

IBRAHIM MAHAMA, TRANSFER(S)

Opening on 8th July, 2023, at Kunsthalle Osnabrück at 4pm

The installation will be sited at the former Galeria Kaufhof building in Osnabrück (DE) and runs through 1 October, 2023. The discursive programme will take place in Tamale (GH) in November 2023 (dates to be announced on the website)

On the occasion of Osnabrück's anniversary celebration of 375 years since the Peace of Westphalia, the internationally renowned artist Ibrahim Mahama is dedicating himself to investigating the city's history of linen trade in his new research and exhibition project dubbed TRANSFER(S), initiated in cooperation with the Kunsthalle Osnabrück. From 9 July to 1 October 2023, the Ghanaian artist will wrap the former Galeria Kaufhof building in Osnabrück's city centre with a monumental tapestry of strip-woven textiles, locally collected smocks (known as "batakari" in Ghana), and his signature repurposed jute sacks.

TRANSFER(S) explores a variety of historical and contemporary transfer circuits between Central Europe and West Africa. Thematically, it ties in with Osnabrück's historical relevance as one of the most important textile production regions in Westphalia, among others, for linen fabric, which became known as "true born Osnabrüghs" and dates back to the fourteenth century. This linen was also used as a means of exchange for captives from the coastal regions of Africa and to make clothing for the forced labourers working on the plantations in the West Indies.

The former Galeria Kaufhof building with its equally diverse history and future realignment is ideal for these debates in addition to serving as the primary site of Mahama's artistic intervention in Osnabrück. As early as 1955, the Merkur department store had opened there on the site of the Hotel Germania (known from E. M. Remarque's novel "The Black Obelisk"), which had been destroyed during the Second World War. Local city history, war, and post-war experiences are thus placed in the context of global trade and power relations through Mahama's intervention. The building is currently being converted by the Hamburg-based project developer Home United and, as of 2024, will house not only the cross-community space "Osnabrücker Ding" but also, among others, the departments of "Art/Art Education" and "Textile Design" of the University of Osnabrück.

In addition to Mahama's installation in Osnabrück, TRANSFER(S) also includes an accompanying discursive programme at the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art (SCCA Tamale) in Ghana. SCCA Tamale is one of three institutions Mahama has established in his hometown. This autumn, the establishment will serve as a discursive hub where the historical-political strands of the research premises will be unravelled in a series of talks, seminars, exhibitions, performances and presentations. The events are designed to create further perspectives in exchange with academics, curators, historians, musicians and artists.

Ibrahim Mahama (b.1987) lives and works in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, in Ghana. His politically-driven practice explores themes such as the contradictions inherent in economic globalization, labour relations, and creating inclusive, sustainable infrastructure in conditions of hopelessness. His work has been included in numerous international exhibitions such as the Sharjah Biennial 15 (2023), the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), the 56th and 58th Biennale di Venezia (2015, 2019), the 6th Lubumbashi Biennale in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2019) and documenta 14 (Kassel, Athens, 2017). Mahama has held many notable exhibitions around the world including Garden of Scars, oude kerk, Amsterdam (2022); In-Between the World and Dreams, University of Michigan Museum of Art (2020); Parliament of Ghosts, The Whitworth, University of Manchester (2019); a straight line through the carcass of history, 1918–1945, 2015–2018, daadgalerie Berlin (2018); Coal Market, Schloss Strünkede, Emschertal-Museum Herne (2018); Fracture, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (2016). Mahama is the artistic director of the 35th edition of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts (2023). He is the founder of SCCA Tamale, Red Clay and Nkrumah Volini—sister institutions engaged in hosting cultural, techno-scientific, and artistic programming in Tamale, Ghana.

TRANSFER(S) is co-curated by Kwasi Ohene-Ayeh and Bettina Klein, in collaboration with the team of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück and the directors Anna Jehle and Juliane Schickedanz.

For progressive updates and further related information about TRANSFER(S) visit: <http://transfer-s.org>

Thanks to Francis Djiwornu, Benjamin Okantey, Raimund Apel and his team, and all volunteers who have worked tirelessly in the production of the installation.

For more information about SCCA Tamale visit: www.sccatamale.org

Front image caption: Ibrahim Mahama, A Tale of Time and Purple Republic, 2013–2022. Commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation. Detail view: Sharjah Biennial 15, Kalba Ice Factory, 2023. Image courtesy of Sharjah Art Foundation. Photo: Motaz Mawid

MEDIATION PROGRAMME

2023 JUBILÄUM
WESTFÄLISCHER
FRIEDEN

OSNABRÜCK
DIE | FRIEDENSSTADT

Thursdays: Each starts at 6 pm

20.07.2023, 27.07.2023, 03.08.2023, 17.08.2023, 24.08.2023, 31.08.2023, 07.09.2023, 14.09.2023, 21.09.2023,

Saturdays: 15.07.2023, 12.08.2023, 30.09.2023, each starts at 2 pm

Meeting point: Eiscafé Dolomiti, Neumarkt 6, 49074 Osnabrück

free of charge, without registration

Guided tours of Ibrahim Mahama's installation TRANSFER(S) take place on Thursdays and Saturdays. Art mediators give an introduction to the artistic wrapping of the former Galeria Kaufhof building at the Neumarkt. Following a tour of the building, a discussion will take place in the ice cream café next door.

Selected guided tours are taking place with experts:

Saturday, 15.07.2023

With Bärbel Schmidt

Textile pedagogue and Professor for Textile Design at the University of Osnabrück

Thursday, 31.08.2023

With Birgit Haehnel

Professor of Art and Textile Studies with a focus on transculturality at the Institute of Art / Art Education at the University of Osnabrück

Thursday, 14.09.2023

With Thorsten Heese

curator at MQ4 for Urban and Cultural History and initiator of the city tour "Osnabrück post-colonial"

Thursday, 21.09.2023

With Liane Schäfer

PhD student in Cultural and Social Sciences at the University of Osnabrück with a research focus on the critique of racism, postcolonial and decolonial thinking

Saturday, 30.09.2023

With Bettina Klein

co-curator of TRANSFER(S), Independent curator, Berlin

Talk & Table

"Sew, knot, weave!"

Mini workshop for families with guided tour of the exhibition.

Saturday, 09.09.2023, 15:30–17:30

Kunsthalle Osnabrück

Free of charge

Register by 25.08.2023 at: vermittlung.kunsthalle@osnabrueck.de

Fancy an afternoon with art, cake and lots of craft activities on the theme of fabric at the Kunsthalle Osnabrück? Parents and their children are welcome, explicitly Ukrainian families. There will be a German-Ukrainian translation.

Adresses:

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