

KINSHASA (N)TONGA

between
future
and dust

23.09—
20.11.2022

Kinshasa (N)tóngá: between future and dust

Kinshasa (N)tóngá presents a unique vision of the Congolese capital, its development, and its urban structure. *(N)tóngá* means 'needle' or 'construction site' in Lingala and therefore refers to the informal course that characterises Kinshasa's evolution to date. The impact of colonialism and the influence it has had on the architecture of the third largest city on the African continent are the focus of the exhibition. The featured artists depict the working methods and production processes that allow the people of Kinshasa to go against an imposed vision of the city and its identity.

Curated by Estelle Lecaille and Aude Tournaye (Twenty Nine Studio) in collaboration with KANAL-Centre Pompidou, the exhibition is structured around a scenography designed by Traumnovelle which, through the materials used, recalls the aesthetics of a city in the making.

Throughout history, Kinshasa, today metropolis of 17 million inhabitants and a hub of world trade, has been built in successive layers, with the first traces of human habitation recorded on the banks of the river dating back to around 500. The modern city was developed from 1881 onwards with the arrival of the Belgian colonisers imposing large-scale plans for urban development. The colonial city was deeply segregated along the lines of its wide avenues, railway tracks, and parks that housed administrative buildings. Despite a grid plan imposed by the colonial regime and multiple master plans proposed after 1960, Kinshasa is to this day characterised by vernacular constructions and informal architecture.

Comprising both original works and archival material, *Kinshasa (N)tóngá* offers an in-depth look at the Congolese capital, its inhabitants, heritage and perspectives for the future. Archival photographs trace the indigenous customs and roots of Kinshasa from the late 19th century to the 1970s. Modernist utopias and the city's colonial past are documented in Magloire Mpaka Banona's work, and are questioned in Prisca Tankwey's performance *Leopoldville mourning* as well as in Sammy Baloji and Filip De Boeck's film *The Tower: A Concrete Utopia*. In dialogue with this artistic momentum from Kinshasa, the exhibition presents archives from Italian architect Eugene Palumbo and his Congolese associate Fernand Tala N'Gai, who worked under President Mobutu Sese Seko during the return to 'authenticity' in the 1970s. Comprising a large number of official and private projects, Palumbo's work remained in tune with the currents of modern architecture, while seeking to embody the precepts of a so-called 'authentic' culture.

Featured artists: Bianca Baldi, Sammy Baloji, Filip De Boeck, Pume Bylex, Dirk Dumon, Azgard Itambo, Godelive Kasangati, Kongo Astronauts, Gosette Lubondo, Mega Mingiedi, Magloire Mpaka Banona, Mweze Dieudonné Ngangura, Eugène Palumbo & Fernand Tala N'Gai, Isaac Sahani, Tankila Studio, Prisca Tankwey.

In March 2022, *Kinshasa (N)tóngá: Between Future and Dust* was exhibited at the Académie des Beaux-Arts of the Congolese capital. The exhibition is part of Living Traces, a project initiated by KANAL-Centre Pompidou and its partners that connects Brussels and Kinshasa.

(ground floor) Sammy Baloji & Filip De Boeck

The Tower: A Concrete Utopia, 2016

Video 70'

The Tower: A Concrete Utopia offers a guided tour by Dr. Dieudonné Malekani, owner of a remarkable tower located in Limete, one of the communes of Kinshasa. Conceived and built without any professional architect, this construction started in 2003 and is now completed.

The Tower offers a reflection on the legacy of colonial modernist architecture in Kinshasa, the social aftermath of colonial infrastructures and different utopian visions of the city, both historical and contemporary.

(ground floor) Sammy Baloji

Cinq Chantiers, billboard Place de l'Echangeur, municipality of Limete, February 2013

Blue back colour print / 150 x 224,5 cm / © Sammy Baloji. Courtesy galerie Imane Farès, Paris

In 2006, DRC president Joseph Kabila launched his *Cinq Chantiers*: an ambitious economic restructuring project with comprehensive urban planning in terms of infrastructure, employment, education, utilities and healthcare. The previous urban plan dated back to the Belgian colonial period: the *Ten Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Congo* (1949-1959). Kinshasa's city centre was radically modified: avenues were extended, trees uprooted and gardens razed to the ground, buildings were restored and new complexes were built. It gave the population hope and restored confidence in their government. However, only parts of the plan were executed, leaving most of the population bitter and disillusioned.

Construction of new Houses and apartments, Limete industriel, 2013

Blue back colour print / 150 x 224,5 cm / © Sammy Baloji. Courtesy galerie Imane Farès, Paris

Limete Industriel is a district of Kinshasa where many industries were located: dairies, soap factories, sawmills, cosmetics companies.... Today they have been replaced by the second-hand clothing trade that already flourished during Belgian colonization. But the looting of the 1990s did not help Limete's industries, and the DRC is said to have lost 80% of its businesses in 30 years. In addition, the district has also developed with numerous luxury residences: 'residential Limete' or even 'presidential Limete' as the youth of the district like to say, referring to the house of Félix Tshisekedi (the current president of the DRC) located in the district.

1. Bianca Baldi

Zero Latitude, 2014

Video 9'30

Zero Latitude presents the unpacking of the *Explorator*, a trunk bed designed by Louis Vuitton in 1874 and commissioned by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza for one of his colonial expeditions to what is now the Republic of Congo. The bed was part of a series of objects specifically designed by Louis Vuitton for the *Explorer* line, still marketed today. Because of its portability and comfort, it allowed de Brazza to reach the interior by sailing up the Congo River, where the cities of Kinshasa (DRC) and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) were established on either side of the river, on the sites of pre-existing villages.

2. Godelive Kasangati

Etrangère, 2018-2020

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / (60 x 90 cm) x 4

Étrangère is a visual translation of the emotions Godelive Kabena Kasangati experienced after the family upheaval of her parents' divorce when she was a child. The artist questions the lack of self-confidence, fear, loneliness, and uncertainty she feels, while attempting to define the cause and remedy it. Through the medium of self-portraiture, Kasangati represents her isolation, and makes visible this suffering that eludes others.

3. 4. Gosette Lubondo

Beya Kajinga, series Tala Ngai, 2017

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / (40 x 60 cm) x 3

Espérance Luzingu, series Tala Ngai, 2017

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / (40 x 60 cm) x 3

Drawing on classical portraiture, Lubondo photographed young women in Kinshasa twice: before and after they put on their makeup and clothes, showing how they are at home and how they present themselves in public. A third part exposes their living space. As the title suggests, *Tala Ngai* means 'look at me' or 'visit me' in Lingala, one of the main languages of Kinshasa alongside French. This series invites us to reflect on the perception of oneself and the gaze of others.

5. Tankila Studio

Canapé Kola, 2020-2021

76 x 119 x 72 cm

The result of a collaboration between two designers, Jean Jacques Tankwey 'Tankila' and Cedric Nzolo, the *Kola* sofa is made entirely of precious Afromosia wood. Designed with Kinshasa's economic and social context in mind where the majority of the population rents cramped spaces, this sofa adapts to the architecture of its native city. The title refers to the collaboration around the object, also represented by the sunflower in the fabric, a symbol of the radiance when these two artists met. *Kola* also refers to the kola nut, which means 'welcome' or 'good welcome' when offered to soon-to-be in-laws at the start of a wedding.

6. 7. Kongo Astronauts

SCrashed_Capital.exe Untitled [-9], 2021

Blue back colour print / © Kongo Astronauts. Courtesy Axis Gallery, New York

SCrashed_Capital.exe Untitled [-3], 2021

Blue back colour print / © Kongo Astronauts. Courtesy Axis Gallery, New York

The series traces the appearances of the Kongo Astronauts in Kinshasa. Founded in 2013, the collective conducts performative and spontaneous actions in gold and silver costumes. The performances are never announced, producing a surprise effect in their witnesses, free to interpret the astronaut's intentions. Made of recycled materials such as motherboards, antennas, cell phones, and other electronic waste, the suit directly refers to the precious minerals extracted in the eastern DRC.

8. Eugène Palumbo & Fernand Tala N'Gai

Photograph of project model *Cour Suprême et Constitutionnelle de l'Etat Kinshasa, 1969*

© CIVA Archives

President between 1965 and 1997, Mobutu Sese Seko initiated his political doctrine of 'return to authenticity' in 1966. Aiming to erase all traces of Belgian colonialism, this doctrine led to interventions in social and political life: several toponyms were changed, including that of the country, which became the Republic of Zaire between 1971 and 1997, and that of Leopoldville, which became Kinshasa. The 'return to authenticity' also found its expression in a new government culture embodied in art and architecture. The architects Fernand Tala N'Gai and Eugène Palumbo designed several public buildings emblematic of this era. Although some of them would only exist on paper, they highlight the search for an architectural language that evokes both the 'authentic' Congolese culture and the notions of progress and modernity.

9. Isaac Sahani

Ville Morte, 2020

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / (90 x 60 cm) x 6

In *Ville Morte*, Isaac Sahani paints a portrait of Kinshasa during the COVID-19 crisis. Taken in the Gombe commune, usually the city's nerve center, they draw the portrait of a ghost town abandoned by its occupants and of all public life. In doing so, the series acts as a subliminal echo of a metropolis slumbering in the ruins of history, seeking to rewrite history in order to awaken it.

10. 11. Sammy Baloji

Inside the Building 3, Cielux OCPT 2013

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 100 x 150 cm

These images depict the former colonial OCPT post office interiors and attest to its lack of maintenance. Clotheslines and improvised rooms reveal the building's transformation into a living space following a takeover by its unpaid workers.

12. Magloire Mpaka Banona

Ville mémoire

Photographic archives dating from 1802 to 1960

Magloire Mpaka is working to build an archive of images of Kinshasa in order to fight against an urban memory crisis. To do this, and with the goal of eventually creating a museum, Mpaka is collecting photos of the Congolese capital taken between the years 1802 and 1960. The photo collection illustrates the colonial city as it was, with archival material originating from Congopresse, a colonial press organization.

13. Eugène Palumbo & Fernand Tala N'Gai

Photo de chantier

Photograph construction site/ © CIVA Archives

14. Azgard Itambo

Code Kin, 2018

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / (30 x 20 cm) x 30

In the series *Code Kin*, Azgard Itambo captures Kinshasa in its raw state. The commercial stalls on the streets, the capital taxi-buses, and the faces of the Kinois introduce us to the 'fragments of the city that make it possible to designate Kinshasa as such,' according to the artist.

15. Eugène Palumbo & Fernand Tala N'Gai

Projet pour la résidence du Président à Gbadolite, 1974

© CIVA Archives

16. Archive

500 zaïre note

© Collection Twenty Nine studio Bruxelles

Introduced on June 24, 1967 under Mobutu, the zaïre (Z) replaced the Congolese franc and was aligned with the U.S. dollar (USD) with a value of 1 zaïre per 2 USD. The president sought a new identity for the Democratic Republic of Congo which could be expressed through this currency. It was printed with symbolic buildings, including those designed by Eugene Palumbo.

17. Gosette Lubondo

Dernière célébration, series Terre de lait, terre de miel, 2022

Impression couleur sur papier Canson Rag mat contrecollée sur dibond / 58 x 100 cm

Chœur perdu, series Terre de lait, terre de miel, 2022

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 75 x 110 cm

Attente prolongée, series Terre de lait, terre de miel, 2022

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 70 x 70 cm

In situ, series Terre de lait, terre de miel, 2022

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 50 x 100 cm

In the continuation of her memorial work, Gosette Lubondo is interested in the heritage of Gbadolite, located in the north of the DRC. Once a city of sumptuous palaces, commonly known as 'the Versailles of the Jungle', it was built in the middle of the equatorial forest by the sole determination of President Mobutu. Today, it is nothing but ruins. To get us in, Lubondo invites us to a ceremony inspired by political entertainment spectacles: songs and dances to the glory of Mobutu. Faced with the abandonment of the site, the brightly colored costumes and dancers' rhythmic choreography give way to contemplation and meditation.

18. Mega Mingiedi

Tableau noir, craie blanche, 2022

Mixed media, drawing on 250 gram monopole paper, ballpoint, Chinese ink / 70 x 100 cm

19. Mega Mingiedi

Tourniqué à Kinshasa, 2022

Mixed media, drawing on 250 gram monopole paper, ballpoint, Chinese ink / 70 x 100 cm

In Mega Mingiedi's work, graphic poetry, collage, architectural drawing, and cartography are intertwined. If at first glance his drawings represent the physical and visible urban reality of Kinshasa, they also reveal a second invisible city, the reality hidden beneath the surface. Emphasizing the contrast between buildings and slums, the artist makes multiple references to the city's economy, its corruption, its ecological promises, and its future hopes.

20. Pume Bylex

La Cité touristique, 2008

Mixed media / 65 x 271 x 271 cm / © Revue Noire, Paris

In Bylex's practice, architecture and design introduce and order new ways of existing, seeing and thinking. Structured

around a central dome, *La Cité touristique* acts not only as a model of a city but, more specifically, as a mental roadmap for human emancipation. While the tourist is a metaphor for the spiritual quest within each of us, the central royal dome - or, as the artist calls it, the 'temple of the spirit' - is the beating heart of the city. Equipped with a multi-colored synthetic turf, it serves as an example, a point of passage and a place of reflection between the other stages, embodied here by the hotels, the stores, etc. Fluctuating between reflection, characterized by the dome and the experiences embodied in the surrounding city, *La Cité touristique* maps the city's spiritual and social landscape.

21. 22. 23. 24. 25. Pume Bylex

Botte Pivalo

Display, wood and photographic paper / 40 x 38,5 x 17,5 cm
© Collection Filip De Boeck

Rock n roll

Display, wood and photographic paper / 22,5 x 17 x 33 cm
© Collection Filip De Boeck

Dame griffée

Display, wood and photographic paper / 24,5 x 28 x 14 cm
© Collection Filip De Boeck

L'humanité prise en otage

Display, wood and photographic paper / 35 x 57 x 11 cm
© Collection Filip De Boeck

Valone

Display, wood and photographic paper / 42 x 30 x 20 cm
© Collection Filip De Boeck

In a vast series of futuristic-looking objects, ranging from shoes, clothing, and other household items all the way to buildings, Pume Bylex materializes objects and situations as prototypes of a world on the horizon. A checkered pattern, which runs through the majority of Bylex's work, serves as a guiding principle. In a reference to universalism, black and white serve as the 'base' colors, their grid-like arrangement allowing for reproducibility. Thus, each of the models appears as the prototype of fictional solutions and inventions, capable of being reproduced and scaled industrially.

26. 27. Sammy Baloji

Detail of Richard Kaumba's model, March 2013

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 80 x 120 cm /
© Sammy Baloji. Courtesy galerie Imane Farès, Paris

Artist Richard Kaumba at his home in Lubumbashi, March 2013

Colour print on Canson Rag mat paper laminated on dibond / 80 x 120 cm

This image shows Lubumbashi-based artist Richard Kaumba next to a model of one of his 'dream houses'. Kaumba is known for his models of colonial-style villas and mansions. His creations question what is generally considered a decent life, material comfort, or success. The model on display bears the description, 'The house is a machine for facing the right moment.'

28. 29. Prisca Tankwey

Leopoldville mourning, 2019

Video 15'

The work consists of a tombstone mounted on wheels that can be activated by a performance: a mourning procession for colonial Kinshasa, also known as Leopoldville. The installation allows the people of Kinshasa to mourn the colonial city so that they stop dwelling on the maxim 'It was better before' and to offer them the possibility to project themselves into a better future.

30. Kongo Astronauts,

Postcolonial Dilemma #Track 4 (Remix mix) within the multi-dimensional world of Bebson Elemba, 2019

Video 14'08 / 5 + 2AP / © Kongo Astronauts. Courtesy Axis Gallery, New York

Éléonore Hellio's film, the fourth in a series of seven, presents a sequence of images and videos intertwined with sound clips. If it announces a certain point of view, a shifted or critical glance, it does not want to be explanatory. It also dispenses with narration in favor of an astonishing atmosphere, both anxiogenic and lyrical, which presents Michel Ekeba's psyche, the avatar of the Kongo Astronauts.

31. Filip De Boeck & Koen Van Synghel, Pume Bylex

Percer les mystères de l'invisible, 2008

Video 69' / © Collection Filip De Boeck

Directed by Filip De Boeck and Koen Van Synghel, the film highlights artist Pume Bylex's extravagance and energy. Giving him carte blanche to film his daily life, De Boeck and Van Synghel show 'a kaleidoscope of videos in which Bylex creates a very personal vision of the world, starting with a stubborn look at science, technology, and religion'.

32. Dirk Dumon

Kingelez: Kinshasa, une ville repensée, 2003

Video 30' / © Collection ARGOS

In this documentary, we discover Bodys Isek Kingelez, self-taught model maker. His creations in cardboard and recycled materials develop utopian cities inspired by Kinshasa. Free from any political, military, police, or religious injunction, the cities imagined by Kingelez concentrate all hope on ideal cities where peace, justice and freedom could endure.

33. Mwézé Ngangura

'Kin kiese... ou les joies douces-amères de Kin-la-belle', 1982

Video 28' / © Collection Cinémathèque d'Afrique

The documentary *Kin Kiese*, Kin 'l'ambiance' draws a portrait of Kinshasa, the capital of a country still called Zaire. It is also a capital of paradox and excess, as the painter Chéri Samba, known as one of the city's 'naïve' artists, would say. Kin of nightclubs, buildings, rickshaws, shoeshine boys, hairdressers, Kin of poor neighborhoods, but above all Kin of music where all genres cohabitate, from the beer festival brass bands, to the rumba, to perfectly-preserved traditional dances.

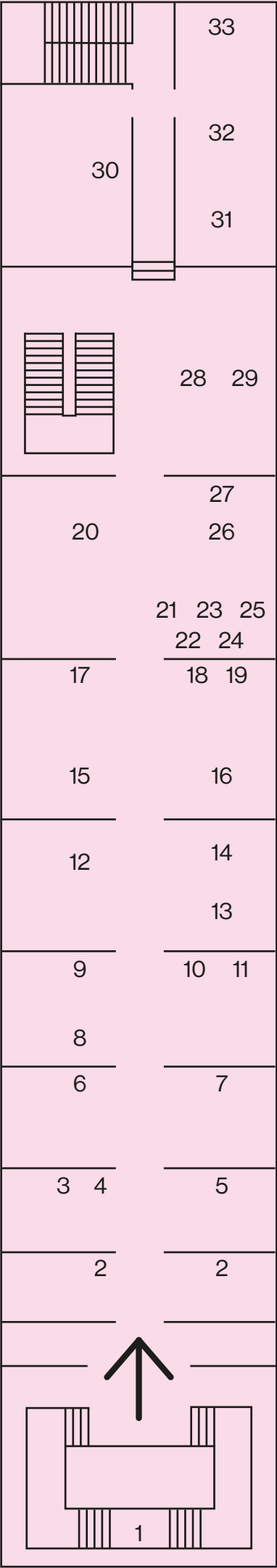
(listen online) Mega Mingiedi & Jaguar Landu Ntumi

Radio Bala-Bala, 2022

Audio composition: 11 episodes of 2 hours / Concept and development: Mega Mingiedi Tunga / Sound: Mega Mingiedi Tunga / Video and images: Jaguar Landu Ntumi / Video and image editing: Azgard Itambo Wenga / Editor-in-chief and audio editing: Cédric Nzolo / Commissioned by Radio Art Zone as part of Esch22, European Capital of Culture

Radio Bala-Bala is a sound project by Mega Mingiedi and Jaguar Landu Ntumi that can be listened to on KANAL-Centre Pompidou's website throughout the duration of the exhibition. Divided into 11 episodes of 2 hours each, the 22 hours of listening reflect the soundscape of Kinshasa. Through a narrative constructed by the two artists and the title, which means 'radio in the city', Kinshasa reveals itself to the rhythm of their encounters and conversations, as if it were a postcard in sounds, giving voice to the city's many actors. Residents of all ages, artists and visitors proclaim their views and, with urban stories and memories, both collective and individual, introduce this metropolis of 17 million inhabitants.

1st floor



Programme

Friday 23.9

18:00 — Performance

Prisca Tankwey - *Leopoldville mourning*

→ Start at Monument au Travail, Rue Claessens, 1020
Brussels towards The Church of Our Lady of Laeken

Thursday 06.10

17:30-19:30 — Walk & Talk

Brussels Academy: *Urban struggles and the right to the city*

Saturday 08.10

17:00 — Podcast/Live recording

Rokia Bamba - *Sororités, conversations with my sistas*

Saturday 15.10

17:00 — Book launch & DJ set

Nicholas Lewis & Anne Wetsi Mpoma -
Colonial Tales, Trails and Traces
+ Live set DJ Mambele

Thursday 20.10

17:30-19:00 — Walk & Talk

Brussels Academy: *The (in)formal urban fabric*

19:00 — Launch

Estelle Lecaille, Ayoh Kré Duchâtelet &
Quentin Nicolai - *sika magazine #3*

Saturday 22.10

21:00-01:00 — Live sets

Leaving Living Dakota -
Museum Night Fever

Thursday 10.11

17:30-19:00 — Conference

Brussels Academy: *Working in Brussels,
labor on the shadow of the city*

19:30 — Performance & Screening

Performances by Eric Androa Mindre
Kolo / Yannis Majestikos.

Screening documentary *Faire-part* -
Anne Reijniers, Nizar Saleh, Paul Shemisi,
Rob Jacobs
(63' OV FR)

Thursday 17.11

17:30-18:45 — Final debate

Brussels Academy: *The informal city,
a perspective from Kinshasa and Brussels*

20:00 — Screening + Q&A with the director

Système K - Renaud Barret
(94' OV FR / Belgian premiere)

→ **Cinema RITCS, Rue A. Dansaert 70, 1000 Brussels**

Friday 18.11

20:00 — Screening

Système K - Renaud Barret
(94' VO FR)

→ **Cinema RITCS, Rue A. Dansaert 70, 1000 Brussels**

Sunday 20.11

16:00-20:00 — Finissage

Carte blanche Customs & Borders

22.09–20.11

Bookshop *Ici Sont Les Lions*

During the exhibition, K1 will occasionally host the *Ici Sont Les Lions* bookshop, a temporary project led by Dulia Lengema at 180 rue Haute, Brussels. It offers, in conjunction with the *Kinshasa (N)tóngá* exhibition, a multilingual literary selection. Presenting art books, children's books, African literature and philosophy, the bookstore offers an expanded context for the exhibition.

Bar

The bar at K1 is operated by independent journalist and activist Gia Abrassart. She has been running Café Congo, an artistic, feminist, decolonial and queer third place, for four years. In the context of the exhibition *Kinshasa (N)tóngá*, she shares her expertise on Congolese products and drinks and shares her love for ginger, bissap and natural wines.

Radio Bala-Bala

Radio Bala-Bala is a sound project by artists Mega Mingiedi and Jaguar Ntumi. In 11 two-hour episodes, *Radio Bala-Bala* talks about Kinshasa seen through the eyes of its inhabitants, its artists and its 'users', and reflects the soundscape of the city.

On the website → www.kanal.brussels.

A commission by Radio Art Zone as part of Esch22, European Capital of Culture.

Colophon

Artists

Bianca Baldi, Sammy Baloji, Filip De Boeck, Pume Bylex, Azgard Itambo, Godelive Kasangati, Kongo Astronauts, Eric Androa Mindre Kolo, Gosette Lubondo, Yannos Majestikos, Mega Mingiedi, Magloire Mpaka Banona, Eugène Palumbo & Fernand Tala N'Gai, Isaac Sahani, Tankila Studio, Prisca Tankwey

Filmmakers

Dirk Dumon, Mweze Dieudonné Ngangura

Curators

Estelle Lecaille and Aude Tournaye
(Twenty Nine Studio)

Exhibition design

Traumnovelle

In collaboration with

Gia Abrassart (Café Congo), Brussels Academy, Studio Balado, Rokia Bamba, Renaud Barret, CMCLD (Collectif Mémoire Coloniale et Lutte contre les Discriminations), Customs & Borders, Leaving Living Dakota, Ayoh Kré Duchâtelet & Quentin Nicolai, Dulia Lengema (Librairie Ici Sont Les Lions), Nicholas Lewis, Anne Wetsi, Leïla El-Mahi, Kevin Mambele, mòsso asbl, Anne Reijniers, Nizar Saleh, Paul Shemisi & Rob Jacobs

K1, Avenue du Port 1, 1000 Brussels

Thursday - Sunday: 12:00-20:00

Free entry

