

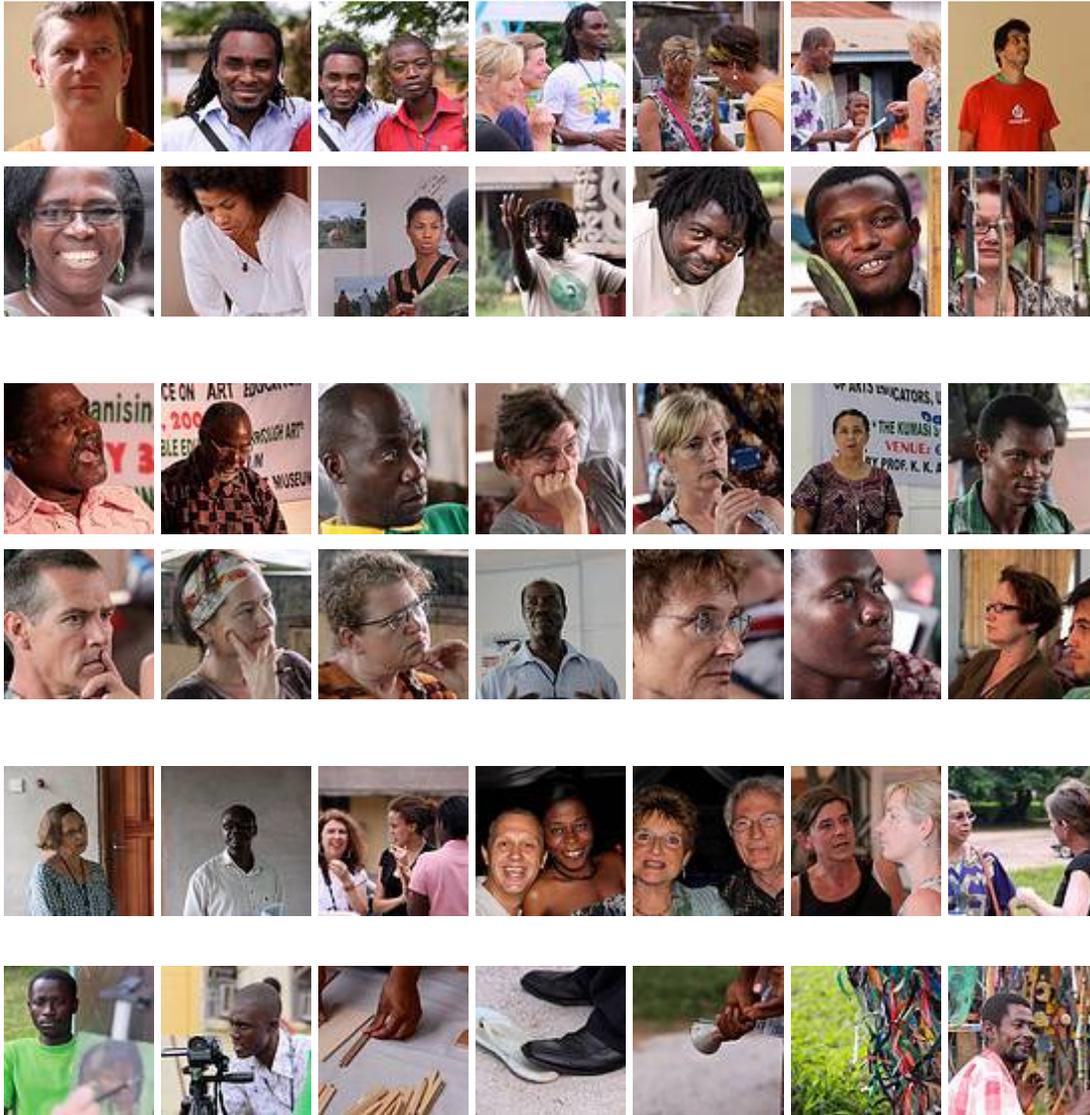


2009 Kumasi Symposium Report

THE KUMASI SYMPOSIUM:

Tapping Local Resources for Sustainable Education through Art

Department of General Art Studies, College of Arts and Social Sciences,
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana
July 31-August 14, 2009



Snap shorts from the Symposium



2009 Kumasi Symposium Report

Report by Barthosa Nkurumeh, AfriCOAE General Secretary and Project Director

The 2009 Kumasi Symposium is a first in a series of planned symposiums that encourage collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to art and community interactions. The next one is planned for 2011. Here is the report with some images of the art installations from the participating artists. These installations were in an open public space accessible to the general public.

The symposium was organized as collaboration between African Community of Arts Educators (AfriCOAE) and KNUST's Department of General Art Studies to stimulate transnational dialogues that focused on tapping local resources for sustainable education through art interventions. The topics ranged from art education and studio practice to art criticism, arts advocacy and marketing practices as solutions to problems. The event was a two-year project; the first was held in summer 2008 at Aba House in Nungua, an Accra suburb. The following year, participants were to reconvene to share results from implementation of some of the practices.

Roughly 200 scholars, educators, curators, and artists participated in the 2009 symposium, with 50 regular attendees. Presenters came from Uganda, Ireland, Austria, Australia, Netherlands, Hungary, Finland, Germany, Canada, China, Nigeria, Cameroon, and USA. Of course, many arts practitioners and scholars from Ghana including Professor Ablade Glover, the traditional ruler of Maabang, and Fulbright Scholar Dr. Kwaku Ofori-Ansa presented papers. The workshops, demonstrations, local immersion and projects culminated in a two-day art exhibition at the University Museum with Professor Kojo Fosu as the Keynote Speaker.

Many recurrent standpoints were discernible: (1) Art is a national resource; art education can help. (2) Issue of localization of practice was also recurrent. Moving forward implies that art education programs in schools in Africa need to take in all of the best practices indigenous to the learners to create synergies for autonomous and sustainable growth. (3) In advocating for the arts in contemporary African setting such as in this symposium, take into consideration that fine arts and craft are even now viewed the same by the general public.

My overall assessment is that the symposium was a success in many ways in that Mali is planning to hold a similar event in summer of 2010. Nana A. Opoku-Asare, one of the key organizers on a post-conference e-mail reminisces, "The exhibition opened my eyes to the many facets of art that we have not thought of and teach...the symposium has ended but sharing of ideas and work has just begun." Perhaps, it is too early to duly assess the outcomes because as noted, some participants have continued to implement the results from the two-week engagement.



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CURIO KIOSKS PROJECT

Curatorial Statement



The Kumasi Curio Kiosks Project took place as a part of The Kumasi Symposium around the Peace Pole Monument at KNUST in Ghana. It lasted from July 31-August 14, 2009. The curator believes one means of Tapping Local Resources for Sustainable Education Through Art is by bringing together art specialists from diverse parts of the world in a transnational platform to trade in cultural capital. In the project, each participant created a Curio Kiosk of 6 x 6ft for a temporary exhibition of ideas and works to engage the local population in the artistic process. We used the term "curio kiosks" in anticipation that the outward design or content would invoke curiosity and bear special attraction to the public. The overall attempt was to bring contemporary art to the general public who might not normally come to art galleries and museums.

In other words, the "curio kiosks" interventions provided opportunities for artists and passersby to interact freely and to share ideas specific to the artworks or concerns within their communities.



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-Barthosa Nkurumeh, project curator, Sunday Aug 9, 2009

Bello Benischauer living in Fremantle, Western Australia was commissioned to produce a video documentation of the symposium. Here are links to some of his documentation of all of the projects happening during the two weeks:

(1) http://www.openfilm.com/videos/curio_kiosks_project/, this is a 05:56 minute video on Curio Kiosks Project.

(2) The Slide Show on Benischauer's web site: <http://www.artinprocess.com/KUMASI>

(3) Photo Documentary, 500 photos on Flickr's:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/artinprocess/sets/72157621992680241/>

(4) Check it out our hand made exhibition catalog here: <http://www.artinprocess.com/Kiosks> or <http://www.wandsbektransformance.de/news.html> to download the Artists' Catalogue.

(5) <http://www.artinprocess.com/canyouSEEsound> (a review by Elisabeth m Eitelberger)



A series of artist interventions for the Kumasi Symposium: foreground *Water Spot* constructed by Anna Macleod, Ireland; middle ground is *White Kiosk* by Zohra Opoku, Germany/Ghana and background is *Slipper Kiosk Project* by Patrick Tagoe-Turkson



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Water Spot constructed by Anna Macleod, Ireland



White Kiosk by Zohra Opoku, Germany/Ghana



Slipper Kiosk Project by Patrick Tagoe-Turkson, Ghana



Portrait Shop by Brigitte Mulders, The Netherlands (portrait painter)



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The Nearby Village was another curio kiosk constructed by Patrick Cheo, Cameroon



Re-Painting the Red: VODAFONE INTERVENTION, by Charlie Michaels, Rex Akinruntan, Kwadwo Asare Apori, and Ralitsa Diana Debrah

This project was included in an exhibition, *Kumasi Crossroads: Global Kiosk Affairs*, at the KNUST's University Museum that brought the symposium to closure.



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See Also:

(1) <http://afropoets.tripod.com/eta> for addition information

(2) Symposium Reviews at Open Door Contemporary Art Projects <http://www.odcap.com> and <http://www.odcap.com/galleries.php>

(3) <http://www.ycissh.com/ShanghaiPD/Pages/school/SpecialEvent.aspx?docID=39&MenuID=29&style=Menu&EventID=46883> (Symposium report by YCIS Shanghai teacher, Daun Yorke)

(4) http://www.wandsbektransformance.de/PDF_WT/KumasiCrossroadsArtistsCatalogue.pdf (Kumasi Crossroads Artists' Catalogue high resolution download version, pdf 16 MB) or http://www.wandsbektransformance.de/PDF_WT/KumasiCrossroadsArtistsCatalogue_.pdf (low resolution browser version for quick viewing, 1.8 MB). More information is on project afrika-hamburg.de (<http://www.afrika-hamburg.de>) that is about postcolonial remembrance cultures and the colonial in the present. Afrika-hamburg.de was invited to the symposium; the group's focus was on the discussion about chances and forms of transcultural and transcontinental cultures of remembrance.

(5) <http://charliemichaels.wordpress.com/2009/10/27/re-painting-the-red-a-project-in-kumasi> (Charlie Michaels's Blog on his project visit)

(6) <http://zohraopoku.blogspot.com/> (Zohra Opoku's Blog on her project visit)

(7) <http://www.theghanaijournal.com/2009/08/06/international-confab-on-art-education-opens-in-kumasi/> (Review in The Ghanaian Journal)

(8) http://www.brigitemulders.nl/site/index/13412441_Ghana-2009.html (Brigitte Mulders's on her project visit)

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