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Ebifananyi : a study of photographs in Uganda in and through an artistic practice

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Chapter 1

Artistic Practice as a Research Method



Create Album



Elizabeth Bagaya of
Toro
61 Photos



Brother Anthony
Kyemwa's collection
68 Photos



Bro. Ernest Julien
biography
2 Photos



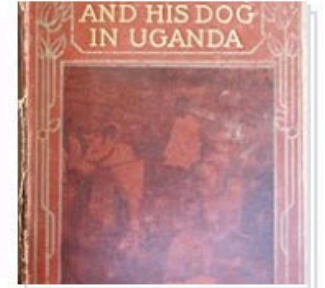
Collection Stan
Frankland
81 Photos



Deo Kyakulagira /
Central Art Studio...
75 Photos



Musa (Moses)
Katuramu
263 Photos



A Doctor and his dog
in Uganda
8 Photos



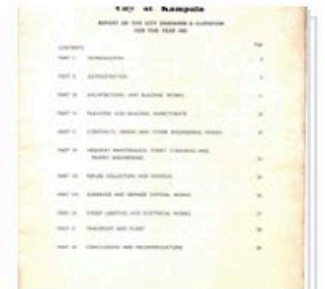
Camerapix archive
Nairobi
25 Photos



Ham Mukasa
Foundation Scanne...
64 Photos



Uganda (book, 1935)
9 Photos



Annual Report of The
City Engineer - ...
58 Photos



Musa Katuramu
prints
32 Photos



British Protectorate
Public Relations...
12 Photos



Photographs from
'Through my...'
10 Photos



A True Story // in
pictures and words.
10 Photos



In 2014 the Buganda Kingdom offered HIPUganda a stand at their annual tourism fair. This is a detail of the display.

The method that developed during this research project unfolds in three stages. These include the collecting, digitising and sharing of photographs, the production of books as part of my artistic practice, and exhibitions and other presentations related to these books in Uganda and Western Europe. They have developed around the encounters which this project has facilitated. My interchangeable role as both a researcher and an artist will be discussed in this chapter, reflecting on my artistic practice as a research method.

During the first stage dozens of collections are digitised and photographs are made available online under the name History in Progress Uganda (HIPUganda). Eight of these digitised collections formed a starting point for the next stage, which is the production of the *Ebifananyi* books. The selection of the collections was based on three factors. The quantity and the quality of the photographs in the collection, the connections that could be made with practices around photographs outside of Uganda, and the insights they seemed to provide into the production and uses of photographs in Uganda. These criteria will be clarified more in detail in the respective chapters. In the third stage the *Ebifananyi* books are distributed alongside exhibitions and other presentations, which generated new, and in some cases still ongoing correspondences.

HIPUganda, the *Ebifananyi* books, and exhibitions are discussed here in relation to the Ugandan contexts in which I worked. My background as a photographer alongside the theoretical discourses that informed my actions will be explored in order to arrive at a conclusion, which explains how the three stages mentioned above constitute this research method.

HIPUganda

From the moment I expressed interest in historical photographs in Uganda in 2008, I heard one story after another from Ugandans about photographs that no longer existed due to political turmoil or neglect.⁶⁸ Once a collection of photographs was encountered I therefore immediately asked for permission to digitise them. HIPUganda was founded in 2011 with the aim to find audiences that might be interested in the photographs encountered, while at the same time creating the possibility for information about these photographs to be added to them.

Social network Facebook functions as HIPUganda's primary platform because of its popularity among Ugandans. This locates

⁶⁸ e.g.: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/3-tricks-elly-rwakoma/104/> and following pages in *Ebifananyi* #3, and <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/buganda-tourism-expo-meeting-1-no-photo>

the project firmly in a timeframe in which social media are used as part of research methods - which would not have been possible a decade earlier. Photographs were shared here on a daily basis and responses to photographs were monitored. Full collections of photographs shared on Facebook were also uploaded to a website that was meant to function as a database.⁶⁹

HIPUganda is not considered to be an archive but a collection, the distinction being that the documents in an archive are catalogued and accessible, while a collection is an accumulation of documents that was brought - or ended up - together for one reason or another. This reason can be found in the production of the documents or the interest of their owner. For the collections presented in this research project it is in most cases a combination of the two, while a myriad of different, and sometimes random, factors are also playing a part. Where these factors were considered to be relevant and obvious at the time of production of the *Ebifananyi* books they appear in them. If this relevance resulted from correspondences following from the books it is addressed in the chapters to follow.

Archives have been problematised through contrasting and contradictory understandings, such as a contested colonial and post-colonial institution of power and knowledge,⁷⁰ or as a source of information that can counter dominant histories through the activation of tacit narratives embedded in its records,⁷¹ or as a metaphorical space that offers an opportunity for critical reflection.⁷² The act of archiving is, as Dutch professor of Archivistics Eric Ketelaar (1944) argues, preceded by ‘archivalization’,

“the conscious or unconscious choice (determined by social and cultural factors) to consider some thing worth archiving. [...] The searchlight of archivalization has to sweep the world for something to light up in the archival sense, before we proceed to register, to record, to inscribe it, in short before we archive it.”⁷³

HIPUganda’s stance is critical of the practice of ‘archivalization’, because of its sense of entitlement, of knowing what is worth archiving. The encountered collections of photographs survived the test of time against many odds, caused by political, economical, cultural and climatological circumstances. This is part of their social biographies and, in my view, renders them worthy to be preserved and made publicly available. The digital form in which photographs were documented made it possible to distribute them through HIPUganda’s online presence.

Archives in Uganda

American historian Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and political scientist Lynn Khadiagala describe what it is like to work in archives in Uganda in an article that was meant to be a guide for fellow researchers.⁷⁴ They mention the sometimes challenging logistics of access, messy rooms, files covered in dust and the (un)willingness of underpaid staff members to answer questions. More recent articles describe the conditions encountered in Ugandan archives along the same lines. However none of these articles specifically address the presence of photographs.⁷⁵ This raises the question as to whether photographs were part of the archives, or whether they simply had not been considered in ‘archivalization’ processes.

Most of the photographs collected and made accessible through HIPUganda were part of private collections and not of formal archives. The most noteworthy exceptions are the photographs in the National Archives of Uganda and in the Africana collection of Makerere University.⁷⁶ The collection from the National Archives consisted of three boxes with pho-

tographs, which were digitised in a matter of hours.⁷⁷ The photographs had barely any information attached to them.⁷⁸ The archive of Makerere University included hundreds of glass plate negatives made by two missionary officers including Dr. Schofield (who is mentioned again in chapter 2 and 3).⁷⁹

The presence of these collections in the archives illustrates the randomness mentioned above. In the case of the National Archives they give the impression of being leftovers of what once may have been a larger collection. The boxes included, for instance, photographs made as documentation of events during the Idi Amin regime as well as two much older photographs of Polish refugees in Uganda⁸⁰ and a set of exhibition prints of African statesmen.⁸¹ A wall with photographs in the archive is mainly devoted to “local rulers” and “colonial administrators”.⁸² Dr. Schofield’s descendants donated the glass plate negatives to the University.⁸³ After the digitisation of the collection at Makerere University by HIPUganda the library staff initially did not grant permission to share the pictures online, as they did not feel they held an authoritative voice on the issue. The suggestion that this was an opportunity to crowd-source information on the photographs was dismissed as this was not considered to be part of the task of the library. The photographs were not thought of as potential sources of information, but as pictures connected to and depending on facts about what was depicted. This changed when a new deputy librarian was appointed who did understand the HIPUganda strategy.⁸⁴

Encountering such randomness within the collections and in the way they were guarded was initially puzzling and dis-orienting. These encounters made me aware that I come from a context in which photographs are understood through genres referring to either a context in terms of their mode of production and use (e.g. news photograph, snapshot, documentary photograph) or the depiction building on art-historical conventions (e.g. portrait, interior, landscape etc.). Accepting the merits of serendipity turned out to be a valuable addition to searching for materials that I was interested in. For example, once I embraced the existing variety of photographs, in terms of production, depiction and distribution within encountered collections, I was able to note unexpected connections. Moreover, approaching the world with a particular focus can obstruct the view into valuable insights that are outside of it, which was the case with the absence of a particular word in Luganda for photograph and the literal translation of *ebifananyi* as likeness.

Considerations on the availability of historical records in digital format

American historian Derek Peterson (1971) worked on numerous archives in Uganda⁸⁵ and is concerned with the availability of digitally accessible materials where he states that,

“Digitisation is a fundamentally modern project in so far as it kind of marshals up collections that exist in a variety of formats into one singular template where the collection can be organised, studied and used by scholars. But also edited, controlled by government officials who might want to suppress aspects of an inconvenient history for their own benefit. At the same time digitisation also allows Western institutions [...]

⁶⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/pg/HIPUganda/photos/?tab=albums> Last accessed 25-09-2018 and <http://www.hipuganda.org/smart-collections>
⁷⁰ Mbembe (2002), p. 19
⁷¹ Ketelaar (2001)
⁷² Foucault (1972), p. 129
⁷³ Ketelaar (2001), p. 133
⁷⁴ Barret-Gaines (2000)

⁷⁵ Barret-Gaines (2000), Peterson (2013), De Haas et al (2016)
⁷⁶ Makerere University is the oldest institute of higher education in the great lakes region, located on Makerere Hill in Kampala. Motani (1979)
⁷⁷ Access to this collection and permission to digitize and share it was possible thanks to Prof. Derek Peterson.
⁷⁸ See https://www.facebook.com/pg/HIPUganda/photos/?tab=album&album_id=357258324350020 Last accessed 25-09-2018
⁷⁹ See <http://www.hipuganda.org/collection/glass-plate-negatives-dr-a-b-fisher> and <http://www.hipuganda.org/collection/schofield-glassplate-negatives>
⁸⁰ <http://www.hipuganda.org/collection/polish-refugees-photos-from-uganda-national-archives>
⁸¹ See https://www.facebook.com/pg/HIPUganda/photos/?tab=album&album_id=387792691296583 Last accessed 25-09-2018
⁸² <http://www.hipuganda.org/collection/uganda-national-archives-display>
⁸³ Information provided by Makerere University Library staff and confirmed by one of Schofield’s granddaughters in a chat resulting from the sharing of photographs on the HIPUganda Facebook page.
⁸⁴ Namagenda (2016)
⁸⁵ See <https://derekpeterson.com/archive-work/> Last accessed Last accessed 25-09-2018

to get access to materials that Africans rightly regard as their own national heritage.”⁸⁶

Peterson stresses the danger of a situation in which researchers no longer are obliged to visit an archive to access the information it contains. The digital archive isolates documents from their materiality and context, both of which contribute critically to the information an archived record gives.⁸⁷ As a solution Peterson proposes to limit long distance access to (digitised) archives.⁸⁸ The issue that Peterson raises concerns the access by researchers from the West. If they only work with data provided by digitised documents, the reality on the African continent could remain an abstraction without an embodied experience of the archive and its context. While I agree with him on the danger of research based on de-contextualised documents, I would still argue that it is important to open these documents up to the public in order to reach out to a wider audience. Documents are not only sources of data, but also can give access to tacit narratives⁸⁹ and establish connections between otherwise isolated pictures⁹⁰ if encounters with them are made possible. The photographs can only prove their relevance to audiences both in Uganda and in the West if they are available and accessible. HIP-Uganda generated, through its website and its Facebook page, the opportunity to engage with and monitor responses to photographs by, predominantly, Ugandan audiences.⁹¹ These responses led to new connections between photographs, and to insights into the distribution of photographs that were previously unavailable.⁹² Sharing photographs online further led to introductions to collections with *Ebifananyi* #4, #7 and #8 as a result of this process.

Doing rather than Making

In this stage my role is that of an interface between collections of photographs as part of the material world and photographs as visualities that can be seen and responded to by online audiences. The emphasis is, in terms of Rancière’s definition of artistic practices, on a “way of doing”, rather than a “way of making”.

Under the name HIPUganda I intervened in the state in which collections of photographs in Uganda were encountered. The collections were digitised in order to preserve this state. This ‘dematerialisation’⁹³ of the photographs also made it possible to make them available to audiences on social medium Facebook.

Facebook statistics provided quantitative data on the popularity of certain posts, and the demographics of profiles that accessed the page.⁹⁴ These data in combination with the engagement with photographs and members of the audience in the online environment influenced the choices which informed the *Ebifananyi* books and exhibitions in terms of points of interest on the one hand and underexposed topics on the other.

⁸⁶ Peterson (2011)

⁸⁷ Edwards and Heart (ed.) (2004)

⁸⁸ Peterson (2011), 11:30 in the podcast

⁸⁹ Ketelaar (2001)

⁹⁰ This is addressed in *Ebifananyi* #8 and chapter 5 with a case study of pictures of Kabaka Muteesa that circulate in Uganda and are present in a Belgian archive.

⁹¹ Based on statistics provided by Facebook.

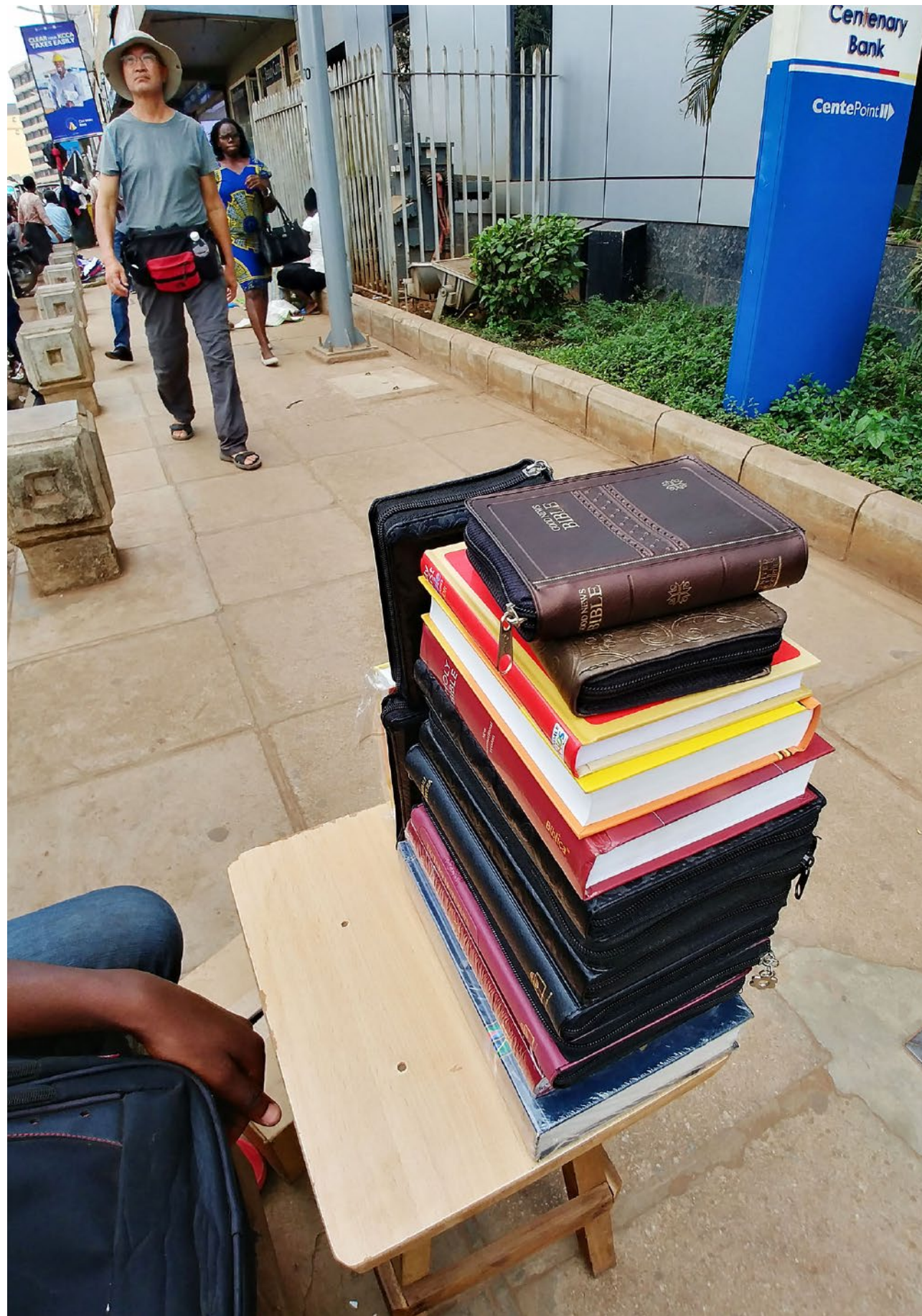
⁹² See for instance these blogposts: <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/hipuganda-weekly-august-1-7-apolos-face-again-and-again> and <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/what-does-a-converted-king-look-like> that link the Schofield Fisher glass plate negatives in the collection of Makerere University to other collections both in and outside of Uganda.

⁹³ Zeitlyn in Morton (ed.) (2015), p. 65

⁹⁴ From May till October 2016 the most popular posts on Facebook were evaluated on a weekly basis on the HIPUganda blog, see posts from here: <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/reviving-the-blog-hipuganda-onward>.



Ebifananyi special edition developed with gallerist Johan Deumens, Amsterdam, 2014



Bibles sold on Kampala Road, Kampala, 2018



Ebifananyi books sold at Afriart Gallery (above) and the Uganda Society (middle and below), Kampala, 2018

Books in Uganda

Walking along Kampala-Jinja road in the centre of Kampala one meets numerous street hawkers selling books. The vast majority of these books are bibles in different sizes and languages. Next to the bibles one sees schoolbooks for primary and secondary school students. A third category that is present in abundance is that of self-help books. The chain of Aristoc bookstores, which has a shop along Jinja road, offers a large variety of books that includes novels and coffee-table books for a limited clientele that can afford them.

Elsewhere in downtown Kampala one finds a street on which Qurans are sold in, again, a large variety of sizes.

Qurans (from the 1860s onwards) and bibles (from the 1870s onwards) were the first books that were brought into 19th century Buganda for the local population and were intricately connected to the development of literacy and formal education⁹⁵ The Luganda word for book is *ekitabo*, which has a striking similarity to the Arabic word *kitab*, suggesting that it could be a loanword used to signify a new concept.⁹⁶ Catholic and protestant missionaries started to teach reading and writing immediately after their arrival in the late 1870s.

Observing how books are generally used in present day Uganda it is obvious that they are still primarily connected to their role as sources of knowledge, and valued as objects that hold authority and should be treated with respect. Other than the repeated stories of collections of photographs or negatives that were burned or discarded for unclear reason,⁹⁷ I have never heard of books that were destroyed in Uganda.

Photobooks as a literary form

Between 2004 and 2014 the three volumes of *The Photobook: A History* by British photo historian Gerry Badger and photographer Martin Parr were published. These books are part of a growing interest in and availability of photobooks in the West. Developments in digital photography, the availability of printing on demand services⁹⁸ and inkjet printers made it possible for aspiring photographers to make a book of their own in a small edition, independent of a publisher. This led to a further appreciation of photobooks, signalled by photo- book awards and festivals. In Uganda however, photobooks do not have a presence among photographers or in bookselling venues.

Badger defines the photobook as “a book with or without text – where the work’s primary message is carried by photographs”.⁹⁹ What Badger calls the primary message of the photobook is what is conveyed through rather than about photographs. The photobook distinguishes itself from, for instance, catalogues that are also filled with photographs. Badger suggests, and I agree with him, that photography is essentially a literary art “where the photographer is not so much a manipulator of forms within the picture frame, but a narrator using images rather than words, a storyteller.”¹⁰⁰ The pages of a photobook offer a form in which an individual photograph naturally gives meaning to - and gets its meaning from - the sequence it is part of. The readability of the sequence depends on the continuity in form and/or content between the pictures as well as the willingness and ability of the reader to interpret them.

The *Ebifananyi* books and their paratexts

In a photobook the ‘messages’ of photographs are most often accompanied by textual ‘messages’ and its design often takes the function of the book beyond being a container of information and suggests meaning in its appearance and materiality. French literary theorist Gérard Genettte (1930) speaks of paratexts that enable “a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public.”¹⁰¹ Paratexts are conventions that make the book speak prior to and beyond its primary message.

In designing the *Ebifananyi* books these conventions were approached as “ways of doing and making” and are responded to in my artistic practice. For example, each *Ebifananyi* book has two textual elements on its front cover and a quote on its back cover. The larger textual element on the front cover refers to its content, and the smaller one to the source of the collection the book is based upon. The conventional position of the author on the front-cover of a book is used here to mention the individuals and institutions that produced or own the pictures in the book. My name appears under the texts in the double sheet of paper that forms the cover of the book. These texts introduce the collections in the book and position the name on the front-cover. This is a deliberate subversion of the conventional layout on book covers, which connect title and author in specific ways. The quotes on the back covers are not explicitly authored but the determiners, which indicate possession, connect individual voices to the wider contextual narrative running through the book as a whole (for example My dad [...] (*Ebifananyi* #1), These must be [...] (*Ebifananyi* #6)). On the back of *Ebifananyi* #8 the same connection is made through the visual, using a picture that is a blend of many other pictures in the book that portray Kabaka Muteesa I. This picture responds to and intervenes in the presence of textual quotes on the backs of the other books in the series. It is a visual and not a textual paratext, just as each of the books is itself in its materiality a paratext responding to the most ubiquitous books in Uganda.

The modest size of the *Ebifananyi* books resembles that of pocket Bibles and Qurans, the paper used on their covers is similar to the archive folders that are ubiquitous in Uganda. Their small size (10.5x14.5cm) makes it possible to use the spreads in landscape as well as in portrait mode as a self-evidentiary gesture. The readability of the pages guides the hands of the reader who effortlessly turns the book ninety degrees. This possibility is used from the second book in the series onward as one of the ways to suggest meaning through form.

Particularly in *Ebifananyi* #4 the shift from a landscape to a portrait orientation of the spreads serves to distinguish different parts of its content. The landscape orientation relates to the collection of photographs the book is based on whereas the portrait orientated section of the book investigates and relates to aspects of Ugandan history.¹⁰² More is said about the use of conventions in the design of the books as a response to “ways of doing and making” in the letter in chapter 2.

The *Ebifananyi* books as outcomes of and experiments with the research method

The *Ebifananyi* books respond to the particular presence of books in Uganda, and relate to the popularity of photobooks in the West. The content of each book is an attempt to activate a collection of photographs rather than a conclusive gesture or remark about this collection. The scale and design of the books creates an intimate space for the reader to engage with its content. Each reader, whether in the Netherlands or in Uganda, looks at the same content, but sees something else since each encounter with the book is unique and can lead to new correspondences. In the next stage of

⁹⁵ Pawliková-Vilhanová (2006), p. 199
⁹⁶ Stephens (2013), pp. 25-26
⁹⁷ One such story is related to the collection of slides presented in *Ebifananyi* #5: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/4/>
⁹⁸ See for instance <http://www.blurb.com/photo-books> and <http://www.lulu.com/create/books#photobook>. Last accessed 09-04-2018
⁹⁹ Badger (2004), p.5
¹⁰⁰ Badger (2015), ‘Why Photobooks are Important’, Zum Magazine 8, <https://revistazum.com.br/en/revista-zum-8/fotolivros>
Last accessed 25-09-2018

¹⁰¹ Genette (1997), pp. 1-2
¹⁰² The first shift in the orientation of the book from landscape to portrait mode occurs between the spreads in the following links: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/4-simuda-nyuma-forward-ever-backward-never-based-images-ham-mukasa/29/> and <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/4-simuda-nyuma-forward-ever-backward-never-based-images-ham-mukasa/30/>

the research method, the role of the books changes from the outcome of a correspondence with a particular collection of photographs, into an agent, which facilitates ongoing correspondences.

Exhibiting *Ebifananyi* in Uganda

The third stage of the research method, following the work towards and production of the *Ebifananyi* books starts when these books are presented in exhibitions and other presentations. In Uganda these exhibitions took place in cultural spaces such as galleries and museums, but also on locations of particular relevance to one of the collections such as schools and a hospital. The presentations in Europe all took place in galleries and museums that are explicitly dedicated to art in general or photography in particular. The exhibition designs were made in correspondences, which in this case means responses to the exhibition spaces and engagements with the people who operated them, where numerous factors played a role. I brought my understanding of what an exhibition can, and should, be to spaces in Uganda and my experiences in Uganda to subsequent exhibitions in Western Europe. The willingness and ability of the people working in spaces used to exhibit it required flexibility in the communication. Given the spaces themselves were not designed for exhibiting photographs, the curatorial strategies deployed had to meet the demands of the particular context. An example is the exhibition that accompanied the launch of *Ebifananyi* #6 that took place at The Uganda Museum during Writivism, a literary festival, in August 2016.

In this example, I proposed to use the natural history wing of The Uganda Museum for the exhibition because the displays include “skeletons prepared by Mr. Sebastiane Nsubuga with the kind permission of Brother Adrian St. Mary’s College Kisubi”.¹⁰³ The exhibition brought two related histories of institutional knowledge and education together. In line with the book the combination of photographs and objects suggested the problematic relationship between photographs of colonial subjects,¹⁰⁴ personified by the students of the school, and the appropriation of the environment into natural history,¹⁰⁵ for example the butterflies and the rest of the gallery display.

The exhibition prints were locally produced on canvas and mounted into blind windows opposite the permanent display and copies of the book were placed in empty niches. The electric wiring in the space had to be fixed for the lights to work and the books to be visible, and the festival rented the space for five days. However the last time I was at the museum in January 2018, the prints were still up. They were losing their colour, but as one of the senior curators of the museum said: “they look nice and we have nothing else to put there”. In contrast, in Europe the conditions and agreements around exhibitions were easier to grasp and prepare for than in Uganda. This was largely due to my familiarity with the conventions from which the spaces worked and communicated.

Compared to the Dutch way of working with its strict distribution of roles, I am involved in the full production of the exhibition. The remark that display materials “must have been made from out”,¹⁰⁶ was regularly made and could be interpreted as a euphemism meaning that the exhibition looked good and therefore could not have been produced in Uganda. Partly as a response to these remarks I made it a point for all the exhibitions, including those in Europe, to display prints produced in Uganda. As a result I now know which resources are available to produce prints in Uganda. In hindsight this provided insights into the resources that are available to produce photographic prints in present day Uganda and helped me to understand the conditions in which Ugandan photographers work.

Ethical considerations

Honesty, transparency and confidentiality regarding information supplied by informants are key principles of ethical research.¹⁰⁷ In this research project, visibility in and through photographs plays a key role and engagements around these photographs regularly emerged outside of the immediate context within which I worked, causing tension between these principles.

Correspondences unfold between individuals amongst each other, and between individuals and non-human actors such as photographs. The human actors are active participants in the research rather than providers of information. They have their own interest in and questions about certain photographs or collections of photographs. Their questions, knowledge and experiences stem from different vantage points than my own, yet meet around our shared interest in the photographs. These correspondences develop, as we will see in the following chapters, in unpredictable ways, which requires a flexible ethical framework.

For example, given that this project uses social medium Facebook as a means of engaging with participants, it was not always possible to inform individuals of the goals and methods of the research prior to their online contributions. That said, the individuals and institutions whose collections are digitised gave explicit permission to share material online - if permission was refused, or only partially granted, it was respected. The sons of the photographers whose work is presented in *Ebifananyi* #1 and #2, Elly and Stella Rwakoma (#3), Engineer Wambwa and his daughter Mary Khisa (#5) saw the text and designs of the books prior to their production. Their objections and remarks led to a final editing round.

In *Ebifananyi* #1 and #3 instances where the production and publication of photographs did cause severe danger for individuals arose during the 1970s. In an attempt not to implicate others or myself in current politics and power play photographs that are digitised and shared are at least twenty years old.¹⁰⁸

Visual Methodologies and the Method of my Artistic Practice

The research method discussed in this chapter creates different interfaces that result from encounters and that facilitate correspondences with and around collections of photographs. In her book *Visual Methodologies*, visual culture scholar Gillian Rose describes a wide range of “sites, modalities and methods for working with found visual materials”.¹⁰⁹ The sites she identifies are those of “production, the image itself, and audiencing”. The modalities are “technological,

¹⁰³ See documentation of the exhibition <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/exhibition/ebifananyi-6-exhibition-launch/>
¹⁰⁴ Vokes (2012), p. 212
¹⁰⁵ Pratt (2008), location 929 of 6792 of e-book

¹⁰⁶ “made from out” is a typical Ugandan English or ‘Uglish’ phrasing.
¹⁰⁷ *The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice*, revised 2014, pp. 3, 5; *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity*, revised edition 2017; Economic and Social Research Council, UK: “Framework for Research Ethics”, 2010, updated 2012. Rose (2007), pp. 251-254
¹⁰⁸ This is an arbitrary number that I now question, being increasingly aware that I work in a country in which the president has been in power since 1986 and in politics for longer. Tumusiime (2012), pp. 345-355
¹⁰⁹ Rose (2007), p. 30

compositional and social". Together they form a surface on which Rose positions particular questions concerning 'visual materials', such as what their relations are to other texts, what their "meanings and effects" are and how, when, why and for who they were made. Rose argues that the meaning of 'the visual' is made where site, modality, question and a method to answer the question meet. The methods discussed by Rose are applied "on only one of the sites at which the meaning of images are made".¹¹⁰ Rose acknowledges that mixing methods has benefits as "it allows a richly detailed picture of images to be developed, and in particular it can shed interesting light on the contradictory meanings an image may articulate."¹¹¹ She recommends to be "methodologically innovative" as long as "the power relations that saturate all ways of seeing: producers', images' and audiences'" are kept in mind.¹¹²

Throughout the three stages described above I move freely across Rose's sites and modalities believing this to be integral to the way we understand photography as a whole. I position myself among people who have an interest in and specific knowledge of historical photographs in Uganda. These people are scholars concerned with photography in Africa, artists and photographers who work with historical pictures in their practices, as well as the owners of collections of photographs in Uganda, and Ugandan artists. The owners of collections of photographs and the Ugandan artists bring their knowledge as insiders to the correspondences and to the artistic outcomes of the research project. I try to share my agency as an artist and a researcher with everyone involved in the correspondences. In this way I try to answer questions concerning photographs in Uganda and artistic practice as a research method. As an artist I am a maker among makers who initiates correspondences. The two roles cannot be separated but depend on each other even though the emphasis shifted in different moments of the research process. The ambiguity inherent in such a position typifies or defines this research project as a research in and through the arts. It also enables me to work from the premise of a privileged outsider doing research in a post-colonial setting in which problematic power relations are obvious and persistent, an issue that is addressed in the next chapter.



Photographs made by the Uganda Protectorate Information Services, Photographic Division, probably 1950s

Previously part of the collection of the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation, now with an anonymous private person, digitised by me in 2010

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 260

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 261

¹¹² Ibid., p. 262



Photographs made by the Uganda Protectorate Information Services, Photographic Division. Jubilee of Gayaza high school, 1955



Part of the collection of the Gayaza high school, digitised by HIPUganda 2012