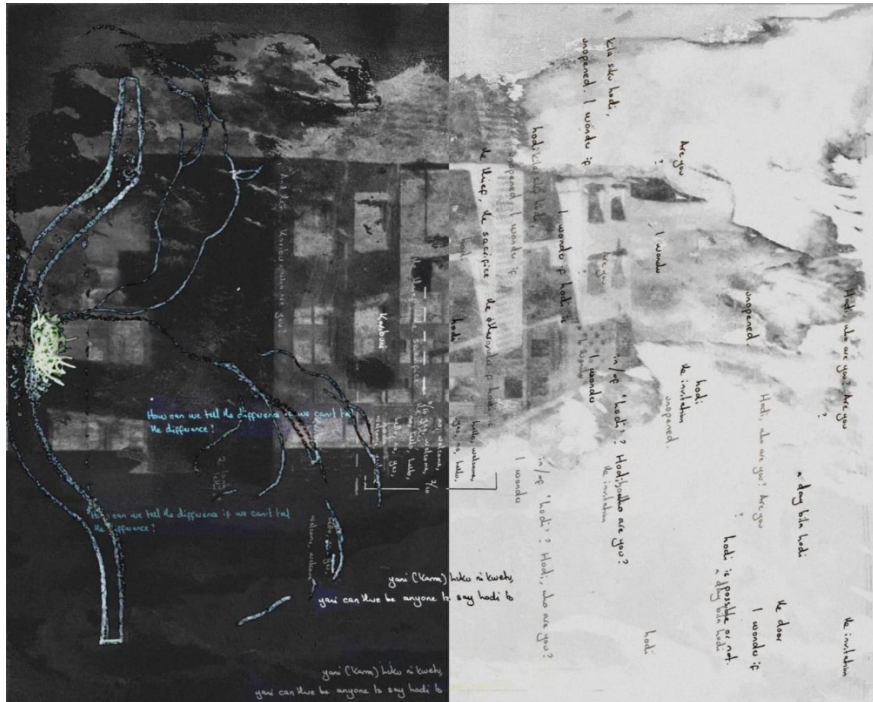


1. September 2026

Land, Language and the Stranger



What if land in Kenya is more than something we own? How does it shape social realities beyond its function as property? The Goethe-Institut Kenya and its partners from Down River Road: Brian Muraya, Muthoni Mwangi, Kamwangi Njue and Cynthia Nyakiro have taken up the challenge to view the question of land through research which culminates in artistic presentations.

‘Land, Language and the Stranger’ is an experimental exhibition that explores land in Kenya in relation to themes of hospitality, ownership, colonization and gendered labour. Following various readings, gatherings and workshops, the creatives will each showcase an experiment, an installation, and an experience reflecting upon these themes.

Brian Muraya’s installation looks at land through the lens of hospitality: “When you invite someone to your home, you are at risk of becoming a guest in your own home,” says Brian. His immersive installation invites attendees into a space where they can choose to either be the stranger or the host. Muthoni Mwangi’s projected video work examines a partial history of the gender and class dynamics that shaped who owns the land and who tends to it in the early colonial period and

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beyond. This work focuses on both the rural/urban divide as well as the place of women in shaping and determining this divide and land dynamics in general. Kamwangi Njue and Cynthia Nyakiro's sound sculptures explore how land figuratively mutates following landmark events in history such as colonization and political protests, forging the grounds for new beginnings while maintaining continuity with the past. Compared to the works by Brian and Muthoni, their work looks at the non-human agency of land, insisting that vegetation has autonomy to respond to events, be they in the past or in the present.

Taken together, these works reflect on a missing link, a future these artists have termed: "South A". In this context, South A and the search for it is not necessarily concerned with a geographic location but with what kind of gift, problem and/or opportunity a missing place may be for interpreting and answering current events.

There will be additional works-in-progress shown, as well as some collaborative works made over the term of the project.

The exhibition will run from 3rd – 18th September and will be open Monday - Saturday from 10am – 6pm.

This project is part of a larger project called 'Sediment', that asks the overall question: "Who Owns the Land?". This overarching project also includes works from partners in Cameroon and Burkina Faso in collaboration with the Humboldt Forum Berlin.

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About Down River Road

Down River Road (DRR) is an online and print journal for fiction, nonfiction, poetry and ideas. We elaborate our poetics and thus the objectives of our organisation along three general axes: print and publishing, and the Karara Library and Archive in Umoja 1, Nairobi and gatherings.

About Humboldt Forum

Situated in the heart of Berlin's historic centre, the Humboldt Forum is a unique place of discovery and encounter. A place for culture and science, for exchange, diversity and a multitude of voices. By bringing together outstanding collections and offering a diverse programme of exhibitions, events, educational activities and digital resources, a visit here inspires new insights into the world of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

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About the Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, active worldwide. It contributes widely to the promotion of artists, ideas and works. In Nairobi, the Goethe-Institut connects with partners across the country to foster Kenyan-German cultural and educational exchange through cultural projects and trainings, co-productions, school collaborations, information and knowledge platforms as well as German language teaching. <https://www.goethe.de/ins/ke/en/index.html>

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