

## **‘Kabbo ka Muwala’ exhibition opens at Makerere**

The exhibition “Kabbo ka Muwala”, conceived as an itinerant project taking place in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Germany, artistically explored perspectives on the multitude of migration processes in and from southern and eastern Africa primarily through the eyes of artists from these regions. A wide range of media, including photo works, videos, mixed media, and installations will propose alternative reflections to clichéd representations of a mass exodus to the Global North.

“Kabbo Ka Muwala”, is a Luganda phrase which translates as “the girl’s basket” the traditional basket is presented to the man, soon after a traditional marriage ceremony. The basket is usually filled with fruits, juices, sweets, wine and any such things that the bride feels will please her husband.

“Kabbo ka Muwala” is a tradition known throughout East Africa in which a bride transports presents in a basket to her new family. Metaphorically the basket represents expectations and hopes, but also disappointments and setbacks, which come with marriage and also with processes of migration.

With social media, the pain of migration has been reduced. Lovers are able to chat any time of the day. To this end, one of the artists exhibited a series of whatsapp messages between lovers. The messages were printed on different beautiful glass blocks. The exhibition, which started in Zimbabwe, was opened in Uganda by the Germany Ambassador, Dr. Peter Blomeyer.

Dr. Blomeyer commended the 20 artists who participated in the exhibition.

He explained that migration is due to various causes such as economic, wars, persecution and in search of a better life.

The exhibition which opened on 14<sup>th</sup>, April, 2016 will last two months and will give an opportunity to students to interact with professional artists and also gain knowledge on how to build their careers as artists.

In the Vice Chancellor’s remarks made for him by the Deputy Principal, College of Engineering Design Art and Technology, Dr Venny Nakazibwe, thanked those who came up with the idea of Kabbo ka Muwala and for choosing Makerere University to host the exhibition as an opportunity for us to learn from local and trans-national artists.

The Vice chancellor thanked the Germany Ambassador for honoring the request to officiate at the launch of the Kabbo Ka Muwala exhibition. He applauded the exhibition as a unique event. “The topic of migration is very important in our times. It brings people together in the contexts of cultures and beliefs.

The travelling exhibition ‘Kabbo Ka Muwala – The Girl’s Basket’ presents contemporary artistic perspectives on African migration with emphasis on Southern and Eastern Africa.

Speaking on behalf of the curators Rafael Chikukwa, Curator National Gallery of Zimbabwe said” We would be jobless without artists. Artists are very important in the society.”

“The Kabbo Ka Muwala” exhibition is a joint project of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, the Makerere Art Gallery in Kampala, Städtische Galerie (Municipal Art Gallery) Bremen, and Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany.

The exhibition which started on Thursday 14th closed on June 12, 2016.

*Story by Timothy Niwagaba*