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Middernacht, Sari Martine

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Research Report

Masters in Heritage Studies

Sari Middernacht
1304977

From collective curating to sharing curatorial authority: Collaborative practices as strategies of democratisation in exhibition making in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Supervisor: Nontobeko Ntombela

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INTRODUCTION

> Every day, thousands of people pass by Tshombe's statue at the 'Place de la Poste', but actually it was another monument before, dedicated to the soldiers that fought in the world war. Who of those passers-by know that? (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016)

History professor Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu's speaks about the statue of Congolose politician Moise Tshombe, who proclaimed Katanga's independence shortly after the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo's in 1960, as one of the examples of political manipulation of Lubumbashi's *lieux de mémoires*[1]*, or* site of memory. His broader concern is the absence of historical consciousness in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Congolese writer André Lye Yoka (2012) talks about a 'devoir de mémoire' (duty of memory) as a way to redress the erasure and rewriting of history in the official discourse by political powers. According to Yoka, Congolese society needs to engage in a 'désir de mémoire' (desire for memory) to finish off the 'travail de deuil' (work of mourning), as a starting point towards reconciliation after decades of oppression and war (Yoka Lye Mudaba 2012:52). Yoka uses the words of Congolese historian Elikia M'bokolo when he states that "memories need to be desacralized and history to be written"', to argue for a deromanticisation of the past and a critical writing of history to "stop the tricks of manipulating memory" (Yoka Lye Mudaba 2012:53).

As a way of addressing his concerns about how memory and history function to create a collective memory and historical consciousness, in 1999 Dibwe dia Mwembu initiated the project 'Mémoires de Lubumbashi' at the University of Lubumbashi. Working with an international research group, this project produced multidisciplinary research focusing on urban oral history. In 2000 the initiative resulted in the public event titled *Ukumbusho* with an exhibition and a one-week cultural programme in August at the National Museum of

[1] *Lieux de mémoire* (site of memory) is historian Pierre Nora's notion of referring to material or immaterial symbols of memory for a community. His work *Lieux de mémoires* (Nora 1984) has been translated into English as *Realms of Memory*.

Lubumbashi, Musée National de Lubumbashi, referred to as MNL. The initiative was based on the assumption that the power of memory and oral history exist in their ability to reinsert unheard voices into history, and the national museum can be a place for its dissemination.

This research takes the critical thinking around the place of memory in the reassessment of histories, identities and the role of the museum in this process as its point of departure (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2007). The importance of embedding the lived experience in the writing of history had been argued during the second half of the twentieth century by oral and social historians as a way to counter the 'grand narratives' (Perks and Thomson 2016; Thompson 2016). These new perspectives on history writing are located in the broader context of the reassessment of dominant ideas and models across the human sciences, where Eurocentric elitist hegemonies were challenged. In historiography, oral history methodology constituted the basis for new historical narratives such as what historian E.P. Thompson termed 'history from below', emphasising perspectives on history as lived by working class people, which started to include the 'unheard voices' (Thompson 1966). The strategies and methodologies of social and oral history have also been important for the inclusion of 'silenced voices' in colonial and post-colonial contexts such as in the rewriting of African history, and vice versa, developments in African historiography contributed importantly to these new methodologies and the critical discourses around them (De Kok 1998; Minkley and Rassool 1998; Ndaywel è Nziem 2006; University of the Witwatersrand n.d.; Vansina 1985). Memoires de Lubumbashi is fundamentally grounded in the social and political motivations of oral and social history practices.

The paradigm shifts in the human sciences called also for the repositioning of museums, considered as sites of power relations and representation of the hegemonic western culture (Macdonald 2006; Nicks 2003; Phillips 2003). The critical awareness about the political dimension of museum work and the social roles of museums instigated more democratic and inclusive practices, a movement that has been broadly defined as 'new museology' (MacDonald 2006). New museology involved a change from a collection-based institute that displays the knowledge of the expert, to a place for social development where actions of sharing and transmission of knowledge (considered as fundamentally relative) take place[2].

[2] In 1972, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Round Table of Santiago de Chile adopted the concept of the 'integral' museum and in 1984 the Movement for new Museology (MINOM) was born, today an

The 'new museology' was especially strong in museums based in the disciplines that were coming to terms with their historical roles in the construction of narratives of western cultural domination, such as contemporary art, anthropology and history (Witcomb 2003:79). One of the ways museums attempted to challenge the dominant view was about fostering collaborative relationships between the museums and communities, through community-based research (Golding 2013; Peers and Brown 2003; Watson 2007). Community-based museology has been explored to establish connections within the museum and its collections with present day experiences (Golding 2013), to address social inequalities (Sandell 2002), to enable the representation of difficult contested histories in polyvocal ways (Crooke 2007; Karp, Kreamer, and Lavine 1992; Sandell 2002; Witcomb 2003)Crooke 2007; Karp et al. 1992; Sandell 2002; Witcomb 2003), or to rewrite histories in order to create community identity and a sense of place (Watson 2007).

Critical questions within academia have been addressed about issues of power, control and authority in collaborative practices in museums, pointing out that collaborations are fraught, given that the final decision making in collaborative projects lies exclusively with the museum, and thus, continues the inequalities (Boast 2011; Golding and Modest 2013; Phillips 2003). The concepts of collective curating and shared authority in exhibition-making will therefore be explored in relation to two case studies, *Ukumbusho* (2000) and *Waza Chumba Wazi* (2014), both of which took place in Lubumbashi, Congo. *Ukumbusho*, meaning 'memory' in Swahili, as mentioned before, is the first iteration of the University of Lubumbashi's oral and public history research project *Mémoires de Lubumbashi*[3]. *Waza*

affiliation of ICOM. New museology as a movement has been evolving, expanding and branching out in the 1980s and 1990s. Its origins, however, retrace dual roots: first a Latin and secondly an Anglophone school of thought, which are often mistaken for each other (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010:55). New museology as the Latin school of thought born in the 1970s, is based on political views of grassroot approaches and community development. Inspired by the post-Marxist concept of *conscientisation* or critical consciousness as developed by Brazilian activist, educator and theorist Paulo Freire, the central idea was empowerment: taking an active role in working with heritage could incite self-determination and create better conditions for (marginalised or oppressed) communities. Latin new museology is often materialised through ecomuseums and community museums. The movement grew into what has been called 'sociomuseology' (Assunção dos Santos 2010; Moutinho 2016). The new museology here in question is the Anglophone school, and incites an awareness of museums, and their opening up to broader audiences through strategies of social inclusion, participation and access; here, a top-down path is more common (MacDonald 2006).

[3] As an ongoing project, *Mémoires de Lubumbashi* has, since 2000, organised five editions on themes related to the industrial history of the city, which culminated in public activities, publications and exhibitions. The iterations consist of a research component and a form of restitution to the public with activities, round tables, performances, an exhibition, and a subsequent publication. The iterations in chronological order : *Ukumbusho. Images, objets et paroles: Mémoires de Lubumbashi* with publication *Ukumbusho* (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2001); *Femmes, modes, musique* (Sizaire 2002) ; *Le travail hier et aujourd'hui* (Dibwe dia Mwembu, Jewsiewicki, and Klauber 2004) ; *Se souvenir des ancêtres, lever le deuil. Bâtir sur l'expérience* ; and *Violence et Mémoire de la violence* (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2015).

Chumba Wazi, Swahili for 'imagine the empty room', was an exhibition of Lubumbashi's contemporary art centre Waza. What *Ukumbusho* and *Waza Chumba Wazi* have in common is that they employed applied strategies of collaborative practices (through bringing together researchers, artists, community participants and cultural practitioners) and collective knowledge production (such as collecting life histories, testimonies and objects linked to popular culture). The two community-based art and heritage projects were conducted in association with the National Museum and so provide an apt framework to examine the way smaller and experimental projects speak to aspects of museum work.

Although the *Ukumbusho* and *Waza Chumba Wazi* case studies were not initiated with 'shared authority' as a starting point, nor was it an objective of either project; this research adopts a shared authority theoretical framework from which to examine their collective practice. This framework will be used as an analytic tool for a better understanding and a suggestion as an operational tool for a more efficient approach to collective practices. In other words, this research doesn't intend to give a verdict on them by 'scoring' the shared authority. I'm proposing instead that if the projects had emphasised this idea in their enquiries that were primarily of historical, cultural or artistic interest, it might have been more efficient if the understanding of shared authority had been on the forefront. Looking at past projects enables me to hypothesise an answer that is also part of the question, namely, how collaborative practices, in which the notion of a shared authority is embedded, can function as a way to democratise museum space in Lubumbashi. It's about wanting to clarify the moments of tension in collaborative projects, between intentions and practicalities; and at the same time proposing an effective work model for an alternative approach.

Analysing the experiences of *Ukumbusho* and *Waza Chumba Wazi* allows some empirical information about momentary examples and patterns of collaborative practices and the ways they have operated as distinct moments of inclusiveness in the museum of Lubumbashi. Research on the processes and outcomes assesses what an inclusive approach may have meant for every step of these projects. It sheds light on the way in which collaborative exhibition projects negotiate the multiple layers and complexities of places and the communities inhabiting them, and might open up discussion of this history in the national museum and the various ways in which democratisation of museological practice might take place.

Research Methodology

The research engages with multiple sources of original data from the case studies to analyse the processes applied. My thinking about collaborative practices is informed by my experience as a museum practitioner. First in my home country Belgium, where I worked for over 10 years in the public services department at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren near Brussels. My work as museum educator and exhibition coordinator for the new I was initially museum educator and later exhibition coordinator for the new permanent exhibition after its renovation and so was directly involved in the museum's reflections about its past, present and future and about repositioning itself as a (post)colonial museum.

My collaborations with Congolese from the diaspora but more particularly Congolese *du pays* (Congolese living in Congo), have informed and sensitised the ways theoretical considerations about representations of cultures in a context such as the museum are put in practice. I have been living and working in Lubumbashi for five years, and collaborative approaches increasingly been a focus of research and a methodology in my practice.

I was involved in the 2014 *Waza Chumba Wazi* project as a member of the Revolution Room project (2013-2016) which initiated it, as well as working as a project coordinator, curator, exhibition researcher and publication editor for Waza art center. My hands-on involvement in heritage projects in Lubumbashi, including curating art and history exhibitions, and assisting with compiling the dossier which was the basis for the city being declared a UNESCO Creative City in 2015; and through collaborations in a relationship of trust for example with academics like Dibwe, facilitated access to research material such as the archives for the *Ukumbusho* project. Archival research for both projects includes the exhibition catalogues and other publications, but also unpublished documents. However, this research is interested more in the processes than in the outcomes of exhibition-making, and data related to process is difficult to trace in documents, especially about critical moments such as decision-making and disagreements which are rarely reflected in the archive. Also, the projects weren't working with notions of shared authority in mind. Seventeen interviews with the organisers and participants of both case studies as well as with museum staff on the processes of each project were conducted between 2016 and 2018 to understand their experiences and considerations.

There is a possibility that interviewees present a certain perception because of their interests and agendas (Onciul 2013), especially regarding my being a *muzungu* (white), however, the encounters and interviews happened in an open and thoughtful way. This critical positioning of myself in the context of Lubumbashi and in the research is a transversal concern throughout this report. In both case studies, I will provide more detail about the applied methodologies and their constraints.

Doing museum work in former colonies requires some specific sensitivity: since the very idea of a museum carries colonial baggage, so does the participation of a foreign expert in projects (Basu and Modest 2015). By accepting this, new learning can start with unlearning, through a process of challenging the acquired, supposedly absolute principles of how a museum should look and function. Also, research on the colonial and postcolonial history of MNL helped me locate the current active zones of its 'colonial baggage' of its existence as an institution, its presentation of artefacts and its consideration that white people are the providers of projects. I've been building up a new reference framework, by resuming studies focussing on productive intersections of the arts and heritage fields, but most of all by joining collaborative projects initiated by local initiatives such as Waza Art Centre. Understanding the history of MNL as well as how collaborative projects exist in Lubumbashi informs museum practice beyond assumptions of how it should be according to international (western) standards. This is a liberating insight and my starting point for action.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter goes into the broader theoretical background of the basic issues this research speaks to, which are at the intersection of museum studies, oral history and contemporary art practices. First, it provides the context of the situation and concerns of museums in Africa today as remnants of a colonial period, and how this speaks to broader discourses in international museum developments. The second part of the chapter unpacks notions of collaborative practices and collective curating, focussing on the concept of shared authority as developed in oral history and applied to exhibition practice, including my understanding of the inherent tensions this evokes.

The second chapter identifies the practical context of the city of Lubumbashi and its museum from a historical perspective, through the scope of how historical events have been reflected in the museum practice of the institute, for example in exhibition concepts and audience engagement. Bringing the microhistory of MNL to the fore enables a deeper understanding of its realities today and how the projects of the case studies fit into this particular context.

The third and fourth chapters analyse the collaborative experiences of the case study projects, *Ukumbusho* and *Waza Chumba Wazi*. They provide the background and description of the exhibition projects and processes in relation to their methodologies, and identify their distinct capacities respectively as an oral history project and an arts project. On the one hand, they use examples of where the projects showed the practice of shared authority, and on the other hand, hypothosise what could have happened if the practice of shared authority had been embedded in other aspects. This allows for reflections about the role such collaborative projects can play to elicit new ways of museum practices within MNL and its surrounds.

Images are inserted after each case study to illustrate the project, enabling the reader to engage with the process and exhibitions, rather than merely to suggest a visual analysis of the images.

The research draws to a large extent on texts in French, the official language of DRC. I have translated all quotes into English.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework: African Museums and New Practices

Like many museums in Africa, the Lubumbashi museum is a complex space, with layers of burdened histories of colonisation and post-independence nation building. The MNL is being profiled on the one hand as a place of 'high culture' and on the other hand as a place of contested objects and displays (Bundjoko Banyata 2005; Sizaire 2001), often resulting in social exclusions. The contradictions of being only partly operational, operating as 'half-life' are due to insufficient resources (Matanga Sapato 2017; Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007) and the condition of a place like Lubumbashi, marked by state failure which necessitates people in the museum sector for example doing multiple jobs both within and outside the museum. But it also signals the larger persistent crisis of African museums across the continent (Abungu 2006; Arinze 1998).

Theorists have been engaged in what can be described as an ongoing process of revaluation of museum identities in Africa beyond inherent western ideologies and problematic pasts. Towards the end of the 20th century the conviction that community engagement is the only way out of the 'western imposed model' and towards 'local relevancy' came radically to the fore. In this chapter, I will relate this discourse to the critical literature of community work in international museum studies to identify some general concerns, as well as how this speaks to the understanding of museum and community work in the context of the Congolese city of Lubumbashi. A theoretical background of the concepts of collaborative practice and shared authority precedes the chapter which looks at the history of MNL through the lens of questions of local relevancy and strategies for democratising museum practice. At the same time, it challenges their very meaning and what they evoke when applied in practice.

1.1 Museums in postcolonial Africa and their search for local relevance

At the same time as museums in Europe, Latin America and former settler colonies such as Australia have been exploring transformative processes since the 1970s; in Africa, the postcolonial context gave rise to existentialist concerns about its museums. Informed by the concept of 'Africanisation' (Arinze 1998; Myles 1976) and of 'overcoming colonial legacy' (Arnoldi 1999; Fogelman 2008; Mawere and Mubaya 2015), the need to be responsive to the communities they serve has been also a central focus for African museums in order to break away from these imposed concepts and to become more locally relevant (Abungu 2006; Ardouin and Arinze 1995; Arinze 1998; Eyo 1994; Myles 1976).

Ghanaian museum practitioner Kwasi Addai Myles suggested as early as 1976 the need to "search for forms, methods and techniques of their own which are more closely related and suitable to their own conditions" (Myles 1976:196). He said the time had come for the African museum to be of 'greater benefit for its communities' and he reflected on the international approach focusing on the social role of museums. When in 1981 Alpha Oumar Konaré, at the time a consultant for UNESCO and later president of Mali, announced the new policy for the National Museum of Mali, he spoke about the 'birth' of the museum as a critical response to the former colonial museum policy[4] (Arnoldi 1999:29). The Konaré policy did indeed have an impact on everything from the development and design of a new museum complex, in order to counter colonial architecture; to the revision of the museum's research agenda and collections policy, exhibitions and public programming (Arnoldi 1999:29). The policy spoke to issues of democratisation and decentralisation that dealt with how to get more people involved in the museum through public access, the use of regional languages and consultation with people's representatives and specialists in traditional cultures, and the creation of regional museums that would have a stronger local engagement (Arnoldi 1999:28)[5]. It was again Konaré on the cutting edge of the public discussion in 1991, a decade after the 'birth' of the Mali museum and subsequently president of the International Council of Museums

[4] Alpha Oumar Konaré was a consultant to UNESCO (1981 – 1992), President of ICOM (1989-1992), President of Mali (1992-2002) and Chairman of the Commission of the African Union (2003-2008).

[5] The National Museum of Mali plays a leading role as a reference for processes of overcoming colonial legacies within the larger African and international museum community (Andriamirado 2007; Arnoldi 1999; Sylla 2007). Contrary to MNL, the directors of the Mali Museum were Malinese since independence in 1960.

(ICOM) who opened the annual encounter dedicated to the museum in Africa with the words that the "time was urgent to kill the western model of museum in Africa" [6] (ICOM 1992).

Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze[7] in *African Museums: The Challenge of Change* in 1998 said: "[Museums in Africa] need to break away from their colonial vestiges to create African-based museums that will be responsive to their communities. […] Africans expect museums to develop appropriate methods and strategies for interacting with the public, and to create innovative programmes that will involve it" (Arinze 1998:36). The concerns expressed in the texts about change, community engagement and the relevancy of the museum echo with the broader discussions, transformations and paradigm shifts for museums to become inclusive spaces of dialogue and encounter (Anderson 2004; Golding and Modest 2013; Knell, MacLeod, and Watson 2007; Sandell 2002; Witcomb 2003). The relationship between museum and community was the theme of the ICOM annual meeting in 1995 (ICOM 1995). Also in Africa, considerations about the involvement of communities are a focal point, as can be seen by the title of the International Council of African Museums (ICOM n.d.) meeting in Lusaka in 1999: *Construire avec la communauté, un défi pour les musées africains* (Building with the community, a challenge for African museums). After Lusaka, important initiatives had started on a practical level to professionalise the African heritage and museum sector, but expectations on the more philosophical aspects and orientations remain unfulfilled and the discourse continues[8].

Browsing through texts written over the last 20 years by museum professionals from throughout the continent, the titles suggest that the existential malaise in the museum landscape in Africa is not over. The president of the Kenyan National Arts Council, George H. Okello Abungu, argued in 2004 that museums, "that claim to have become of age", should

[6] « *Il est temps […] de procédér à une totale remise en cause, il faut « tuer », je dis tuer, le modèle occidental de musée en Afrique pour que s'épanouissent de nouveaux modes de conservation et de promotion du patrimoine* » (Time is urgent to completely rethink; we have to « kill » I say kill, the western model of museums in Africa so new ways of conservation and promotion of our heritage can develop, own translation). Discourse published in the conference's publication: Quels musées pour l'Afrique, patrimoine en devenir (Which museums for Africa, heritage to come (own translation)).

[7] The Nigerian Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze was President of the West Africa Museum Programme (WAMP).

[8] Examples of organisations and programmes that unite museum professionals in Africa: Ecole du Patrimoine (EPA, School of Heritage) founded in 1998 in Porto Novo, Benin; EPA's Anglophone counterpart created in 2000 in Mombasa; Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA); and WAMP (West Africa Museums Program) (Houndégla 2007).

embrace strategies of inclusion and community participation (Abungu 2004:3). Using the metaphor of museums from 'temples' to 'forums', he argues that the places of knowledge and pride, undemocratic by nature, can become democratic spaces for constant dialogue (Abungu:2004)[9]. In the 2006 text *Africa and Its Museums: Changing of Pathways?* Abungu develops this idea of forums further and argues that "the museums as a forum for different voices has the capacity of being inclusive" (Abungu 2006:388). Abungu says museums have to remove the "monumental walls that surround the museum" and "create spaces with a human face". African museums should take up the role of platforms for expressing living communities' feelings and expectations; because of the disappearance of many of the cultural and spiritual spaces, communities begin to regard museums as alternative spaces for cultural activities and community performances (Abungu 2004:3). He concludes there is a need for change from top-down to down-up (Abungu 2004). In 2007, the francophone Africultures dedicates a 'cahier critique', a collection of critical texts called "*Réinventer les musées*' ('Reinventing the museums')[10] with other voices calling for more audacious, locally inspired solutions such as Beninese art historian and museum practitioner Joseph C. E. Adandé (2007) with *Le musée, un concept à réinventer en Afrique* (The Museum, a concept to reinvent in Africa) and Ivorian art historian and anthropologist Yaya Savané (2007) *Pour la survie des musées en Afrique de l'Ouest* (For the survival of the West African museum) and in 2015, *African museums in the making: reflections on the politics of material and public culture in Zimbabwe* (Mawere et al. 2015).

Museums throughout the continent have attempted to be relevant by adopting strategies that aim to boost local development by promoting local heritage and which materialised in a burgeoning of community-based museum initiatives such as ecomuseums[11] or community-run museums (Ardouin and Arinze 1995; Keita 2007). In 'conventional museums' (Eyo 1994) with colonial legacies such as the museum of Lubumbashi, however, it often remained unclear how the process of revaluation and strategies of inclusion were reflected in museum practice.

[9] In his keynote address for the South African Museums Association Bulletin in 2004, *Democratising Museums and Heritage Ten Years On*, Abungu challenged the idea of democratisation of the museum institution, taking stock of South African museums after 10 years of democracy.
[10] The Africultures issue treats African museums in the west as well as on the African continent; unfortunately, insights on how both can inform each other has not been dealt with.
[11] The definition of the ecomuseum according to *Key concepts of Museology*, is "a museal institution which, for the development of a community, combines conservation, display and explanation of the cultural and natural heritage held by this same community; the ecomuseum represents a living and working environment on a given territory, and the research associated with it." (Desvallées & Maraisse 2010:59).

1.2. Second wave of new museology

In the larger international discourse about museum developments, the practical process and impact of theoretical repositioning of museums were also reconsidered at the turn of the 21st century. The 'educational turn' that had characterised new museology had meant in practice that the authority had been shifting inside the museum[12] instead of being put into question (Boast 2011; Trofanenko 2006). In other words, after 30 years of new museology, a discrepancy had been created between what museums advocated for and real implementation and change, which led to a 'second wave' of new museology since the 2000s and a renewed motivation to reconnect research and practice (MacDonald 2006; Boast 2011). Historian and anthropologist James Clifford's 1997 critical essay, *Museums as contact zones,* raised potential ways ethnographic museums could be relevant. They need to address their colonial collections within the museum as well as with the communities they represented, while at the same time bearing in mind that communities are not homogeneous and have their own agendas (Clifford 1997) . The complexities of a series of notions commonly used in the new museum paradigms have increasingly been addressed, such as 'relevance' (Nielsen 2015), 'engagement' (Onciul 2013; Schorch, McCarthy, and Hakiwai 2016), 'the community' (Crooke 2007; Golding and Modest 2013; Peers and Brown 2003; Schorch 2017; Watson 2007), including the problematic supposition that communities tend to be associated with radical democracy and resistance to dominant culture (Witcomb 2003:79). Art historian and curator Ruth Phillips (2003) wonders how far the growing popularity of collaborative exhibitions is only a symbolic restitution for injustices done in the colonial era, and recently in an edited publication with art and cultural historian Annie Coombes (2015) she raised the question how 'thoroughgoing' transformation in museums is (Coombes and Phillips 2015:XXIII). Museum anthropologist Robin Boast (2011) explored the 'dark underbelly' of Clifford's contact zone as neo-colonial collaborations: Boast points out that "the new museum, the museum as contact zone, is and continues to be used instrumentally as a means of masking far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases" (Boast 2011:67). According to Boast, "dialogue and collaboration are foregrounded, but the ultimate suppression of oppositional discourse is always effected" (Boast 2011:64). Boast proposes a way out with Clifford's own words where he warned about this restricted application of the

[12] According to Boast, new museology "has introduced a regime where the educator and the marketing manager […] control the voices of the museum's presentations" (Boast 2011:58).

'contact zone' and suggested a more engaged interpretation: ''Contact work in a museum thus goes beyond consultation and sensitivity, though these are very important. It becomes active collaboration and a *sharing of authority*'' (Clifford cited in Boast 2011:67). Boast argues that the museum in the 20th century has to confront its deeper neocolonial legacy and requires museums "to learn to let go of their resources, even at times of the objects, for the benefit and use of communities and agendas far beyond its knowledge and control" (Boast 2011:67). Central in this study is the idea of the capacity of the notion of shared authority applied to museum work such as collective exhibition-making in order to transform museums more deeply.

1.3. Collaborative practices

Collaborative curating, as a group process, is a curatorial practice interested in the plurality of voices and perspectives, sometimes in a search of bringing them together in a single voice, sometimes in a search of keeping the multivocality of the authorial voices (Arriola 2009). In this way, the 'sacrosanct autonomy' of a singular curatorial vision is challenged (Macdonald and Basu 2007:10). As a constituent of collaborative practices, collective curating is a term that has been developed in curatorial studies in the context of megashows or biennials, but also as a strategy for more inclusive art projects (Bishop 2005).

It has been argued that little research touches on the curatorial aspects of the process and impact of collaborative practice (Golding and Modest 2013:1–3), which leaves blind spots in the understanding on a very practical basis, as well about the responsibilities of the expertise that has been brought into the process, leading to new questions about authorial renunciation (Bishop 2005) or curatorial integrity (Golding 2013). Also, concepts and theories about how museum change through collective curatorial practices are largely developed in spaces in a context of cultural heritage politicisation, such as colonial museums in former metropoles that establish relationships with the diasporas of the source communities of their collections, or in settler societies such as Australia, New Zealand or Canada, activated by new indigenous activism (Peers & Brown 2003, Basu 2015). Anthropologist Paul Basu questions what the responsibilities are for museums without a pressure group community challenging it to transform its policies and practices (Basu 2015:338), which was, until now, the case for MNL. The study critically analyses instants of collaborative museum practices in Lubumbashi

as moments where current theoretical and practical considerations of museum work are engaged with the context of museums in Africa. It looks at how these moments inform the African museum space, located in a larger discourse of decolonisation. By bringing this conversation to Lubumbashi and MNL, this research explores the role of the museum as a social agent through active participation that is firstly located within the context of Lubumbashi, secondly as part of Congo in the broader sense and thirdly, as part of the African context at large.

1.4. Shared authority and sharing authority

The notion of 'a shared authority' has been coined by oral and public historian Michael Frisch in his seminal work *A shared authority: Essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history* in 1990 in the USA[13] (Frisch 1990). It describes the interaction between the oral historian and the narrator as a shared process of authorship and interpretative authority. In other words, both the academic historian and the person who contributes to historical understanding through his lived experience contribute to the development of the interview; they both interpret, orient and decide content generation. According to Frisch, oral historians should acknowledge this collaborative production between academic authority and authority based on culture or experience. Instead, he argues, this moment of sharing is most commonly masked in finished products, with only the authority of the academic represented. Frisch extends his considerations into public history – which includes exhibition-making; here, he says, it is not the distribution from knowledge of those who have to those who have not; the audience has a real authority that contributes to dialogue, which provides a meaningful engagement with history. This authority is a distinct authority which public historians need to respect, understand, invoke and involve better. Frisch suggests the *dialogue* between different bases of authority might more deeply characterise the *experience of the finished product* (Frisch 1990:XXIII, own emphasis). Encouraging audience participation in exhibitions has been subject to other studies, revealing interesting techniques of how an audience can be stimulated to more actively co-create meaning (Satwicz and Morrissey 2011). More

[13] By oral history is meant the process of historical research through interviews with informants. Public history is the discipline where history, and in the context of Frisch's work specifically oral history, is used publicly; such as in the development of a history exhibition, a popular history book, a public programme, a documentary. Public history as a discipline was professionalised in the late 1970s, first in the USA and Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

importantly for this study is how a shared authority with audiences can be brought into the process of exhibition-making. The effect of bringing the collaborative process in the production would not only have an impact on the *experience* of the finished product, but on the product itself.

Mary Hutchison explores the question of bringing a shared authority in exhibition practice in *'Shared Authority': Collaboration, Curatorial Voice, and Exhibition Design in Canberra, Australia* (Hutchison 2013). According to her, shared authority in practice requires attention be paid to the agency of both the curatorial voices as well as those of the participants. This agency and an egalitarian form of interaction should be of central concern in all stages, from the development and management of elements to their design and fabric. From this perspective, not only the outcome but also the process is important, and the interactions ought to be made visible in the outcomes (Hutchison 2013:143). In other words, through collaborative exhibition creation, Hutchison argues for a shift from the authoritarian, often anonymous and institutional 'museological voice' in cultural historical exhibitions towards a transparent and more democratic attitude, made perceptible in the exhibition itself. Furthermore, what shared authority in collaborative exhibition practice does so forcefully, she argues, is making visible the voice of each individual participant instead of an abstract representation of "the community" by rendering the "personal complexity and what that reveals in contrast to representative simplicity and what that obscures" (Hutchison 2013: 145). Shared authority in this perspective is a useful tool to understand how the 'unheard voice' can be brought effectively inside the museum space and, simultaneously, how authority is played out within processes of exhibition-making. At the same time, it speaks to Clifford's call for sharing authority in institutions where 'asymmetrical relations of power' are at work (Clifford 1997:191–92).

The question now is if *shared authority in the process* can be defined as *sharing* authority, as has been called for by Clifford (Clifford 1997:191–92), which is mostly the understanding picked up in museums that refer to this notion. A tendency can be noted to refer to Frisch's resonant phrase, using 'shared authority', but actually the understanding of sharing authority as a practice of long-term collaborative endeavours lies closer to James Clifford's[14]. In oral

[14] For example *West Side Stories: The Blending of Voice and Representation through a Shared Curatorial Practice* (MacDougall and Carlson 2009) and the project *Stereoculture: The Art of Listening* in the framework of Switch, the

history, the confusion has been addressed in the first place by Frisch himself. Whereas it had been argued that sharing authority was a reframing of the original concept in a more expanded view (High 2009:13), Frisch himself points out there is more going on than only an extension of the original concept: sharing authority suggests that in some important sense the academic historians have authority, which they need or ought to share; 'a shared authority' suggests something that 'is' – that in the nature of oral and public history, the historians are not the sole interpreters. According to him, historians are called not so much to 'share' authority, as to respect and attend to this definitional quality, and to act on that recognition: "[we] need to recognize the already shared authority in the documents we generate and in the processes of public history engagement – a dialogic dimension, however implicit, through which 'author-ship' is shared by definition, and hence interpretive 'author-ity' as well" (Frisch 2003, 2011). Frisch's statement has been turned into a premise by heritage professional Bill Adair: "does the notion of sharing imply that historians have the prerogative to distribute historical authority […] undercut[s] the supposedly collaborative or 'dialogic' nature of such work?"? (Adair, Filene, and Koloski 2011:12).

When this reflection is brought into the practice of exhibition-making, there seems to be a limitation in the concept; for shared authority in exhibition-making goes beyond recognition but needs to be activated first by bringing people together in a collaborative practice (the same way oral history as an approach is a collaborative discipline by inviting informants for interviews) – which would be called sharing authority. Briefly said, for shared authority to happen, there must be sharing of the practice first. However, every step in the project of exhibition-making, contrarily to the interview in oral history, is a moment on its own and can be decided if it is happening in a shared approach or not. Sharing, in other words, can be switched on and off. What does this then say about author-ship and author-ity?

Frisch suggested there is a 'productive tension' in the two terms, and that it would be useful to listen and learn how they speak to each other in collaborative oral history work, as that dialogue may, in its own way, help resolve some of the paradoxes of collaboration (Frisch 2003:113). This productive tension becomes tangible when looking at the highly political aspect of Frisch's work. Recalling in the introduction of his book that both oral and public history have the capacity to redefine and redistribute intellectual authority, Frisch proposes

running European Project for Ethnographic and World Culture Museums (2014 -2018) where a reference is made to shared authority as a way to co-create exhibitions. http://www.swich-project.eu/about/.

that this might be shared more broadly in historical research and communication rather than continuing to serve as an instrument of power and hierarchy. He points out that public and oral history have the capacity not only to contribute to the process of *interpreting* the world, but also of *changing* it.

Frisch says, however, that sharing voice doesn't always lead to sharing cultural power. "Concerns about the dynamics and shareability of cultural power, complicate the task of thinking clearly about oral and public history, and what they have to contribute to the process of not only interpreting our world, but also changing it – the authority for which is even more in need of sharing" (Frisch 1990: XXIII). This could be the point where Frisch and Clifford meet; the need for sharing authority in museum work, as Clifford calls for, is because of the need for change in cultural power in the museum. However, there are still paradoxes of collaboration. The question remains: what are the practical implications for the collaborative process at every step of exhibition-making? Hutchison argued equal agency has to be a central concern throughout the process; does this mean the work has to be done collectively, or does it imply what Ruth Phillips calls a 'to-ing and fro-ing', a process of negotiation and consulting to validate the work the museum professionals did on their own (Phillips 2003:160).

Oral historian Linda Shopes (2003) argued in these discussions within the field of oral history that for an understanding of how theoretical shared authority works in practice, there should be a close analysis of interview texts, so the ''moves and countermoves'' in the structure of the conversation could be identified (Shopes 2003). My understanding is that this is also an insightful approach for exhibition-making, to recognise the complications and paradoxes of collaborations in a way to address and reassess them. Even though shared authority has limitations when applied to practical exhibition work, it offers some valuable approaches to collaborative work, and at the same time some key ways to point out its own limitations. I will therefore use the notion to clarify the moments of tension between intentions and practicalities in collaborative projects, and at the same time explore some alternative approaches for an effective work model.

Christina Kreps, an American anthropologist specialising in cross-cultural museum models, speaks about 'museum-mindedness' when she points out that people in non-western contexts interact with their museums according to their "own means of interpretation and

appropriation of museological concepts to fit into their own cultural patterns" (Kreps 2003:42). Kreps develops the idea further into the notion of 'appropriate museology', a "bottom-up, community-based approach that combines local knowledge and resources with those of professional museum work to better meet the needs and interests of a particular museum and its community" (Kreps 2008:23). The notion of shared authority will be challenged in the African museum context in a series of questions: how does shared authority apply to a context where the museum occupies a position of cultural authority, but where in practice, as will be argued, the museum lacks agency over its missions and operations? What does shared authority mean in the step-by-step process of making exhibitions collaboratively? How can shared authority contribute to a larger understanding of Kreps's museum-mindedness and appropriate museology?

Chapter 2

The Musée National de Lubumbashi (MNL): a Historical Perspective

With his article in AFRICOM's magazine in 1999, titled *Ceci n'est pas un musée!* (This is not a museum!)[15], MNL director Donatien Muya called out for attention about the conditions of the museum (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:75). In 2001, he defined his task to lead a Congolese museum *un pari fou* (a crazy challenge) (Duplat and Turine 2002). On both occasions, he referred to the difficult, if not impossible, working conditions due to insufficient economic support. In *African Museums: the Challenge of Change* (1998), Emmanuel Nnakenyi Arinze[16] had made a similar, sad portrait of the condition of the African museum and the stagnation they found themselves in since the 1980s. Arinze denounced a series of deprivations the museum in Africa has to encounter: lack of training of professional staff, lack of security (addressing the issues of stolen objects), poor leadership, lack of materials, equipment and patronage (Arinze 1998). This can be said to be the case for MNL.

A telling example is the fact that Nicole Sapato, the current director of MNL, says she doesn't have a complete inventory of the museum's collections with basic documentation such as the conditions of acquisition (Matanga Sapato 2018)[17]. Since collections and information about them have been defined as the basis of the museum's curatorial and institutional authority (Peers and Brown 2003:1), what does this condition of MNL reveal about the authority that it is supposed to represent? How does a notion of shared authority apply to a context where the museum's authority over its own collections and archives, the strategic development plan or the management of the building is overseen outside of the museum management (Matanga Sapato 2018). Does it mean that authority in MNL has not authority at all, or that

[15] The title of Muya's article is a wink to René Magritte's famous painting *"Ceci n'est pas une pipe".*
[16] At the time of writing Arinze was the president of the West African Museums Programme (WAMP).
[17] Although the Institut des Musées Nationaux du Congo, the national agency for the Congolese museums of which MNL is part of, participated in 1994 in a UNESCO collections' inventory project (ICOM n.d.).

authority is already shared, and if so, by whom, for what aim and what does it mean for the museum and its communities?

Throughout this research, and particularly when reading literature that speaks in general terms about the museum in Africa, it felt increasingly imperative to get a deeper understanding of the history behind MNL to understand how it is today. Recent critical contributions have been made by museologists and museum historiographists on the continent that a more differentiated research on the historical policies of institutions is needed (Effiboley 2015; Mawere, Chiwaura, and Thondhlana 2015). To have a deeper understanding of the distinct complexities of the different museums in Africa, it is necessary to know how they created their collections, conducted their research conceived their public activities. In the limits of this study, I considered it important to pay attention to the particular history of MNL in the context of Lubumbashi. In the following sections I map out the history of the museum, against the larger panorama of the museum in Africa, as a way of contextualising how the two case studies respond to the museum's current realities.

2.1. Musée Leopold II and the Momentum of 'Rapprochement' (1946 – 1958): a Contact Zone in the Colonial Period.

The MNL's institutional creation goes back to 1937 during the Belgian colonial regime in Congo (1885-1960)[18]. Lubumbashi, at the time named by its colonial name Elisabethville[19], had been created in 1910 'ex nihilo' as a colonial mining town in the Congolese Copperbelt in the mining rich province of Katanga in the southeast of Congo. Like other museums on the continent, it was designed and conceived based on western models and ideas (Couttenier 2014). Between 1946 and 1958, the museum, then called Musée Leopold II, was according to the visitors' statistics, frequented by the local population and especially the Congolese (Couttenier 2014) and open to 'all kinds of public (scholarly, working class, intellectual, religious, literate, illiterate) (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:302). These findings are contrary to the

[18] The colonial era in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo is marked by two main periods: 1885-1908 Congo Free State (under personal rule of King Leopold II of Belgium) and 1908-1960, Belgian Congo.
[19] Elisabethville was named after the wife of the then-ruling Belgian King, Albert I. The city has been renamed under the Mobutu regime in 1966 as Lubumbashi, referring to the name of the stream that runs through it.

common assumption that colonial museums in Africa are "catering to a white elite" (Abungu 2006:388), "almost to the total exclusion of the local people who produced the objects and materials" (Arinze 1998:31). I think it is useful to go deeper into this rather unusual characteristic for a colonial museum, and what it means for MNL today. However, only two writers offer detailed information regarding this period of the museum's popularity, and therefore a more focused study would be useful to make a conclusive statement, but the sources give corroborating evidence. The first, Congolese museum curator Henri Bundjoko Banyata (2005; 2007), includes quotes by Congolese staff; the second, historian and anthropologist Maarten Couttenier (2014) on the creation of the Musée Leopold II, is based on archival research. The statistics for the year 1949, published in the 1950 annual report, are mind-blowing; almost 280 000 people came to visit, mostly 'natives' (Couttenier 2014)[20]. Bundjoko states that the museum played an important role in the rapprochement between the local and the colonial people, contributing to the integration of Lubumbashi's culturally mixed society (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:306).

The feasibility and truthfulness of the visitor's numbers would certainly merit verification[21]. Analysing this period, Couttenier (2014) argues how the museum director, Francis Cabu, assisted by curator Burkhart Waldecker, was able to follow his own agenda by playing on the lack of coherency in the official colonial discourse regarding the role and responsibilities of museums in Belgium and Congo (Couttenier 2014). The annual report, written by Waldecker, could therefore reveal a certain will to exaggerate numbers for purposes of recognition. This pursuit for self-assertion initially was a personal motive of Cabu, a Belgian archaeologist working in Congo, who in 1935 was refused a permanent research position in the Musée du Congo Belge in Tervuren in Belgium although he had contributed extensively to the museum's research and collections. This led to a breach of trust between him and the Tervuren museum. After that, he was determined to continue collecting and researching in the Katanga province of Belgian Congo, and refused to send any more archaeological research material to Belgium. He advocated instead, as a member of a group of like-minded people that formed the Museum Society of Elisabethville (MSE) in 1939, for a regional museum in Elisabethville (Couttenier 2014:77). Governor Ryckmans supported their idea which gave considerable

[20] 4303 Europeans and 274,854 (!) "natives" visited the museum in 1949 (Couttenier 2014:83 exclamation in original).

[21] A calculation of the numbers shows that 753 'native' visitors and 12 Europeans visited per day. Even with the museum being open every day of the year (Couttenier 2014:83), this seems too many to be probable.

political backup to establish the regional museum[22]. After almost a decade of negotiations with the colonial authorities, marked by temporary solutions for exhibiting a steadily growing collection[23], the permanent Musée Leopold II was established in 1946 and Cabu appointed curator (Bundjoko Banyata 2007; Couttenier 2014; Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007; de Plaen 1989)[24].

The Tervuren museum's claim for the centralisation of collections and research would remain a permanent source of tension between both museums' staff[25]. According to Tervuren, the museums in Congo had a mere popularising role, for which eventually copies of the collection items could be sent; research and unique collection items should be exclusive to the museum in Belgium. But Cabu continued stubbornly to develop the Musée Leopold II's prehistory, mineralogy, ethnography and natural history collections through fieldwork and donations[26]. The fact that the museum was keeping the originals instead of sending them to the 'cannibal' museum in Tervuren[27] could be a reason why the museum received attention from local chiefs who honoured it with a visit, and the Lunda kings Mwant Yav Kaumb and Naweej III even donated objects (Couttenier 2014: 86). This fact should be considered together with the insight that traditional rulers became aware of the financial value of their cultural heritage objects and the need to protect them according to western standards (Van Beurden 2015:146). Some traditional chiefs created local museums outside the city centres, but in

[22] Francis Cabu and the museum project in Elisabethville always enjoyed the support of the General Governor of the Belgian Congo between 1934 and 1946, Pierre Ryckmans, who was known for his motto 'Dominate to serve' and was a big supporter of regional museums in Congo where he believed the unique items should be kept as 'they are part of the colony's heritage, and we are responsible as its guardians' (Ryckmans cited in Couttenier 2014:91).

[23] A first exhibition was organised by Cabu in his own living room. Afterwards, the collection moved 11 times before finding its permanent location (Bundjoko Banyata 2007; Couttenier 2014; Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007).

[24] The Musée Léopold II was located on the site of the 1931 World Fair, before being moved to the current modernist building. Today, only a part of the entrance hall is still remaining of the old site and is the playground of the Maadini school (Couttenier 2014).

[25] Belgian colonisation was caught between the need for centralisation and the desire to make local initiatives possible (Couttenier 2014). This lack of coherency in the official colonial discourse would be the reason why Cabu could afford a considerable degree of disobedience: he was accused of a 'lack of collaboration' with the museum in Tervuren, which claimed the centralisation of collection items and scientific research (Couttenier 2014:90–92).

[26] Donations came from local colonial agents, missionaries and local companies such as Union Minière du Haut-Katanga (UMHK) or from Cabu's excellent relations with colleagues on the continent, particularly in Anglophone Southern and Eastern Africa, with whom he also regularly exchanged collection items (Couttenier 2014).

[27] For the concept of the 'cannibal' museum and the ethnographic museum 'as an institution that assimilates and absorbs artefacts to better forget the cultures and societies producing these artefacts' see GHK 2002:13, Dias 2002:27, and for the RMCA in particular see Wastiau (Dias 2002; GHK 2002; Wastiau 2002). Both contributions are part of the exhibition project and publication *Le Musée Cannibale* of the Musée d'ethnographie de Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

Elizabethville, the Musée Leopold II would play a similar role. Another example of 'indigenous' contribution came from Kalunga Mwendanabo, a security guard at the museum, who collected the art of the Tabwa people for the museum and provided the explanatory notice and a picture of himself wearing the attire *in situ* (Couttenier 2014:89). Similar examples are scant, but could illustrate a certain level of trust the curators had established amongst the Lushois (the name given to inhabitants of Lubumbashi), who dubbed the museum "Musée Cabu" (Couttenier 2014:82; Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007:36). The reason I mention this is because trust is a prerequisite for any collaborative knowledge production, and a feeding ground for more engaging collaborative practices. It must be recalled that Cabu basically was refusing colonial order on the one hand, and on the other hand, according to Couttenier, the informants had no say in the ways the items were classified (Couttenier 2014:86) so their agency vanished with the loss of power over the use of the objects once entering the museum. But the hypothetical question, although utopic in a colonial context, can be asked: would a more engaged collaborative practice, where authority over the objects was shared, have been a more effective way to involve traditional chiefs in the museum as a safe space for conservation?

A second consideration for the understanding of the local popularity of the Musée comes out of its mission statement; the 1950 White Paper mentions that visits by "anonymous natives" were considered to be the *raison d'être* (the raison for being) (Couttenier 2014:83). According to Waldecker, the museum had a role to play as a place where the migrant workers of the city could reconnect with the culture of their hometowns: "[s]eparated from their villages by the imperatives of industrial life and modern economy, they draw strength with us from the ambience of their country and they are happy" (Couttenier 2014:83). A similar function had, and still has, the myriad of socio-cultural associations in the city who represented the cultural groups, such as the Luba, Kuba or Tshokwe (Gobbers 2016)[28]. According to Bundjoko's informants the museum was "the only place where local people could discover their own culture" […] (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:306). Another testimony by Kabanshi Efeni, plumber (!) in the museum at the time, perceived the art objects as "precious testimonies of the past that help making us aware of [the rich culture] of our ancient populations" (Bundjoko Banyata

[28] Those cultural groups were first forbidden, then accepted and even stimulated by the colonial system, to prevent estrangement and forlornness - leading to conditions of unproductive labourers - among the migrant workers. (Gobbers 2016).

2005:306)[29]. The Musée Leopold II functioned as a place for congeniality and belonging amongst the migrant workers of Elisabethville, but Bundjoko's research reveals that something more was happening: the museum as the *only* place in town where cultural events took place "without any connotation of discrimination", a space of "sincere encounter with the other". (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:307, own emphasis). This is a remarkable statement for a city organised through logics of segregation comparable with the apartheid system in South Africa, with a central white city and black townships[30]. Bunjoko also cites Isaac Kisimba, a Congolese former staff member of the Musée Leopold II who states that: "[…] Whites, Belgians, Greek, Portuguese, English, Jewish and Congolese of different ethnicities, inhabitants of the [white] city and of its peripheries, "évolués[31]", administrators, young and old, found a space of attraction and of cultural interaction. The museum enforced cultural identities, stimulated *dialogue* between the visitors and generated the will to learn something from the others, from other cultures and from their own culture" (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:307, own emphasis). This testimony shows the diverse identities within both Elisabethville's white and black communities. Architecture historian Johan Lagae notes that Elisabethville was a cosmopolitan colonial city where diverse influential spheres were at play, and he argues that the rereading of the history (and its sites of memory) demand therefore 'a historical narrative that goes beyond a mere binary analytical framework of 'colonizer' and 'colonized' (Lagae 2005:6) The Musée Leopold II operated as a space of consolidation and social coherence within the diversified social fabric that typified the segregated city of Elisabethville. Bundjoko suggest that the museum generated proudness and enabled ways to deal with cultural oppression as well as ways to deal with the cultural heterogeneity of the city's population: "by accepting this encounter in a neighbourhood normally reserved only for the whites, the visitors approved, silently, their encounter with the inhabitants of the colonial neighbourhood *but did this with pride of their past*" (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:307, own emphasis).

Although the museum was considered as a place where the 'natives' could 'discover' their home culture, they were also invited to share their knowledge about the cultural

[29]In the mining town of Elizabethville, due to the colonial politics of displacement and immigration and the dynamics of urbanisation, the population was disconnected from their original region and culture (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2017).

[30] For Elizabethville as segregated city see Lagae and Boonen (2012).

[31] The black elite created in the 1950s based on the required assimilation of the Belgian culture, literally meaning: the 'developed' in the meaning of 'civilised' (Dibwe dia Mwembu and Kalaba Mutabusha 2005:41).

contextualisation of the collections (Mikobi 2017). For example, *promenades causeries* (walking tour and talk) and conferences were organised to attract visitors (Couttenier 2014), but can also be considered as a way for the museum to gather additional information and as such 'fieldwork' within the ethnographic museum. The idea of 'indigenous people' going to the museum to rediscover their heritage and at the same time providing the curators with a way to gather information, is what anthropologist Fiunup-Riordan has termed 'fieldwork turned on its head' in the context of the contemporary Canadian museum (Fienup-Riordan 2003:39)[32]. Burkhart Waldecker, MNL's assistant curator in charge of classifying the ethnographic collections, made "eclectic use of evolutionism, diffusionism and functionalism, rather along the lines of the Boas School" and organised the ethnographic exhibition according to native groups (local anthropology) and use and customs (comparative anthropology) (Couttenier 2014:87). This approach differed from the *Musée de la Vie Indigène*, the museum in Kinshasa, that employed an administrative classification, aimed to give arriving colonials information about the cultural customs in the region where they were going to work.

The 'Boas School' refers to American cultural anthropologist Franz Boas who was the founder of the 'cultural relativism' methodology, which implied an understanding of the use of objects (the 'social function'), and required, in other words, a relationship with the users as informants. Frans Olbrechts, director of the Tervuren museum between 1946 and 1958 – which exactly overlaps with the "Musée Cabu" years - had been a student of Boas at Colombia University in New York and is renowned for his innovative research approach to classify African sculpture, combining stylistic analysis with anthropological analysis on the social function of the sculpture (Van Beurden 2013:478). However, Olbrechts conducted his research from Belgium and never did field work in Congo (Van Beurden 2013:478). Against the background of Cabu and Waldecker's persistent desire to prove the relevance of the Musée Leopold II as a regional museum in the colony with its own collections and scientific work, their contact with 'natives' and strategies of 'fieldwork' in Congo can be Tervuren[33]. Also here the hypothetical question could be asked: to what extent would a sharing of

[32] Anthropologists such as Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber and George Byron Gordon have used fieldwork in the museum as a strategy to collect information within the museum with 'indigenous people' about collections remote in space or time from the originating communities (Fienup-Riordan 2003:39).

[33] The scientific value of Cabu and Waldecker's work in the museum was regularly challenged, such as when Olbrechts visited the museum in Elisabethville with a colleague of Boas, "the critical Melville Jean Herskovits" (Couttenier 2014:90).

authority about the ways the objects would be represented within the museum space have been effective for a more equipoised sharing of knowledge – and thus ensured a better understanding of the use of the objects, for the benefit not only of the 'natives' but also for the researchers?

The rapprochement in the Museum Leopold II must be interpreted in the most literate way, as a 'coming closer' of the different communities of Elizabethville. The museum wasn't the place where the rationale of colonisation and the ideas of superiority were put into question (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:47). Bundjoko states that "[…] if contact happened, it was through the spectre of the methods and interpretations of art and African cultures that rationalised the superiority of the culture of the coloniser. The comprehension of the other culture was subordinated to the colonial ideology […]" (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:47). Bundjoko's analysis of the contact that happened in Musée Leopold II, resonates with Marie-Louise Pratt's definition of the 'contact zone' as a "deeply asymmetrical (i.e. unequal) space[s] where a dominant culture would provide for a ''negotiated'' space for certain kinds of cultural exchange, negotiations, and transactions necessary to the maintenance of the imperialistic program" (Pratt in Boast 2011:57). From this point of view, the *raison d'être* to include the 'native' would be another way of maintaining the power relations in the city.

In conclusion, the visitor's statistics of Musée Leopold II - even if proven to be exaggerated – are in sharp contrast to the supposed inaccessibility of colonial museums for local audiences - except for the national elite (Arinze 1998:31). In Belgian Congo, these descriptions match with the *Musée de la Vie indigène* (Museum of Indigenous Life) in Leopoldville that attempted to engage an audience of *evolués* (Van Beurden 2015:146). Deeper research into the dynamics behind the 'rapprochement' that happened with Musée Leopold II falls out of the scope of this study, but another 'museum life' seems to have existed in Belgian Congo[34]. Better insight into Cabu's intentions and personality would help understand his position within the colonial

[34] Such a study would demand a comparison of other 'atypical' museums in a colonial context to understand more profoundly its motives. It would demand also historical evidence of the effects of the post-World War II colonial policy on the management of Musée Leopold II, when concessions were made in order to hold on the colony; for example, by the late 1940s and 1950s, showing a conscious attitude towards cultural diversity in the world in the museum was *bon ton* (fashionable) (Bundjoko Banyata 2005:306). It would demand a deeper investigation the link between the position of Cabu's museum and the peculiar position of the rich mining capital Elisabethville and the Katanga province in general during the Belgian regime, and its affinities with the ways cities of white settlers in British and Southern Africa functioned. It would demand insights of the other ways the museum eventually put in place to reach out to the local communities, beyond the *promenades-causeries*. It would demand a better knowledge of the ways the collections were acquired, how Cabu operated in the field, under which conditions the gifts were donated to the museum by the source communities and how contextual information was transferred.

society, and how he realised this through the means of a museum. The 'cracks' in the colonial discourse about the role and responsibilities of museums in Congo enabled the Musée Léopold II's disobedience regarding orders from Brussels – much in the style settler colonies developed a sense of independence from the metropole. Elisabethville's cosmopolitan social fabric with its multiple spheres of influences enabled the Musée Leopold II to gain momentum and its audience appropriated it as a forum for encounter and exchange. In this sense the museum occupied a complex place within the segregated city. The history of the Musée Leopold II may have created a certain museum culture in the city and its legacy provided one of the foundations for projects such as this research's cases studies.

2.2. 1958 – 1986: New building, still Belgian directors: old wine in new bottles?

The year 1958 meant a radical change for the Leopold II Museum and one that shaped the contours of the museum as it is currently exists. First, a new museum building was designed in 'tropical modernism' style, along with other buildings for the new cultural hub in the white city[35], which is the MNL building today. A second major change was the fact that the self-controlled scientific mission was called into question with the new museum; the museum would now be governed by the newly created university, the Université officielle du Congo (UOC, today the University of Lubumbashi, or UNILU) and marked the new scientific mission of the museum as a centre for multidisciplinary research[36]. Today, the two institutions have maintained this historic relationship (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2018; de Plaen 1989), as illustrated also in the collaboration between UNILU and MNL for *Memoires de Lubumbashi*.

History's turn made it impossible to know if the dynamic of the Musée Leopold II would have transferred to a new extravagant building. The early years of the new building are marked by the tumultuous political changes after Congo became independent on 30 June 1960. Moise

[35] The cultural hub included a theatre (today the Batiment du 30 Juin, used as the Provincial Assembly), the museum, both designed by the Belgian Claude Strebelle from the local architect office Yenga (Swahili for 'to build'), and a music school (today National Radio and Television broadcast post, RTNC Katanga). (Lagae and Boonen 2012; Mwitwa and Pabois(2008)). The new museum, in Yenga's 'poetic version of a post-war tropical modernism' (Lagae 2005:2), couldn't count on Cabu and Waldecker's enthusiasm; Cabu was very attached to the museology of 'his' museum and Waldecker spoke about a 'insane waste of money' for a new building that would be smaller than the old one (Couttenier 2014: 93).

[36]The first university was created in Belgian Congo in 1954: Lovanium in Leopoldville, founded by the Catholic University of Leuven. The following year, the Université Libre de Bruxelles founded the UOC in Elisabethville. The late arrival of universities in Belgian Congo is another evidence of the politics of 'catching up' – in vain - in the 1950s to hold onto the colony during the wave of independence struggle in Asia and Africa.

Tshombe – the man depicted in the statue at Place the la Poste - proclaimed the independent state of Katanga on 11 July 1960. During the armed conflict that followed between 1960 and 1963, the United Nations peacekeeping force in Congo (ONUC) transformed the building into their military barrack. The collections, archives and building were nearly completely destroyed[37] (Bundjoko Banyata 2007; Couttenier 2014; Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007). After the conflict, the Belgian Roger De Poerck was appointed as the new curator (Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007)[38]. In 1967, two exhibition spaces for ethnography were opened (Bundjoko Banyata 2007). The loss of a major part of the collections and archives became the first moment in the museum's history where its "basis for institutional and curatorial authority" (Peers & Brown 2003:1) was undermined.

A second turning point was 1970: the president of the republic Mobutu Sese Seko - in line with his politics of centralisation and nationalisation - created the Institut des Musées Nationaux du Congo (IMNC)[39] that included MNL. In the following years, Mobutu established his politics *Retours à l'authenticité* (Return to authenticity) [40] and changed the country's name to 'Zaire'[41]. He adopted a policy of cultural nationalism with the aim of decolonisation and Africanisation and to bring out prosperity and modernity, through cultural sovereignty and pride. Mobutu's authenticity politics were found to be a political smokescreen for dictatorship and an empty shell that didn't contribute in any way to development or to the decolonisation of cultural identity (De Craene 2012). To accelerate Africanisation of universities, a considerable number of foreign academics were recruited for teaching jobs and doctoral programmes, and Congolese doctoral students were sent to former metropoles to speed up their obtaining diplomas. But Belgians held the senior positions and intellectual mirroring with western models hindered a more profound intellectual decolonisation (De Craene 2012).

[37] The ONUC, constituted by Swedish military forces, destroyed the library and big parts of the collections; ethnographical items were used as firewood or barricades. The museum staff, Belgian and Congolese, rescued what could be evacuated out of Elisabethville. At the end of the war in 1963, what was left of the collections came back to the museum, that had fell into ruin.

[38] Roger De Poerck was professor at the Institut of Fine Arts. Cabu had left town and Waldecker was appointed conservator, but died in 1964 (Couttenier 2014:94).

[21] The following year, in October 1971, Mobutu changed the name of the country into 'Zaire', and the IMNC would change into IMNZ, until the end of the Mobutu regime in 1997, when it turned back into IMNC. The aim of the creation of the IMNC was the reorganisation of the existing museums (Lubumbashi and Kananga), the reactivation of the museum of Kinshasa, whose collections had been transferred to Tervuren during independence, the creation of new museums in Goma, Kisangani, Butembo and Bukavu (Bundjoko Banyata 2007).

[40] A policy first known as '*Retours à l'authenticité*' (Return to authenticity), later subtly corrected by Mobutu himself into '*Recours à l'authenticité'.*

[41] Ironically, Zaire, a corruption by the Portuguese of *nzadi* (river that swallows all rivers), is less authentic than Congo, referring to the Kongo kingdom, people and language.

Similarly, the national museum organisation, known then as Institut des Musées Nationaux du Zaire (IMNZ), had a similar ambiguous strategy; it was used as a political cultural tool to play a role in decolonisation on a transnational level, making claims for the contested colonial guardianship by asking for the restitution of collections located in Belgium[42], and intensifying the commodification of Congolese art on the international market (Van Beurden 2015). This strategy for decolonisation and Africanisation of museums in Congo was in line with those of the universities, and with similar not very convincing results. A decree was signed in 1971 between the IMNZ and the Royal Museum for Central Africa (the Tervuren museum) that meant the Belgium museum would coordinate IMNZ: it would train staff and Belgians would hold senior positions (Culture Congo n.d.).

For Lubumbashi in particular, Mobutu's politics had an imperative impact on the city's intellectual life in the 1970s: the nationalising and reorganisation in 1971 of Université National du Zaire (UNAZA) and the relocation of the humanities faculty[43] to the campus of Lubumbashi, together with the 'collaboration project of scientific policy' meant a huge influx of national and international intellectuals and academics[44]. Mobutu's politics of 'authenticity' to redress cultural sovereignty had an important effect on the revival of the museums in terms of governmental financial support, and stimulated new missions for fieldwork and the acquisition of collections. Since MNL had been looted between 1961 and 1963, missions - mostly archaeological and ethnographic - to reconstitute a collection was crucial. The aim was to collect items with attention to their contextual use (Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007:36) but more detailed information about those new collections and the specific conditions of acquisition are not available in MNL today (Matanga Sapato 2018). The gouged politics of 'authenticity' was also felt in the museology and the public programme of MNL , which was in the hands of foreign curators and researchers and reflected northern museology based on ethnographic aesthetics without any concern for contextualising objects in terms of their functional or symbolic values (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:75; Couttenier 2014:75). Less and less Congolese public visited MNL which was considered to be a 'warehouse of fetishes' (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:75). Bundjoko's description ironically qualifies the post-independence 'new

[42] In 1976, a project of the restitution of collection items, supported by UNESCO, resulted in a scandal because they appeared shortly afterwards on international auctions (Wastiau 2000).
[43] The Faculty of Humanities included the departments Arts and Philosophy; History; Social, Political and Administrative sciences. Also, the Faculty of Geology was based in Lubumbashi.
[44] They included Georges Ngal, Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (Dean of Faculty), Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, Jean-Luc Vellut, Johannes Fabian, Ilona Szombati, Bogumil Jewsiewicky, Edouard Vincke and Guy de Plaen (director of MNL).

museum' more as a colonial museum, than the 'old museum'[45] ever had been during the colonial era.

In 1975, the IMNZ became detached from government control and Congolese museums became independent, which resulted in their being in a permanent state of precariousness (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2018; de Plaen 1989). Mobutu never visited MNL (Bundjoko Banyata 2007; Couttenier 2014), which illustrates the ambiguous role museums played in his decolonisation process. The paradox is also voiced by the first Congolese appointed as director of MNL in 1986, Donatien Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga[46], saying it is above all commendable that the museum still existed considering its turbulent history and the total lack of interest of the Zairian state since the end of the 1970s, an existence Muya believed was thanks to the efforts and concerns of many individuals – including the Belgian staff[47]. The fragmented and unsustainable successes of Mobutu's politics of decolonising Congo's culture and its impact on Congolese museums, points to the need for multifaceted strategies to decolonise museums, which is a holistic process. The MNL was restricted to 'cosmetic' change, which Thomas Panganayi Thondhlana defines as 'old wine in new bottles', such as Africanisation of staff or a name change, without other essential and meaningful changes (Thondhlana 2015).

The aftermath of the intellectual pool of people in Lubumbashi in the 1970s, and the required white presence for its survival - or consecutive revivals – still determines the atmosphere at MNL. The museum has the reputation as a place for high culture (Mwenyi 2016) for the intelligentsia. It is in a continuous state of financial precarity, where foreign projects are the only source of new projects and budget.

3. 1986 : Africanisation and the Unity through Diversity strategy in MNL

Museum director Donatien Muya (1986 – 2015) and his successor Nicole Sapato (since 2015) both testify how MNL's international financial dependence still today determines how it functions as a semi-autonomous organ influenced by a complex amalgam of national and

[45] Lushois colloquial language still refers to *l'ancien musée* (the old museum) or 'musée Cabu' to name the Musée Leopold II (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:74).
[46] Muya, archaeologist and museum intern, had been trained in Europe.
[47] The assumption that it is a miracle that the museum still functions as a museum (contrary to the adjacent theatre building) is shared by others such as former director de Plaen (1989) and Couttenier (2014).

international agendas (Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007), which makes it difficult to guide the institution with an audacious and coherent vision (Matanga Sapato 2017). Bundjoko asserts that curators after the Africanisation in 1986 "had the big task of giving the collections their artistic, historic, aesthetic, cultural and scientific value back" (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:75). Bundjoko doesn't provide information, however, of the means and practices to realise this 'big task'[48]. Bundjoko's 'big task' was not an understatement, considering the holistic process this entails. But the political situation in Congo didn't allow for a 'birth' as happened in Mali under Konaré.

A political and economic crisis at the beginning of the 1990s resulted in Belgium's international cooperation in Zaire being suspended. Belgian was an important sponsor for the museum and this, plus successive *pillages* (lootings) in the region in 1991 and 1993, led to MNL putting its collections under protection and closing to the public. The museum reopened but didn't succeed in communicating this; the public thought the museum had closed once and for all (Bundjoko Banyata 2007:75)[49]. In 1997, Laurent Désiré Kabila overthrew the Mobutu regime and rebaptised the country back into Congo (République Démocratique du Congo). Muya's wake-up call "*Ceci n'est pas un musée!*" in 1999 was the restart of international cooperation in Congo, new international projects were initiated including the reorganisation of the public galleries. It is in this context of renewed international cooperation, as will be detailed further, that the *Mémoires du Lubumbashi* project was started.

For the reorganisation of the permanent display and the ethnographic section in particular, the curators of MNL, among them Henri Bundjoko, changed the colonial classification according to categories of 'ethnicity' into a thematic approach, where the function of the object is central[50]. This exhibition is still on display as the permanent exhibition, with some minor additions made in 2012, essentially adding pictures of objects in context and a 'digital restitution' of pictures of masterpieces from the RMCA's collection[51]. The curatorial starting point *L'unité dans la diversité* (Unity in diversity) reflects the politics of strengthening national

[48] The only funding that potentially contributed to public aspects of museum work, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was a photocopy machine and an electronical typewriter (Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007:38).
[49] In 1993 the IMNZ would take part in a standardising inventories project by ICOM's International Committee for Documentation (CIDOC) (ICOM n.d.).
[50] The objects are now organised in groups of 'Female power and Body art', 'Lineage and Regalia', 'Memory objects', 'Transition Rituals, education and initiation', 'Social ties and coherence' and 'Traditional Religion'.
[51] Realised in collaboration with RMCA (Cornet 2018).

unity through cultural heritage, respecting the diversity of the different populations of Congo. It is remarkable that the choice to develop this unity-in-diversity permanent exhibition goes back to ideas of nationbuilding done in the museums, politicised by the newly independent government just after independence. As early as 1976, Kwasi Myles critically analyses this tendency of politicising the museum: "In developing African countries where nation-building is one of the most significant current phenomena museums are seen as one of the means of bringing cultural awareness to the community and also emphasizing the variety of ethnic cultures which blend to form the national heritage. […] Whilst it is admitted that the concept of a museum as an institution which assists in the cultural rediscovery of a new nation can and has been very useful, *care has to be taken not to use it for propagating narrow and extremist nationalist ideas*" (Myles 1976:197, my emphasis). Anne Gaugue elaborates the critique in a body of research on how African museums in the early years of independence have been used by governments to insist on one, uniform national culture (the idea of unity), and by doing this, deny the particularities of nations' cultural groups (the idea of diversity). The exhibition 'Unity in Diversity' can be interpreted thus at the same time meeting and contesting the strategy of the museum as a tool for nationalism. Gaugue however points out another effect of this nationalisation from which the 'Unity in Diversity' exhibition in MNL doesn't escape: by focusing on traditional cultures, "those museums offer an image of societies where consensus, cohesion and solidarity reigns amidst its members […], congruently, everything that could challenge this order gets silenced. Places of possible contestation of the power, as cities, or contemporary culture, are not represented in the museum." As a result, she concludes, the museum as it exists today in Africa, continues to be the exhibition of the Other (Gaugue 1999:242).

This research doesn't speak directly to the traditional heritage collection of MNL. Nevertheless, by bringing methodologies of shared authority into the museum, it starts to cite strategies of how to bring these objects into a contemporary context in ways which counter the discourse of traditional African culture as a stagnant history.

Chapter 3

Ukumbusho

Memoires de Lubumbashi (2000)

3.1 Introduction

The exhibition and public programme *Ukumbusho* was the first iteration in 2000 of the oral history project *Mémoires de Lubumbashi.* The aim was to present at MNL the research conducted by Lubumbashi University (UNILU) on memories of recent history and daily urban life in the mining city of Lubumbashi[52]. The project also involved international research institutions whose academics were present during the event. Local partners included university researchers, artists, musicians and actors. The project issued a collection of objects linked to the popular culture of the city, which today is part of the museum's collection.

The exhibition, in the main wing of the building, was centred on the objects that the participants of the Ukumbusho project had brought into the museum with their testimony. They were organised in categories: 'patrimony objects' (objects that testified to the former rural life of the informants or their close relatives); objects related to the memory of women (fashion and household objects); to social clubs (*foyer social*), objects that represented the life of the *évolués*; administrative documents (workers' licences from the colonial era, identity cards); objects related to education; to the political conditions of the city (colony, independence, Katangese secession) and consumption goods of the 1970s (gramophones, music records and even a car). Family pictures, press documents and pictures of places in the

[52]With 'recent history' is meant the period from the 1950s until today. The iterations, in chronological order, with accompanying publications that appeared at L'Harmattan (titles hereunder in italic): in 2000 – the iteration on study here – on the diversity of the urban memories with the catalogue *Ukumbusho. Images, objets et paroles : Mémoires de Lubumbashi* (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2001). In 2001, on women's memory with publication *Femmes, modes, musique* (Sizaire 2002); in 2002, on the memory of the former industrial work, in decline since the desindustrialisation of the 1990s with *Le travail hier et aujourd'hui* (Dibwe dia Mwembu et al. 2004) ; in 2003 on the possibility of grief in order to 'digest' the colonial period with *Se souvenir des ancêtres, lever le deuil. Bâtir sur l'expérience* (Jewsiewicki 2004); and finally, in 2004, on violence and memories of violence with the publication, only coming out 11 years later, *Violence et Mémoire de la violence* (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2015).

city[53] were mounted on panel partitions. On the walls, above the low glass cabinets with the 'memory objects', was a large series of popular paintings, expressing urban life in Lubumbashi. The paintings were commissioned, along with a selection of works from the local 'Verbeek' collection[54]. There was also a display of compositions created for the project by secondary school students aged between 15 and 20 years old (Sizaire 2001, 2006). The public programme consisted of activities in the exhibition such as guided tours with participants of the project and school groups, a concert in the museum yard, and a play that was organised outside the museum because of space restrictions (Mwilambwe 2016, Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016).

This case study draws on data from researching the archive, including a range of published articles and the edited catalogue, but also unpublished documents such as photo albums kept in the history department of Lubumbashi University, and objects stored at MNL[55]. Published articles mostly address the overarching project Mémoires de Lubumbashi as a whole and don't speak specifically to the exhibition and cultural week programme I am focusing on in this research. Although the sources are multiple and diverse, they highlight the outcomes of the project (exhibition and published research). The focus of this study is however on the development of the making of exhibitions and unfortunately the process data of this case study was found to be largely unobtainable; an important part of the archive is lost, namely the project's hard disk that contained the digital copy of the working documents[56]. As a way of attempting to recover this lost information I conducted and recorded four in-depth interviews with key people of the project, focussing on the curatorial and collaborative

[53] The pictures were taken by the Belgian couple Muriel and Marc De Haan (Petit 2001).
[54] Father Leon Verbeek has been collecting local arts, mainly popular paintings, since the 1970s. Today, the collection totals about 9000 artworks and is the biggest collection of artworks in the city (Verbeek 2008b, 2008a).
[55] Most of the published articles are written by the main academics behind the project: professors Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu and Bogumil Jewsiewicki (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2007; Jewsiewicki 2005; Jewsiewicki, Dibwe dia Mwembu, and Giordano 2010). The *Ukumbusho* catalogue edited by the curator of the exhibition Violaine Sizaire (Sizaire 2001), is prefaced by Jewsiewicki and the introduction written by co-founder of the project Pierre Petit.
[56] According to Dibwe dia Mwembu (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2017) this brochure served as a model for the exhibition catalogue, published the following year, which gives an idea of content. However, there is no information about the number of copies distributed during the exhibition – on the pictures in the photo album no one seems to be visiting the exhibition with the brochure in hand which raises questions about its distribution. The hard disk contained all the exhibition texts, labels and captions, as well as information about the memory objects the participants provided: name of the object, short description, name of the owner and even the price paid for it in case the object had been acquisitioned (Sizaire 2006: 212).

aspects[57]. An unexpected source of exhibition-process information was found on the physical collection: some items, such as textiles, still had their printed caption pinned on. It seemed insignificant but turned out an important source for the analysis on 'shared authority' as these primary sources gave information about curatorial decisions regarding which and how the produced knowledge was articulated, in terms of writing style and design. The impossibility of being able to interview the late museum director Donatien Muya wa Bitanko as a member of the project's scientific committee and 'host' for the project in MNL, is deeply regretted; he was the only person from the museum involved in the project. Instead, I had to base the research on the positioning of the museum in the project - among other museum perspectives - solely on documents written by others; he never wrote about the Mémoires de Lubumbashi experience. Also, third party information is mostly missing; the archive didn't contain any newspaper articles or other kinds of reviews and the exhibition visitor's book is lost[58]. Apart from artist Bwalya, my efforts to search for feedback on the project from the participants' perspective were unsuccessful; since most of them were already of age at the time of the project 17 years ago, they were too old or were already deceased (Mwilambwe 2016).

3.2. International institutional framework

The construction of the Mémoires de Lubumbashi project, of which Ukumbusho forms part, is a result of renewed institutional collaborations in the early post-Mobutu era[59] (Sizaire 2016). The Université Libre de Bruxelles and UNILU co-founded the research unit "Observatoire du Changement Urbaine" (Observatory for Urban Change) in Lubumbashi[60]. For the launch and implementation of the research unit, the founding academics Pierre Petit and

[57] In Brussels I interviewed Violaine Sizaire, the curator of the exhibition. Violaine Sizaire is trained as an art historian and byzantinologue and, since 1992, worked with museums in Belgium. In 2000, she lived with her husband Pierre Petit in Lubumbashi. In Lubumbashi I interviewed Donatien Diwbe, history professor; Dominique Bwalya, one of the participating artists; and Claude Mwilambwe, sociologist and secretary of the scientific committee. The latter was in charge of the fieldwork; conducting interviews and testimonies, and collecting objects.

[58] Violaine Sizaire published two quotes in her 2006 article, hardly enough to get a deeper insight of the reception by the broader public (Sizaire 2006:220).

[59] The relations between Belgium and Zaire during the Mobutu regime (1965-1997) have been largely determined by the Cold War, after which the relations cooled down and in 1990 the bilateral cooperation was put to an end.

[60] Project financed by CUD (Coopération universitaire pour le Développement), today known as ARES (Académie de Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur), the NGO Fédération Wallonie – Bruxelles (francophone community of Belgium) and partner of the Belgian Directorate – General for Development (ARES n.d.).

Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu wanted to organise an exhibition and involved Bogumil Jewsiewicki from the University of Laval, Quebec[61]. Jewsiewicki proposed a larger project, over multiple years, with a gathering of researchers in Lubumbashi each year and cultural activities in the form of a *semaine culturelle*, a 'cultural week' (Jewsiewicki 2001:XII). The project was an opportunity to continue and intensify research relationships between Laval, Bruxelles and Lubumbashi.

RMCA had also been exploring ways to redevelop their relationship with their Congolese partners. Known by the public at large as a museum, it is important to note that RMCA is first a research institution, depending administratively on the Belgian Federal Science Policy (BELSPO) (Royal Museum for Central Africa 2018). In 1998, RMCA and the Belgian Federal Development programme signed a new framework agreement (Royal Museum for Central Africa 2018), which meant a substantial financial framework for RMCA collaborations in the DRC. A new dynamic was created within the RMCA history department regarding colonial historiography with a strong focus on political history[62], in collaboration with Congolese historians in RMCA's team, but also in collaboration with the Centre for Documentary Studies and Research on Central Africa (CERDAC) research centre in Lubumbashi, of which Dibwe dia Mwembu was director from 1994 until 1999 (de Lame 2005, Royal Museum for Central Africa 2002:386)[63]. Consequently, the cultural weeks of the 2002, 2003 and 2004 Mémoires de Lubumbashi editions were opportunities for RMCA historians and anthropologists to present their work in Lubumbashi (de Lame 2005).

Regarding collaborations for museum practice, the agreement enabled the first fundamental collaboration with IMNC. Renewed cooperation with MNL was part of the programme, which included the realisation of the new "Unity in Diversity" permanent exhibition (Royal Museum

[61] Bogumil Jewsiewicki had been teaching at the UNAZA Humanities campus Lubumbashi between 1971 and 1976 and during his stay conducted research on popular culture by collecting life stories. After leaving Zaire (Congo's name at the time), Jewsiewicki continued his career at the University of Laval, Canada, where between 1989 and 1996 he developed a special programme for Zairian historians to obtain a doctoral degree at Laval University. He supervised five Congolese PhD students, of which Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, one of his students in the 1970s, obtained his degree in 1990. With the financial support of the Conseil de recherche en sciences sociales et humaines du Canada (CRSH), Jewsiewicki and Dibwe dia Mwembu continued jointly to research the history of urban culture and memory in Lubumbashi. Today, Jewsiewici is Professor Honoris Causa at the University of UNILU (2016) and Professor Emeritus in Laval (2011) (Université Laval 2011; Université de Lubumbashi 2016).

[62] As Lies Busselen notes in her honours thesis about Congolese participation in the RMCA, at the turn of the 21st century the RMCA started a process of catch-up on critical colonial and postcolonial historiography, which until then had not been institutionally underpinned (Busselen 2012:76).

[63] The research unit of the universities of Kinshasa CEP (*Centre d'Etudes Politiques* - Centre for Political Studies) was also a partner.

for Central Africa 2002:98)[64]. Another result of the cooperation was RMCA's art historian Violaine SIzaire being appointed as curator of the Ukumbusho exhibition (Jewsiewicki 2001; Sizaire 2016). However, as will be argued further, the two projects were managed and actualised separately and by different people.

In short, historical collaborations between institutions (universities as well as museums) and personal contacts joined forces in Mémoires de Lubumbashi. Even if the realisation of the project is local and as Jewsiewicki puts it, "rooted in the past and present of the city of Lubumbashi", the construction of it – and the funding - is definitely international (Jewsiewicki 2001:XII)[65]. The collaborations were primarily driven by research institutions, and this project, being academia-driven and international, would dominate the strategies of the different editions of the 'cultural weeks' over the years, but also aspects of its museum work.

[64] IMNC, formerly IMNZ, changed name in line with the country when Laurent-Désiré Kabila overthrew the Mobutu regime in 1997. Luc Tack, general director of the RMCA in 1999, first job was to renew contact with scientific establishments in Congo, since the bilateral agreements between the two countries had been abrogated end of the 1980s. Since 2000, framework agreements established with the Directorate-General Development (DGD), the Belgian Federal Development programme and with IMNC, are still running. RMCA reelaunched cooperation with the national museum of Lubumbashi (RMCA 2002:98), focusing on the realisation of the new permanent exhibition. There were also collaborations with CERDAC in Lubumbashi, Afrika Institute with a triple mandate; publication, documentation and research in the area of Kinshasa, Congo in the postindependence period (RMCA 2002: 380).

[65] Dibwe dia Mwembu describes the project construction in the first place as locally supported jointly between the Université de Lubumbashi and the City of Lubumbashi City Council. Financially however, the project depended entirely on foreign money, with (over the different years and editions): l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), la Chaire de Recherche du Canada en histoire comparée de la mémoire, la communauté française de Belgique the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) des Pays-Bas, and for the 2004 edition, the Prince Claus Foundation of the Netherlands.
The scientific committee of the *Ukumbusho* exhibition was constituted of Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu (president of the committee), Bogumil Jewsiewicki, Gabriel Kalaba Mutabusha (Observatoire du Changement Urbain, UNILU), Kizobo O'Bweng-Okwess (UNILU), Lwamba Bilonda (UNILU, enquêteur), Marcel Ngandu Mutombo (obtained a PhD with Jewsiewicki at Laval and was fieldwork interviewer for the project), the director of MNL Donatien Muya wa Bitanko, Pierre Petit (ULB, ULg, Observatoire du Changement Urbain), and historian Jean – Luc Vellut (UCL). The exhibition was jointly organised by : Centre interuniversitaire d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions (CéLAT, Laval), CUD (Coopération Universitaire au développement), Communité française de Belgique, the history department at UNILU, MNL, RMCA, Observatoire du changement urbain (UNILU, Université libre de Bruxelles or ULB and University of Liège or ULg).

3.3. Shared interpretative authority: the exhibition at the beginning was not the exhibition at the end

3.3.1. Ukumbusho: research grounded in oral history practices

The rationale for the research team, according to Dibwe dia Mwembu, was to reconnect the Lushois and especially the youth with the history of their city (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2013, 2016). Jewsiewicki speaks in terms of an 'urgent need' (Jewsiewicki 2005:27). Also, the research team wanted to explore for this first edition "how the population of Lubumbashi would react on the *dialogue* established with local and foreign university researchers" (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2007:136, my emphasis). In other words, while being an oral history project focussing on memory and sociohistorical change in urban Congo, it also had the ambition of being a public history project, communicating the research to the public through an exhibition and cultural events.

The core of the research for *Ukumbusho* consisted of fieldwork through interviewing and collecting. A selection of people was asked to share their 'live accounts' (*récits de vie*) and to bring a memory-object they commented on with a testimony[66]. Dibwe dia Mwembu considers the population as co-creators of history, holders of history (*détentrice de l'histoire*) and proprietors of the cultural heritage. The informants of the project, for Dibwe dia Mwembu 'popular intellectuals' (*intellectuels populaires*), are the people who have knowledge by experience: their own lived experience, but also indirect experience, as holders of the collective memory[67]. Four categories of 'popular intellectuals' can be distinguished in the project; first, the 'narrators' contributing life stories or testimonies and memory-objects. Secondly, musicians whose music is intrinsically related to the city: the late Edouard Masengo, singer-songwriter in Lubumbashi since the 1950s, and *kalindula* musicians[68]. Thirdly, popular painters, commissioned to illustrate the theme 'ukumbusho'[69]. Lastly, the theatre company

[66] In the vocabulary of the project those were called 'memory-objects, memory-images and memory-words'
[67] More than 100 'intellectual populaires' contributed to Ukumbusho (Sizaire 2001).
[68] Kalindula: popular satirical music, typical for the Congolese / Zambian cupper belt, traditionally performed at funerals (Dibwe dia Mwembu and Mwilambwe 2003).
[69] Claude Mwilambwe commented that the painters could also be commissioned to illustrate customs (such as ways of wearing particular clothes) (Mwilambwe 2016)

Mufwankolo, popular in Lubumbashi throughout all social classes for its ironic representations of daily life in the city.

For Dibwe dia Mwembu, the approach redresses the omissions one can observe in the written history of Lubumbashi and Congo in general - mostly written by non-Africans – and to 'complete' the African perspective, with particular attention also to women's perspective (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2007). The methodology of the project, as the Congolese intellectual V.Y. Mudimbe notes, is in line with 'subaltern studies' and 'history from below' (Mudimbe 2010: 7-22) and Dibwe dia Mwembu refers to the seminal work of oral historian Jan Vansina and his explorations in oral history as an alternative source to rewrite the historiography of Africa. Dibwe dia Mwembu brings Vansina's methodology from the context of precolonial and rural Congo to the contemporary African urban setting (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2008). In short, Dibwe dia Mwembu's motivations tie in with the political motivations of oral history, how it can challenge hegemonic narratives and contribute to the rewriting of African history.

The project draws on more theories from oral history, such as acknowledgement of the importance of the genuine voice without 'correcting' this if information was proven to be 'historically false', considering that also deformed memory is information. This approach relates to the ground-breaking theories of oral historian Alessandro Portelli for the recognition of oral history as a historiographical practice. The value of oral history had been put in question because of the 'historically inaccurate character' of memories, but according to Alessandro Portelli, the strength of oral history lies in its capacity to reveal how historical facts have been experienced and remembered (Portelli 2006)[70]. Dibwe dia Mwembu supports in this regard the principle of 'intertwining perspectives' (*regards croisés*) between the different sources of information (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016). He uses the notion to describe

[70] Applied to the context of Lubumbashi, Dibwe dia Mwembu gives the example of the 1941 strike in Cité Gécamines. The mining company workers, under pressure to produce more due to the circumstances of the Second World War, went on strike for a salary raise, but were shot at by the colonial power. Hundreds died and were injured (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2001:94–95). Oral history research has enabled historians to recount the event from the Congolese (subaltern) viewpoint, but some informants recounted people fled into the church, whereas others are convinced people fled out of the church. This, says Dibwe dia Mwembu, tells the historian not that much about the historical facts of the direction of the turmoil that broke out when shooting started, but it does inform a lot about how the position of the church is perceived. On one hand, people tend to remember that the House of the Lord was a safe escape, but contrary information reveals how the population mistrusted the church, considered a pillar of the tripartite colonial system of state, church and business (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016).

the different perspectives that can emerge between informants who testify about the same fact, but also the possibly different perspectives between historian and informant.

3.3.2. The dialogue in the finished product: *regards croisés* as shared authority

Acknowledging these distinct perspectives and making them visible in the outcome of the research is applying the notion of shared authority in exhibition-making. In some ways the *Ukumbusho* exhibition revealed itself to be a classic example of shared authority in practice, that Frisch through Hutchison advocates for. For example, from the captions pinned onto the clothes and excerpts published in the catalogue, it can be deduced that the voices of the distinct authorities – namely, the narrator (expressed in the testimonies) and the historian (for contextualising information) – had a different, but equal position in the exhibition. The narrator's accounts were put in italics to distinguish them from the historical contextualisation. Both types of texts were signed with the name of the narrator and the name of the historian who provided the information. This is exactly what a shared authority is about; respecting the author-ity (to use Frisch's notation) by acknowledging and *naming* the informants (by experience or by research), to avoid the more common 'anonymous authoritarian museum voice', as referred to by Hutchison (2013). At the same time it represents the individual voice as opposed to an blended voice that problematically represents 'the community', as had been defended by Hutchison (2013). It must nevertheless be noted that the interviewers had penned the informant's accounts during the interview and there is no sound record of the original account (Sizaire 2006), so, a certain process of editing happened from spoken word into text at the moment of interviewing itself, of which there is no trace[71]. In other words, applying shared authority in an uncontaminated way can only happen when it is taken into account from the very beginning.

In short, the project didn't collaborate with informants to figuratively swallow their input, through gathering, analysing, correcting, contextualising and blending it into in an informative text panel. Without the notion of a shared authority explicitly in mind, but drawing on considerations of oral history theory and calling it *regards croisés*, the *Ukumbusho* project

[71] The texts in the catalogue are written in the first person; but clearly structured (sometimes even with enumeration bullets) which indicates considerable 'editing' by the interviewer.

applied the notion of shared history in the exhibition and catalogue, as the public products of the project.

3.3.3. The dialogue in the experience of the finished product: shared interpretative authority

Dibwe dia Mwembu's use of the word 'dialogue' takes its whole significance once the exhibition was put in place and joins in its own way the propositions of Hutchison (2013) who argued that stimulating a shared authority with the audience required the use of democratic interpretative strategies and techniques, proposing practical consideration of Frisch's suggestion about the *experience* of the exhibitions. These strategies and techniques, Hutchison says, mean that conditions have to be created for the audience to feel invited to respond to the exhibition and to incite dialogue. One such technique was to create exhibitions as 'dialogical "texts"' to generate 'empathetic relationships' with the stories of other people (Hutchison 2013:144). Ukumbusho went beyond the level of the texts but brought dialogue int0 the exhibition in its most explicit way: Claude Mwilambwe, the main fieldworker on the project, was at the exhibition at all times to engage with the audience, register their reactions, present it as feedback to the scientific committee and re-imput it in the exhibition (Mwilambwe 2016). For example, he received new objects that visitors proposed to add to the display; "me too I have a…." or "you can't talk about this without showing that, and I have one" (Mwilambwe 2016). The exhibition at the beginning was not the exhibition at the end but a dynamic and evolving presentation. The fact that new objects had been brought to the exhibition by visitors and integrated into the display, resulting in a continuously developing ensemble, indicates that the audience felt invited to share and contribute their interpretative authority. In other words, Ukumbusho put in place a dialogue, but also 'listened' to it; the project incited the audience to react and the project team incorporated this feedback. The fruitful dynamics this process enabled shows how a shared interpretative authority can be a tool for inclusiveness and democratic practices. Another example is the guiding tour by the narrators of the project. Walking through the exhibition, they performed their testimony with their object for the public. According to the organisers, this was one of the strong moments of the project (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016; Mwilambwe 2016; Sizaire 2006). Dibwe dia Mwembu took this even further: for him the objects on their own didn't constitute the

Ukumbusho exhibit. The exhibition was only complete and to be called 'the exhibition' at these moments of activation (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016). This insight about the performative, dialogic exhibition, is a challenging thought regarding what Kreps has called an 'appropriate museology'. At the same time,the idea of an activated exhibition has considerable impact when it comes to searching for concepts for long term installations as well as for permanent displays.

3.4 On the Collaborative and the collective: 'working apart together'

Ukumbusho had put together distinct expertise embodied by different types of contributors: scholars, citizens, artists and curators. Within those types, different profiles were represented: foreigners and locals, men and woman, musicians and painters, youth and elders. Collaborations between multiple specialists have been argued to have the potential of adding value which is more than the sum of everyone's contribution (Shannon 2009). For *Ukumbusho*, this potential has been underexploited; everyone had a clear function without much exchange *between* the collaborators (Sizaire 2016). For example, Claude Mwilambwe, in charge of the field work, described his task as "between the scientific committee and the population; I received directives from the committee and then 'went down' to the population" (*je descendais vers la population*) (Mwilambwe 2016). The committee selected the most 'sparkling' testimonies and 'most representative paintings' for the exhibition (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016)[72]. This selection was subsequently passed on to curator Violaine Sizaire. Her task was to make a coherent storyline for the exhibition, but she did this alone (Sizaire 2016). The informants (narrators and artists confused) didn't meet each other during the preparations. Everyone had been interviewed apart and the painters, musicians and theater people had worked separately (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016; Mwilambwe 2016).

In this way a clear distinction between the 'academic intellectuals' and the 'popular intellectuals' was maintained. Jewsiewicki recounts that the 'social partners', as he calls the non-academics, put the elements of the public programme in place autonomously, leaving

[72] I have varying and somewhat contradictory information about the selection of the paintings put on display; according to Dibwe dia Mwembu it was Sizaire who made the selection, with the historical value as decisive criterium over the aesthetical value. According to the painter Bwalya, it was the committee who made the selection. selected.

the academics in a position "of having to provide the means for the realisation of the performances" (Dibwe dia Mwembu and Kalaba Mutabusha 2005:29). For the participating painter Bwalya, the project was a commission as any other commission; his creativity as a painter was exclusively in the representation of the theme 'ukumbusho' (memory) (Bwalya 2016). Mwilambwe acknowledges that the work of the artists was a mere illustration of the theme rather than conceptually challenging it (Mwilambwe 2016). The Mufwankolo theatre play too, *Maisha ya Lubumbashi* (Life in Lubumbashi), had been "put in place completely independently [from the Mémoires de Lubumbashi committee]" (Jewsiewicki 2005:30) and was, according to Sizaire ,of dubious quality, a "caricatural opposition between the life before (discipline, school and control) and after independency (orgies and seduction in bars, corruption, egoism)" (Sizaire 2006 : 217). The curatorial committee distanced itself in other words from the creative or artistic part of the project, with mixed appreciation of it as a result.

The separation between 'popular' and 'academic' was also reflected with regard to the public. For example, the visitors assisting the session with the narrators in the exhibition were a restricted group of mostly university people. The performances of the *karindula* and of the singer Masengo attracted lots more – and a more diverse – public, but happened in the museum courtyard and no connection was made to the exhibition or project. For the Mufwankolo theater company, such a huge audience was expected it was decided to programme the performance in a school hall in town (Sizaire 2016).

The collective approach was, in other words, rather a 'working apart together', an accumulation of distinct expertise but without the possibility to reinforce each other as collaborative practices can do. The collective moments installed during the exhibition, for example with the narrators in the exhibition during the guiding tour (it was also the first time the narrators met each other), had been fruitful for the installation of dialogue, but also as feedback of the narrators to the organisers about their contribution during the research phase. Since the written text for captions and panels or the ways the objects were on display hadn't been validated by those who had contributed them, reactions came at this public moment. For example, a belt wasn't displayed in the right way; the organisers corrected it and also commissioned a painter to make an illustration (Mwilambwe 2016). Some of those reactions were decisive elements for the orientations and process of later editions of *Mémoires de Lubumbashi*. For example, the potential of bringing the stories together *before* the exhibition was picked up for the fourth edition, in the form of a focus group, which was

filmed and projected at the exhibition (Mwilambwe 2016). Also, a *Nganda Mémoire* (memory pub) had been created for this edition, a public moment where the narrators chatted as if they were in a bar, sometimes completing each other, sometimes contradicting each other (Mwilambwe 2016). Those experiences show the potential for multivoiced practice when distinct expertise is brought together during the process[73], as Hutchison has been arguing for. However, apart from writing text panels together and designing the product in a shared way, I will explore another, and provide reflection, about the potential of projects such as *Ukumbusho* for a more indepth democratic practice, if the notion of shared authority had been taken into consideration at the beginning of the project, namely at the moment of selection of the contributors.

A first reflection concerns the selection of the narrators. The research team relied on relationships from former research they had conducted (Petit 2001); according to Sizaire, they represented a particular section of Lubumbashi's population (Sizaire 2016). They were elderly people from a middle-income and rather affluent environment, a community that, from their privileged position, recalled the golden years of Lubumbashi such as the late colonial period (about being *évolué*, having access to social clubs) or, after independence, of the state mining company Gécamines (access to consumption goods, a good job). Sizaire addressed this biased narrative and an attempt for redress was made by employing a second interviewer with another network of informants, but the balance was never restored (Sizaire 2016). As a result, the exhibition did indeed reflect indeed the voice of the Congolese and contributed in this way to the African perspective in history writing, but it did this in a selective way. Social inequalities within Lushois society weren't challenged in *Ukumbusho*. Involving 'the community', as a basket concept masking a variety of people with varying social status, power, interests, opinions, stories or sensibilities, has the capacity to be but isn't a guarantee for a more inclusive or democratic discourse. The reflection can also be extended towards the presence of the 'woman's perspective' in Lushois society, as had been argued for by Dibwe dia Mwembu. Woman narrators were indeed involved, but also here, a more differentiated woman's voice was absent, because the dominant representation of women were from a comfortable social position. The contribution of women in the making of Lushois society was certainly illustrated with the women's accounts (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016; Mwilambwe

[73] An example is that the decision to work on women's topics and more with woman arose from feedback on the *Ukumbusho* edition (Mwilambwe 2016).

2016), but my point is that the submissive position of woman in society was not challenged in the oral history project. As a Belgian white woman, I want to avoid an overly emancipated perspective on the situation, but an example given by Bogumil Jewsiewicki can underpin my statement: according to Jewsiewicki, the museum operated as a space of 'ex-territoriality of the real', by which he means the museum operates as a space where objects of political power are neutralised which allows for a 'temporary suspension of authority' in general (Dibwe dia Mwembu and Kalaba Mutabusha 2005:28). He gave the example of how a fierce debate happened during one of the public events in the yard of the museum, with women talking out loud about topics that aren't easily raised in the public sphere. In other words, the need for a more democratic discourse, about social status, about women's position, or other Lushois-inherent topics had been invoked. According to Sizaire, a sharing of authority of academics with the public had never been considered as a strategy. Her opinion about it is that the hierarchical and male-led Lushois society wouldn't enable such a process (Sizaire 2016). By the selection of its topics and discourses, *Ukumbusho* had challenged neither the hegemonic discourse within Lushois society (although the project had enabled an utterance on some uncontrolled moments) nor the high culture – a profile that typifies the university and the museum. Jewsiewicki and Dibwe dia Mwembu (2005) have addressed the complexity for the understanding of this seemingly nostalgic revival of colonial memories. They argue that the individual memories of a colonial past is not about going back to this past, but controlling the present 'that exclude the grand-children' (Jewsiewicki and Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005).

A second reflection about the long-term impact a project such as *Ukumbusho* could have enabled concerns the potential to change something within the museum, as will be explored in the following section.

3.5 Ukumbusho's rationale to change MNL's museum practice: confusion

For curator Violaine Sizaire, the exhibition project had, apart from revealing the university's research in order to 'sensitise the population of the city of some form of its heritage' (Sizaire 2006: 210-211), also aimed to be a strategy to redress the poor visitor numbers at the museum. Even though access is free of charge and the staff 'dynamic and motivated', Sizaire notes, the poor attendance is because the Lushois "are suspicious of the collections shown in the museum, being objects linked to witchcraft or the world of the dead [and] also the reconstitution of several tombs in the archaeological section are badly perceived'' (Sizaire

2006: 210, own translation). Museum curator Henri Bundjoko and director Donatien Muya refer to the reputation too of MNL as being a 'fetish warehouse' or a 'museum of skeletons'[74] (Bundjoko 2007: 75, more). Sizaire draws on Anne Gaugue's critique on 'otherness' represented in the post-colonial African museum (Sizaire 2006, Gaugue 1999) and refers to the success of the District Six museum in Cape Town in South Africa. She argues "the population is not totally disinterested in cultural heritage, but its interest is rather orientated towards 'more local heritage'' (Sizaire 2006: 210). Sizaire takes Gaugue's philosophical concern about the absence of contemporary and urban culture in the African museum and turns it into a practical tool for improving visitors' numbers, arguing that exhibitions on contemporary heritage subjects, with objects selected by the population, could be a strategy for attracting visitors (Sizaire 2006). Sizaire addresses the problem of exhibiting traditional cultural objects (connected to power and religion) and archaeological findings (the Sanga tombs with skeletons) (Sizaire 2006: 210) but my understanding is that excluding those from the project strategy is also excluding creative solutions for a way out of the impasse, especially considering that both projects (the renovation of MNL's permanent display and *Ukumbusho*) happened simultaneously. Gaugue speaks about the lack of the contemporary and urban, but that doesn't necessarily exclude objects related to contemporary forms of traditional heritage, objects that could enable a contemporary lecture of the older collections[75] (Watson 2008). Furthermore, in the case of MNL, Sizaire's call for the need for 'more local' collections isn't entirely appropriate. First, the museum collections are -relatively- *geographically* local, and secondly, if the museum was considered to be holding dislocated artefacts, the relationship of the Lushois with the museum would be one of 'diaspora within the country'. So the museum's relevance - as also argued in the chapter about the history of the museum – in a city that arose out of migration with a significant number of socio-cultural groups - can be to play (as the 'Musée Cabu' has illustrated) an important role of reconnection. In this regard, the 'disinterest' of Lushois in the traditional objects in MNL is arguable and addresses only a part of a more complex relationship of the Lushois with MNL. The need she addresses of creating museum collections that are spiritually neutral or neutralised is insightful, but on the other hand, project colleague Jewsiewicki's idea of the museum being an 'ex-territoriality

[74] In the newspaper article *Diriger un musée congolais, pari fou* (Managing a Congolese museum, a crazy challenge), Muya reveals people won't shake his hand because he 'manipulates fetishes' (Duplat and Turine 2002).

[75] Not to be confused with anthropologist Johannes Fabian's critical reading of the use in anthropological discourse of the 'ethnographic present', namely, describing other cultures and societies in the present tense (Fabian 2014).

of the real' where power objects are neutralised, presents a different reading of the museum and its objects and how these speak to the city and its inhabitants (Dibwe dia Mwembu and Kalaba Mutabusha 2005:28).

In other words, the role of the museum in the project isn't based on a solid argument among the different collaborators. The concerns regarding the museum seem instead to be a self – fulfilling prophesy: oral history is the 'core business' of the history department of UNILU, so it is suitable to pretend the museum needs this as a strategy for attracting visitors. Also Daniel de Lame, anthropologist at RMCA and co-editor of a publication (2005) that resulted out of the institutional collaborations at the frontiers of the Mémoires de Lubumbashi project, articulates her ideas in the publication's introduction her ideas about the project's role in the general development strategies of the museum. The Lubumbashi museum, she notes, is indeed poorly visited except by visitors on compulsory school tours and she is convinced that the Mémoires de Lubumbashi approach, working with recent heritage, is the strategy for the museum to reconnect with the Lubumbashi population. She recalls this regretted time when the museum was a place of memory and well-being for the inhabitants of the city - referring to the period of 'Musée Cabu'. If the museum can be a place for ancient interpretations of relations between people and their environment, she argues, why can't the museum be a space where the visitors can develop, in a scientific but also playful way, a new vision of their relation to the present, while having a rich knowledge of the past (de Lame 2005: 25)? According to her, the Mémoires de Lubumbashi project offered a space for re-actualisation of the past through action, which had a leverage effect on the museum to become an 'instrument for social construction' (de Lame 2005: 25). My understanding is that de Lame's ideas are full of insights of possible and more holistic strategies for the museum, but that the project wasn't shaped with these strategies in mind and her argument is an *a posteriori* thought.

This fragmented strategy is reflected in the ways MNL director Muya had considered the project, as a 'guest' project popping in and out. Although funded with foreign money and happening in the museum – Mémoires de Lubumbashi even had an office space within the museum, Muya doesn't allude to the project in the article where he provides an overview of the international support and projects in the museum (Muya wa Bitanko Kamwanga 2007). Leaving aside considerations about eventual political positioning, certain competing forces between different departments in the museum (archaeology, traditional heritage,

contemporary history), the fact that the contributions Muya does mention include detailed information about technical support such as paint and typewriters; support for fieldwork missions and for the permanent display reveals the director didn't consider this temporary project initiated by other structures as part of a larger innovative strategy. A fruitful collaboration between the renovation of the permanent display and Ukumbusho didn't happen: Sizaire recalls she had been in contact with museum staffers Jacqueline Kaluba and Henri Bundjoko, but both worked on the permanent displays in the museum and weren't involved in the project (Sizaire 2016).

Several attempts of making a permanent display of the Ukumbusho project have failed (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016; Jewsiewicki 2005). Contrary to the intentions of the initiators of the project - 'guests' in the museum – who saw the project as a stategy, if not *the* strategy, for inclusion of new publics, collections or narratives, the project didn't succeed in making a proper change within the museum institute. This understanding questions the effectiveness of the intentions of 'guest projects' if these are not articulated, recognised, shared and implemented in the first place with the host institution. However, contrary to other 'host' projects in the museum, the director was part of the committee and as such, the project could have had a more long-term impact if the museum would have deployed, more vertically within its structure, the authority it had been offered through the project. In the context of the museum's history, when *Ukumbusho* was put in place in 2000, it was the beginning of a turning point in MNL after a long period of 'survival strategies'.

3.6. Conclusion

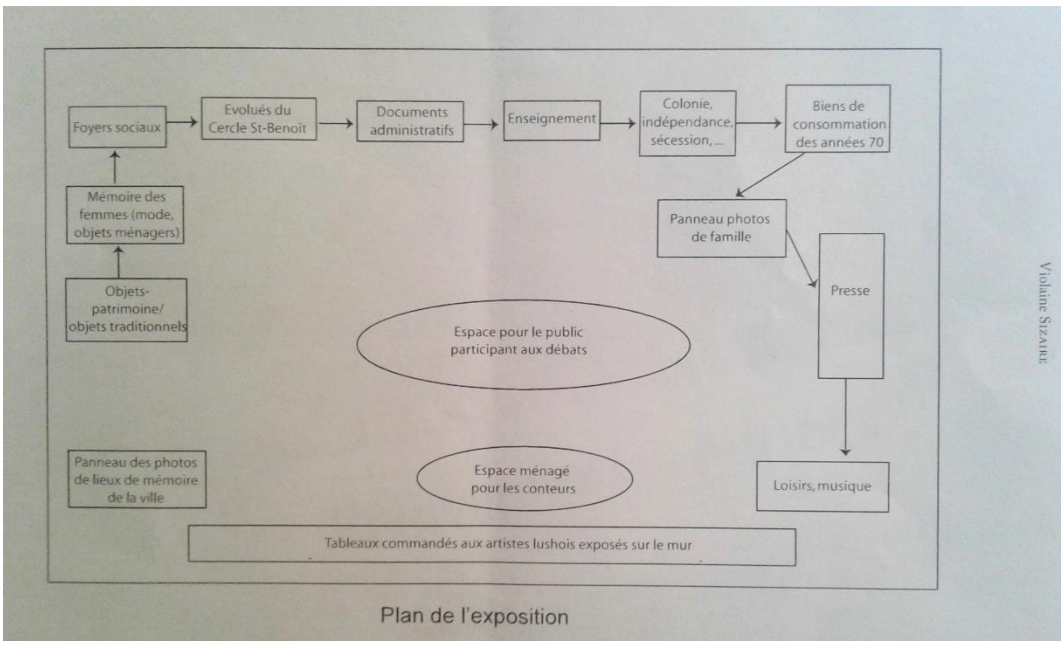
Congolese historian Isidore Ndaywel é Nziem (2006) drew attention to the important body of literature the research project produced (such as in the fields of historiography, social anthropology and memory studies), within the larger context of the immense contribution to Congolese historiography by the Lubumbashi historians. This academically orchestrated approach to the project was deliberate, and somewhat inevitable considering it had been set up by academics. Bogumil Jewsiewicki notes that the organisers were more skilled in the academic components of the project. He distinguishes between the research part and the public part – which he calls the 'social' part – with the terminology of cultural theorist Michel de Certeau; saying 'the collective in charge' has been subject to actions and influences

exercised on them, and is not in position to take ownership of a social field, (de Certeau's 'proper'), to engage in strategic actions within society. Therefore, he continues, the social part of the project must be described in terms of 'tactics' (Jewsiewicki 2005:28). *Ukumbusho's* collective approach worked as an oral and public history project in terms of generating a collection of individual academic outcomes, but not as an initiative that generates change within society or within the museum, where collaborative practices are prerequisites throughout the process. However, the museum could have taken the opportunity to be in charge of the development of strategies for the 'social part', but the time wasn't ripe, mentally and organisationally, for MNL and the international partners to research, accept and distribute an even bigger sharing needed for a more ambitious change. This reveals how shared authority, as applied to exhibition-making, touches on a complex network of authorities and, as a consequence, the redistribution of the authority is a multifaceted and complex negotiation. Also, analysing the oral and public history project in Lubumbashi through the scope of shared authority reveals how effective it has been when applied to the rewriting of African history and challenging hegemonies on a global level, but it didn't automatically challenge hegemonies and inequalities on a local level.

The *Ukumbusho* Exhibition Location
Musée National de Lubumbashi



The museum building in 2014 (© Tristan Guilloux)



Lay-out of the exhibition *Ukumbusho* (image from Sizaire 2006:218)

Images from the *Ukumbusho* exhibition

(pictures from the photo album Mémoires de Lubumbashi)

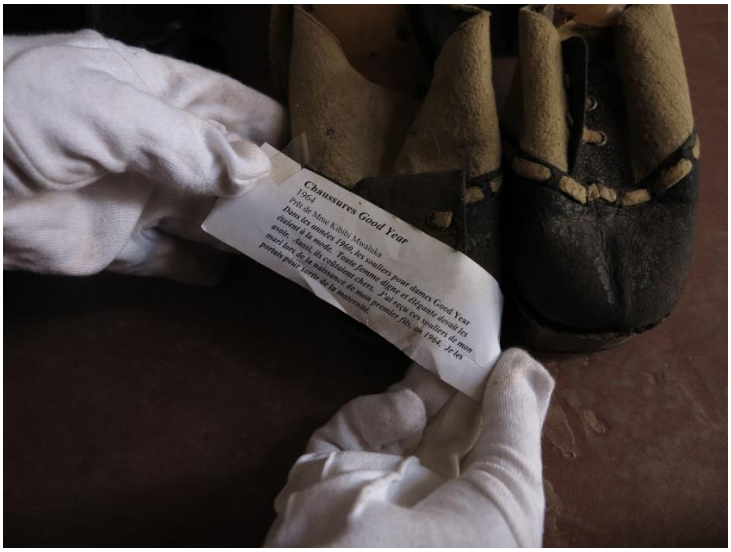






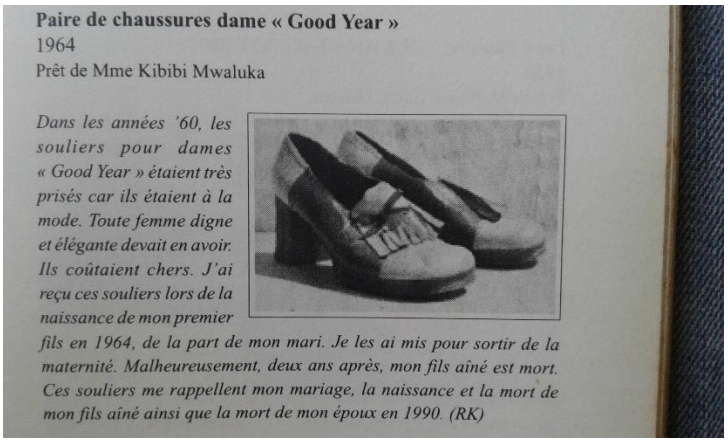


Captions from the *Ukumbusho* exhibition



Exhibition caption of 'Good Year', found during the research in the collection in 2014 (© Vaughn Sadie).

The text is a first person narration of Mrs Kibibi Mwaluka, the owner of the shoes, recounting how the shoes were fashionable in the 1960s. She received them as a gift from her husband and wore them when she came out of hospital after having given birth to her child.



Paire de chaussures dame « Good Year »
1964
Prêt de Mme Kibibi Mwaluka

Dans les années '60, les souliers pour dames « Good Year » étaient très prisés car ils étaient à la mode. Toute femme digne et élégante devait en avoir. Ils coûtaient chers. J'ai reçu ces souliers lors de la naissance de mon premier fils en 1964, de la part de mon mari. Je les ai mis pour sortir de la maternité. Malheureusement, deux ans après, mon fils aîné est mort. Ces souliers me rappellent mon mariage, la naissance et la mort de mon fils aîné ainsi que la mort de mon époux en 1990. (RK)

Page in publication with the 'Good Year' shoes.

Here, the story is more complete than on the exhibition caption and ends with Mrs Mwaluka remembering that two years after the birth of her child, the baby died.

Public programme *Ukumbusho*

(pictures from the photo album Mémoires de Lubumbashi)



A narrator tells the story about her memory-object



Audience of the guided tour with the narrators



Singer Edouard Masengo at the exhibition

Chapter 4

Waza Chumba Wazi

Revolution Room

4.1 Introduction: Waza Chumba Wazi (2014) and Revolution Room

The exhibition project *Waza Chumba Wazi*, organised in 2014 by Art Center Waza in Lubumbashi, formed part of a larger project that explored participatory art practices, called *Revolution Room*[76]. The project builds on the 2000 *Ukumbusho* project by revisiting its research methods and the physical collection, which enables a certain continuity in the analyses between both case studies of this research. As a project fundamentally grounded in contemporary arts practices, *Waza Chumba Wazi's* envisages distinct interpretations of collaborative methodologies and practices, and its analysis and comparison with Mémoires de Lubumbashi enlarges perspectives on possible approaches of museum work.

The exhibition, located in a rented house in the former state mining worker's camp Gécamines, displays objects in a 'suspended scenography', scattered throughout the living room. There were pieces of white paper on the walls, each displaying a picture of an object with the verbatim record of the project participant's testimony about the object serving as its caption. The colloquial names of the objects were printed on paper stuck onto the floor under the actual objects. The other rooms of the house were organised as follows: in the bedroom, the bed formed the bench for watching a projection of four in-depth filmed portrait interviews covering an entire wall; on the back of the entrance door a lit-up sign with the title Waza Chumba Wazi, placed on a background of the Gécamines company's typical printing paper. At the exit door, a 'visual timeline colophon', featuring every participant of the project's picture and quote about the most important day of their life.

[76] A joint project between VANSA (Visual Arts Network of South Africa) and Waza, *Revolution Room* explored from 2013 to 2016 how artists and residents create and assume collective responsibility of creative projects that mediate and reflect the concerns of people (Revolution Room publication 2017). It focused on three locations in the DRC (Lubumbashi, Fungurume and Moba), and on Cosmo City, a post-apartheid urban development on the outskirts of the city of Johannesburg, South Africa. For the focus of this research, only the Lubumbashi section is taken into consideration.

4.2 Sources and methodology for Waza Chumba Wazi case study

The research of this case study draws essentially on primary sources consisting of archive material such as conceptual notes, workshop reports and photo albums); the Revolution Room publication (VANSA and Waza Centre d'art de Lubumbashi 2017), along with 13 in-depth recorded interviews. My knowledge on this project is shaped by the understanding that comes from having been inside the process, since I was part of the organisation. A considerable part of the archive material was my personal documentation of the project, including recordings of the group meetings; in this sense, the consulted archive showed less 'gap' eras than the first case study's and spoke to a higher degree about the developments and processes of the project. Being structurally implicated is however a risk for the imposition of my own bias. I tackled this with third party consultation and a series of interviews with the participants. I positioned myself explicitly in a distinct role: from the performative and guiding organiser, to the observing and self-critical student; also, I used a focus group methodology as a way to re-open the discussion collectively, followed by individual interviews, to hear everyone's personal thoughts. The participants contributed willingly to this self-reflective sequel of our collaboration and contributed with insightful and frank opinions. I asked explicitly what their further personal expectations of the collaboration project were, coming from Waza Art Centre's desire to create projects such as Waza Chumba Wazi as vehicles to developing long term relationships. Also, being a white person and working in art inevitably represents a privileged position in a society where a large part of the people live in precarious conditions. Anticipating possible perspectives that could come from underlying personal interests and agendas, by addressing the issue in an open and tactful way, has proved on several occasions to be the best way forward.

Sharing authority as the scope through which I proposed the focus group to concentrate on our conversations appealed to the group. The evocative notion stimulated a dynamic conversation in the focus group and was referred to regularly in the personal conversations. Shared authority proved to be a useful tool around which conversation could happen in this self-critical and introspective evaluation of the collaborative project.

4.3 Framework and rationale: research art project

Extending French philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour's theories on the experiment as a transformational process to exhibitionary practices and museum, museum theorists Sharon Macdonald and Paul Basu (2007) state that contemporary exhibition practice is – or should be – also an experimental practice - the exhibition is 'a laboratory' (Macdonald & Basu 2007:2). Also, they assert that the "unplumbed potential in art practice" might be "experimentally developed in anthropology"; in other words, experimental exhibitionary practices in the museum - and in particular art practices, have the potential to catalyse ways to exchange the word-centered methods of representing complexities (about subjects, objects, but also on the museum concept itself and the relationship between them) into visual, expressive ways (Basu & Macdonald 2007:7-8).

Grounded in theories and practices of contemporary art methods, Revolution Room had been conceived as a process-centred, collaborative and experimental project. Patrick Mudekereza and Joseph Gaylard, the respective directors of Waza Art Centre[77] and VANSA[78] wrote the project's intention paper. Mudekereza was involved in the entire process of the realisation of the project as organiser, curator and co-writer of an introspective conclusion in the project's publication. Gaylard changed jobs shortly after, but followed the project further at a distance. Their point of departure at the time of writing the proposal was "a set of concerns and interests shared by the two organisations, rooted in the complex and sometimes 'panicked' realities of each national context [Republic of South Africa (RSA) and DRC]". The name of the project refers to ways in which artistic practice in public space in RSA and DRC can generate 'revolutionary rooms' in people's minds[79]. One problem, however, in common with that of *Ukumbusho* initiator Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu's experiences, is the difficulty of creating a collective memory in the political context of Lubumbashi. In this way, the title opens up another dimension in the specific Congolese context; with Congolese history characterised by

[77] Waza Art center was in 2013 called Picha Art Centre. Since February 2016, due to a split between the founding members of the Picha organisation, it changed its name. For clarity reasons, I will refer only to the new name throughout the study.
[78] Molemo Moiloa succeeded Joseph Gaylard as director of VANSA since 2014.
[79] The title 'Revolution Room' explores (with some irony) South African politician Julius Malema's statement that the Luthuli house is a 'revolutionary house' as a way to rethink museums (Gaylard & Mudekereza 2013).

a succession of parties and programmes referring to revolutions[80], but the word is used as "an immaculate conception out of the previous violence", with a continuous process of erasing and rewriting history in the official discourse (Gaylard and Mudekereza 2013)[81]. The project challenged this process of erasing/rewriting revolution by creating or revealing marks through documented art creations, shared with an audience locally and in other African contexts.

One of the strategies to realise this approach in a practical way took the form of curated presentations of the process at the end of what I refer to as a 'stopover workshop', rather like a stopover during a longhaul flight which allows a pause, and some reflection, before continuing the journey. These principles and the ethics it involved had first been developed in a workshop. The stopover workshop and its presentations functioned as feedback moments where the collected research, the collaboration with the partners and the provisional results were shared with a larger public. At the same time, these moments functioned as a platform for new input from the partners and the public, and ensured there was feedforward (rather than feedback) in order for the organisation to pivot and reorient further developments (unpublished document "February 2014 development workshop report"). The month-long activity in August 2014, Waza Chumba Wazi, was the resulting 'stopover workshop' after February's development workshop[82].

The project wanted to investigate how creative practice and memory work would speak to the 'panicked reality' of the "Cité Gécamines", the former worker's camp of the state mining company in Lubumbashi. An unpredicted event during the February development workshop meant that the project engaged with a specific section of the Gécamines community, namely the "voluntary departees", the community of 10655 employees Gécamines dismissed in 2003 during a restructuring in collaboration with the World Bank (Mukendi 2017)[83]. This

[80] Mobutu's party « Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution », « Le parti de la révolution populaire » de Laurent – Désiré Kabila, Joseph Kabila's programme de la "Révolution de la modernité".
[81] The 'working title' for the Congolese itinerary of Revolution Room was in the beginning of the project *Territoires de la mémoire (Places of memory*), which remained the dominant concept for the first chapter of the project's publication, *Histories of place*.
[82] The stopover moments for the Lubumbashi itinerary in chronological order: Revolution Room development workshop (February 2014), Waza Chumba Wazi (August 2014), Chumba Cha Mapinduzi (October 2015), launch of the Revolution Room publication (April 2017). It must be noted that the name *Waza Chumba Wazi* originated from the process as the title of the exhibition, at the end of the August 'stopover moment'.
[83] A group of 400 'voluntary departees' had unexpectedly showed up at one of the workshop activities in the Cité – convinced the team was a World Bank delegation there to renegotiate the conditions of the massive dismissal. Waza director Patrick Mudekereza felt compelled to explain the whys and hows of doing art and memory work in the Cité, which he described as one of the most challenging moments in his career as a cultural operator (VANSA and Waza 2017: 172-173).

community, today in a social and financial precarious situation, left with feelings of nostalgia, but also loss and disloyalty, and forms a marked contrast with the participants of *Ukumbusho*, who had been witnesses of a rather prosperous era.

The workshop group comprised of voluntary departees or voluntary departee relatives (child, spouse), cultural professionals (curators, heritage professionals), representatives of civil society, and artists[84]. Several of them represented different of these capacities, for example the participating artists and musicians were all part of the voluntary departee community: visual artist Jean Katambayi is himself 'enfant Gécamines' (child of the Gécamines, as someone whose parent or parents work for the company) and his mother a 'voluntary departee'. He participated at all stages of the project, double-hatted in his role of artist and community member. His aim was to produce an artwork that would be presented in the public space of the Cité Gécamines during the Lubumbashi Biennale in 2015. The Jecoke musicians performed on several occasions within the context of the project, although they hadn't been commissioned to create new work[85].

4.4. Museum collaboration and rationale

A second concern for the art centres lies in the 'half-life' the African museums live in the post-colonial and, in South Africa's case, post-apartheid periods. The problem, according to Gaylard and Mudekereza, is that the museum in the African context fails to give expression to the artistic and cultural life of societies involved in processes of rapid and complex change. They question if a cultural infrastructure based on buildings and physical edifices has the potential agility to do so, and if the whole concept of cultural infrastructure needs to be reconceived in ways that are predicated on people and networks, following urbanist

[84] Jean-Marie Maga, Céline Tambwe, Elliot Mujinga Kamanga and Louis-Gaston Kabwe are voluntary departees, all having worked for 25 years or more for Gécamines. Jean Pierre "King John" Kangand is a Jecoke musician, as are Jean-Marie and Elliot, and their music is intrinsically associated with Gécamines. Elisabeth Mwenyi's husband is a voluntary departee, and they live in the Cité, as does Pierrot Kasanda, who still works for the company and is also the trainer of a group of acrobats, the Bana Mampala, in Gécamines. Patrick Tshamala, Jires Mulapwa, Bebel Mukaya, Naomie Malemba, participating artist Jean Katambayi, and civil society activist Luc Mukendi are children of the voluntary departees, representing the new generation. Patrick Mudekereza, Lester Adams, Vaughn Sadie, Molemo Moiloa, Toma Luteba Mutumbue and I worked as cultural operators and curators in the project.

[85] Jecoke stands for 'Jeunes Comiques du Kenya' (Young comics of Kenya, one of Lubumbashi's popular neigbourhoods), singing in the 'brakka' style, played particularly in the mining cities of Katanga and the Zambian Copper Belt (Guilloux 2017: 54).

AbdouMaliq Simones's resonant concept of 'people as infrastructure'. They propose a project that "[…] intends to explore ways in which museums might project themselves more forcefully and imaginatively into the public realm through greater and deeper engagement with the invisible (but in certain senses, more 'real') cultural infrastructure constituted by networks, relationships and social structures." (Gaylard & Mudekereza 2013:3).

The idea for *Waza Chumba Wazi* as an exhibition project outside the walls of the traditional museum, came from this desire to go out of the cultural infrastructure and into 'people and networks'. For the August moment, an empty house was rented in "Cité Gécamines", and for a whole month, the house was transformed into a meeting place, an exhibition space and a site for events. Waza chumba wazi means in Swahili 'imagine the empty room' and was an invitation for the 'voluntary departees' to fill the place, physically and imaginatively, through their bodies, memories, words and objects. It was a call for new interpretations of history, where subjectivities could exist. The project group gathered daily in the rented house, got to know each other, discussed their lives at the times of Gécamines but also their 'new' life after the Operation Voluntary Departure, and meals were shared. The process was certainly about becoming familiar with heritage and cultural practice and to create a kind of museum-work literacy or museum-mindedness, but was also about building relations, within and across the communities taking part. The house functioned first as a domestic space, and only later as the exhibition space and place of public events. Once the exhibition was installed, people were invited to share their life stories[86]. As French urbanist Tristan Guilloux, who participated in the project, noted: this strategy of separating the project from traditional cultural institutions located in the city centre such as MNL, but also from the Waza Art Centre, and setting up the project in a working class district, constituted a type of spatial measure. This demonstrated the desire to revive the memory of the residents in a more effective way than in classic memory spaces such as museums, while producing and reflecting an artistic approach more involved with the residents than would have been possible in a typical art centre context (Guilloux 2017:52–53).

The project also engaged with the traditional understanding of museum work. A key preparatory activity towards the making of the exhibition in the house consisted of a visit to MNL; for some, it was their visit (Mwenyi 2016; Ntambwe 2016). After the public spaces, the

[86] The project engaged Claude Mwilambwe, who had done this for *Ukumbusho*, and Philippe Mikobi, a MNL staff member.

group went up to the storerooms to see the *Ukumbusho* collection. Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu was also present, and for him this was a rediscovery of the objects after more than a decade. The group members started to comment on the objects and spontaneously took a decision to record these conversations more formally as testimonies: everyone picked out an object from the collection and commented it: through this revisitation of the collection and the *Ukumbusho* methodology (the capture of stories evoked by objects), a new layer of interpretation was added to the collection (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2016). The moment became very powerful and unexpectedly also photogenic and turned into a photo-shoot of every group member with a collection object – the material issued out of this improvised moment would finally be the fundamental exhibition objects in the Gécamines house.

Strangely enough, only the Congolese contributed; suddenly the group reorganised itself around new sectional lines between the locals (who felt compelled to contribute with a memory) and foreigners (who didn't, although subjectivity wasn't an issue). As with *Ukumbusho*, local organisers turned into informants of the memory project.

This museum visit and its completely improvised moment in the storerooms has been referred to by the participants as the strongest moment of the week. In other words, once the threshold of the museum was trespassed in a literal but also figurative way as a social barrier, the museum worked, in the language of museum theorist Stephen Greenblatt, as a place of 'resonance and wonder' (1991). The physical act of walking through the architecture and going up the spiral stairs into the storerooms, the reconnection with the cultural context of the *Ukumbusho* collection and its reactivation of the complex and dynamic forces from which they emerged, adding to what has been called by anthropologist Clifford Geerz, the collection's 'thick description' (Geertz 1973), was a unique experience for the project group. Afterwards everyone agreed the objects would constitute in some way the skeleton structure of the exhibition, and with the kind permission of the MNL management, the objects were on loan for the exhibition in the Gécamines house: in a certain way a repatriation, within the city, from the museum towards the collection's original context.

Although the project radically explored museum methods outside the traditional museum's walls, MNL functioned as a source and a site of reconnection, knowledge sharing and experience. The idea of the exhibition as a 'laboratory' was extended into the exhibition-making and MNL as a tradition museum played a crucial role in this process. Unfortunately,

as with *Ukumbusho*, MNL staff weren't much involved. Nicole Sapato and Philippe Mikobi had both been invited to participate couldn't participate step by step, as we had hoped for. They observed from the sidelines however, and were a great help in facilitating access to the storerooms and the loan for the exhibition. Philippe participated, after the opening of the exhibition, as a collector of life stories, for which he was paid. This reveals a reality about MNL staff; since their salary is limited, they are – as are most Congolese state employees, always searching for side projects to make up their monthly needs. Projects such as *Waza Chumba Wazi* can't always fulfil this necessity, nevertheless, it is an important thought to take in account for projects that really want and can engage with the museum staff.

4.5. The collaborative: sharing or showing?

In the following section, I will explore, through the lens of shared authority, some of the moments the project managed involving collaborations. It must be recalled that the project wasn't set up with that notion in mind, and this research is not about finding a verdict, but exploring what could have happened if the understanding of shared authority had been on the forefront. For example, operations were delegated to (shared with) local actors, such as local activist Luc Mukendi during the lead-up to the August moment. Mukendi is a reference person for the community of voluntary departees who fights their cause of having been dismissed and never receiving the promised financial compensation on an international level. He contacted and selected the working group members, identified the house to be rented in the neighbourhood, and facilitated during the workshop collective sessions. In our interview, he explained, however, that inviting this fragile community to an art project and answering the question "Why are whites coming if there's no money involved?" was the most difficult thing he'd had to do. His idea was to contact people he thought could understand, but even then, he convinced them to participate only by saying "just come, maybe something good will come out for you". Mukendi's testimony reveals the expectations such a project generates in the context of Lubumbashi. The ever-recurrent comment throughout the interviews with the project participants of the Gécamines community, except for the artists and musicians, was their lack of comprehension and even frustration of what it was all about.

Another interesting moment to be analysed is the collective action being extended into curating. For example, the storyboard of the exhibition was collectively created by distilling the thematic narratives the group proposed after selecting the objects in MNL and a timeline was created in which everyone contributed with a story of the most important day of his or her life and the reason why. For the labelling, colloquial names for the selected objects were identified, so, a local line telephone was called a *nshinga*; and a recycled tin can be used at the market for measuring merchandise a *kasipa*. In the exhibition, the objects were presented with the colloquial name (sometimes two if the group didn't agree on one) and the verbatim record of the testimony collected at MNL of the person who had chosen the object was used as the caption. In other words, the project didn't apply a shared authority; only the 'lived experience' was exposed without a more scholarly contextualisation, as had been done for Ukumbusho. Ruth Phillips described these two typologies of collaboration as the community-based and the multivocal exhibition (Phillips 2003:163–64). Whereas *Ukumbusho* is multivocal where different perspectives co-exist (Dibwe dia Mwembu's intertwining perspectives), *Waza Chumba Wazi* is in this regard an example of a more community-based-and-oriented exhibition. The risk of the latter, according to Philipps, is that the information will not be understood by viewers who are not part of that community and in this way, the community-based exhibition is 'trading one set of exclusionary practices for another' (Phillips 2011:163-164). One of the participants addressed this in our interview; for him, scholarly information was lacking in the exhibition. He gave the example of his own selected object – a student's association cap - and said he would have liked to have more explanation about the history of this university tradition. This reveals that not only viewers outside the community, as Philipps suggests, but also from inside, can appreciate multiple perspectives.

Going back to the collective curatorial experiment; the efficiency of the exercise had limited success. Whereas the examples of the timeline or labelling were straightforward and, ultimately, more about collecting information straight from lived expertise, the discussions about how to present it - the expertise of the professionals - happened in a less collective way. The discussion on the scenography, for example, was dominated by cultural professionals among the group. For the non-initiated in exhibition terminology and principles, this part of the collective process was inaccessible and the session ended inconclusively.

The curatorial discussion culminated in a tension between 'sharing or showing'; must the outcome be dominated by 'sharing' (and continue the discursive character in the public

moment), or was it time to 'show' (moving towards an exhibition, and thus a 'fixing' of the moment in space and time) (Guilloux 2017: 55-56)? Ultimately, because the collective process had been time-consuming and needed to be accelerated, the open questions were resolved fast and efficiently by a small committee of professionals (the title "Waza Chumba Wazi", the texts on the captions and the scenography). They decided to 'show' out of a concern to maximise the readability for the aimed public. As Guilloux notes, from this point of view, the house in the neighbourhood was in the end not managed any differently from the way an exhibition space is usually managed (Guilloux 2017). For the group participants, the fact that they were excluded during the last stages of the project and 'discovered' the final exhibition at the opening event, wasn't an issue. "Chacun son domaine" (Everyone, his or her expertise), I heard repeatedly during the interviews. However, when I tried to find out if they would have liked to participate if the professionals had shared their knowledge (by showing for example pictures of exhibition lay-outs), they all agreed it would have been a nice thing to do together. Sharing authority, in other words, doesn't have to be one extreme or the other; as Frisch noted (2011), sharing authority is not about 'letting go' the authority or expertise, but putting distinct expertise *in dialogue*. Change in the curatorial work on the level of co-management and co-ownership needs arrangements that have time and budget implications, as museum curator Trudy Nicks states (Nicks 2003). For the *Waza Chumba Wazi* workshop, this insight came with the experience. However, making all steps of the process collectively in shared moments – even if it can be considered as a creative exercise, isn't either what shared authority is about. Mudekereza isn't convinced that more time or money would have made a difference to the decision-making. For him, the curatorial exercise of collectively producing exhibition content and exploring curatorial starting points, were beautiful moments of sharing, but which don't have to be stretched to their extreme (Mudekereza 2018). More than an imperative technique, it's about an attitude, about demystifying the knowledge production throughout the process. As an initiative of an arts centre connected with the global contemporary art scene, Waza produced and signed off a 'grassroots but contemporary artistic' exhibition, that spoke at the same time to a local audience. Also museum theorist Vivian Golding (2013) has argued about avoiding an oppositional perspective that places curatorial integrity at one extreme and community engagement at the other (Golding 2013); *Waza Chumba Wazi* can be seen as a project led by a strong ethos of collaboration and at the same time, maintaining strong curatorial integrity.

4.6. Collaborations and expectations

The lack of information about the project philosophy ('what was it all about?') evoked confusion and frustration during the project, but also regarding the intentions after the opening. There were activities during the month of the exhibition but the group didn't gather in an organised way and not everyone took part. Several participants pointed out this abrupt ending of the project, because they were just getting the point of it (Mukaya Grillon 2016; Mwenyi 2016; Ntambwe 2016). From this perspective, the project had some features of what in community participation projects is called the 'hit and run' policy (Phillips 2003:8). Peers and Brown point out that differences in aims and expectations in collaborative work exist between museums and source communities and must therefore be identified and compromised on beforehand (Peers & Brown 2003: 8).

4.7. Conclusion

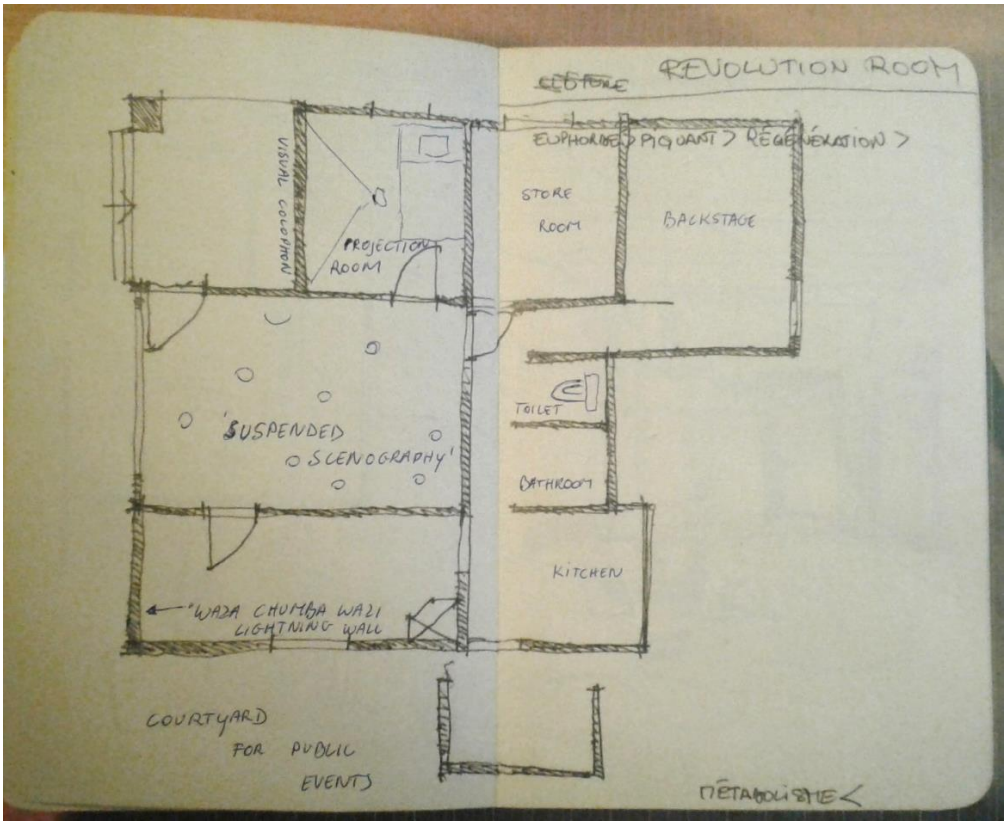
One of the Jecoke musicians, Jean - Pierre « King John » Kangand, started our conversation with: "Sharing authority is a biblical obligation", insinuating that he, as an informant in the project, has an authority with his knowledge and with his art, and his duty is to share this (Kangand Kalend 2016). What I prepared as a conversation about how the project could have been more effective if it had shown a better understanding of the sharing of authority, turned out to start the other way round. It made me realise that in the context of Lubumbashi, where institutions haven't the same kind of authority as institutions in the literature about sharing authority have, mapping out where people organically embody those distinct authorities and acknowledging these, is an interesting starting point for collaborative work. The conversations with the participants made me realise that everyone came into the project with a set of skills and knowledge and, as such, a sense of authority. Although the project intended a sharing of authority throughout the process, they weren't invited to share this because they weren't informed how their authority would be used, which became a problem that left them confused.

Despite this, the exhibition as a laboratory and as a transformative process created the impulse for both Waza Art Centre and the participants to engage in actions. Waza decided to continue participatory activities, and the participants created their own initiative, a self-organised group to continue "their battle against the injustices of the state through arts and memory practice" (Kabwe 2016). The group, called *kupiganya* (fighting) did not live very long because of management issues, but the group members are convinced of the values that artistic practice can bring to fight their cause, heal wounds and boost self-esteem (Kabwe 2016; Mwenyi 2016; Ntambwe 2016).

The *Waza Chumba Wazi* exhibition location
a house in Gécamines neighbourhood



The house in the former worker's camp (© Tristan Guilloux).



Notebook drawing of the *Waza Chumba Wazi* exhibition map
(drawing by Tristan Guilloux).

Images from the group session
Musée National de Lubumbashi
(© Tristan Guilloux)



Professor Donatien Dibwe comments on the Mémoires de Lubumbashi collection in museum storeroom.



Céline Ntambwe recounts her memory of the *nshinga* telephone.



The selected objects ready to leave for the *Waza Chumba Wazi* exhibition in the Gécamines neighbourhood.

Working in the living room of the house



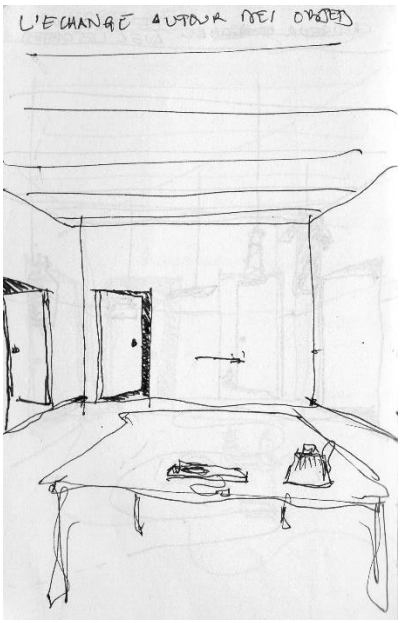
Group session in the living room of the house (© Tristan Guilloux)

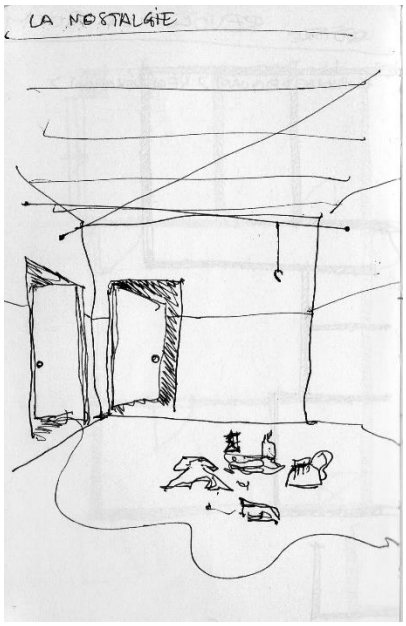


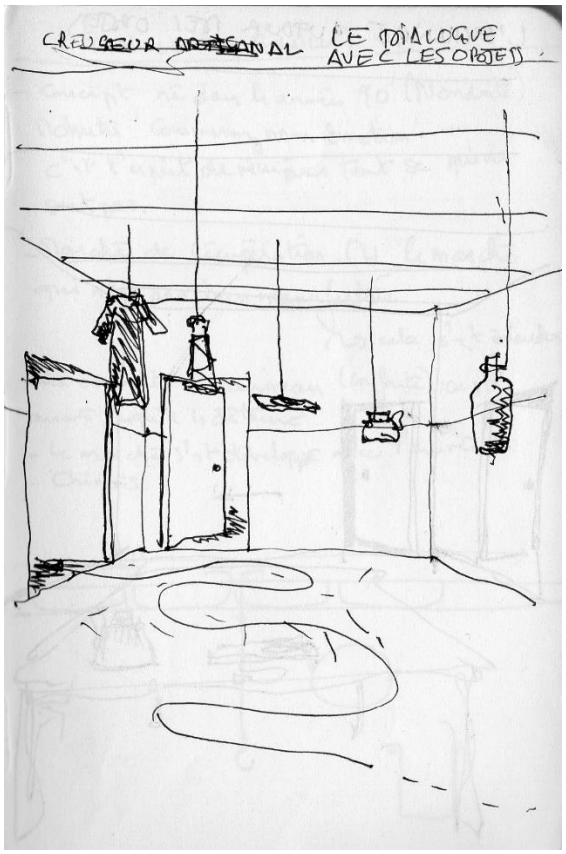
Setup of the exhibition in the living room of the house (@ Sari Middernacht)

Notebook drawings of the three propositions for scenography

The ‘classic’ approach with the objects displayed on a table; the ‘nostalgic’ approach with the objects on the ground as in the museum store room; the ‘dialogue’ approach with eye contact between visitor and object in a suspended scenography (© Tristan Guilloux).







Images of the ‘Waza Chumba Wazi’ exhibition



The title words lit up in front of the typical Gécamines copy paper (© Tristan Guilloux).



View of the display in the living room, of a suspended milk bottle and its caption on the wall (© Sari Middernacht).



Visual colophon with portraits of all the participants (© Sari Middernacht).



Video projection with portrait interview of Céline Ntambwe (© Sari Middernacht).

Conclusion

Ukumbusho and *Waza Chumba Wazi*, both collaborative projects grounded in oral history practices, intended to contribute to the making of Congolese history and collective memory through its knowledge production and exhibitionary practices. Oral historian Michael Frisch (1990) argues that shared authority is inherent to collaborative knowledge production as a shared process of authorship and interpretative authority, and believes the distinct expertise at play should be acknowledged in the finished product. Shared authority acknowledges that it is not only the expert whose view counts; the concept recognises and acts on what is inherently there. Sharing authority, on the other hand, suggests those in control should share their authority. The productive tension between both notions becomes tangible when shared authority is embedded in the processes of exhibition-making, as has been illustrated by Mary Hutchison (2013), enabling a more transparent and democratic approach. However, my understanding is that applying the twin notions of 'shared' and 'sharing' authority as an analytic tool for the case studies in this research revealed how it is almost impossible to apply them in their pure forms. Creating an exhibition is an amalgam of moments where 'shared' and 'sharing' is intensified or loosened, or can even be switched on and off. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to address the tension between the intentions and practicalities of collaborative projects, and thereby avoid a split between curatorial integrity and community engagement.

Stretching the notion of shared authority in all the complexities of practice, my reading of how different aspects of a project have been managed - ranging from the ways the distinct contributions in knowledge production are made visible, to the practical and philosophical questioning of shareability in each step of the way – became more multifaceted. For example, the art *project Waza Chumba Wazi* emphasised the intention of sharing authority throughout its process, but for the exhibition, the shared authority was not acknowledged, with only the voice of the lived expertise on display; even though the curators made the final decisions concerning content and presentation, their voice was withheld. The university project *Ukumbusho* applied a practice of multivocal display where the distinct expertise was put as evidence on an equal level, but sharing authority was not extended into the process of

exhibition-making itself. The collaborative aspect of the project remained a separate organisation of the multiple tasks, and stayed more at the stage of bringing together different expertise within the project.

This last finding brings me to the consideration of shared authority on the level of the museum institution itself. The history of MNL had, due to its concept and architecture, defined it as a western museum, but it doesn't operate in the same way as a museum in the west. The relationship between MNL and the communities of Lubumbashi is complex, but potentially vibrant. However, the gap between the museum and the communities is big, defined by colonial legacies and MNL's scarce financial and human resources, despite the latent interest of the Lushois. The consequences of these complexities create the specific context in which MNL has to navigate.

According to museum theorist Ciraj Rassool, the successful models of South African community museums are because they are borne by real concerns from the community about their heritage. They are located outside the structures of national museums, which brings its own set of problems, but gives them a certain independence and flexibility (Rassool 2006). In Kenya, the National Museum explores how to reach towards communities by stepping outward of its walls and into community collaborations throughout the country (Nyangila 2006). But the question is: how can those experiences be brought effectively into the museum and how can those methodologies inform everyday museum practice and contribute to the development of an 'appropriate museology' (Kreps 2008)?

The analysis of the experiences in Lubumbashi has explored the potential of introducing the methodologies of smaller and experimental projects of a university and an arts centre into museum practice. It revealed mostly bottlenecks, but also showed the beginning of possibilities. The potential of collaborations between MNL and other institutions has been underexploited, which the examples of the case studies brought to the surface because shared authority wasn't embedded in the collaborative project and the museum didn't consider and integrate the guest projects as part of a larger strategy. MNL, the audiences and the project's partners were positive about *Waza Chumba Wazi* and *Ukumbusho* but they didn't have, didn't put, the weight to make these initiatives sustainable. Institutions such as Waza Art Centre and UNILU could act as agents between the museum and the society. The

consideration of those partners as being part of the museum's ecosystem, as actors and bridges at the same time, in a relation of shared authority, opens the way to lift the museum out of its institutional isolation.

Reflecting through the lens of shared authority enables a reconsideration of what museum authority means in the context of Lubumbashi. It underpins the need and potential of collaborations on an institutional level and starts a reflection of how collaborative projects bring together the different expertise of institutions and how these can be put into dialogue. The notion of shared authority creates perspectives where discourse on the democratisation and decolonisation of museums in Africa has often stagnated in theories and intentions and resulted in the naïve or laconic acceptance of a situation, rather than the development of practical solutions.

Some final conclusions can be reached from the idea of shared authority as an embedded strategy in the collaborative practices between the MNL and its partners, as well as an approach for exhibition-making. Upcoming projects for a history section in the museum or the exhibition of the popular paintings of the Verbeek collection, together with the new wind brought by a change of direction, could mean a start for capitalising the existing experiences and relationships. The methodology explored in *Ukumbusho* where the voices of the living experiences are brought into the museum narrative, along with the curatorial voice, has the potential to create historical consciousness and collective memory while still having place for a multi-layered historical complexity. The engagement of *Waza Chumba Wazi* to share the process with the participants of the project, presents ways of igniting a certain museum-mindedness. Those experiences can profoundly inform strategies of bringing the seemingly more problematic traditional heritage out of its extreme spheres of romantisation or condemnation. The findings of the case studies point out how the contextual complexities in Lubumbashi challenge the practical employment of collaborative practices, but at the same time shows how strategies of shared authority could be an efficient way of creating new paths of democratisation of African postcolonial museum practices and institutions such as the Musée National de Lubumbashi.

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