



# Meeting of the Expert Panel at the Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi 10 - 12 April 2022

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## Summary of the 3 days' workshop

**Present:** Nicola, Avi, Ernst, Lisa, Bernadette, Osuanyi, Patrique, Ebenezer, Mary Clare (Guests on 11 and 12 April: Prof Odoch, Prof Sukhi, Prof Doris Binger)

**Apologies:** Paul-Henri, Constanze, Ming

## Presentations of the local EVC projects, suggested for the documenta summer school

### Osuanyi: Two Research Projects

#### 1. Practicalizing STEAM education in Ghanaian senior high schools

The Government is introducing STEM education (science, technology, engineering, maths) as its new policy, denying the arts. Therefore, there is now a danger that indigenous technology and technology available to make art will be lost as a result of this. There are ongoing discussions to rather introduce STEAM (e.g. teach STEM through arts)

A pilot study in schools will be carried out testing STEAM education possibilities. Example: Use of recycled material with engineering to make art objects. Transform materials into worthy objects. The study will collect and explore the views of these school students and other reactions as well as general public's opinions. A major problem could be time restraints.

#### 2. Reimaging communal and national identities and memory making in public sculptures of Winneba

Public sculptures in Winneba by Theophilus Mensah, e.g. about the Deer Festival (work is at the Heritage Centre – see the project by Patrique below / Aboakyer Festival); or: Fishing men pulling nets, and other works in the university, etcetera. These works were commissioned by the parliament. These artworks are a good example of how visual culture represents and shapes Collective Memory.

The visual perception on these public works will be explored by 20 masters' students (aesthetics and criticism) in respect to the artist's, the community's & the students' perspectives. How do they constitute a specific importance? How is memory co-produced? How do they add to belonging to the same community? How do they shape perceptions of future and past? How do the art works shape memories and identity and how do they transform the social (urban) space?

The students do the research on this using three perspectives on the art works: they speak to the artist, to community members and comment on these works themselves.

### Discussion:

1. Re **STEAM**-proposal. Concern (students/ civil society groups) that this must be reconsidered by government. There is lots of information on STEAM available. At the moment, EVC cannot really

be of help in respect to this important topic. Thus the Expert Panel recommends to focus on the public sculptures instead of STEAM.

2. Re **public sculptures** proposal: It was mentioned that Lydia (Kenya) and more EVC scholars have written on a similar topic on the website, e.g.

- Nairobi: <https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/how-public-are-public-statues.html>
- Germany: <https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/andreas-kuhnlein-in-unterwoessen.html>  
<https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/hans-haacke-der-bevoelkerung.html>
- Cameroon: <https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/djaoulerou.html>  
<https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/the-reunification-monument-2.html>
- South Africa: <https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/the-day-rhodes-fell.html>  
<https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/south-african-struggle-t-shirts-as-sites-of-resistance.html>  
<https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/mandela-statue.html>  
<https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/the-day-rhodes-fell.html>
- Denmark: <https://www.explore-vc.org/en/objects/little-mermaid.html>

Sculptures in the public space are obviously an important theme that can also be related to EVC's topic of Collective Memory.

The discussion revealed that one aspect in particular is of interest to EVC: How do sculptures like these contribute to the community itself. As the works in Winneba are commissioned works, there were also critical questions about the function of the works. Do they express the artist's creative intention or a political intention by the authorities? How was the community involved? What research was done by the artist? E.g. costumes are based on community information, community members were used as models.

## **Patrique: Research Project - A Gallery of Ghanian symbols and icons**

Traditional symbols and icons, embedded in social practice, represent identities and provide information on particular groups of people. They are part of Ghana. Documentation of 30 examples thus far. Interpretations of these, their relevance to the people today. Especially when Information is scarce, research in the field is needed.

E.g. the Aboakyer Festival ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aboakyer\\_festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aboakyer_festival)) is an example. It represents a specific collective memory on the one hand and, on the other, it is in permanent transformation (sacrifice of man – tiger – deer). As nowadays it is also a touristic event, it is an example of the world in constant transformation (ritual – commercialism). Thus it has the highest educational relevance

The collection which is to be built is going to be a data base for information that sometimes is unfamiliar to many, especially the youth. As many symbols as possible and respective information will be collected (including e.g. also the Coat of Arms, designed by Amon Nii Kotei) for educational purposes. Fieldwork is being done by students, taking photographs of the symbols and gathering interpretations of information on authentic meanings. A website on information collected will be created. It is an ongoing project that can stop at any time for the Summer School.

**Questions:** Illustrations are indigenous drawings; authentic works must be presented; adjustments needed if works are not correctly portrayed; use of unpublished images from personal archives; inclusion of broad variety of 'media' (gold weights, carvings etc). What is authenticity in this context? Why call it symbols and/or icons? Symbol- more narrow, icon- deliver an idea for symbolic meaning? They provide visual significance. The people believe in the symbols represented. How are they embedded in social practice? Different understandings and how they affect people.

**Way forward:** The expert Panel recommends to concentrate on one specific kind of symbols and one specific research question. Keep the words symbols & icons, looking at types of images. Use more terms such as semiotics. Use names of indigenous communities.

## **Ebenezer: Research Project - Unpacking visual narratives from paintings: perceptions from Winneba**

In this project 20 oil paintings made by tertiary art education students (final year) at the Education Department in Winneba are presented to 52 different people (government-2, health-5, park and gardens-5, education-5, trader-5, fisheries-5, artisans-5) and students-20. Random sampling is done. In one-on-one and focus group interviews they will analyze the works and the social and educational implications will be considered. Visual, content, thematic analysis are the methods used, to explore the narratives in the paintings. The goal is to link between the students / the university and the community, as exhibitions are mostly done for the university not the community.

**Questions:** Target group selection? Pilot study done already to inform the study. Examples of painting? Are there categories of works? Any paintings, narratives (or topics) as long a visual done by student? Could categories (e.g. portrait, street life, landscape, animals) help? Who selects the works? Avoid to impose personal views on selection? What shall be achieved with paintings communicating to the public? Will the comments by the community define what people want to be done in studios, thus affecting curriculum? There may be problems in responses? Which groups are excluded / included in asking their opinion? Is the approach too complicated and ambitious? If the works show communities lifestyle (only), will it be easier for results?

**Discussion:** Taking it to people to have their opinion can be considered as transformative for EVC. Exposure to a public that has no availability to works. It can be revealing. Method is scientific, impact on works that are not scientific will be interesting.

**Way forward:** Including humanities approach (not social science only) could be useful. Focus on narratives not technique. Specific types / categories of narratives should be set by the researchers - as a starting thesis. Students could be included which to select. A pre-test could help to understand public responses (e.g. technique, like or not) and to develop strategies to come beyond.

The methodology developed could be helpful in a further step to even understand the EVC Collective Memory Exhibition better.

## **Patrique & Osuanyi & Ebenezer & Ernst & Nicola: Handbook for art teachers in Ghana & Germany**

There are three ongoing projects: 1. A competition for good art lesson concepts, promoted by ATAG/Ghana and BDK/Germany in their countries; 2. Joint exhibitions of Ghanaian and German art students; 3. Collaboration within EVC with a focus on developing a handbook for German art teachers. Based on the processes, experiences and results of these and more, already finished projects (lecture series, publication, study visits, Ghanaians have most contributions to website's database) there is an increasingly deeper mutual understanding of what art education, art and visual cultures could mean in Germany and Ghana.

A joint workshop in Bayreuth in late April 2022 will help to develop the handbook for German teachers. The handbook deals with methods of understanding an unfamiliar culture and learning from different perspectives. (See Patrique's and Ernst's publication about El Anatsui's 'Rising sea'. Both wrote about the work and shared it with each other.) The handbook delivers more interpretations, following this blueprint on recommendations on how the work could be addressed in the classroom. In a next step, such a handbook could be developed not only for German teachers but also for Ghanaian teachers. Preliminary concepts for a first prototype will be presented at the summer school.

**Questions and discussion:** Situations in both countries are different, perhaps too different to develop a joint book. How can questions specific to Ghanaian and German teachers be addressed? How does content development take place? How does the thinking process in European and African countries look like? How to handle the huge complexity (different perspectives, diversity in both

countries)? Open minds to the ideas that different places have different perspectives on the world. African countries share exchanges with other countries across the world. These exchanges affect the curriculum that connects us.

**Way forward:** Look at narratives that can be developed into one textbook for Germans and Ghanaian teachers. What are the chapters, perspectives, visuals that become the content?

Share common ground, what links both. What is the shared reality? There are existing parallels regarding the core competences in the specific curricula: collaboration and communication, cultural identity and global citizenship, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, personal development. Pick from those. UNESCO concepts are also available.

Specific topics (like monuments created to address a new identity in Ghana and Germany, colonialism is also a shared the history) can help to develop similar questions.

## **Avi: Exploring socio-dynamic behaviour/s and its connectedness to waste reclaimers**

In South Africa you are not obliged to recycle, unlike in other countries. That is why waste reclaimers are working with the waste. Materials collected earns money.

In this project students explore the social and economic dynamics behind, collaborate with the waste reclaimers (participatory methodology) and develop artistic responses (different types of images in context of education: paintings, symbols, social practices).

The project aims to connect the universities taking part with the communities.

**Questions and discussion:** In respect to ethical considerations, in this case human dignity is a sensitive issue. How to respond to this?

## **Nicola: Projects from Augsburg University**

The approach starts with four main questions:

1. How can an understanding of a transcultural art education be established in Germany?
2. How can the mediation of visual culture be organised by anthropological topics rather than by concepts from art history like 'development of styles'? How can we meet 'wrong narratives' in German art history education?
3. Is a change of the existing latent canon of art in education possible?
4. If a transdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the complexity in a better way, how can we develop it?

To find answers to these questions collaborative projects are carried out:

- Art practices on sustainability and consumption. Project between Augsburg and UP (see Avi's project above).
- Collective memory. Project between Augsburg and Douala.
- Art education at schools. Project between Augsburg and China called 'my image - your image', a children's project.
- documenta fifteen - lumbung terms visualized in photographs. Project between Augsburg and Mexico.

**Questions and discussion:** Art education lessons organized by topics not by history seems a promising way to meet the existing misrepresentation of what art/culture worldwide is or can be. This led to a controversial discussion, as there is value in a chronological order that helps to understand cultural dynamics. Of course there is no linearity in cultural development in time and space. Nevertheless the paradigm of evolution from biology is often transferred and applied in daily teaching on the ground.

**Way forward:** Combination of both concepts (thematic and historical) could be a way forward, as long as they are referring to nonhierarchical positions in time and space.

There is a need for evaluation of the projects.

As to the transdisciplinary / transcultural nature of the projects and their complexity (e.g. redefining the canon) look at a timeline.

## **Mary Clare / Doris Binger / Students from TUK and HSA: Games**

Students from the Technical University of Kenya and the University of Applied Sciences Augsburg are working together to create a board game about cooperation and sharing of resources in Nairobi. A group from TUK is working on a video game as well.

Concept of the board game: The board game shall depict an aspect of life in Nairobi through the lens of game design. During a workshop in November 2021, the students have created an early prototype that concerned itself with the daily business of hawkers of Nairobi. In this prototype, players pick different roles such as hawkers, kanjos and other locals, each with their own goals for the game, and try to achieve these goals by gathering and trading resources.

While it is possible for any players to win on their own, during the process of play the game eventually reveals that the »best« way to win is to cooperate – achieving the own goal, while working with others to help them achieve theirs – thereby imparting the value of shared victory.

The students met parallel to the meeting of the Expert Panel in Nairobi in person. They further developed the game idea, created a first prototype that was tested. This prototype was presented to the members of the Expert Panel. It will now be further developed and presented at the EVC Summer School in Kassel and played and discussed with the EVC partners there.

## **General discussion**

The various presentations were discussed not only in respect to the inner consistency of the projects but also to the leading ideas behind that could help to shape and frame the profile of the summer school. E.g. it could be observed that ‘transformation’ plays an important role in all projects. This leads to further questions to be asked, like: Who transforms (artists, communities, industry, tourism ...)? What is transformed (identity, belonging, social systems, meaning, ways of seeing, ...)? Which effects do the transformation processes have (e.g. include / exclude ...)? What is the goal?

The discussion was enriched through a valuable input by Prof Doris Binger, HSA Augsburg, about ‘transformation design’, a new subject taught in Augsburg, influenced by the Kolding Design School (a place where Patrique had been as well). The shift here is from every day aesthetics to everyday cultural practice. (“How do we want to live together?” – the motto of the Architecture Biennale Venice in 2020.) Doris stressed the core aspect in this context, how to deal with uncertainty. Key concepts are translating, adapting, and exchanging – in a kind of holistic thinking. Parallel concepts are ‘social design’, ‘participatory design’ and ‘problem based design’.

Although the notion seems to make sense also in the EVC project, it will be used with sensitivity as the term ‘transformation’ has been politically contaminated in South Africa. The current core terms in South African politics are: transform – africanise – decolonise. **One option** to structure the summer school (by grouping the projects under rubrics) could be to use the activities (or competences) related to transformation design “translating the unfamiliar, adapting, exchanging, storytelling/meaning making”.

**Another option** is oriented on transversal themes of the projects presented, e.g. 1. Methodologies of Understanding (Interpretation, Translation); 2. Collective Memory – Identity, 3. Reflecting and responding to socio-economic dynamics, 4. Global Citizenship

or: following the concept of 'cultural resilience' with its three dimensions: rootedness; resourcefulness; resistance.

or: Sustainability/Ecologies; Circle of Life (Anthropology); How to live together;

Further and careful deliberation on this is needed, as such these will be a topic at the next meeting of the Expert Panel.

### Possible additional results of the reflection of the presentations

- ✓ Topics appearing in several projects (like 'function of sculptures in urban planning') could be used to develop contributions to the website (LAB section), also including already existing entries in the OBJECTS database. This could lead towards a book publication.
- ✓ The scientific method for analyzing paintings (unpacking narratives) developed by Ebenezer can possibly be applied to the artworks in the collective memory exhibition. (The question raised is: can we compare this method with the Cape Town Model?)

## Book Launch

EVC's first book publication "Visual cultures of Africa" was presented by the editors and ceremoniously launched by the Vice Chancellor on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April (see Website / News section).

## EVC Panel Meetings – Summary of results

### 1. Expert Panel (EVC's steering group)

- Bea has left the panel. Lize is invited to be a member of the panel. Bernadette and Ernst retire at the end of 2022. A successor for UNISA would be welcome. Unclear situation in China. The fact that persons retire from their institutions does not mean that their expertise should be lost. Such persons (Bernadette and Ernst) will remain as panel members without institutional portfolios.
  - **Current members:** Ghana: strong team of 3 members from UEW; South Africa: 3 persons (one from UNISA, two from UP); Germany: 4 persons (3 from Augsburg University, one from Museum Fünf Kontinente); Kenya and Cameroon: 1 person per country (Recommendation that there is a team of about three per country - Avi will get in touch)
  - A kind of "rules of procedure" seems to be needed. E.g. Members are representatives of universities and institutions (like museums). Could be extended to individuals (honorary members / co-opted members). Further rules should be decided as soon as the need arises, e.g. on the admission of new members - both to the network and to the EP.
2. **Future of EVC:** As funding ends in Dec 2022 a funding proposal is required. All partners look at possibilities for funding. Avi is planning a (virtual, hybrid or real) conference in South Africa in 2023. Book Publication/ conference proceedings (peer reviewed)/ publication in Image and Text Journal
3. **Summer School:** Lists of attendees to be sent to Nicola. Each country has 5 persons. Accommodation and travel from country to Frankfurt, 1 week. 25 persons from EVC. Proposal for the programme will be sent to EP members by Ernst/Nicola.
4. **Residency Programme:** There is a call from Documenta that was distributed by Ernst. 1 person from each partner country would be great. Successful person are invited to go to Karnitz after documenta for another 2-week. Costs will be covered. Ernst will coordinate the application (deadline April 19).

5. **Collective Memory Catalogue:** Discussion on catalogue: A4 Size; Cover design: EVC Logo (Branding); Chapter pages between countries – images to diversify; Transversal topics could be: gender, nature, national identity etc. A critical view on the works required extensive time.

**Decision:** Use the logo as template for the cover; Frontispiece: Map after cover page. Curators of exhibition; Title: Collective Memory. Visual perspectives from SA, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya & Germany; Alphabetical spread of exhibitions; Separation pages: map, highlighting the respective country, and country name; 200 copies

**Content:**

- Acknowledgements - funders
- Preface: Avi
- Order: Essays first, then visuals
- Essays: 600-800 words
  - Patrique: Educational aspect
  - Ernst & Bernadette (double feature): What is collective memory and how is it reflected in the art works?
  - Osuanyi: Decolonisation
  - Lize's student: Nostalgia

Time plan

- 30 April (all images to Nicola- 300dpi 20x 20cm (jpeg or tiff)
- 1 May: Essays to be sent to editors (Mary Clare, Avi, Nicola)
- 20 May: Final layout

Coordinator of the publication: Nicola

6. **Any Other Business:** Members are requested to send the presentations to Ernst and Nicola. In revised versions they could be related to the Summer School. The presentations should also be used to create content for the EVC website.