

BEING CONTENT (?): CONTAINMENT, HABITATION AND DEVOTION

Dorothy Akpene Amenuke

Inhabited spaces could be friendly or hostile depending on many factors. In times prior to our current experiences of nation-states that excessively surveilled, many non-western geographical boundaries were presumably considered to be so to speak, only 'virgin' and could be raped at the whim of intruding sailors, missionaries and enslavers from Northern and Western Europe. These acts of 'rape' were actual in bodily terms, as well as psychological and more pervasively cultural, thus material. Some of those raped and defiled were jettisoned with the tatters of fabrics; some exchanged for kegs of liquor and worst still, even probably nothing at all, whence they were shipped off as chattel cargo to the so-called 'New World'. When we contemplate the world's current over-reliance on technologies that lead to the enhancement of security within the nation state, most especially, fortress Europe, we wonder if it is a quest to rid these states of so called "parasitic" beings. This obsession with surveillance, border control and the prevention of access, also permeates so called 'developed' societies to the extent that we literally cannot simply trust our neighbour(s), whosoever they may be now. But to what or to whom do we refer as "parasitic" beings? Is it the ever-growing hordes of refugees who desperately seek for asylum at the gates of fortress Europe, or is it the current inhabitants of former colonies who seek "greener" pastures in places other than their 'native' lands? How fair is it to see humans as such? Is it because they are not of our kind? Not of our own? Different from or "Other" than us? In the daily experience of inhabiting spaces, we witness these sorts of complexities of existence. The manner in which space is produced and consumed and the accompanying emotional registers of security, confinement, resignation, intimacy, boredom, and contentment define the spatial politics which eventually manifest as boundaries and borders. Over time, even these abstract ideas become embodied, often by those that wield power and perpetuated. By exploring the possibly communicative potential of fibres and fabrics, I seek through my research and practice, to investigate the dynamics of the individual in the larger picture of the world, thus questioning the individual in today's transnational global society.



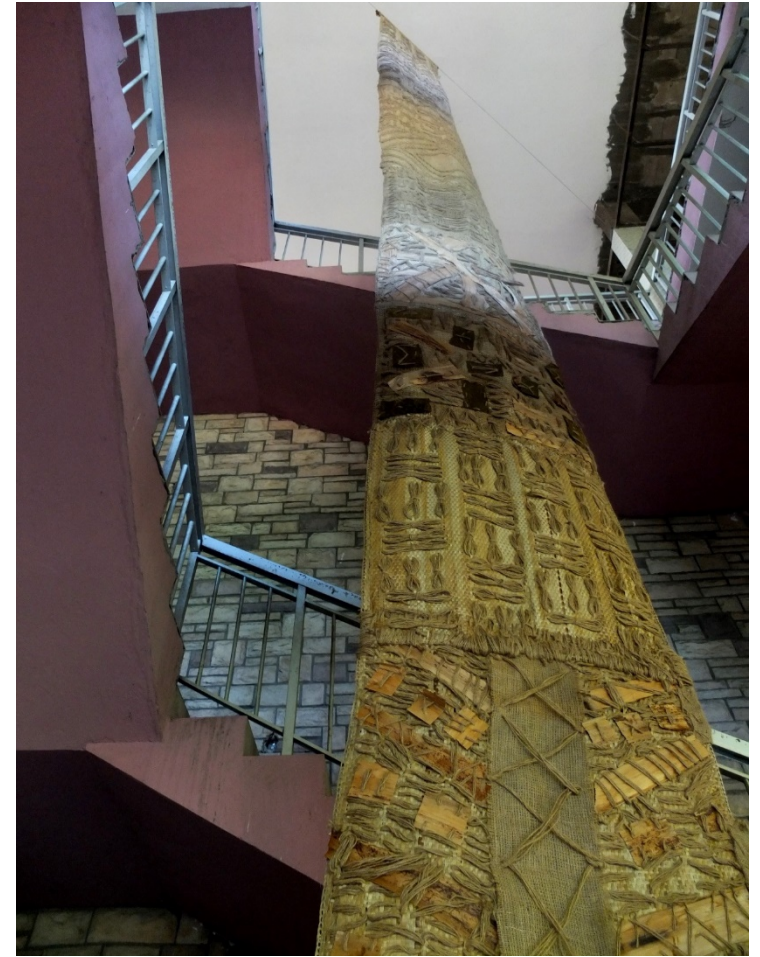
Dorothy Amenuke, *Coded*. Installation view from *Twists, Turns and Broken Doors*, Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana, June 17 – September 30, 2017. Photo by Dorothy Amenuke



Dorothy Amenuke, *Habitation-Inhabitation*. Installation view from *Twists, Turns and Broken Doors*, Nubuke Foundation, Accra, Ghana, June 17 – September 30, 2017. Photo by Dorothy Amenuke



Dorothy Amenuke, *Scroll*. Installation view from *The Gown Must Go to Town*. Museum of Science and Technology, Accra, Ghana, June 19 – July 31, 2015. Photo by Amenyo Dzikunu Bansah





Dorothy Amenuke, *Marks on the sheet*. Installation view from *if you love me*, Kumasi Locomotive Shed, Kumasi Ghana, April 15- May 5, 2016. Photo by Amenyo Dzikunu Bansah



Dorothy Amenuke, *In the Nest* variation, 2013 Photo by Dorothy Amenuke



Dorothy Amenuke, *The Scroll 2*. Installation view from *Twists Turns and Broken Doors*, Nubuke Fondation, Accra, Ghana, June 17- September 30, 2017. Photo by Mary Hark



Dorothy Amenuke, *The Scroll*. Installation view from *Silence Between the Lines*, New Ghanaian Contemporary Art, Kumasi, Ghana, February 19 - 23, 2015. Photo credit: Jean Rivel Fondjo.



Dorothy Amenuke, *The Scroll*. Installation view from *Silence Between the Lines*, New Ghanaian Contemporary Art, Kumasi, Ghana, February 19 - 23, 2015. Photo credit: Jean Rivel Fondjo.

Dorothy Akpene Amenuke, PhD, is an artist who lives and works in Kumasi Ghana. She studied sculpture for her undergraduate programme at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. For her graduate studies in the same university, she undertook MA Art Education and MFA and PhD Sculpture. She is a lecturer in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, College of Art and Built Environment, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. Amenuke has participated in several International art workshops and residencies. She was a resident of the 2009 Art Omi international Artists Residency, New York and directed the International Women Artists Workshop (IWAWO 2009) organized by Art In Aktion in collaboration with Goethe-Institut Accra. She currently coordinates the itinerant OFKOB Artists' Residency in Ghana. Amenuke was the recipient of the 2012 Howard Kestenbaum/Vijay Paramsothy International Fellowship in the Haystack Mountain School of crafts, USA, and her work, *How Far How Near*, is in the collection of Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (SMA). Amenuke's art involves the manipulation of a variety of fabrics and fibres through cutting, dying, tying, knotting, pasting, weaving and modeling into objects and spatial installations that evoke feelings of containment and protectedness of even subtle repulsion. Devotion becomes a recurring metaphor in her use of materials, laborious processes and communal strategies in the production of her work. www.dorothyamenuke.com / dorothyamenuke@gmail.com