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## If they won't follow, let the art follow them

Feb 13, 2015 - by User2

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Last Saturday there was the launch of the Beauty Salon and the beast exhibition showcasing installation and graphic art in the beauty salons and barbershops of Msasani area, near "kwa Edo" Chips Dar es Salaam.

The small public space was full of people some carrying on with their daily activities such as selling chips, washing cars, playing, others were dancing to live music.

### The theme

The theme of the exhibition is choice(s) or making a choice(s). I start with an installation piece made of 50 Barbie dolls hanging upside down and tinted in "50 shades of grey," Delphine Buysse's intervention, examines qualities in life and the difficulties that come with making choice(s), while Eneida Sanches explores the same but from a slightly different angle.

With her drawings of the missing men in her life, hers is more of a confusion and reflection about these missing men and their choice to leave her the question being: where have they gone and what made them leave?

And in a similar manner, Amani Abeid's intervention also exhibits a more positive take on the subject through his depiction of a Tanzanian superhero that comes forward to save the world from disaster, after all the famous, loved and western superheroes failed to do so.

Vita Malulu's intervention, which is more of a satirical take on the subject, comments on the one-piece Kanga fabric (kanga moko) and its newly found freedom as it has recently expanded on its traditionally private and domestic use and is now seen in the streets, worn by women in broad day light.

Beauty Salons and the Beast introduces the Tanzanian public to a new and experimental art form and attempts to increase public interest and dialogue around visual arts in Tanzania. The project carries the theme of 'multiple-choice' and feature artwork and installations from local Tanzanians and international artists.

The exhibition is happening in four selected salons Eric Hair Cutz, MA Barbershop, Preshaz Salon and Hawa Salon. The salons served as a new and interesting galley space for drawings from different artists such as Amani Abeid (Tanzania), World under siege, mixed drawing technique, Cloud Chatanda(Tanzania)

Rehema Chachage and Jan van Esch, the organisers of the event shared their experience with The Beat. Rehema said that Beauty Salons and the Beast is aimed at the public sphere and in questioning the role of artists in society by using artistic media and creative expression to engage with communities to communicate, explore and articulate issues of local significance.

### A new art space

"It employs the 'if they don't follow the art, we will bring the art to them' module by 'infecting the city' with activities like public performances, interventions and public discussion as a way of

'bringing art' to the community, and as a dialogue starter," she says. She adds that when she was in her third year of my bachelor's degree at the time, and still rather clueless on what direction she wanted like her art practice to take, but she remembers what a big impression the idea behind this festival had on her, and how she wished for even a segment of that idea to one day be experienced in her city, Dar es Salaam.

She also wished to be one of the organisers for the Dar es Salaam version, in whatever form and scope the context would allow.

This year, eight years later this experience still has a lasting effect on her. "I am finally able to accomplish this dream with the apex art Franchise Exhibition Beauty Salons and the Beast," Rehema says.

After brainstorming, Rehema and Jan concluded that perhaps the only effective way to reach more of the public would be to borrow from the Infecting The City methodology and experiment with 'pop-up' art exhibitions in public spaces that draw a big concentration of Tanzanians. "We say,

'If they won't follow the art, let the art follow them' and we are on a mission to follow our audience wherever they may be. For this first attempt at 'pop-up' exhibitions, we decided to explore beauty salons and barbershops as sites for intervention."

The highlights shows that, the extent to which salons have become one of the booming businesses in the city of Dar es Salaam, and where one finds a large, concentrated mix of upper, middle, and lower class Tanzanians spending their spare time, especially on weekends. This is the kind of audience we have, for the longest time, been trying to gain access to.

Jan- Van- Esch says that it is very important for people to see and learn from cultural activities thus they decided to use salons instead of arts galleries where you find only foreigners and middle class Tanzanians.

Hassan Kilamba , a Msasani resident, was happy to see different talents and of course to meet new people from other parts of the world especially from New York. "These people are coming from outside of the country and we become friends," he tells me. while we listen to Vitalis Maembe entertaining the crowd with her much loved song "Sumu ya teja."

Msasani is also easily accessible by (and most of the businesses in the area cater to) other settlers from the rest of Kinondoni district, majority of which are a mix of lower class and middle class Tanzanians. This, therefore, gives us access to a wide range of locals we would never normally see on opening nights in the art center.

They employ this exhibition as a means to take art outside of the four white walls that they are used to access viewers other than the traditional gallery goers, and to listen to alternative views on their 'messages' and 'media' so as to develop an 'eye' and 'ear' for local aesthetics and interpretation of contemporary art.

Through their interventions, they want to challenge their audience to pay attention and perceive more deeply the environment that they occupy—the situation through which their interventions are received and the resulting discourse are key elements. In a way, these artists are assuming the role of cocates (through art) for alternative perspectives that challenge assumptions, beliefs, and community values.

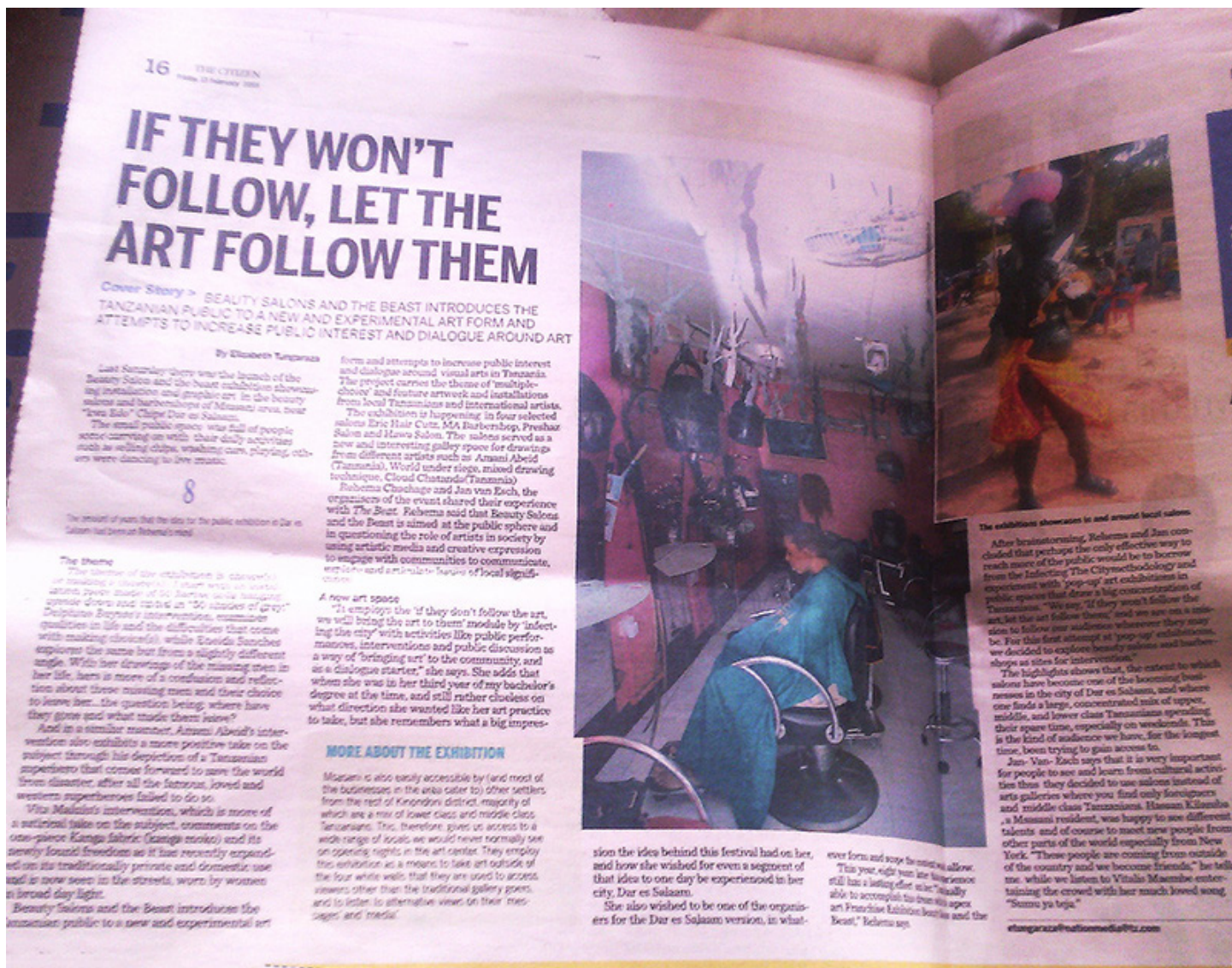
There are many ways to draw schools of thought and meaning from one artist's contribution to the next. As curators for Beauty Salons and the Beast, we allowed for whatever personal and distinctive interpretations that the artists may bring to the idea behind the exhibition.

And although individually, each artist's topics are highly specialized, the web of experiences stirred outside and within the mélange of the artists is expansive and mirrors the range of complexities of our nation and politics.

Cloud Chatanda also from Nafasi Arts Space show the Beat two of his works one was more positive take on the subject, depicts in his surreal mix of sculpture and illustration how ancient and unknown creatures that had long been frozen in Mt. Kilimanjaro are woken up to find a chaotic and imbalanced Tanzania and take it upon themselves to fight the causes of this imbalance and restore the nation back to its natural order.

etungaraza@nationmedia@tz.com

SOURCE: The Citizen



## IF THEY WON'T FOLLOW, LET THE ART FOLLOW THEM

Cover Story > BEAUTY SALONS AND THE BEAST INTRODUCES THE TANZANIAN PUBLIC TO A NEW AND EXPERIMENTAL ART FORM AND ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE PUBLIC INTEREST AND DIALOGUE AROUND ART

By Elizabeth Tunneza

Last Saturday there was the launch of the Beauty Salons and the Beast exhibition showcasing installation and graphic art. In the beauty salons and barber shops of Mwanazi area, near "Tree Side" Chape Dar es Salaam.

The small public space was full of people sitting curving on with their daily activities such as selling clips, washing cars, playing, others were dancing to live music.

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The amount of years that the site for the public exhibition in Dar es Salaam had been an rehearsal.

### The theme

The theme of the exhibition is 'Beauty Salons and the Beast'. It features an artwork which gives more of a humanistic background on people who are in a "30 minutes of beauty".

Despite Bayona's intervention, examining qualities in life and the difficulties that come with making choices, while Elvinda Sanchez explores the same but from a slightly different angle. With her drawings of the missing men in her life, there is more of a confusion and reflection about those missing men and their choice to leave her... the question being, where have they gone and what made them leave?

And in a similar manner, Anansi Abeid's intervention also exhibits a more positive take on the subject through his depiction of a Tanzanian super hero that comes forward to save the world from disaster, after all the famous, loved and western superheroes failed to do so.

Vita Malinda's intervention, which is more of a satirical take on the subject, comments on the one-piece Kangu fabric (Kanga motifs) and its newly found freedom as it has recently expanded on its traditionally private and domestic use and is now seen in the streets, worn by women in broad day light.

Beauty Salons and the Beast introduces the Tanzanian public to a new and experimental art

form and attempts to increase public interest and dialogue around visual arts in Tanzania. The project carries the theme of 'multiplicity' and feature artwork and installations from local Tanzanians and international artists.

The exhibition is happening in four selected salons Eric Hair Cutz, MA BarberShop, Freshair Salon and Hava Salon. The salons served as a new and interesting gallery space for drawings, new and interesting gallery space for drawings from different artists such as Anansi Abeid (Tanzania), World under siege, mixed drawing technique, Cloud Chastards (Tanzania)

Robema Chachage and Jan van Koch, the organizers of the event shared their experience with The Beast. Robema said that Beauty Salons and the Beast is aimed at the public sphere and in questioning the role of artists in society by using artistic media and creative expression to engage with communities to communicate, educate and stimulate issues of local significance.

### A new art space

"I employ the 'if they don't follow the art, we will bring the art to them' model by 'infecting the city' with activities like public performances, interventions and public discussion as a way of 'bringing art' to the community, and as a dialogue starter," she says. She adds that when she was in her third year of my bachelor's degree at the time, and still rather clueless on what direction she wanted like her art practice to take, but she remembers what a big impres-

### MORE ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Mwanazi is also easily accessible by (and most of the businesses in the area cater to) other settlers from the rest of Kigamboni district, majority of which are a mix of lower class and middle class Tanzanians. This, therefore, gives us access to a wide range of locals we would never normally see on opening nights in the art center. They employ this exhibition as a means to take art outside of the four white walls that they are used to access, viewers other than the traditional gallery goers, and to listen to alternative views on their 'messages' and 'media'.



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She also wished to be one of the organizers for the Dar es Salaam version, in what-

ever form and scope the context will allow.

This year, eight years later, Robema is still in a better effort since "initially able to accomplish this from the apex art franchise Exhibition, Beauty and the Beast," Robema says.



The exhibition showcases in and around local salons

After brainstorming, Robema and Jan concluded that perhaps the only effective way to reach more of the public would be to borrow from the Infecting The City methodology and experiment with 'pop-up' art exhibitions in public spaces that draw a big concentration of Tanzanians. "We say, 'if they won't follow the art, let the art follow them,' and we set on a mission to follow our audience wherever they may be. For this first attempt at 'pop-up' exhibitions, we decided to explore beauty salons and barber shops as sites for intervention."

The highlights shows that, the extent to which salons have become one of the booming businesses in the city of Dar es Salaam, and where one finds a large, concentrated mix of upper, middle, and lower class Tanzanians spending their spare time, especially on weekends. This is the kind of audience we have, for the longest time, been trying to gain access to.

Jan Van Koch says that it is very important for people to see and learn from cultural activities that they decided to use salons instead of art galleries where you find only foreigners and middle class Tanzanians. Hassan Kizamba, a Mwanazi resident, was happy to see different talents and of course to meet new people from other parts of the world especially from New York. "These people are coming from outside of the country and we become friends," he tells me, while we listen to Vitalis Maembe entertaining the crowd with her much loved song "Samu ya teja."

etungaruz@nationalmedia@tz.com

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