

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berlin, 2nd June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

we are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibition:

GLADYS KALICHINI ... these gestures of memory

Exhibition: 19TH JUNE – 12TH JULY 2020
Tuesday – Sunday, 2 – 7 pm
Kottbuser Str 10

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RECHTSFORM: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH · SITZ: Berlin · AG Charlottenburg

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG: Christoph Tannert · Andrea Boche · HANDELSREGISTER: HRG 8089

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

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“... elo taba labikwa... bala moneka... kutila fye bamoneke.

... there seems to be an insistence to make some people, things and events unseen, to render them invisible... essentially to archive a peculiar kind of erasure. But they are here, their presence... traces of their memories linger in spaces ... in these gestures... yes, their residuals are protesting to disappear.” (Gladys Kalichini, 2020)

“Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects... memory can also be selective; insofar as it is affective and magical, it sometimes accommodates only those facts that suit it.”

(Pierre Nora: From Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire, 1989)

In the exhibition ... these gestures of memory Gladys Kalichini focusses on the duality of memory and history, and considers ideas about mourning, remembering and forgetting in relation to the commemoration of stories about specific women within the larger picture of the narration of resistances against the colonial rule in Zambia and Zimbabwe (then Northern and Southern Rhodesia) in the 1960s and 1980s. The starting point of this exhibition project is the artist’s critical engagement with the erasure, absence and invisibility of particular female freedom fighters within the collective memory of Zambia and Zimbabwe. The exhibition challenges the singularity of dominant liberation narratives, complicates and expands freedom struggle histories by piecing together different memories about women, and provides a multi-layered and complex picture of national independence.

The three multi-media installations in this exhibition draw largely from research material and archival photographs of women in the independence struggles acquired from the National Archives of Zambia and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) Archives in Lusaka, and the National Archives of Zimbabwe and the (ZANU – PF) Archives in Harare. Some of the women included are Julia Chikamoneka, Elizabeth Mulenje (Senior Chieftainess Nkomeshya Mukamambo II), Bessie Chibesakunda Kankasa, Alice Lenshina, Amai Misozi, Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana and Joice ‘Teurai Ropa’ Mujuru. The intricately designed installations are created with video, fabrics, paper, text and paint to present spaces and gestures of memory. The installations can be viewed on one hand as a place to honour female freedom fighters and on the other as counter-monuments that present the complexity, fluidity and at times fragility of memory.

GLADYS KALICHINI is a contemporary visual artist and scholar from Lusaka, Zambia. Her work centres around notions of erasure, memory, and representations and visibilities of women in colonial resistance histories. She is currently a PhD candidate at Rhodes University in South Africa and a member of the Arts of Africa and Global Souths research programme, supported by the Andrew. W. Mellon foundation and NRF. She participated in the Àsikò International Art Programme (Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Lagos) in Maputo, Mozambique in 2015, the Fountainhead Residency in Miami, USA in 2017 and the second iteration of the “Women On Aeroplanes” project in Lagos, Nigeria in 2018 themed “Search Research: Looking for Collete Omogbai”.

Gladys Kalichini is currently a KfW Stiftung grant holder in the International Studio Programme at Künstlerhaus Bethanien. Other KfW Stiftung grant holders taking part in the International Studio Programme for the period 2020/2021 include Talya Lubinsky (South Africa), Hamlet Lavastida (Cuba) and Daniel Lie (Brazil).

The KfW Stiftung is an independent, not-for-profit foundation founded in October 2012. Fostering cultural diversity is one of its top priorities. To promote intercultural dialogue, KfW Stiftung offers artists from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia the opportunity to live and work in Berlin for 12 months and to take part in the International Studio Programme of the international cultural center Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

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