

CHANGING ROOM (BERLIN) PRESENTS

# TERRITORIES UNDER MY SKIN / RE-VISITED



Tuli Mekondjo and Steffen List, *Kátunga ka Nangobe (God of Nangobe)* (still), 2020.  
Video installation, performance.

Changing Room is pleased to feature **TERRITORIES UNDER MY SKIN / RE-VISITED** at The Goethe Institute in Windhoek. It is the second installment of the program that was first hosted in September at the landmark movie theatre City Kino Wedding and Changing Room's space in the historical neighbourhood of Wedding in Berlin, known for its vibrant artist community, but also for its strong associations with German colonial history.

For this special feature, the artist/curators **CASPAR STRACKE** and **JARO STAUB**—in collaboration with the artist and writer **NICOLA BRANDT**—present eight works ranging from shorts, live art performances to documentary-fictions. The various perspectives and regions in which the artists and filmmakers have set their work underscore the transnational entanglements — both historically and in the present day — between Namibia and Germany.

The program runs for approximately 90 minutes and will be followed by a discussion with **HILDEGARD TITUS, JOEL HAIKALI, TULI MEKONDJO** and **STEFFEN LIST**, as well as **LAURA HORELLI, MUSQUIQUI CHIHying, GREGOR KASPER** and **JARO STRAUB** on Zoom.

The discussion will be moderated by **NICOLA BRANDT** (Zoom), **CASPAR STRACKE**, and **HILDEGARD TITUS**.

STIFTUNGKUNSTFONDS

## FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21ST, 7:30—10 PM

AT THE GOETHE INSTITUTE

5 FIDEL CASTRO ST, WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

A FILM PROGRAMME ORGANIZED BY CASPAR STRACKE (GERMANY)  
AND JARO STRAUB (GERMANY) IN COLLABORATION WITH NICOLA BRANDT (NAMIBIA)  
FOR CHANGING ROOM, BERLIN

MUSQUIQUI CHIHYING & GREGOR KASPER (W/D)

JOEL HAIKALI (NAM)

NICOLA BRANDT (NAM)

LAURA HORELLI (D/FI)

TULI MEKONDJO (NAM)

HILDEGARD TITUS (NAM)

CASPAR STRACKE (D)

Changing Room's name is in part inspired by the founders' philosophy to foster a decolonial public awareness in the city of Berlin. For example, the space is located on Lüderitzstrasse (Lüderitz Street) with its strong ties to Germany's problematic colonial past. For a long period, these painful associations were covered up by collective amnesia. In the post-war period, while Germany was trying to come to terms with its dark National Socialist past and the East-West divisions, it largely overlooked how this devastating period in the country's history intersects with its colonial legacies.

Often referred to problematically as 'The African Quarter,' the urban district in Berlin became a geographical starting point to expand on these post-colonial circles of inquiries. For example, Musquiqui Chihying from Taiwan and Gregor Kasper from Germany explore past and present-day aspects of German colonial-ism at the site of the nearby community garden. What begins on Lüderitz Street in Berlin eventually brings us to Lüderitz, Namibia or !Nami#Nus/.

Socialist ties between SWAPO and the GDR revive a forgotten political relationship in Finnish artist Laura Horelli's work. Caspar Stracke examines the notion of 'home' in the context of remnants of colonialist architecture in Swakopmund and Lüderitz.

These perspectives are entwined with diverse accounts by contemporary artists and filmmakers from Namibia who reflect on postcolonial and post-apartheid realities and identities in today's Namibia. Nicola Brandt foregrounds involuntary memory triggered by place and the way that unresolved traumas of colonial violence and denial break out in ordinary engagements.

Hildegard Titus documents the voices of young Namibians of various backgrounds and their relationship to their heritage and identity. Tuli Mekondjo juxtaposes gestures, objects, and rituals of indigenous belief systems with their colonial counter-parts. Finally, Joel Haikali imagines a journey taken by two individuals traveling through the vast Namibian landscape so as to reflect on an interior state, which Haikali refers to as 'psychological landscapes of uncertainty.

**CAFÉ TOGO**  
**MUSQUIQUI CHIH Ying AND GREGOR KASPER**  
**(D) | 2018 | 27 MIN**

Café Togo looks at the efforts to change street names with colonial connotations in the so-called Afrikanisches Viertel (African Quarter) in Berlin-Wedding. According to Berlin's street law, every street named after a person honours that person. Petersallee, Lüderitzstraße, and Nachtigalplatz bear the names of persons whose biographies are tainted by the blood of the victims of German colonialism. According to the law, streets that do not correspond to today's understanding of democracy and human rights should be renamed.

Café Togo follows the visions of the Black activist Abdel Amine Mohammed, who is working for a paradigm shift in the politics of state symbols—away from honouring colonial criminals, toward commemorating the victims and the resistance and freedom fighters who challenged the German colonial regime. His goal: a multidimensional politics of memory within postcolonial perspectives. Abdel Amine Mohammed's story "With Colonial Love" references NS propaganda and the film Carl Peters (1941); it narrates the founding of German East Africa and forms the basis for Café Togo.

**NAMIBIA TODAY**  
**LAURA HORELLI (D/FI) | 2018 | 21 MIN**

Seven people wait in an underground station below Karl-Marx-Allee in former East Berlin. Billboards line the walls, each combining a front page of "Namibia Today" with associative material. "Namibia Today" was a journal of the Namibian liberation movement, which was printed and distributed by the GDR during times of military confrontation with South Africa. SWAPO's (South West Africa People's Organisation) editorial board was forced to operate from exile in Angola, and without the ideologically motivated help of the GDR the mass production of the periodical (1980—1985) would not have been possible. Rushing underground trains pick up the slow-moving shot between the billboards and the protagonists, between fragments of image and speech. The participants with their memories and diverse ways of storytelling standstill in the movement.

**GRÜSSE AUS KRAMERSDORF** (work-in-progress)  
**CASPAR STRACKE (D) | 2021 | 9 MIN**

Caspar Stracke examines the notion of home in the context of remnants of colonialist architecture in Swakopmund and Lüderitz. What does it mean to make one's home in a place and within walls that carry a contested past, to live in a house that should never have been built here? "... A bird born from me who builds a nest in my ruins. Before me, and in the rubble of the enchanting world around me." (M.D.)

**INDIFFERENCE**  
**NICOLA BRANDT (NAM) | 2014 | 14 MIN**

*Indifference* foregrounds involuntary memory and the way that unresolved traumas of colonial violence and denial break out in ordinary engagements. The multi-screen video work explores such moments in the lives of two women through fragments of their everyday experiences. The women reside in the small coastal town Swakopmund in Namibia. A Herero woman makes her living from tourists taking photos of her in traditional dress. On her way to work, she walks past Ovaherero, Nama and San/Bushmen mass graves.

A German-Namibian woman in her nineties tries to maintain her illusions about the Second World War and the events leading up to it; she recalls a romantic encounter in the cemetery near her home, adjacent to the unmarked graves. The stories are accompanied by large-scale triptychs of the Namibian desert coastline and its hinterland. Among these deceitfully beautiful, derelict landscapes are places of historical violence. The sites are largely unmarked, and their identity has been preserved primarily through personal memories and oral histories. *Indifference* shows the extent to which the guilt of those who have inherited the German colonial legacy has not been adequately addressed.

**INVISIBLES (KAUNAPAWA)**  
**JOEL HAIKALI (NAM) | 2019 | 16 MIN**

Two individuals run into each other at a low point in their lives and go on a journey of self-love and freedom. Traveling through the majestic Namibian outback, landscapes of the psyche of a post-Apartheid nation to find their place.

**US NOW**  
**HILDEGARD TITUS (NAM) | 2018 | 5 MIN**

Namibia's history did not begin with independence 28 years ago. It did not even begin when colonialism or apartheid first took over this region that was once called Southwest Africa. Our journey began thousands of years ago, as our ancestors left their marks on the world in caves to be seen and remembered for millennia to come. It began when our ancestors held ceremonies and feasts for every aspect of life, from birth to death. It began long before our cultures were brought together under the new utopian vision of a free and equal Namibia. While we were focused on celebrating freedom and overcoming a past plagued by dark moments — war, genocide, apartheid — we forgot to truly listen to each other and heal wounds that had begun to fester. Tribalism, racism, colorism, sexism, ageism, ableism, and xenophobia continue to stain our country. We spend more time breaking each other down than listening to one another. *Us Now* is a conversation and a dialogue for remembering and healing. It is an invitation to hear the voices of young Namibians from various backgrounds expressing their stories, their feelings, their aspirations, the way they relate to their heritage and identity,

and the way that we all relate to each other. Looking back into Namibia's old history books we can see the ways in which colonial images depicted and tried to define our existence and way of life. Today we define them for ourselves. We are more than a caption: 'Herero,' 'Nama.' We are a history, a present, and a brighter future. This is us now.

**KALUNGA KA NANGOBE (GOD OF NANGOBE)  
TULI MEKONDJO AND STEFFEN LIST (NAM) | 2020 | 3:53**

Tuli Mekondjo's live performance piece serves as a basis for a re-interpretation of the theme in the moving image medium. The film explores and builds on an improvised narrative that considers Aawambo cultural and spiritual identity in the context of a pre-and post-colonial history — more specifically through the missionary influence used in its name. By simultaneous depiction of past and present as one, the film enables a dialogue between an (ancient) sangoma/healer and a (modern-day converted) nun, underlining the apparent and non-apparent ties between the two – which are after all still one and the same.