

Debating 'Culture' between Performing Artists and the Goethe-Institut

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Research object

I examine performing art projects created in cooperation between artists from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Germany and the Goethe Institute. These performing arts productions are realized as a minor part of both German-African cultural relations and of transnational collectively produced stage plays. They are positioned at the interface between foreign cultural policy and specific local contexts (art history, contemporary theatre scene, actual working conditions of artists etc.).

Research questions: How are transnational performing art productions realized within the framework of international cultural relations and the art-historical context of each country? Which challenges are included in such cooperation and what conclusions can be drawn for the negotiation of 'culture' and 'practical cultural work'? Which visions have been articulated by the actors in this regard? In this paper I focus on the aspect of negotiating the category 'culture' and on two regions: Ethiopia and Kenya.

Methodology

My research is positioned within the subject of Cultural Studies and allows pursuing an approach that combines theoretical considerations from a political, art-sociological, cultural-historical and theatre-specific perspective. In my work the study of culture refers to the field of performance art works and to the level of production, starting from the premise that culture is designed jointly by diverse actors through a variety of artifacts (distinct cultural goods). Therefore I put myself into the paradoxical position to investigate something which is called 'material culture' within the Cultural Studies referring to the idea of researching artifacts and to investigate an object that is seen as 'intangible art form' within the field of Theatre Arts due to the argumentation that any performance realized as action in space and time is continually transformed and therefore unrepeatable.

Characteristic of my research approach is the between-method triangulation (Flick, 2000: 309-318), which demands the use of different methods for analyzing the data amount. In addition, I work with theory triangulation, so that the data can be reviewed and interpreted from different perspectives. In my thesis, I deal with aspects of international cultural relations; reflect on the respective cultural and historical contexts and art sociological aspects of performing art productions in the respective countries. Here, one can imagine the performances as the quintessence of this investigation and as the smallest unit that is jointly created by artists in an intensive working process. Since such theatre productions do not arise in a vacuum, but within a specific institutional framework and specific social environment, it requires a sociological approach to art. My data collection methods include literature review, collection of information in online archives, co-presence and selective observation of rehearsals and artistic work processes, stage analysis of performances as well as semi-structured interviews with participating artists and cultural managers. For the analytical evaluation of the interview material I make use of theoretical coding, because it allows using priority lists for organizing the content by specific categories.

Theoretical Perspectives on the Term 'Culture'

The selected dance and theatre projects have been realized within the Cultural Program of the Goethe-Institut, which operates within a given framework of foreign cultural policy, European cultural policies and recommendations of UNESCO. There

is a specific understanding of culture and cultural policy involved in these legal and conceptual frameworks. For this reason, I try to specify the dimensions of the concept of culture.

Historically four dimensions of the concept of 'culture' were often emphasized: culture as art production, culture as way of life, culture used in a pluralistic sense as 'cultur(es)' or 'culture' as distinction to nature (Klein, 2009:36). The first dimension of the term is very narrow and subsumed under 'culture' exclusively artistic productions that are materialized in the form of artifacts. This dimension of the term designates elements of material culture - no matter how transitory their characters are (Hansen, 2011: 136-138). So this might refer to theatre, dance or opera stage productions, concerts, performances in public spaces, works of fine art, photography, videography, film, literary text production or architecture etc. In this sense, culture is reduced to the very specific areas of art production (Klein, 2009: 33). This narrow definition of culture was later questioned and criticized for an exclusive arts and cultural reception. In the 1930's the philosopher and political scientist Herbert Marcuse criticized this concept of culture as being 'affirmative'. His interest was to question critically the elitist attitude of a bourgeois epoch. Thus he problematized the tendency of that applied concept of culture to declare an aesthetic, spiritual and psychic world as its own territory and as being distinguished from cultural practices of other social strata. In the course of the later reception of Marcuse's texts, the student movements in the 1960s and the aspirations of the democratization of art (since beginning of the classical avant-garde movements to the mass effective enforcement of Pop Art and Happenings), the idea of an extended concept of culture seemed as the apparent solution of the theoretical and social problem. On the one hand this approach of extending a narrow concept of culture seemed necessary and had emancipatory potential at that time because expression of alternative art movements such as performance art, body art, action painting, street theatre, graffiti, break dance or hip hop seemed suddenly possible within established art institutions. An important point was the approach of inclusion in terms of contents, forms and artists. On the other hand, a dynamic developed in which cultural work was considered as being a cross-cutting issue for youth, social, integration and development aid work fields. Moreover maintaining a hierarchy of art productions and applying a dichotomous construction regarding 'solemn' art productions (opera) and 'vulgar' art productions (graffiti) remained within the practical cultural work. Besides the term 'culture' is also used as a synonym for 'the art of living'. In that case it surrounds mental concepts, style, aesthetic sense, etc., which often requires material and financial preconditions in addition to intellectual skills. According to Klein this dimension of the concept of culture adheres to the idea of someone has and maintains culture - or just not (Klein, 2009: 34). In this use, however, the term is normative, raises the question of power of definition and served historically as argumentation for the maintenance of power relations and social demarcation within one society. If the term 'culture' is used in the pluralistic sense of 'culture(s)' it often refers to different societies of nation states. It is this common, seemingly descriptive and broad dimension of a diffuse concept of culture, which was repeatedly exposed as maintaining established international power relations. The criticism relates to the idea of an in-itself homogeneous community that is often constructed as a 'nation' and the inherent created distinction between societies that would be fundamentally different from others (Hansen, 20011: 227). Here, the constructed character of the concepts of nation, difference and representation as an established canon of values disappears. In

the Critical Whiteness debate the combination of these two dimensions - culture as 'sophistication' with the notion of culture as a homogeneous group - is interpreted as a strategy of shifting from the term 'race' to the seemingly neutral term 'culture' (Osterloh, 2011: 413). While the term 'culture' is often used non-differentiated as representative of terms such as 'nation' or 'people', racist remarks, prejudices and verbal violence can be still transported under another label. The fourth dimension of the concept recognizes the phenomenon 'culture' as the contrast to nature. From the postcolonial theoretical perspective this concept of culture is viewed dangerous, because it enabled certain groups to consider themselves being superior to others. Furthermore historically a differentiation was made between 'civilized nations' and 'non-civilized societies', which served as argumentation for the submission of the Global South during the colonialism. Therefore when I apply the term 'culture' in the context of this work, I refer consciously and exclusively - but remembering the criticism of Marcuse - to a very narrow materialistic concept of culture to outline the idea of culture as art production and as creation of non-practical artifacts.

Since I research art productions realized within the context of the Goethe-Institut, which acts on behalf of the foreign cultural policy of the Federal Government of Germany, I will try to outline the controversial issue of international cultural relations from the perspective of postcolonial theory. These theories remind us that due to the historical experiences of colonialism, slavery and imperialism relations between countries of the Global North (such as Germany) and the Global South (such as Ethiopia or Kenya) are neither unloaded nor neutral.

Transnational and International Cultural Relations from Postcolonial Theoretical Perspectives

Édouard Glissant - writer, philosopher, cultural policy maker in UNESCO and theorist for cultural questions, claims the increasing creolization of the world (Glissant, 2005: 11, 14). By creolization erratic cultural relations of all with all persons originate unpredictable cultural microclimates (ibid: 15). Nevertheless, the experience of colonization continues to work as a mental bracket of international cultural relations (ibid: 71). This raises the question of how these transnational connections can be realistically created. What forms or formats are required to allow the participation in exchange processes? It is also linked to the doubts that artists can be individual representatives of an entire community. How is their multiplier function designed exactly? Glissant emphasizes colonialism as a strategy to create 'the homogeneous universe' and he refers to a central attitude of anti-colonial resistance movements in terms of the 'right of presence' (Glissant, 1986: 143). Thus he indirectly raises questions about the power of definition as well as about the representation function of foreign cultural institutes.

The sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall dealt with the phenomenon of historical and contemporary multicultural societies (Hall, 2004: 191). He points to two logics that are equally effective. First, over a long time the idea of a homogeneous and strongly demarcated culture of a given society that is unique and different from another was continually reproduced. This understanding of culture included an acceptance for the idea that certain traditions largely determined all members of society, their networks and lifestyles (ibid: 207). Secondly, this idea served as the foil on which a contrast was constructed to 'modern' societies of the West. The definition of 'modern' and 'traditional' societies is still reproduced

temporary as an idea of historical continuity or spatially as accentuation of the difference between Western and non-Western societies. Hall also questioned the concept of culture in terms of inter-textual narrations of nations. He declares a relation of 'prevailing ideas' and 'ruling classes' as well as the correspondence between socio-economic and ideological power relations (ibid: 13, 31). He defines culture as an effective, powerful and moderately contested 'regime of representation' (ibid: 115), where international cultural relations would take place in an unequal representation power relationship, which was operating with symbolic power. Among others the following questions can be derived: What content and whose ideas are turned into cultural projects? How is the selection process of participating artists regulated? On which basis are choreographers, theatre practitioners or performers selected in Ethiopia, Kenya and Germany? Which standards are set as the aesthetic standards?

The postcolonial theorist and literary critic Homi K. Bhabha assumes a growing international community that currently creates a contemporary culture through artistic productions (Bhabha, 2004: XI) that re-negotiates experiences of cultural values (ibid: 1). Bhabha thus declared the current status quo as one that is characterized by transnationally created art processes. He sees culture as a zone of articulation and he distinguishes between culture as production of artifacts and cultural authority. With regard to the cultural authority of the irregular dimensions of cultural representation are also problematic for him because any extension of a cultural authority produces a symbolic textuality (ibid: 255-256). He critically questions international cultural relations due to the role of Europe as central cultural forum, the possibility of a conflictual relationship between countries of the global North and the global South (ibid: 2), and because of the indirect influence on mental structures (ibid: 17). Bhabha thus indirectly refers to classic core concepts of European cultural institutes such as 'cooperation' and 'dialogue' because they require negotiation, describe phenomena that are based on reciprocity, and can neither be occupied nor taken for granted.

On the cultural-political levels of UNESCO, the EU and the federal government of Germany, the application of a very broad concept of culture is postulated and a mutual, conflict-free and historically unencumbered cultural exchange is assumed. On these three policy levels a diffuse concept of 'culture' is used synonymously for the mental, physical and functional characteristics of a nation based on an understanding of homogeneous static culture(s) representing their respective societies. This understanding of culture seems outdated, because it suggests aspects as totality of self-contained systems and the representation of singular nations. Furthermore the question of representation power is left untouched while this concept of culture creates a rhetoric which builds binary constructions (ibid: 18, 32, and 52).

Cultural Policy

The Cultural Studies scholar Armin Klein claims the existence of parallel used and quite diverse understandings of the terms 'culture' and 'politics'. He points out that the relevant definition of terms and their associated concepts have real consequences for the cultural policy (Klein, 2009: 60-62). Based on Klein's model of the spectrum of possible cultural policies I try to exemplify characteristic features of German, Ethiopian and Kenyan cultural policies, because within those ones the working and production conditions of artists are created structurally. Klein differentiates between a broad and a narrow concept of culture as well as of politics, which generate several types of cultural policy (ibid: 65). In this paper only two versions are relevant.

The use of a narrow definition of culture and a broad concept of politics leads to a cultural policy, which focuses on the field of art and declares both the state and social networks as being responsible for promoting it (ibid: 66). In essence, the Goethe-Institut orientates itself on such a cultural policy, because in the practical cultural work it focuses on the promotion of art and finances those art productions by means of the federal government. Equally, however, the Goethe-Institut prefers to work together with partner institutions and individual actors in diverse art fields.

A combination of a broad concept of culture and a narrow concept of politics leads to cultural policy, that fixes and preserves supposed 'customs', 'moral' or specific 'ways of life' on the part of state institutions. Orientation on the maintenance of 'traditions', on archiving and restoration, etc. are expected (ibid: 66). Based on the statements of interviewees regarding the cultural policies in Ethiopia as well as in Kenya the application of a broad concept of culture and a narrow concept of politics is characteristic. In Ethiopia and Kenya, the focus is put on the maintenance of folkloristic elements of certain customs instead of promoting contemporary art practices.

At the center of the current cultural policy of Ethiopian are the representations of folk elements, the preservation of the cultural heritage and the linkage of culture and tourism. In addition, theatres such as the National Theatre, the Hager Fikir Theatre, the City Hall, Ras Theatre and the Children and Youth Theatre, cultural centers at the district level, folkloric dance and music performances and parades on national holidays are financed by the state; upcoming initiatives and experimental approaches to contemporary art have yet been barely promoted. Some Ethiopian artists question the cultural policy and formulate explicitly claims of a governmental funding system for the arts. Critically they reflect their own work situations and the social, economic and political context of their productions. One challenge for Ethiopian performing artists is to work in the huge theatre houses due to structural, organizational, technical and administrative obstacles. As further challenges they address material, techniques, professionalism, and access to large stages, standardization of aesthetics, discontinuities, self-management, and self-censorship (Interviews: L.B., A.Y., T.G.). Nevertheless some freelance artists claim to be able representing the Ethiopian nation and to increase the country's international reputation by staging art productions abroad. The constructions of such terms as 'culture', 'nation', 'folk' and 'tradition' are rarely questioned. Thus the dominant internal discourse is reproduced by them. However, some performing artists believe that the exclusive focus on the preservation of cultural heritage alone is not sufficient for a vital contemporary art scene. They are increasingly looking to surmount the cultural isolation, to establish stable contacts with artists from other regions and to achieve an active presence in the global art scene. They recommend the financial and structural support of alternative art initiatives such as the Netsa Art Village, the Adugna Dance Compagnie, the Ha Hu Dance Company, the Abate Mekuria Theatre Studio or the Kendil Theatre.

The Kenyan cultural policy is characterized by a focus on archiving, preservation and marketing of 'traditional' cultural goods for tourism purposes (Interviews: C.M., M.O.O.). As folkloristic arts are favored over contemporary art productions it generates resentments of some artists (Interview: A.L.C.). In contrast to the well-attended theatre house performances in Ethiopia, the operation of the theaters in Kenya is largely ceased due to continuing lack of governmental support. Temporary art initiatives such as the Go Down Arts Centre, the Sarakasi Trust, the Kenya

Performing Arts Group, La Compagnie Gáara, Dashy Krew etc. are almost exclusively funded by Kenyan companies or by foreign organizations. But future changes are expected due to the new constitution of Kenya regarding the effect to shape the cultural policy in 47 regions independently, therefore to decentralize it and to modify it (Interview: M.O.O.). From this perspective, a sense of community revealed among artists who demand political participation, who discuss in various forums approaches for a better cultural policy and who expect that contemporary art productions will be funded by the state in the near future. This can possibly lead to sharpening profiles of art initiatives, to specializations of artists and therefore might result in qualitative and aesthetic differentiations within the existing art scenes. Kenyan artists and cultural managers currently insist on the protection of ideas and patent rights, the establishment of a lucrative creative industry, the countrywide establishment of cultural centers, the programmatic, legal and economic stabilization of artists as well as on a governmental fund system. Currently, high production costs and very small audiences are additional challenges for performing artists in Kenya (Interview: C.M.).

Reflections on transnational art productions in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut

Several Kenyan and Ethiopian performing artists collected independently diverse work experiences in transnational co-productions or exchange platforms. For example the Ethiopian dancer Junaid Jemal Sendi worked together with Germaine Acogny, Royston Maldoom, Hofesh Schechter, Russell Maliphant and with the Japanese star choreographer Saburo Teshigawara for a long time. And the Kenyan choreographer Opiyo Okach collaborated with Germaine Acogny, Faustin Linyekula, Régine Chopinot and Mathilde Monnier. These are just two examples of artists who have already repeatedly created transnational dance and theatre pieces. Contemporary Ethiopian and Kenyan artists have previously worked individually and temporarily in Hong Kong, Japan, Venezuela, Uruguay, Jordan, Rwanda, Uganda, Congo, Tanzania, Senegal, Mozambique, South Africa, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Spain, France, England and Germany as well as in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Several performing artists of Ethiopia evaluate the work of the Goethe-Institut and other foreign cultural institutes locally as being very relevant. They emphasize an appreciation for their active role in the promotion of local art scenes (Interviews: M.G., D.D.; F.K., S.T., M.K.). Particularly they highlight positively the practical orientation and the versatility of the cultural work of foreign institutions, which would differ significantly from local government institutions (Interview: M.K.). But they criticize abrupt programmatic changes due to the rotation of directors' posts. Some artists express the opinion that the Goethe-Institut Addis Ababa until recently gave little significant impetus into the local performing art scene. In addition, some artists doubt the expertise of the employees in terms of observing and knowing the dynamics of the local art scene (Interviews: J.J.S., M.G.). Few artists express their resignation due to the impression that foreign cultural institutes constitute elitist institutions. Partly they feel a physical, economic or mental distance and criticize that intensive exchange between the Goethe-Institut and Ethiopian artists would not take place in terms of concepts, ideas and issues of implementation (Interviews: F.K., M.J.). Some critically question the selection processes of artists for transnational art projects, the established standards of evaluating their art work and the related power positions of foreign cultural institutes (Interviews: F.K., M.J.).

In the reflection of specific performance art projects that were implemented within the framework of the Goethe-Institut, the following themes have been problematized in interviews by Ethiopian artists: task sharing, short time productions, payment and supply, group dynamics, communication, training and rehearsals, transparency of artistic and organizational decisions and controversial views on contemporary art (Interviews: S.T., D.D., Y.K., M.J., J.J.S., M.G.). On the last point it becomes obvious that an artistic paternalism is strictly rejected and the question of including locally grown art-historical realities is highly sensitive, which cannot be ignored. Due to harsh life conditions in the country not many artists allow themselves to produce an abstract, self-referential or discourse-related art, which might be completely detached from the majority of the Ethiopian society. The director of the Goethe-Institut Addis Ababa considers the artistic contact zones between innovative, experimental and long grown, locally proven and accepted ideas as being important (Interview: E.K.M.).

In Kenya, artists were spatially and financially quite dependent on foreign cultural institutions such as the Goethe-Institut by the end of the 1990s. From 2000, the cultural landscape of Nairobi changed gradually through the establishment of alternative art spaces (Mboja, 2007: 169). Nevertheless, the Goethe-Institut and other foreign cultural institutes have been reflected as being important mainly because of their financial participation in production costs (Interviews: K.O., K.M.) and their good public relations. Discontinuity is also critically considered, which results from project-based work and possible shifts in programmatic focus points (Interviews: K.M., A.L.C.). On the one hand, the cultural work of the Goethe-Institut is regarded as positive, versatile and important, but on the other hand the consequence of an increased dependency on the part of African artists is rigorously rejected, because it is interpreted as a continuation of historical realities (Interview: M.O.O.). Additionally the issue of a 'hidden agenda' of foreign institutions has been mentioned repeatedly. In this regard the promotion and dissemination of its own cultural heritage and language is discussed (*ibid.*). Furthermore the occupation of the social aspect through the involvement of foreign cultural institutes and the power to define standards in the local art scene are mentioned (*ibid.*). In this context, questions regarding a cultural dominance and an increasing marginalization of local productions in the globalization process are raised by Kenyan artists (*ibid.*). Cultural managers of local initiatives feel an obligatory to cooperate with the Goethe-Institut and other foreign cultural institutions because of their reputation and for not losing their own relevance (Interview: C.M.). Especially this aspect refers to the issue concerning 'representation power' raised by Stuart Hall that is indirectly exercised by foreign cultural institutes through the inclusion or exclusion of artistic productions. According to the interviewed artists the involvement of the Goethe-Institut Nairobi into the field of performing arts is considered as being minimal (Interview: A.L.C.) and in some cases it is even judged as being irrelevant (Interview: I.R.K.). The cooperation with the Goethe-Institut has been reflected upon payment issues, the questionable selection of artists, networking activities, performance opportunities, audience, discontinuity, equipment, financial support of local initiatives and the increasing dependency (Interviews: A.L.C., M.O.O., I.R.K., S.P.O.). In the reflection of a concrete transnational art project that was produced collectively among Kenyan, Ethiopian, German and American artists, the difficult group dynamics, the friction due to different, artistic and conceptual approaches and the working method of improvisation to generate movement material were reflected by participating artists (Interviews: A.L.C., J.H.).

Due to the perspective of the director of the Goethe-Institut Nairobi the lack of Kenyan artists on concepts, designs and project proposals in relation to the international art world are considered as very problematic. Furthermore the engagement of local cultural initiatives focusing exclusively on an organizer role is critically debated (Interview: J.H.). In addition, it is acknowledged that there are currently no employees professionally skilled in the field of performance art at the Goethe-Institut Nairobi, who deeply know the respective local art scene or the cultural historical aspects of the Kenyan dance and theatre movements (ibid.). Self-critically their own role and definition power of art events is reflected as the Goethe-Institut moves between two poles and diametrically opposite demands: on the one hand as an institution with cultural political objectives and on the other hand as an actor in a network of art publishers, theatres, galleries, art collectives, etc. (ibid.).

Visions

The articulated visions relate to modifications of a practical cultural work cooperation of the future. Ethiopian artists hope for a structural and continuous support from the Goethe-Institut, so that new ensembles, advanced training programs for dance and sound installation and permanent training centers for dance and theatre will be built in cooperation. They also hope for the structural support of the local well-attended theatre houses (Interviews: M.G., J.J.S., S.T., F.K., D.D., M.J.). They also advocate trainings in cultural management, art residence opportunities, regular realizations of transnational art production and the establishment of an international festival of performing arts in Addis Ababa (Interviews: H.Z., F.K., A.D., J.J.S., D.D., M.G., S.T., M.K.). There are several explicitly expressed claims of regularity and continuity in the cooperation process (Interviews: J.J.S., M.G., M.J., D.D.). In contrast to these expressed visions there are capacity constraints within foreign cultural institutes. For example, the establishment of a fixed theatre or dance compagnie connected to facilities for studios or rehearsal rooms is in contrast to the internal project-based work approach of the Goethe-Institut and the administration procedure of a limited budget (Interview: E.K.M.). But teachers could be invited for intense training sessions. In that case the question arises, what types of training are currently being considered as relevant by Ethiopian artists, because the demand is changing over time. For artistic production processes in the future, it seems to become important, to work less with the method of improvisation and to give more space for teaching techniques and specific stage skills. In addition, Ethiopian artists want to be more integrated into the work fields of organization and management levels (Interviews: F.K., M.G.). The director of the Goethe-Institut Addis Ababa would find it desirable, if transnationally produced art events would continue, and individual performing artists were given the opportunity to participate temporarily in major dance companies abroad, so that such experiences again flow back into the art scene. She also stressed the need for increased structural assistance as a consequence of the work experience in past projects (Interview: E.K.M.).

In Kenya, individual artists cherish the hope that the Goethe-Institut involves into shaping the new cultural policy and strengthens the position of local artists in this framework (Interview: M.O.O.). Moreover visions of enhanced structural support in terms of financing project ideas and the active promotion of local productions are articulated (Interview: A.L.C.). It is urged to intensify discussions with performing artists to avoid paternalism and to identify the needs of artists before planning projects (Interviews: K.O., M.O.O.). As Ethiopian artists do it, also Kenyan artists encourage a

broader engagement in distribution of art scholarships as well as training and exchange programs (Interviews: A.L.C., K.M.). In addition, individuals articulate the vision that the Goethe-Institut would engage actively in the brokerage and marketing of local productions (Interview: K.M.). The director of the Goethe-Institut Nairobi hopes that the output of the cultural institution reaches relevance in the global art scene. Therefore he awaits an increasingly international focus in productions of Kenyan artists regarding the aesthetic, technical quality, and conceptual approaches (Interview: J.H.).

Conclusion

Ethiopian and Kenyan artists currently articulate an ambivalent position with regard to the design of contemporary culture. It results from different perspectives, needs and standards. This dilemma is exemplified in the negotiation of the concept of 'culture' through different perspectives onto contemporary art. Ethiopian and Kenyan artists currently try to deal with the phenomenon of parallel claims at the same time - to create avant-garde art works (claim of foreign cultural institutes) and to produce patriotic, folkloristic cultural elements (claim of domestic cultural policy in the respective countries). This phenomenon of being in-between is intensively discussed by performing artists and the deconstruction of this dilemma remains to be seen.

Partly employees of the Goethe-Institut perceive the impulses from the local performance art scenes as too less avant-garde and conceptually oriented. This position can be read as acknowledging the artists own responsibility for specific knowledge of the art discourse, progressive approaches and innovative contemporary realizations. Artistic work isolated from the conceptually oriented art discourse is often questioned by cultural managers of foreign cultural institutions and only limited supported within practical cultural work.

However, the western art discourse is not put into question. Through this historically grown dilemma Ethiopian and Kenyan artists experience contemporary art as being already defined and monopolized by the West. They share the impression that their own cultural productions remain marginalized, because they operate with reference points other than those established ones in the normative discourse of art. In the future, it seems to be necessary to design models for an unbiased conversation between the Goethe-Institut and local performing artists, where aesthetic standards, artistic methods and models of different cultural practices can be discussed, analyzed and negotiated collaboratively.

For a better reputation of the Goethe-Institut, the questioning of one's own art claims, a comparison with internationally renowned art houses and locally active art initiatives, a continuously intense communication with performing artists, a professional expertise in locally specific performance art scenes as well as more transparency in the selection process of artists become relevant. For Kenyan and Ethiopian artists it might become increasingly significant to display or to deconstruct internal and external expectations of contemporary cultural production as well as making own positions visible through ambivalent art productions, which point to the inherent ambiguity of that situation of 'dis-placement' within an established art discourse.

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Interviewees

L.B.: Lealem Berhanu; A.Y.: Aron Yeshitila; T.G.: Tesfaye Gessesse; M.G.: Mintesinot Getachew; J.J.S.: Junaid Jemal Sendi; D.D.: Dawit Desalegn; S.T.: Shiferaw Tariku; A.D.: Addisu Demissie; M.J.: Meseret Jirga; Y.K.: Yared Kenny; H.Z.: Helen Zeru; F.K.: Frew Kebede; M.K.: Mihiret Kebede; C.M.: Catherine Mujomba; M.O.O.: Moses Otieno Oduor; I.R.K.: Irene René Karanja; A.L.C.: Adam Lucas Chienjo; K.O.: Kepha Oiro; K.M.: Kebaya Moturi; S.P.O.: Dr. Simon Peter Otieno; J.H.: Johannes Hossfeld; E.K.M.: Dr. Elke Kaschl Mohni

