

Ogutu Muraya // ON THIN ICE (Nairobi)

Als Ogutu Muraya 2014 für sein Masterstudium von Nairobi nach Amsterdam zieht, beginnt er, Tagebuch zu führen. Was anfangs dazu dienen soll, seine Identität vor der unvertrauten Kulisse einer fremden Stadt zu kartografieren und lokalisieren, wächst über die Jahre hinweg zu einem komplexen persönlichen Archiv an. Der Aufenthalt in den Niederlanden ist für Ogutu Muraya wunderschön, komplex und schmerzhaft zugleich, ein Amalgam paradoxer Erfahrungen. Zurück in Nairobi ist er nun dabei, aus seinem stetig wachsenden Tagebuch fragmentarische Memoiren zu formen die ihm helfen sollen, die Herausforderungen seiner Erfahrung der Diaspora zu verstehen. ON THIN ICE ist eine performative Lesung eines Auszugs des fortlaufenden Buchprojekts.

Ogutu Muraya ist Schriftsteller und Theatermacher, dessen Arbeit in die Tradition der "Orature" – also des mündlichen Erzählens, eingebettet ist. Er studierte internationale Beziehungen an der USIU-Africa in Nairobi und machte später einen Master of Arts am DAS Theatre in Amsterdam. Seine performativen Storytelling-Arbeiten wurden in Theatern und auf Festivals in verschiedensten Ländern gezeigt.

Quinsy Gario (Curaçao / St.Maarten / Niederlande) ist ein Visual- und Performancekünstler, dessen Arbeitsschwerpunkt das dekoloniale Erinnern und Stören ist. Sein bekanntestes Werk, ZWARTE PIET IS RACISME (2011–2012), kritisiert das politische und gesellschaftliche Allgemeinwissen sowie die Praxis rund um die rassistische, holländische Figur von Zwarte Piet (Schwarzer Peter). Er studierte Gender Studies und Postcolonial Studies und ist Absolvent des Master Artistic Research Programme an der Royal Academy of Art, Den Haag. 2017 erhielt er die Mitgliedschaft der Organisation Humanity in Action, Detroit. Gario ist Vorstandsmitglied von De Appel, Keti Koti Table und The One Minutes sowie Mitglied des panafrikanischen Künstlerkollektivs State of L3 und wiederkehrender Teilnehmer bei der Black Europe Body Politics (Be.Bop).

Ogutu Muraya war bei SPIELART 2015 mit NOBODY KNOWS MY NAME und 2017 mit BECAUSE I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE RUNNING zu sehen.

29. und 30.10. jeweils 19 – 20 Uhr
HochX

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Am 29. und 30.10. jeweils 19 – 20 Uhr im HochX

Anstelle seiner selbst sendet **Ogutu Muraya** den in Brüssel lebenden Performer **Quinsy Dario**, um seinen Text ON THIN ICE zu lesen. Muraya, der in Nairobi lebt, entschied sich diesen Sommer, das Schengen-System zu verweigern. Mit diesem Statement beschreibt er, warum er nicht nach Europa reist.

Statement Ogutu Muraya

«There is no easy way of saying this without seeming self- righteous or morally superior. So let me emphasize that my decision is not to say that I am a better person. Or throw shade or shame at anyone who is brave enough to stay with the visa trouble. It is to say that it became difficult, a real challenge for me to convince myself to go through with this periodic process of justifying my existence in order to gain temporary approval from a system that is undeniably discriminatory. A system whose biases and filters disproportionately affect people of color. (...) I give away my residency permit and accept that according to the system I am now an alien.

This is the situation, the struggle for equality of mobility in this globalizing world has always been there will always continue. And yes there exists in international relations the doctrine of reciprocity - I will do unto your citizens what you do unto our citizens - but this doctrine is seriously flawed and does not begin to address the massive inequalities, if anything it makes things worse. And yes the struggle for freedom of mobility is intricately connected to other struggles for equality, but some of these emancipatory processes have more urgency than freedom of mobility, especially in situations where violence is being performed in direct and indirect ways.

My mind is clear but my body is stuck in this timeline - a timeline where the greater 'we' continues to allow the unnecessary deaths of people trying to cross real and abstract borders – however they manifest.»

ON THIN ICE

Ogutu Muraya

NuVo Arts Festival: An Interview with Ogutu Muraya

By Sophie Alal

Sophie Alal: When did you first become interested in storytelling?

Ogutu Muraya: I became interested in storytelling back in 2007. I was doing storytelling as part of a competition. I saw a storytelling competition being advertised when I was in campus. Tell at story for 7 minutes, win 2000 shillings. I was like, yeah why not? I came second in the finals of the Storymoja Master Storyteller and soon got so engrossed in the concept of telling stories. It is one of the oldest art forms that we have. Every one has a story to tell. Everyone has a story to share. I embraced the idea of turning it into an art form that is engaging, not just the usual format with the grandmother sitting by the fireside telling stories. At the same time, a young man can take it up as an art form and do it seriously as a profession.

SA: Are there any storytellers in your family?

OM: Non that I know of. (Laughter) But you never know, when I dig into my geneology I might discover great great great someone was a storyteller.

SA: What does it take for someone to become a storyteller?

OM: The first thing is to read a lot because you might read ten, a hundred or more stories before you find one good story that touches you enough to make you want to tell it. This is especially true for folk tales. I tell true stories as well. These are personal stories. Stories about people, and that takes passion and love for what you are doing. You've got to have love for what you do, love for getting on stage and speaking, and also love for improving yourself. Gifted artists sometimes get comfortable without working, but you have to rehearse. You have to work at it. You have to look for opportunities to perform. Don't wait for somebody to stretch out a hand and say: 'Oh come and perform with us.' It is your job to take that step.

SA: What makes a great story?

OM: For me it has to be the human touch. It has to be a story that engages. A good story can make you laugh. A better story can make you laugh as well as cry. It can make you angry, frustrated and take you through different emotions.

SA: Why do you think storytelling is important?

OM: Often our stories as Africans are told by others, not ourselves. It is the western media that has perpetuated this story of Africa as place of doom, despair and disaster. It's now our turn to tell our stories, regardless of whether I do it through poetry, whether you do it through music, or a play on TV. By standing up and telling a story, it means that we are taking ownership of our stories and taking them to the world.

SA: Which story tellers have had an immense influence on your style?

OM: There are two favourite storytellers, one is Daniel Morden from the UK and a Caribbean British storyteller called Jan Blake. Meeting them was the first time that I had experienced professional storytelling. All they do for a living is tell stories, write stories and read stories. They really inspired me to get into story telling more strictly, to script more rigorously and work seriously at finding what the audience will respond to. I use flashbacks to draw people in, such that there is a story within a story. All these techniques are drawn from research. You have to constantly read other people and watch what other people are performing. It's just like being a doctor. You have to keep reading, researching and getting familiar with new practices that build onto your knowledge.

SA: How does your culture blend into your story telling?

OM: I like to adapt stories into my context, whether they are modern, historical or futuristic. I exist within the world and I draw my stories from that world. Hence I reference to that world as well.

SA: Culture is usually seen as a benign force for fostering understanding. Whereas the ideal has always been to identify with a community, form relationships from within the same group, notably the tribe, clan or nation, art usually offers a unique opportunity to rise above all that. Having collaborated with people from different backgrounds, travelled to Ngong Hills to perform Maasai stories and now you are in Kampala, what is the unifying idea that has brought you this far?

OM: It is art and stories. We have a common goal of sharing human stories. Basically we have the same experiences as human beings. In the words of Shakespeare's Shylock, "If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?... That's from The Merchant of Venice. And it's that same idea that we are all one. It's that common goal that I can be in Kenya among the Maasai one day, and the next day I can be in Kampala telling a story. We should keep that interconnection because it is what makes us grow as East African artists. It's also what enables our global recognition.

<http://deyuafrican.com/2013/08/nuvo-arts-festival-an-interview-with-ogutu-muraya/>