



GLOBAL جامعة
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UNIVERSITY العالمية

6th Congo Research Network Conference

CONGOLESE HORIZONS: WEAVING TEMPORALITIES IN CONGO STUDIES

January 29-31, 2025

The Africa Institute
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Under the leadership of

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THE MEETING PLACE OF CONGO RESEARCHERS

6th Congo Research Network Conference

CONGOLESE HORIZONS: WEAVING TEMPORALITIES IN CONGO STUDIES

January 29-31, 2025



Global Studies University (GSU) was established in 2023 as a non-profit institution for higher education by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al-Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.

The Africa Institute
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Foreword

The Congo Research Network (CRN), in collaboration with The Africa Institute, Global Studies University (GSU) in Sharjah, presents the sixth international conference, "Congolesse Horizons: Weaving Temporalities in Congo Studies". Scheduled from January 29 to January 31, 2025, at The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE, this event brings together over 40 scholars from across the humanities and social sciences, united by a shared interest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conference aims to create space for productive interdisciplinary dialogue, encouraging discussions both within and beyond Congo Studies. The central theme of this year's conference examines the concept of temporality—how time is understood, experienced, and managed in the context of the Congo. Participants will explore the intersections of various temporalities within the country's social, cultural, and political spheres, with an emphasis on historical narratives, societal rhythms, and the evolving political landscape. By analyzing tensions, ruptures, and continuities, the conference seeks to enhance our understanding of how individuals and communities navigate complex temporal experiences.

In today's rapidly changing world, the issue of temporality has gained immense significance. As technological, economic, and sociocultural transformations accelerate, understanding how time shapes human experiences has become increasingly vital. This conference offers a crucial platform for interdisciplinary exchange, advancing conversations on how temporality influences individual and collective realities, not only in the Congo but across the global South more broadly.

We look forward to stimulating scholarly exchanges throughout this event, confident that it will contribute meaningfully to the continued growth and development of Congo Studies as an interdisciplinary field.

Participants

Hoor Al Qasimi
 Surafel Wondimu Abebe
 Samuel Mark Anderson
 Noemie Arazi
 Meg Arenberg
 Zaynab El Bernoussi
 Sarah Van Beurden
 Anne Nabintu Birato
 Grieve Chelwa
 Thijs Costers
 Christopher P. Davey
 Michée Diansana
 Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann
 Eric Abanati Gbadi
 Étienne Gontard
 Salah M. Hassan
 Aminadab Havyarimana
 Benoît Henriët
 Emery Kalema
 Wandile Kasibe
 Duan Kissonde
 Brecht Kreyen
 Amandine Lauro
 Frédéric Le Marcis

Faustin Linyekula
 Margot Luyckfasseel
 José Rivair Macedo
 Nelson Makengo
 Nsah Mala
 Don Bosco I. Mbawmbaw
 Thomas F. McDow
 Pedro Monaville
 Sabrina Moura
 Faisal Garba Muhammed
 Sung-Joon Park
 Katrien Pype
 Marco Reyes
 Almudena Mari Saez
 Diana Salakheddin
 Emilia Sana
 Rosa C. R. Vieira
 Jules Villa
 Alice Vittoria
 Rosette Sifa Vuninga
 Daniela Waldburger
 Kennedy Muhindo Wema
 John Thabiti Willis

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THE MEETING PLACE OF CONGO RESEARCHERS



Conference Program

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 am	Registration
10:00 am	Welcome Remarks <u>Hoor Al Qasimi</u> – President, Global Studies University, UAE <u>Salah M. Hassan</u> – Chancellor, Global Studies University (GSU); Dean, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE
10:15 am	Introductory Remarks <u>Emery Kalema</u> – Assistant Professor of History, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE <u>Benoît Henriët</u> – Associate Professor of History, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium
10:30 am	Panel 1 Colonial Encounters and Postcolonial Reverberations Investigating the Colonial Crime Scene: Revisiting the Forgotten Odyssey of the Congolese 'Pygmy', Ota Benga <u>Wandile Kasibe</u> – Independent Researcher, South Africa "My Grandfather Was a Volunteer": Remembering Enslavement in the Surroundings of Kisangani <u>Margot Luyckfasseel</u> – Junior Research Professor in Modern African History, University of Antwerp, Belgium Transimperial Experiences: Revisiting the History of Belgian- Congolese Armed Forces in World War II <u>Amandine Lauro</u> – Research Associate, Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium Weaponizing Military Order: Debating Military Discipline in Congo's Military Courts (1904-1918) <u>Brecht Kreynen</u> – Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium Chair: <u>John Thabiti Willis</u> – Associate Professor of African History, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

12:30 pm	Lunch Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU
2:00 pm	Panel 2 Colonialism, Environment, and Territoriality in Central Africa Colonizing Landscapes: Reforestation Schemes and Multispecies Territoriality in Colonial Burundi <u>Benoît Henriët</u> – Associate Professor of History, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium "The Lake Forms a Homogenous Whole, Comparable in Every Way to a Living Being" - An Environmental History of Fishing on Lake Tanganyika during the Belgian Administration of Urundi (1923-1962) <u>Etienne Gontard</u> – Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium Is It the Same Plant? Oil Palm-Human Relationship in the Mayombe Forest <u>Rosa C. R. Vieira</u> – Professor, Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, University of São Paulo, Brazil Chair: <u>Grieve Chelwa</u> – Chair, Department of Social Sciences; Associate Professor of Political Economy, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE
3:30 pm	Break Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU
3:45 pm	Keynote Address Of Dreams and Broken Circles: A Lecture-Performance <u>Faustin Linyekula</u> – Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice of Theater, Artist in Residence, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), UAE Chair: <u>Pedro Monaville</u> – Associate Professor of African History, McGill University, Canada
5:10 pm	Film Screening Tongo Saa (Rising Up at Night) (96 minutes, 2024) Director: <u>Nelson Makengo</u>

Thursday, January 30, 2025

8:30 am Registration

9:00 am Panel 3

Epidemic Accretion and Temporalities of Disease in Congo

**Temporalities of Coexistence with the Ebola Virus:
Ebola Virus Resurgence in Guinea and the Democratic
Republic of the Congo**

Frédéric Le Marcis – Professor of Social Anthropology, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (ENS), France

Almudena Mari Saez – Anthropologist, Junior Professor Chair, TransVIHMI Unit, Research Institute for Development (IRD), France

Sung-Joon Park – Medical Anthropologist, Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Germany

Kennedy Muhindo Wema – Ph.D. Candidate, Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Germany

Epidemic Palimpsests: The Past in the Present in the Yambuku Mpox Outbreak

Jules Villa – Postdoctoral Researcher, Institut Pasteur, France

Multispecies Temporalities, Socio-Ecological Changes and Emerging Diseases in Equateur Province, DRC

Almudena Mari Saez – Anthropologist, Junior Professor Chair, TransVIHMI Unit, Research Institute for Development (IRD), France

Les Analyses Intégrées: La Collaboration et la Multidisciplinarité dans la Gestion des Épidémies et les Leçons Apprises dans le Cadre du Centre des Opérations d'Urgences de Santé Publique [Integrated Analyses: Collaboration and Multidisciplinarity in Epidemic Management and Lessons Learned within the Framework of the Public Health Emergency Operations Center]

Emilia Sana – Head of Planning Department, Centre des Opérations d'Urgence de Santé Publique, Ministry of Health in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Chair: Zaynab El Bernoussi – Associate Professor of Political Science, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

11:00 am **Break** Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU

11:15 am

Panel 4

Archives, Memory, and Personal Histories

In My Mother's House: Navigating Personal and Archival Memory in Kinshasa

Pedro Monaville – Associate Professor of African History, McGill University, Canada

Unravelling the Past in the Eastern Congo: Memory Landscapes and Colonial Collections

Noemie Arazi – Lead Researcher, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium

Project AIDS: Writing the History of AIDS in Congo

Thomas F. McDow – Associate Professor of History, Ohio State University, USA

Chair: Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann – Associate Professor of Archaeology and Anthropology, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

12:45 pm

Lunch Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU

2:00 pm

Panel 5

Religious Encounters and Spiritual Temporalities

Translation as a Tool of Conversion: Portuguese Missionaries and the Old Kongo in the 17th-18th Centuries

Duan Kissonde – Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Lettres, Récits et Images sur le Kongo dans les Collections de l'Église Romaine (XVIe-XVIIe siècles) [Letters, Narratives, and Images of Kongo in the Collections of the Roman Church: 16th-17th Centuries]

José Rivair Macedo – Full Professor, Department of History, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

La Médecine Traditionnelle: Illustration des Échanges Intemporels entre les Peuples Burundais et Congolais [Traditional Medicine : An Illustration of Timeless Exchanges Between the Burundian and Congolese peoples]

Aminadab Havyarimana – Assistant Lecturer, Department of Socio-Anthropology, University of Burundi, Burundi

Chair: Meg Arenberg – Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

Friday, January 31, 2025

8:30 am Registration

9:00 am Panel 6

Crafting Memory and Identity Through Material Culture

Making and Mobilities in Congo: Bolobo's Ivory Carvers and Their Origin Stories (1880s-1980s)

Sarah Van Beurden – Professor of History and African American and African Studies, Ohio State University, USA

Traversing Contexts: The Multilayered Biography of Albert Lubaki

Diana Salakheddin – Multidisciplinary Researcher, Royal Museum for Central Africa; Ph.D. Candidate, Ghent University, Belgium

L'Image d'Albert Lubaki dans la Presse Européenne de l'Entre-Deux-Guerres: de 1929 à 1932 [The Image of Albert Lubaki in the European Press During the Interwar Period: 1929 to 1932]

Michée Diansana – Ph.D. Candidate, University of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ghent University, Belgium

Temporal Escape: Papa Mfumu'eto Premier's Comics

Emery Kalema – Assistant Professor of History, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

Chair: Sabrina Moura – Research and Development Manager, Louvre Abu Dhabi, UAE; Affiliated Professor, Arts Department, Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil

11:00 am **Break** Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU

11:15 am Panel 7

Embodied Memory and Postcolonial Mobility

Transitions of Land and Local Memory: Former Refugee Camp Sites in the Kivus

Anne Nabintu Birato – Congolese Researcher, Group for Conflict and Human Security Studies (GEC-SH); /CERUKI/ISP-Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Eric Abanati Gbadi – Researcher and Teaching Assistant in International Relations, University of Kisangani, DRC

Christopher P. Davey – Visiting Assistant Professor, Institute of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (IGMAP), Binghamton University, USA

The Centrifugal Forces of Logging: Bayaka Hunter-Gatherers in Northern Congo

Alice Vittoria – Postdoctoral Researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

Multiple Temporalities and Futures in the Congo Basin

Nsah Mala – Postdoctoral Researcher and Hub Coordinator, UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition, University of Cologne, Germany

Chair: Surafel Wondimu Abebe – Assistant Professor of Performance Studies and Theory, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

12:45 pm

Lunch Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU

2:00 pm

Panel 8

Shifting Labor and Social Identities in Congo

Changing Social Identities in the Context of Ex-Mine Workers in Lubumbashi, DRC

Daniela Waldburger – Senior Lecturer, Department of African Studies, University of Vienna, Austria

Judicial Documents as a Source for Vernacular Practices of Intoxicants in Colonial Burundi

Thijs Costers – Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

Les Enjeux de Gouvernance et la Menace du State Building en RD Congo [The Issues of Governance and the Threat of State Building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo]

Don Bosco I. Mbawmbaw – Visiting Assistant Professor, Program for Asian and African Studies, National Autonomous University of Mexico (PUEAA/UNAM), Mexico

Chair: Faisal Garba Muhammed – Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute, GSU, Sharjah, UAE

- 3:30 pm **Break** Venue – Courtyard, The Africa Institute, GSU
- 4:00 pm Panel 9
Protests, Diaspora, and Digital Spaces in Contemporary Congo
The Yebela and Wumela Manifestation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2019): Coloniality of Protests and Decolonization of the Congolese Future
Marco Reyes – Political Scientist, Autonomous Metropolitan University-Iztapalapa Campus (UAM-I), Mexico
Diaspora Mobilization and Homeland Conflict: The Case of Congolese in South Africa and the Eastern Congo Conflict
Rosette Sifa Vuninga – National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences Postdoctoral Fellow, Historical Studies Department, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Digital Horizons, Cryptopolitical Agency, and Shifting Elsewheres in the Kinois Imagination in the Early 21st Century
Katrien Pype – Associate Professor, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Katholieke Universiteit (KU) Leuven, Belgium
 Chair: Samuel Mark Anderson – Senior Lecturer, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), UAE
- 5:30 pm **Concluding Remarks**
Margot Luyckfasseel – Junior Research Professor in Modern African History, University of Antwerp, Belgium
Rosette Sifa Vuninga – National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences Postdoctoral Fellow, Historical Studies Department, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Panel 1

Colonial Encounters and Postcolonial Reverberations**Investigating the Colonial Crime Scene: Revisiting the Forgotten Odyssey of the Congoese 'Pygmy', Ota Benga**

Wandile Kasibe – Independent Researcher, South Africa

This paper seeks to revisit the forgotten odyssey of the Congoese 'Pygmy' Ota Benga, who was taken from the Congo to be displayed at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair in the United States. He was showcased for anthropological race "science" at the Museum of Natural History as a "live specimen" and later exhibited alongside an orangutan at the Bronx Zoo in 1906, where he was labeled "the Missing Link."

The practice of putting African people on display, whether for entertainment purposes or to appease white sensibilities under the guise of anthropological "science," stems from a long history of European racism.

In locating the narrative of this African diaspora, this collegial inquiry further investigates the entanglement of anthropological institutions, natural history, and ethnographic museums in the construction of racist ideologies, as well as the perpetuation of colonial reasoning and its continuities in today's "post-colonial" society. The paper draws attention to the fact that these colonial institutions were complicit and colluded in perpetuating colonial "crimes against humanity," thereby rendering their own institutionality a colonial "crime scene" that requires rigorous "de-colonial" investigation in the "post-colonial" era.

In an attempt to shed more light on the miasma caused by colonial rule, this paper turns to the practices of "scientific inquiry" and public exhibitions to argue that these displays of Africans, such as Benga, were, to a large extent, a precursor to genocide. The paper further contends that these public exhibits of Africans were instrumental in popularizing theories of racial ideology and perceived white "supremacy," dehumanizing Africans and providing public justification for the colonial dispossession of African people.

Additionally, this paper explores the author's personal journey to the United States, following Benga's footsteps to the Bronx Zoo in New York and the Museum of Natural History, with the goal of gathering any physical evidence of this worthy ancestor whose fate was made to hang in the balance within the metropolitan city of North America.

"My Grandfather was a Volunteer": Remembering Enslavement in the Surroundings of Kisangani

Margot Luyckfasseel – Junior Research Professor in Modern African History, University of Antwerp, Belgium

In the late 19th century, the broader region of Kisangani was home to a series of events that connected local, Eastern African, and European trade networks. So-called 'Arab-Swahili' traders ventured into the region following Stanley's trip along the Congo River in 1876, while representatives of the Congo Free State worked to defend Leopold II's interests in the area. Both groups shared the desire to subordinate local populations and export ivory en masse. To convince their European peers of the legitimacy of the imperial occupation of the Central African region, colonial actors persistently framed these Arab-Swahili traders and their Wangwana troops as 'evil,' local populations as agentless anonymous victims of slavery, and themselves as white saviors. Yet, this framing has also influenced – if not deliberately distorted – local understandings of the slave past in what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This paper, based on 95 interviews, argues that oral slavery narratives provide an important entry point to differentiate the specificities of local micro-contexts, challenge colonial written accounts, and assess to what extent the latter have affected local memory work. Despite certain methodological challenges, a careful analysis of oral micro-histories of enslavement can allow for tracing trajectories of local agency, through interactions with 'Arab-Swahili' and European perpetrators in the past, as well as narrative reappropriations of that past through creative storytelling.

Transimperial Experiences: Revisiting the History of Belgian-Congoese Armed Forces in World War II

Amandine Lauro – Research Associate, Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium

Weaponizing Military Order: Debating Military Discipline in Congo's Military Courts (1904-1918)

Brecht Kreynen – Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium

Congo has experienced many forms of (colonial) violence that have taken hold of its territories, some of which continue to persist today. As recently as October 2023 and March 2024, the United Nations published reports noting a resurgence of armed violence throughout the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These recurring events are linked to the country's colonial past, particularly through the omnipresence of indiscipline in the *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo's* colonial predecessor. However, questions remain about the conception and punishment of military (dis)order in the colonial context.

With military discipline as the main conceptual framework of this paper, the study examines how the colonial soldiers' (lack of) cooperation was perceived in civil and military conceptions of justice in the early colonial period. Furthermore, it analyzes cases of colonial violence through the lens of military discipline and legal narratives of accountability.

This paper draws on the archives of the *Rôle du Parquet* files for the years 1904 and 1905 from the *Organisation de la Justice militaire*, which pertains to justice under the special military regimes during 1914-1918, as well as the rediscovered court-martial files. Taken together, these sources reveal a clear conflict of interest between the *Force Publique* and Congo's magistrates regarding military discipline. The military's primary concern was the maintenance of military order to avoid its breakdown and the 'inevitable' subsequent increase in militarized violence. In practice, this was reflected in the imposition of harsh punishments. Meanwhile, the judges responsible for the court-martials prioritized the severity of the crime over maintaining military standards. The court-martials themselves provide a wide scope of criminal charges, in which interpretations of discipline were reflected in the judges' considerations, interrogations, and sentencing of accused soldiers. Through these files, the paper also aims to contribute to broader historiographical debates surrounding colonial violence, military justice, the intermediary roles of colonized groups, and military identities in both the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo.

Panel 2

Colonialism, Environment, and Territoriality in Central Africa

Colonizing Landscapes: Reforestation Schemes and Multispecies Territoriality in Colonial Burundi

Benoît Henriët – Associate Professor of History, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

From the late 19th century until the 1930s, Burundian landscapes and their inhabitants experienced what Roger Botte labeled as a "slow assassination": a conjunction of droughts, parasitic invasions, epidemics, and epizootics, which triggered widespread famines and population declines. Colonialism, under both German (1891-1919) and Belgian (1922-1962) administrations, exacerbated or initiated these afflictions, fostering human displacements that facilitated the spread of illnesses, took peasants away from their crops, and lands away from peasants.

These overlapping ecological crises did not go unnoticed by colonial public servants. The two successive regimes devised and implemented a range of responses, in which reforestation schemes played a major role. The expansion of agriculture, the lack of rains, and massive reductions in tree populations contributed to depleting Burundi's primary forests, leaving many of its hills barren or covered with low bushes. This situation, in turn, increased the risks of landslides and erosion and fostered a structural shortage of timber and firewood.

In response to this multifaceted crisis, Belgian administrators encouraged the massive planting of imported tree species, mostly originating from Australasia, such as eucalyptus and black wattle. These reforestation schemes were thoroughly monitored, mapped, and discussed, creating a thick archive that can today be mined to contribute to the environmental history of colonial Burundi. This paper uses these policies as an entry point to study both the dynamics of landscape alteration and their ecological entanglements. Using territoriality as a central theme, the paper attempts to retrace how changes in the biotope generated new ways to use and interact with trees, both for humans and non-humans.

"The Lake Forms a Homogenous Whole, Comparable in Every Way to a Living Being" - An Environmental History of Fishing on Lake Tanganyika During the Belgian Administration of Urundi (1923-1962)

Etienne Gontard - Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

Is It the Same Plant? Oil Palm-Human Relationship in the Mayombe Forest

Rosa C. R. Vieira - Professor, Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Multispecies analysis, plantation studies, and oil palm academic debates have considered plants as agents that participate in regimes of life and death. Plantations are sites of control, discipline, and domination of plants and people, but they are also patchy and fragmentary, where new social and multispecies relationships emerge. Based on long-term ethnographic research, this paper discusses the rearrangement of relationships and affections between the Yoómbé people of the Mayombe Forest (DRC) and the native oil palm tree. During the 19th and 20th centuries, palm oil acquired a different scale of value, prompting colonial actions to increase its production in West and Central Africa. However, the paper argues that Mayombe did not become a scalable frontier. In the ruins of former colonial Belgian plantations, a human-native palm tree relationship was reconfigured, becoming a cultural, social, and economic pillar of the villages. This relationship is structured by the circulation, sharing, and selling of oil palm substances and products. In this regard, the paper fosters a dialogue between multispecies analysis, the anthropology of economy, and African studies.

Keynote Address

Of Dreams and Broken Circles: A Lecture Performance

Faustin Linyekula - Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice of Theater, Artist in Residence, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), UAE

In this lecture-performance, Faustin Linyekula—renowned storyteller, choreographer, and artist—invites us to journey through the fragments of dreams and the dissonances of broken circles that animate his creative universe. Drawing on themes central to his body of work, Linyekula explores the intersections of memory, resilience, and imagination in the face of historical ruptures and personal loss. Through a deeply performative narrative, he intertwines the poetic and the political, offering reflections on the act of storytelling as a form of resistance and a space for reimagining futures. With his singular voice and presence, Linyekula challenges us to confront the silences of broken histories while holding space for the power of collective dreaming.

Film Screening

Tongo Saa (Rising Up at Night)

Director: Nelson Makengo

Year of Release: 2024

Duration: 96 minutes

Language: Lingala with English subtitles

Kinshasa and its inhabitants are in darkness. They wait and struggle for access to light. Positioned between hope, disappointment, and religious faith, Tongo Saa (Rising Up at Night) is a subtle and fragmented portrait of a population that, despite the challenges it faces, is sublimated by the beauty of Kinshasa's nights.

Panel 3

Epidemic Accretion and Temporalities of Disease in Congo**Temporalities of Coexistence with the Ebola Virus: Ebola Virus Resurgence in Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Frédéric Le Marcis – Professor of Social Anthropology, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon (ENS), France

Almudena Mari Saez – Anthropologist, Junior Professor Chair, TransVIHMI Unit, Research Institute for Development (IRD), France

Sung-Joon Park – Medical Anthropologist, Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Germany

Kennedy Muhindo Wema – Ph.D. Candidate, Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM), Germany

The uncertainties surrounding a dormant virus lie at the heart of this study. Following investigations during the 2021 Ebola epidemic in Forest Guinea, virologists concluded that the Ebola virus was dormant. A long phase of latency, rather than slow and continuous replication of the virus (Garry, 2021), was the verdict (Keita et al. 2021). Out of 37 Ebola virus (EV) epidemics recorded, eight were caused by reemergence of the virus, and four happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Seroprevalence studies in contacts of confirmed Ebola virus disease (EVD) cases after epidemics in Guinea showed the existence of pauci-a-symptomatic and a-symptomatic individuals. While their roles in transmission remain unclear, so does the virus's potential to relapse in such cases.

Research following the 2014–2016 West African epidemic revealed that the virus does not entirely vanish from all those who contract the disease. People in EV endemic areas live with its varied forms, such as persistence in body fluids, immune system activation, latency, and, in some cases, relapses. Relapses among cured individuals underscore the significance of understanding the virus reservoir, raising questions about when and under what conditions the virus might resurge. The certainty of its capacity for reactivation contrasts sharply with the uncertainties of how and when it will occur. These temporalities of the virus are reflected in scientific attention, as development of diagnostic tools, but also in the questions that people who have been cured of the disease ask themselves about their health, the potential risk of transmitting the virus and their survival labeling. Using Guinea as a case study, this paper aims to reflect on what this virus' temporalities

meant for epidemic preparedness, ontological register for monitoring and control of the virus in the body seen as a container. It explores the tension between the epidemic event and the lasting presence of the virus, between the exceptionality and the ordinariness of living with a virus in a context of the dilapidated public health system in Guinea and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Epidemic Palimpsests: The Past in the Present in the Yambuku Mpox Outbreak

Jules Villa – Postdoctoral Researcher, Institut Pasteur, France

This paper examines how the past is in the present in the current Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) mpox outbreak or how experiences of the past form the optics by which people understand the present. It is based on an historical investigation in the Mongala province (Yambuku health zone) in October-November 2024 and on archival work (local health zone archives & WHO). It underlines the palimpsest nature of epidemic history. Mpox is indeed a new name for an old pathogen (monkeypox), well-known in the Mongala province. The ways in which the outbreak is narrated today build upon experiences of (other) past diseases and health interventions. It is a discourse on the past and the present. These histories are fundamentally dynamic: always ready to be reinterpreted by the latest development of the global health attention cycle and changes in health provision strategies.

Multispecies Temporalities, Socio-Ecological Changes and Emerging Diseases in Equateur Province, DRC

Almudena Mari Saez – Anthropologist, Junior Professor Chair, TransVIHMI Unit, Research Institute for Development (IRD), France

In recent years the Equateur Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been characterized by overlapping health crises, including zoonotic emergence and re-emergence of Ebola and mpox, in addition to measles and cholera. In 2024, the province became one of the most affected areas by mpox in the DRC, with 1,612 cases reported between January and February 2024. Although significant advances have been achieved in the last years in diagnosis, care, treatment, and vaccination to contain such emerging epidemics, research at the interface between social sciences and ecology are still needed to better understand the material and socio-

environmental conditions of disease emergence. This leads us to urgently question the spatiotemporal configurations of multispecies encounters, and how they occur in domestic, urban, or forest spaces in the Equateur Province.

Numerous studies have highlighted the role of environmental factors in the occurrence of zoonotic infectious diseases. Among these factors, the cycles of the animal world respond to complex dynamics. However, far from being autonomous and solely dependent on the ethology or vital needs of each species, these cycles are shaped through the sharing of living territories and mutual interspecies ecologies, leading to spatial and temporal overlap. While these interactions display recurrences, regularities based on daily (daytime, nighttime) or seasonal rhythms, forms of proximity, attentiveness or avoidance linked to practices and perceptions, they can also be disrupted by structural changes on wider scales: ecological, climatic, economic, political, or social factors. It is in the changes at work in these shared spaces that it is relevant to investigate the conditions of zoonotic emergence in multispecies co-dwelling situations.

Reliance on the environment and seasonal dynamics implies specific mobilities, leading to encounters between living forms in particular places at specific times. However, how current environmental and climatic changes affect these human/non-human meshes? How do humans experience and react to these transformations? Our approach is based on local perceptions of these dynamics, historical and contemporary, as well as observation of multispecies encounters (partly through video/camera traps). This paper gives specific focus to human-rodent and human-bat interactions and how these relationships are embedded in localized contexts involving other forms of agentivity: other animal species, fruits, trees, places, and meanings.

Les Analyses Intégrées: La Collaboration et la Multidisciplinarité Dans les Gestions des Épidémies et leçons Apprises Dans le Cadre du Centre des Opérations des Urgences de Santé Publiques
[Integrated Analyses: Collaboration and Multidisciplinarity in Epidemic Management and Lessons Learned within the Framework of the Public Health Emergency Operations Center]

Emilia Sana – Head of Planning Department, Centre des Opérations d'Urgence de Santé Publique, Ministry of Health in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Panel 4

Archives, Memory, and Personal Histories**In My Mother's House: Navigating Personal and Archival Memory in Kinshasa**

Pedro Monaville – Associate Professor of African History, McGill University, Canada

This paper explores the interplay between the personal and the archival, using a photograph of my mother discovered at the Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique in Kinshasa. The analysis navigates historical and familial realms by examining the role of photography in historical narratives and personal memories. Drawing critically on the notions of *studium* and *punctum* introduced by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*, the study considers photographs as both historical sources and intimate objects.

Starting from a personal "archival accident" – recognizing my mother in a seemingly unrelated archival photograph – the exploration develops into a reflection on the nature of memory, recognition, and intellectual abstraction in historical research. The discussion engages with colonial history, the decolonization of education in the Congo, and my family's history to address questions of race, colonialism, and the role of archives in preserving and contesting history.

By challenging the conventional detachment associated with historical scholarship, the paper advocates for a more nuanced approach that recognizes the affective dimensions of archival work and the personal connections that shape our understanding of the past. In line with the conference's theme, this paper focuses on a specific experience of time, which blurs the boundaries between the scholarly and the self. It argues that the personal provides a critical lens to fully expose the dynamics of historical memory.

Unravelling the Past in the Eastern Congo: Memory Landscapes and Colonial Collections

Noemie Arazi – Lead Researcher, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium

During the second half of the 19th century, the eastern Congo became entangled in territorial conquest, predatory extraction, and the global trade in natural resources, initially led by Swahili and Arab merchants from the Indian Ocean coast and later taken over by the agents of the

Congo Free State. The legacies of this past continue to occupy and embody today's cultural landscapes and memory.

With the collaboration of resident communities, it was possible to activate the documentation of a complex register of sites tightly linked to issues of trade, extraction, resistance, and colonial conquest in the territory of Kasongo in the Maniema Province of the DRC. However, important elements of this heritage are absent, such as locally produced and imported cultural objects. Many of these were seized during the Congo Free State's military operations and became part of the collections of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren and the Royal Army Museum in Brussels. Provenance research reveals that contexts of appropriation were largely silenced. This is why dialogue and engagement with the communities from the countries of origin have stood at the core of this work. Their biographies, memories, and affective connections serve as an antidote to the epistemic violence of the archive, the ordering of objects in museums, and the self-referential nature of provenance research. This presentation critically examines the results of long-term research carried out in the Maniema Province and along the central caravan route in Tanzania, merging archaeology, archival sources, collaborative provenance studies, and oral history.

Project AIDS: Writing the History of AIDS in Congo

Thomas F. McDow – Associate Professor of History, Ohio State University, USA

Project AIDS, the pathbreaking HIV/AIDS research project based in Kinshasa from 1984–91, was an intellectual powerhouse, uncovering and documenting the clinical and epidemiological aspects of AIDS. The project was jointly sponsored by the Zairean Ministry of Public Health, the Belgian Institute for Tropical Medicine, and two U.S. entities, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The NIH's Thomas Quinn credited the project's many years of success with "publishing 10 papers a year...and really writing the history of AIDS in Africa" (Quinn 1996). Yet this history barely names the Congoese scientists, doctors, and technicians who examined and interviewed patients, sustained the laboratories and interpreted results, co-wrote these myriad papers, and helped navigate the politics of Mobutu-era Zaire.

This paper continues the work of “recaptioning” Congo (Collard 2022) into the 1980s, starting with a photograph from 1984/85 that was published in 2008. The photo includes twelve Project AIDS members, but the caption only identifies the white American scientist “with his team.” Such images harken back to representations of colonial-era scientific enquiry as solitary, heroic and European, when in fact the research’s very success depended on the knowledge and networks of Africans (Fabian 2000). Recent critical anthropology has highlighted the unequal partnerships within global health (Geissler 2011, Crane 2013), and such questions have historical resonance with the history of HIV/AIDS as well (Giles-Vernick, Gondola et al. 2013; Cumminsky 2020). Through interviews with past members of Project AIDS this paper puts the project in its Congolese and African historical context, tracing the individual trajectories that led to the assemblage of talent and resources within Congo to produce new knowledge of AIDS. Were these postcolonial “middle figures” (Hunt 1999) mediating new technologies in a changing world? The Congolese men and women who helped build Project AIDS’s success came of age between the 1950s and 1970s, spanning the Lumumba generation (Tödt 2021) and student activists of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Monaville 2022). Thus, within the intersecting historiographies of international health and postcolonial Congo, we can write new Congolese histories of global relevance that illuminate multiple conference themes: historical memory and narratives of the past; the time of (re)invention – technology and innovation; and (via viral histories) time beyond the human – ecological entanglement.

Panel 5

Religious Encounters and Spiritual Temporalities**Translation as a Tool of Conversion: Portuguese Missionaries and the Old Kongo in the 17th-18th Centuries**

Duan Kissonde – Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil

This work is part of the research for an ongoing master’s thesis, and one of its main objectives is to discuss the relationship between translation practice and coloniality. It aims to demonstrate how translation was used as a tool by Portuguese missionaries in their attempts to convert the population of the Old Kingdom of Kongo to the Christian model in the 17th and 18th centuries, utilizing a bilingual catechism design to instill the values and behaviors of Roman Catholicism. Based on a qualitative analysis of the Portuguese-Kikongo bilingual catechism titled *Doutrina Christã*, published in 1624 by Jesuit priest Mateus Cardoso from the College of Luanda, this paper aims to present the possible diversity of meanings for a set of words in the Kikongo lexicon. It will explore the meanings attributed to these words in texts by travelers and missionaries who were in Kongo during the period under examination, along with studies by Western and African historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, and linguists (such as Jean Cuvelier, Joseph Van Wing, Anne Hilton, John Thornton, Bunseki Fu Kiau, Elikia M’Bokolo, and Koen Bostoen). Using these reading keys, the paper will engage in a debate on the impact of the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine* on the local language to determine the extent to which it contributed to altering the original meaning of certain fundamental words in Bakongo spiritual cosmology.

Lettres, Récits et Images sur le Kongo dans les Collections de l’Église Romaine (XVIe-XVIIe siècles) [Letters, Narratives, and Images of Kongo in the Collections of the Roman Church: 16th-17th Centuries]

José Rivair Macedo – Full Professor, Department of History, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil

This presentation is part of the international project titled *Christians of Ethiopia and Kongo Facing Rome: Writing a Different History of Connections Between Africa and Europe (15th-Early 17th Century)*, funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR) and linked

to the University Laboratory for History, Cultures, Italy, and Europe (LUHCIE), directed by Olivia Adankpò-Labadie (Université Grenoble Alpes). The objective is to present, briefly describe, and analyze the historical sources of direct contacts between the elites of the Kingdom of Kongo and the papacy from 1580 to 1622, the year the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was established. The focus will be on the study of documentation related to the diplomatic initiatives of the Kongo kings in the Mediterranean region, particularly the sending of embassies to the Vatican by King Álvaro I nimi-a-Mpanzu between 1584 and 1588, represented by Portuguese merchant Duarte Lopes, as well as the embassy sent by Álvaro II nimi-a-Nkanga between 1604 and 1608, represented by Antonio Manuel Ne Vunda.

Three types of historical sources will be presented: a) the correspondence of the kings and their ambassadors with the popes; b) ethnographic accounts from Europeans regarding Kongo at the end of the 16th century; c) the visual representation of Kongo and its leaders in various texts (maps, illustrations), in the frescoes of palaces and churches at the end of the Renaissance, in Borghese art, as well as in inscriptions, public monuments, and numismatics. This presentation will delve deeper into two documentary series: the letters and historical narratives about Kongo copied in Italian by Giovanni Battista Confalonieri, part of the manuscript codex identified as Ms. Vat. Lat. 12.516, ff. 1-127, housed in the Vatican Apostolic Library; and the collection of letters and annotations from the manuscript codex containing the correspondence of the Congolese ambassador Antônio Manuel Ne Vunda, located in the section *Miscellanea Armadi I*, 91, ff. 124-254, of the Vatican Secret Archives.

La Médecine Traditionnelle: Illustration des Échanges Intemporels entre les Peuples Burundais et Congolais [Traditional Medicine : An Illustration of Timeless Exchanges Between the Burundian and Congolese peoples]

Aminadab Hayyarimana - Assistant Lecturer, Department of Socio-Anthropology, University of Burundi, Burundi

Like all peoples around the world, Burundians have been using medicinal plants for healing since time immemorial. Various segments of the population in the country have cultivated and diligently preserved knowledge about the healing properties of plants. Those

who have managed to accumulate the most knowledge in this field have forged a profession—a craft of alleviating pain and curing various ailments. They have distinguished themselves from the masses as guardians of the health of their villages and are regularly visited by patients of all kinds.

Even though there have been difficult times for practitioners of this profession over the years, there is now a resurgence of this practice, which, instead of fading away, has solidified in the shadows. Based on the postulate of cultural ecology theory, which posits that peoples of the world adapt to their surrounding environment, it has been shown that in all cultures, people tend to view health in relation to their natural living environment. Thus, perceptions of illness and definitions of health often tend to resemble one another among populations living in the same ecological niche: people use the resources available in their immediate environment and only turn to external sources when necessary. At the same time, any external recourse is inspired by local trends and habits.

In this same logic, the peoples of the Burundian and Congolese slopes of the Congo Basin (the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the western regions of Burundi) maintain connections and exchanges that are largely influenced by their geographical situation and ecological conditions. Traditional medicine aptly illustrates these often poorly regulated cross-border exchanges that take place outside any official contracts but involve all layers of the populations in border areas. Defying temporality and political uncertainties, the circuits of traditional medicine transcend national borders, with movements going in all directions.

From a socio-anthropological perspective, inspired by cultural ecology theory, this presentation, based on ethnographic research, reveals a resurgence of local traditional knowledge systems that had been silent for decades but remain deeply rooted in Burundian society, strengthening exchanges between the Burundian and Congolese peoples more than ever.

Panel 6

Crafting Memory and Identity through Material Culture**Making and Mobilities in Congo: Bolobo's Ivory Carvers and Their Origin Stories (1880s-1980s)**

Sarah Van Beurden - Professor of History and African American and African Studies, Ohio State University, USA

In the center of Bolobo, Congo, a cluster of well-built houses dating back to the early 20th century hints at forgotten histories. Today, the record of Bolobo's most notable export, ivory carvings - the commodity that provided the wealth to build these houses and outlasted Belgian colonialism - is found only in conversations with elderly people. A few summers ago, I listened to José Makwamela Ngaliema as he sat on the porch of the house his grandfather built, painstakingly outlining his family's many generations of ivory artists, all the way back to the late 19th century, and lovingly showing me his grandfather's carving tools.

Ivory-carving is not a "traditional" craft of the area, whose population consisted of fishermen who were traders in ivory and enslaved people (Harms 1981 and 1987) but a colonial-era innovation spurred by a formerly enslaved person. Workshops sprang up in Bolobo and carvers settled across cities in the region. By engaging in these practices of making and selling, carvers were able to maintain pre-colonial patterns of mobility and autonomy. A ban on ivory-trading led to a gradual collapse of the industry by the late 1990s.

This paper will address the thematic conference topic of "Historical memory and Narratives of the Past," by focusing on oral histories about the emergence of carving in Bolobo and contrasting them with the histories present in colonial and missionary sources. Placing makers and their objects at the center of this history will demonstrate the long-term impact of colonial knowledge patterns not only on our understanding of the history of craft making in the region, but also on the categorization of the objects produced. It will also demonstrate how craft making was successfully deployed as a strategy to circumvent colonial restrictions and exploitation.

Key to this history of both objects and people is an understanding that 'making' is a creative, as well as an economic, cultural, and social practice in which regimes of value meshed with (post) colonial social codification, economies, and labor (Byfield 2002, Ingold 2013, Myers 2001). Processes of making shaped the encounter between

communities and colonial structures and helped determine the lifespan of the colonial cultural economy, but were acts of self-realization that reveal a shared imagination of global consumer cultures (Mabiala 1989, Thomas 1991).

Traversing Contexts: The Multilayered Biography of Albert Lubaki

Diana Salakheddin - Multidisciplinary Researcher, Royal Museum for Central Africa; Ph.D. Candidate, Ghent University, Belgium

Albert Lubaki (c. 1896 - after 1939) was commissioned to produce watercolor paintings in the 1920s and 1930s in the Belgian Congo. While widely known in Europe and considered one of the precursors of modern art in Congo, his artistic practice in his own country is discussed predominantly within academic circles. Today, almost 100 years after Lubaki produced his first paintings in the cité indigène of Elisabethville for a young territorial agent, Georges Thiry, we are trying to piece together the very few facts of his life and reconstruct his biography and the socio-historical context in which he existed. Through archival research, multi-sited ethnography (in Kinshasa, Kongo-Central, Lubumbashi, and Kabinda), and oral tradition, we have gathered an alternative narrative about his life.

In this paper, we will present some of the research results focusing on Lubaki and his surroundings, situating him within the multitude of local contexts from which he was detached by the European art world. In doing so, his life story will be woven into a larger context of spaces, processes, and practices. This approach constructs not a biography in the sense of a chronological recital of facts, but a social surface (Bourdieu 2000) - a description of "successive states of the field through which the [life] trajectory has progressed" (302). Lubaki's life traversed different locales within the territory of Congo and different regimes of governance, and his art - commodities bearing his agency but having their own life trajectories - reached Europe, Asia, and the Maghreb.

It is important for us to analyze this variety of trajectories - both temporal and spatial - to move beyond the commonplace description of Lubaki as a "painter of the bush" towards a more complex and nuanced narrative, including topics such as mobility, migration, and urbanization. In conclusion, we will explore Lubaki's presence in the contemporary art world in Congo. What legacy of Lubaki remains in the places where he lived? How do people talk about him, if at all? Is there any interest in the phenomenon of early watercolor painting?

By examining these questions, this paper aims to achieve not only an alternative narrative of this famous period in Congoese art history but also a better understanding of the experiences people might have had in the first half of the twentieth century in the Belgian Congo.

L'Image d'Albert Lubaki Dans la Presse Européenne de l'Entre-Deux-Guerres: de 1929 à 1932 [The Image of Albert Lubaki in the European Press during the Interwar Period: 1929 to 1932]

Michée Diansana – Ph.D. Candidate, University of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ghent University, Belgium

The arts of the Belgian Congo have always generated significant commentary in Europe, and painting is no exception. Unlike sculpture, which has long dominated the African artistic landscape in Europe, painting allows the public to identify its authors. When discussing modern Congoese painting, the name Albert Lubaki comes to the forefront. Literature on the subject regards him as the precursor of modern Congoese painting (Badibanga ne Mwine, 1977, 1982; Ceyssens, 1986; Cornet, 1989; Mubembele, 2015; Vellut, 2017).

In the 1920s, the Belgian Georges Thiry met Albert and Antoinette Lubaki, a couple engaged in mural painting, in Southeast Congo, in Katanga. Georges Thiry was captivated by their work and introduced them to “new” materials: paper, brushes, and watercolors, replacing their traditional tools and providing them with a different kind of “visibility.” This visibility was part of a dynamic for the promotion of the arts from the Belgian Congo during the interwar years. This dynamic was likely due to a significant opening up of perspectives on art in Europe (Schuylenbergh, 1995). In this context, Albert Lubaki’s works arrived in Europe in 1929 and were the subject of an exhibition titled “The Exhibition of the Watercolors of the Black Artist Lubaki.” This event represented a novelty and was regarded as the entrance of modern Congoese artists onto the European stage of African arts (Vellut, 2017: 300). The realization of this was due to the actions of patrons such as Gaston-Dénys Périer, Georges Thiry, and Carlo Rim. They took pride in presenting Lubaki’s work as evidence of African craftsmanship in relation to Western materials (Périer, 1938).

However, this “Negro” art did not achieve unanimous support, and some critics sparked a controversy questioning the authenticity of the authors and the works. The press played a decisive role in shaping the discourse around Albert Lubaki and his works. Thus, two trends

emerged in the press. For instance, while the *Dépêche coloniale et maritime* on June 30, 1929, was positive toward Lubaki and his art, *Candide* on November 21, 1929, took a harsher and more disparaging stance toward him. This presentation will first discuss the dynamism that contributed to the promotion of the arts in the Belgian Congo. It is likely due to this dynamism that Albert Lubaki was able to gain recognition in Europe. The construction of different versions of the discourse regarding Albert Lubaki in the European press from 1929 to 1932 will also be analyzed. Was it information or promotion?

Temporal Escape: Papa Mfumu’eto Premier’s Comics

Emery Kalema – Assistant Professor of History, The Africa Institute, GSU, UAE

In the 1990s, in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (then known as Zaire), the markets in popular neighborhoods served as cultural convergence points and economic exchange hubs, where the fast-paced rhythms of urban life intertwined with the richness of Congoese tradition. Among the many treasures found in these vibrant markets was a unique experience that captivated the imaginations of both the young and the old: the comics of Papa Mfumu’eto Premier. These graphic artworks, spread across the market floors, were much more than simple entertainment; they were gateways to imaginary worlds where time seemed to lose all significance. This paper delves into the author’s journey through these comics, examining how they influenced perceptions of time, and how a simple act of forgetting led to unexpected consequences, revealing the intricate nuances of the relationship with time and reality.

Panel 7

Embodied Memory and Postcolonial Mobility**Transitions of Land and Local Memory: Former Refugee Camp Sites in the Kivus**

Anne Nabintu Birato – Congolese Researcher, Group for Conflict and Human Security Studies (GEC-SH); /CERUKI/ISP-Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Eric Abanati Gbadi – Researcher and Teaching Assistant in International Relations, University of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Christopher P. Davey – Visiting Assistant Professor, Institute of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (IGMAP), Binghamton University, USA

What happened to the infamous refugee camp sites of the mid-1990s during the First Congo War, and how do these sites now function in local Congolese memory? This research addresses these questions by analyzing the perspectives of local populations living in or around these former camp sites. Historically, the focus is on the attacks on Rwandan refugee camps orchestrated by the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaïre and the Rwandan Patriotic Front during this war. This moment is regarded as a significant and persistent conflict-based fracture, as well as a continuation of the Rwandan civil war and relations during the genocide. During this period, an estimated 233,000 Burundian and Rwandan refugees were indirectly or directly killed by these forces.

Tracing the locations of camps across Congo reveals the interconnectivity between land, ownership, use, and memory. Do former massacre sites play a role in local economic development, and how are these sites framed in contemporary understandings of this history and the ongoing conflict within the region? This paper provides an analysis of how local populations from the sample areas navigate a temporal landscape both fixed in the past and reverberating in the present.

Using theory from memory studies and political geography, this paper examines field data from interviews with Congolese communities residing on or near former 1996-1997 camps and massacre sites, as well as site data identifying locations previously less understood from this period. The sample includes dozens of sites in areas across three provinces: Mbandaka (Equateur), Kisangani (Tshopo), and the

Ruzizi Plain and Shabunda (South Kivu). The aim is to explore local populations' relationship with land as an embodiment of historical memory, encompassing both its silence and presence, and its connection to contemporary Hutu and Tutsi-aligned conflicts and popular discourse in Congo. These communities carry a more salient memory of this period than is often reflected in scholarly literature and popular discourse. They also demonstrate a dynamic, layered understanding of land and memory rooted in these historic massacres.

This research is part of a larger funded fieldwork project tracing and mapping the narratives of Rwandan Hutu refugees, now exiled survivors of the camp attacks.

The Centrifugal Forces of Logging: Bayaka Hunter-Gatherers in Northern Congo

Alice Vittoria – Postdoctoral Researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

Bayaka hunter-gatherers in northern Likouala (Republic of Congo) are navigating rapid and radical socio-ecological transformations. As forest landscapes are dissected and transformed by roads, logging exploitation, and conservation ideologies; as new borders and regulations are imposed on Indigenous communities; as the Bayaka are discouraged from pursuing a mobile lifestyle in a forest that is exploited and protected to benefit a few powerful outsiders; and as new values are introduced, how are the Bayaka responding to this rapidly changing world? How do they perceive and interact with the forest? More specifically, what are their mobilities and dwellings today? This paper explores the postcolonial extraction experience, particularly logging, from a Bayaka perspective.

On one hand, the paper examines the desires and aspirations that logging introduces in local landscapes. Following the work of Thomas Hendriks, logging is understood as a centrifugal force that creates desires and motivations directed outward, towards an idealized modernity and away from the forest. On the other hand, this paper describes how road networks and logging sustain new mobility possibilities and create novel outcomes. The Bayaka face ideological pressure to sedentarize. Despite this, they are often on the move, and mobility continues to play a significant role in their lives. Mobility is understood as a subversive practice that sustains the Bayaka's everyday life and identity.

The development of road networks does not hinder mobility but instead boosts it. In exploring new mobility motivations and outcomes, this paper challenges common approaches to describing contemporary hunter-gatherers' mobilities, which often juxtapose nomadism with sedentarization, fluidity of movement with sedentism, or (im)mobility in place. Despite transformations in territorial and spatial organization, and the tendency to reside more regularly in open spaces (such as villages and roadsides), the Bayaka are seldom in the same location and are more often found journeying between different dwelling places. This paper explores how mobility—along with (im)mobility—depends on a combination of structural, personal, social, ecological, economic, emotional, and affective factors. (Im)mobility in a place is not a fixed condition of being stuck but an integral part of mobility. Mobility is relational and sustained by a dialectic between being rooted and connected to places and walking away from them.

Multiple Temporalities and Futures in the Congo Basin

Nsah Mala - Postdoctoral Researcher and Hub Coordinator, UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition, University of Cologne, Germany

As a scholar of the Congo Basin, working across environmental humanities, sustainability science, and foresight and futures, this intervention addresses multiple temporalities and futures in the rich basin beyond the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a nation. The first part draws on ongoing British Academy-funded research on Wetland Time to discuss how oral narratives and cultural practices in the Congo Basin promote multiple and alternative temporalities that challenge linear and capitalist progress, which underpins environmental conservation. In other words, this paper builds on analysis of oral narratives, indigenous cultural practices, and fieldwork to highlight different temporalities (seasonal, relational, circular, organic) in the Congo Basin. It will discuss their implications for environmental conservation, which is mainly based on the Western logic of linear, progressive time, while addressing ecological entanglements. This will speak to how more-than-human life cycles, cosmogonies, invisible forces, and religious institutions are shaping past and present societies and cultures in the Congo Basin. In the second part, the intervention borrows from ongoing foresight workshops being facilitated on #CongoBasinFutures, as a Next Generation Foresight Practitioner (Judges' Choice) at the School of International Futures (UK), to discuss participatory approaches to

imagined futures for the Congo Basin. It will highlight some aspirations, projections, and anticipations for the future of the Congo Basin, from the perspectives of both insiders and outsiders. It will also suggest how collective imaginaries and social utopias may shape the temporal horizons of individuals and communities, without leaving out the legacies of colonialism on forms of agency, resistance, political contestation, and repression. In a nutshell, this presentation will focus on multiple, past, present, and future (imagined) temporalities in the Congo Basin.

Panel 8

Shifting Labor and Social Identities in Congo**Changing Social Identities in the Context of Ex-Mine Workers in Lubumbashi**

Daniela Waldburger – Senior Lecturer, Department of African Studies, University of Vienna, Austria

This paper is the result of empirical research. It brings the former miners' narratives of the past into dialogue with their aspirations for the future. The focus is on the ex-mine workers' nostalgia in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo. These ex-mine workers were members of the *Collectif des ex-agents de la Gécamines* ("Départs Volontaire"), all of whom lost their employment in 2003 as part of a World Bank-supported deal to save the run-down company.

Using a triangulation methods, the study analyzes the specific form that the 'nostalgia-based master narrative' utilized by ODV members. It conceptualizes three focal domains—*kazi* ("work"), stability, and *heshima* ("respect")—which represent objects of loss. These domains explain the ODV members' sentiments about today's deficiencies, framed against the backdrop of the environment in which they were socialized and which serves as their reference point.

This paper examines how social identities based on gender underwent significant changes. Women were socialized by the mining company to be responsible for workers' productivity, domesticity, and family life, and were ostensibly "saved" from moral depravity—effectively depriving them of their agency. However, after 2003, they increasingly became responsible for household livelihoods. This shift also led to changes in associated social values and questions of respect. The concept of "intersectionality" is applied to explore how both women and ex-mine workers experienced complex transformations in discrimination, privilege, and social inequality.

Judicial Documents as a Source for Vernacular Practices of Intoxicants in Colonial Burundi

Thijs Costers – Ph.D. Candidate, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium

This paper combines colonial judicial archives with ethnographic fieldwork to research practices of production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol in Burundi. These sources offer a unique view into day-to-day colonial life, containing testimonies of marginalized people, allowing them to leave a trace in colonial archives, as well as

snapshots of the conviviality of colonized individuals.

The questions asked in these interrogations still reflect colonial concerns with these substances and shed light on colonial anxieties. Furthermore, by asking questions regarding motivations, they provide deeper insights on intoxicant use in a colonial setting than moralist discourses. Here they are often discussed as a fringe phenomenon, to be combatted through legislation and taxation.

These judicial sources are, however, fragmentary, and the questions and answers don't paint the entire picture of alcohol-related practices. Hence, they are complemented by ethnographic fieldwork performed in June and October of 2024. The dialogue of questions asked, past and present, allows for the construction of a more holistic picture of these practices, and the role of alcohol in daily Burundian life.

It is shown that alcohol was deeply connected to power. On the one hand, it is important in political power, both in ritual uses to solidify it and in ways it could be challenged. On the other hand, it renders people more powerful on a physical level.

Les Enjeux de Gouvernance et la Menace du State Building en RD Congo [The Issues of Governance and the Threat of State Building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo]

Don Bosco I. Mbawmbaw – Visiting Assistant Professor, Program for Asian and African Studies, National Autonomous University of Mexico (PUEAA/UNAM), Mexico

In the DRC, faced with the deadlock of good governance oriented towards public welfare, liberal democracy appears increasingly outdated and has become a tool for maintaining the status quo by successive autocratic regimes, to the detriment of the people's will. Caught between illegitimacy and state weakness, new threats are emerging, the most prevalent being political tribalism. As a result, the illogic of a system that has failed to correspond to the spatio-temporal realities of the African continent in general, and the DRC in particular, forces a reconsideration of the political system operating in this country since its independence in 1960 through 2023.

Panel 9

Protests, Diaspora, and Digital Spaces in Contemporary Congo**The Yebela and Wumela Manifestation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2019): Coloniality of Protests and Decolonization of the Congolese Future**

Marco Reyes – Political Scientist, Autonomous Metropolitan University-Iztapalapa Campus (UAM-I), México

The so-called social movements or national liberation struggles were always guided by an intellectual vanguard whose emancipation horizons were taken from the European history. Therefore, these liberation wars in Africa (either based on Marxism-Leninism or liberalism) ended up believing in the self-determination of all the nations; the economic development of the newly independent States; and the existence of universal values such as the scientific knowledge as the “treasure at the end of the rainbow” (Wallerstein). However, they never realized that the inherent ontology-teleology of the social liberation movements kept intact the colonial matrix of power and knowledge inherited by European colonialism producing what Anibal Quijano conceives as coloniality: long standing patterns of power that emerged from colonialism and continues to shape Africans’ everyday life (Quijano, 2007).

This coloniality of power-knowledge discredits any other alternative structure whose rationality does not contribute to the reproduction of the logic of coloniality. By doing so any other social-political Utopia, any other horizon of social-political meaning is converted into a remainder of the Eurocentric power-knowledge rationality which only admits the parts if and only they are explained by the European whole: the Yebela protests and actions deployed in DR Congo in 2019 were therefore conceived by the coloniality of power-knowledge as naïve, unconscious or inconsequential. This paper will try to demonstrate that Yebela challenges the old category of social movement (which always requires a personal and clear leadership whose end was taking the State power to change the world. On the contrary, Congolese Yebela never committed itself with the State power. The Congolese Yebela inverts the logic of coloniality of power, decolonizes power and political protest. Yebela, as an expression of a “society in movement” (Quijano), an “anti-power” action (Holloway); and a pedagogy of presence (Mbembe) denies taking the political power because it seems to understand that by doing so the Yebela would reproduce

coloniality and would become a utensil (*assujettissement*) of the State. As the black feminist Audre Lorde states, “do the master tools of emancipation allow the slave to be free?”

Diaspora Mobilization and Homeland Conflict: The Case of Congolese in South Africa and the Eastern Congo Conflict

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Focusing on South Africa and employing ethnographic methods, this research examines new developments in Congolese migrants’ homeland politics and activism in the era of the persistent eastern Congo conflict. It seeks to identify the local, global, and transnational factors driving the increasing radicalism in Congolese migrants’ homeland mobilization. The research endeavors to answer two major questions: First, how do recent trends in the eastern Congo conflict impact Congolese homeland politics and activism? Second, what could go wrong with Congolese diaspora mobilizing for means to support those fighting to end the armed conflict in the eastern Congo? The research has three major objectives. The first is to raise awareness of lesser-known and emerging translocal aspects of the eastern Congo conflict, as well as post-Kabila-related trends in Congolese transnationalism. The second is to demonstrate the particular ways in which South Africa, both as one of the leading destinations for Congolese refugee migrants on the African continent and a key Southern African DC regional force militarily and diplomatically involved in ending the war and related instability in the eastern Congo, uniquely shapes the homeland activism of Congolese people in South Africa. This research contributes to scholarship on diaspora mobilization and the translocality of conflicts and civil wars.

Digital Horizons, Cryptopolitical Agency, and Shifting Elsewheres in the Kinshasa Imagination in the Early 21st Century

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This paper examines the historical shifts in desired “elsewhere” in the imaginaries of Kinshasa (residents of Kinshasa), how these changes coincided with digitalization, and what this meant in terms of “cryptopolitical agency,” i.e., the play of showing one thing and hiding

another in the negotiations of power relationships.

In 20th-century central Africa, narratives by those who had traveled were recounted orally, and via a wide range of communication technologies such as messengers, written or typed letters, the telegraph, CB radio, the telephone, and mass media like the radio, television, and print journals and magazines. Throughout the early 21st century, digitalization has added the computer screen, the tablet, the smartphone, and other digital devices as transmitters of images and narratives about life in "other places." Horizons shifted along with the "connectors" and "mediators" of images and narratives of life elsewhere. At the same time, with an increasingly narrowing digital divide in urban Africa, the digital world rendered the perceived distance between diaspora communities and those who have remained "home" smaller, as powerfully coined in the analytic concept of 'co-presence' (Featherstone and Burrows 1995). Presence by proxy, e.g., via text messages, remittances, and gifts, is, after all, also presence.

The conceptual contribution of this chapter is the notion of "the digital horizon," which builds on phenomenology and anthropology. A study of the "digital horizon" integrates an analysis of subjective knowledges and the representations on which these knowledges are built, with a study of the role of digital infrastructures as material forms and as platforms for symbolic representations, in interlocutors' understandings of their here and now, their pasts and futures, and how they act thereupon. The digital itself is both part of the lifeworld against which interpretations are made, relationships are formed, and which can be mobilized as a space of intentionality. These digital horizons also set in motion power reconfigurations, which in turn generate new ways of 'cryptopolitical agency.'

While a history of communication technologies and the horizons they generate(d) in central Africa remains to be written, the dialectics between the digital, Kinois (<Kinshasa) lifeworlds, and the imagination of 'elsewheres' are reconstructed as these played out between 2002 and 2022. This period coincides with the reign of President Joseph Kabila (2002-2019), documenting significant transformations in citizens' lifeworlds in the early 21st century, when the Congolese nation faced political uncertainty and failed efforts to establish a democratic regime. The material is derived from ethnographic research in Kinshasa's media cultures, which began with doctoral research in 2003. Two decades later, the city grew exponentially from approximately 10 million to an estimated 18 million inhabitants; the local economy,

social relations, and political governance have deteriorated. This transformation occurred amidst two significant infrastructural and social changes in urban livelihoods: the gradual democratization of digital media and the influence of an ever-growing Congolese diaspora on daily life, through remittances, used cars shipped to Kinshasa for public taxis, and social media interactions rendering those abroad co-present in the daily lives of those who stayed behind.

Biographies

Hoor Al Qasimi is the President of Global Studies University (GSU), where she has been instrumental in the institution's development since the establishment of The Africa Institute in 2018. This initiative builds on the historical Afro-Arab cultural exchange, including the pivotal 1976 "Symposium on African and Arab Relations." Under her leadership, GSU reaffirms its commitment to academic excellence and innovative programming. Collaborating closely with Distinguished Professor Salah M. Hassan, Chancellor of GSU and Dean of The Africa Institute, Al Qasimi continues to shape the university's vision and direction. As a practicing artist and curator, Al Qasimi also serves as the President and founding Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF), which has become a key player in the regional and international art scene since its inception in 2009. Her efforts have expanded the Foundation's offerings, including major exhibitions, artist residencies, and educational programs. She co-curated the Sharjah Biennial and was elected President of the International Biennial Association in 2017. Al Qasimi is the Artistic Director for the upcoming 2026 Biennale of Sydney and serves on various advisory boards, including those of Kunst-Werke Berlin and Ashkal Alwan in Beirut. She holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London, a diploma in Painting from the Royal Academy of Arts, and a BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art.

Surafel Wondimu Abebe studied Literature (BA) and Cultural Studies (MA) at Addis Ababa University (AAU) in 2010. He served as a lecturer, researcher, and Deputy Dean of Humanities at AAU. After completing his Ph.D. in Performance Historiography at the University of Minnesota in 2018, he continued working with AAU as an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Center for African Studies, and College of Performing and Visual Arts. Additionally, he is a board member of AGITATE, a multi-genre online journal at the University of Minnesota. Currently, he holds the position of Assistant Professor of Performance Studies and Theory at The Africa Institute (GSU). Abebe uses academia, performance, and media as sites of cultural politics from which to interrogate representational practices. He engages with sedimented embodied historiographies in order to understand what it means to be human in the here and now. Currently, he is working on his book project, which studies the ways in which Ethiopian female performers maneuver and reinvent spaces of empires, revolutions, and neoliberal globalization.

Samuel Mark Anderson conducts multidisciplinary research on expressive culture and its encounters with politics, religion, and public health in West Africa and beyond. His ethnographic research in Sierra Leone focuses on how residents use diverse arts to pursue reconciliation, cultural reconstruction, and development projects in the wake of the country's 1991–2002 civil war and 2014–2016 Ebola epidemic. Anderson has written articles for *Africa*, *Cultural Anthropology*, and *Antipode*, and co-edited the volume *The Art of Emergency: Aesthetics and Aid in African Crises* (Oxford University Press, 2020). His work has been funded by the Social Science Research

Council, the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation, and the U.S. Fulbright Program. Currently a senior lecturer at NYU Abu Dhabi, he holds a Ph.D. in Culture and Performance from UCLA and served as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow for the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard.

Noemie Arazi studied archaeology at University College London. For her doctoral degree, she focused on the development of urbanism and the arrival of Islam in the Inland Niger Delta of Mali. Her practice usually combines archaeological data with the collection of oral histories and memories, as well as archival research. From 2009 to 2015, she directed Heritage Management Services (HMS), a university spin-off of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. HMS focused on cultural heritage impact assessments in the infrastructure and mining sector, which brought her to work in the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries in Central Africa. In 2016, she founded Groundworks, a non-profit organization that seeks to broaden reflection and activate access to cultural heritage and history. Groundworks received funding for archaeological and oral history investigations in Kasongo, one of the principal Swahili and Arab market towns in the eastern Congo. In 2021, together with Congoese photographer Georges Senga, she directed *Kasongo (Im)material*, a documentary that interweaves scenes from their archaeological investigations with archival material and contemporary recordings. She currently works at the Africa Museum in Tervuren (Belgium) as lead researcher on the project *Congo-Arab Heritage in Historical Narratives*.

Meg Arenberg is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at The Africa Institute (GSU), where she also teaches in the African Languages and Translation Program. She earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Indiana University Bloomington and has held postdoctoral positions at Rutgers University and Princeton University. Her research focuses on 20th- and 21st-century African literatures, with particular interests in Kiswahili poetics, intertextuality, and translation studies. Arenberg is currently working on her book project, *Disruptive Forms: Tanzanian Literature Beyond Nation*, and two literary translations from Kiswahili. In 2024, she was named one of the top ten recipients of the PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant.

Zaynab El Bernoussi is an Associate Professor of Political Science at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, specializing in dignity politics, international relations, and international political economy. She holds a Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences from the Catholic University of Louvain, an MPA from Columbia University, and a MiF from Instituto de Empresa. Prior to her current role, El Bernoussi was a Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University Abu Dhabi and held academic positions at Al Akhawayn University and Sciences Po Rabat. She has conducted research as a visiting scholar at Smith College and Harvard University. Active in international relations, she is the Vice-Chair of the Global South Caucus of the International Studies Association and a founding member of the Security in Context network. Her scholarly contributions have earned her Fulbright and Carnegie awards, and her work has been recognized with the Arab Prize for her article on

dignity politics. El Bernoussi's book, *Dignity in the Egyptian Revolution*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2021. Her research focuses on the politicization of dignity demands in the global South, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East.

Sarah Van Beurden (BA, University of Leuven [BE]; Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) is a Professor of History and African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University. She is the author of *Authentically African: Arts and the Transnational Politics of Congolese Culture* (2015) and co-editor of *The Planning Moment: Histories of (Post)Colonial Planning* (Fordham University Press, 2024) and *(Re)Making Collections: Origins, Trajectories, and Connections/La Fabrique des Collections: Origines, Trajectoires et Reconnexions* (Africa Museum, Tervuren, 2023). She has published on topics such as museum and collection histories, Congolese arts and crafts, colonial heritage, the history of Belgian colonialism, Congolese decolonization, and postcolonial cultural politics. In recent years, she has done public work around the legacies of colonialism by chairing the *Restitution Belgium* initiative (2019–2021), which developed a set of guidelines for the management and restitution of colonial collections in Belgium, and by serving as an expert for the Special Parliamentary Commission on Belgium's Colonial Past (2020–2022).

Anne Nabintu Birato is a Congolese researcher at the Group for Conflict and Human Security Studies (GEC-SH) and CERUKI/ISP-Bukavu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. She graduated from a pedagogical institute with a degree in the English department and spent a year teaching English at a secondary school in Kalemie, Tanganyika Province. As a new researcher, she is specializing in interethnic conflicts in schools and the reintegration of children associated with armed groups, particularly in conflict areas.

Grieve Chelwa is Chair of Department of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Political Economy at The Africa Institute (GSU). Previously, he was Director of Research at the Institute on Race, Power, and Political Economy at The New School and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, where he also directed the MBA Program. He has held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard University and Wits University. Chelwa's research, which focuses on political economy and African development, has appeared in leading journals such as the *Journal of Economic Literature* and *Social Science & Medicine*. He is also a prolific commentator on African economic issues, with contributions to *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *BBC*. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Thijs Costers is a Ph.D. candidate affiliated with the ERC FORAGENCY research project at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). His research focuses on the production, distribution, and consumption of intoxicating substances in Central Africa. Specifically, he explores how colonized people used these substances to escape colonial encroachment economically, psychologically, and socially. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in History

at VUB and spent one semester at Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg in Austria. During his studies at VUB, he also participated in the honors program *Talent voor Onderzoek*. In 2023, he completed his master's thesis on the gendered dynamics of alcohol consumption in early modern Bruges, drawing on testimonies from the Witnesses project at VUB.

Christopher P. Davey is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Binghamton University's Institute of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention. He was previously the Charles E. Scheidt Visiting Assistant Professor of Genocide Studies and Genocide Prevention at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He teaches *Genocide and Civil War in the African Great Lakes Region* and *Genocide Prevention and Conflict Transformation*. His research explores the connections between genocide in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, contemporary perspectives on genocide, from identity to diaspora mobilizations, and climate-related violence.

Michée Diansana is a member of the Congolines project, which studies drawing and painting practices in the Congo, under the coordination of the Africa Museum. As part of this project, he is pursuing a joint Ph.D. at the University of Kinshasa and Ghent University on the painter Albert Lubaki, under the supervision of Bambi Ceuppens. His other research areas include colonial urban dynamics and the study of urban violence since the colonial period.

Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann is an Associate Professor of Archaeology and Anthropology at The Africa Institute (GSU) and a critical heritage scholar with expertise in West African Islam, the transatlantic slave trade, and critical heritage studies. She holds degrees from Columbia and Stanford Universities and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University. Engmann currently leads two research projects: *Hidden Palimpsests*, on 19th-century Islamic talismans in Asante, and *Slavers in the Family*, an archaeological study of Christiansborg Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ghana. Engmann has received numerous interdisciplinary fellowships and serves on advisory boards for UNESCO's African World Heritage Sites, Brepols, and *100 Histories of 100 Worlds*. She has also led heritage projects across Africa, including work with UNESCO.

Eric Abanati Gbadi is a teaching assistant and researcher in International Relations at the University of Kisangani (DRC). His doctoral research focuses on "Governance of the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve and Analysis of Collaboration Strategies Between Actors." He also contributed to the "Erasing Refugees: DRC" project, organized by Clark University and GEC-SH.

Étienne Gontard is a graduate of Sciences Po Paris (Master's in Cultural Policy and Management) and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Master's in Environmental Studies). His master's thesis, supervised

by Christophe Bonneuil and Violette Pouillard, examined ivory extraction in Africa and its trade, transformation, and consumption in the United States, Belgium, Germany, and France from 1860 to 1918. He is currently a Ph.D. student at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, under the supervision of Benoît Henriët, as part of the *FORAGENCY* ERC project. His research explores the environmental history of foraging and resource abundance in Central Africa (1920–1960), focusing on case studies in Brazzaville, Kisangani, and Bujumbura. By examining non-agricultural practices and interactions with biodiversity, he aims to shed light on the interplay between colonial policies, local practices, and capitalist dynamics in shaping everyday life in the Congo Basin.

Salah M. Hassan is the Chancellor of Global Studies University (GSU), and Dean of The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah –roles he assumed following the establishment of GSU in 2023. He has served as Director of The Africa Institute since its founding in 2018. Additionally, Hassan holds the position of Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in Africana Studies, Director of the Institute for Comparative Modernities (ICM), and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture at Cornell University, USA. Hassan is an art critic, curator, editor, and co-founder of *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Duke University Press). He currently serves as a member of the editorial advisory board of *Atlantica*, *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. His recent publications include *Ahmed Morsi: A Dialogic Imagination* (2021) and *Ibrahim El Salahi: A Visionary Modernist* (2012). Notable exhibitions he has curated include *Gavin Jantjes: To Be Free! A Retrospective 1970–2023* (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2023; Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2024) and *Kamala Ibrahim Ishag: States of Oneness* (Serpentine South, London, 2023), among others. Hassan's work has been supported by prestigious grants and fellowships from the J. Paul Getty Foundation, Sharjah Art Foundation, and other institutions. He was honored as the 2021 Distinguished Professor by the College Art Association (CAA), the oldest and largest scholarly organization dedicated to the history and criticism of the visual arts.

Aminadab Havyarimana has been an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Burundi in the Department of Socio-Anthropology within the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences since 2016. After earning his Master's degree in Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven) in 2019, he began his doctoral training at the University of Burundi in 2022, focusing on traditional Burundian medicine. Following a research visit to the Institute of Traditional Medicine at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), his current research on entrepreneurship in traditional Burundian medicine lies at the intersection of the anthropology of health and the anthropology of development. A certified trainer in Climate Change Resilience Management (MCR), he teaches courses in Development Anthropology, Environmental Anthropology, Tourism and Heritage Anthropology, and Entrepreneurship. His non-academic publications include two novels: *Haruna, un garçon*

comme les autres (2011) and *Les Fratries cassées* (2015), as well as *Les sagesse paysannes du Burundi* (2022). His essay, "Pour un vivre-ensemble harmonieux dans la région des Grands Lacs africains," is featured in *Les plumes semeuses de paix* (2023).

Benoît Henriët is an Associate Professor of History at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant *FORAGENCY: Foraging, Colonialism, and More-than-Human Agency in Central Africa*.

Emery Kalema is an Assistant Professor of History at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah, holding a Ph.D. from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He has served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institut de Sociologie at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the South African Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Kalema was also a Summer Program in Social Science Fellow at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study and received the inaugural CSAAD Research Fellowship at New York University. In 2021, he won the Central African Studies Association (CASA) Essay Prize for Best Published Article by a Junior Scholar. Kalema's research centers on power, politics, memory, and trauma. He is currently working on a book project titled *Violence and Memory: The Mulele 'Rebellion' in Postcolonial Congo*, which investigates the suffering caused by the Mulele Rebellion (1963–1968) and its lasting effects on survivors' memories, exploring the complex relationships between embodied suffering and psychological trauma.

Wandile Kasibe earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2020, with his thesis titled *Museums and the Construction of Race Ideologies in South Africa*. During his time at UCT, Kasibe actively participated in the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) and Fees Must Fall (FMF) movements, which sought to challenge colonial symbolism and institutionalized racism. A Chevening scholar, Kasibe holds a B.Tech. in Fine Art from Border Technikon (now Walter Sisulu University), a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art from UCT, an MFA from UCT, and an MA in World Heritage from the International Training Centre/ILO, University of Turin, Italy. Additionally, he completed a Master's in Museum Studies with distinction at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, United Kingdom. Kasibe has contributed to various publications and served on numerous boards, including the National Arts Council of South Africa (NAC) and the University of Cape Town (UCT), among others. He has traveled extensively across Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. A critical and decolonial thinker, Kasibe works at the intersection of heritage, museology, fine art, sociology, photography, politics, and curatorial practices.

Duan Kissonde graduated in History from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in 2023 and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in History at the same institution. He works as a guest researcher on the project *Ambassadors of the Kongo between Lisbon, Madrid, and Rome*, coordinated by Professor José Rivair Macedo, which is part of collaborative research

initiatives in Brazil and France. Kissonde is also a member of the *Dimensions of Bantu-Kongo Culture* study group, led by Professors José Rivair Macedo and Felipe Merker Castellani, and is involved with the *Ibakivi* (Bantu Kimpa Vita Research Institute) at the Candomblé Munanzo Kongo dya Mayala Mavuemba Nkôsi Biolê in Rio de Janeiro.

Brecht Kreynen holds a Master's degree in History from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), where his thesis focused on the wartime recognition of Belgian colonial veterans of the First World War between 1917 and 1951, exploring interactions between the metropole and the colony regarding wartime recognition, such as pensions and the gilding of regimental flags, and examining the theme of dual identities. A key finding was that the Ministry of Defense denied compensation based on the perceived "otherness" of the colonial front, for which Kreynen was awarded the R. de Bock-Doehaerd Prize for the best master's thesis with a historical focus. From September to December 2023, he contributed to a research project at VUB's Center for Academic and Freethinking Archives (CAVA), studying the connection between freethought and academic resistance during the Second World War, compiling a list of Flemish-speaking ULB professors involved in resistance activities and writing a biographical article on Frans Lenaerts. Since January 2024, Kreynen has been a doctoral student on the Rebel Soldier project, focusing on the agency of Force Publique soldiers and their repression in colonial Congo between 1885 and 1960, with his current research centering on the roles of military justice in institutional belonging, military identities, and narratives of militarized colonial violence.

Amandine Lauro is a Research Associate with the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS) at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), where she also teaches courses on African history, colonial history, and gender studies at both the BA and MA levels. Her research focuses on the intersections of gender, race, and security in colonial Africa, with a particular emphasis on the Belgian Congo. She has published a book and several contributions on these issues.

Frédéric Le Marcis is a Professor of Social Anthropology at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) de Lyon. He is currently affiliated with the Unité Mixte Internationale (UMI) 233 TransVIHMI—a collaborative unit involving the University of Montpellier, the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), and the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM)—and is assigned to the Centre de Recherche et de Formation en Infectiologie de Guinée (CERFIG) in the Republic of Guinea. His research primarily focuses on the logics and experiences of confinement, as well as global health issues, including epidemics and preparedness.

Faustin Linyekula is a dancer, choreographer, and storyteller who uses theater, dance, writing, and visual art to convey his narratives. Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, he returned in 2001 after living abroad in

Kenya, Europe, and the Indian Ocean, where he founded Studios Kabako, a creative hub for artists offering long-term support across disciplines like dance, theater, and music. Beyond artistic production, Studios Kabako is also dedicated to community projects, including water purification and computer literacy initiatives. Linyekula's work has been showcased at prestigious venues like MoMA, the Metropolitan Museum, Tate Modern, and the Sharjah Biennial, and he has received numerous honors, including the 2007 Principal Award from the Prince Claus Fund and the 2019 Tällberg/Eliasson Global Leadership Prize. He is currently an Associate Artist at Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris and a Visiting Assistant Professor of Practice and Artist in Residence at New York University Abu Dhabi.

Margot Luyckfasseel is a Junior Research Professor in Modern African History at the University of Antwerp. She holds a Ph.D. in African Studies from Ghent University. She specializes in Congolese history from below (late 19th century to the present), with a thematic focus on urban-rural relations, language ideologies, and debates on "authenticity." Additionally, she is developing an interest in socio-economic themes such as slavery, labor, and trade.

José Rivair Macedo is a Full Professor in the Department of History at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil, specializing in African and Afro-Brazilian studies. Since 1995, he has been a researcher at the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, CNPq). His research focuses on African historiography and the history of African societies prior to the 19th century—specifically the peoples of the Mali Empire (13th-15th centuries), the peoples of Upper Guinea (16th-17th centuries), and the Bakongo people (15th-17th centuries). From 2018 to 2020, in collaboration with Thuila Farias Ferreira, he developed the website *Biografias de Mulheres Africanas* (Biographies of African Women). His current research explores the political relationships between the kings of Kongo and the Roman papacy, as part of the project *Os Embaixadores do Kongo entre Lisboa, Madrid e Roma: Séculos XVI-XVII* (The Ambassadors of Kongo between Lisbon, Madrid, and Rome: 16th-17th Centuries) (2023-2026). He is the author of several works, including *História da África* (History of Africa) (2014); *O Pensamento Africano no Século XX* (African Thought in the 20th Century) (2016); *Antigas Sociedades da África Negra* (Ancient Societies of Black Africa) (2020); *Dicionário de História da África: Séculos VII-XVI* (Dictionary of African History: 7th-16th Centuries) (2017); and *Dicionário de História da África* (Dictionary of African History: 16th-19th Centuries) (2021).

Nelson Makengo A director, cinematographer, and producer, Nelson Makengo lives and works in Kinshasa. His fifth film, *Nuit Debout* (2019), was named Best Short Documentary at the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival and was screened at more than one hundred festivals around the world. *Tongo Saa* (Rising Up at Night), which had its

premiere in the Panorama section of the Berlin International Film Festival, is his first feature-length documentary.

Nsah Mala (born Kenneth Nsah) is an award-winning poet, writer, international consultant, foresight practitioner and futurist, and multidisciplinary scholar working across the fields of arts, literature and cultural studies; environmental humanities; sustainability science; and foresight and futures thinking. He is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher and Coordinator for the University of Cologne's Hub of the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition, a hub with a thematic focus on Planetary Wellbeing. Winner of the 2022 Prize for Francophone Theses in Foresight and Futures from Fondation 2100 and Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Nsah is also a 2023 Next Generation Foresight Practitioner Fellow (Judges' Choice) at the School of International Futures (SOIF). He has published widely in creative writing and academic research and has received funding from the British Academy, SOIF, and other organizations. His co-edited volume, *Ecotexts in the Postcolonial Francosphere*, is forthcoming from Liverpool University Press.

Don Bosco Mbawmbaw holds a Ph.D. in International Security from Anahuac University Mexico, awarded in February 2023. His doctoral thesis is titled *Tribalisme politique et démocratie: Étude basée sur la théorie de sécurité des régimes pendant la période électorale de 2018 en RDC* (Political Tribalism and Democracy: A Study Based on Regime Security Theory during the 2018 Electoral Period in the DRC). He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Program for Asian and African Studies at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (PUEAA/UNAM), where he focuses on the nation-state and contemporary political systems in Africa.

Thomas F. McDow is an Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University. He is the author of *Buying Time: Debt and Mobility in the Western Indian Ocean* (Ohio University Press, 2018) and co-author of *A Primer for Teaching Indian Ocean World History: Ten Design Principles* with Edward Alpers (Duke University Press, 2024). He co-created and co-teaches (with a virologist) an innovative course on the science and history of HIV/AIDS. McDow's public-facing history work includes "A Century of HIV" and "Searching for Wakanda: The African Roots of the Black Panther Story" (both in *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*).

Pedro Monaville teaches African history at McGill University in Montreal. His work focuses on the modern history of the Congo and explores themes such as the history of ideas, leftist politics, and popular culture. He is the author of *Students of the World: Global 1968 and Decolonization in the Congo* (Duke University Press, 2022).

Sabrina Moura is a curator, researcher, and writer who currently serves as the Research and Development Manager at the Louvre Abu Dhabi. In this role, she leads initiatives that bridge research and public programming,

contributing to the museum's mission of fostering cultural dialogue. Moura has organized projects for renowned institutions, including the Goethe Institut, Videobrasil, the World Biennial Forum, and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC). Her curatorial achievements include the 2024 exhibition *Travelling Back: Reframing a Munich Expedition to Brazil in the 19th Century*, presented at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich. Moura holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Campinas, Brazil, an MA in History and Aesthetics from the University Paris VIII, and a Master's degree in Management and Conduct of Cultural Projects from the University Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle. She is also an Affiliated Professor in the Arts Department at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), Brazil. Her work is supported by prestigious organizations such as the Getty Foundation and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and her writings have been featured in leading publications such as *Mousse Magazine* and *African Art*.

Faisal Garba Muhammed is an Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration, and Mobility at The Africa Institute (GSU), Sharjah. He holds degrees from several universities, including Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Universities of Ghana, Cape Town, and Freiburg. Throughout his career, he has been awarded fellowships at esteemed institutions such as the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape and the Merian Institute for Advanced Study in Africa at the University of Ghana. He has conducted extensive fieldwork across Germany, Ghana, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and the United States and currently serves as a Research Associate at the University of Freiburg's Institut für Soziologie. Garba Muhammed's research focuses on migration and mobility, inequality, social theory, and social movements. He actively publishes articles in both academic and popular outlets, contributing to the discourse on working-class forms of organizing and knowledge production.

Sung-Joon Park is an anthropologist specializing in medical anthropology and science and technology studies (STS), with a regional focus on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His work centers on the anthropological study of Ebola epidemics, exploring themes of mobility, trust, and genomics to enhance our understanding of the ecology of Ebola viruses.

Katrien Pype a social and cultural anthropologist, is an associate professor at Katholieke Universiteit (KU) Leuven. She has been studying Kinshasa's popular culture and media landscape since 2003 and is currently researching the digitalization of Kinois society. Her publications include the monograph *The Making of the Pentecostal Melodrama: Religion, Media, and Gender in Kinshasa* (Berghahn Books, 2012) and the edited volume *Cryptopolitics: Concealment, Exposure, and Digital Media* (Berghahn Books, 2023, co-edited with Victoria Bernal and Daivi Rodima-Taylor). She leads doctoral and postdoctoral research projects on climate urgency and green science and co-founded the Congo Research Network in 2009.

Marco Reyes is a political scientist at the Autonomous Metropolitan University–Iztapalapa Campus (UAM-I). He holds a master's and a Ph.D. in Asia and Africa Studies from the Asia and Africa Studies Center at El Colegio de México (COLMEX) and completed a postgraduate specialization in Decolonial Thinking and Border Epistemologies at the Afro-Oriental Studies Center of the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil). Since 2009, he has been a full-time research lecturer at the Mexico City Autonomous University (UACM), and in 2021, he became a visiting professor in the Department of Philosophy at UAM-I. He has also lectured at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where he coordinated the first module of the African Studies Diploma Program. A member of the Mexican Council of International Affairs (COMEXI), his recent publication, "Pandemics, Demographic Sweeping, and Space Segregation in Angola The Mirages of the Oasis," appears in *The Covid-19, Its Impact on Business and Civil Society: Some Experiences from the South* (Colima: University of Colima).

Almudena Mari Saez is an anthropologist who studies the socio-cultural and ecological factors that facilitate the emergence of diseases, specifically focusing on human-animal-environment interactions, as well as the investigation of epidemics and the logics of responses to them. She has conducted these investigations within multidisciplinary consortia, where she has developed both theoretical and methodological approaches specific to anthropology, while also contributing to broader discussions with other disciplines. She recently obtained a Junior Professorship Chair to conduct interdisciplinary research on the conditions of disease emergence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Diana Salakheddin is a multidisciplinary researcher with a background in art history and social and cultural anthropology. She is currently working on a project focused on painting and drawing in the Belgian Congo at the Africa Museum and writing a Ph.D. dissertation at Ghent University (Belgium).

Emilia Sana MD, MPH, works at the Centre des Opérations d'Urgence de Santé Publique at the Ministry of Health in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. She has extensive experience in epidemiology and a successful career in the health sector.

Rosa C. R. Vieira is a Professor at the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at the University of São Paulo. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship as a visiting researcher at the Centre Maurice Halbwachs of the École Normale Supérieure and earned her doctorate in Social Anthropology from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. She directed the ethnographic short film *Mutsoóngo Malaávu* (The Palm-Wine Tapster), which was selected for various festivals, including the Smithsonian Mother Tongue Film Festival and the Jean Rouch International Festival. The film won the Best Film award at the Pará International Ethnographic Film Festival and the Cine-Plural Festival.

Additionally, she curated the exhibition *Other Ships: An Afro-Atlantic Collection*, which opened in July 2024 at the Centro Cultural SESI in São Paulo, Brazil.

Jules Villa is a historian of science currently serving as a postdoctoral researcher at the Institut Pasteur, where he is working on a book about the African history of mpox. He defended his Ph.D. thesis in 2024 at Sciences Po, titled "*On the Trail of Ebola: Investigating the Origins of the Virus in Northeastern DRC*," based on a 14-month ethnography under the supervision of Guillaume Lachenal.

Alice Vittoria is a social and environmental anthropologist. She recently completed her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology at University College London. Her doctoral thesis is the result of sixteen cumulative months of fieldwork conducted among Bayaka foragers in the Likouala department of the Republic of Congo. In an effort to reconceptualize the dialectic between movement and space, her thesis examines Bayaka entanglements with forest landscapes at multiple scales by looking at Bayaka dwellings and mobilities, foraging strategies, and relations with significant non-human others, specifically ancestral and forest spirits. Her research interests include post-colonial forest management and socio-ecological change, mobility, sedentarization, and land rights, as well as more-than-human agency and multi-species ethnography. She is currently holding a postdoctoral position in the *FORAGENCY* project at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), researching the impacts of colonialism on local communities' relationships with the environment in Central Africa.

Rosette Sifa Vuninga is a National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences Postdoctoral Fellow in the Historical Studies Department at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She is also a 2024 Individual Research Fellow of the Social Science Research Council's African Peacebuilding Network. Her book project, based on her doctoral dissertation, focuses on how ethnic and regional identities are experienced among migrants, particularly Congolese people in Cape Town. Vuninga's research is in the field of migration and explores issues related to the transborder politics of identity and belonging, as well as gender politics within migrant networks. Her research interests also include urban networks of violence and economies of insecurity.

Daniela Waldburger is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of African Studies at the University of Vienna, an associate lecturer at the University of Graz (Austria), and has also taught at the Centre Universitaire de Formation et de Recherche de Mayotte. Her latest book combines anthropological linguistics, social biographies, and history to investigate the nostalgia of former mineworkers in Lubumbashi (DR Congo). She developed the "shared-authority approach" to rethink African studies. Other research interests include sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and issues of language and power (mis)use, language and violence, as well as research methods,

Swahili language and literature, Swahili varieties, and transnational multilingual language use. In her dissertation (2012) on Comorians in the diaspora (Marseille), she focused extensively on multilingualism.

Kennedy Muhindo Wema is a Ph.D. student at BNITM. His thesis is titled “The Determinants of the Choice of Subjects to Be Covered in a Media Editorial: The Specific Case of Beni Radios – From Endemic War to the Ebola Epidemic.” He conducted fieldwork in Beni, Butembo, and Likati, engaging with literature on social anthropology, Ebola outbreaks, mobility/motility, and global health preparedness and response.

John Thabiti Willis is an Associate Professor of African History at The Africa Institute (GSU) in Sharjah. He holds a Ph.D. in History from Emory University. He also serves as an Associate Professor of African History at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, USA. Willis previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies and as the Director of Africana Studies at Carleton College from 2019 to 2022. He was a Carleton College Mellon New Directions Fellow from 2020 to 2023. His research focuses on the history and politics of masquerade performances among the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria, explored in his book *Masquerading Politics: Kinship, Gender, and Ethnicity in a Yoruba Town, Otta, 1774-1928* (2018). This work received recognition as a finalist for the African Studies Association’s Best Book Prize and won the Yoruba Studies Book Prize (2020). He is currently investigating Africa’s contributions to pearling in the Gulf through oral histories and geographic information systems.

The **Congo Research Network** (CRN), founded in October 2010 by Dr. Katrien Pype, Reuben Loffman, Dr. Miles Larmer, and Aldwin Roes, is a global community of scholars dedicated to the study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Originally initiated through Dr. Pype’s Newton International Fellowship at the University of Birmingham, the network aims to foster interdisciplinary collaboration across the humanities. CRN brings together researchers working on various aspects of Congolese culture, providing a platform for the exchange of ideas, promoting partnerships between Western and Congolese scholars, and serving as a valuable resource for media practitioners seeking expertise on Congo-related issues. Through conferences, workshops, and research publications, CRN contributes to advancing scholarship on the DRC while reinforcing academic and cultural connections both locally and globally. Visit <https://congoreseachnetwork.com/www.congoreseachnetwork.com> for more information.

About Us

About The Africa Institute, Global Studies University (GSU), Sharjah

Based in Sharjah, UAE, **The Africa Institute** is a non-profit higher education academic entity dedicated to advancing the study, research, and documentation of Africa and its diaspora, focusing on the humanities and social sciences. It operates as a center of research and documentation, and a postgraduate studies institution, offering master's and Ph.D. programs and certificates in African Languages and Translation. **The Africa Institute** aims to be a center of excellence to train a new generation of critical thinkers in African and African diaspora studies. In 2023, **The Africa Institute** became part of the newly established Global Studies University (GSU), integrated into its network of semi-independent and interdisciplinary institutes, with each focusing on different regions worldwide. These institutes emphasize postgraduate studies, research, and documentation of various global regions' histories, cultures, and peoples. Additionally, preparations are underway to launch other institutes focusing on Asia, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas in the coming years. Led by Hoor Al Qasimi, President of Global Studies University, and Salah M. Hassan, Chancellor of Global Studies University and Dean of **The Africa Institute**. For more information, visit theafricainstitute.org.

Our Campus

Situated in Al Manakh, the Khalid bin Mohammed School (KBMS) was established in the mid-1970s as a boys school, forming part of a series of nearly identical schools constructed across the UAE. Its distinctive soft orange colored design has been replicated 28 times across Sharjah City and the three port-towns of Dibba Al-Hosn, Khor Fakkan, and Kalba, making it the most widely used school typology in the region. The school model, which emerged as the first primary and secondary school typology after the UAE's union, boasts a modular precast structure designed with shaded external circulation and passively ventilated classrooms. Its eye-catching features encompass repetitive flat vaulted bays, tall arcs with long corridors, and covered walkways encircling courtyard spaces, granting the schools an

iconic and unmistakable presence that enhances neighborhoods across the country. These architectural wonders were designed by the architecture studio, Khatib & Alami, under the patronage of the Ministry of Education.

Over time, the doors of Khalid bin Mohammed School eventually closed, but its story did not end there. Recognizing the potential of this historical structure, the Sharjah Art Foundation acquired it from the government and architect, Mona El Mousfy, led the renovation, not only preserving Sharjah's modern heritage but also showcasing a brilliant example of adaptive reuse, breathing new life into the existing framework.

Today, the once-abandoned school has metamorphosed into the vibrant nucleus of **The Africa Institute (GSU)**—an interdisciplinary academic research institution dedicated to the study, research, and documentation of Africa and the African diaspora. Within its walls, one can find an auditorium, workshop spaces, modular classrooms, a library, and a bookshop, all catering to the Institute's mission of fostering knowledge and engaging with the broader community of Sharjah, the UAE, and beyond.

Africa Hall

The original **Africa Hall** building was inaugurated on the same day as the Municipality's building in 1976, however, the original buildings of both were first built in the early 1970s as part of a wave of modernist government buildings. The building was inaugurated as "**Africa Hall**," and its first cultural and political event was the Arab African Symposium. The new Africa Hall, which was rebuilt on the site of the original building - demolished in 2015 is part of the future complex of buildings for **The Africa Institute**.

Africa Hall serves as a knowledge center and platform for conferences, symposia, lectures, film screenings, and staged plays related to the university's outreach activities to the larger community of Sharjah, UAE, and beyond.