

UN.KNOWN SPACES: An Artistic Research of the United Nations headquarters in Vienna, New York and Nairobi and their Host Communities

Nairobi, 8 July 2014 – Berlin-based stage designer and director Janina Janke and musician/multimedia artist Maurice de Martin will share a performance-based interaction with music, video and sound recordings designed to spotlight the differences and commonalities between three UN headquarters (Nairobi, New York and Vienna) and their host communities on 8 July 2014, 12:30-2:00 PM, at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Gigiri.

Inspired by the French philosopher Michel Foucault essay “Of Other Spaces” and the phenomenon “Worlds inside the World,” the two artists researched how the United Nations was perceived by its staff and the surrounding three host-communities; what people from outside of the UN offices know about the people working inside and vice-versa and whether the culture, customs and geographical situation of the host-communities influence the daily attempts of the UN officials in making the world a better place.

From 2011 to 2013, the artists collected a total of 66 testimonies from the three headquarters by conducting interviews with UN staff and people from the surrounding communities. The interviewees included a gardener, a bee keeper, a security officer, a salsa club manager, a kindergarten nurse, a tour guide and an Under Secretary-General of the UN.

In Nairobi, the presentation is being facilitated by the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa and the UN Information Centre in Nairobi (UNIC-Nairobi) in partnership with the Goethe-Institut Nairobi.

After the lecture-performance, there will be an opportunity for an informal "meet the artists" follow-up discussion combined with refreshments on site.

In addition to the lecture-performance at UN headquarters, the artistic research results can be viewed in an exhibition at the Goethe-Institut Nairobi (Maendeleo House, Monrovia Street), which runs through 17th July 2014. The two artists also held a two-day workshop with orphans from the Agape Hope Center in Dagoretti. The resulting children's artwork was integrated into the exhibition at the Goethe-Institut. More information available at: www.goethe.de/nairobi.

All media are invited to cover the event. RSVP to Irene Mwakesi, UNIC-Nairobi irene.mwakesi@unon.org

Lecture-performance: Conference Room 3: Tues. 8 July 12.30 – 14.00

Video installation: loop of 66 video-miniatures 66 hand-performances from employees and neighbors of the UN HQs in Vienna, New York City and Nairobi, Tues. 8 - Fri. 11 July, 10.00 -14.00

Exhibition: Goethe-Institut Nairobi: from 27 June - 17 July

About UN.KNOWN SPACES ART PROJECT

The art project UN.KNOWN SPACES was developed as an integral part of the large scale scientific research project "Knowledge through Art," funded by the FWF (Austrian Science Fund) and presented by the Alpen-Adria University Klagenfurt/Austria. This innovative platform is designed for scientists and artists to create interdisciplinary projects that would allow the involved disciplines to reflect upon their different methods of knowledge creation on a long term basis. The project was first presented in Vienna in 2013 and will be presented at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2015. For more information, visit www.unknownspaces.org.

For more information, please contact:

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