

SCHOOL OF MUTANTS

portfolio / resume

[@theschoolofmutants](#)
theschoolofmutants@gmail.com



All Fragments of the Word Will Come Back Here to Mend Each Other (2), 2022

Installation at Berlin Biennale (*Still Present* curated by Kader Attia), Akademier der Kunst - Pariser Platz

Wood, cotton, pigment, paper, ink, chairs, sound. Dimensions: variable

“The School of Mutants is a collaborative platform for art and research initiated in Dakar, Senegal, in 2018. Its starting point is an inquiry into the role of universities, public school projects, and academic utopia in post-independence processes of nation-building in Senegal and West Africa; it is informed by wider transnational networks such as the Non-Aligned Movement, Afro-Asianism, and Third-Worldism. A nomadic project that aims to mobilize spaces for the production, transmission, and pluralization of knowledge in a nonhierarchical manner, The School of Mutants engages with sociocultural, ecological, and aesthetic mutations of the real. It produces video works, publications, assemblies, and collective learning situations.

The project borrows its name from the University of Mutants, founded in Gorée, Senegal, in 1977 with an emphasis on nonhierarchical teaching and decolonizing academic epistemes. It connects this short-lived experience with the archives of other pedagogical utopias of that decade as well as literary and theoretical reflections on the figure of the mutant, from Octavia Butler to Édouard Glissant. The School of Mutants invites us to actively think about ways to deconstruct and collectively reconstruct the ideologies seminal to the experimental pedagogical structures that participate in shifting paradigms and recentering discourses on the African continent and beyond. The installation on view at the 12th Berlin Biennale hosts a dialogue between archival materials and speculative video works.”

Text by Marie Héléne Pereira

This installation presented at the 12th Berlin Biennale is a reconstruction of the main scene of the film *Bamako* by Abderrahmane Sissako (2006) which stages, in the courtyard of the director’s childhood home, a semi-fictional trial of the World Bank and the IMF by West African civil society, giving voice to the victims of ultraliberalism in the South. The installation reenacts this stage and reinterprets the Third World discourse by simulating a court for the restitution of knowledge.



Assembly of Mutants, 2022

International conference and workshop in Dakar, Senegal

Organized by School of Mutants in collaboration with Point Sud - Center for Local Knowledge and Raw Material Company

Participants: Felwine Sarr, Seloua Luste Boulbina, Mohamed Mbougar Sarr, Ana Pi, Joseph Tonda, Maria Aparecida Moura, Ntone Edjabe, Nolan Oswald Dennis, Ken Bugul, Carole Diop, Baptiste Brun, Catitu Tayassu, Daniel Sciboz, Dulcie Abrahams Altass, Eyumane Baoulé Assengone, Fatima Bintou Rassoul Sy, Fatou Kiné, Hamedine Kane, Judith Rottenburg, Julien McHardy, Karim-Yassin Goessinger, Khouma Gueye, Katharina Schramm, Kuukuwa Manful, Leuz Diwan G, Mamadou Diallo, Mamoudou Sy, Marie Héléne Pereira, Mourtada Gueye, Nathalie Vairac, Oulimata Gueye, Stéphane Verlet Bottéro, Tabara Korka Ndiaye, Thierno Seydou Sall and Fehe



Mutatis Mutandis, 2022

Installation at Dakart Biennale (*Ī Ndaffa* program curated by El Hadj Malick Ndiaye) at IFAN museum

Wood, colored chalk, found objects, cotton, paper. Dimensions: variable

Following School of Mutants' investigations into educational utopia and pan-African pedagogies after independence, the installation examines the blackboard as an evolving space of postcolonial discourse and reconstruction of past histories. The drawings bring together visual fragments and symbols derived from the Sahelian sciences studied by Amadou Hampaté Ba and Cheik Anta Diop: astronomy, mathematics, geometry, weaving, forging... This archeology of form reflects on epistemic decoloniality and plural knowledge (in wolof "xeetu xam-xam").

A fulani hut hosts a multitude of objects ranging from everyday life stuff to specialized tools that respond to cultural, ritual or nomadic uses. A tribute to the artful compositions of market stalls in Dakar, but also, a meditation on unsettling the notion of museum collection, and materialising the 'museum of mutants' imagined by Souleymane Bachir Diagne. Being situated in a museum that takes an active part in the debate on Restitutions, how does one consider the ontology of things and the African positions on materiality. What happens when the focus on the foundational artworks, drifts to "real life" objects and the intimate knowledge they transmit?



As with each stage of the School of Mutants project, the installation extends as an educational program. A temporary library serves as a space for study, relaxation and conversation for students of nearby schools and visitors alike. The installation also features curatorial essays by Simon Njami and Syham Weigant.



UFA—Université des Futurs Africains, 2021

Exhibition at Le Lieu Unique, Nantes (curated by Oulimata Gueye), as part of the Africa2020 cultural season

Wood, cotton, wax, pigment, paper, ink, sound, HD video. Dimensions: variable

[Vimeo link](#) to 3-channel video

“Whether the subject is architecture, IT, or education, Africa is either berated for being “behind the times” or hailed as a laboratory for its hypermodernity. School of Mutants is a research project that takes the neighborhood of Sébikotane (east of Dakar) as its starting point, where one finds the abandoned construction site for the University of the African Future (UFA) and the ruins of the École Normale William-Ponty. This area, which was once used for market gardening, is now the site of new urban projects in the style of Dubai. School of Mutants explores how more than a century of colonial and post-colonial history has shaped education policies in Senegal – and more generally in West Africa. Based on an in-depth exploration of “futures that have not kept their promises”, School of Mutants creates the conditions for collective reflection on our past and future ways of life. It hashes out alternate possibilities, inspired by pan-Africanism, decolonial ecology, and science fiction.”

Text by Oulimata Gueye



Assembly of Mutants, 2021

Gathering at Le Lieu Unique, Nantes, as part of the Africa2020 cultural season

Participants: Hemley Boum, Emmanuelle Cherel, Ketty Steward, Catitu Tayassu, Mohamed Mbougar Sarr, Stéphane Verlet Bottéro, Hamedine Kane, Diane Cescutti, Benoit Verjat.



Assembly of Mutants, 2022

Gathering at Days4Ideas, La Bellone, Brussels



All Fragments of the Word Will Come Back Here to Mend Each Other (1), 2021

Installation for the group exhibition *Sagesse des Lianes* at CIAP Vassivière (curated by Dénètem Touam Bona)

Wood, metal, cotton, wax, pigment, acrylic, 12 HD video screens, sound. Dimensions : Variables

A cabin, perhaps a ship, certainly a shelter. A refuge for the possibilities to inhabit, circulate, speak, amongst the disintegrating rubble of techno-imperialist modernity. In the 12 videos that combine footage of people and places in Dakar, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Fouta, Taiwan, Guangzhou, Calais, Beijing, Hong Kong, Kanakie, the work speculates on an imaginary encounter between the Mutants invented on Gorée by Senghor, and the Batouto people imagined by Glissant in his novel 'Sartorius'. A soundscape features a long interview with Patrick Chamoiseau, acute keeper of the Poetics of Relation.

Created with the support of CIAP Vassivière and Fondation pour la mémoire de l'esclavage.



All Fragments of the Word Will Come Back Here to Mend Each Other (1), 2021

Same installation, recreated for the group exhibition *In Search of the Pluriverse* at Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam

Wood, metal, cotton, wax, pigment, acrylic, found objects, horn speaker, HD video, sound. Dimensions : Variables

The sound piece featuring Patrick Chamoiseau is recreated with the voice of filmmaker Michelange Quay.



TheSchool of Mutants, 2020

Installation at Taipei Biennial, 'You and I don't live on the same planet' curated by Bruno Latour and Martin Guinard

Wood, cotton, wax, pigment, paper, ink, sound, HD video. Dimensions: variable

'The ruins of the incomplete University of African Future in Dakar, are one of the few remaining traces of former diplomatic relations between Senegal and Taiwan, which supported the project in the late 1990s. The brutalist, postmodern architecture included neo-Sudanese auditoriums, and a reversed concrete pyramid for library: a radical design for a pan-African utopia. Unearthing the remnants of this and other post-independence infrastructures of knowledge, Hamedine Kane and Stéphane Verlet-Bottéro's work *The School of Mutants*, in collaboration with a number of artists, researchers and specialists, delves into the broader archives of Afro-Asianism. This installation aims to re-visit this historical sequence of political partnership between Taiwan and Senegal, and discuss its speculative potential to consider and amplify current transformative scenarios in the Global South. Intended as a dialogue, it invites experts in the field to examine how these questions are thought across Asia, from the perspective of theoretical arguments in postcolonial studies as well as political and historical discourse..'

Catalogue extract



Ruines et Futurs, 2019

Solo exhibition and public assembly for Partcours festival at Kër Thiossane, Dakar

Wood, acrylic, paper, cotton, sound, HD video. Dimensions : Variables

In the wake of Senegalese independence, a flurry of alternative experiences in the field of education emerged, bringing together utopia, pan-Africanism and radical architecture. Coming and going with governments, these schools - for the most part forgotten - draw a complex history where knowledge and power are intertwined in the search for decolonized futures. From the abandoned University of African Future in Sébikotane and its hypothetical renovation into an Oil and Gas Institute, the investigation thread leads the ruins of the William Ponty colonial school, a breeding ground for African independence leaders whose legendary history spans the entire twentieth century. There, in between farms, the story of the future keeps being written, with the fast-track urbanization of the "smart city" of Diamniadio as part of the "emergence" framework.

At the crossroads of archive work, multimedia creation and social practice, the artists' approach questions urban acceleration and the palimpsest of forsaken utopia. A series of video capsules, screen prints and drawings, produced in collaboration with local artists and artisans, summon networks of interdependence between landscape and inhabitants, Ponty graduates and historical figures, architecture and agriculture, soil, water and forest.

Prior to the exhibition, we organized a popular assembly at the foot of the Ponty school ruins. 300 members of the local community gathered to discuss public participation in the production of the territory, and to question officials about the smart city construction project and the destruction of the food-producing ecosystem of Sébikotane-Diamniadio. We commissioned a theatre forum play to activist Alassane Ciss and the Sébikotane theater company, who practice theater of the oppressed.

resume

School of Mutants is a collaborative art and research platform initiated in Dakar by Hamedine Kane and Stéphane Verlet Bottéro in 2018.

Exhibitions

- 2022 'Still Present', Berlin Biennale (curated by Kader Attia)
- 2022 'Ī Ndaffa', Dakar Biennale, Dakar (curated by Malick Ndiaye)
- 2022 'In Search of the Pluriverse', Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam
- 2022 'The School of Mutants', Moussem Cities: Dakar, Brussels
- 2021 'The School of Mutants', Partcours Festival, RAW Material Company, Dakar
- 2021 'Toi et moi, on ne vit pas sur la même planète' (curated by Bruno Latour), Centre Pompidou, Metz
- 2021 'Sagesse des Lianes' (curated by Denetem Touam Bona), CIAP Vassivière
- 2021 'UFA-Université des Futurs Africains' (curated by Oulimata Gueye), Le Lieu Unique, Nantes
- 2021 Screening installation of 'The School of Mutants' at Sheffield DocFest
- 2021 Archive of Forgetfulness, Goethe Institut Johannesburg
- 2021 'Infinite Creativity for a Finite World', La Villette, Paris
- 2020 'You and I don't live on the same planet', Taipei Biennale (curated by B. Latour and M. Guinard), Taipei
- 2019 'Ruines et Futurs', Kër Thioissane, Dakar
- 2019 'The Architectur of Degrowth', Oslo Architecture Triennale, Oslo

Performances, lectures, public programs

- 2022 'From Restitution to Repair' symposium, Berlin Biennale
- 2022 'Mutant Assembly', Days 4 Ideas Festival, La Bellone, Brussels
- 2022 'Mutant Assembly', Raw Material Company, Dakar
- 2021 'Universities of African Futures', Luma Days, Luma Foundation, Arles
- 2021 'Mutant Assembly', Le Lieu Unique, Nantes
- 2021 'The School of Mutants', lecture, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris
- 2020 'Mutant Assembly', Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei

Publications

- 2021 'The School of Mutants', exhibition catalogue, RAW Material Company, Dakar
- 2020 'We Are the Ambassadors of the Blurred Mirages of Lands that Never Fully Materialized', e-flux Journal #114

Residencies

- 2021 RAW Material Company, Dakar
- 2021 Art Explora, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris
- 2019 Kër Thioissane, Dakar

Grants

- 2021 Fellowship, Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam
- 2021 Africa2020
- 2022 Point Sud
- 2019 Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Dakar