

PRESS RELEASE**14.2.2018****SCHOOL OF ANXIETY****First Iteration in Johannesburg and Upcoming Event in Nairobi**

The *School of Anxiety (SoA)* is a project by curator and critic Moses Serubiri within the framework of the 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, funded by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation). Moses Serubiri is a curatorial team member of the 10th Berlin Biennale.

The *School of Anxiety* is an (un-)learning environment focused on subjective anxieties. While anxiety is often defined as a psychological condition, this workshop format aims to address anxiety by blurring the lines between artistic practice and an investigation into social and historical forms of anxiety. The project is oriented towards conversations about concepts of “unlearning.” Søren Kierkegaard’s book *The Concept of Dread* (1844), in particular the chapter on “subjective dread”, functions as an initial reference of the *SoA*.

The first meeting of the *School of Anxiety* took place in Johannesburg (ZA) from September 4 to 9, 2017, preliminary to the 10th Berlin Biennale’s running time (9.6.–9.9.2018). The workshop featured writer and media artist Awuor Onyango (KE), media artist Nyakallo Maleke (ZA), and playwright Sanyu Kiyimba-Kisaka (UG) and was led by Moses Serubiri. Stemming from different disciplines—literature, theater, contemporary art, and criticism—the participants presented a range of positions during the workshop.

By engaging the fields of fiction, literature, and psychoanalytic theory, the workshop expanded and complicated the notion of anxiety. The participants raised questions such as: Can I transgress what I have acquired and what is anticipated? How fast can I unlearn in order to become present again? What do processes of “becoming” someone entail? How do you become? How can you learn new possibilities of becoming? Can hyper-surveillance simultaneously eradicate my voice? Can I retrace shared experiences from individual ones and vice versa? How do I negotiate the option of refusal?

Over the five-day workshop, the group met with artists and curators around Johannesburg and engaged in a series of critical debates emerging from the topics of the workshop: unlearning, autopoiesis, mourning, and becoming. Walks through the city of Johannesburg and excursions to museums, galleries, and independent spaces accompanied these discussions.

At ROOM gallery, the group met with Johannesburg-based artist Kitso Lynn Lelliott, whose solo show *I was her and she was me and those we might become* articulated ideas of subjectivity through the motif of the “ghostly” and explored notions of becoming through making erasure visible. At Keleketla! Media Arts Project, an institution concerned with pedagogical processes, the group held discussions with cofounders Malose Malahlela and Rangoato Hlasane on the topics of mourning, learning, and self-preservation. At the Hector Pieterse Memorial and



Museum, the group met with curator Khwezi Gule and reflected on the history of Soweto and ways of working with the archive.

The workshop culminated in a public panel discussion titled *What to do with anxiety?* with the participants and the curatorial team of the 10th Berlin Biennale. It was featured within the FNB JoburgArtFair 2017 as part of the Berlin Biennale's public program *I'm not who you think I'm not*. The panel generated questions from the audience about anxiety within education systems and the anxiety of how others deal with one's own complex identities.

The next iteration of *SoA* takes place in Nairobi (KE) in February 2018 and addresses the anxieties of mourning and ethnic subjectivity that have colored recent memory in Kenya. Like the inaugural edition, also the Nairobi edition consists of an internal workshop with Awuor Onyango, Nyakallo Maleke, and Sanyu Kiyimba-Kisaka, led by Moses Serubiri, followed by a public presentation that this time has the format of a performance within *I'm not who you think I'm not* on February 15, 2018, at Uhuru Park.

A third iteration of *SoA* takes place in July 2018 during the running time of the 10th Berlin Biennale.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Awuor Onyango is a writer and visual artist based in Nairobi, KE. She took part in a number of workshops at Kuona Trust – Centre for Visual Arts in Kenya. In 2014, she participated in Sanaa , an exhibition for upcoming artists at the Kenya Art Fair – *Wasanii Exhibition* in Nairobi, and has since started experimenting with video art and mixed-media works on paper as well as sculpture. She is currently exploring motion triggered video installations as well as experimental film as media for examining the transgression, shame, and discomfort of the black feminine. She has shown her works *Library of Silence* (2016) and *Limbe* (2016) at CHALE WOTE Street Art Festival (2016), Accra, GH; and participated in the Nyege Nyege Festival (2016), Jinja, UG; *SHE* (2016), Sweet 'Art, London, UK; and the Art @ The Bus Wkend (2016), Nairobi.

Nyakallo Maleke is a multimedia artist based in Johannesburg, ZA. Her process-based practice consists of an investigation into time, space, and the social politics of the everyday in post-independence South Africa. Installation, video, sound, printmaking, and found objects and materials are used to reimagine the present, its meanings and the implications of “what it means to be alive.” Her practice seeks to negotiate ways to provide alternative “truths” within spaces that often make it impossible to negotiate ways of being in the world.

Sanyu Kiyimba-Kisaka, also known as Aganza, has a deep passion for playwriting, song writing, poetry, dancing, and acting. She started writing poetry at the young age of seven and went on to win the Babishai Niwe Poetry Award, UG, in 2011 for her poem *A hand swing of disguised depravity* (2009). After earning her BA in theater and psychology at New York University Abu Dhabi, AE, Kiyimba-Kisaka returned to Uganda to continue her career as an actress. She has starred in several plays and films, her latest memorable performance being lead actress for the film *Faithful* (2016) by Richard Nondo. Her play *Black* (2015), dealing with issues of blackness, race, and identity, was also a highlight at the 2016 Kampala International Theatre Festival (KITF),



UG. This year, her short story *Operation: Mother's Bruises*, yet to be released, was selected for the Afriwori (African women writers) Literary Project. Inspired by the burning questions of her heart and the complexities of society, Kiyimba-Kisaka continues to direct, write, and act—hoping to understand or at least reveal important issues.

MOSES SERUBIRI

Moses Serubiri is an independent writer and curator based in Kampala, UG. He is interested in metanarratives and scholarly practices beyond the field of art. Serubiri is currently on the curatorial team of the 10th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art. He is published in *How Institutions Think* (CCS Bard and MIT Press) and in *Recent Histories: Contemporary African Photography and Video Art* (The Walther Collection and Steidl). He was on the selection committee for the 2017 and 2018 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, ZA. In 2014, he co-curated the Kampala Contemporary Art Festival (KLA ART), with a team advised by Gabi Ngcobo. In 2013 Serubiri organized *A History of Kadongo Kamu*, a radio documentary on the history of recorded music in Uganda. He also edited the online journal *START – A Journal of Arts and Culture in East Africa*. In 2011 Serubiri was a critic at *The New Vision*, one of Uganda's leading daily newspapers. In 2015 he received a fellowship at the University of Bayreuth, DE, as “Stadtschreiber” (City Writer) and is an alumni of the Àsikò International Art School at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Lagos, NG. His writings are featured in *Chimurenga Chronic*, *Frieze*, *Manifesta Journal*, and *Africa is A Country*.

COMING UP

I'm not who you think I'm not #4

Chebomuren

Public performance by the *School of Anxiety*

Thursday, 15.2.2018, 10 am

Uhuru Park, Freedom Corner (corner of Kenyatta Avenue and Uhuru Highway), Nairobi, KE

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