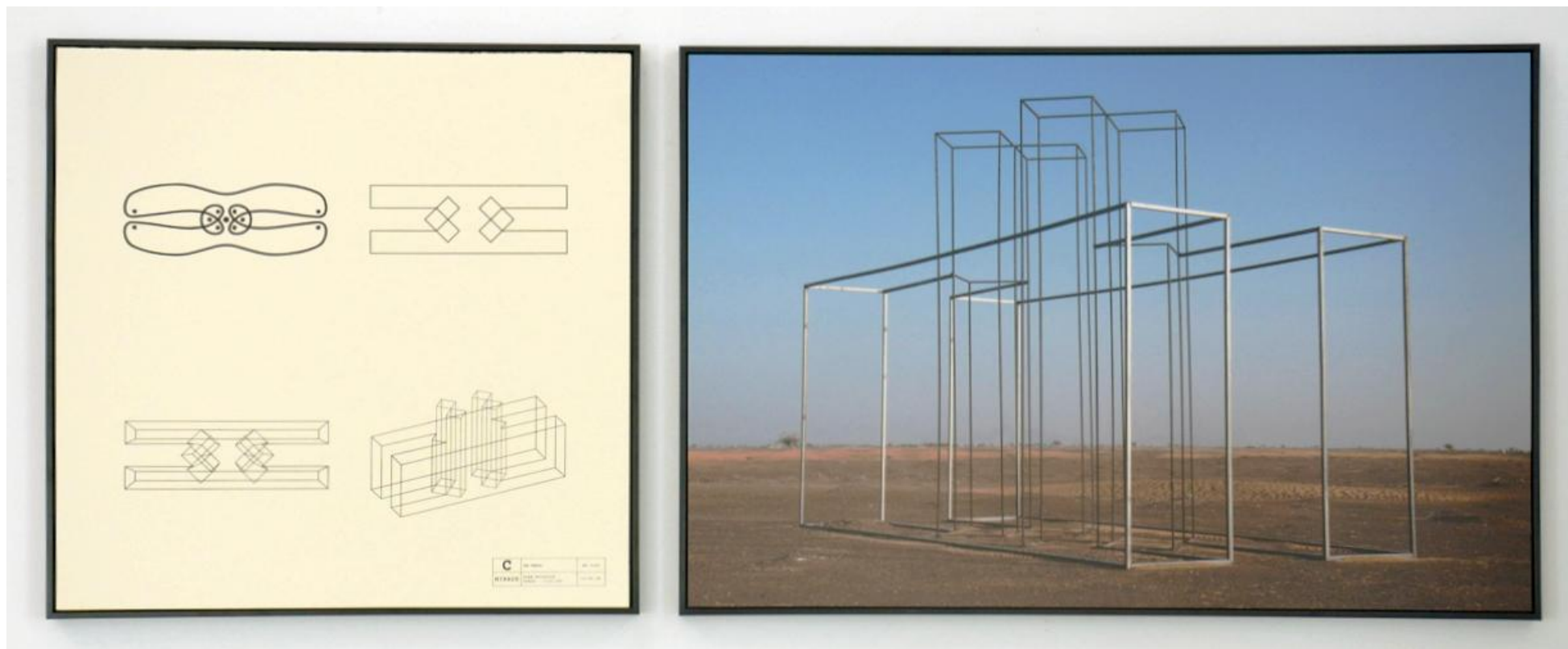
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Instructions to create your personal Dubai at Home*, 2013, prints of seven photographs and texts, cm. 60 x 40 each, ed. of 5 (detail)



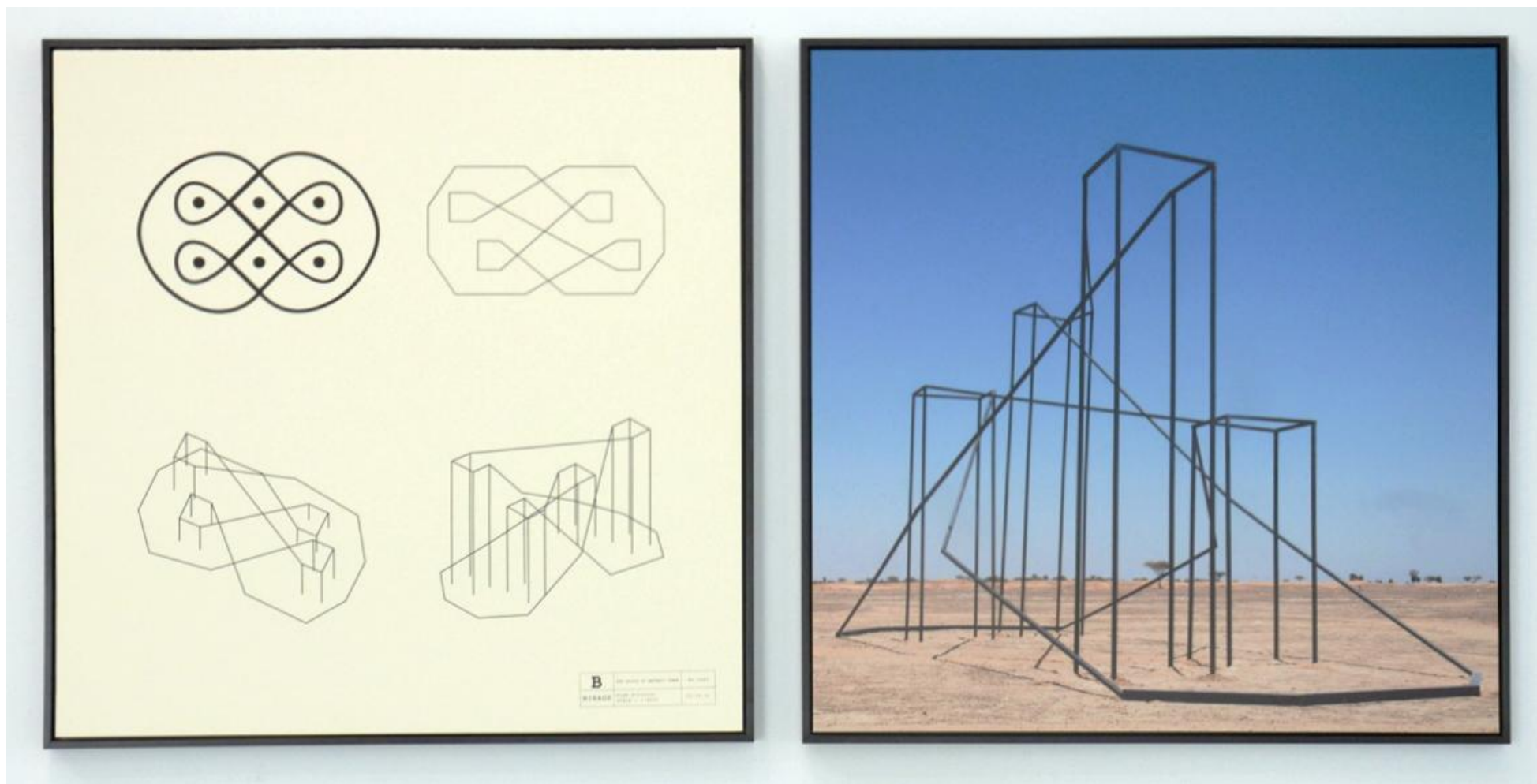
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Settings for an imaginary landscape I*, 2009,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 120 x 80 each



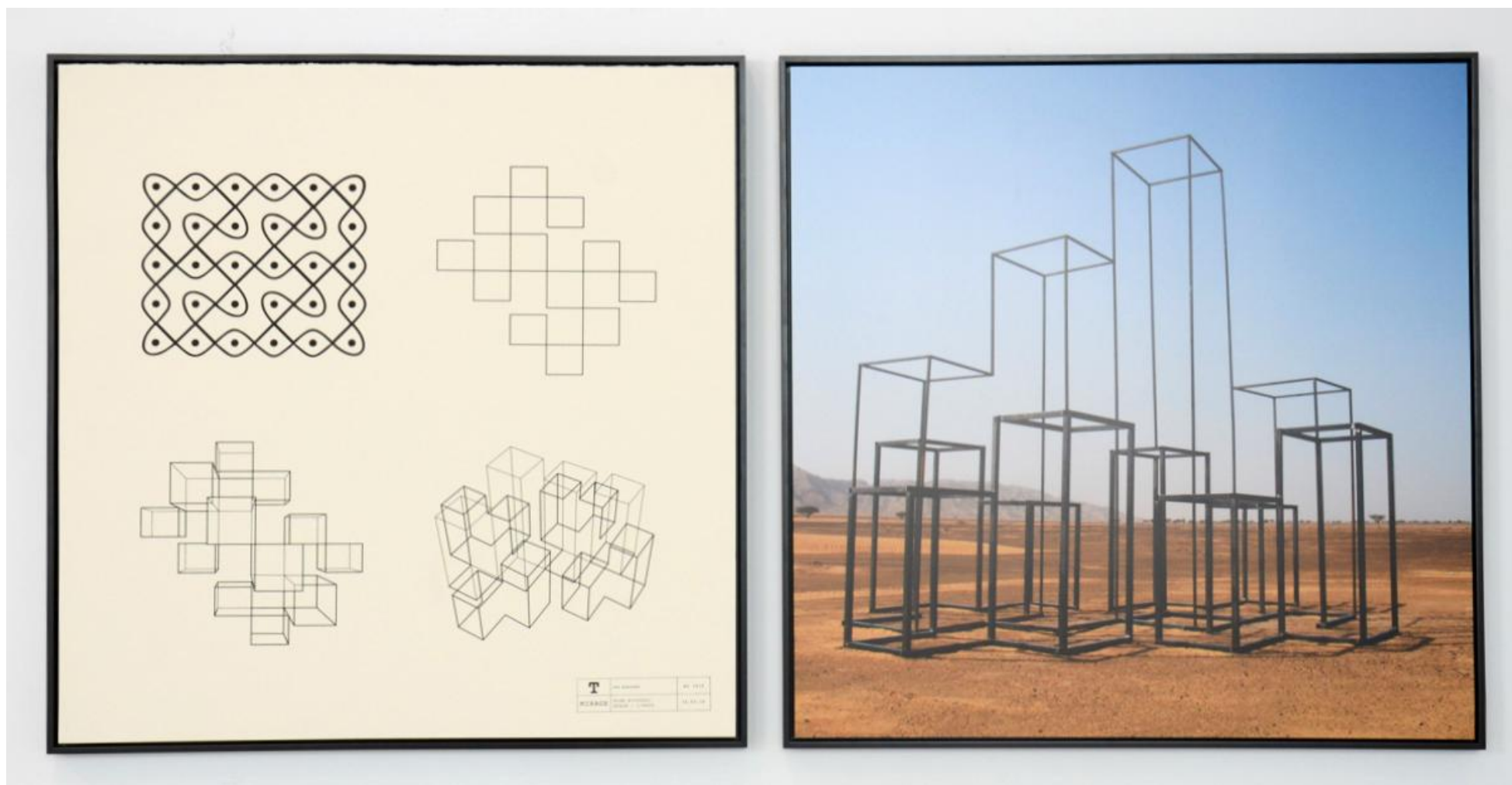
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Settings for an imaginary landscape II*, 2009,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 120 x 80 each



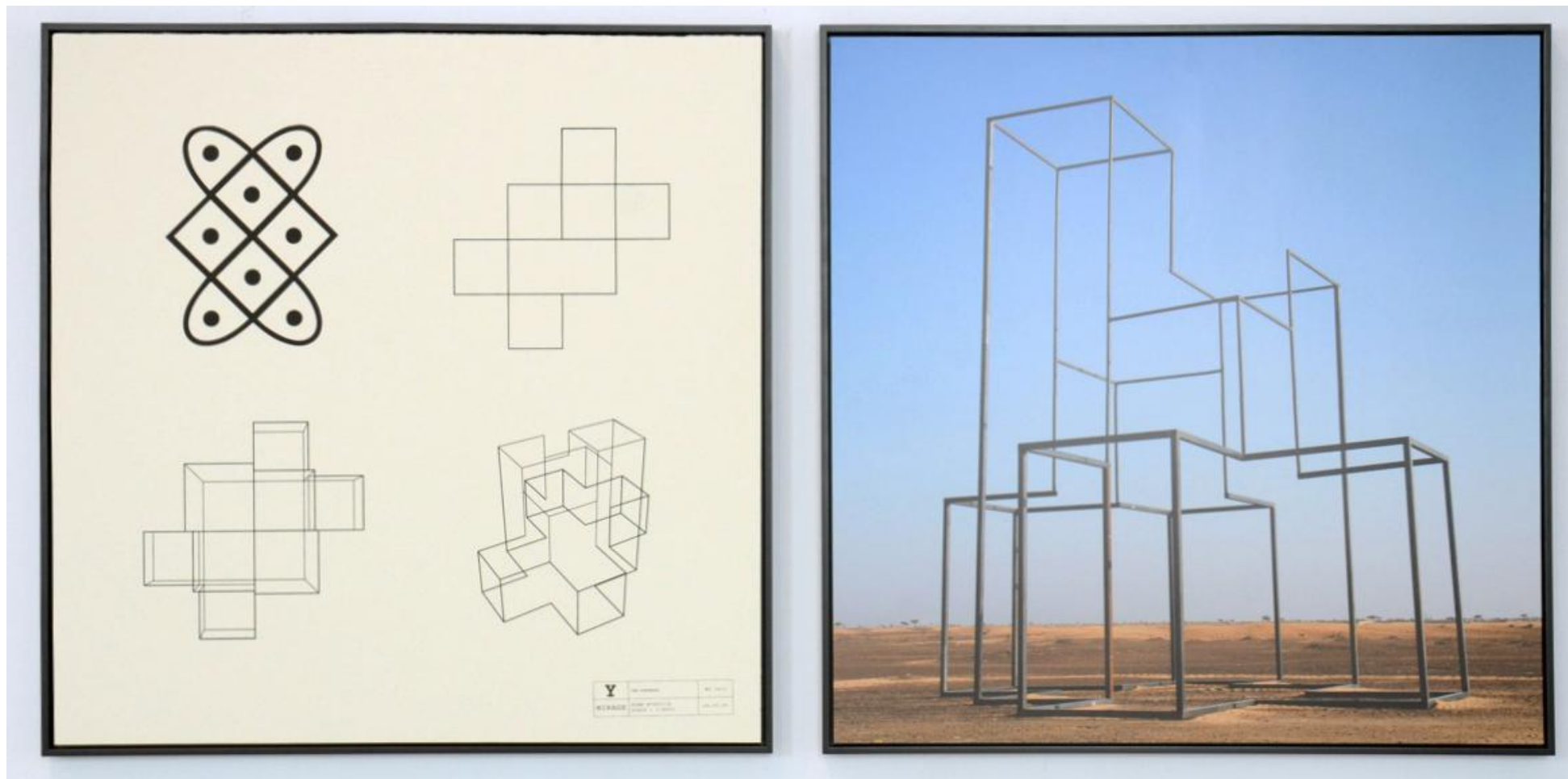
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Palace of Abstract Power - The building series I*
 2014, silkscreen and inkjet print on photographic paper, cm. 100 x 100/cm. 100 x 150, ed. of 5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Palace of Abstract Power - The building series II*
 2014, silkscreen and inkjet print on photographic paper, cm. 100 x 100 each, ed. of 5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Palace of Abstract Power - The building series III*
 2014, silkscreen and inkjet print on photographic paper, cm. 100 x 100 each, ed. of 5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Palace of Abstract Power - The building series IV*
 2014, silkscreen and inkjet print on photographic paper, cm. 100 x 100 each, ed. of 5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, Mirage On The Wall, 2015, inkjet print on matt paper mounted on aluminum, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Paradise Metalic*, 2014, multi-channel video, 23' in loop
(Comissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation)

Boxed Memories: *the projects Concrete Affection – Zopo Lady and 75.*

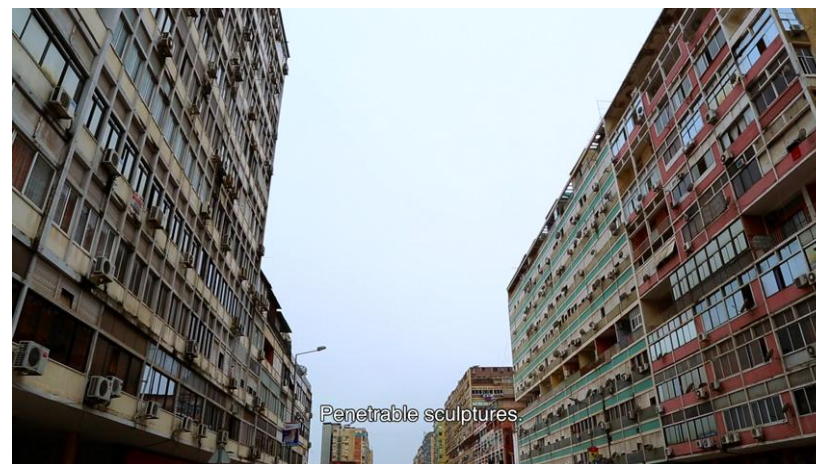
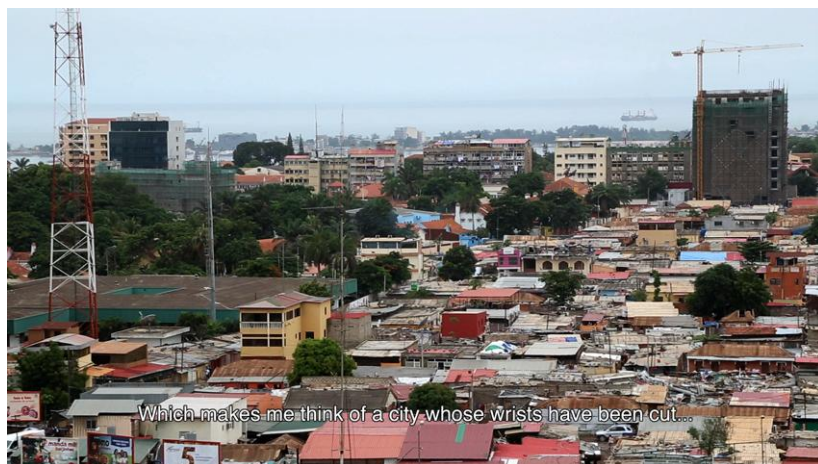
In 2013 , Kiluanji Kia Henda *was* invited by the collective Beyond Entropy Ltd , to realize a video art about the modern architecture in Luanda, as part of the exhibition *Ilha of São Jorge*, a project presented in the parallel events of the 14th Biennial Edition Architecture Venice. Inspired by the book of the polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinsky *More A day of life - Angola 1975*, one of the few written documents of Luanda during the months leading up to the independence of Angola, Kia Henda directed the short-film *Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady* (2014).

The historical period lived during the independence process in Angola is crucial when we approach the modernity in Luanda, not only the principles that founded the design of the modern city in the mid-twentieth century, but also a reading that allows us to understand the various social phenomena succeeding in in today's life in Luanda. The exodus of thousands of inhabitants in 1975, that were essentially the portuguese colonizers, is an important milestone that redefines irreversible and deeply the essence and structure of the Angolan capital , which then is occupied by thousands of families from the suburban areas and rural areas in the interior of Angola, changing the spaces according to their needs.

In his literary work , Ryschard Kapuscinsky describes a city in 1975 stripped of his memory during the great exodus when thousands of boxes were built and taken to the ports and airports. Kapuscinsky refers to this box cluster as a new city, keeping within itself the intimate objects of everyday life and the inseparable part of the memory of its inhabitants. The description of Kapuscinsky, became the main inspiration for the work 75, where Kia Henda creates a serie of 75 photograms and drawings in ink-of-china, which evolve from the construction of a single box , to the emergence of various crates scattered and overlapping designs that sometimes resemble buildings, and certain aspects of an imaginary urban landscape. Concluding the series of drawings with abstract structures, which the artist uses as video-installation for the projection of the short-film *Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady*.

As conunterpoint to the drawings, the artist use the video frames of *Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady*, which tells the story of an individual that has 24 hours to leave the city. The text of the film is an intimate and emotional description of modern architecture, while the images show a kind of cataloging the various buildings that constitute the city center of Luanda. Kia Henda filmed the city without the presence of a single person, a visual narrative similar to science fiction movies. In the empty space comes a new fictional town dubbed by the artist as Zopo Lady. The character who narrates the film in voice- off , is involved in a dilemma when confronted with the vital need to leave the place where he was born. Persuaded by fear and a vague hope, the description that makes the city sometimes confused with the woman he loves, which makes the decision to abandon it even more painful .

The umbilical relationship with a certain space, the fear of permanence and the impossibility of boxing affections, become the central plot of this short film. The representation with frames and drawings , as if it were a storyboard, makes possible the coexistence of the two cities: the ephemeral city made out of crates and the real city, with the deep marks of the rapidly change present on her surface.

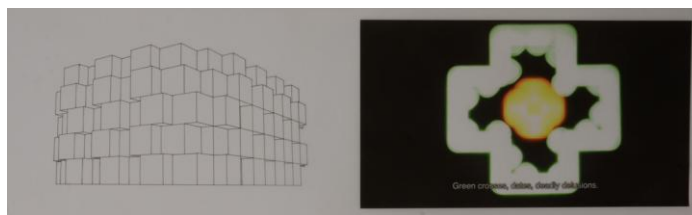
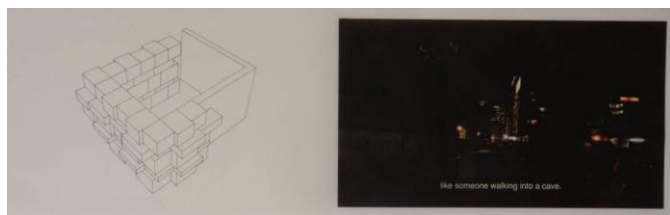
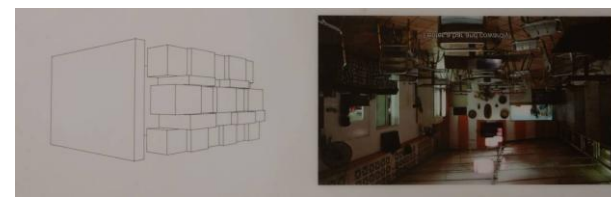
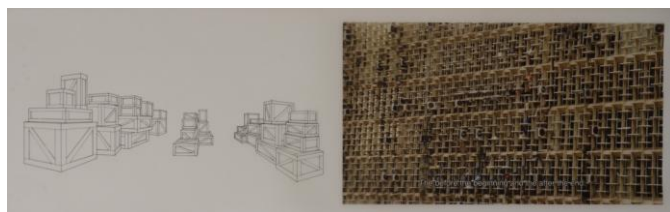
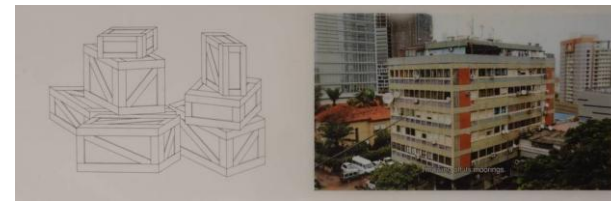
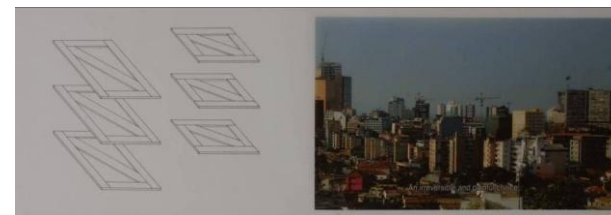
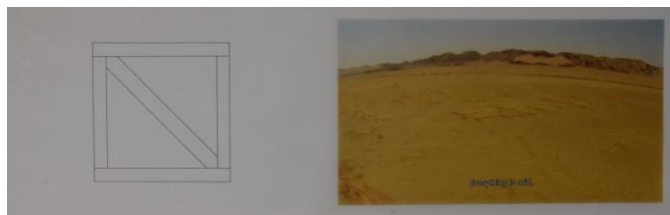


Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Concrete Affection - Zopo Lady*, 2014, 12 minutes in loop, single channel

<https://vimeo.com/96447193>
 Password: hendahenda



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Concrete Affection-Zopo Lady*
 2015, video-installation, word boxes, dimensions variable
 Installation view for the exhibition "As Margens dos Mares", SESC Pinheiros, Sao Paulo



Kiluanji Kia Henda, 75, 2015 - 2016, 75 drawings with chinese ink and photograms printed on vegetal paper, cm. 18 x 63,5 each (detail)

Homem Novo

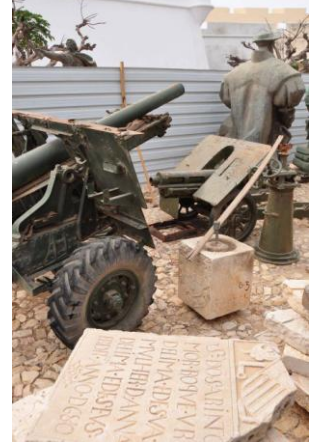
Art|43|Basel|2012

Kiluanji Kia Henda focuses his research on the complex postcolonial situation in today's Angola, a country contended for its oil resources by the world's superpowers during the Cold War from the year it gained political independence from Portugal (1975), and immediately afterwards ravaged by a brutal civil war (1975-2002).

For the project *Homem Novo*, realized specifically for Art|43|Basel, Kiluanji Kia Henda intends to raise questions around the historical heritage of the objects/monuments by proposing an alternative methodology for the transmission of history. A comparison with the historical gap caused by the decades of conflict in Angola, is one of his main focus of Kia Henda research who re-invents the history in attempt to find a fictitious interpretation of the present. The art in Angola has always being used as a tool for a social change during the post-independence revolution. This tool is now used to materialize the dream of the construction of a *Homem Novo* - *New Man*, a citation used in Angola's anthem, and one of the aims of the revolution for the birth of a new nation.

The series of portraits "*Redefining The Power - 75*", were made in the public spaces in Luanda where performers were invited to stand on the pedestals built for the Portuguese monuments during the colonial era. Those monuments were removed in 1975, year of Angola independence. Their removal were indeed the first act for the production of this project to become real. Appropriating the old postcards of the monuments seeing in their original places and doing a portrait of their actual situation, the artist uses those images as a reading of the changes of power showing us their relation with the public spaces. Meanwhile the performance of two young Angolan artists were an attempt to create a monument for the *Homem Novo* - *New Man*. During 35 years, those pedestals have been empty and almost invisible to the people in Luanda. The redefinition of the power appears as a representation of the false heroes but at same time uses the concept of the living sculpture, building an imaginary to perpetuate the sculpture as symbol of power and also an ephemeral materialization of a dream.

The series of photographs entitled *Balumuka (Ambush)*, is a focus on a transit zone, a kind of open-air cemetery, in the Fort of São Miguel in Luanda - Angola, where various historical objects are left in a state of latency, where history seems to be replayed in private conversations. Some ancient statues of the Angolan history were placed temporally because of the reparation of some public squares so, among Russian tanks and cannons of the cold war, is therefore possible to find the figures of the Angolan sixteenth century heroin Njinga Mbandi, the first Portuguese king Afonso Henriques or Vasco da Gama, together with monumental statues of conquerors from the colonial era. Those objects were moved whilst it was being decided what future awaited them, thus showcasing the problems posed by the idea of a place of preservation that would allow Angola to remember its history. The military armament displayed around this place causes some tension among the monuments and, at same time, shows the different stages and technologies used by the conflicts along the centuries.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Balumuka – Ambush*, 2010, photo print mounted on aluminium,
n°12 photos cm.30 x 40 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining The Power I (Serie 75 with Shunnuz Fiel)*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining The Power II (Serie 75 with Shunnuz Fiel)*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining The Power III (Serie 75 with Miguel Prince)*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



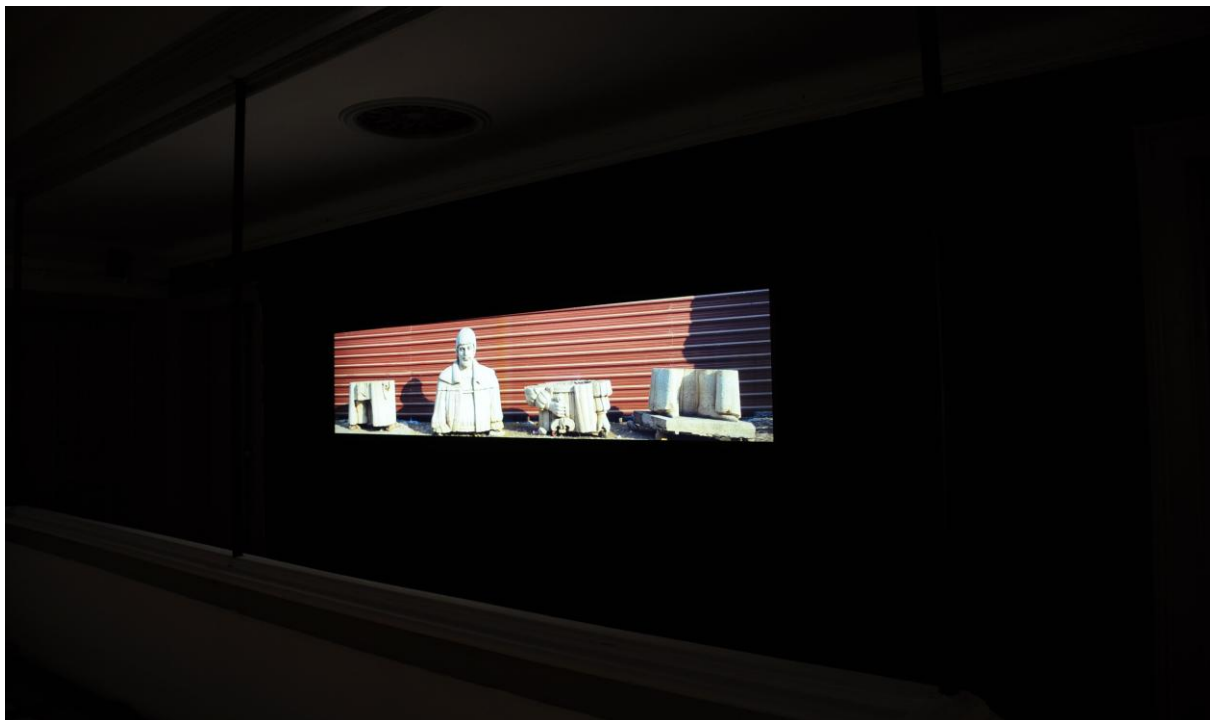
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining The Power IV (Serie 75 with Miguel Prince)*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining The Power (with Didi Fernandes)*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Transit*, 2008, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Transit*, 2009, photography print on light box, cm. 55 x 243cm,
installation view from Luanda: Anatomia da Velocidade, Experimenta Design, Lisboa



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Transit (Special Edition)*, 2009,
installation view from Luanda: Smooth and Rave, Evento, Bordeaux

Self-Portrait As a White Man

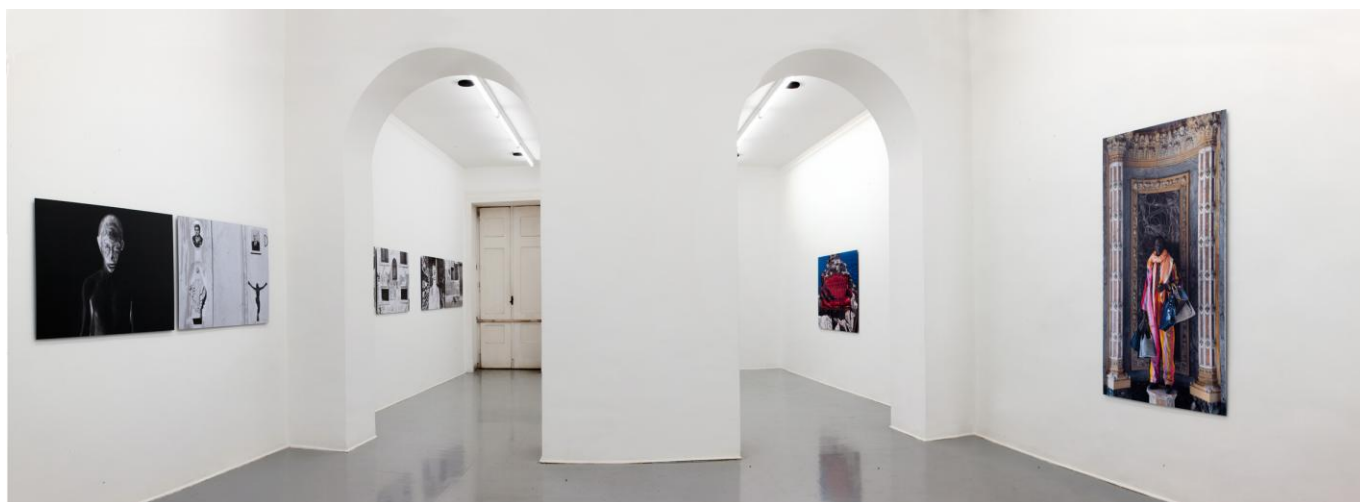
Kiluanji Kia Henda, Luanda (Angola), 1979, focuses his research on the complex postcolonial situation in today's Angola, a country contended for its oil resources by the world's superpowers during the Cold War from the year it gained political independence from Portugal (1975), and immediately afterwards ravaged by a brutal civil war (1975-2002). The perennial conflict between human history and the current state of affairs of the societies in the contemporary world is thus a central theme for Kia Henda. In his works, the artist is committed to challenging the false claims created by the ideology related to the birth of European nations and racial politics in relation to black people, the "Moors", which have massively imposed the European colonial model, spreading it all over the world, thus also helping to create a hybridization of aesthetics, where tribal culture is deformed by the imagination of mass culture. These observations are the background against which the works created by Kia Henda during his stay in Venice should be viewed.

In *The Great Italian Nude*, for example, the artist looks on traditional painting and the representation of the other, proposing the idea of the black male nude, which in the history of Western art has hardly ever been represented. Depicted in a classical pose, Kia Henda's subject immediately calls to mind Edouard Manet's famous *Olympia*. When it was exhibited at the Salon in Paris in 1865, critics universally denounced its unashamed immorality - for the first time a painter had dared to show the nude figure of a prostitute at work. Besides being ironically provocative, Henda's work elicits from the viewer a reflection on art as a historical document.

Among the various works, the exhibition will also feature the photo portrait *The Merchant of Venice*, which pays homage to William Shakespeare's play set in late sixteenth century Venice. The male figure photographed in the interior of the Istituto Veneto per le Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, is a Senegalese musician, who, like so many other immigrants, is forced to accept whatever job comes his way just to survive, even at the cost of the proverbial "pound of flesh". But the link with the Shakespearean play is even more evident in the installation of three caskets where the artist invites the viewer to be reflected in three mirrors holding the riddles.

The theme of the profound isolation and estrangement of human beings runs through the self-portraits titled *Self-Portrait as White Man* and the video work *Fluxus*, showing a black man racing along the meandering streets of Venice and those in the Angolan capital, trying to divest himself of his appearance to then disappear into the sea. This disappearance seems to be the harbinger of an inevitable truth. The video soundtrack, especially composed for this video by musician Emmanuel Wiltsch Barberio to further enhance the images, includes a mixture of samples of Christian sacred music and cyclical animist rhythms, typical of Angola.

Mara Ambrozic



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Self-Portrait As a White Man*, 2010,
exhibition view, galleria Fonti, Napoli



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Great Italian Nude*, 2010, inkjet print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Merchant of Venice*, 2010,
inkjet print mounted on aluminium, cm. 180 x 110



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *EXPECTATIONS, MEMORIES AND PRESENT TENSE (GOLD, SILVER, LEAD)*, 2010, mixed media, 3 caskets, mirrors, photos, postcards and text, cm. 80 x 100 x 60 each
(Installation view for the exhibition "Self-Portrait As White Man"
in Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venice, Italy)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, exhibition view,
Self-Portrait As White Man, 2010
 Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, Venice, Italy



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Othello's Fate (Act I)*
2013, digital print on matt paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 110 x 170



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Othello's Fate (Act II)*
2013, digital print on matt paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 110 x 170



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Othello's Fate (Act III)*
2013, digital print on matt paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 110 x 170



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Othello's Fate (Act IV)*
2013, digital print on matt paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 110 x 170



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Othello's Fate (Act V)*
2013, digital print on matt paper mounted on aluminium, cm. 110 x 170



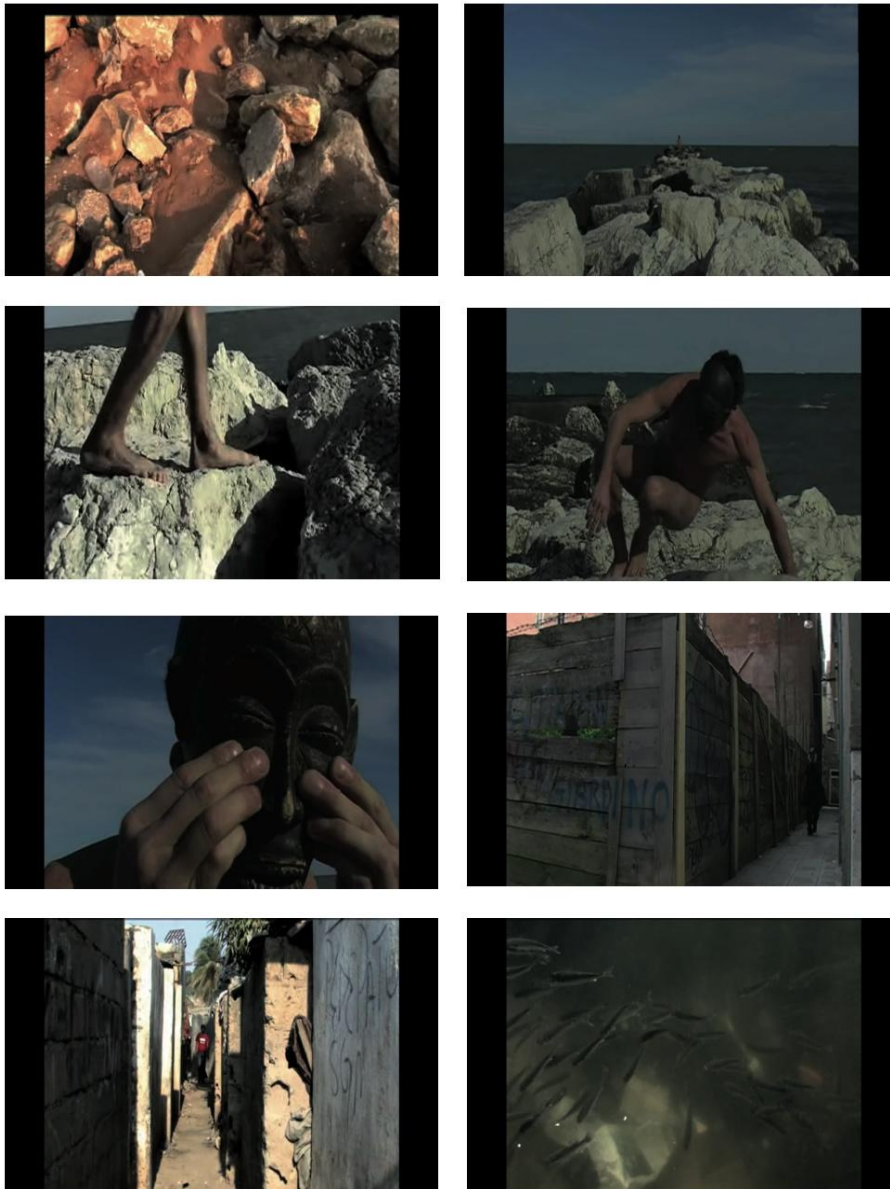
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Self –Portrait As A White Man I*, 2010, inkjet print diptych mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Self –Portrait As A White Man II*, 2010, inkjet print diptych mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Self –Portrait As A White Man III*, 2010, inkjet print diptych mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Fluxus*, 2010, video in loop, color, 6'

Los muertos de mi felicidad – Versus Carnaval

The reasons (if there are any) for the existence of the carnival change in line with the history of the country. The carnival is always a means of political and nationalist intervention and propaganda. After independence, it became a kind of manifesto, a pagan feast and at the same time political as a celebration of victory over colonialism and chaos over order. It was then given the name “o Carnaval da Vitória” (“The Victory Carnival”). Later, in the early '90s, when Angola began to take its first steps towards democracy, “Victory” was cut out and it became just plain “carnival” again.

I always had a great admiration for the carnival, because besides the big parade along the Marginal, there are costumes and performances by individuals or small groups, and many of them are radical. The masks and clothes are homemade. It is all a massive show of creativity. I was always interested in doing something with these images, but I didn't want to do anything as obvious as describing and documenting the party. So the idea was to contradict the basic elements of the carnival – the colour, the public space, the collective party – and invert all of this by creating the photos in a studio, in black and white and with isolated people.

I believe you can sense the party behind each person portrayed. It shows a side of Luanda stylised by its own inhabitants, a whole expressed through individual fragments. It is a work which is completely spontaneous. I worked with a team who would go out and invite people to come to the studio to take a portrait. The people would come into the white studio with total freedom to show how they experienced that 24-hour delirium. The idea was precisely that of catching this ephemeral madness in a flash.

But parties are not necessarily joyful. Even the songs of the '70s and '80s have sad lyrics. The people dance over this sadness. They are at a party but they cry too. Freedom from colonialism itself is not a state of pure joy, just like the end of the civil war. There's a whole nostalgia behind it. It is a joyfulness which reminds us of the dead, like in that song by the Cuban Silvio Rodriguez: *soy feliz, soy un hombre feliz y quiero que me perdonen, por este día, los muertos de mi felicidad*. It's like a mixture of carnival and the Mexicans' Day of the Dead. A day in which the ghosts of the war return to visit the celebration of the survivors.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Versus Carnaval*, 2009, six photography prints mounted on aluminium, inches 59,1 x 39,4/cm. 150 x 100 each, ed. 5/5



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Baluba*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Lady G*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Alove Ove*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Kimbuada*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *De Matiti*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Mussorongo*, 2009, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100

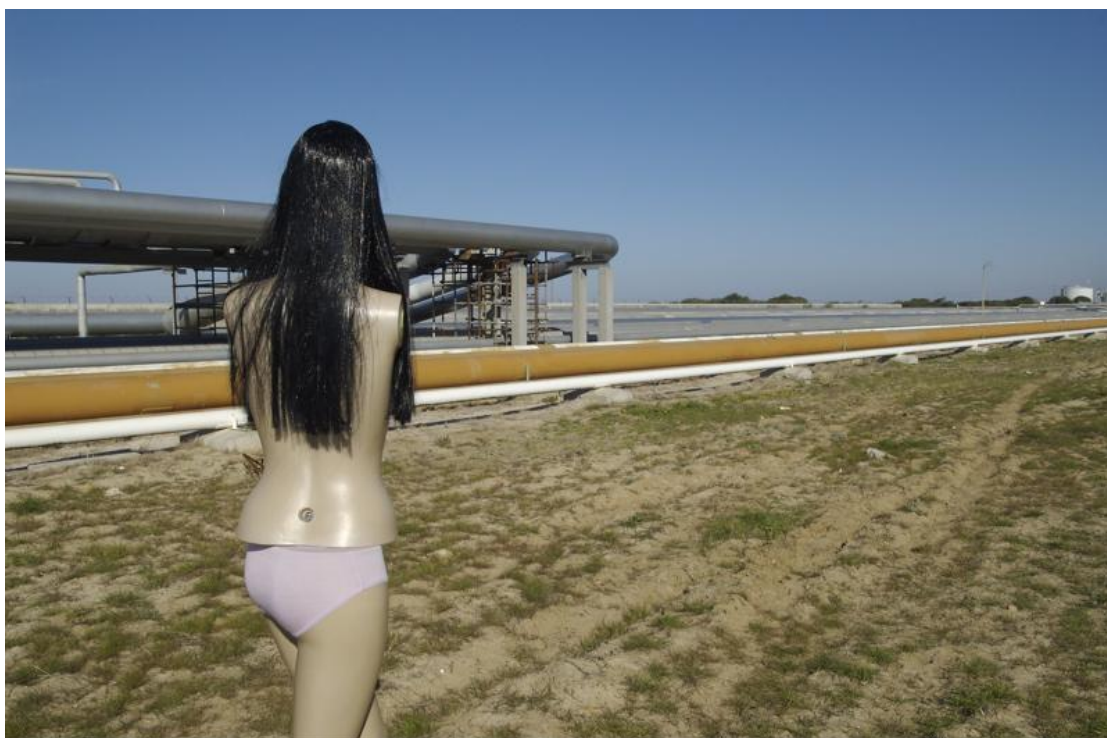
There are days when I leave my heart at home...
2011



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Sem titolo (Untitled)*, 2010,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 120 x 88



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Nuclear Barbecue* (da série *Nuclear Garden of Mr. Young*), Cape Town, 2008, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 120 x 88



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Baby Lonia, Sines* , 2008, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 120 x 88



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The wires of shame and fear*, 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluanji Kia Henda, Blackness, *Cabinda*, 2008,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



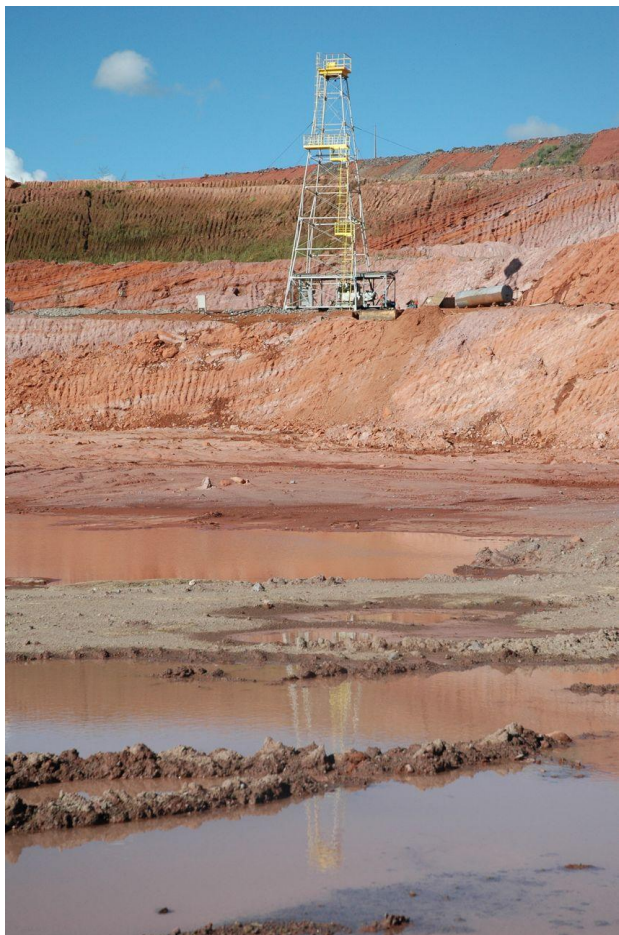
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Big Bang, Huambo*, 2009,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



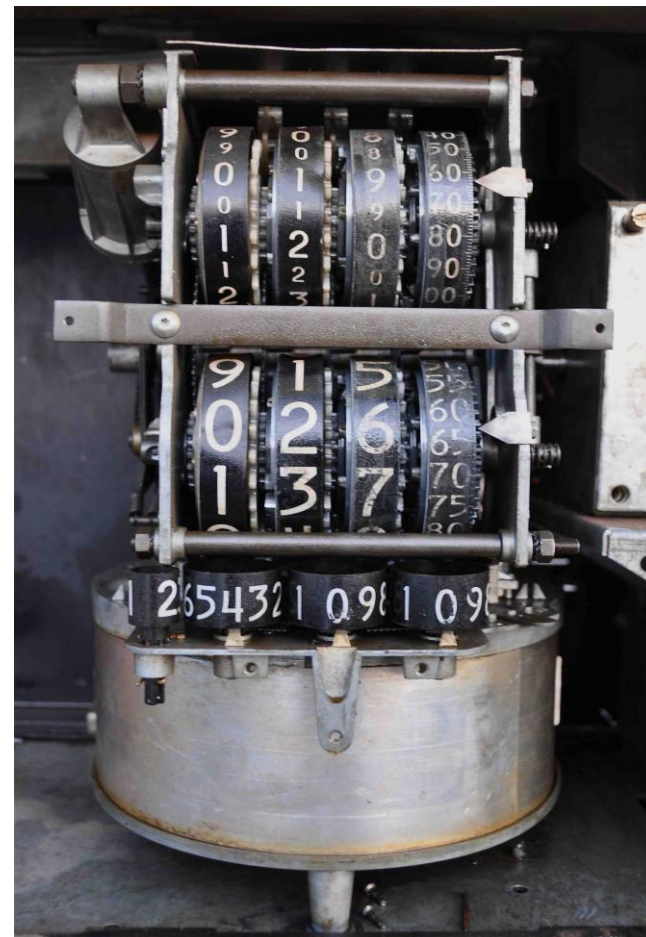
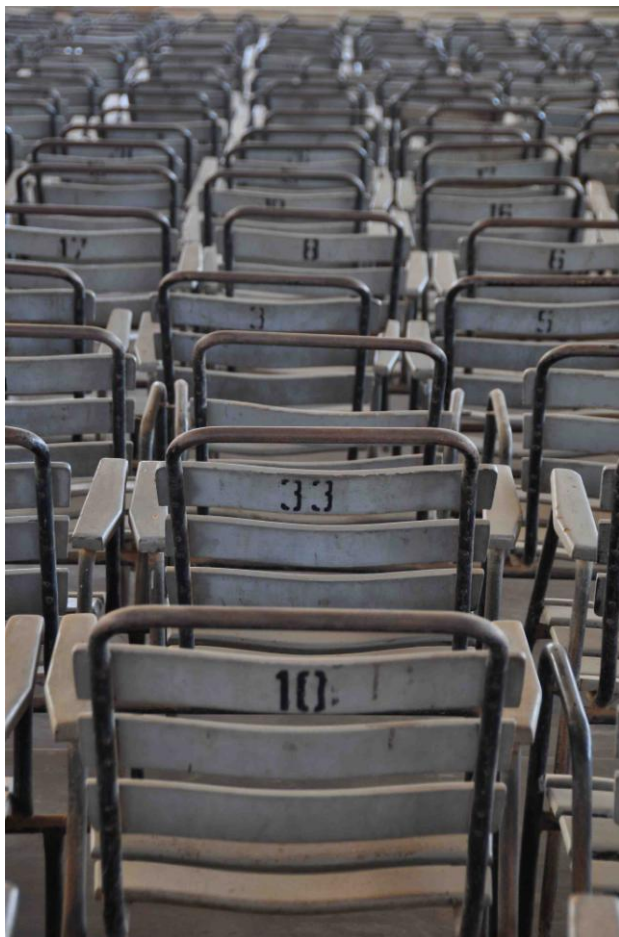
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Balas e Satélites, Huambo*, 2009,
photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *Muriege, Lunda Sul*, 2010, triptych, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150 each



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *Saurimo Conection, Lunda Sul*, 2010, triptych, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Numbers*, 2009, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100 each



KiluanjiKia Henda, *6 Portraits about Apocalypse (Serie I)*, 2009,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150x 100 each



KiluanjiKia Henda, *6 Portraits about Apocalypse (Serie II)*, 2009,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100 each



KiluanjiKia Henda, *6 Portraits about Apocalypse (Serie III)*, 2009,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 150 x 100 each



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *Terra Esfolada, Bengo*, 2009, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *Lunda In The Sky with Diamonds I*, 2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *Lunda In The Sky with Diamonds II*, 2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 100 x 150

Kiluanji Kia Henda to me

(interview carried out by online chat, at various times and on various days, punctuated by continual breaks in the Internet connection that maps out the transatlantic and ex-colonial triangulation between Luanda, Angola - Kiluanji Kia Henda's home, a city that I have never visited/ São Paulo, Brazil – my temporary home and the place where I first met Kiluanji, a place that is close to the origin of the series presented here / Lisbon, Portugal – my permanent home and the schedule drawn up by my computer, Kiluanji's ex-temporary home)

By Lígia Afonso

12:48 PM me: What was your starting point for this project? It seems to me that you wanted to edit it in quite a different way from the other proposals for series or exhibitions. From my initial reading, I immediately realised that you had decentred the theme. Have you abandoned the thematization of the narrative?

12:52 PM K: It is important to state that the title of this series emerged when I had a gun pointed at my head. They are images that are inevitably connected to each other from that moment.

12:55 PM me: That happened here in Brazil. I clearly remember the story of that situation when you were here. In fact, it had just happened.

12:56 PM K: Yes, it was in Bahia.

10:30 PM me: I see, in the phenomenon of hypermnesia and the idea of Jorge Luis Borge's short story "The Secret Miracle", some possible ways of exploring your work.

12:56 PM K: Yes, that relationship exists. It arises in the description of the moment of tragedy to which I am trying to refer in the title, as well as in the selection of the images, which is a retrospective view of work carried out over the past three years.

Without doubt, the idea of the retrospective creates a parallel with the state of hypermnesia.

10:32 PM me: Like Hladik, the protagonist of Borges's short story, you also suspended the possibility of the shot, like a secret miracle. It is in that suspension, which lasts a thousandth of a second (or the time that it takes for the raindrop to touch and fall off your face) but is mentally equivalent to a whole year, that Hladik has the opportunity to complete his previously unfinished novel. How would you describe your "drop of water"?

10:41 PM K: I remember it was a time of great despair. I also remember that I felt that my head was not clear, that my brain had embarked on an automatic summary of my whole life, as if that proliferation of ideas were capable of distancing me or even eliminating the situation experienced at that precise moment. It is incredible how, in the face of particular circumstances, we cease to be ourselves in order to become spectators of our own lives, as if we were denying our existence or the present and painful reality, deliberately absenting ourselves from our intrinsic materiality.

10:45 PM me: "There are days when I leave my heart at home..." seems, in this context, to be a sort of ante-mortem confession, an anguished and desperate unburdening formulated in retrospect in the same way as a testament.

10:54 PM K: In my head at that precise moment, that phrase meant that there was no forgiveness, that fate had been proclaimed. The intention of the aggressor, a policeman, was to cause me to lose all hope after several hours of grief.

11:01 PM me: And then the brain goes off. In what way did the images that you chose echo the images that appeared to you, and how does that relationship materialize in this project?

11:08 PM K: It turns out that the stories represented in these images convey several questions related to fear and insecurity about the future. My intention as an artist was to tackle various questions such as the nuclear issue, petrol, diamonds, negritude, drug addiction etc, factors that involve immense interests, and that postulate the idea that one should disregard the means in order to achieve the ends and that often lead us to leave our heart at home. The idea is to tell stories that could happen one day in anyone's life, starting from pre-existing works produced

within the scope of an inquiry into controversial and global themes. Temporal space, as well as physical space, the place that is inseparable from its own history, both exist among the images and were essential to the selection that I am presenting now. While I am seeking to convey large-scale themes with this project, there is a personal approach that exists in parallel. There is a lot of talk, for example, about how the Cold War is something that belongs to the past, but I am questioning the extent to which each of us is still affected by it in the present.

11:27 PM me: So when you're talking about a personal dimension you're referring to your experience in a specific political context and the intimate and psychological implications that stem from it?

11:29 PM K: I'm talking about the need to understand the individual through his or her political and historical context.

11:30 PM me: Besides that, where do you locate your own subjectivity and the affection evident in the name given to the project, and how do these elements intervene in it?

11:48 PM K: In fact, the title is incredibly affectionate but at the same time it refers to a lack of latent affection. It refers to our enormous destructive capacity that so often places our hearts outside of the game, or simply leaves them waiting in a place that we consider to be home, the place that we imagine when we are wandering around the world.

11:55 PM me: Is this what your work is proposing? Imagining home? Do you believe that your work has transformative potential in the sense that it points to the construction of another image of Africa, with the imagination functioning as an engine?

12:01 AM K: I think I would be very pretentious if I thought that. I'm simply seeking to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue. But of course the epicentre is Africa, or Angola, to be more precise. It is important to consider how much of the rest of the world is in us.

5:06 PM me: The selected images were reintegrated from series that I recognize. They form part of other stories; they are fragments of those narratives that work together here to construct a larger story. They project themselves equally into all dimensions of your experience as if it could signify all of these convulsions.

5:10 PM K: There are many things in them that are born from certain personal traumas and these traumatic moments are directly linked to the history of the country where I have lived. However, they transcend continental borders and therefore simultaneously assume a personal, political and global dimension.

5:14 PM me: Did you feel impelled by history or have you had the feeling that you are intervening in your images, in the sense of forging through them a power by which to transform the world, not only that of the people or of political power?

5:15 PM K: I have always had the feeling that I have experienced the direct consequences of the globalisation of war. Since I was a child I have learnt that in Angola we were part of, or victims of, a great international strategy, and that what was happening was not caused only by our will. You are therefore compelled to adopt a position. I think that this awoke in me a concern for tackling themes on a broader scale.

5:29 PM me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What importance does the accumulation of such diverse repertoires have for your formation, which includes the squabbling and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that want to form part of or determine its future?

5:35 PM K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been, political options aside, a great and accessible cultural and even religious freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and now through the Internet and satellites. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

5:41 PM K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to plan one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly utopian future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:44 PM me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations, some of which are also young powers, depends on their ability to retell their own histories, opposing the perpetuation of the Eurocentric reading. Is that the aim of your work, to rewrite or reinvent history?

5:48 PM K: Yes, whoever doesn't have a history should invent one!

5:49 PM me: That irony reminds me of a speech that Sarkozy gave in Senegal in which he said that Africa had never "entered into the history" of the problems of Africans. Is it self-determination that you are talking about?

5:51 PM K: The important thing is that we feel that we have the legitimacy to define who we are or who we aim to be. The history forged by the universities also contains lacunae and manipulations. Moreover, it is clear that the process of mental decolonisation goes far beyond the political act of raising flags, holding parades in public squares and promoting discourses. For this reason, I think that it is very early to talk about post-colonialism, since there are still many weakened countries in Africa which are occasionally obliged to tolerate this type of paternalist discourse. Independence in Africa is a recent historical landmark, and strategies of dominance and neo-colonisation are unfortunately not confined to the past. Sarkozy's statement is indisputable proof of this danger.

1:57 AM me: You are therefore confronting a sort of idea of historical falsification, which, like all history, obeys a particular interest and point of view, but which is subverted by you using the same method to produce the opposite effect, like a form of piracy.

2:00 AM K: Exactly! In fact, it is the same strategy that was used in a negative way towards the African continent, and it was effective: the lie which it suits all of us to hear, and which makes us happy. I'm talking about the African context purely for personal reasons. As I have said, I believe that it is a history that is shared by other parts of the world. The fact that in five hours I can travel to Ethiopia by aeroplane when it took the Bantus thousands of years to reach Luanda is something that can never be trivialised. It is important to rethink the way in which we access globalisation, which, in our case, was in an obligatory and immediate manner: understanding the other, the foreigner, became absolutely essential for the survival of Africans. The ships that left here for the rest of the world were not occupied by tourists and were not following a tourist route.

2:16 AM me: That necessary, urgent communicativeness shaped an open and perceptive attitude towards the other and adaptability.

2:18 AM K: Yes, and it was also essential to our own sovereignty. It is incredible to reflect on the tremendous interdependence that currently exists among all humanity. If we know the other, and others know us, then tragedies such as Iraq could be avoided. Knowing that modern systems of communication depend on a mineral that comes from the Congo forests involves a moral duty to know more about that country.

3:44 PM me: We've talked about the political engagement of your work, which is in its roots and seems to be inextricable from it. It is its framework and its basic deflagrator. But when did you discover that art can give shape to this disquiet?

3:47 PM K: My interest in producing art was always an interest in being able to reproduce extreme situations which I have experienced and which often transcended fiction. It springs from interaction with the streets, their laws and their myths. Since childhood, my attention has always been drawn to the mark left by time on things, the feeling of nostalgia and the lingering smell of other lives that have inhabited the city. Perhaps my interest in recording things sprang from there.

3:51 PM me: It's interesting that you mention reproduction. My image of the African continent, where I was raised and educated, is a photographic image. When did you feel the need to move from reproducing to fictionalising?

3:57 PM K: At the moment I believe that I am undergoing a change of skin as an artist. I decided to intervene in what was supposedly a mere documentary image, which came to acquire another significance when it underwent this process of manipulation. Feeding people the same poison with which we were fed. Sensationalism, omission or disorientation can be good tools when used in the artistic context. This is the most important freedom for me when entering fictional territory. "...And if the six becomes the nine, I don't mind", as Hendrix sang.

4:04 PM me: But how did you begin taking photographs?

4:05 PM K: In the family, with my older brothers. We even came to have a studio at home. But later I got to know some photojournalists, like Carlos Louzada and John Liebenberg, who were heroes to me during my adolescence. Liebenberg, who is now a paparazzo, possesses one of the greatest photographic archives of the war. For me, it was amazing how much I learned about myself in his images. It was also where I discovered photography as a weapon of intervention and denunciation: in South Africa, it was also one of the main means used to unmask apartheid.

4:13 PM me: When you met him were you taking photographs?

4:14 PM K: No. At that time I was a student and I was more in touch with music. This was in the late 1990s, when I tried to form various groups that always resulted in frustrated projects. I believe that I connected to photography more through its contextual side because the truth is that I was always analysing images. I had photos by Cassiano Bamba, my brother, who had great freedom in what he was photographing because he did not take photographs in order to sell them. His images were always closely related to life in Luanda, from the *musseques*¹ to the catwalks in the city, and he documented a sort of rebirth of glamour after independence. But strangely, I barely took any photos. I only reconnected with photography when I returned to Luanda in 1998, after spending two years in Johannesburg. The relationship with the downtown artists was very important for this reencounter in the sense that it encouraged me to search for an attitude or an artistic concept in what I was photographing.

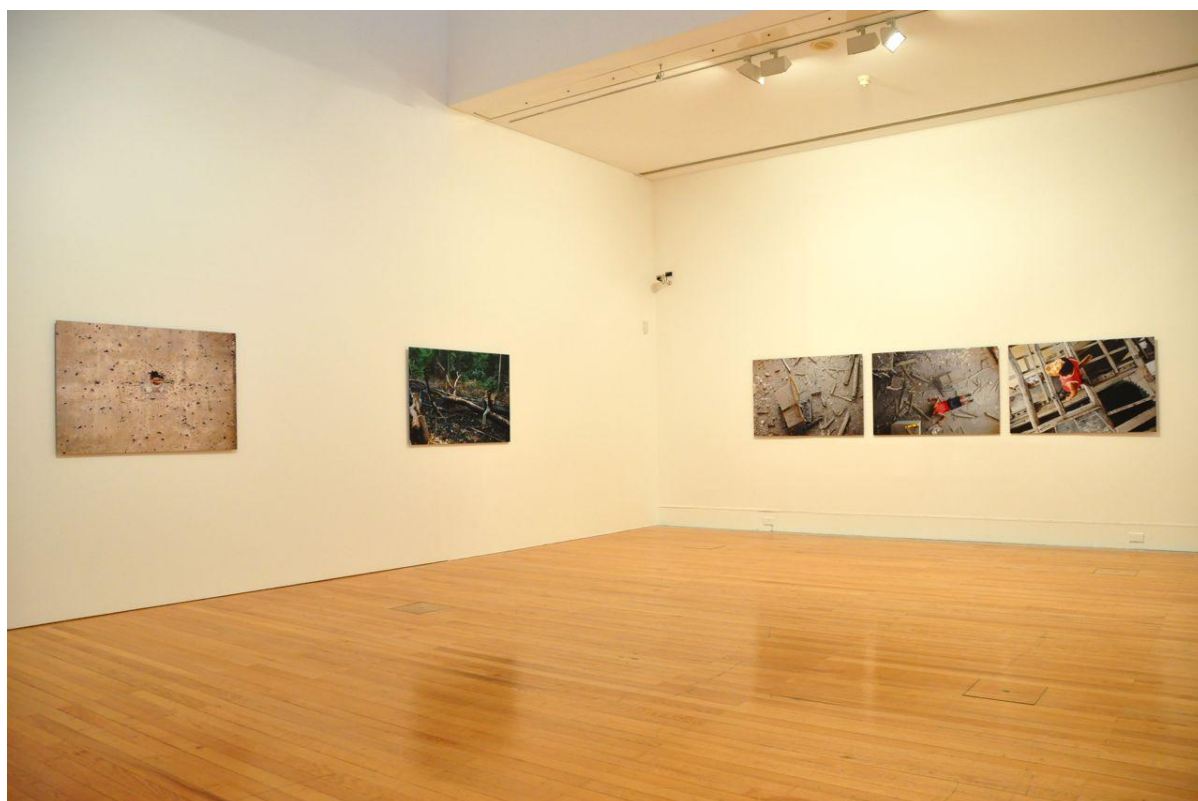
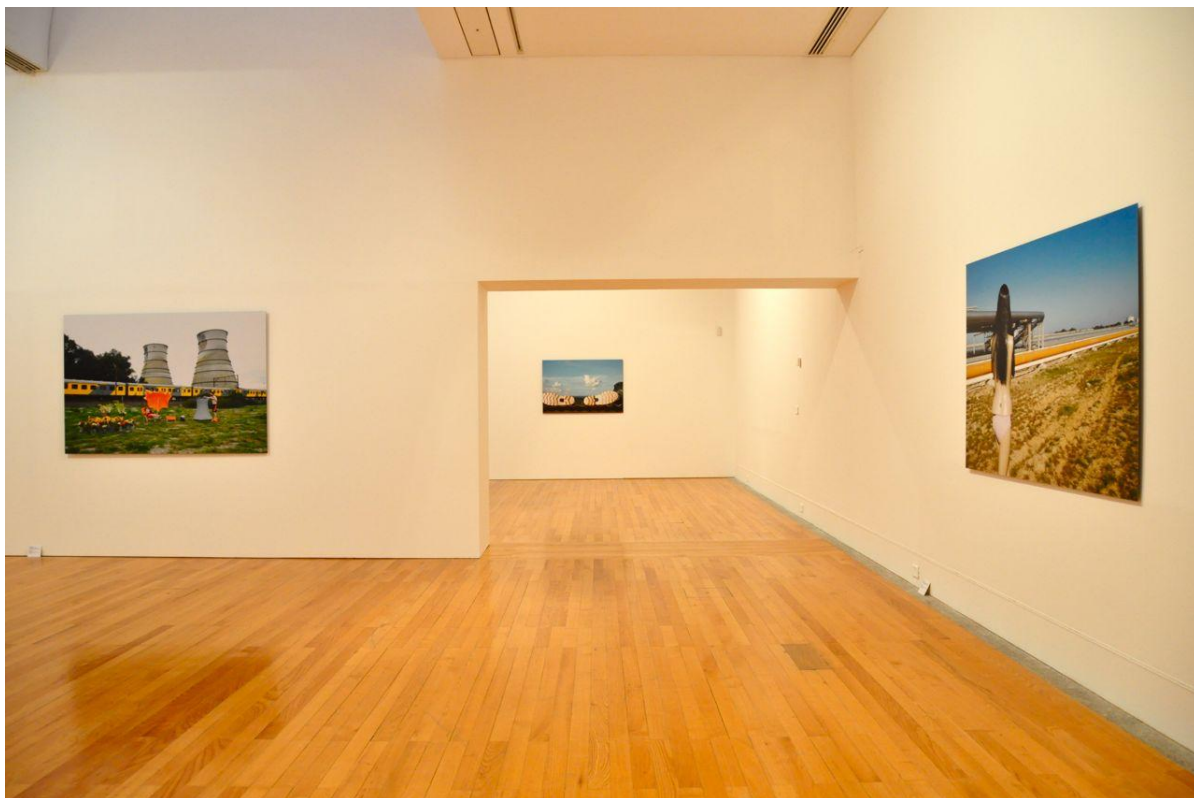
12:01 AM me: Like Liebenberg with Apartheid, you chose to insert in this project many images of Lunda Sul, the main setting of the massacres related to the "blood diamonds". Some of these images, however, are very enigmatic, I would say almost abstract, such as "Lunda in the Sky with Diamonds II", whose protagonists are the white soles of two shoes.

12:28 AM K: Those boots belong to a miner. They couldn't leave the mining area without washing their boots, because any stone, however insignificant it might be to the naked eye, is highly valuable. Even the tyres on the trucks have to be washed. The experience that I had in Lunda Sul was very profound, and it possesses a dual connotation of affectivity and conflict.

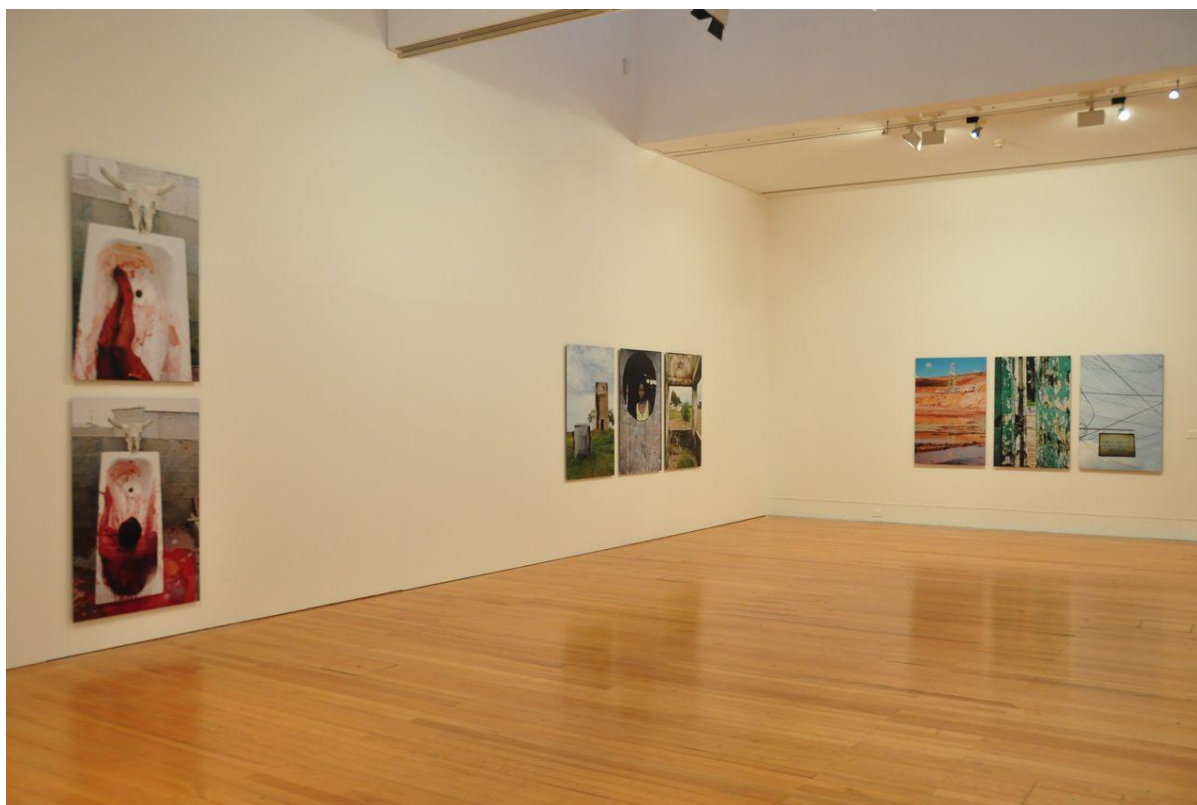
12:47 AM me: Why affectivity?

12:50 AM K: Because I had an adoptive brother who did his military service there, and he was killed during one of the battles. I grew up with the name of this province in my head because of the stories that he told me, from which I tried to create images of what this place was like as I had no photos. Much later, when I travelled there, it was incredible! It was very exciting to think that I was going to unveil a mystery that had always been alive in my subconscious. I heard only about the riches of the subsoil but in fact I had never seen a more beautiful sky.

¹ shanty towns



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *There are days when I leave my heart at home...*,
exhibition view, Coleção Berardo Museum, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisboa



Kiluaji Kia Henda, *There are days when I leave my heart at home...*,
exhibition view, Coleção Berardo Museum, Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisboa

Expired Trading Products.

“Expired Trading Products” is a mixed media exhibition that deals with refugees. The title refers to the fact that, like products that have passed their sell-by date, refugees are discarded or destroyed after their period of usefulness has expired. The models in the portraits are holding a bar code from a expired tuna tin, representing also their feeling at the moment of being a refugee in South Africa. South Africa is currently undergoing its worst human rights abuses since the fall of Apartheid and this timely exhibition, presented in a unique perspective on the issue. Significantly this project was conceived prior to Kia Henda’s arrival and before the recent crisis escalated to its current levels.



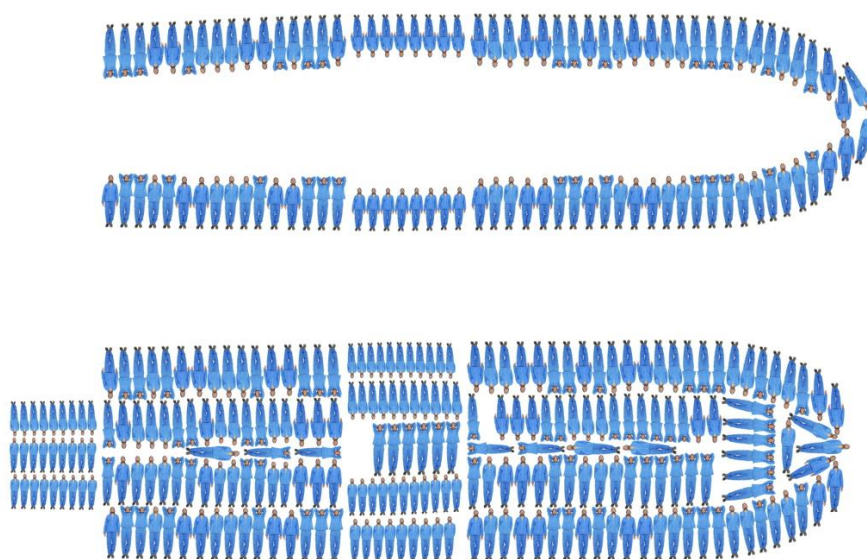
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Some say we are in África*, 2008,
photography print on matt paper, cm. 150 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Expired Trading Products*, 2008,
mixed media, photography print on woven bag, cm. 120 x 144



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Expired Trading Products*, 2008,
mixed media, photography print on woven bag, cm. 120 x 144



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *New Shipment*, 2008, photomontage, cm. 130 x 130

Icarus 13, The first journey to the Sun

'Icarus 13' is a pioneer project in Africa in that it gives wings to our knowledge, creatività and imagination by making use of new technologies and appropriate tools for building a spacecraft. The mission's purpose is to land in the largest of all stars, the Sun. The dream once attempted by Icarus, so the Greek legend tells, will now become possible: we shall travel by night.

By mid-20th century, Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon (or somewhere in Hollywood for that matter); 40 years later, Mars is closer than ever and, consequently, our dreams grow wilder and more daring. The purpose now would be to apply our knowledge on astronomy and physics to improve the future of our planet. A thorough investigation around the Sun would bring us a better understanding of the inconstant pulse of human beings and, thus, better protect the Earth's ecosystem.

As a ball of fire this odyssey to the Sun needed imagination as its fuel. Our dream is achievable as long we stay a period during which the sun cools down for 8 hours, allowing enough time for exploring its surface before dawn, in this exploration we attempt to collect substances from the sun surface so we can have a bit of the sun in earth.

On ground, we invited a number of scientists; their mission was to conquer space, for the first time in African history. Aiming at that, a new organization, state and privately - sponsored, has been created. This project is based in Luanda, Angola, where the foundations for "Icarus 13" were built: a 6000 sq ft base, in the city's seafront, employing 70 workers, artists and engineers among the most prominent. The spaceship was built with a mix of steel and diamonds covering and the heart of the ship with a system based on a catalyser that transform the heat into cold in unmeasured speed called "SnowBall". The spaceship is powered from solar energy which gives "Icarus13" a total autonomy in orbit.

The flight crew is composed of two astronauts and two beautiful air stewards, trained one year before the launch, in desert of Namibe, where is localized the base for the training of the spaceship crew. They will be exposed in high temperature, inside a machine called "Sahara" developed especially for this project preparing the human being for a high tolerance once exposed to extreme temperatures. A special suit was also developed, based on the "Snowball" technology that is called the "CoolSuit" equipped with tanks filled with Buds, allowing them to support the heat of this odyssey.

The experimental launch of "Icarus 13" happened after two years of hard work and deep investigation, the launch occurred at 6:00pm on the 25 May of 2006. Was a moment of great tension but every problem was sort out, and we finally had "Icarus" flying in towards the sun. The spaceship reached the sun after fifteen days of traveling a distance of 149.5 millions of km, the crew onshore were working for 14 hours a day for a dream closer than never, and at 22:00 the spaceship landed on the photosphere of the sun. The investigation took 5 hours on the sun's surface and some particles from the photosphere were collected to be observed in our laboratori and by the description of the astronauts the sun has the most beautiful night.

This first mission accomplished, we plan to launch the first "solar tourist" flight in 5 years, duly equipped with UV sun block and sun glasses – dark enough. The profit from the first "solar tourist" journey will support to continue our scientific investigation in order to discover more about the sun and his effects on the planet earth.

To be continued...



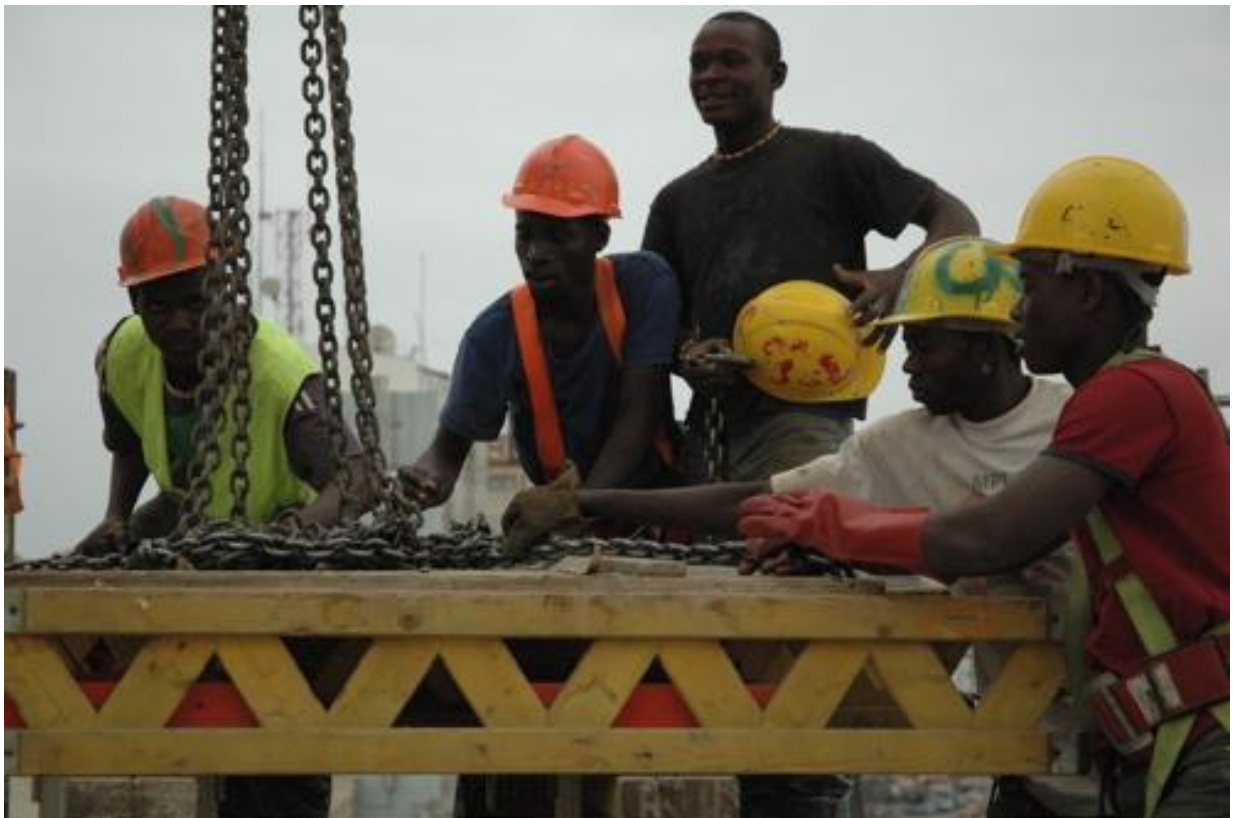
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The spaceship Icarus13*, Luanda,
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The spaceship Icarus13*, Luanda
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Centre of astronomy studies and austronauts training, Namibe Desert*
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



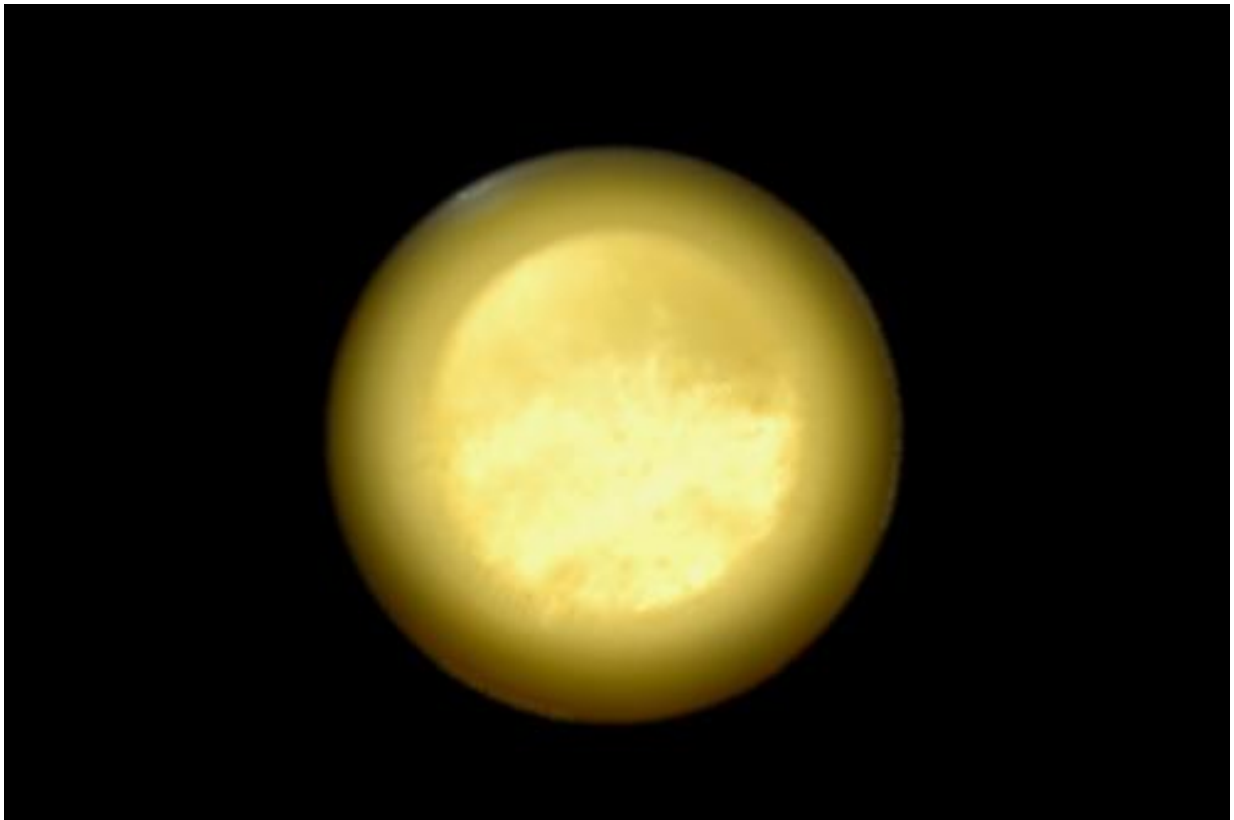
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Building the spaceship Icarus 13*
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The spaceship Icarus13*, Luanda
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



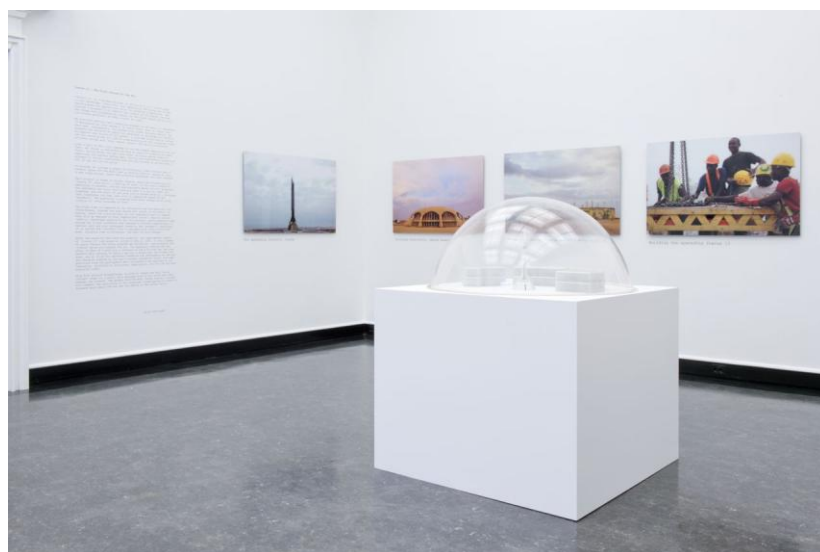
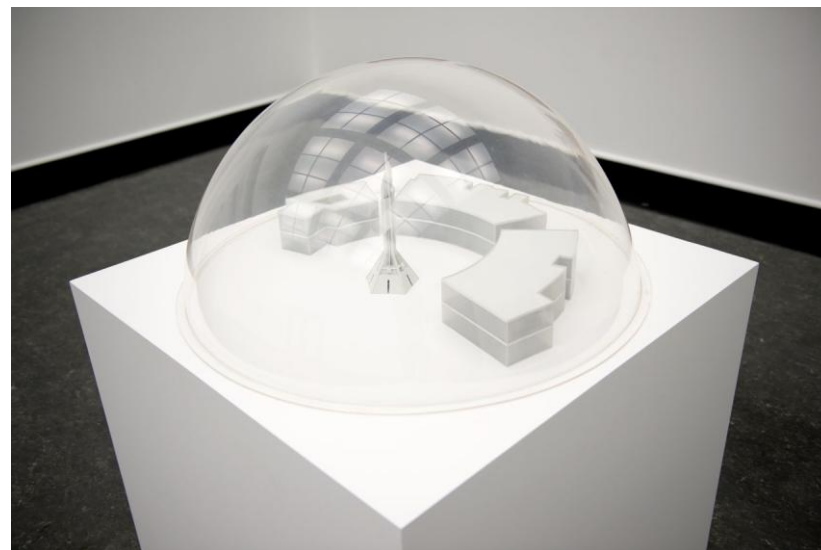
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The launch of Icarus 13*, 6:00pm, 25th of May
2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *First picture of the Sun's photosphere from Icarus13 in orbit* 2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The return of the astronauts* (5:00am, 9th of June, 2007) 2007, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Icarus 13*, installation view at exhibition "Monday Begins on Saturday", Kunsthalle Bergen, Bergen Assembly Triennial, 2013



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Icarus 13*, installation view at exhibition "There is Always a Cup of Water to Sail In", 29^a Bienal of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2010

The African Contemporary Art and Post-Colonial Politics

By **Stina Edblom**

Research Curator for the Third Triennial of Guangzhou, China

Employing humour and playfulness as a subtle, yet critical way of subversion, Angolan artist Kiluanji Kia Henda's project *Icarus 13* is based on the documentation of the fantastical journey of *Icarus 13*, the first African spaceship to reach the sun. The name of the spaceship is borrowed from the story of Icarus, the young boy who in his escape from the imprisonment by King Minos, was overcome by the sublime feeling of flying. Boldly, Icarus flew too close to the Sun, where the heat melted his fragile wax wings and he plummeted to an early death.

Utilising architectural structures, monuments and buildings from the Portuguese colonial era and from the Russian presence in Angola during and after the Cold War, Kiluanji humorously plays with notions of utopia and turns its ultimate failure into the successful journey of *Icarus 13*. Inspired by a joke, first told by Samora Machel, the first president of Mozambique, who suggested an African space trip to the sun, a journey only possible to undertake by night when the sun was cooled. Kiluanji plays with African stereotypes and the utopic notion of European colonial expansion and modernity. Positioning himself as the polymorphous trickster, Kiluanji uses fiction, irony and humour as critical tools in order to produce a displacement of commonly held perception and meaning.

Just like President Machel himself, Kiluanji takes on the degrading stereotypes on Africa in a reflexive manner. He appropriates them to subvert their colonizing powers, laughs at them so as to reduce their harmful effects and becomes one with them in order to displace their controlling powers - and to this end he appropriates the now deteriorating architectural remnants of colonial conquest and Cold War politics. In bringing back into play the discarded reminder of the discourses of power and revealing the way we operate in a world of 'fictions', Kiluanji makes way for the unexpected 'event' that takes our breath away by surprise and laughter.

Consequently, the project *Icarus 13* enables us to recognize our habitual modes of thinking and infiltrates hegemonic language in ways that alter its meaning and effectively makes way for a changing relationship between self and other.

Hybride Muse - The artist, the travestite and the alchemist.

The photo of *Poderosa of Bom Jesus* came about as a result of a journey to the south of Angola on work, where I visited the *Mumuilas*, a nomadic people who live essentially from their cattle and subsistence farming. The war had already been over for 5 years. The country was changing and I wanted to look at the effect of the recent economic growth on the most ancestral cultures, on how the lives of the people in the most isolated areas had been affected.

When I returned from the journey, one night after giving a friend a lift home to the outskirts of Luanda, I sat at a bar and drank a beer and while I was there, a group of ten transvestites with Poderosa in their lead turned up. It was amazing, like a revelation. Normally, you would have thought that transvestites, in the middle of such a poor neighbourhood, would have been the victims of obvious and violent prejudice. But on the contrary, people of that sexual persuasion live there very freely. They told me that Poderosa had a catering company, that she held lots of parties and that she lived with a veritable entourage of transvestites at home.

The advocates of more traditional views in Africa are profoundly homophobic. In South Africa, there are daily reports of gays and lesbians being murdered. In Uganda, an attempt was even made to enact a law that would sentence homosexuals to death. And suddenly, there I was, in a neighbourhood of people from the interior of the country, religious people, living in peace with transvestites, without the least taboo. Whilst in the centre of the city, it is a far greater taboo caused by a false sense of respectability in the attempt to preserve a certain attained wellbeing.

As I had just come from a world of ancestral cultures, my shock at seeing the transvestities was even greater and out of it came this work, which I hoped would be a provocation to the traditionalist discourse. I proposed to Poderosa that she dress as a *Mumuila*. The idea of dressing her as a *Mumuila* was to create a trap, as much for the foreigner and his search for the exotic and 'real' Africa, the person who lives in delirium with ancestral exoticism, as for the national discourse aimed at defending traditions, a discourse adopted by those who in fact have no idea what its traditions are and are already imbued with western culture and capitalism and at times use this discourse about traditional values as a means of political opportunism.

Whilst the rest of the work consisted of documental photos, that of Poderosa was a false document. Her photograph was the sum of the cultural hybridism which the country was living through at that moment of peace, the apex of the amalgam that I had been seeking.

It was a cut-and-paste job. The clothes, which actually had nothing to do with those of the *Mumuilas*, were made from a mix of bits and pieces: what is on her head came from the south of the country and the beads were bought in Luanda, like the skirts and the heels. Even the landscape is fake. We took the photo in Bom Jesus because it was the closest place to Luanda that could be passed off as 'real' Africa, the image of rural isolation that is very typical in southern Angola.

The work was first presented in Luanda and then in a gallery in São Paulo as part of a collective exhibition. At the exhibition preview, there appeared someone who introduced himself as Bantu Tabasisa, "representative of African culture in São Paulo", from music to painting, cooking and dance. He said he personified the "spirit of Africa" in Brazil. I asked how long it was since he'd been back to Angola. He said 25 years and wandered around the gallery for another 10 minutes before disappearing.

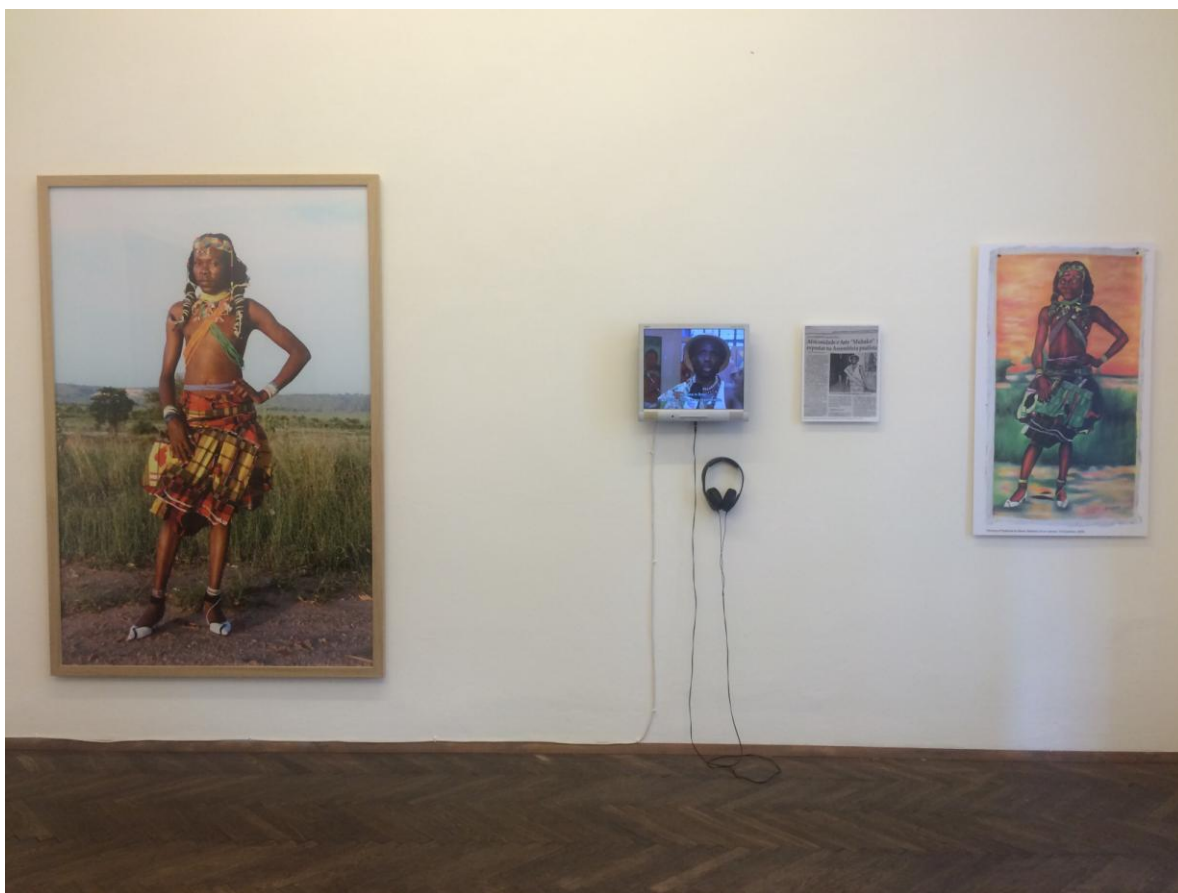
Two months went by. I had already returned to Luanda and was on my way to the studio when I bought the newspaper, the *Jornal de Angola*, to read the culture section and saw a photo of Bantu Tabasisa exhibiting at the Museu da Assembléia de São Paulo (São Paulo Parliament Museum). To my amazement, I could see that behind Bantu was a painting scrupulously copied from the photo of Poderosa. But what surprised me even more was the theme of the exhibition: a show about African women. A university professor had written a positive critique of Bantu's work in which he spoke about how it was important to exhibit Angolan traditions in São Paulo. He had copied a transvestite to symbolise the "traditional African woman". A flat-chested androgynous *Mumuila* in high heels representing a traditional Angolan woman in São Paulo. It was unbelievable. They had both fallen into the trap: the foreigner seeking the exotic and the African who uses the "traditional" for political and economic gain. And Poderosa there in the middle, oozing charm and representing the African woman to the world. And at heart, who knows, could she be the traditional African woman of the future?



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Poderosa de Bom Jesus*
2008 - 2015, photograph, text, press clip, video and painting (detail)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Poderosa de Bom Jesus*, 2008 - 2015, photograph, text, press clip, video and painting (detail)



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Poderosa de Bom Jesus*, 2008 - 2015, photograph, text, press clip, video and painting
Installation view at the exhibition "This Is Not My History", Rotor Contemporary, Graz, 2015

Between the two red telephones

During my childhood in the mid-'80s, I spent various weekends with my family at Praia de Santiago, north of Luanda. The beach had been inundated with abandoned fishing boats slowly running aground on the sand and had come to be known as the "Ship Graveyard". What we didn't realise on those sunny days on the beach was that Santiago not only represented a post-industrial landscape but the end of the ruling political ideology of the post-independence period.

One day, my father told me that the boats had belonged to a state fishing cooperative created by the Angolan government in partnership with the former Soviet Union. The partnership consisted of the Soviets providing the boats and technical training for Angolan fishermen in exchange for half of the catch. Once the management contract with the Soviets ended, the fishing cooperative went bust within a few months because of a lack of organisation by the Angolans. The bankruptcy of the cooperative was just one of the many partnerships that fell apart during the period in which Angola declared itself a communist state.

Among the dozens of boats stuck in the sand at Praia de Santiago, which can still be seen there today like inert bodies consumed by the saltpeter, the image of the "Karl Marx, Luanda" stands like a monument to the crumbling of the state apparatus. Like the Berlin Wall, this boat became the perfect metaphor for the aborted dream of a communist Angola. In my case, more than an experimental ideology that was never truly implemented, communism was the dream of my father, a fierce and unwavering communist who was active in the struggle against colonialism and in political life during the first decades of independent Angola. The rust corroding the ships today is like the years of war which ate away part of his life and the political system which he still defends to this day.

The rust is like the dust which today covers the long untouched books by Marx, Engels and Lenin and the Soviet "Sputnik" magazines on the shelves of the national libraries. The boats are slowly falling apart in the sea. The huge machines built for fishing are today forming real corals, where the fish lay their eggs for the shoals of the future. Communism was one of the pretexts used by the different aggressors as part of a geostrategy during the Cold War, which as a result fed one of the longest and cruellest wars in Africa. Most of the population never understood what communism meant and capitalism even less; many died without really knowing what they were fighting for. And for the youngsters swimming at Praia de Santiago today, in times of peace, Marx is just the name of a ship run aground in the Tropics.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Karl Marx, Luanda*, 2006,
photography triptych print mounted on aluminium, cm. 130 x 86 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Un recuerdo para ti*, 2009, photo print mounted on aluminium, cm. 130 x 86 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Un recuerdo para ti*, 2009,
installation view from Luanda: Smooth and Rave, Evento, Bordeaux



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Walls and politics I*, 2007,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 70 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Walls and politics II*, 2007,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 70 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Walls and politics III*, 2007,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 70 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Dipanda*, 2005, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 70 x 100



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Cold war-collateral effects*, 2005,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 86 x 130



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *ScareCrow of DemocraCY*, 2007, photography diptych print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Bullet proof photography*, 2007, photography diptych print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Untouchable lines for apacific existence*, 2007,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 x 120



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Between the two red telephones*, 2007,
exhibition view, galleria Fonti, Napoli

Niemeyer's Dream – Luanda: Year 0.

Nothing more closely resembles a ruin than a building under construction.

It's impossible to consider my work without considering Luanda. Over 400 years old, Luanda is the oldest town south of the Sahara and has spent a good part of its history surrounded by wars and home to all types of fugitives. Children of the world in the breasts of a single mother city, both the oldest and the youngest at the same time, constantly re-made, constantly re-signified according to the context. A mixture of so many eras and geographies. An Atlantic city linked to Portugal, Brazil, Cuba, the former USSR, the USA in which the government may be formed by Africans who besides Portuguese speak English, Russian and Serbo-Croat. Luanda is an amalgam constantly *de-re-forming*.

Luanda: Year Zero. In November 1975, like a flash of lightning, thousands fled the city. With the colonial era over, the chronometer was re-set to zero. The change was radical: Luanda, the capital of Angola, on Africa's western coast, became a ghost town abandoned by its settlers and anxious for new inhabitants and its new freedom. The city then became a massive "squat". People from the ghetto and the country invaded the empty buildings. In flats marked by memories of another age, more and more African families now lived, using "European spaces" in a totally different way, creating an urban logic based on DIY.

Luanda became an extraordinary city where the down-and-out and the multimillionaire lived in the same buildings and shared the same steps, as Oscar Niemeyer had dreamed when he designed the iconic Copan building in São Paulo. Copan is the largest reinforced concrete structure in Latin America, a winding 35-storey building with roughly 2,000 residents from different social classes divided into blocks with differently-sized flats. It also has a gallery with hair salons, shops and even a cinema, which was later converted into an Evangelical church.

The parallel between the Copan building and post-independence Luanda is still relevant. Just like Niemeyer's failed dream on the other side of the Atlantic, the explosive growth in Luanda's population has caused headaches. Overcrowded housing, traffic gridlock, cinemas converted into churches and lifts in new residential buildings. It is the start of a long dive into chaos.

Between the civil war and the new world order, *funge* (traditional food) on Saturdays and the multinationals, the city is holding on. The communist dream died and the new towers grow. In neoliberal capitalism, there's no room for utopias. Nor "squatter" cities. Living in the centre means living fast and speed is power. The people who once occupied the ghost city, and the ones that still arriving from the rural area, entered in the interminable *musseques*, the new realm of experimentation. The landscape here is greyer – but the only grey is in the landscape.

Home to politicians, ex-soldiers, war refugees, Catholics, Muslims, Mucubals, transvestites and celebrities, the *musseques* reinvent themselves constantly. It doesn't matter whether we live under communism or capitalism, one-party or multi-party politics. Power here is independent of any institution or religious belief. It is distributed in the streets and neighbourhoods, forming an opaque territory that is hard to apprehend by the "system" as it is so interwoven. The economy is domestic, based on buying and selling. The culture is hybrid, intense and extremely experimental. High tech is married with animism, the rhythms and dances assault the asphalt city. The *candogueiros* (informal taxis), as if they were *youtube*, disseminate the music and attitude from the *musseques* throughout the cities and villages of the whole country. In the end, the *musseque* created a national identity. Like a cancer which has taken over the organism and produced mutations.

Any attempt to conceive theories about these phenomena becomes useless and obsolete as soon as they are created. This is definitively a parallel universe. There are no solitary figures or tourists in this story; no one is left indifferent. Life is a constant endeavour. Cities like these exist everywhere, they are planetary in their essence – continents become too small for them. They also overflow the boundaries of fiction. Their rapid mutation and weak immune system gives them absolutely no defence against unknown agents. Everything becomes a part of them.

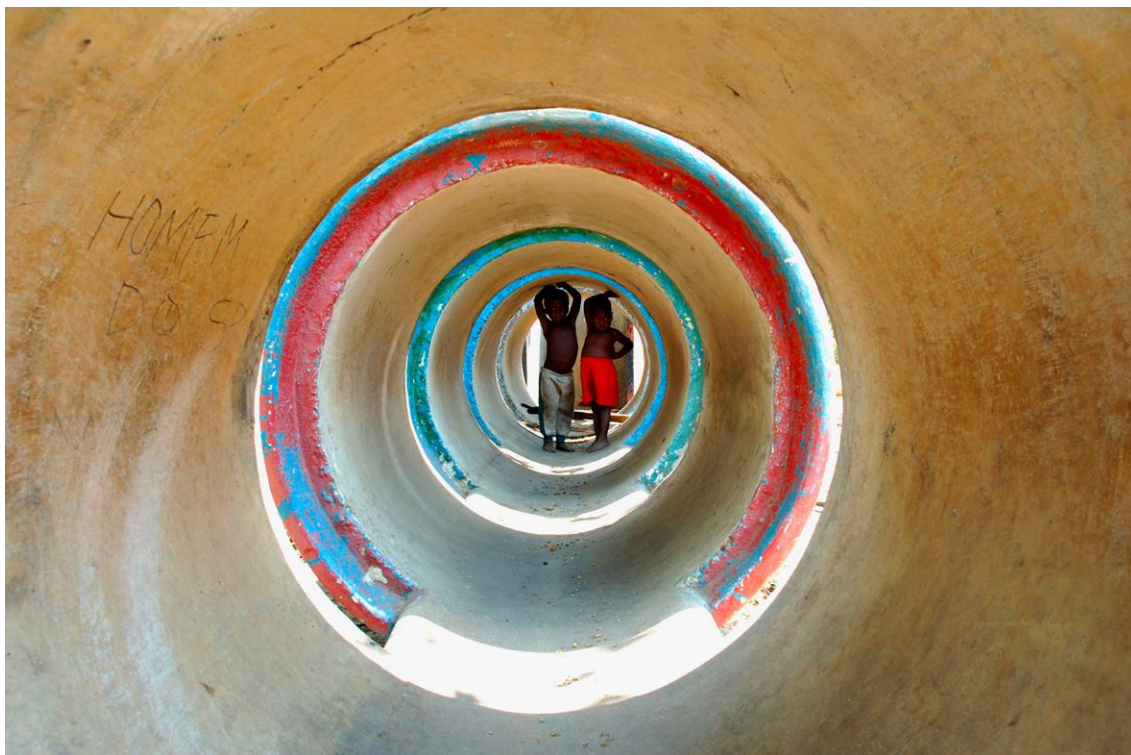
A post-apocalyptic reality is created in which all eras are contemporary between themselves. It is the end of the world and its re-beginning. If Africa is the future, the future is now.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Chinese Connection*, 2006, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 86 x 130



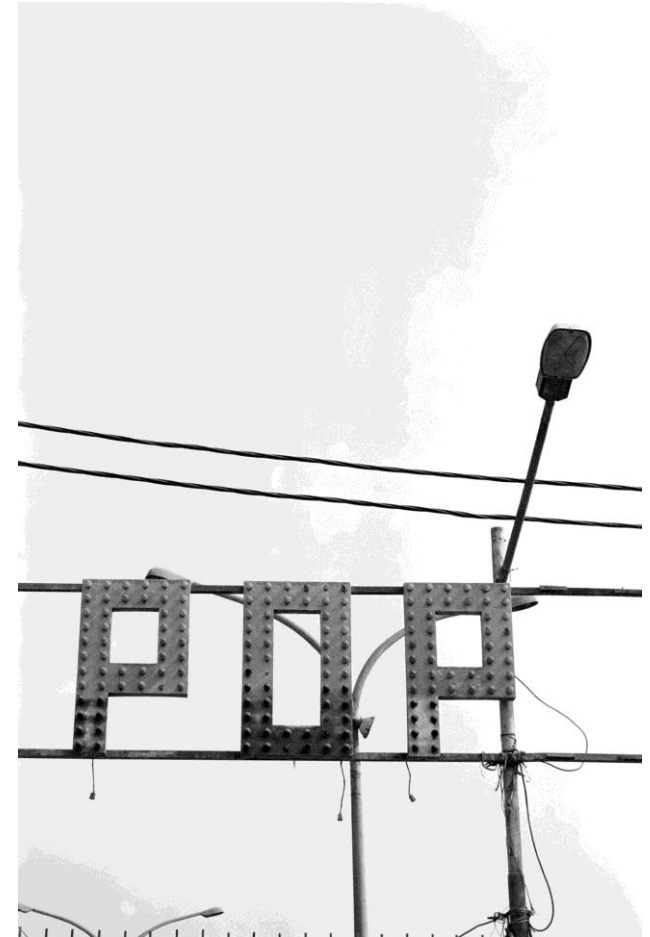
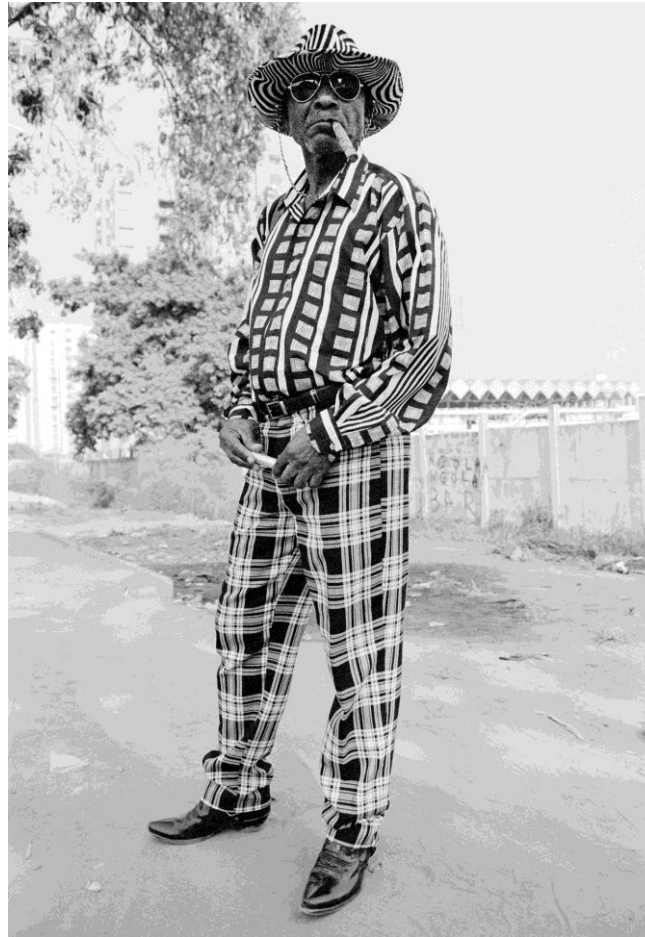
Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Alô Alô*, 2005, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 130 x 86



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Placenta*, 2005, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 130 x 86



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Che Boy*, 2005,
photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 86 x 130



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Ngola Bar*, 2005, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 200 x 110 each



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *WC*, 2005, photography print mounted on aluminium, cm. 80 X 120

ARTFORUM

POSTED MAY 25, 2017

Kiluanji Kia Henda Wins 2017 Frieze Artist Award

Frieze has named Kiluanji Kia Henda as the winner of the 2017 Frieze Artist Award. Kia Henda is the first African artist to receive the prize, the fourth to be awarded. He will be invited to realize a new installation at Frieze London as part of Frieze Projects, the fair's nonprofit program.

"Kiluanji Kia Henda is a vital voice of his generation and I'm very pleased that the jury made him this year's Frieze Artist Award winner," said Raphael Gygax, the curator of Frieze Projects and Zurich's Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst. "His work examines the wounds of his home country Angola left by decades of political unrest. Kia Henda brings satire to bear on politics and the legacy of colonialism in Africa, corrupting enduring stereotypes."

The jury was made up of artist Cory Arcangel; Eva Birkenstock, director of Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen in Düsseldorf; Tom Eccles, executive director of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in New York; and Gygax. Jo Stella-Sawicka, artistic director of Frieze Fairs, chaired the jury.

A Luanda-based artist, Kia Henda works across photography, video, and performance. Titled *Under the Silent Eye of Lenin*, his winning proposal is a two-part installation that draws parallels between the cult of Marxism-Leninism in Angola, witchcraft practices during the country's civil war, and science-fiction narratives used by Cold War superpowers. "Despite being a political doctrine that rejected religion, the way that Marxism-Leninism was indoctrinated during the revolution demanded strict loyalty and unquestionable belief, similar to religious practice," Kia Henda said. "In this project, the bust of Lenin returns to become the central object of an installation and performance piece, where the memories and narratives of one of the bloodiest conflicts in Africa are molten with the transcendence of witchcraft and the dogmatic dimension of a political ideology."

Frieze London will run from October 5 to October 8 and, for the fourteenth consecutive year, is sponsored by Deutsche Bank. Previous award winners include Yuri Pattison, Rachel Rose, and Mélanie Matranga.



f t g+ d p e | PERMALINK | COMMENTS

GAGOSIAN

Xavier
Hufkens

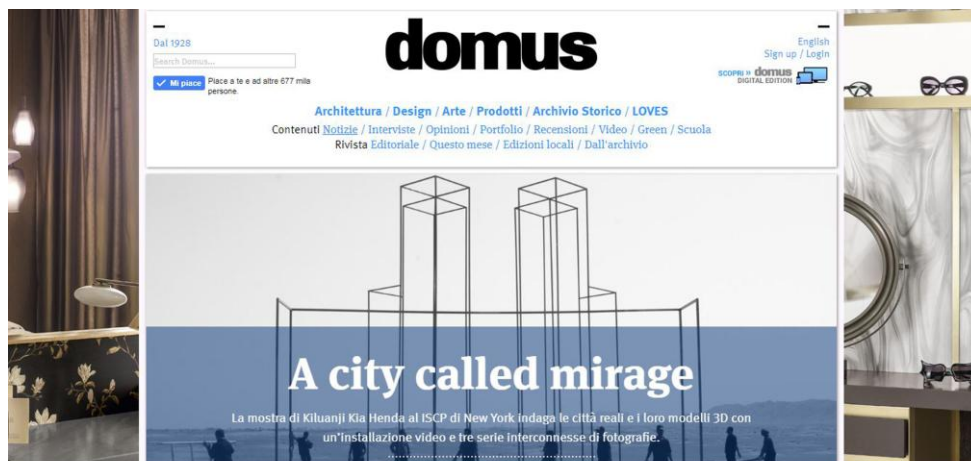
PERROTIN

Galerie
Buchholz

LESLIE
TONKONOW
ARTWORKS +
PROJECTS

cartiergebauer

team



La International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) di New York ha presentato "A City Called Mirage", una mostra di Kiluanji Kia Henda. L'esposizione indaga le città reali e i loro modelli 3D con un'installazione video a quattro canali e tre serie interconnesse di fotografie.



In "A City Called Mirage" Henda studia la nascita, la vita e la morte delle città moderne. Nell'opera *Paradise Metalic* (2014), quattro video sincronizzati raccontano insieme la costruzione di una città ideale, costruita sul deserto arido di Maliha, nell'emirato dello Sharjah. Land art e performance si mescolano per creare un nuovo paese immaginario, costituito e successivamente demolito nella sabbia, demarcato con dei pali nel terreno, pareti di cemento e scheletri di acciaio.



† Fig.6 "Kiluanji Kia Henda: A City Called Mirage", veduta della mostra, International Studio & Curatorial Program, 2017


fino al 6 ottobre 2017
Kiluanji Kia Henda: A City Called Mirage
 a cura di Kari Conte
 International Studio & Curatorial Program
 1040 Metropolitan Ave., New York

PT

EN

BUALA

Interview carried out by online chat, at various times and on various days, punctuated by continual breaks in the Internet connection that maps out the transatlantic and ex-colonial triangulation between Luanda, Angola – Kluang Kia Hendu's home, a city that I have never visited, São Paulo, Brazil – my temporary home and the place where I first met Kluang, a place that is close to the origin of the series presented here. Lisbon, Portugal – my permanent home, source of the schedule drawn up by my computer and Kluang's extemporary home.



Kluang Kia Hendu, 2008, Nuclear Barbecue (in situ Nuclear Garden of 9th Young), Cape Town, 120cmx83,5cm.

FULL VIEWFACE TO FACE

ARTISTSREINNOVATE

STAGESCITYGAMES WITHOUT BORDERS

ROY DUARTE DE CARVALHOBODY

Search

FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

by LIGIA ALCANTARA

Ligia Alcantara

Portugal, 1981) is a graduate in History of Art and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she now works as a researcher in the Institute of Art History.

Having recently published the book entitled *Kluang Kia Hendu* (Lisbon, 2010), she continues her involvement in various research, exhibition and education projects with several art institutions in Portugal and Brazil. She took part in the London / Liverpool Visual Art Curators Showcase 08 programme, held a residency at the Z30 Gallery and was the curator of the exhibition *A Escala da Crítica* (The Critical Choice) for Plataforma Revolver. Ligia Alcantara is also an art critic and regularly publishes articles in the online magazine *Art & Critique* net. She worked as an assistant curator to the 20th São Paulo Biennial (on a scholarship from INOVAM).

1:28 PM

me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What experience does the accumulation of such diverse experiences have for your formation, which includes the equating and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that went to form part of or determine its future?

5:36 PM

K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been political tensions with a great and accessible cultural and even linguistic freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and not through the Internet and satellite. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM

me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

5:41 PM

K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to play one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly African future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:42 PM

me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations, some of which are also young powers, depends on their ability to select their own histories, opposing the perpetuation of the Eurocentric reading. Is that the aim of your work, to rewrite or reinvent history?

5:43 PM

K: Yes, whoever doesn't have a history should invent one!

5:43 PM

me: That story reminds me of a speech that Bakhtin gave in Geneva in which he said that Africa had never "entered into the history" of the problems of Africans. Is it self-determination that you are talking about?

5:51 PM

K: The important thing is that we feel that we have the legitimacy to define who we are or who we aim to be. The history (largely) by the universities also contains lies and manipulations. Moreover, it is clear that the process of mental decolonisation goes far beyond the political act of raising flags, holding rallies in public squares and promoting discourses. For this reason, I think that it is very early to talk about post-colonialism, since there are still many unresolved conflicts in Africa which are occasionally obliged to tolerate this type of paternalistic discourse. Independence in Africa is a recent historical landmark, and strategies of dominance and neo-colonialism are unfortunately not confined to the past. Bakhtin's statement is indisputable proof of this danger.

1:57 AM

me: You are therefore confronting a sort of idea of historical falsification, which, like all history, obects a particular interest and point of view, but which is subverted by you using the same method to produce the opposite effect, like a form of parody.

2:05 AM

K: Exactly! In fact, it is the same strategy that was used in a negative way towards the African continent, and I was effective in the way in which it got all of us to hate and which makes us happy. I'm talking about the African context purely for personal reasons. As I have said, I believe that it is a history that is shared by other parts of the world. The fact that in five hours I can travel to Ethiopia by aeroplane when I look at the British Airways of years to reach Luanda is something that can never be invalidated. It is important to rethink the way in which we access globalisation, which, in our case, was in an obligatory and immediate manner: understanding the "other", the stranger, became absolutely essential for the survival of Africans. The ships that left here for the rest of the world were not accompanied by tourists and were not following a tourist route.

2:16 AM

me: That necessary, urgent communication shaped an open and perceptive attitude towards the other's adaptability.

2:18 AM

K: Yes, and it was also essential to our own sovereignty. It is incredible to reflect on the tremendous changes that have occurred since we arrived in Luanda. If we knew the other, and others know us, then tragedies such as this could be avoided. Knowing that modern systems of communication depend on a mineral that comes from the Congo forests involves a moral duty to know more about that country.

2:42 PM

me: I've talked about the political engagement of your work, which is in its roots and seems to be inseparable from it. Is it the framework and its basic dogma? But when did you discover that art can give shape to this dispute?

3:47 PM

K: We started producing art very early, an interest in being able to reproduce extreme situations which I have experienced and which often transcended fiction. It sprang from interaction with the streets, their laws and their myths. Since childhood, my attention has always been drawn to the mark left by time on things, the feeling of nostalgia and the lingering smell of other lives that have inhabited the city. Perhaps my interest in recording things sprang from there.

3:51 PM

me: It's interesting that you mention reproduction. My image of the African continent – the image with which I was raised and educated – is a photographic image. When did you feel the need to move from reproducing to fiction-making?

3:57 PM

K: At the moment I believe that I am undergoing a change of skin as an artist. I decided to intervene in what was supposedly a new documentary image, which came to acquire another significance when it underwent this process of manipulation. Feeding people the same poison with which we were fed. Seminalisation, omission or deconstruction can be good tools when used in the artistic context. This is the most important freedom for me when entering fictional territory. 'I. [Now if it's turned out to be no, I don't mind]', as Hemingway said.

4:04 PM

me: But how did you begin taking photographs?

4:05 PM

K: In the family, with my older brothers. We even came to have a studio at home. But later I got to know some photographers, like Carlos Leal and John Liebenberg, who were friends to me during my adolescence. Liebenberg, who is now a paparazzo, possesses one of the greatest photographic archives of the war. For me, it was amazing how much I learned about myself in his images. I was also when I discovered photography as a weapon of observation and denunciation in South Africa. It was also one of the main means used to oppress apartheid.

4:14 PM

me: When you met them were you taking photographs?

4:14 PM

K: At that time I was a student and I was more in touch with music. This was in the late 1990s, when I lived in some groups that always resulted in frustrated projects. I believe that I connected to photography more through its contextual side because the truth is that I was always analysing images. I had photos by Cristina Banti, my brother, which had great freedom in what he was photographing because he did not take photographs in order to sell them. His images were always closely related to life in Luanda. Then the movement to the suburbs in the city, and he documented a sort of rebirth of glamour after independence. But strangely, I barely took any photos. I only recommenced with photography when I returned to Luanda in 1998. After spending two years in Johannesburg. The relationship with the African artists was very important for this recommence in the sense that I encouraged me to search for an attitude or an artistic context in what I was photographing.

12:01 AM

me: Like Liebenberg with Apartheid, you chose to insert in this project many images of Luanda. Is the main setting of the messages related to the "third diamond"? Some of the images, however, are very enigmatic. I would say almost abstract, such as Luanda in the Sky with Diamonds I, whose protagonists are the white sides of bus stops.

12:28 AM

K: Those buses belong to a mine. They couldn't leave the mining area without washing their boots, because any stone, however insignificant it might be to the naked eye, can be highly valuable. It can't be on the trucks have to be washed. The experience that I had in Luanda Sky was very profound, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:47 AM

me: City, affectivity?

12:50 AM

K: Because I had an adoptive brother who did his military service there, and he was killed during one of the battles. I grew up with the name of his province in my head because of the stories that he told me, from which I had to create images of what this place was like as I had no photos. Much later, when I travelled there, it was incredible to see how everything that I was going to create in my mind had been there alive in my subconscious. I lived only about the surface of the subject, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:50 AM

me: I think I would be very pretentious if I thought that... I'm simply seeking to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue. But of course the epicentre is Africa, or Angola, to be more precise. It is important to consider how much of the rest of the world it is in us.

5:36 PM

me: The selected images were reorganised from series that I recognize. They form part of other stories, they are fragments of those narratives that work together to construct a larger story. They project themselves equally into all dimensions of your experience as if it could signify all of these convolutions.

5:10 PM

K: There are many things in them that are born from certain personal traumas and these traumatic moments are directly linked to the history of the country where I have lived. However, they transcend continental borders and therefore simultaneously assume a personal, political and global dimension.



Kluang Kia Hendu, 2008, Baby car, Lima, 120cmx53cm.

Full View

Face to Face

Artists Rein

Stages City

Games Without Borders

Roy Duarte de Carvalho

Body

Search

FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

by LIGIA ALCANTARA

Ligia Alcantara

Portugal, 1981) is a graduate in History of Art and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she now works as a researcher in the Institute of Art History.

Having recently published the book entitled *Kluang Kia Hendu* (Lisbon, 2010), she continues her involvement in various research, exhibition and education projects with several art institutions in Portugal and Brazil. She took part in the London / Liverpool Visual Art Curators Showcase 08 programme, held a residency at the Z30 Gallery and was the curator of the exhibition *A Escala da Crítica* (The Critical Choice) for Plataforma Revolver. Ligia Alcantara is also an art critic and regularly publishes articles in the online magazine *Art & Critique* net. She worked as an assistant curator to the 20th São Paulo Biennial (on a scholarship from INOVAM).

1:28 PM

me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What experience does the accumulation of such diverse experiences have for your formation, which includes the equating and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that went to form part of or determine its future?

5:36 PM

K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been political tensions with a great and accessible cultural and even linguistic freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and not through the Internet and satellite. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM

me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

5:41 PM

K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to play one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly African future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:42 PM

me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations, some of which are also young powers, depends on their ability to select their own histories, opposing the perpetuation of the Eurocentric reading. Is that the aim of your work, to rewrite or reinvent history?

5:43 PM

K: Yes, whoever doesn't have a history should invent one!

5:43 PM

me: That story reminds me of a speech that Bakhtin gave in Geneva in which he said that Africa had never "entered into the history" of the problems of Africans. Is it self-determination that you are talking about?

5:51 PM

K: The important thing is that we feel that we have the legitimacy to define who we are or who we aim to be. The history (largely) by the universities also contains lies and manipulations. Moreover, it is clear that the process of mental decolonisation goes far beyond the political act of raising flags, holding rallies in public squares and promoting discourses. For this reason, I think that it is very early to talk about post-colonialism, since there are still many unresolved conflicts in Africa which are occasionally obliged to tolerate this type of paternalistic discourse. Independence in Africa is a recent historical landmark, and strategies of dominance and neo-colonialism are unfortunately not confined to the past. Bakhtin's statement is indisputable proof of this danger.

1:57 AM

me: You are therefore confronting a sort of idea of historical falsification, which, like all history, obects a particular interest and point of view, but which is subverted by you using the same method to produce the opposite effect, like a form of parody.

2:05 AM

K: Exactly! In fact, it is the same strategy that was used in a negative way towards the African continent, and I was effective in the way in which it got all of us to hate and which makes us happy. I'm talking about the African context purely for personal reasons. As I have said, I believe that it is a history that is shared by other parts of the world. The fact that in five hours I can travel to Ethiopia by aeroplane when I look at the British Airways of years to reach Luanda is something that can never be invalidated. It is important to rethink the way in which we access globalisation, which, in our case, was in an obligatory and immediate manner: understanding the "other", the stranger, became absolutely essential for the survival of Africans. The ships that left here for the rest of the world were not accompanied by tourists and were not following a tourist route.

2:16 AM

me: That necessary, urgent communication shaped an open and perceptive attitude towards the other's adaptability.

2:18 AM

K: Yes, and it was also essential to our own sovereignty. It is incredible to reflect on the tremendous changes that have occurred since we arrived in Luanda. If we knew the other, and others know us, then tragedies such as this could be avoided. Knowing that modern systems of communication depend on a mineral that comes from the Congo forests involves a moral duty to know more about that country.

2:42 PM

me: I've talked about the political engagement of your work, which is in its roots and seems to be inseparable from it. Is it the framework and its basic dogma? But when did you discover that art can give shape to this dispute?

3:47 PM

K: We started producing art very early, an interest in being able to reproduce extreme situations which I have experienced and which often transcended fiction. It sprang from interaction with the streets, their laws and their myths. Since childhood, my attention has always been drawn to the mark left by time on things, the feeling of nostalgia and the lingering smell of other lives that have inhabited the city. Perhaps my interest in recording things sprang from there.

3:51 PM

me: It's interesting that you mention reproduction. My image of the African continent – the image with which I was raised and educated – is a photographic image. When did you feel the need to move from reproducing to fiction-making?

3:57 PM

K: At the moment I believe that I am undergoing a change of skin as an artist. I decided to intervene in what was supposedly a new documentary image, which came to acquire another significance when it underwent this process of manipulation. Feeding people the same poison with which we were fed. Seminalisation, omission or deconstruction can be good tools when used in the artistic context. This is the most important freedom for me when entering fictional territory. 'I. [Now if it's turned out to be no, I don't mind]', as Hemingway said.

4:04 PM

me: But how did you begin taking photographs?

4:05 PM

K: In the family, with my older brothers. We even came to have a studio at home. But later I got to know some photographers, like Carlos Leal and John Liebenberg, who were friends to me during my adolescence. Liebenberg, who is now a paparazzo, possesses one of the greatest photographic archives of the war. For me, it was amazing how much I learned about myself in his images. I was also when I discovered photography as a weapon of observation and denunciation in South Africa. It was also one of the main means used to oppress apartheid.

4:14 PM

me: When you met them were you taking photographs?

4:14 PM

K: At that time I was a student and I was more in touch with music. This was in the late 1990s, when I lived in some groups that always resulted in frustrated projects. I believe that I connected to photography more through its contextual side because the truth is that I was always analysing images. I had photos by Cristina Banti, my brother, which had great freedom in what he was photographing because he did not take photographs in order to sell them. His images were always closely related to life in Luanda. Then the movement to the suburbs in the city, and he documented a sort of rebirth of glamour after independence. But strangely, I barely took any photos. I only recommenced with photography when I returned to Luanda in 1998. After spending two years in Johannesburg. The relationship with the African artists was very important for this recommence in the sense that I encouraged me to search for an attitude or an artistic context in what I was photographing.

12:01 AM

me: Like Liebenberg with Apartheid, you chose to insert in this project many images of Luanda. Is the main setting of the messages related to the "third diamond"? Some of the images, however, are very enigmatic. I would say almost abstract, such as Luanda in the Sky with Diamonds I, whose protagonists are the white sides of bus stops.

12:28 AM

K: Those buses belong to a mine. They couldn't leave the mining area without washing their boots, because any stone, however insignificant it might be to the naked eye, can be highly valuable. It can't be on the trucks have to be washed. The experience that I had in Luanda Sky was very profound, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:47 AM

me: City, affectivity?

12:50 AM

K: Because I had an adoptive brother who did his military service there, and he was killed during one of the battles. I grew up with the name of his province in my head because of the stories that he told me, from which I had to create images of what this place was like as I had no photos. Much later, when I travelled there, it was incredible to see how everything that I was going to create in my mind had been there alive in my subconscious. I lived only about the surface of the subject, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:50 AM

me: I think I would be very pretentious if I thought that... I'm simply seeking to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue. But of course the epicentre is Africa, or Angola, to be more precise. It is important to consider how much of the rest of the world it is in us.

5:36 PM

me: The selected images were reorganised from series that I recognize. They form part of other stories, they are fragments of those narratives that work together to construct a larger story. They project themselves equally into all dimensions of your experience as if it could signify all of these convolutions.

5:10 PM

K: There are many things in them that are born from certain personal traumas and these traumatic moments are directly linked to the history of the country where I have lived. However, they transcend continental borders and therefore simultaneously assume a personal, political and global dimension.



Kluang Kia Hendu, 2008, Baby car, Lima, 120cmx53cm.

Full View

Face to Face

Artists Rein

Stages City

Games Without Borders

Roy Duarte de Carvalho

Body

Search

FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

by LIGIA ALCANTARA

Ligia Alcantara

Portugal, 1981) is a graduate in History of Art and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she now works as a researcher in the Institute of Art History.

Having recently published the book entitled *Kluang Kia Hendu* (Lisbon, 2010), she continues her involvement in various research, exhibition and education projects with several art institutions in Portugal and Brazil. She took part in the London / Liverpool Visual Art Curators Showcase 08 programme, held a residency at the Z30 Gallery and was the curator of the exhibition *A Escala da Crítica* (The Critical Choice) for Plataforma Revolver. Ligia Alcantara is also an art critic and regularly publishes articles in the online magazine *Art & Critique* net. She worked as an assistant curator to the 20th São Paulo Biennial (on a scholarship from INOVAM).

1:28 PM

me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What experience does the accumulation of such diverse experiences have for your formation, which includes the equating and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that went to form part of or determine its future?

5:36 PM

K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been political tensions with a great and accessible cultural and even linguistic freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and not through the Internet and satellite. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM

me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

5:41 PM

K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to play one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly African future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:42 PM

me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations, some of which are also young powers, depends on their ability to select their own histories, opposing the perpetuation of the Eurocentric reading. Is that the aim of your work, to rewrite or reinvent history?

5:43 PM

K: Yes, whoever doesn't have a history should invent one!

5:43 PM

me: That story reminds me of a speech that Bakhtin gave in Geneva in which he said that Africa had never "entered into the history" of the problems of Africans. Is it self-determination that you are talking about?

5:51 PM

K: The important thing is that we feel that we have the legitimacy to define who we are or who we aim to be. The history (largely) by the universities also contains lies and manipulations. Moreover, it is clear that the process of mental decolonisation goes far beyond the political act of raising flags, holding rallies in public squares and promoting discourses. For this reason, I think that it is very early to talk about post-colonialism, since there are still many unresolved conflicts in Africa which are occasionally obliged to tolerate this type of paternalistic discourse. Independence in Africa is a recent historical landmark, and strategies of dominance and neo-colonialism are unfortunately not confined to the past. Bakhtin's statement is indisputable proof of this danger.

1:57 AM

me: You are therefore confronting a sort of idea of historical falsification, which, like all history, obects a particular interest and point of view, but which is subverted by you using the same method to produce the opposite effect, like a form of parody.

2:05 AM

K: Exactly! In fact, it is the same strategy that was used in a negative way towards the African continent, and I was effective in the way in which it got all of us to hate and which makes us happy. I'm talking about the African context purely for personal reasons. As I have said, I believe that it is a history that is shared by other parts of the world. The fact that in five hours I can travel to Ethiopia by aeroplane when I look at the British Airways of years to reach Luanda is something that can never be invalidated. It is important to rethink the way in which we access globalisation, which, in our case, was in an obligatory and immediate manner: understanding the "other", the stranger, became absolutely essential for the survival of Africans. The ships that left here for the rest of the world were not accompanied by tourists and were not following a tourist route.

2:16 AM

me: That necessary, urgent communication shaped an open and perceptive attitude towards the other's adaptability.

2:18 AM

K: Yes, and it was also essential to our own sovereignty. It is incredible to reflect on the tremendous changes that have occurred since we arrived in Luanda. If we knew the other, and others know us, then tragedies such as this could be avoided. Knowing that modern systems of communication depend on a mineral that comes from the Congo forests involves a moral duty to know more about that country.

2:42 PM

me: I've talked about the political engagement of your work, which is in its roots and seems to be inseparable from it. Is it the framework and its basic dogma? But when did you discover that art can give shape to this dispute?

3:47 PM

K: We started producing art very early, an interest in being able to reproduce extreme situations which I have experienced and which often transcended fiction. It sprang from interaction with the streets, their laws and their myths. Since childhood, my attention has always been drawn to the mark left by time on things, the feeling of nostalgia and the lingering smell of other lives that have inhabited the city. Perhaps my interest in recording things sprang from there.

3:51 PM

me: It's interesting that you mention reproduction. My image of the African continent – the image with which I was raised and educated – is a photographic image. When did you feel the need to move from reproducing to fiction-making?

3:57 PM

K: At the moment I believe that I am undergoing a change of skin as an artist. I decided to intervene in what was supposedly a new documentary image, which came to acquire another significance when it underwent this process of manipulation. Feeding people the same poison with which we were fed. Seminalisation, omission or deconstruction can be good tools when used in the artistic context. This is the most important freedom for me when entering fictional territory. 'I. [Now if it's turned out to be no, I don't mind]', as Hemingway said.

4:04 PM

me: But how did you begin taking photographs?

4:05 PM

K: In the family, with my older brothers. We even came to have a studio at home. But later I got to know some photographers, like Carlos Leal and John Liebenberg, who were friends to me during my adolescence. Liebenberg, who is now a paparazzo, possesses one of the greatest photographic archives of the war. For me, it was amazing how much I learned about myself in his images. I was also when I discovered photography as a weapon of observation and denunciation in South Africa. It was also one of the main means used to oppress apartheid.

4:14 PM

me: When you met them were you taking photographs?

4:14 PM

K: At that time I was a student and I was more in touch with music. This was in the late 1990s, when I lived in some groups that always resulted in frustrated projects. I believe that I connected to photography more through its contextual side because the truth is that I was always analysing images. I had photos by Cristina Banti, my brother, which had great freedom in what he was photographing because he did not take photographs in order to sell them. His images were always closely related to life in Luanda. Then the movement to the suburbs in the city, and he documented a sort of rebirth of glamour after independence. But strangely, I barely took any photos. I only recommenced with photography when I returned to Luanda in 1998. After spending two years in Johannesburg. The relationship with the African artists was very important for this recommence in the sense that I encouraged me to search for an attitude or an artistic context in what I was photographing.

12:01 AM

me: Like Liebenberg with Apartheid, you chose to insert in this project many images of Luanda. Is the main setting of the messages related to the "third diamond"? Some of the images, however, are very enigmatic. I would say almost abstract, such as Luanda in the Sky with Diamonds I, whose protagonists are the white sides of bus stops.

12:28 AM

K: Those buses belong to a mine. They couldn't leave the mining area without washing their boots, because any stone, however insignificant it might be to the naked eye, can be highly valuable. It can't be on the trucks have to be washed. The experience that I had in Luanda Sky was very profound, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:47 AM

me: City, affectivity?

12:50 AM

K: Because I had an adoptive brother who did his military service there, and he was killed during one of the battles. I grew up with the name of his province in my head because of the stories that he told me, from which I had to create images of what this place was like as I had no photos. Much later, when I travelled there, it was incredible to see how everything that I was going to create in my mind had been there alive in my subconscious. I lived only about the surface of the subject, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:50 AM

me: I think I would be very pretentious if I thought that... I'm simply seeking to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue. But of course the epicentre is Africa, or Angola, to be more precise. It is important to consider how much of the rest of the world it is in us.

5:36 PM

me: The selected images were reorganised from series that I recognize. They form part of other stories, they are fragments of those narratives that work together to construct a larger story. They project themselves equally into all dimensions of your experience as if it could signify all of these convolutions.

5:10 PM

K: There are many things in them that are born from certain personal traumas and these traumatic moments are directly linked to the history of the country where I have lived. However, they transcend continental borders and therefore simultaneously assume a personal, political and global dimension.



Kluang Kia Hendu, 2008, Baby car, Lima, 120cmx53cm.

Full View

Face to Face

Artists Rein

Stages City

Games Without Borders

Roy Duarte de Carvalho

Body

Search

FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

by LIGIA ALCANTARA

Ligia Alcantara

Portugal, 1981) is a graduate in History of Art and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she now works as a researcher in the Institute of Art History.

Having recently published the book entitled *Kluang Kia Hendu* (Lisbon, 2010), she continues her involvement in various research, exhibition and education projects with several art institutions in Portugal and Brazil. She took part in the London / Liverpool Visual Art Curators Showcase 08 programme, held a residency at the Z30 Gallery and was the curator of the exhibition *A Escala da Crítica* (The Critical Choice) for Plataforma Revolver. Ligia Alcantara is also an art critic and regularly publishes articles in the online magazine *Art & Critique* net. She worked as an assistant curator to the 20th São Paulo Biennial (on a scholarship from INOVAM).

1:28 PM

me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What experience does the accumulation of such diverse experiences have for your formation, which includes the equating and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that went to form part of or determine its future?

5:36 PM

K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been political tensions with a great and accessible cultural and even linguistic freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and not through the Internet and satellite. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM

me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

5:41 PM

K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to play one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly African future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:42 PM

me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations, some of which are also young powers, depends on their ability to select their own histories, opposing the perpetuation of the Eurocentric reading. Is that the aim of your work, to rewrite or reinvent history?

5:43 PM

K: Yes, whoever doesn't have a history should invent one!

5:43 PM

me: That story reminds me of a speech that Bakhtin gave in Geneva in which he said that Africa had never "entered into the history" of the problems of Africans. Is it self-determination that you are talking about?

5:51 PM

K: The important thing is that we feel that we have the legitimacy to define who we are or who we aim to be. The history (largely) by the universities also contains lies and manipulations. Moreover, it is clear that the process of mental decolonisation goes far beyond the political act of raising flags, holding rallies in public squares and promoting discourses. For this reason, I think that it is very early to talk about post-colonialism, since there are still many unresolved conflicts in Africa which are occasionally obliged to tolerate this type of paternalistic discourse. Independence in Africa is a recent historical landmark, and strategies of dominance and neo-colonialism are unfortunately not confined to the past. Bakhtin's statement is indisputable proof of this danger.

1:57 AM

me: You are therefore confronting a sort of idea of historical falsification, which, like all history, obects a particular interest and point of view, but which is subverted by you using the same method to produce the opposite effect, like a form of parody.

2:05 AM

K: Exactly! In fact, it is the same strategy that was used in a negative way towards the African continent, and I was effective in the way in which it got all of us to hate and which makes us happy. I'm talking about the African context purely for personal reasons. As I have said, I believe that it is a history that is shared by other parts of the world. The fact that in five hours I can travel to Ethiopia by aeroplane when I look at the British Airways of years to reach Luanda is something that can never be invalidated. It is important to rethink the way in which we access globalisation, which, in our case, was in an obligatory and immediate manner: understanding the "other", the stranger, became absolutely essential for the survival of Africans. The ships that left here for the rest of the world were not accompanied by tourists and were not following a tourist route.

2:16 AM

me: That necessary, urgent communication shaped an open and perceptive attitude towards the other's adaptability.

2:18 AM

K: Yes, and it was also essential to our own sovereignty. It is incredible to reflect on the tremendous changes that have occurred since we arrived in Luanda. If we knew the other, and others know us, then tragedies such as this could be avoided. Knowing that modern systems of communication depend on a mineral that comes from the Congo forests involves a moral duty to know more about that country.

2:42 PM

me: I've talked about the political engagement of your work, which is in its roots and seems to be inseparable from it. Is it the framework and its basic dogma? But when did you discover that art can give shape to this dispute?

3:47 PM

K: We started producing art very early, an interest in being able to reproduce extreme situations which I have experienced and which often transcended fiction. It sprang from interaction with the streets, their laws and their myths. Since childhood, my attention has always been drawn to the mark left by time on things, the feeling of nostalgia and the lingering smell of other lives that have inhabited the city. Perhaps my interest in recording things sprang from there.

3:51 PM

me: It's interesting that you mention reproduction. My image of the African continent – the image with which I was raised and educated – is a photographic image. When did you feel the need to move from reproducing to fiction-making?

3:57 PM

K: At the moment I believe that I am undergoing a change of skin as an artist. I decided to intervene in what was supposedly a new documentary image, which came to acquire another significance when it underwent this process of manipulation. Feeding people the same poison with which we were fed. Seminalisation, omission or deconstruction can be good tools when used in the artistic context. This is the most important freedom for me when entering fictional territory. 'I. [Now if it's turned out to be no, I don't mind]', as Hemingway said.

4:04 PM

me: But how did you begin taking photographs?

4:05 PM

K: In the family, with my older brothers. We even came to have a studio at home. But later I got to know some photographers, like Carlos Leal and John Liebenberg, who were friends to me during my adolescence. Liebenberg, who is now a paparazzo, possesses one of the greatest photographic archives of the war. For me, it was amazing how much I learned about myself in his images. I was also when I discovered photography as a weapon of observation and denunciation in South Africa. It was also one of the main means used to oppress apartheid.

4:14 PM

me: When you met them were you taking photographs?

4:14 PM

K: At that time I was a student and I was more in touch with music. This was in the late 1990s, when I lived in some groups that always resulted in frustrated projects. I believe that I connected to photography more through its contextual side because the truth is that I was always analysing images. I had photos by Cristina Banti, my brother, which had great freedom in what he was photographing because he did not take photographs in order to sell them. His images were always closely related to life in Luanda. Then the movement to the suburbs in the city, and he documented a sort of rebirth of glamour after independence. But strangely, I barely took any photos. I only recommenced with photography when I returned to Luanda in 1998. After spending two years in Johannesburg. The relationship with the African artists was very important for this recommence in the sense that I encouraged me to search for an attitude or an artistic context in what I was photographing.

12:01 AM

me: Like Liebenberg with Apartheid, you chose to insert in this project many images of Luanda. Is the main setting of the messages related to the "third diamond"? Some of the images, however, are very enigmatic. I would say almost abstract, such as Luanda in the Sky with Diamonds I, whose protagonists are the white sides of bus stops.

12:28 AM

K: Those buses belong to a mine. They couldn't leave the mining area without washing their boots, because any stone, however insignificant it might be to the naked eye, can be highly valuable. It can't be on the trucks have to be washed. The experience that I had in Luanda Sky was very profound, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:47 AM

me: City, affectivity?

12:50 AM

K: Because I had an adoptive brother who did his military service there, and he was killed during one of the battles. I grew up with the name of his province in my head because of the stories that he told me, from which I had to create images of what this place was like as I had no photos. Much later, when I travelled there, it was incredible to see how everything that I was going to create in my mind had been there alive in my subconscious. I lived only about the surface of the subject, but I feel that I never saw a more beautiful city.

12:50 AM

me: I think I would be very pretentious if I thought that... I'm simply seeking to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue. But of course the epicentre is Africa, or Angola, to be more precise. It is important to consider how much of the rest of the world it is in us.

5:36 PM

me: The selected images were reorganised from series that I recognize. They form part of other stories, they are fragments of those narratives that work together to construct a larger story. They project themselves equally into all dimensions of your experience as if it could signify all of these convolutions.

5:10 PM

K: There are many things in them that are born from certain personal traumas and these traumatic moments are directly linked to the history of the country where I have lived. However, they transcend continental borders and therefore simultaneously assume a personal, political and global dimension.



Kluang Kia Hendu, 2008, Baby car, Lima, 120cmx53cm.

Full View

Face to Face

Artists Rein

Stages City

Games Without Borders

Roy Duarte de Carvalho

Body

Search

FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE

by LIGIA ALCANTARA

Ligia Alcantara

Portugal, 1981) is a graduate in History of Art and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she now works as a researcher in the Institute of Art History.

Having recently published the book entitled *Kluang Kia Hendu* (Lisbon, 2010), she continues her involvement in various research, exhibition and education projects with several art institutions in Portugal and Brazil. She took part in the London / Liverpool Visual Art Curators Showcase 08 programme, held a residency at the Z30 Gallery and was the curator of the exhibition *A Escala da Crítica* (The Critical Choice) for Plataforma Revolver. Ligia Alcantara is also an art critic and regularly publishes articles in the online magazine *Art & Critique* net. She worked as an assistant curator to the 20th São Paulo Biennial (on a scholarship from INOVAM).

1:28 PM

me: I read a recent article that contained some quotations from a statement of yours. You were talking precisely about these crossed references, like listening to Michael Jackson's music on a Soviet radio when you were a child. What experience does the accumulation of such diverse experiences have for your formation, which includes the equating and permanent presence in Angola of all the countries that went to form part of or determine its future?

5:36 PM

K: I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been political tensions with a great and accessible cultural and even linguistic freedom. For this reason, I think that we have an identity that is quite contaminated by what reaches us through the ports and airports, and not through the Internet and satellite. This happens not only in Angola but also in the rest of the continent, which has suddenly ceased to be the continent of the past in order to be sent into the future.

5:39 PM

me: And are you interested in working on this image of the future as a sort of justification for the process of historical overtaking or overcoming? Is that concern part of the Afrofuturist movement, which is particularly prominent in literature?

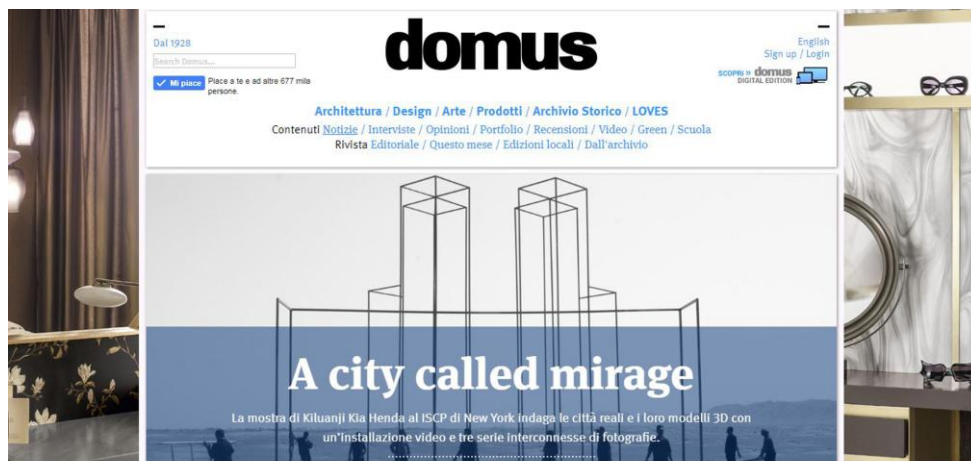
5:41 PM

K: There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to play one's own future. Afrofuturism is an escape through which I am seeking to separate myself from the present. It does not obey a temporal rule, which allows a supposedly African future to be projected that sometimes interferes with the legacy of the past.

5:42 PM

me: The thorough restructuring and political affirmation of young nations

[illegible]



La International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) di New York ha presentato "A City Called Mirage", una mostra di Kiluanji Kia Henda. L'esposizione indaga le città reali e i loro modelli 3D con un'installazione video a quattro canali e tre serie interconnesse di fotografie.



In "A City Called Mirage" Henda studia la nascita, la vita e la morte delle città moderne. Nell'opera *Paradise Metalic* (2014), quattro video sincronizzati raccontano insieme la costruzione di una città ideale, costruita sul deserto arido di Maliha, nell'emirato dello Sharjah. Land art e performance si mescolano per creare un nuovo paese immaginario, costituito e successivamente demolito nella sabbia, demarcato con dei pali nel terreno, pareti di cemento e scheletri di acciaio.



† Fig.6 "Kiluanji Kia Henda: A City Called Mirage", veduta della mostra, International Studio & Curatorial Program, 2017

fino al 6 ottobre 2017
Kiluanji Kia Henda: A City Called Mirage
 a cura di Kari Conte
 International Studio & Curatorial Program
 1040 Metropolitan Ave., New York

[Back to Index](#)

Like place 63

Condividi

Tweet

KILUANJI KIA HENDA at Galleria Fonti and Vulcano Solfatara, Sala del Bianchetto in Naples



Double appointment in Naples with work by the artist **Kiluanji Kia Henda**. On Friday 27th of May at 6.30pm the exhibition **Concrete Affection** at Galleria Fonti in Naples and on Saturday 28th the exhibition **A City Called Mirage** opens at 10.30am at Vulcano Solfatara in Pozzuoli.

The Angolan artist **Kiluanji Kia Henda** (1973) who lives and works in **Luanda** (Angola's capital) and Lisbon, is one of the protagonists of the aesthetic wave that joins art and commitment, poetry and militancy. With different languages and tools – sculpture, video, photography, light boxes, to environmental sized works – traces, between truth and fiction, the history of his country, Angola, from 1975 year in which the Portuguese rule ends and Angola achieves independence to a long period of civil wars ended in 2002.

The artist represented his country at the Venice Biennale in 2007. He received the National Prize for Culture by the Minister of Culture in Angola in 2012 for his contribution to the internationalization of the Angolan culture and in 2014 the magazine Foreign Policy recognized him as one of the Leading Global Thinkers of that year.

At Galleria Fonti the artist presents the video installation **Concrete Affection – Zopo Lady** (2014) together with **75**, a series composed by 75 photos taken from the video "Concrete Affection" and Chinese ink drawings.

Kiluanji Kia Henda's video (**about 12"**) – presented in Italy for the first time as a side event of the 14th Venice Biennale of Architecture (2014) – is inspired by the book by the Polish journalist and writer Ryszard Kapuscinski entitled **Another Day of Life – Angola 1975**. A text that documents the last days of Portuguese colonial rule in 1975 and which testifies a time of great unrest and changes experienced even in the "body" of the city of Luanda and of the whole country, followed by a long period of civil war before reaching the independence. In particular, from the book by Kapuscinski, Kia Henda gets back the description of the exodus of the many Portuguese people leaving the country, which corresponds to the arrival in Luanda of thousands of Angolans forced by necessity to move from remote and rural areas to the capital city. In the midst of these movements – metaphorically between full, empty and full again – it ranks **Concrete Affection – Zopo Lady** which emphasizes this "delicate and painful" step of the history of Luanda and the whole Angola.

In the video, in a completely empty city without people, a narrator out-field male voice, runs through streets, places, buildings, from morning to night. In 24 hours: that's the time to decide whether to remain or to leave the country. A common destiny for everybody is forced to migrate. The result? The narrator says: "All of the population's belongings are being packed. The houses are empty and the boxes filling with furniture and trinkets. The city is being stripped of its memory. All that remains is its skeleton, the ground zero of history."

At Vulcano Solfatara in Pozzuoli, Kiluanji Kia Henda will show **A City Called Mirage**. Among fumaroles and volcanic phenomena, yet active for 4000 years, has been installed **Fortress** (2014) a big structure made by iron tubes (8x 8 m) which reproduces the skyline of one of the many **City Mirage** – one for all Dubai in the Emirates – that seem to come from nothing and represent the urban boom imported from Occident to Middle East, Africa, South America. They call it "Dubalization." A strong symbol of power that becomes poetic and ironic complaint in Kiluanji Kia Henda's work.

A City Called Mirage is a work in progress, 2013 – 2014, composed by iron sculptures, photographs, drawings, video, installations. A complex project of more elements exhibited at the show **Art and the City Zurich: Public Sculpture Project** in Zurich in 2015, curated by Christoph Doswald.

The starting point is a journey to the south of Angola through the desert region of Namibia, where Kiluanji Kia Henda finds an abandoned building (riddle with bullet holes) with the sign "Miragem."

A sign that assumes a symbolic value and developed a series of linked projects: **Rusty Mirage (The City Skyline)**, **Buildings (The Palace, The Fortress, The Temple, The Ministry)**, **Instructions on How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home** and the video **Paradise Metallic**.

Inside the old **Sala del Bianchetto** will be exhibited: the lightbox **Rusty Mirage** (2013) that reproduces the sign "Miragem"; the series of eight photographs **Rusty Mirage (The City Skyline)** (2013) that show the construction of the **city mirage** in iron in the desert of Al-Azraq in Jordan (one of that series has recently been acquired by the Tate Gallery Collection); the ironic installation of photographs **Instructions on How to Create Your Own Personal Dubai at Home**; the video installation **Paradise Metallic** produced by Sharjah Art Foundation.

Concrete Affection

Galleria Fonti – via Chiaia n 229, Naples

Opening Friday 27 May 2016, 18.30pm

27 May to 27 July 2016

A City Called Mirage

Vulcano Solfatara, Sala del Bianchetto – via Solfatara 161, Pozzuoli

Opening Saturday 28 May 2016, 10.30pm

28 May – 29 July 2016

Luanda's Monuments



Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Redefining The Power IV (Serie 75 with Shunnuz Fiel),
2011, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100,
courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

Dariel Cobb

(Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

The photograph shows a man standing on a monumental pedestal, arms akimbo, occupying the home of some forgotten statue. The man is Angolan fashion designer Shunnuz Fiel dos Santos; the now-removed statue bore the likeness of Portuguese colonist Paolo Dias de Novais, who claimed the small coastal settlement that became Angola's capitol as São Paulo da Assumpção de Loanda in 1575. In the 2011 series "Redefining the Power," Angolan artist Kiluanji Kia Henda depicts Fiel atop different vacated pedestals across central Luanda. In *Redefining the Power IV*, Fiel is wearing a grey one piece outfit with flared trousers, a dark green cap, and long braided dreadlocks down his back. In another, he's reciting poetry wearing bright colors—a green jacket over a red shirt, layers of blue skirts over yellow short pants, and red stockings. In a third, he's dressed in black and purple, holding out the symbol the American musician Prince used as a pseudonym. Henda's photographs use Shunnuz Fiel's sartorial playfulness to pose serious questions about Angola's historical memory—its four centuries of colonial conflict followed by three decades of civil war—and to introduce into public dialogue more inventive and imaginative notions of the nation's future. Henda harnesses and reconfigures the layers of meaning represented by public urban monuments, what Pierre Nora (1989) calls *lieux de mémoires* ("sites of memory"), and rather than stripping them of affect, repurposes empty pedestals as sites for the public contestation of Angola's future. This is a temporal exercise, mixing up the past so as to catalyze and ignite possible futures. Henda's political engagement, characterized by a seductive mix of humor and pathos, exemplifies the power art has to challenge and expand society's oneiric capacities. The project "Redefining the Power" does exactly this—invites critique of Angola's political, social, and economic policies by asking simply, who does Angola want to be?

PLANNING LUANDA: THE CITY AND ITS MONUMENTS

The present disordered fabric of urban Luanda, the landscape surrounding Henda's work, is a direct reflection of its political history. Under Portuguese colonial influence (1575-1975), Luanda's urbanization followed the governing principles of various European models, disregarding the indigenous "essence of its built environment," deemed both fragile and confusing. "Entire cities were thus designed and built from scratch..." (Macedo 2012, 90). Initial efforts were modest, beginning with a series of hilltop forts overlooking the harbor; late-Medieval constructions of thick-walled stone around which clusters of houses gathered and new roads were cut. Luanda was a mercantile post and a hub of the slave trade, but full time residents were few. Over the centuries the city crept down the slope onto the harbor side, forming waterfront avenues and radial plazas in a roughly interconnected grid. These plazas were typically punctuated with statues of Portuguese heroes from what came to be called "The Age of Discoveries," each named for the man depicted, such as *Largo Infante D. Henrique*—the only such plaza to retain its name following Angola's independence.

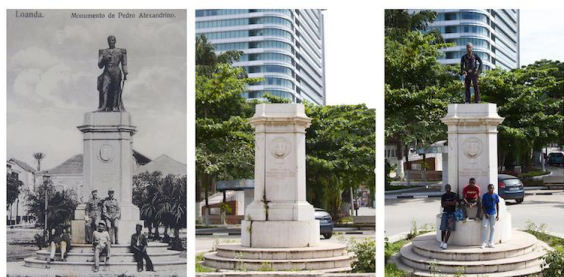


Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Redefining The Power II (Serie 75 with Shunnuz Fiel), 2011,
photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100,
courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

These stone men atop their towering pedestals served as much to reassure Portuguese colonial citizens as to hector native peoples. Each was a public proclamation of Portugal's domination, a celebration of military and technological prowess presented as cultural superiority embodied. Not until it was consumed by the political ramifications of the last convulsions of colonialism did Portugal claim Luanda as the capital of a large and growing settler society. In the epoch prior, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, the European population of the city remained relatively stable. Despite road building and other small-scale infrastructure projects, neither the architectural density nor the outline of the city changed significantly until the twentieth century. As a result, the choice and placement of monuments became one of Portugal's most noticeable planning interventions in this period.

Urban planning took on new agency in the twentieth century, as the Portuguese government in Angola began to reimagine and transition itself from an imperial colonial power to a "pluricontinental" settler society. Luanda's rising population, including many more Portuguese immigrants, and Angola's increasing importance to Portugal's economy (first through diamond mining and later through oil extraction) led to a succession of new master plans. The 1942 urban plan diagrams developed by Etienne de Gröer and D. Moreira da Silva are somewhat outmoded and are reminiscent of Ebenezer Howard's 1902 treatise "Garden Cities of To-Morrow," which advocated the creation of small satellite cities to depopulate congested and polluted industrial city centers in England. The 1952 plan by João António Aguiar features a much more contemporary, Modernist, rationalist network of roughly rectangular blocks, similar to plans developed by Le Corbusier-for whom Aguiar once worked-and Josep Lluís Sert for Bogota, Columbia in 1948. Aguiar also designed plans for several other Portuguese colonial cities in 1952, including São Tomé, Cabinda, and Huambo ("Nova Lisboa"), the last of which stands out for its French Imperial style, representing the grandiose goals of Portugal's fascist Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, who held office from 1933-1968. Salazar's dream of an *Estado Novo* ("A New State"), also called "The Second Republic," was in reality a conservative, authoritarian, pro-Roman Catholic regime which justified Portuguese imperialism as a check against the spread of communism and the growing economic power of the NATO alliance, of which Pedro Manuel Santos writes Portugal felt compelled-as an unfortunate necessity-to be a part.

Aguiar's urban plans were commissioned just after the complete restructuring of the Portuguese colonial system in 1951. Salazar declared that the colonies were no longer to be treated as tributes to the nation, but to be officially considered as *provinces*, with parliamentary representation, a notion Kiluanji Kia Henda refers to as a "myth." References to "colonies" and "colonialism" were removed from political rhetoric, department titles, and official documents, and replaced with the term "ultra-marine" in a gesture towards unity that imagined Portugal neither as a nation nor as a paternalistic empire, but as the capital of a global lusophone culture. Novo Lisboa was to be the seat of this enterprise in Africa. This gesture, partially in response to anticolonial criticism from the UN, extends and justifies a political vision publicized between the world wars (but which is arguably much older). At the 1934 Colonial Exhibition in Oporto, a map ostensibly "drawn" by military officer and politician Henrique Galvão was presented depicting Portugal and its colonies, colored red, superimposed over the rest of Europe, colored yellow. Its title, *Portugal Não é um País Pequeno* ("Portugal is Not a Small Country"), points to the motivation for many of the nation's political choices; that is, this was a European power unwillingly on the decline. Like a geopolitical Napoleon complex, Portugal imagined itself enlarged by the territory of its colonies, casting an imposing shadow across European neighbors that had outpaced Portugal-Europe's oldest continuous colonial power-technologically, economically, and in commensurate political power. These maps also served to remind the nation that were it to lose its colonies, retaining control only up to its traditional national boundaries, it would in fact be quite small, and would furthermore lack a self-reinforcing system of colonial trade and wealth accumulation.



Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Redefining The Power III (Serie 75 with Shunnuz Fiel), 2011,
triptych, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100,
courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

Like the colonies themselves, Portuguese colonial monuments were also rhetorically reframed under Salazar as spectacles of *Estado Novo*, celebrating what Walter Benjamin would call the "cult" value of traditional aesthetics as a popular vehicle for political memory in public space (Verheij 2013). During the 1936 dedication of a monumental statue of Portuguese conqueror Mouzinho de Albuquerque at the center of a new square in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, the interim Governor-General José Nicolau Nunes de Oliveira observed statuary this way:

The work of art, even when carved by the hands of genius and warmed by its divine breath, always falls short of the artist's dream, and even more of the votive intent that anxiously searches to reveal itself in it. I do not know, however, what better suited homage a thankful nation can pay to those noble men who conquered immortality for her.... (qtd. in Verheij par. 29)

Gerbert Verheij argues that the void between the statue and its referent, its failure to be animated by its human form and its lack of aura or specific presence, aims to "produce a distance between historical representation and present reception, opening up space for the manipulation of its meaning. In a certain sense, the failure of the image as representation is necessary; it produces a *distance* to the historical referent which allows it to appear as something above history, as myth" (par. 31). The monumentality of the statue-an anesthetization of politics-combined with the evacuation of personality, is representative of the *Estado Novo* as well as of the monuments of other fascist regimes.

Totalitarian art uses political aestheticization to reclaim the past in the name of a supposed nationalist (or ethnic) tradition, fusing aspects of social narrative around an all-encompassing idea of the State. Like totalitarian architecture, it is meant to "create not only a new physical space, but also a mental space that could serve as a medium between the idea and its implementation" (Rudovska 2012, 77). In the colonies, these aesthetic objects occupy and infuse shared *lieux de mémoires* with messages meant to artificially impose difference rather than a sense of belonging, to reinforce the existing hierarchy in new terms. The monument is a locus that represents the mythic secular sublime amidst the banality of day-to-day life, creating "a space in which a community can see its own mirror image" (Verheij par. 51). Only after the removal-the "symbolic death"-of such statues can free people begin to "build their own place upon the ruins of the past" (Verheij par. 65).



Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Balamuka – Ambush, 2010,
installation view by Susana Pomba (missdove.org), "No Fly Zone,"
Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, 2013

Thus even as the *Estado Novo* proclaimed itself a welcoming, non-racist vehicle of lusophone culture under the guise of "lusotropicalism," it simultaneously concretized Portuguese dominance across public space at home and abroad. In the 1940 Exposition of the Portuguese World in Lisbon, for instance, the ethnographic section "put actual colonial subjects on display" (Sapega 2008, 22), which seems quite contrary to Salazar's rhetoric of Portuguese imperialism as "of a humanistic, hybrid, non-racist kind" (Peralta 2011, 197). This Janus-faced stance continued throughout the 1950s into the early 1960s with the construction of new towns, the erection of new statues, and the inscription of jingoistic phrases on public buildings and in public plazas throughout Portugal's territories. In the main square of Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, the message *Aqui também é Portugal*—"This is also Portugal"—was laid into the pavement directly in front of the town hall during the 1960s (Verheij par. 18).

In Luanda, a third series of master plans were initiated in 1961 by architect Fernão Simões de Carvalho. These focused primarily on the development of highspeed roads, including Luanda's main boundary ring road. Carvalho was also concerned with Luanda's rising inequality and class separation and sought to promote mixed residential communities through the distribution of high- and low-rise Modernist housing. This planning effort was contemporaneous to the start of the Portuguese Colonial War in Angola, and ended unfinished (that is, without a final master plan) in 1964, after Portugal had suffered numerous military losses across its global territories.

Angola was declared an independent nation in 1975, but already during the war Portuguese statuary began to be removed from plaza pedestals in central Luanda. Despite Portugal's insistence on shared cultural memory, Luanda's removal of these statues of famed Portuguese explorers, which represents Luanda's denial of their colonists' right to claim Angolan cultural heritage, runs parallel to Lisbon's refusal to honor "anticolonial liberation heroes" with statuary in all the decades since (Sieber 2010, 112). The only colonial- era statue in Luanda to be completely destroyed, however, was the war memorial located in *Largo da Maria da Fonte*, Luanda's main market square today known as *Largo do Kinaxixi*. Sculpted by Henrique Moreira and dedicated in 1937, this memorial in honor of Portugal's World War I dead depicted Victory with her sword aloft flanked by two Portuguese soldiers in period military garb. The figure of Victory was also understood to be Maria da Fonte, a nineteenth century Portuguese hero who helped foment a popular revolt. The statue sat atop a monumental Modernist pedestal characteristic of industrial, socialist architecture of the 1930s. In April 1975, just prior to the official declaration of independence, the statue was destroyed using dynamite, whereupon it was replaced by a Soviet military tank (Gillemans). The tank's origin is significant. Throughout the Portuguese Colonial War the MPLA, a resistance and liberation group that held sway in Luanda and succeeded to the presidency, was funded and supplied by the USSR, in direct refutation of Salazar's anti-communist stance. In November 2002, a new statue was erected in its place upon a similar pedestal, a monumental bronze of Queen Njinga Mbande (1582-1663), one of the best-documented and most successful African rulers of the early modern period.

During her lifetime Njinga Mbande, also known by several other names including "Dona Ana de Sousa," expanded her territory and resettled former slaves while holding the Portuguese at bay along the coast of modern-day Angola. She led men into battle through multiple wars, and was celebrated for her wit, intelligence, political acumen, and military tactics. In her statue she is depicted standing, calm and composed, wearing an interpretation of traditional garb more modest than historically accurate, grasping an axe in one hand and looking into the far distance, seemingly ready for any confrontation. The simplicity of the sole figure of Njinga Mbande commands more presence than that of the previous World War I memorial, dwarfing Maria da Fonte in historical importance if not in physical stature. The memorialization of Njinga Mbande, who lived contemporaneous to Paolo Dias de Novais, is a direct rebuttal to the statues of men who embodied Portugal's empire and once commanded the city's squares. The Queen is taller than any of those figures, cast in bronze (which gives her flesh a brown color), and female, in all ways different from Angola's Portuguese conquerors except one—she too is a military leader.

In *Balamuka (Ambush)*, 2010, Kiluanji Kia Henda photographs the statue of Njinga Mbande in exile, awaiting the completion of new construction around *Largo do Kinaxixi*. The monumental bronze finds itself in a courtyard facing the deposed statues of Luís Vaz de Camões, Dom Afonso Henriques, and Pedro Álvares Cabral, among others. Henda stages a twelve-part confrontation simply by turning his lens. That Henda recognizes the political implications of public monuments, their embodiment of shared social values, history, and collective memory, could not be more clear. An earlier work, *Transit*, 2007, shows the dismembered sections of a statue of Paolo Dias de Novais on the ground, preparing for transport to the Museum of the Armed Forces, a former Portuguese fort in central Luanda, where it and many of its compatriots can be found today. During a lecture delivered at the Tate Modern in 2010, Henda explained that this statue does "not [have] a place of exhibition... they don't know how [or] where to keep it. So I had this feeling that this monument became like a citizen which his visa has already expired, and so it should be back to the point of origin." This was the beginning of the artist's interest in the fate and function of Luanda's monuments, particularly during the first decade of Angola's peaceful self-rule.



Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Transit, 2011, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100,
courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

The populism personified by the monument of Njinga Mbande has not yet extended to post-independence planning in Luanda. Urban planning remained dormant throughout the Colonial War, and later, the Angolan Civil War, until 1992, which marked the beginning of a brief armistice. In 1994, an isolated upper middle class neighborhood was developed south of the city, appropriately called "Luanda Sul," populated primarily by government officials and their families. Little has been built for the vast majority of the city's population, 80 percent of whom live in *musseques*, the local term for slums (Macedo 2012, 93). In fact, the most significant planning moves to affect the poor have been the clearing of their homes from land over which they hold uncertain legal tenure. Most of these citizens arrived in Luanda during the Civil War, fleeing rural areas that had transformed into battle zones. With Luanda's formal infrastructure only capable of supporting a population of 500,000, as the city swelled to 18 million it could not maintain its quality of life (Power 2012, 999). Rather than developing a comprehensive regional plan to extend water, power, and sanitation, or a plan to build more permanent, legal urban housing, Angola has instead turned toward the global market for "solutions" which offer maximum profit. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, Angola has sought out development agencies from China and the United Arab Emirates to deliver master plans, publicly touting a "south-south" model of mutual economic benefit that in fact enriches very few private parties. *"Since the end of the civil war in 2002, Angola has sought out development agencies from China and the United Arab Emirates to deliver master plans, publicly touting a 'south-south' model of mutual economic benefit that in fact enriches very few private parties."*

Given that China is Angola's primary foreign investor and trade partner, it is not surprising that Luanda's current model for modernization is an idealized, high technology version of Chinese urban development circa 1960, built by Chinese workers using Chinese equipment (Power 2012, 995). By 2025, Angola's new geography will feature urban decentralization, the fullscale development of new cities *tabula rasa*, isolated industrial and special economic zones, and extended road and rail infrastructure. However, as Power argues, despite the publication of glossy brochures filled with positive pro-development rhetoric, Angola lacks any systematic or transparent national development policy. What has been built emphasizes segregation and citadelization along class lines, a spatial system that effectively criminalizes the poor, directly counter to Carvalho's 1960s-era aspirations for urban housing models that would consciously comingle different classes. The fear of the lower classes as vectors of crime, violence, and general disorder has become so entrenched that a Lebanese developer, Dar Al-Handasah, proposes to dredge Luanda Bay between the mainland and Chicala island, narrowing its thin land bridge so as to protect newly planned "archipelagos of utopian luxury" from the unwelcome incursions of informal housing and its residents (Power 2012, 1010). Other projects underline the government's internal corruption and ineptitude. The new city of Kilamba, for example, was meant to house 500,000 middle-income residents, but with apartments selling for a minimum price of \$120,000 US, it is far too expensive; acres of buildings remain empty.



Kiluanji Kia Henda,
Mussorongo, 2009, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100,
courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

Planning in Luanda has progressed only in fits and starts, shaped during the colonial period by dominate European models such as the English garden city, the French imperial capital, and the 'International Style' of Modernism. Each new plan has negotiated Portugal's evolving relationship to its colonies. Yet only at the book ends of Portuguese rule-in the beginning and during the penultimate years prior to Angola's independence- did statuary play a dominant role in asserting cultural superiority. The messages initially asserted by figures from the Age of Discoveries were reinforced and reiterated during Portugal's fascist *Estado Novo* period. Since independence, the role of statuary has regained its recognizable force as a vehicle for reshaping and reclaiming historical memory. Beginning with the demise of Portugal's "Victory"-the World War I memorial- the post-civil war period has been witness to renewed visions of Angola's history and identity, most notably as embodied in the figure of Njinga Mbande. Contemporary urban plans for Luanda, however, are banal expressions of market forces and lack any power for cultural mobilization. It is this striking contrast, between city and statue, which raises the stakes for the many empty pedestals inhabiting downtown Luanda. Could these pedestals become sites for renewed popular dreams? Or will they too be stripped of their potential for inclusion and inspiration?

HYBRIDITY: MONUMENTS, MEMORY, AND ART

It is against this backdrop of both historical and contemporary government-sanctioned disempowerment and *confusão* (confusion) that one must situate Kiluanji Kia Henda's work. Drawing upon Žižek, Šakaja and Stanić suggest that autoreferencing via architecture and monument building is part of how a nation "finds its sense of self-identity by revealing itself as already present in its tradition" (2012, 503). The monument enables the state to promote a particular reading of the present as embodied by selected celebrations of the past. The statue of Njinga Mbande, for example, brings her centuries-old story of resistance to the awareness of contemporary Angolans, and integrates it with the history of recent conflicts that enabled the nation's enfranchisement with the end of colonialism. In this juxtaposition of temporalities, the location of Mbande's statue is instrumental.

Yet the complexity of Angola's multilayered constituency- diverse politically, ethnically, and economically- complicates any hegemonic vision of the nation's future. The horrors of the civil war, how Angolans treated one another, rival those of the colonial era. Because official narratives of history are often used to legitimize the crimes of the past, history itself places the monument-its symbolic manifestation-in an uncertain position. "With this abiding link between the means of articulating history and an abhorrent past, the very notion of the monument appear[s] untenable" (Stubblefield 2011, 1). With the civil war very much present in the memory of Angola's citizens, the permanence of any monument-wrought in materials meant to last generations-could elicit distrust and suspicion were a more controversial figure or event chosen for memorialization.

"[T]he complexity of Angola's multilayered constituency-diverse politically, ethnically, and economically-complicates any hegemonic vision of the nation's future."

Henda's work asks Angolans to consider what should happen to Luanda's cultural legacy as embodied in its statuary. Should Paolo Dias de Novais stay with his fellows at the Museum of the Armed Forces, a leftover outlier without a true home? Does the Portuguese founder of Luanda deserve honor, ridicule, or indifference? The suspended animation of the dismembered statue in *Transit* suggests perhaps a mixture of all three. For statutes that have outlived their public purpose yet still possess considerable social-historical residue, the "strategy of relocation-[a] change of place from central to peripheral areas" is common, particularly among nations of the former Eastern Bloc (Šakaja and Stanić 2011, 506). A

statue from the main public square may be removed to a quiet residential neighborhood, where its aura is diminished but not forgotten. The valiant allegorical worker upon his pedestal in front of the once state-run factory can now be found on the ground in the courtyard to its rear. Parks that cheerfully and ironically display a collection of ideologically obsolete statuary are not unknown; examples include Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary and Fallen Monument Park in Moscow. Such locations act as the nation's "hybrid memory-scapes," serving to contest new identities by retaining a layer of older, outmoded ones; or they might simply allow citizens to celebrate their nation's break from the past by retaining the symbols of that past defanged and decathected in the present (Light and Young 2010, 1453).



Kiluanji Kia Henda, Ngola Bar, 2005, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 200 x 110, courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

The son of a former government official, Henda is a member of the bourgeoisie who has come to reject monocular visions of Angolan society. Born in 1979, Henda has lived his entire life-until 2002-in a wartorn country, learning his craft from photojournalists documenting the Civil War (Afonso 2011). The process of an artist in Angola in many ways mirrors the liminal nature of Angolan culture, a society with the possibility of being born anew. Just as the artist invents new worlds and composes new realities, so too have Angolans required flexibility and inventiveness to survive. Henda describes being "original" as an artist a "huge challenge," particularly "in a country where every[one] has to be creative to overcome many problems. It's like improvisation as a way of living." In his series of portraits of residents from the *musseques*, "Portraits From a Slippery Look," 2009, Henda photographs sartorial trend-setters and celebrated dancers of *kuduro*, an emerging Angolan electronic musical style. As an artist, he seems to have found himself reflected in the redemptive qualities of aesthetic celebration amidst such impoverished conditions. This has impacted his politics as well as his sense of place within Angolan culture. As Henda (2010) declares:

It makes no difference which kind of system we live in, if it's capitalist or communism, mono or stereo party, those places [the *musseques*] they had like very autonomous ways to rule... The culture is hybrid, and intense, and extremely experimental. The high tech is really mixed with animism; and so we had new sound, new music... new dancing, new style, and so for me that was really important to make portrait[s] of this transition that the country is living. And the townships really they become like the place of inspiration.... And I think that any attempt to conceive any theories about this phenomena becomes useless and obsolete the minute they are created. This is a parallel universe.

The creativity and the individualism evident in "Portraits From a Slippery Look" emphasize the cultural hybridity Henda recognizes as emerging from Luanda's townships. Sartorial invention is as much a part of Angola's transition, reimagining, and re-emergence as its urban or industrial development. Henda's partnership with fashion designer Shunnoz Fiel in the series "Redefining the Power," 2011, is particularly appropriate for addressing issues of self-identification and cultural projection in Angola. Sartorial citation accrues power in a post-colonial context. As Jill Cole (2013) explains in reference to the integration of indigenous Ovihimba fashion within contemporary Namibian commercial culture, dress is a signifier for various modes of citizenship. Not only does dress reflect personal aspirations, costume itself carries deeply shared cultural and religious significance in a readily legible form. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (2010) tells us, religious traditions among Bakongo people, including costume, are direct antecedents of the carnival celebration in Brazil, reinforcing the debt of global lusophone culture to the sartorial creativity of Angola's people. As one of the two designers for *haute couture* label Projecto Mental, Fiel embodies a nexus of cultural creativity that projects contemporary Angolan identity worldwide. Henda's act of posing Fiel atop a monumental pedestal in place of 16th century Portuguese colonist Paolo Dias de Novais in *Largo do Lumeji*, or 19th century colonial Governor-General Pedro Alexandrino da Cunha near *Largo Rainha Ginga*, works to claim Angola's future for those with the creative capacity to shape Angola's culture.



Kiluanji Kia Henda, Lady G, 2009, photo print mounted on aluminum, cm. 150 x 100, courtesy Galleria Fonti Napoli

"Redefining the Power" rewrites the semiotic force of past monuments, "those self-aggrandizing, heroic monuments that utilize their physical remove from daily life to reinforce the static and eternal history they articulate," and makes apparent that the actors who will create and define Angola's future may very well originate from the ordinary creativity of the everyday (Stubblefield 2011, 2). The temporal life of Henda's monuments-as brief as the click of a camera lens-are counter-memorials which allow the "active negation of presence" to shift the political work of memorialization onto public discourse itself (1). That is, Henda's photographs encourage speculation as to whether or not certain monumental pedestals in central Luanda should remain vacant. As James Young (1999) has noted regarding imaginative post-World War II German memorials, "In the end, the counter-memorial reminds us that the best German memorial to the fascist era and its victims may not be a single memorial at all-but simply the never-to-be-resolved debate over which kind of memory to preserve, how to do it, in whose name, and to what end" (9).

Questions about the power and legitimacy of monuments and memorials cross numerous social and political contexts. Memory, as a shared human experience, can be co-opted or claimed, but never fully controlled by any state actor. In this way, Henda's work in an Angolan context enters into conversation with similar debates globally. Luanda is at an important and potentially very powerful moment of urban transition. Emerging into a global neo-liberal economy following its earlier socialist culture, Luanda, like Zagreb, Croatia, is "rethinking history and negotiating its meanings," which, Šakaja and Stanić write, is "one of the essential traits of the post-communist transition" (499). A potential way to further this transition is through the installation of new public monuments proclaiming new ambitions, important indicators of recodified memory though perhaps less "impressive" than the proliferation of new capitalist signifiers such as shopping centers and corporate offices (498). Just as Queen Njinga Mbande will soon look out over a new luxury shopping and office complex at *Largo do Kinaxixi*, what monuments that are similarly inclusive in tone might greet other sections of the city? Henda's work suggests that, as in Bamako, Mali, these new national *lieux de mémoire* could be places "wherein citizens, especially young people, can engage in the performance of a shared history and national purpose" (Arnoldi 2007, 2). These yet to be realized sites will be interrogated by new sets of interpretive practices, engaging in a cyclical process of historical interpretation that allows evolving cultures to continually revisit unanswered social questions. Henda's series "Redefining the Power" represents an intermediate, catalyzing step between forgetting the past and imagining the future. As Achille Mbembe (2013a) explains, the "future" is both a political and an aesthetic category with a profound role to play in postcolonial societies. "Futurism is a form of imagination that in practice is becoming a foundational dimension." The capacity to imagine the future is necessary for genuine collective agency because it keeps open the possibility of its own existence. If societies are constituted on the means of controlling oneiric functions, as Mbembe argues, then by denying basic infrastructure, Angola has curtailed Luanda's citizens' temporal imagination by restricting their bodies to daily struggles, reducing them to a purely biological life. The creative fields, with their capacity to demonstrate, or "try on," different guises of the future like so many different clothes, is key to the revitalization of Angola's shared cultural dreaming functions. As Mbembe (2013b) states, For Frantz Fanon, the most brutal consequence of the injuries inflicted to those who had been subjected to abject forms of racial violation was an inability to imagine or project themselves forward in time while, at the same time, that is, imagining the future. Their sense of temporality had been crippled, as a result of which they had developed a specific illness-a faulty sense of a future they believed they could not control or shape. Perhaps this lack of imagination is part of the reason why the Angolan government continues to look outside itself to the international community for urban development models. Kiluanji Kia Henda's "Redefining the Power" offers instead a strong sense of place and of community, and a profound faith in the creative capacity of Angolans to control and shape their own representations.

Savannah

“Wild Is the Wind”

SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
320 East Liberty Street
January 11–February 28



Zineb Sedira, *MiddleSea*, 2008, still from a color video, 16 minutes.

“Wild Is the Wind” brings together seven artists whose work shares a sensibility that the curator, Laurie Ann Farrell, connects to the mood and lyrics of the 1957 American song of the same title, a slow, melancholic ballad of longing, discovery, and love. To translate these emotions into a coherent visual exhibition, Farrell casts her net wide. *MiddleSea*, 2008, a hauntingly beautiful video by Zineb Sedira, follows a middle-aged man who is alternately lost in contemplation and pacing the deck as he travels as the lone passenger on a ferry. Ghada Amer’s equally compelling installation, *Le Salon Courbé*, 2007, explores the space between cultures and examines the definition of *terrorism* in English and Arabic. Kiluanji Kia Henda’s large-scale color prints reveal the beauty and dignity the Angolan photographer has found among Luanda’s poverty-struck inhabitants. His pictures provide an interesting contrast to *Shish Kebab*, 2004, Lara Baladi’s critical look at the culturally loaded media images that flood society.

Less obvious but no less powerful are paintings by Odili Donald Odita, whose hard-edge abstractions speak of a desire to create harmony among elements that may be at odds with one another. Similarly, Nicholas Hlobo’s elegant sewn “drawings” made from leather, tire rubber, and ribbon offer personal meditations regarding his search for acceptance as a gay black man in post-apartheid South Africa. Combined with Penny Siopis’s figurative paintings, which teeter between romanticism and fantasy, the exhibition becomes a thought-provoking meditation on the very basic human quest for understanding and acceptance.

— Rebecca Cochran

Flash Art

La prima rivista d'arte in Europa • Edizione Italiana • Anno XLIII • n° 280 mensile • febbraio 2010 • € 6.00

RECENSIONI

BLACK ATLANTIC AR/GE KUNST - BOLZANO

Il "Black Atlantic" è una zona rimossa della storia moderna. La mostra, a cura di Luigi Fassi, trae spunto e titolo dalla rilettura della diaspora atlantica che Paul Gilroy ha raccolto nello scritto *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Un tema spinoso e difficile da trattare, tanto più in un testo visivo. Questioni che sollecitano la coscienza collettiva come razzismo, indifferenza e sfruttamento avrebbero potuto spingere verso derive emotive o approcci fortemente retorici. La scelta di opere dal registro diaristico ha giovato all'analisi e al ritmo della mostra. Gli oggetti non fanno sentire il proprio peso e anche quando l'affondo critico si fa più diretto, la retorica è equilibrata, a favore della pregnanza delle questioni. La storia della diaspora si ricollega così al nostro quotidiano.

Gli artisti invitati hanno fatto della propria appartenenza culturale il punto di partenza della loro ricerca. Tre gli sguardi in campo. Quello più diretto delle vittime della colonizzazione, come per Hank Willis Thomas e Kiluanji Kia Henda: entrambi mostrano la continuità nel presente

delle implicazioni economiche e culturali del colonialismo e tengono alto il livello di allerta storica su questioni irrisolte, come il razzismo negli Stati Uniti e in Europa, o minimizzate nelle pieghe della geografia economica, come il disastro economico e culturale post guerra fredda in Angola. Il secondo sguardo è quello del carnefice: Nanna Debois indaga la storia coloniale che la Danimarca ha deciso di chiudere da oltre un secolo. In lei la testimonianza diventa problematizzazione dei modelli di esperienza del mondo.

Infine, lo sguardo più neutro di Maryam Jafri. L'artista di origine pakistana si concentra sulle cerimonie dei trattati di indipendenza. La lunga serie di immagini ricavate dagli archivi dei diversi Stati mette in dubbio le radici universaliste del pensiero occidentale, da cui ancora facciamo fatica a staccarci.

Denis Isaia



KILUANJI KIA HENDA, Karl Marx, Luanda, 2006. Stampa fotografica, 86 x 130 cm. Courtesy Collezione Raffaella e Stefano Sciarretta, Nomad Foundation, Roma; Galleria Fonti, Napoli.

Kiluanji Kia Henda: Art Beyond the Local and the Global

By Rachel Nelson

Published at NKA Magazine (Nka **2013** Volume 2013, Number 33)

Kiluanji Kia Henda lives and works in Luanda, Angola, and has been active on the contemporary art circuit since 2007. The artist is an example of the increased presence on international art circuits of Angolan artists since the end of the nearly thirty-year civil war that ravaged the country until 2002. He has shown in biennials and triennials from Venice to Guangzhou and is represented by galleries in Brazil, Italy, Paris, and in Luanda. His work considers both the role of art in Angola, at the end of first decade of peace, in building national consciousness and the potential of art for initiating conversations about broad geo-politics, Kia Henda is negotiating global and local systems of meaning making. Thus, his work is paradigmatic of what noted curator Hou Hanru has articulated in another context as “contemporary art created from and for different localities but immediately involved with the swirl of global information, communication, and displacement.” (1) As artists from countries outside of mainstream art nexuses take part in and influence global art forums, this is imagined, Hanru has noted, as “an efficient means to resistance, interruption and deconstruction of the established, dominant, hegemonic power of global capitalism and its ideology.” (2) However, negotiating between local and global concerns has led to some moments of misunderstanding. As Kia Henda shows his work around the globe, the meanings attached to it have shifted through context of where and how it is shown. His exhibition history has become illustrative of the potentials and problems of art and exhibitions as sites of mediation between the local and the global.

For instance, work that Kia Henda has shown in both Angola and in Brazil has generated different responses. In 2008, in an exhibition in Luanda called “Stories and Diligence”, Kia Henda addressed issues of sexuality and gender constructions in Angola with a photograph entitled *Poderosa de Bom Jesus* (2008). This work is of a locally famous self-identified transvestite from the suburbs of Luanda known as Poderosa, which translates as “Almighty” from the Portuguese. Kia Henda posed Poderosa in the clothing that Mumuila women in Southwestern Angola both historically and currently wear. Treading between both local and global conceptions of Angolan identity, the artist photographed Poderosa in a mode of dress and in a wide expanse of grasslands that creates an image recognizable to an audience used to the representations of Africa found in news magazines. He located Poderosa in the idea of what so-called “traditional” cultures in Angola look like within the global media and called in to questions how this visualization of identity has largely ignored or repressed so-called non-normative aspects of gender and sexuality. Thus, this image proposes to challenge what both local and global art viewers imagine “traditional” Angolan identity to look like and what gender roles it contains. As Kia Henda explains, in the exhibition of this work in Luanda, “When people first went into the room and saw this picture, the first thing people said was, “This is our culture, our tradition”, but as they look, they had to think about what this means- “Our culture, Our traditions”.” (3) The hope was that this challenge to the imagining of a rigid conception of cultural identity would also be taken up outside of Angola.

However, when Kia Henda showed this work in São Paulo in 2009, the image worked in a different way. The culturally conventional gender roles of the Mumuila, especially as they relate to dress, are less obvious to the gallery goer in Brazil, so Kia Henda had to indicate the fact that Poderosa was a transvestite on the wall label. And, importantly, the work seemed familiar; the staging of identity politics on the body itself has become a trope in contemporary art. Without a historical context and an awareness of the cultural paradoxes at play, this work, demarcated as non-normative with a wall text, seemed only to be a reductive transmission of identity through a raced, gendered, sexualised body. If this work troubles how the body is gendered, it's still staging the body as the location of the battles of culture. Not much seems to have changed since Laura Mulvey's famous polemic in which she assured us that women stand “in patriarchal culture (...) as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.”(4) While the category of “woman” has been expanded, the role women play in culture has not. Consequently, the work was troublingly reductive in the São Paulo gallery context as yet another assertion of “African identity” through the female body, and in the reception of the work, the implications of this became disturbingly clear.

In the months that followed the opening for Kia Henda's exhibition in São Paulo, an artist in São Paulo

produced the photograph as a painting. Kia Henda discovered this when the painting, and the man who did the painting, were featured in the newspaper in an article about an exhibition at the Art Museum of São Paulo Parliament celebrating “authentic Angolan culture.” (5) Bantu Tabasisa, the Afro-Brazilian painter who appropriated Kia Henda’s work, was quoted discussing the painting as “exhibiting the values of Africa, the traditions of Africa.” (6) In Brazil, Kia Henda’s work changed, quite literally as it became a painting and no longer his, to being an illustration of the pervasiveness of the idea of African identity as stable and know-able (and structured in the biological). What Kia Henda had seen as non-normative issues of gender and sexuality, polemics in the national discourse of Angola where homosexuality is a crime, were easily subsumed into the definition of African-ness in Brazil. This was perhaps predictable. After all, Africa has long served as a stand-in for Otherness in discourse outside of the African continent. Notions of Otherness are not just tied to race; gender and sexuality have also been imagined to function differently (“exotically”) in Africa. Of course, *Poderosa* fits right into this imaginary. What, then, is an artist to do when his attempts to create a more nuanced conversation that resonates with both a local and global audience about what it is to be Angolan are inevitably mis-seen in this way?

The reception of *Poderosa de Bom Jesus* in Luanda was what Kia Henda had thought of as productive and the way the work should be interpreted, and what happened in São Paulo was obviously incredibly problematic. Yet, in both instances, fictions of identity were created or reinscribed with *Poderosa de Bom Jesus*; clearly, situating art in its cultural context alone will not suffice in marking a shift from what has come before and what continues to produce knowledge of the world. In Luanda, this work might have expanded the notion of what Angolan identity could be, but it still relied on the idea that such an identity could exist. In Brazil, in the moment when a photograph became a painting and a transvestite became the representative of traditional culture in a country where homosexuality is a crime, some serious ideological work was also being done. The question is: what would it take for that ideological work to be a departure from what has come before and to not rely on preexisting ideological structures based on inequality and injustice? Can there be a significant move away from the racialised, sexualised, gendered paradigms that have reigned supreme, not only in art discourse but also in the process of self-identification and nation building in Angola as well as elsewhere? The idea that something generative can come from such damaging sites of mis-seeing and mistranslation seems beset with insurmountable problems; after all, as Okwui Enwezor wrote over a decade ago, for artists from Africa and the diaspora, “the zones of enunciation are so fraught with gross misreadings and the most miserable translations (...) that it seems nothing could possibly mediate the gap that separates the two worlds.” (7) Enwezor goes on to say that it is in “those gaps – between worlds – the potent signs that these artists carry from different localities are translated and ultimately transfigured through relocation into new imaginary constructs of identity.” (8) While these “new imaginary constructs of identity” have historically been repressive and damaging, as Enwezor alludes to, that moment of translation and transfiguration is a productive space, even if what it produces is harmful. Therefore, in Kia Henda’s recent body of work, he is experimenting with the idea that alternative creative possibilities exist for the identities imagined into being in this space that exists when art and ideas travel.

To this end, Kia Henda has started a movement called the Afronauts with another young Angolan artist named Yonamine. (9) In this movement, the world and its power structures have become the unknown to be both explored and created as the artists generate new models and new ethics of cultural translation. This is a playful take on the ideas of a universal aesthetic with high stakes. After all, not only the interpretation of Kia Henda’s artworks has been harmed in these spaces of cultural translations, but the interests of Angola in the global political economy have also suffered. From the position of an Afronaut, Kia Henda can wilfully mis-see the signs and significations of the dominant discourses that have structured these interactions. Thus, he has the space to imagine different myths of the world and its structures of power.

In the project that was a point of departure for the Afronauts, Kia Henda staged a “research expedition” close to home. The artist, in this work, addressed the legacy of colonization and the Cold War to flip the narrative of Angola’s role in global politics. In *Icarus 13: Narratives of Progress from Elsewhere* (2008), the city of Luanda is the location for the first fictitious space journey to the sun led by an Angolan mission. As a result, Angola is the site from which exploration begins as opposed to where exploration takes place. While the title of this project immediately evokes the Greek anti-hero that loses his wings as he approaches the sun, Kia Henda misuses and wilfully misunderstands this founding myth of Western

modernity to create a new myth for Angola. The story of Icarus is about the perils of hubris, and through this work, Kia Henda humorously suggests that Angola's aspirations to assume a different position in the global political economy have also been understood in terms of an impossible mission (and even as an example of hubris.) Yet, as Icarus 13 culminates in a successful sun landing, such supposedly unrealistic and foolhardy goals become possible.

Considering the lessons learned in Brazil, if mis-seeing in art can recreate and expand fictions of identity, in Icarus 13, Kia Henda proposes that Angolan history, as it is materialized in the Angolan landscape, can be mis-seen in generative ways. Icarus 13 is an installation made up of eight photographs and a model of spaceship and the surrounding city plaza. The installation reconstructs Angolan political history through a futuristic vision of the architectonic ruins of colonization and the Cold War occupation of Angola. The photograph of the spaceship, a ragged obelisk rising over the city of Luanda, is of an unfinished mausoleum left behind by the Russians in Angola in which the body of Agostinho Neto, the first President of independent Angola, is interred. The photograph labeled as an Astronomy Observatory in the installation is a cinema theatre in the province of Namibe that decolonization left unfinished. The shuttle's take-off illumination is the captured image of the night sky lit up by the celebration of Angola's qualifying victory for the 2006 World Cup. An image of construction workers in the shipyards of Luanda becomes the photographic record of mechanics fine-tuning the equipment of the Icarus 13 spaceship. When Kia Henda lays the myth of space travel over a city that is already overlaid by the remnants of colonization, Cold War occupations, and the evidence of the destruction wrought by a three decade long civil war, he is rearranging the landscape (and wilfully mis-sees that violent history) from one of trauma into one of exploration and self-making. He strings together these monuments to power to create a different fiction in which Angola has the power over its own inventions. As Kia Henda explains, "What motivated those structures [photographed for Icarus 13] to be constructed was to make Angola into someone else's idea of utopia. The country was built on a utopist idea of Angola as a province of Portugal, and then the spaceship and the other buildings and monuments photographed for Icarus 13 are evidence of the idea the Russians had to build the Red Square in Luanda, the capital of Angola. So, all these intentions they had, they are a myth. They are from projects that never really happened yet they exist, they are there, in time. I think I am doing a continuation of that." (10)

Therefore, the artist misuses and misrepresents the monuments left from colonization, that are the Cold War's legacy in Angola, to create a different history, present, and future for the nation. However, does this work really shift the boundaries of the possible? Icarus 13 has been Kia Henda's most widely shown work on the international art circuit. It has been shown in China, Brazil, Germany, and Angola. The installation is shown accompanied by a wall text that playfully suggests that it will not be the last flight to the sun. The text states, "According to the astronauts' description, the Sun has the most beautiful night. This first mission accomplished, we plan to launch the first solar tourist flight within five years- duly equipped with ultraviolet sun block and sunglasses that are dark enough." (11) As curators eagerly show this work, the hard questions that have the potential to be asked by it, or the kind of discomfort that accompanies any sort of radical shift in discursive structures, seems to have been elided. The kind of experimentation that Kia Henda is doing in this work that has been embraced by the international art community, then, has not been without problems. This is a palatable fiction that has been created, for good reason; it emulates the structure that it is trying to mis-see. Trying to take apart power structures often leads to recreating them, and Kia Henda is negotiating a slippery slope. And, in a more recent appraisal of the work, the artist is critical that he has not moved far enough away from the dominant discourse. Icarus 13 is not enough of a mis-seeing of global politics – not in anyway a break from the power structures which have to be undone if the possibilities of the future are to truly change. Kia Henda explains that this work was to be a "critique of the Greek mythology itself, its heroes, Greece as the birthplace of the Modern Western world, where democracy and all these ideas were born". (12) But, when the myth becomes realized in the successful journey to the sun, as the artist also explains, "I have to be critical also of myself, when I use this myth and write a successful travel." (13) To re- tell the myth of Icarus as a triumph of modernity, and the sun turned into a destination for tourists (a capitalist commodity,) is to continue the myth of progress that led to colonization and neo-liberal politics. A fiction free from the discursive structures in place has not been created. Nevertheless, the possibilities multiply along the shiny surfaces of the eight photographs; if this is repetition and not radical reappraisal, something has happened in the process of repetition. It still hints to something more.

As he tours the world as an Afronaut, the fictions and proposals that Kia Henda can create do offer a possibility to imagine a differently conceived future. Even if he has yet to approach the world truly as alien, and his work still slips into fictions of which we are familiar, he is generating critical inquiry into the structures of cultural translation and transformation. What tantalizes in the possibilities of the Afronauts, and in the potentiality of contemporary art in a global world, is that a space can be made, in which to experiment with possible futures. As art becomes a space of cultural encounter and creator of identity, it can be utilized to move ideas of culture and identity outside of the world-making that already exists. As Hanru suggests, “art works constantly create vacant spaces or voids. The works are then open to (...) the constant reinvention of meanings through endless negotiations between different individual and collective experiences and aspirations on their equally endless journeys between the global and the local, between history and the present, between reality and projection.” (14) Kia Henda suggests that this can be pushed even further by taking a step out of the global/local paradigms. If the potential for creatively re-imagining the world cannot be accomplished on a global scale, it is time to step into a new atmosphere of art practice.

Rachel Nelson is currently getting her PhD in Visual Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her work focuses on Contemporary Art and Globalism, contemporary art from Africa and its diasporas, and the theoretic of writing of global art discourse. She is currently engaged in a project called Fiction and Form in Contemporary Art in Angola and Brazil.

Notes:

- 1) Hanru, Hou: Towards a New Locality: Biennials and “Global Art”. In: Vanderlinden, Barbara (ed.): The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe. Cambridge, 2005. p. 61
- 2) Hanru (2005), pp. 61-62
- 3) Kia Henda, Kiluanji: Interview by Author. Paris, 2011.
- 4) Mulvey, Laura: Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: Braudy, Leo and Cohen, Marshall (eds.): Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings. New York, 1999. p. 835.
- 5) Arzak, Bruno: Africanidade e Arte ,Mubako‘ expostas na Assembleia paulista. See: Uma Certa Angola: <http://umacertaangola.blogspot.com/2009/08/africanidade-e-arte-mubako-expostas-na.html>, 24 Agosto 2009. [Accessed on 25 November 2011]
- 6) Arzak (2009)
- 7) Enwezor, Okwui: Between Worlds: Postmodernism and African Artists in the Western Metropolis. In: Enwezor, Okwui and Oguibe, Olu (eds.): Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Market Place. London, 1999. p. 245.
- 8) Enwezor (1999), p. 245
- 9) Kia Henda (2011)
- 10) Kia Henda (2011)
- 11) Kia Henda. Kiluanji: Icarus 13: The First Journey to the Sun. See: Other Possible Worlds: Proposals on this Side of Utopia, http://www.otherpossibleworlds.net/?page_id=316 [Accessed on December 2, 2011].
- 12) Kia Henda (2011)
- 13) Kia Henda (2011)
- 14) Hanru (2005), p. 62

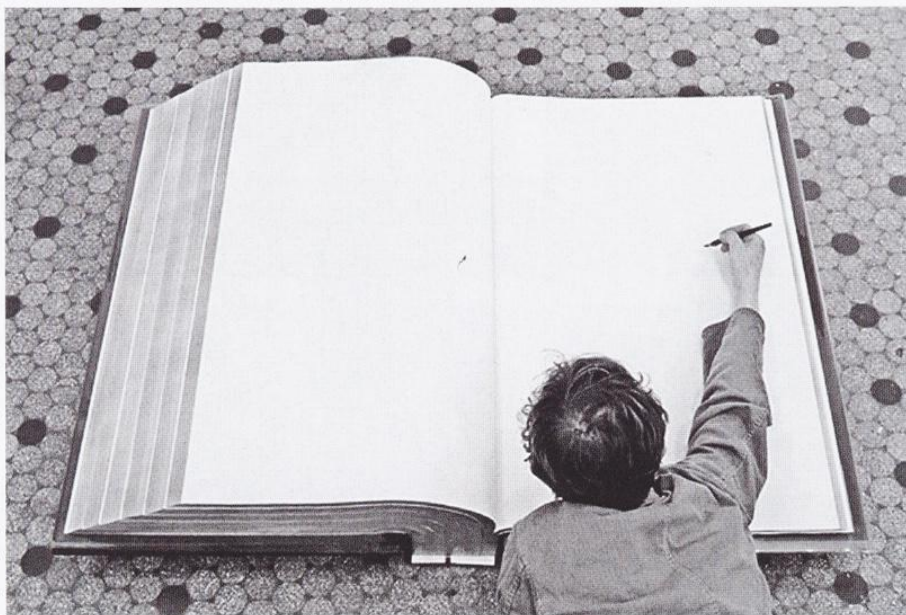
VOGUE ITALIA
SEPTEMBER 2012

AFRICANS' PLINTHS

BY MARIUCCIA CASADIO



Parla di un'Angola che sta velocemente cambiando, Kiluanji Kia Henda. E a rendere particolarmente avvincenti progetti come il suo recentissimo "Homem novo", che la galleria Fonti di Napoli ha presentato nella sezione "Statements" di Art Basel 2012 lo scorso giugno, è che sulla reale sostanza di quei cambiamenti l'artista s'interroga, indaga, fa confluire e penetrare il nostro sguardo. Disincantato reporter e testimone di Luanda, sua città d'origine e popolosa capitale del paese, il trentaquattrenne Kiluanji, che vive e lavora ormai da alcuni anni tra Angola e Portogallo, sceglie infatti di rilevarne e diffonderne le intrinseche contraddizioni, tra colonialismo e postcolonialismo, condizionamenti di ieri e indipendenza di oggi. E lo fa anche nel contesto di "Homem novo", apponendo un unico titolo contenitore a due distinti cicli di immagini fotografiche, che contribuiscono a rendere il pubblico internazionale dell'arte contemporanea sempre più partecipe, consapevole, ricettivo alle più promettenti espressioni culturali, creative, artistiche della rinascita identità africana. Non a caso, infatti, le tracce di trascorse sopraffazioni convivono con la propositiva vitalità dell'Angola del XXI secolo, sia negli scatti un po' come cartoline del suo "Redefining the power 75", sia, diversamente, in quelli che compongono la serie "Balumuka (Ambush)". Nel primo ciclo, realizzato sullo sfondo di edifici governativi, pubbliche piazze o altri scorci emblematici dell'Antigo regime, Kiluanji ha invitato una serie di giovani artisti, protagonisti a vario titolo della nuova scena angolana, a prendere posto su piedistalli un tempo occupati dai monumenti, oggi deposti, del colonialismo portoghese. Parallelamente, il ciclo "Balumuka



Artisti che instillano vitalità e un inevitabile interessante quantum d'impegno nei loro immaginari. E da Kiluanji Kia Henda a Nástio Mosquito esplorano identità, attitudini e territori dell'Africa di oggi. Proiettandola nel futuro

(Ambush)", realizzato sempre a Luanda, documenta una sua ricognizione presso il forte militare São Miguel, dove, stipati in un deposito a cielo aperto, si conservano armi russe o mezzi militari di trasporto. Si tratta di cannoni, carri armati, jeep e altri "memorabilia" della guerra fredda, che interagiscono con statue di Nzinga Mbandi, Afonso Henriques o Vasco da Gama, cinquecenteschi eroi o sovrani che hanno emblemizzato nei secoli il dominio portoghese. Seppure polverosi, accatastati, delegittimati, restano tuttavia a testimoniare le implicazioni economiche e sociali del colonialismo, la storia

dei suoi errori e orrori, le sue internazionali conseguenze ancora irrisolte o minimizzate. E ci appaiono come dei rischi latenti, dei traumi rimossi, ma sempre vivi, dei disinnescati pericoli, che permangono tuttavia nel territorio e nell'inconscio collettivo. Indipendente dal 1975, ma in pace dal 2002, dopo una guerra civile e una serie di dilanianti guerriglie, l'Angola non è stata solo ricostruita in tempi record. Animata da nuova autoconsapevolezza, nonché espressivamente libera, ricca di idee, vitalità e vivacità artistica, si è molto presto candidata a occupare una posizione leader nella futura topografia internazionale del contemporaneo. E lo scenario si è riconfigurato molto in fretta grazie a una Trienal de Luanda concepita in forma interdisciplinare dall'artista-curatore angolano Fernando Alvim, che ha preso il via nel 2006 e sta per giungere alla sua terza edizione, e alla Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art, che dopo l'acquisizione nel 2005 della già rilevante Hans Bogatzke collection ha accresciuto inesaustamente la sua raccolta e specifica autorevolezza in materia di artisti africani già affermati o emergenti. Curata da Simon Njami e Fernando Alvim, la Sindika Dokolo collection si è poi evoluta in fondazione, incentivando la nascita di nuove gallerie, nonché la confluenza e mili-

tanza degli artisti africani in Angola, trasformando Luanda in un luogo d'origine o d'elezione al quale aspirare, nel quale trasferirsi, in cui ritornare a vivere e a lavorare. Non stupisce, peraltro, che sempre la capitale angolana abbia intitolato la mostra "Check list Luanda pop" del 2007, allestita nel padiglione africano nel contesto della 52ª Biennale di Venezia. Ispirata dal successo

di "Africa remix", un progetto espositivo firmato da Simon Njami e inaugurato nel 2004, che ha viaggiato fino al 2007 tra Dusseldorf, Londra, Parigi, Tokyo e Johannesburg, ospite d'importanti musei, l'esposizione "Check list Luanda pop" non ha potuto che alimentare la fama, oggi estesa in tutti gli angoli del pianeta, di artisti angolani come Kiluanji Kia Henda o Yonamine, N'Dilo Mutima o Nástio Mosquito, gettando peraltro nuova luce sui contemporanei di tutto il continente. E una nuova storia si sta inevitabilmente scrivendo. M.C. Bili Bidjocka, "L'écriture infinie #3" (particolare), 2007, courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art, Luanda. Nella pagina accanto. Kiluanji Kia Henda, "Balumuka (Ambush)" (particolare), 2010, courtesy galleria Fonti, Napoli. In apertura, da sinistra. N'Dilo Mutima, "Manroja. Ângulos periféricos" (particolare), 2006, courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art, Luanda. Kiluanji Kia Henda, "Redefining the power IV" (particolare della serie 75, realizzata con il fashion designer Shunnuz Fiel), 2011, courtesy galleria Fonti, Napoli.



*Kia Henda says that he hopes to 'find certain common factors,
between various points on the planet,
in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue'.*



2



3

IN FOCUS

Kiluanji Kia Henda

Post-colonial Angola; photography as both 'pliable fiction' and 'weapon of intervention and denunciation'

by Sean O'Toole

Kiluanji Kia Henda lives and works in Luanda, Angola, and Lisbon, Portugal. This year, his work has been included in the group shows: 'Tomorrow Was Already Here', Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; 'Les Ateliers de Rennes – Biennale of Contemporary Art', Les Praires, Rennes, France; 'SuperPower: Africa in Science Fiction', Arnolfini, Bristol, UK; 'You Are Now Entering...', CCA Derry-Londonderry, UK; 'Doublebound Economies', Halle 14, Leipzig, Germany; and 'Experimental Station', Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial LABoral, Gijón, Spain. In 2013, his work will be included in shows at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, the Centre Culturel Gulbenkian, Paris, France, and the Sharjah Art Museum, UAE.

Luanda, the rehabilitated African port city where artist Kiluanji Kia Henda was born four years after Angola gained its independence from Portugal in 1975, is a place of recurring ellipses. Perhaps it is not so much a case of omission as incompleteness that marks life in this increasingly gridlocked capital city on Africa's oil-rich western coastline. At one intersection where some of Luanda's tree-lined *avenidas* meet, a pedestal that once elevated the statue of Pedro Alexandrino da Cunha, a 19th-century colonial governor-general, stands empty. Outside the National Assembly it is the same: the white Deco-style plinth is also empty, the statue of its former occupant, Alfonso I, Portugal's first king, stored in a military stockyard alongside effigies of colonial adventurers and grandees of empire.

Shortly after independence, in an attempt to establish a new public narrative for its citizens, Angola's Marxist leadership installed an armoured car used by Agostinho Neto, the country's first post-independence president, on one of the unoccupied pedestals. It was a grotesquely prophetic choice. Angola's ruinous civil war, a late-Cold War conflict which dragged on from independence until 2002, plunged the country – which in 1975 was the world's fourth-largest coffee exporter – into radical decline. News and travel reports since have repeatedly commented on the city's vacant plinths, proposing them as a kind of metonym for a state in the process of becoming. Despite a recent oil boom, Angola's narrative of self – one that Kia Henda explicitly allies his practice to – is still in the process of reinvention.

Intrigued by the absent statues and the multiple colonial abuses they signalled, in 2010 Kia Henda visited the fortress of São Miguel with his camera. Set on a position overlooking Luanda's port, this fortification, built in 1576, was once a major point of origin in the transatlantic slave trade. Similar to photographer Guy Tillim, who tracked down the toppled statue of Welsh journalist and explorer Henry Stanley to a government transport lot in Kinshasa, Kia Henda photographed the sombre effigy of Alfonso I in the open-air stockyard. Aside from weapons of war, the yard also contained disassembled stone pieces that once portrayed seafarer Vasco da Gama, and, illogically, a towering bronze statue of Nzingha, the legendary 17th-century queen of pre-colonial Angola who was held captive in the fortress for resisting colonization.

Unlike the other statues, the queen, who appears in seven of the 12 photographs comprising Kia Henda's 'Balamuka – Ambush' (2010) series, was only a temporary visitor. Installed on a pedestal on Luanda's Kinaxixi Square in 2002, she was temporarily moved to São Miguel during an upgrade of the square. It all forms part of an ongoing process of restitution; in January, for example, 35 new monuments and historical sites were presented to Angola's Ministry of Culture. 'Balamuka – Ambush' – the earliest work in Kia Henda's work-in-progress *Homem Novo*, an open-ended exploration into the meaning of the 'new man' eulogized in the country's national anthem – is obviously about Angola's remaking. More formally, it is a descriptive work, which is where many photographers negotiating monuments and memory in postcolonial Africa – Tillim and David Goldblatt in particular – have left it.

Although schooled in southern Africa's austere documentary tradition, informally at first by his adoptive brother, Cassiano Bamba, who died soldiering in the civil war, later by the photojournalists Carlos Louzada and John Liebenberg, Kia Henda's photography is marked by its increasing refusal to simply show. His lens-based practice oscillates between an optimistic faith in the *vérité* style of documentary, and a more playful engagement with the photographs as pliable fictions, and also as artefacts of the ephemeral, performance in particular. A year after finding the toppled statues, Kia Henda collaborated with Miguel Prince and urban dandy Shunnuz Fiel to produce the series 'Redefining the Power' (2011). Luanda's much-remarked pedestals became the site for stylized performances, which Kia Henda photographed from the same vantage points used in a series of archival tourist postcards he had found. He juxtaposed the new and old photographs to distinguish the colonial 'then' from the independent 'now'.

Self-awareness is vital to his practice. 'I grew up in an experimental period in a country that is as young as I am, where there has always been, political options aside, a great and accessible cultural and even religious freedom,' remarked Kia Henda in an interview with Lígia Afonso published last year. He has directed this freedom towards interpreting Angola, which stands at the 'epicentre' of his investigative projects, not because of an exaggerated nationalism, but because through the particular he hopes 'to find certain common factors, between various points on the planet, in order to shorten distances and improve dialogue'. The idealistic nature of his project largely



owes to Kia Henda's discovery, while living in Johannesburg in the late 1990s, of photography as 'a weapon of intervention and denunciation'. This near-militant faith in photography's activist capabilities is tempered by a rival impulse: photography, as he has acknowledged, is capable of 'sensationalism, omission or disorientation', traits that he has recognized as useful. His photographic installation *Icarus 13* (2008) – which stemmed from an invitation to contribute to a book by Cape Town artists – is instructive. The work, which describes an Angolan scientific mission to the sun, comprises a glass-domed architectural model and eight supporting photographs, one showing the needle-shaped solar spaceship, another the green iridescence from its launch, and an exterior view of the astronomical observatory.

Of course, the purported mission never happened. *Icarus 13* is an elaborate hoax: the green cast across the sky came from fireworks launched in a Luanda football stadium, the observatory is an unfinished provincial cinema theatre, and the spaceship is Neto's incomplete Russian-built mausoleum in Luanda. Reflecting on the work's sci-fi qualities – which recall Jean-Luc Godard's conceit with *Alphaville* (1965) in the way it proposes the ordinary (and in Angola incomplete) as fantastical and speculative – Kia Henda offered what could be construed as a defining motivation for his practice: 'There are two questions which are vital to the African context: the ability to write and know one's own history, and the ability to plan one's own future.'

1
From the series 'Balamuka – Ambush', 2010, photographic print mounted on aluminium, 40 x 30 cm

2
Redefining The Power III, from 'Series 75 with Miguel Prince', 2011, triptych, photographic print mounted on aluminium, each: 120 x 80 cm

3
The Return of the Astronauts (5:00am, 9th of June, 2007) from the series 'Icarus 13', 2008, photographic print mounted on acrylic, 80 x 120 cm

Africa aims for the final frontier

Aman Sethi



Artist Kiluanji Kia Henda photographed iconic structures around Luanda, Angola, and recast them as components of an imaginary space programme. Here, the mausoleum of Angola's first President, Antonio Agostinho Neto, is described as spaceship Icarus 13. Photo courtesy: Galleria Fonti, Naples

A pan-African space programme may have its detractors but the continent's policymakers believe that its benefits, including access to satellite data and better communications, far outweigh the costs

The space shuttle Icarus 13, with its slender spires and massive flared base, is parked by the seafront a few blocks from downtown Luanda, the capital of Angola.

But the shuttle will never leave the oil-rich west African country for the weightless serenity of space — Icarus 13 is not really a space ship, it is a mausoleum, an art project, a constructivist gesture in concrete.

“My idea for ‘Icarus13’ has a lot to do with the idea of celebration, but at the same time, the failure of many post-independent African nations,” wrote Kiluanji Kia Henda, the Angolan artist behind Icarus 13, in an e-mail.

Mr. Kia Henda took photographs of iconic buildings around Luanda and recast them as components of an utterly imaginary pan-African space mission: an abandoned building was photographed to look like an astronomy observatory; the Soviet-funded mausoleum of Antonio Agostinho Neto, Angola's first President and Kremlin ally, became “Icarus 13” — a spaceship that would take an all-African crew on a fantastical journey to the sun.

“The misery of many African societies forces us to be submitted on the present and basic issues,” said Mr. Kia Henda. “For me it is also important to find a new approach on the reading of African contemporary creation.”

Last week, a gathering of Communication Ministers in Khartoum considered a proposal not dissimilar from Mr. Kia Henda's art: if realised, Afrispace will be a pan-African space agency committed to "promote, for exclusively peaceful purposes, cooperation among African states in space research."

The announcement triggered a wave of chatter on social networks with many, predominantly western, commentators implying that African governments could better serve their citizens by investing in anti-poverty measures. Yet, much like Mr. Kia Henda's art, the continent's policymakers believe they must think beyond the immediacy of the present and support transformational technology.

"A pan-African space programme that is well aligned to bring immense benefit to the needs on the continent will have significant economic impact," said Vanashree Maharaj, spokesperson for the South African National Space Agency (Sansa), adding that countries too poor to invest in space technologies would benefit from access to satellite data to improve environmental resource and disaster management, and could contribute to scientific knowledge.

Apart from the absence of the sort of detailed geological and climatic data that satellites could provide, African nations are also hamstrung by some of the world's most expensive yet rudimentary telecommunication infrastructure.

At present, the entire continent has less bandwidth than Norway; almost all of which comes from 20-odd communication satellites, positioned over Africa, that are owned by non-African companies. "Space technologies...provide commercial opportunities and strategic advantages for a tiny minority of countries controlling them," claims an Afrispace working paper.

Space technologies can be divided into the rocket science needed to put a satellite in space, and the earth station know-how necessary to make full use of the satellite once it is in orbit.

"No African nation has the ability to launch a satellite even though Africa has a massive advantage having land on the equator, meaning lower costs for getting into orbit," said Brad Inggs, CEO of Orbital Horizon, a South African company investing in commercial space flight and space advocacy. Launching from equatorial sites, Mr. Inggs said, could result in fuel savings of up to 25 per cent when compared to launch-pads further north.

At present, countries like Ghana, South Africa, and Nigeria are investing in ground stations rather than rockets. While Ghana has set up the Ghana Space and Technology Centre that hopes to become a regional focal point for remote sensing, meteorological and communication technologies, Nigeria launched three satellites last year. The NigComSat-1R communication satellite was built with Chinese support, while a British company built the NigeriaSat-2 and NigeriaSat-X imaging satellites. All three were launched from foreign launch pads.

Rather than each country investing in its own programmes, Michael Afful, spokesperson for Ghana's Space Generation Advisory Council, believes that a pan-African approach "will allow for the sharing of risks and costs and ensure the availability of skilled and sufficient human resources. It will also ensure a critical size of geographical area and population required ... for some space applications."

Yet, the greatest obstacles to Afrispace could be political and institutional rather than technological, says Chandrashekar Srinivasan who worked at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at a time when many questioned the premise of a developing country like India investing in space research.

"A number of detailed cost benefit studies have indicated that the benefits of the [Indian space] programme far outweigh the costs," said Prof. Chandrashekar, now a Professor of Corporate Strategy and Policy at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. "Africa as a whole is a viable entity for a space programme, [but] it is difficult to get a group of countries at different stages of development and with different capabilities and internal needs to work together."

While a lot of the technology can now be bought off the shelf rather than built from scratch, Prof. Chandrashekar believes the interface between technology and good governance is the most critical infrastructure. "This aspect is pretty bad even in India today," he said.

If it is to succeed, Afrispace must build institutions to leverage scientific infrastructure into development gains, or metaphorically risk becoming a mausoleum like Icarus 13.