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

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## Chapter 5

### Unsolicited Correspondences

The previous chapters discussed solicited responses to the collections of photographs presented in this research project. The emphasis of this chapter is on the unsolicited responses to the books, each one of which has had an impact on my intentions and position. It argues the relevance of the *Ebifanyani* books as experiments without an anticipated outcome. Returning to Ingold, “In correspondence points are set in motion to describe lines that wrap around each other like melodies in counterpoint.”<sup>230</sup> The “motion” of the “points”, however, is not continuous. Other points enter into the movement; add a dissonant that may dissolve or change the “melody” all together.

The letter with *Ebifanyani* #5 is written to Engineer Wambwa,<sup>231</sup> on whose slides and autobiography the book is based. I expected the appropriation of existing photographs in my artistic practice to lead to critical and negative responses sooner or later. Engineer Wambwa’s rejection of the book in an e-mail, written several months after it was published, nevertheless came as a surprise. I thought I had been careful and consistent in explaining to him in e-mails the reasons behind why I had selected only fragments from his autobiography. Engineer Wambwa’s response made it obvious that I was wrong to assume I had done so, as the book I made did not get close enough to fulfilling the dream of having his manuscript published. In the letter, I respond to his objections.

The letter to Brother Anthony Kyemwa (*Ebifanyani* #6) follows several meetings that took place in 2012 and 2013 on the veranda in front of his room in one of the buildings of the congregation of the Brothers of Christian Instruction. Canon was present during these meetings and I therefore speak of ‘us’ and ‘we’.<sup>232</sup>

Brother Anthony was a student at St. Mary’s College Kisubi (SMACK) and trained as an art educator (and therefore as an artist) by Margaret Trowell in the 1950s; Trowell was an artist and the wife of a missionary doctor. She informally started to educate artists at her house, which eventually led to the foundation of the faculty of applied arts at Makerere University, that is still named after her.<sup>233</sup> Brother Anthony complained during our meeting of memory loss. Not long after our meeting he was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. The progression of the disease prevented further discussions about the history of the school and his photographs. Brother Anthony died in November 2017.<sup>234</sup>

Kizito Paul, the addressee of the letter on *Ebifanyani* #7, is a former patient of the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI). His face appears in the book. Other people who were photographed during the same period were anonymised by translating photographs into drawings. The letter explains why I did this and how the book answered two questions I had about the pile of photographs in which Kizito Paul’s face appears.

<sup>230</sup> Ingold (2013), p. 108

<sup>231</sup> Engineer Wambwa was trained as an engineer and used the abbreviation of this title to sign his e-mails to me. It is therefore used when addressing him or speaking about him.

<sup>232</sup> See <https://vimeo.com/album/4863294/video/231497812>, <https://vimeo.com/album/4863294/video/231496161> and <https://vimeo.com/album/4863294/video/231497015> for video documentation of one of these meetings. Links last accessed 25-09-2018

<sup>233</sup> Peters-Klaphake (2017), Walukau-Wanambwa (2014)

<sup>234</sup> Obituary in the Ugandan newspaper, *New Vision*, 26-11-2017:

[https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1466413/smack-alumni-honour-bro-kyemwa](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1466413/smack-alumni-honour-bro-kyemwa) Last accessed 25-09-2018





From the manuscript of Eng. Wambwa's autobiography

## Introducing Engineer Wambwa

If Engineer Martin Wangutusi Wambwa (1928) had not been able to become an engineer, then he would have chosen a career as a writer and photographer. He is one of the first Ugandan engineers to be trained in the West. Engineer Wambwa works as a city planner in the Ugandan capital of Kampala and in Mbale in the east of the country. He produced a series of colour slides in the 1960s, which was quite unusual at the time, as most photographs were black-and-white. These slides provide an optimistic and literally colourful image of the years immediately following Ugandan independence.

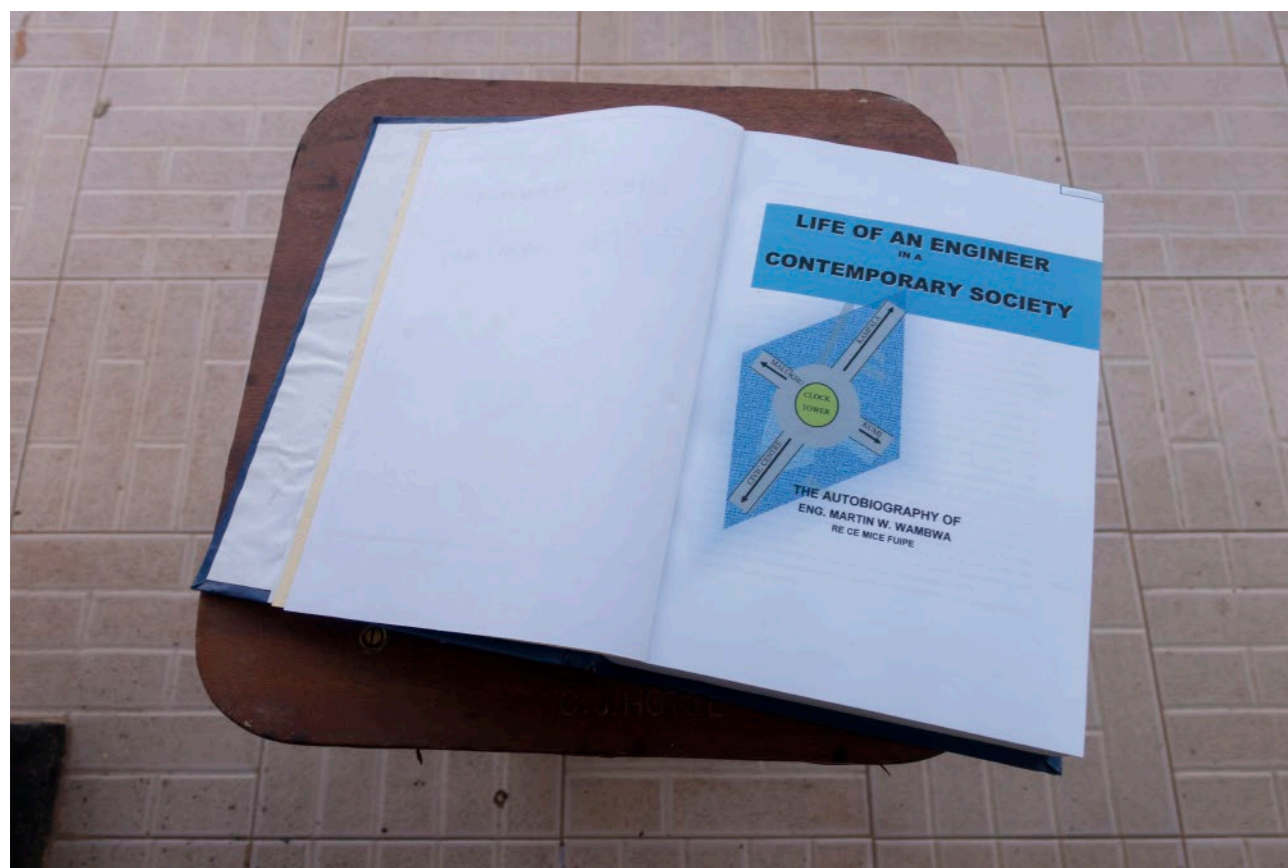
*Mary Khisa, Engineer Wambwa's youngest daughter, thought that I might be interested in her father's collection. She brought me to Mbale, where Engineer Wambwa told me that he had burned his photographic negatives just a few months earlier. An acquaintance had advised him to do this since what might happen if the pictures fell into the wrong hands? He had not burned the colour slides but cherished them, which suggests he attributed different values to them.<sup>235</sup>*

*I looked at modern Kampala with the photographs of Engineer Wambwa on my mind. In the 1960s, he photographed an urban environment under development. Kampala was growing quickly and organically as so many African cities.*

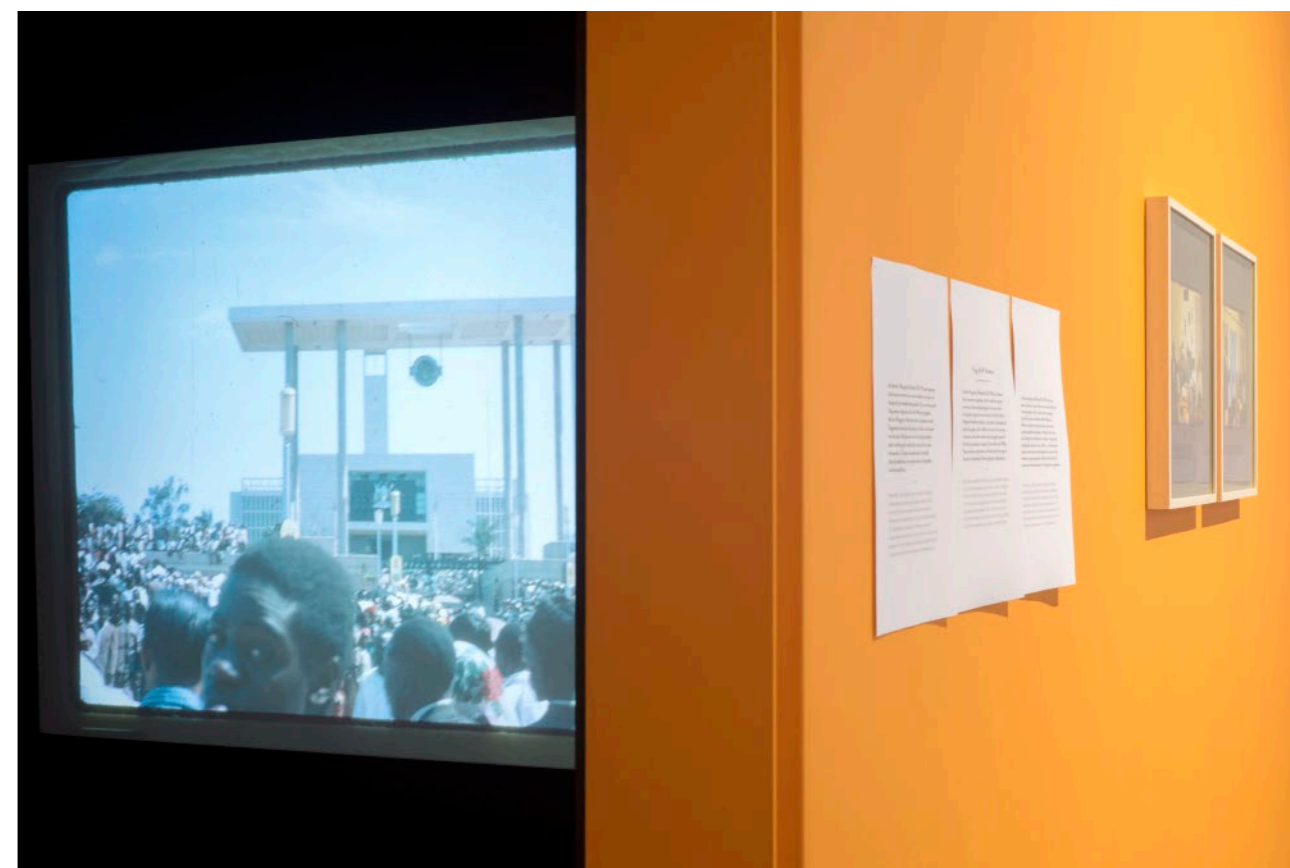
*Artist Canon Griffin<sup>236</sup> documents the city as it is today. He lives on a busy road near Makerere University, the oldest such institution in East-Africa.*

<sup>235</sup> Engineer Wambwa told me that the decision to burn the negatives was the result of a comment made by a visitor. See the introduction to *Ebifananyi* #5: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/4/>

<sup>236</sup> See p. 17 of this dissertation



Printed version of the manuscript of Eng. Wambwa's autobiography, Mbale, 2015



Ebifananyi, Fomu Antwerp, October 2017 / February 2018

## A letter in which I apologise for the choices made

Dear Engineer Wambwa,

I hope that this letter finds you in good health and spirit. While I sit in my garden and enjoy a couple of warm Dutch spring days, I finally found the proper state of mind to reflect on your response to *Ebifananyi* #5.

The book is the result of an introduction made by Mary, because she heard about my interest in historical photographs and knew about your collection of slides. Mary and I met through a mutual friend in Kampala, and it is a pleasure to currently be working with her and her architectural skills towards an exhibition that is scheduled for August. I visited you accompanied by Mary, with Canon, or alone in the year following our introduction. You gave me access to the manuscript of your autobiography that I recognised as a unique document in itself. We spoke about the slides you kindly allowed me to digitise, but it was hard for you to answer my questions due to challenges you had with your eyesight. Details of photographs could not be identified when you looked at them on a computer screen. If I zoomed in digitally, the picture as a whole was lost. Certain passages of the manuscript, however, connected to the scenes I saw on the slides. I felt these two different sources provided a unique opportunity to connect your personal history to collective memory and my interest in photographs in Uganda.

In the periods between my visits we exchanged e-mails in which I told you about what I was doing.

With the last e-mail I sent before the book was printed, you received a digital version of the design.

Almost two years have passed since we celebrated the launch of the book, first publicly at Makerere University in Mary's presence, then privately with your wife in your home in Mbale. In the months that followed these events I received e-mail messages in which you rejected the book and questioned my choices and intentions. I replied with a brief but sincere apology and referred to the earlier e-mails in which I tried to inform you of my intentions. I did not go into the matter in more detail, which is what I intend to do in this letter by describing and evaluating the book and some of the other responses to it.

The slides and the manuscript were the materials from which I started to work towards the book. The slides were all made in the 1960s, in the period just before - and the years following - Uganda's independence. Within the collections of photographs that I have encountered in Uganda, this collection was (and still is) unusual because of the quantity of the slides and the preservation of the colours.<sup>237</sup> The manuscript covers your whole life, with an admirable amount of detail on several topics, including your personal life, your career as an engineer, Ugandan politics in a global perspective and the Catholic Church in Uganda. It was unfortunately impossible for me to fulfil your dream to publish the manuscript. I do however stick to my promise to support the continuing efforts Mary and her sister are making towards this end, as the manuscript is clearly an account that would be relevant for many to read.

<sup>237</sup> Compare, for instance, the slides in *Ebifananyi* #5, with those in *Ebifananyi* #3: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/3-tricks-elly-rwakoma/65/>, or this set of (mass produces) slides on the Uganda Martyrs, that was also part of Eng. Wambwa's collection: <http://www.hipuganda.org/collection/martyrs-of-uganda-a-set-of-slides>

I enjoyed reading the manuscript and proposed to use fragments from it to give context to the slides. These fragments are centred around Uganda's independence or, in the Swahili word you use in your manuscript, *Uhuru*. I hoped that the text fragments I selected would help the reader of the book to see the pictures as resulting from your particular view on Uganda's past. Your writing and slides made it possible to address an important period of time beyond, but not disconnected from the often-told political history. On that note I will now go to through the structure of the book.

The cover of the book has a title, a subtitle, and your name on it. The choice for the title, *Uhuru*, is obvious. The subtitle "minor accidents" is ambiguous and could lead to misunderstandings. In my memory I literally quoted the words from your manuscript. I thought that they were part of a section on your driving career, but I checked, and my memory has failed me. You make mention of "a few accidents involving slight damage", but do not use the phrase "minor accidents".<sup>238</sup> Here is what I think happened.

While I was reading the manuscript and selecting fragments for the book, I shared quotes with Canon to hear his thoughts. He pointed out how history is, like your driving career, characterised by 'accidents' that are meaningful to some and of relative importance to others. Events that make it into history books (such as *Uhuru* and Idi Amin's economic war), obviously have consequences, but can at the same time be inconsequential for people whose voices are rarely heard. Canon's remark made sense to me. It resonated with the way you made clear that your father's circumcision coincided with the Russian revolution, the introduction of cars and a great famine in the region.<sup>239</sup> Your remark that "to the village folk the importance of *Uhuru* [was only understood] in the context of reduced taxes" supported it too.<sup>240</sup> I take history to be a particular view of the past that is constructed by those who are part of the infrastructure that makes it possible for their voice to be heard. For those outside of this infrastructure and this particular view historical events may be "minor accidents", and vice versa.

I do remember feeling unsure about whether using "minor accidents" would be appropriate or not, but was convinced by Canon that it was a relevant, albeit slightly provocative title.

The pictures on the first sixteen pages of the book introduce the slides and time period they originate from. The cardboard in which the slides are framed is partially visible and gives presence to the materiality of the slides. The information that was printed on these frames is included to the left of the picture.<sup>241</sup> The first two pictures show independence arches, which takes us back to the moment of *Uhuru*. In the second slide the arch has the year 1962 on it. The following slides are dated on the cardboard and presented in chronological order. The last photograph in the sequence is dated May 1965 and shows a roundabout with a "road closed" sign.<sup>242</sup> This picture is meant to be a metaphor that foreshadows the dramatic events that end the next section of the book.

<sup>238</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/30/> A check with the full manuscript confirmed that the words are not Engineer Wambwa's.

<sup>239</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/30/>

<sup>240</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/42/>

<sup>241</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/5/> and following pages



Pages with text fragments and photographs alternate in this next section.<sup>243</sup> The pictures are black and white to distinguish them from the slides. They show fragments of the interior of your home and reproductions of pages from your photo albums to give an idea of the context in which you wrote your manuscript. The text consists of fragments from the first 166 pages of the manuscript. Your words take the reader from aspects of the culture and time in which you grew up, through your educational path, to the years around independence in which you were a young professional and one of the first Western trained Ugandan engineers. The last text fragment is your account of the attack on the Buganda palace by President Obote in which the 1966 Kabaka crisis culminated.<sup>244</sup> You describe the event as a turning point in which the optimism following independence changed into a period of struggle. This text seemed important in two ways; you identify a turning point in history and give the reader an idea of how this turning point related to your everyday life.

The first spread after this section of the book reminds us of *Uhuru* in pictures of an independence parade.<sup>245</sup> Your slides are now presented in a black frame and alternate throughout the remainder of the book with photographs made by three contemporary photographers. Their pictures respond to your slides and add other views to it.

Dutch photographer Luuk van den Berg did not visit the African continent before taking up my invitation to contribute to this project. He photographed on black and white film, which brings some confusion to the book because for many people black and white photographs relate to a more distant past compared to colour photographs.<sup>246</sup> This was a deliberate strategic choice which I adopted to cause slight confusion in an attempt to invite active viewing of photographs.

Sudanese photographer Elsadig Mohamed was familiar with other cities in the region, but had not yet been to Kampala or Uganda. He explored the past that is visible on the slides by making out of focus photographs, based on a curiosity on when and how the fuzzy shapes this strategy produced would still refer to a particular place.<sup>247</sup>

Canon has been photographing Kampala extensively ever since he moved there in 2010. His contributions to the book are digitally constructed photographs that transform places you photographed in the 1960s into what he calls “tunnels and planets with holes in the world”.<sup>248</sup>

The idea was that each one of these modes of photographic depiction of reality was so different from the other ones, including yours, that none of them could be taken for granted.

The book closes with pictures of the national independence monument by Gregory Maloba who, in your words, “described new Uganda as a child growing out of bonds”.<sup>249</sup> The monument is shown, as other places before, in different ways; a colour slide from the 1960s, an out of focus photograph by Elsadig Mohamed and a “planet” by Canon.<sup>250</sup> The text on the back of the book, finally, is a direct quote from your manuscript and connects photographic documentation to progress in your country.

<sup>242</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/14/>

<sup>243</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/15/>

<sup>244</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/50/>

<sup>245</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/51/>

<sup>246</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/57/>

<sup>247</sup> See <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/68/> and previous pages

<sup>248</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/60/> and

<http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/61/>

<sup>249</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/40/> Maloba is also the sculptor who made a bust

of Ham Mukasa (*Ebifananyi* #4:

<http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/4-simuda-nyuma-forward-ever-backward-never-based-images-ham-mukasa/51/>, right hand page) that is now part of the permanent display at The Uganda Museum.

<sup>250</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/135/> and following pages

As I hope I have shown, the different elements of the book do connect to each other, and add up to a whole in which your photographs and fragments from your manuscript give access to a period in Ugandan history that is usually told in terms of power and politics.

The launch of *Ebifananyi* #5 was accompanied by two versions of an exhibition titled “City Remixing.” The first one took place at Makerere University, the second one in the gallery of the art school in the Netherlands where I teach. These exhibitions gave a kaleidoscopic view of the development of the city, as documented by you in the 1960s, the three photographers who contributed to the book in 2015, and missionary doctor Schofield in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>251</sup> In addition a monumental print of an aerial photograph of Kampala reached from ceiling to floor. At the Makerere show this photograph led to musings on the development of the infrastructure of the city.<sup>252</sup> I think that this photograph is from the 1960s, but so far it is still not conclusively dated. I am sure that, had your eyesight not bothered you, your knowledge of the development of Kampala would have settled the matter easily.

An evening of discussion around a campfire or *ekyoto* was organised with the Makerere exhibition.<sup>253</sup> About forty people attended the event. Most of them were artists or art students at the university. Mary and I shared our favourite fragments from your text with the audience. I chose the last page on the Kabaka crisis. I assumed that Ugandans would instantly know that these words and the date, May 24th, 1966, referred back to the attack on the palace. I was curious how the crowd would respond to your particular rendering of the event. The current president of the UPC<sup>254</sup> was the one person who was familiar with the event. It turned out that I had overestimated the historical knowledge and collective memory of the *ekyoto* crowd.

It is painful, but I have to come to the conclusion that *Ebifananyi* #5 is a failure in at least two ways. Firstly, because I misjudged how the book’s content resonates with collective memory in Uganda. It so happened that coincidental encounters with documents on Uganda’s past, such as your manuscript, resulted in an almost accidental knowledge of Ugandan history on my side. I started to take this knowledge for granted. However, going from the experience at the *ekyoto*, the events you describe are not part of the history that young, relatively highly educated Ugandans know and feel connected to. It looks as though the Ugandan and non-Ugandan audiences share their outsider position to the history that is presented in the book, which makes the dialogue between text and pictures much weaker within the Ugandan context than I expected it to be.<sup>255</sup> Secondly, the book is a failure because you no longer feel presented by the book in an appropriate way, however, I have explained in this letter how the book is set up and hope that this does contribute to an understanding on your side of what I tried to do. Beyond that I am afraid that the only thing I can do now is to apologise and learn.

With best regards,

Andrea

<sup>251</sup> Documentation of the two shows can be found here: [http://www.andreastultiens.nl/exhibition/city-remixing\\_-\\_kampala/](http://www.andreastultiens.nl/exhibition/city-remixing_-_kampala/) and here:

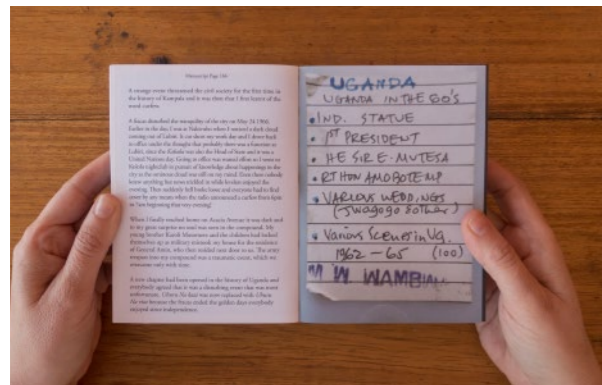
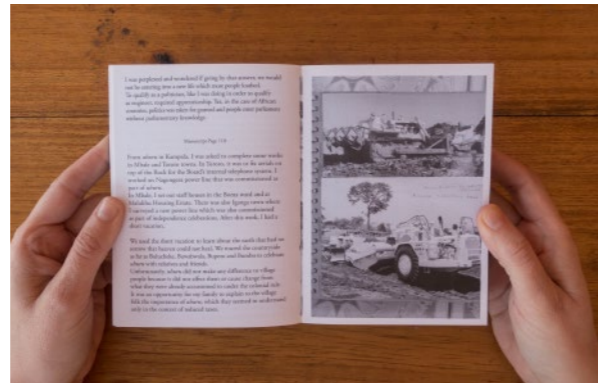
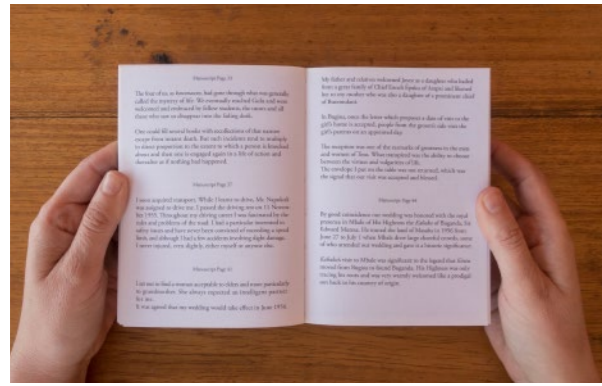
<http://www.andreastultiens.nl/exhibition/city-remixing-nl/>

<sup>252</sup> See <https://vimeo.com/161904324>

<sup>253</sup> *Ekyoto* has connotations that relate the fire to oral history, a meeting place for serious discussion and traditional rituals.

<sup>254</sup> The UPC is the Uganda People’s Congress, the party of former President Milton Obote, who ordered the attack of the palace.

<sup>255</sup> This confirms the remark made by Eria Nsubuga, mentioned in the letter to Ham Mukasa in chapter 4.



Ebifananyi #5 spreads referenced in footnotes with the letter to Engineer Wambwa

See <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/5-uhuru-minor-accidents-eng-m-w-wambwa/> for full version





From a conversation with Brother Anthony Kyemwa

## Introducing St. Mary's College Kisubu

**St. Mary's College in Kisubi (SMACK) was founded in 1906 by the White Fathers. It is one of the oldest Catholic missionary schools in Uganda.**

**In 1926, the White Fathers transferred the management of the school to the Brothers of Christian Instruction, a religious education organisation that was founded in the early 19th century.**

**The friars still play an important role in the educational programme and organisation of the school. Only boys with very high grades at the end of their primary education are admitted. The expectation is that you will do well in life if you study here.**

*Denis Kalyango, Deo Kyakulagira's son, took me to the school and the adjacent friary. Considering the history of the school and its prominent status, he believed that it would have a collection of photographs. The brother in charge of the archive initially did not want to just hand us everything on a plate, but he did let us in.*

*My heart beat faster when I found a set of negatives hidden among a huge stack of printed photographs. Since they were negatives, it was not possible to instantly see what was depicted and they appeared to have no value for the brother. I was allowed to take them to the Netherlands to digitise them and then bring them back afterwards.*

*The negatives were mainly of missionaries and schoolboys.*

*Through these pictures, I learned that a group of Canadian missionaries travelled to Uganda in the early 1940s to work at the Catholic boy's school. The men produced photographs of the boat and the train on their journey and then of their new life.*

*In the building where biology is taught, there are a great number of insects. The dead creatures are packed into drawers and boxes. I was enchanted by the butterflies. They embody freedom but have been pinned down and classified for almost a century.*

*Elsewhere in the school I saw massive picture frames. From each one, dozens of boys stare into the lens. The arrangement of the boys and that of the butterflies is similar: it is an encyclopaedic method of presentation. This Western concept was first used by the Swedish botanist Linnaeus in the 18th century as a method of classifying nature. The system still has a profound impact on how we think about knowledge and knowledge transfer.*

*When the publication of the school collection was presented, Daniel Omara, deputy editor-in-chief of the annual school magazine, approached Canon and me. He wanted to rephotograph<sup>256</sup> some of the historical photographs and publish them in the next issue of the magazine.*

<sup>256</sup> Rephotography is a rather self-explanatory term used to signify the remaking of an existing photograph as precisely as possible at a later time. See Klett et al (2004)



Photograph made during meeting with Brother Anthony Kyemwa, first Ugandan Headmaster of St. Mary's College Kisubi, 1969-1980, July 2012



The only remake for the school magazine based on a photograph published in *Ebifananyi* #6 , November 2016

THE EAGLE 2016  
SMACK  
Duc In Altum  
MAGAZINE



# Campus

## HISTORY IN PROGRESS @ SMACK 110

In 2012, Canon Griffin (Uganda) and Andrea Stultiens (Netherlands), both artists, were advised to visit SMACK and the Brothers of Christian instruction, because they had been looking for and digitising photo collections in Uganda. They do this under the name History In Progress Uganda (HIP).

HIP aims to make photographic materials on Uganda's history available to various audiences. But it also wants to collect information related to those materials and to develop books and exhibitions with and about them. These books and exhibitions are developed in collaborations between Andrea Stultiens and a wide variety of other image makers and artists. In these collaborations, the number of potential meanings of - and stories attached to the photographs are expanded, which does justice to the versatility of photographic pictures, not in what they show, but in how they can be read, used and given meaning.

HIP spoke to SMACK's first Ugandan headmaster, Brother Anthony Kyemwa, who has an extensive personal photo collection and worked with the late Brother Kizza, who was running the archive room of the brothers at the time. Both collections were digitised. Based on the etymological collection of the school, a set of negatives dating back to the 1940s, and the 'Facebooks' with portraits of students, a book was developed. The different source materials are presented in a sequence with photographs made at SMACK in 2013 and 2014, and the story of the unfortunate accident in which 12 SMACK students died in 1964, told by eye witness Eng. Walusimbi.

During St. Mary's day 2016, the book on SMACK, titled with the school motto, was launched at the school, and a week later at the Uganda Museum. The book can be bought at the SMACK art room, or in Kampala at the Uganda Society (building of Uganda Museum) or AfriArt Gallery, both in Kamwokya.

The Eagle Magazine caught up with Andrea Stultiens during the SMACK 110 Feast Day Celebrations at the college as she launched the DUC IN ALTUM photo collection. She introduced us to Canon Griffin Rumanzi, one enthusiastic artist whose impressive views and concepts of nature and the world will leave you in need of more.

We shared with Andrea the idea of reposing for some selected photographs in the DUC IN ALTUM Collection and she was genuinely interested in how it all works out.

Because she was always on the move, she delegated Canon to work with us on the project.

We then identified the original locations where the photos were taken from plus the students with the physique that most closely resembled our brothers in the photographs.

We made the right schedules with Canon and at the end of this experience, we have these comparison to share with you;






The Eagle Magazine  
www.stmaryscollegekisubi.sc.ug

8

THE EAGLE 2016  
SMACK  
Duc In Altum  
MAGAZINE



# Campus

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several photo collections that led to thinking that the now digital information would not be of much use just sitting on my heard drive. When discussing this with Canon Griffin we came up with HIPUganda.

**2. When did HIP Uganda start its activities and How many institutions have you worked with?**

August 2011. And not sure... But they include the National Theatre, National Archive, Gayaza High School, the Uganda Society, the Ham Mukasa Foundation and the Uganda Cancer Institute.

**3. In your engagement with SMACK, do you have any exceptionally unique experience? If so, what amused you?**

I loved attending some Biology classes that included practicals and wish I would have been taught Biology like that. I also love the setup of the Biology class rooms, that, when I walked in for the first time made me imagine a Ugandan Harry Potter sequel.

**4. To what extent are the works of HIP Uganda recognized and appreciated around the world?**

That you should ask 'the world' and not me...

**5. What parting thoughts and advice do you offer to any student with a heart and interest in photography and artistic expression?**

Keep asking questions, do not ever be sure you know what you see.

In case you want to know more about Canon, I can tell you. Well, during the course of our project, I realized that Canon actually likes SMACK rice, posho, beans and beef more than any other delicacy that Kampala hotels and restaurants can offer. In his perspective about nature, he believes such meals that are prepared in large excess amounts bear within them a natural unique freshness and the accompanying comfort that at least 1000 more people are sharing with you the same taste. I am definitely considering a longer experience with art and photography after this with Andrea Stultiens and Canon Rumanzi.

**1. What inspired the inception of HIP Uganda?**

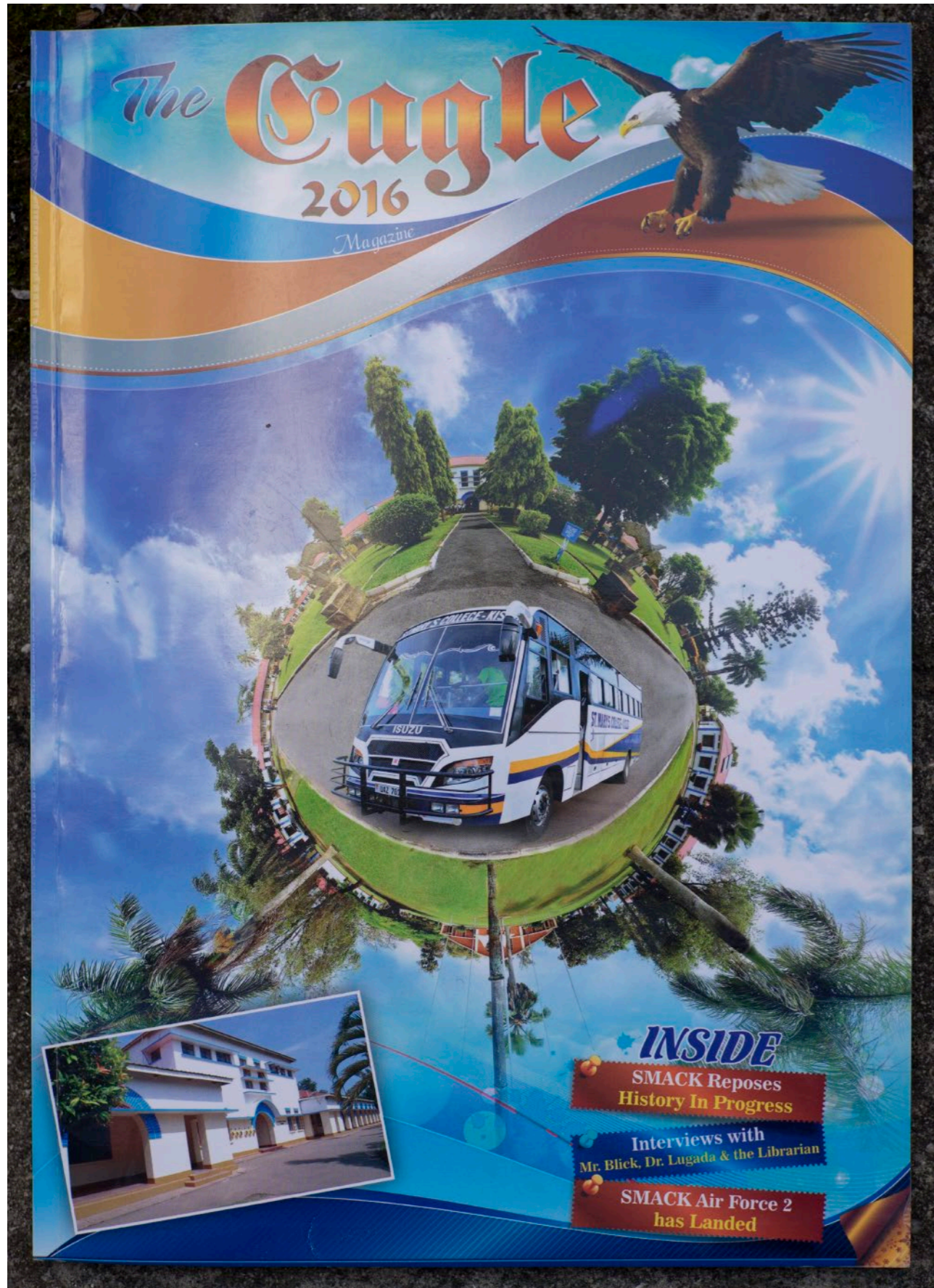
An interest in everyday life in Uganda that led to the at least partial misconception that this could be learned from historical photographs that led to the digitisation of

To satisfy our anxiety, and that we knew you too would experience, we asked Andrea just these five (5) questions which I'm sure respond adequately to your anxiety.

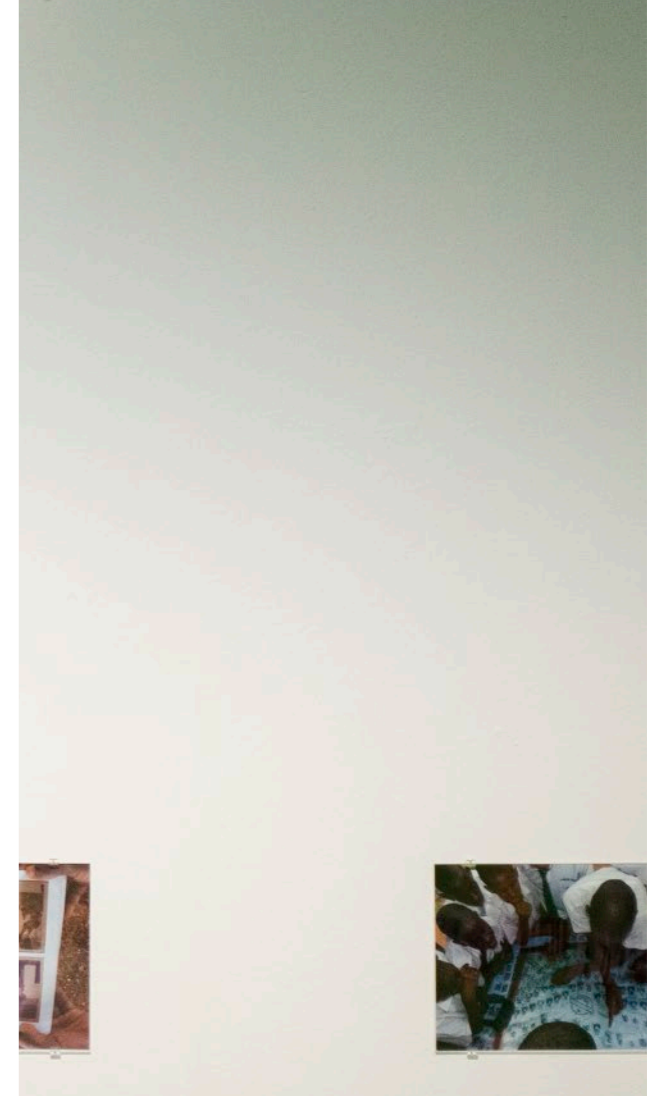
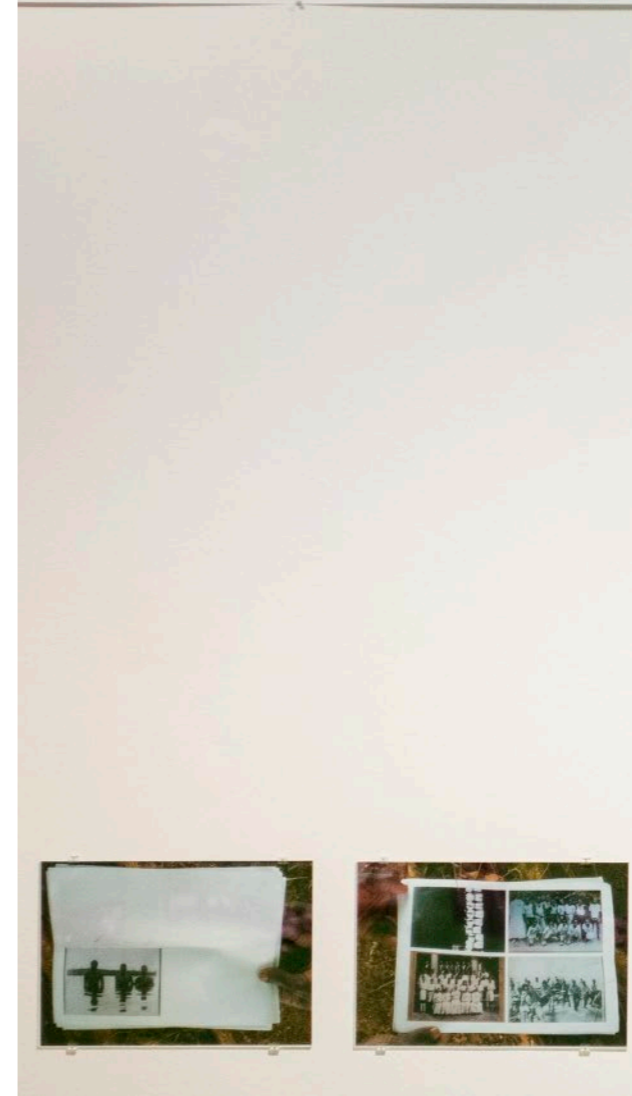
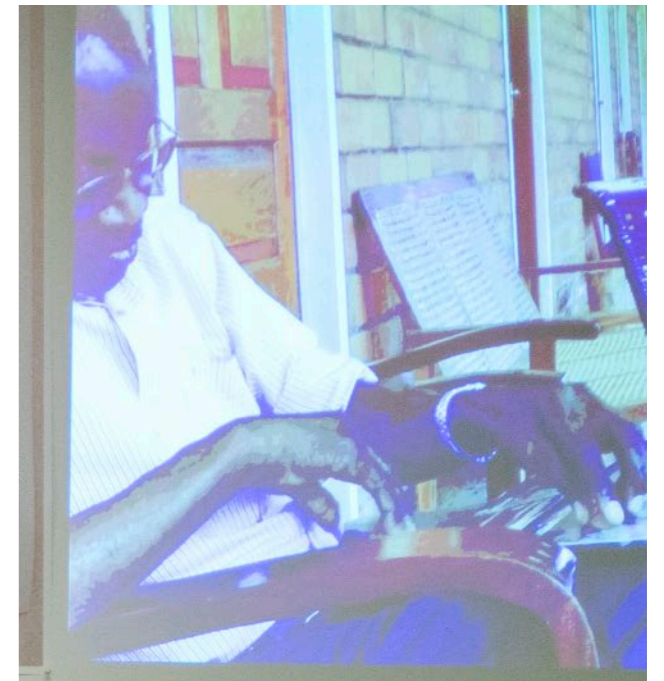
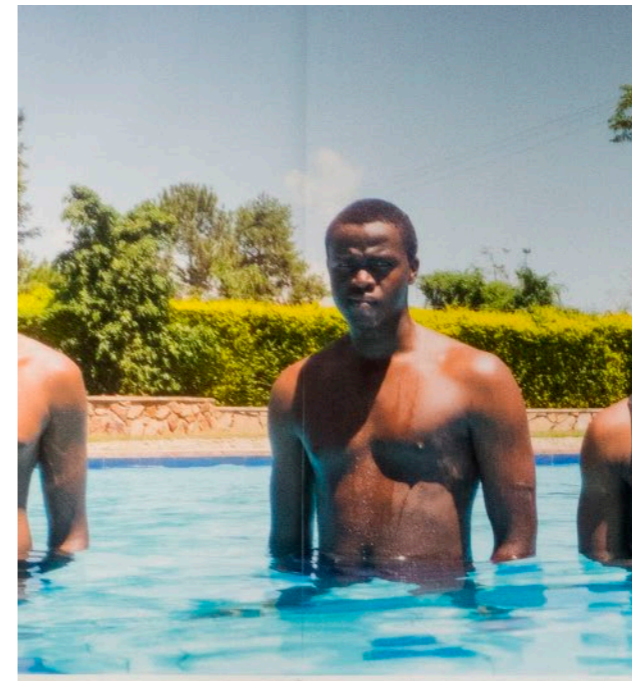
**Daniel Omara**  
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

The Eagle Magazine  
www.stmaryscollegekisubi.sc.ug

9



Published 2017, re-photographs and "little planet with school bus" by Canon Griffin



Ebifananyi, Fomu Antwerp, October 2017 / February 2018

## A letter about what happened as a result of the choices made

Dear Brother Anthony,

Years have passed since the last time we met, and the memories of the afternoon during which we looked at your albums are dear to me.<sup>257</sup> It saddens me that it is not possible to hand the book I made about SMACK to you in person and this letter is a meagre substitute for what could have been. I would nevertheless like to make use of this opportunity to reflect on the making of the book, and what happened after it was launched, with you in mind.

The experiences of going through photographs with you and with Brother Kizza, who at the time took care of the archive room of the congregation, were strikingly different. You generously shared stories and connected photographs to each other and to your life. In contrast, Brother Kizza was rather protective of the identities of the people on the photographs, which surprised me because most of the photographs were made at public functions, and some had been published in newspapers with captions that identified them. You obviously had different relations with the material. You spoke about your own albums, Brother Kizza took care of photographs that came from personal sources and were now institutionalised.

In the archive room I came across an envelope with black and white 6x9 negatives, and noticed the cabinet with entomological specimens, which led to the much larger collection of insects in the school's biology lab. During a meeting with the head master I saw large frames with groups of graduate students and faculty in his office. My admiration for these frames led to a tour around the school. I photographed the frames, which I started to call 'face books' and the spaces they were in.<sup>258</sup>

The pictures on the negatives, the biology lab with its butterflies, and the 'face books' became the main ingredients for the book. The story you told us about the tragic accident with the students in 1964 is what gives the content in the book particularity and a connection to the politics in which the school operated.<sup>259</sup>

With Brother Kizza's concern about the privacy of the people on the photographs in mind, it came as a surprise that he instantly gave permission to take the negatives to the Netherlands for digitisation. I was thrilled by the find because negatives are closer to the actual production of a photograph rather than an interpretation in the way that prints are.

Quite a number of the pictures on the negatives show members of the congregation, traveling to Kisubi by boat and train. Others reveal scenes from everyday life at the school, and explorations of the region. Thanks to framed photographs up on the walls in the archive room one of the men could be identified as former SMACK head master Ambrosius Meek, which dates the negatives to the second half of the 1940s. Is that the period in which you were a student at the school?

<sup>257</sup> See links in footnote 225

<sup>258</sup> The photographs of the head master's office:

<http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/63/>

<sup>259</sup> See link in footnote 247 for Brother Kyemba's account of the event and the section of the book starting from this page:

<http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/85/> for another one.

The opening and closing sections of the book are made of the same brown paper as the cover. The pictures on these pages are printed with white and black ink. This way of printing is an attempt to create an experience for the reader of the book that is somewhat similar to trying to figure out what was photographed while looking at the negatives. The appearance of the pictures has some resemblance with the silver residue on the old negatives. People who shared the experience of handling this type of negative with me understood what I was referring to, but these were all Europeans. Some people made the remark that they were looking at negative pictures, and others still were simply annoyed that they had to "strain their eyes" in order to see what was depicted.<sup>260</sup>

The opening sequence of the book shows scenes in which Ambrosius Meek and his companions travel to Uganda towards Kisubi.<sup>261</sup> Before the brown papers changes to white we have arrived with them at the school. On the last photograph in the book, again printed in white and black on brown paper, Ambrosius Meek stands in front of an airplane.<sup>262</sup> I took this to be an appropriate farewell picture.

The inner section of the book takes the reader back and forth between pictures from the negatives, the biology lab and the 'face books' with their context. I hoped to give the reader and idea of SMACK's rich past as well as of the prestige the school has in present day Uganda.

While I was working towards the book I also heard and read critical views on education in Uganda. Friends told me how misleading the curriculum was, which, for one of them led to the remark that he had been "miss-educated" at SMACK. Connie Nshemereirwe, who is a consultant in education in Uganda, wrote that formal education was set up during colonial times as "a means by which the colonial machinery trained low-level clerical staff".<sup>263</sup> And an article on the early years of Makerere College, by historian Nizar Motani even speaks "educational retardation" to type the inadequacy of the colonial administration in response to the need for educated Africans in the colony.<sup>264</sup>

The book then is a celebration of SMACK as an admirable institute with an impressive past, but also tries to raise questions on the system of missionary education that my friends and these authors refer to. It does this by alternating the photographs of the boys and the butterflies, resulting in a structure that is meant to be a metaphor for the involuntary submission of both boys and butterflies to the educational and taxonomical systems that were imposed on them by outsiders.

While I was designing the book, Ugandan and British friends, all of them living in Uganda and working in the arts, gave me feedback. There was a remarkable difference between their responses. The British friends felt I was too critical. While I do not recall what their exact reasoning was the rejection was obvious. The Ugandans, however, expressed their support for the conversation this juxtaposition tried to bring up. This was something, they felt, that needed to be said and spoken about. As a result of these two contradicting responses I tweaked the design. The alternation between boys and butterflies became less rigid but is still present.

<sup>260</sup> See this review by Ugandan author and blogger Joel Ntwatwa:

<http://nevender.com/just-read-ebifananyi-6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/> Last accessed 25-09-2018

<sup>261</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/5/> and following pages

<sup>262</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/134/>

<sup>263</sup> Nshemereirwe (2016). Also see Bagunywa (1980), Mudimba (1988), p. 44

<sup>264</sup> Motani (1979). Also see Sanyal (2013) for an insightful analyses that focusses on art education.



The book was first presented at SMACK during St. Mary's day, together with an exhibition of student work in the art room.<sup>265</sup> Prints were installed on some of the outside walls of the school buildings. Those who were interested could browse through a large size book of reproductions of the 'face books'. Students carefully looked through the *Ebifananyi* book, and tried to identify parents or grandparents of their fellow students in the 'face books'.<sup>266</sup>

Daniel Omara, an A Level<sup>267</sup> student and the deputy editor in chief of *The Eagle*, wanted to pay attention to the old photographs in the school magazine. He proposed to do this by producing remakes of selected photographs. I provided him with reproductions of photographs that were not in the book. He particularly admired your photographs from the 1960s and 70s, which resulted in a selection of photographs that I, with one exception, had not included in the book.

Daniel Omara was particularly concerned with the similarities between the boys on the photographs and his fellow students, who were to pose for the remakes, which was a surprise to Canon who produced the photographs. For both Canon and I, the individuality of the people in the historical photographs could not be replaced anyway, whereas this was different for Daniel Omara, and his attempts did confirm the importance of resemblance in *ebifananyi*.<sup>268</sup>

The official launch of the book took place at the Uganda Museum, with a debate on education in Uganda. It was a lively discussion among people who largely agreed with each other and were critical of the educational system in present day Uganda. There was so much to be said though that the discussion barely touched on the photographs in the book and how they were relevant to the discussion. There were no responses that echoed those given to the design in progress. This made me question the extent to which this was the appropriate audience for the issue and whether the criticism in the book, expressed through pictures, was suitable for a public discussion or not.

How wonderful it would have been to hear your thoughts, as both an artist and an educator, of the book in which honouring and criticising the institute to which you devoted your life go hand in hand.

With warmest regards,

Andrea

<sup>265</sup> An annual celebration on the name day of the patron of the school in August for staff, students and their parents.

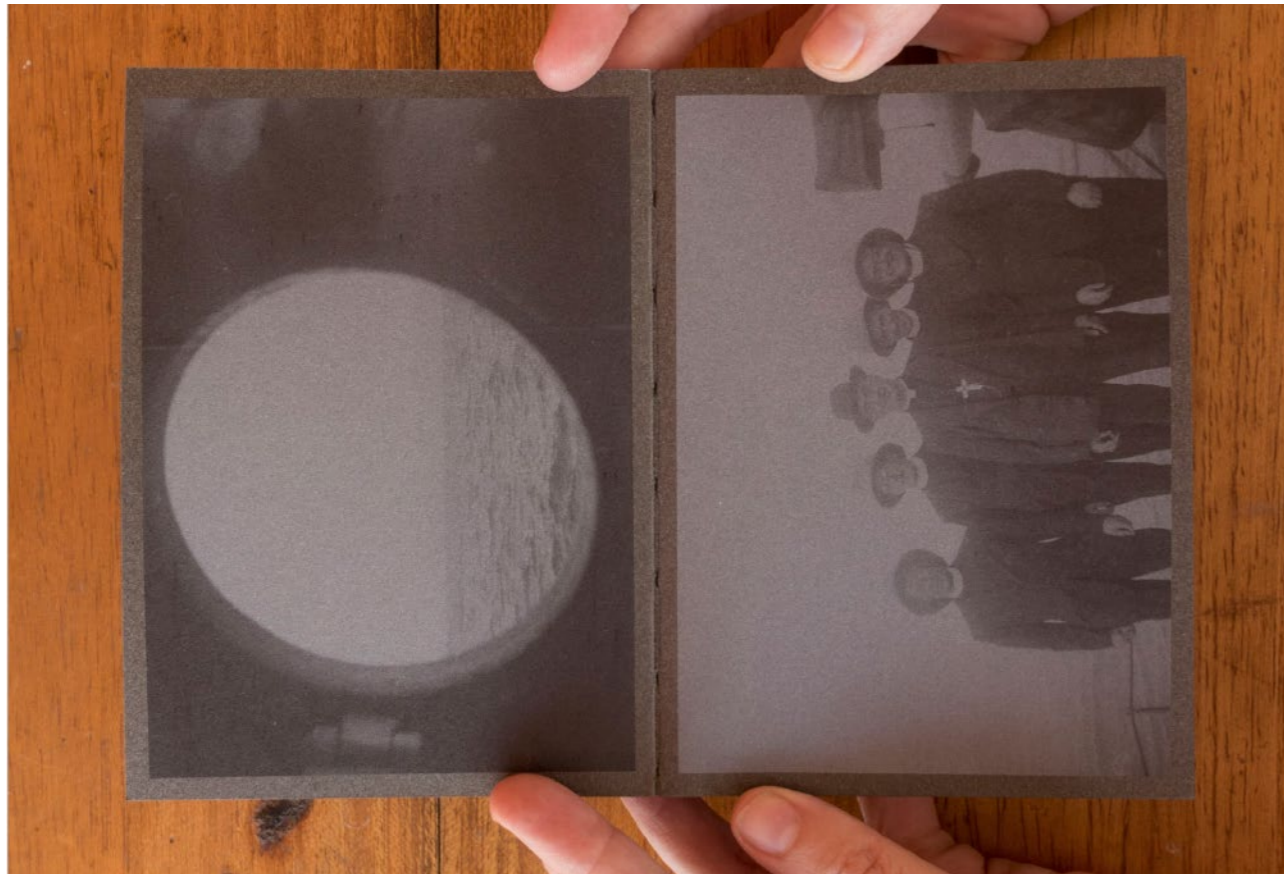
<sup>266</sup> <http://www.andreastulstiens.nl/exhibition/ebifananyi-6-pre-launch-smack/>

<sup>267</sup> Advanced Level, a subject-based qualification in the English school system that the Ugandan system builds on. A level, different from O (ordinary) level gives access to university education.

<sup>268</sup> See this blogpost <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/reposes-of-smacks-photographic-heritage> in which Daniel Omara gives his views on the efforts to rephotograph his selection of historical photographs, and I contextualise where possible the photographs and comment on Omara's views.



*Ebifananyi* #6 spreads referenced in footnotes with the letter to Brother Anthony



See <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/6-duc-altum-dive-deep-st-marys-college-kisubi/> for full version



Published July 2017



From an e-mail exchange with Dr. John Ziegler, first director of the Uganda Cancer Institute, 1967-1970

## Introducing the Uganda Cancer Institute

The Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2017. Photographs play an important role in the institute's history.

American physician Denis Burkitt (1911-1993), who gave his name to a type of cancer that is relatively common in East Africa, uses an old camera to document his observations. This allows him to convince his colleagues of the link between cancerous tumours occurring in different parts of the body. In the early years of the institute's existence, all patients are photographed by the medical illustrators of Mulago hospital - the institute to which the UCI is attached.

*During her doctoral research, American medical historian Marissa Mika (1981) stumbled on slides and prints in the collections of oncologists who worked in Uganda around 1970.*

*Together, we decided to document the current state of the UCI before it underwent dramatic changes due to the new building that was planned.*

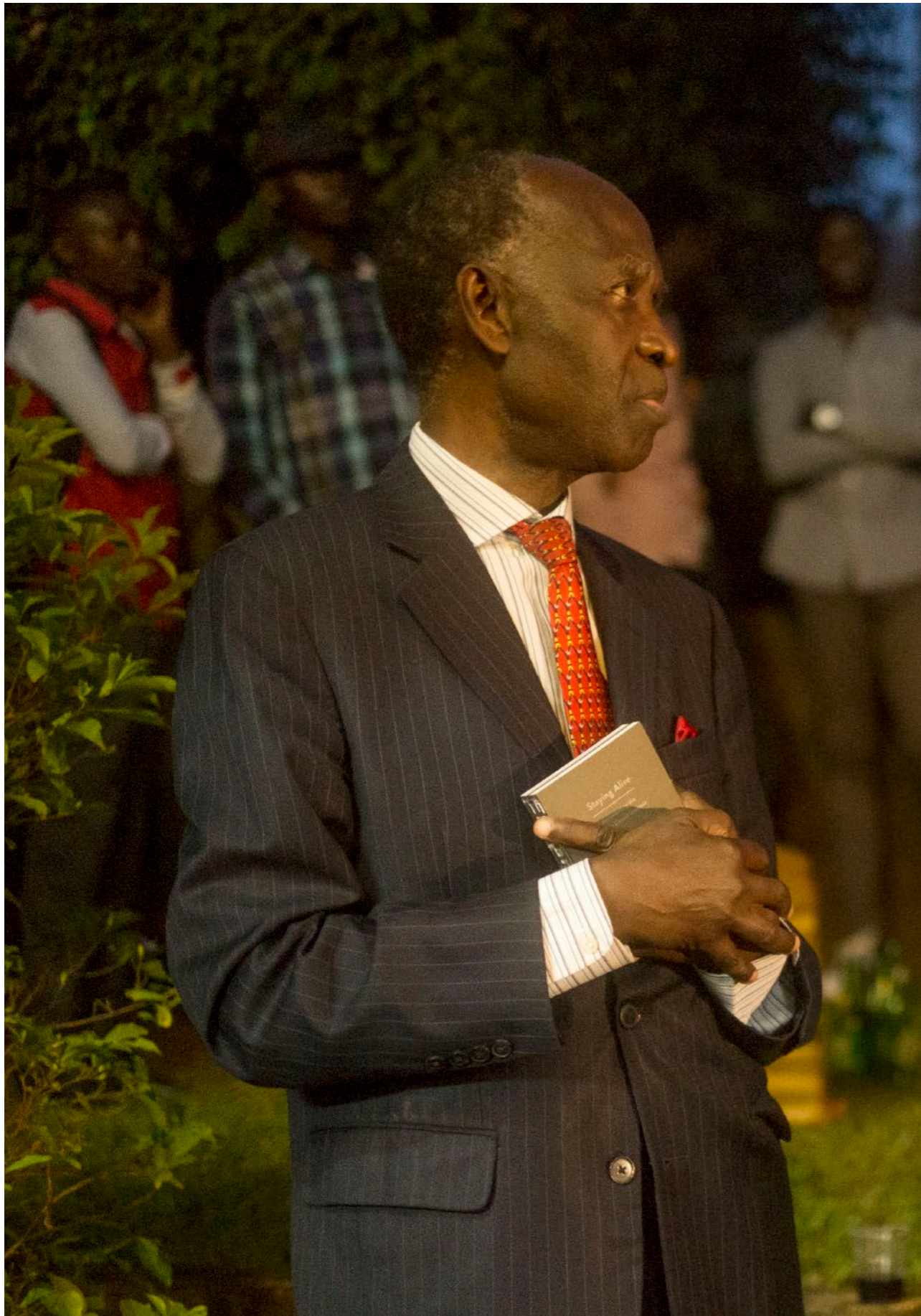
*My own cancer treatment played a role in this narrative that I could not ignore. If I had lived in Uganda when the malignant cells began to form, I would not be alive today.*

*It was extremely difficult for me to look at the photographs taken of all the UCI patients between 1967 and 1970. They usually - but not always - show children. Swellings had deformed faces and transformed eyes into craters. Nevertheless, I thought it would be important to show these pictures: as a phenomenon and as a warning.*

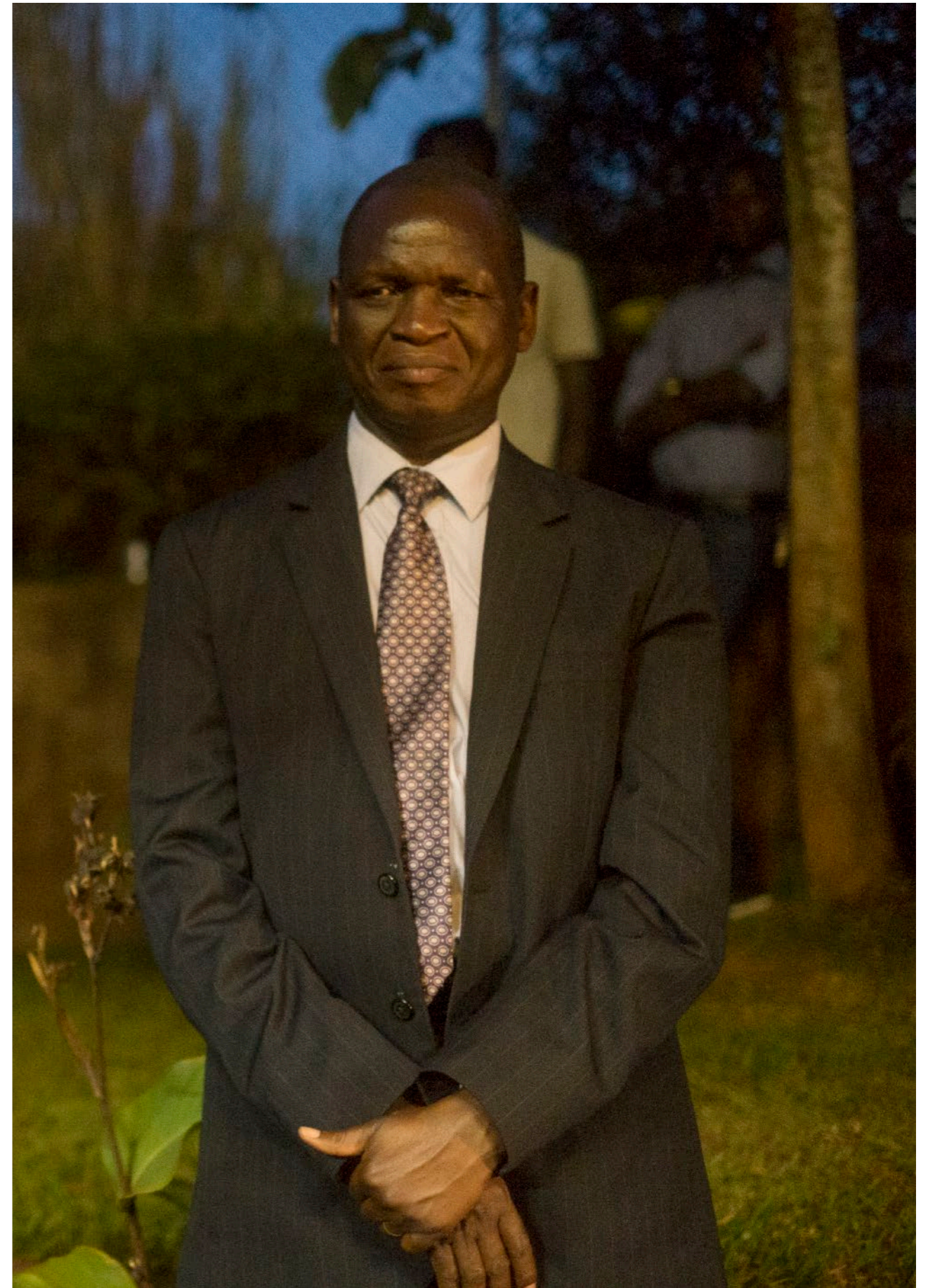
*At the same time, I was aware that doing this would be inappropriate for various reasons. I could not ask for permission of the people portrayed nor expose viewers to the horrific pictures. And then there was the nudity, an unavoidable aspect of some of the photographs.*

*During the opening of the first Kampala Art Biennale, I was introduced by chance to a medical illustrator from Mulago Hospital. I asked him and a colleague of his to make the photographs more acceptable by abstracting the individuals in their drawings as this would serve to navigate around the ethical problem.*

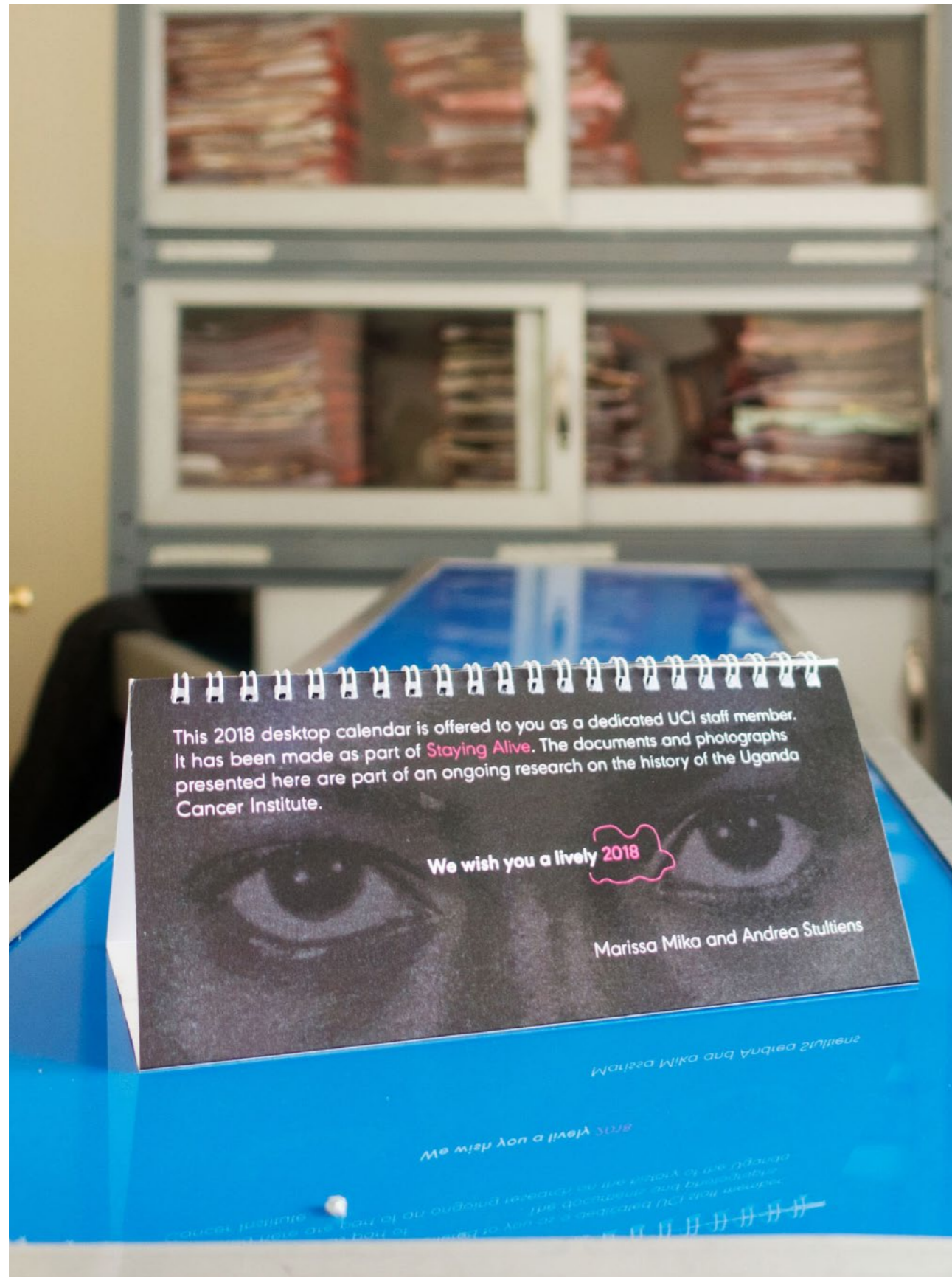




Prof. Olweny, director of the Uganda Cancer Institute in the 1970s, receives the first copy of *Ebifananyi* #7, Afriart Gallery Kampala, August 2017



Dr. Jackson Orem, current director of the Uganda Cancer Institute, at the booklaunch of *Ebifananyi* #7, Afriart Gallery Kampala, August 2017



Staying Alive desktop calendar 2018, produced for Uganda Cancer Institute staff members  
 Photographed in the administration office of the institute, December 2017



Ebifananyi, Fomu Antwerp, October 2017 / February 2018

## Another letter about what happened as a result of the choices made

Dear Kizito,

I am writing this letter without knowing anything about you except that you were treated at the UCI in 1969. Photographs with your name on them are part of a collection of several hundreds of photographs that were made of patients in the early years of the institute's existence. The collection raised two questions. The first one instantly came to me, and asked why these photographs were produced. I could imagine that they were used to identify patients, or to illustrate presentations of physicians who worked at the institute or, maybe, to inform Ugandans about deformations to look out for and act upon.<sup>269</sup> The second question was how I could include these pictures in a book as a phenomenon, without making a spectacle out of the people who appear on them - an answer to this second question is given in the book. I would like to tell you how and why your face is the only one that is printed in the book as a photograph. Towards the end of the letter I will also tell you how an answer to the first question was given. But initially I need to say something about the setup of the book and my relation to the UCI.

*Ebifananyi #7* is the most personal book in the series because I am, like you, a cancer survivor. I noticed how this term 'cancer survivor' is constantly used for our status in Uganda, while in the Netherlands we would usually be called former cancer patients. In the Netherlands we are victims while in Uganda we are victors. I was regularly asked to explain my interest in particular histories or photographs, but as soon as people knew of my medical history this was a sufficient explanation and people expressed their respect and admiration instead. The illness made me an insider to the story told by the book, while I felt more an outsider than ever because, as is mentioned in its introduction, it is unlikely that I would still be alive if I had lived in Uganda.

The book opens with photographs of the inactive record room of the institute.<sup>270</sup> From there, photographs of the institute and the people in it, patients, nurses, doctors and caretakers, alternate with text fragments written by American medical historian Marissa Mika. She wrote a history of the UCI and introduced me to the historical photographs that she had encountered during her research. In the centre of the book a section is printed with silver ink on brown paper and a text written by me explains why the historical photographs were translated into drawings.<sup>271</sup> However, you appear in photographs and the text does not explain my reasoning for this.<sup>272</sup>

The selected portraits that were translated into drawings appeared to me to have been made because of **what**, rather than **who**, people were. They were patients rather than individuals and the pictures were records of their status as patients rather than portraits. Your gaze caught mine when I first browsed through the pile of photographs. It seemed as though you were in control of the way in which you were pictured even if you were not in control of the disease. When I look at these photographs I primarily see a person and not a patient. The dates of the photographs, written in pencil on the back, suggest that you were successfully treated. Your gaze transforms the medical photograph into a portrait of an individual who happens to be caught by a disease. You therefore became the embodiment of the mission of the UCI, to help people to stay alive.

<sup>269</sup> See the remark by Deo Kyakulagira's wife in *Ebifananyi #1* and photographs on the following pages: <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/1-photographer-deo-kyakulagira/70/>. Kyakulagira worked as a medical illustrator at Mulago Hospital in the late 1960s, and may have made some of these photographs.

<sup>270</sup> <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/7-staying-alive-uganda-cancer-institute/6/>

<sup>271</sup> From <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/7-staying-alive-uganda-cancer-institute/54/>

<sup>272</sup> From <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/7-staying-alive-uganda-cancer-institute/84/>

I decided to include your portrait in the book to make the possibility of survival of cancer in Uganda tangible to the reader.

The last part of the book takes its reader through microscopic photographs of cancer cells and documentation of activities connected to the work at the UCI, to the new multi-story building that now carries the name The Uganda Cancer Institute.

The launch of the book was scheduled to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the UCI and I was both surprised and pleased that the title of the book was adopted as the motto for the festivities. To me this is a homage to you and your arresting gaze.

Prof. Olweny, who took over the leadership of the UCI from Dr. Ziegler in the 1970s, received the first copy of the book at its launch.<sup>273</sup> In his speech he mentioned how consistently making photographs of patients led to the identification of the type of cancer that we now know as Burkitt's disease. This answered my first question. You were photographed because of a habit that developed from a success story. That and the agency I see in the photographs that were made of you led to your presence in *Ebifananyi #7*. Dr. Ziegler did not remember specifically why the photographs he gave to Marissa Mika were made. He did remember, however, that you were among the long-term survivors among the patients he treated, so I am hopeful that we will indeed have an opportunity to meet. Somewhere among the files in the inactive record room there must be a factsheet on you. I intend to ask permission to find it, and hope that it will lead me to you. I continue to look forward to that day.

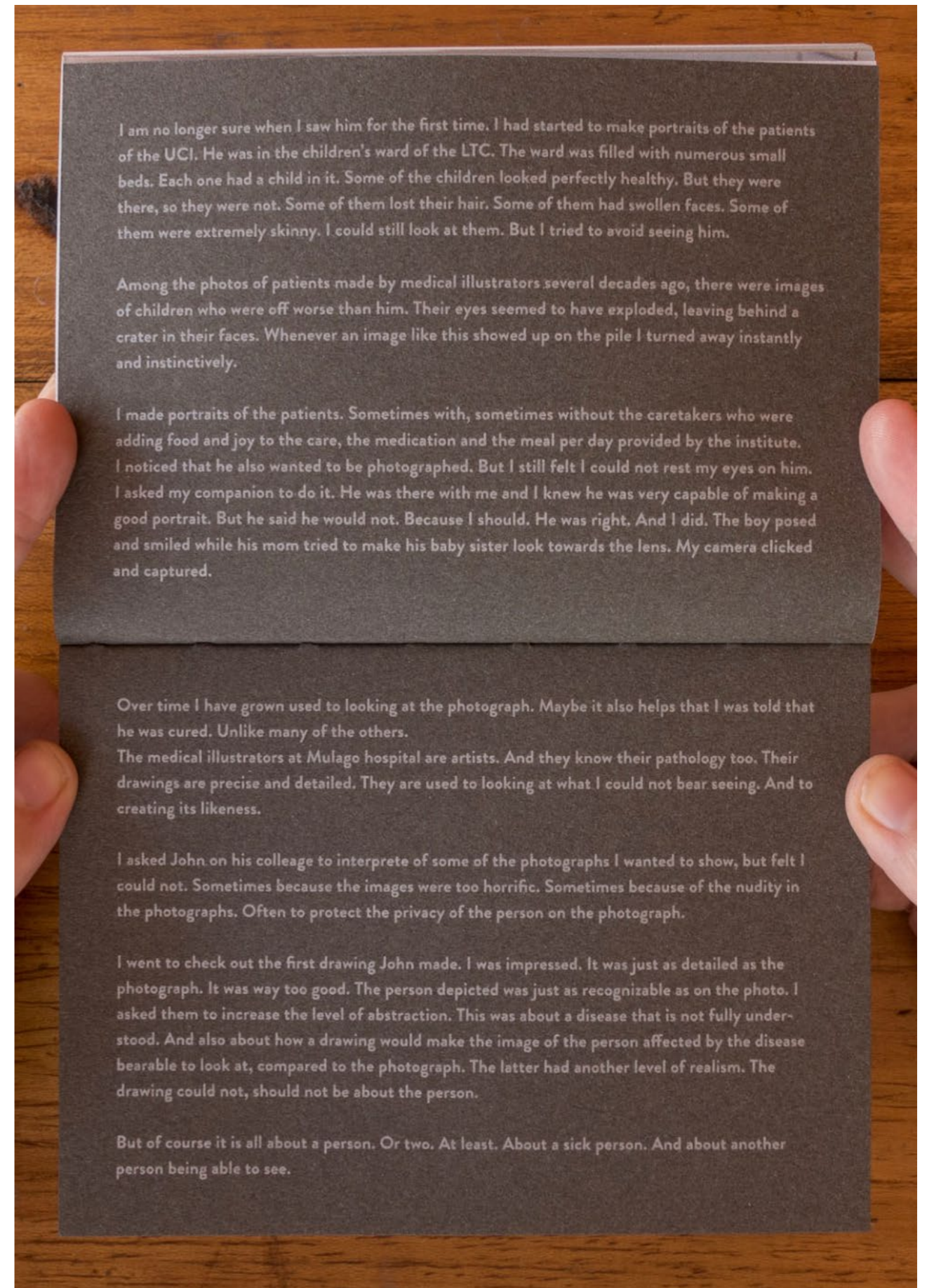
Yours,

Andrea

<sup>273</sup> See this blogpost for a transcription of Prof. Olweny's speech: <http://www.hipuganda.org/blog/staying-alive-6-one-eye-one-camera-one-institute>



Ebifananyi #6 spreads referenced in footnotes with the letter to Kizito



See <http://www.andreastultiens.nl/ebifananyi/7-staying-alive-uganda-cancer-institute/> for full version



## Epilogue to chapter 5: Responses and Consequences

A shared concern in the set of three books discussed in this chapter is how photographs relate to ideas of education and the development of knowledge in Uganda. In hindsight, these books are also of particular relevance for this dissertation due to the responses to the books that confronted me with the consequences of what DasGupta's methodological use of 'narrative humility' may offer. When intending to connect to others through narrative humility, they are approached and engaged with as dynamic entities while the Self, in relation to the Other, simultaneously "remain[s] open to their ambiguity and contradiction, and engag[es]

in constant self-evaluation and self-critique about issues such as our own role in the story, our expectations in the story, and our identification with the story [...]"<sup>274</sup> The responses by Engineer Wambwa, Daniel Omara and Professor Olweny provide examples which make visible what it entails to make oneself vulnerable in a context to which one is alien. It is one thing to state that one has to continuously and as candidly as possible communicate with all those involved in a research project, but it is another to understand who could be implicated as a result of it, and this has helped me to understand how transparency on assumptions and method should translate into actions. I have come to uphold the value and importance of transparency in order to understand my own assumptions, communicate them to others and appreciate how this influences my research in and through my artistic practice.

The responses to the books underline differences between those who respond and myself in a variety of ways. It is not the owners of the photographs, the people who were photographed or the Ugandans responding to the picture who constitute the differences, but my own European reading of and responses to them. My otherness is, as argued earlier, an ambiguous position that brought both unease and opportunities to the research project. Philosopher Lajos Brons traces the notion of otherness from the point of view of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, through Derrida's deconstruction of binary positions which constitute otherness, to theories of self-other distanciation and identification in psychology. Brons mentions how "by necessity all interpretation of the other takes place in the terms of the interpreting self, and with that interpreting self as a model, at least initially."<sup>275</sup> The interpreter is always implied in the way difference is established and valued. Therefore, if we agree that 'othering' is undesirable, the question is how to move beyond the initial position in which others are interpreted in terms of self. The responses to the *Ebifanyani* books confirm, and make tangible, the solutions theorised by Azoulay and Ingold in terms of encounters and correspondences, which is further supported through DasGupta's deployment of 'narrative humility'. The combination of these ideas has provided useful theoretical positions from which I have attempted to transcend the limiting binary between self and other through my practice.

## Interlude

### An e-mail exchange with Engineer Wambwa

<sup>274</sup> Dasgupta (2008), p. 981. Capitalisation from reference

<sup>275</sup> Brons (2015), p. 79. Italics from reference

On May 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 I sent the letter in which I apologise for the misunderstandings that rose from *Ebifananyi #5* to Engineer Wambwa in an e-mail.

**On May 31st 2018, at 14:25, MARTIN WANGUTUSI wrote:**

Dear Andrea,

Thank you very much indeed for the nice letter about my memoirs. You have nothing to apologise about. You did a good job from any viewpoint from which Mary or anyone else can continue with the publication of my full autobiography, which you have kindly described as, "clearly an account that would be relevant for many to read". And another good point for which I thank you is, "Your writing and slides made it possible to address an important period of time beyond but not disconnected from the often told political history".

The above two paragraphs I have quoted and more from your kind comment on my memoirs apply to the entire writing and that is what prompted my comment on your publication of my autobiography titled 'UHURU minor accidents'. So, when I read through, I was struck by omission of my writing beyond 1966 and you concentrated on journalistic paragraphs as if I was a journalist with a camera on my shoulder, which is correct if applied only to that time in my life, whereas the published autobiography should read to from 1928 to date.

It is nice reading your long letter and I thank you for co-operating with Mary and acquainting her with your exemplary knowledge and experience, and we look forward to seeing you again.

Thanking you and wishing you a blessed summer,

Eng. Martin Wambwa

**On Thursday, May 31st, 2018 03:56:51 PM EAT, Andrea Stultiens wrote:**

Dear Engineer Wambwa,

Your swift response is such a relief to me. The idea that I disappointed you troubled me throughout the past years. I do understand (and acknowledge) your concerns on my focus on the brief period of the 1960s, while your memoirs encompass so much more. As stated before, I will continue to support a possible publication of your full manuscript in any way possible.

It might in addition be good to mention that in the case that there is a financial gain from, or commercial interest in, your photographs I will of course be in touch with you and Mary before steps are taken. I am aware that additional permission for the use of your photographs and a discussion of how to deal with possible income is then needed.

Our communication was, and still is, extremely important for me. It is through correspondences like ours that

I have increased my understanding of photographs and their relation to history, and social and cultural practices in Uganda. I am currently finalising the dissertation on photographs in Uganda, of which the *Ebifananyi* books are an important part. Would you be comfortable with me quoting this mail exchange in this context? If this is not, or only partially, the case then please tell me and I will of course fully respect your position.

I hope to be able to visit you again in good health on one of my next visits to Uganda.

With still more warm regards,

Andrea

**On May 31st 2018, at 19:16, MARTIN WANGUTUSI wrote:**

Dear Andrea,

Sorry, in my previous e-mail, I omitted to write my full name as Martin Wangutusi Wambwa.

It's good you've received my reply to yours. We now face a host of problems, some of which are loss of network, lack of power, and for myself with a computer lacking a battery it's necessary to react quickly to e-mails, as if by luck everything is in order as now.

I would be glad to reap from my photos because it took a lot of time and money to make them, but for you it was free because you're so friendly to Mary, and my family loves you as much as she does. It's good that you would not only request further permission to use my photographs, but also a discussion of how to deal with possible income from them.

But please note that the photographs, which are ascribed to me, are quite distinct from those I may have acquired from other sources during my travels overseas. Mine were printed by Kodak and photographing I did not use a digital camera as today.

I would not object to your quoting of the correspondence you refer to provided it does not legally implicate me or anyone connected with me.

I also wish to inform you of my fear of money minded people who may use my photographs of the 60s for enriching themselves at my expense and then later they assume copyright as if they actually took those photographs.

Thanking you for the cooperation and looking forward to seeing you in our home when you revisit Uganda.

Greetings from Mary and all of us and may God bless you always,

Eng. Martin W. Wambwa