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Queering the Form: Zine-Making as Disruptive Practice

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and Kate Pahl⁵ 

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Abstract

This article is an exploration of the zine as a form of practice that is radical and disruptive. It takes the form of six sections and has its own zine armature. It describes a zine workshop held in Kampala, Uganda, during lockdown, and constitutes a record of that event. The authors argue that zine-making is itself a form that can offer a queering of the status quo and can make authors of us all. It invites the reader into the space of the zine as a form that is both materially grounded and epistemologically challenging.

Keywords

zine, materiality, making, queer theory, global south, epistemology, writing

Introduction

In this article, we collectively “queer the form” through an exploration of zine-making as a methodological and material practice. We explore the potential of “queering” as decolonizing practice. This piece takes the form of a “call and response” taking a deep dive into a zine-making workshop held in Kampala, Uganda, during 2020, while in lockdown. Curated and facilitated by poet Gloria Kiconco and artist Charity Atukunda, and made safe with the work of Shawn Mugisha, the workshop was documented by ethnographer Lisa Damon via zoom in a creative response to the form of the zine. Here, we present the work as a piece of art, and a zine, but also as a methodological musing on the *form* of the zine itself as having the potential to open up possibilities and create a space for queering practice.

We begin with this question: What is it to “Queer the form?” Our thinking is reflected in pieces that call and move along the surface of the writing, reflecting what King (2019) describes as a “shoal” that is, “a place, a site of disruption, a slowing of momentum and a process of entanglement” (p. 31). Our co-authoring is in itself a form of activism (Nagar, 2014) that is a journey, through zoom calls, across continents and within and without the ability to call and respond through shared vulnerabilities and financial disruptions. We perceive our writing to be a journey, and this piece to be of that journey. We grapple with epistemic hierarchies that both re-enforce and break our solidarity. Our work with zines attempts to break the concept of “author” and “voice” through a praxis of solidarity. This work invites experimentation in worldmaking from the collective practice of zine-making. This is an epistemology of

activism and celebration (de Sousa Meneses & Santos, 2020) that aims to open up new lines of inquiry as zine-makers, poets, and academics. This writing is itself an experiment in form (Hartman, 2019). It speaks back, and sneaks around its form, to produce writing that is both poetic and materially grounded. We write in turn, and out of turn, producing text that celebrates the vitality of form (Kember, 2020). We invite you, our reader, into this space.

Queering the Form: Artifacts of a (Zine-Making) Happening

By Lisa Damon

The Scene

I am not here. I am *hear* though. And this is what I gleaned.

Disembodied, I am brief presence on the screen. Words and image never quite in sync. I hear my words reach the workshop space a second after having pronounced them, here, in my kitchen in Malakoff. I see the participants move and

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speak slightly before their words reach me through the screen and speakers of my upright interface into the world-making happening at Grand Global Hotel, Kampala.

The world being made over 2×5 days in October 2020 hinges on a particular form whose particular power is to continually extend what it means by form: zines. Gloria Kiconco, poet, performer, and practitioner of zines, is the principal facilitator of these two “Questioning/Queering the Form” workshops.¹ She is here to relate to the participants, in terms fashioned through the encounter, “this little art” (Briggs, 2017) of making books that don’t look like books; of making poems that don’t look like poems; of placing, dragging, or dispersing words and phrases across pages so that how they relate to one another produces something like wonder.

She is accompanied by Charity Atukunda, visual artist, virtuoso of paint, beads, glitter, and collage. She transforms a bland round table into a cornucopia of color and materials each afternoon for the participants to choose from as they practice speaking in tones, textures, and textiles to shape and shadow all that empty space between the morning’s words. If words there are. Sometimes, there are no words. Sometimes the zines created speak in strokes of color, crowning lace, beads, glue, and gumption. Lots of it. As one participant’s zine seems to summon in bold purple and black letters on its cover: “Draw my voice.”

Facilitating the workshops with Gloria and Charity is Shawn Mugisha, the base of the trio, ensuring tempo and time and a blanket of care such that everyone else can do their thing. Shawn came on board when the context of Covid19 and upcoming elections in Uganda imposed itself as the backdrop to making these workshops happen. “Activist, farmer, bee-keeper, security expert” (interview exercise, Day 2, Ndejje), he fixes problems as they arise, sees things that others don’t, remembers what others forget, carries my disembodied self around the room from time to time that I might get a closer look at the creating taking place.

Together, the trio was able to curate 5 days of deep diving into the world of zine-making for two very different groups of women. The first group included seven women in their 20s and 30s chosen by ArtVism director, Juliet Kushaba. Some self-identified as artists, poets, activists, and therapists. They are all Ugandan with an already established practice of self-expression which they want to develop through the workshop. Juliet is present throughout the workshop, acting as an additional facilitator, checking in every morning with the group, prompting discussion and reflection on the process at hand, making sure everyone feels safe and engaged throughout. She also—as do we all—gleefully succumbs to the invitation to participate by making her own zines.

The second group was selected by former director of Strong Minds, Dena Batrice. They are Congolese refugees

in their late teens, early 20s who all live in Ndejje, and who all underwent therapy through Strong Minds. They have been in Uganda for over 5 years, speak English, but are more comfortable in Swahili, and know each other well. They want to improve their English, learn new skills, and enjoy a week of creating away from their responsibilities at home. Dena is present in the mornings and runs several confidence boosting exercises, as well as being the resident mental health reference for all.²

The trio is able to tailor the tempo, writing, zine-making, and art activities to the desires and strengths of each group. Flexibility and fungibility are key to making the workshops work: listening, tending to, reworking, changing vocabularies and exercises to sustain attention, engagement, and creativity across the 2×5 days. In many ways, this enacted flexibility is what kept the questioning of form going enough for quite exalted work to take place and a multitude of different kinds of zines to be produced. It hinges on having conjured up a very precise plan and then allowing it to be subjected to collective and continual rewriting, mirroring one of the poetry exercises Gloria proposed to the first group.

It went like this:

“You might hate me for what’s coming next but hopefully you’ll like the results.”

- 1) Pick up your scissors and cut each line of your poem into separate strips of paper.
- 2) Give them to your neighbor to re-arrange them. Try to challenge each other to re-arrange them a lot. Try a completely different order.
- 3) Then, choose a colored piece of paper to glue them down on in their new order.
- 4) Edit together. How do you edit to “make sense?” It doesn’t have to make perfect sense. Challenge yourself so that it is not a narrative flow.
- 5) Cut out the unnecessary words, the repetition that doesn’t strengthen. Adverbs can go: very, really, and so on instead of saying very hard, say “difficult”; sentences don’t have to be grammatically correct. This is where you can help each other. Cut words that don’t add anything.

Any concerns before we begin? Anyone overly attached to their poems?

In sum, a good zine-making workshop is like a good poem: “If there is one major theme, the lines can be switched around but it will still flow as a good poem.” (Gloria, Day 3, ArtVism)

The Space

Yes. More energy. Yes. I need a different color. Orange. Don’t be shy. Feels nice, huh? Like you’re throwing a ball.

Yeah. There you go. As much as you want. Keep going. I want you to cover all the white. I like what you're doing. (Charity, outdoor paint splashing exercise, on large white A1 sheets, Day 2, Ndejje)

A.k.a.: breaking on through to the other side.

A conference room at Grand Global Hotel, Kikoni, Kampala. The women from the first group came from their homes across the city, arriving Monday morning and leaving Friday after lunch. The second group came together from Ndejje with a taxi allocated to them by the organizers. Room and board were provided, though there were complications with rooms, and some discrimination among the hotel staff toward the Congolese women. In the end, Shawn and Gloria were able to sort out rooms for everyone and the daily trajectories from rooms to hotel restaurant to conference room and back again were established. This ritual of movement across the space of the hotel defined the map of the zine-making universe all were engaged in. We chose this *huis clos* form for security reasons, both because of the LGBTQ component and to abide by Covid19 regulations, but it turned out to be applauded by all the participants as the best way to ensure full immersion into the zine-making process.

From the first group, who had a practice of both hotels and writing workshops: "Commuting would have been too tiring." This way, "you don't go out of the art environment." "Our minds are focused." One participant proposes to start a revolution on Friday to stay here longer. When I ask how I can participate, she says, "you can make a zine! It has to be A1." Another tells me, "Food is the language. First you feed the visitors, in case they have come with bad things to say." If they are full, they will be less inclined to say them.

For the second group, the running joke was that everyone back in Ndejje would wonder where they have been all this time to have put on so much weight and be looking so rested. They largely had no practice of hotels or writing workshops, but very much so of group therapy and non-governmental organization (NGO) contexts interested in refugee problems. They miss breakfast on the first day because they don't know that there is one available; they are grateful for the attention and care put into drawing up and explaining the consent forms. This was not something they were used to. But also, because this was a new experience, they were going to make the most of it. "I am happy to be somewhere else for a time." "It is better to stay in one place. You don't know what will happen on the road. Accidents, what." "When Gloria told us we were coming to a hotel, I was so excited. I brought all my clothes. We ate like kings. When I called my family, I told them I could stay here forever."

The contingency of covid19 helped us find the form that worked. Then Shawn's expertise in locating safe places for LGBTQ+ gatherings made it happen.

Proliferating patchwork. Within these walls then, the space was made what it was through the women's comings and goings, drawing together around a communal table to watch and practice folding, stitching, stenciling, cutting, gluing, glittering, and painting. Back to their own tables to make their own versions of journal zines, A4 zines, collages, and covers: to try their own zine-making moves. For the second group, the space was amplified and punctuated by regular dance sessions to get bodies prepped for making, to let loose the mind, to offer yet another, familiar mode of coming together, to embody differently the idea of "leaning on the skills of others" (Gloria, Day 1, Ndejje), to breach the distance between facilitator and participant. "We are also students," says Gloria on the first day during a discussion on everyone's expectations of the workshops. "We are learning from you. I am an expert in my own life. We are all at the same level. There is something that you can teach me too. What I do is play the role of facilitator. There is a difference from teaching" (Day 1, Ndejje).

Kyali Kikambwe

Peace is only a place

She embraced her fears

How strong and passionate she was

Kyali Kikambwe

The anchor when the storm's wild

When a woman's tongue is cut

Voice of the voiceless

Still we wiggle our tongues

Is this hotel grand or global?

All this is just a poem!!

(Exquisite corpse collective writing exercise. Day 2, ArtVism)

"So, was the hotel Grand or Global in the end?" I ask in my interviews with the ArtVism group. "Both!" they all respond, laughing.

Both Grand and Global, the space was made collectively through the invocation of things that emplace and things that travel. For the first group, it was with the phrase "Kyali kikambwe," written in Luganda. There was much debate over how to translate this into English, and much discussion over how it functioned as linguistic emplacement in the poem. Yes, we are here in Kampala. This is how we speak. When the poem travels, this is what will return the reader to the place of its making. One participant later asks me, in the interview, "do you understand kyali kikambwe?" My response mattered to her. I said I did by listening to their debate on its meaning. By seeing it take its place in their poem. During the exercise, it launched a discussion on whether or not we want our audiences to understand everything; whether we are willing to push the contours of what the publishing world demands. It was agreed upon to keep it. "To put a bit of my flavor" (Gloria). To let it be anchored by the preceding line: "how strong and passionate she was."

Words emplace. And materials emplace. To save the hotel conference room tables from constant impalement with the pins being used to make holes in the zine spines, Charity went out to buy book-board. This is what is used to make books in Kampala. All the materials that decorated the room, the tables and the zine-making process were purchased at minimal cost at Millennium Supermarket, Nasser Road stationary shops, Majestic Plaza, and other markets and tailors across town. This was a constant refrain when Charity led the visual exercises: “you can find these anywhere. Scraps of kitenge and other textiles you can buy a big bag for 5k at any tailor’s shop. Charcoal is in every house, at every market. It is what our mothers and grandmothers use every day to cook food” (Spoken as the women huddled around a large A1 paper laid out on the ground outside as they prepared to fill it with their chosen mediums and marks, Day 2, Ndejje). The fact that anything and everything that was in their everyday environments could be used to speak to their poetry and visuals was a massive source of empowerment for both groups. As one participant in the first group explained, “this idea of everydayness. It is reminding us we don’t have to go far away. With the 10 old clothes that you don’t wear, you can do something with them.”

“Kyali Kikambwe.” It is hard. But “Still we wiggle our tongues”: we have the power to use our everyday languages and our everyday objects to make new and beautiful things.

This collective poem was thought out as possible content for a collective zine to be made later in the week. But when the trio took the pulse of the ArtVism group, and heard their voiced desire to ensconce themselves each in their own work, the collective zine exercise was dropped. Flexibility was the funnel that allowed the tempo and texture of each group’s particular expressive needs to be met. The poem, however, remains as the self-ascribed coordinates of the cocoon created for their 5-day journey into learning and making zines.

Traveling emplacement

I am a pair of shoes,

I have walked the roads of Kampala,
I have danced until morning.
I have been soaked from washing clothes every week.
I have been to church and praised and worshipped God.
I have visited my boyfriend.
We’ve jazzed, conversed, and laughed.
We’ve learned how to spend time together.
In the gym, I have run 3000 kilometers over months.

Mimi ni yato moya,

Nimetembea barabara za Kampala yote,
Nimecheza ntangu asubuhi.
Nimelobewa kutokana na kufua nguo kila siku.
Nimekua nikienda kanisani na kumsifu na kumwabudu Mungu.

Nimetembela mpenzi wangu.
Tumefanya jazz, mazungumzo, na kucheka.
Tumejifunza jinsi ya kutumia wakati pamoja.
Kwenye mazoezi, nimekimbilia kilomita 3000 kwa miezi.

I am a humble pair of shoes.

I walk with confidence,
Helping with every step.
I’ve traveled from Ndejje to Masaka,
From Ndejje to Kikoni, to Mbarara, Kasubi
And drank fresh milk in Kiruhura.
In Jinja I stood at the source of the Nile.
I lived five years in Arua.
And there I saw the tall and dark people of South Sudan.
I have enjoyed this life.
I’ve been loved.
This is my journey.

Ni kokyete ya uruma

Kusaidia kwa kila hatua.
Nimetoka Ndejje a Masaka.
Kutoka Ndejje hadi Kikoni, hadi Mbarara, Kasubi
Na kunya maziwa safi huko Kiruhura.
Huko Jinja nilisimama kwenye chanzo *source of the Nile*.
Niliishi miaka mitano huko Arua.
Na hapo nikawaona watu warefu na wenye giza wa Sudan
Kusini.
Nimefurahia maisha haya.
Nimependewa.
Hii ndio safari yangu.

(oral collective writing exercise, Day 4, Ndejje)

When these poems were presented out loud to the group, one participant read the English while another translated it into Swahili, line by line; alternating who spoke which language half way through. The Swahili came to being in simultaneous translation mode, with pauses to debate around words along the way. “*Tremper* is French”; “3000 kilometres par mois.” Theirs is a Swahili soaked in French. French is their Swahili for measuring time and space. The space of the workshop is made from these emplacements that travel.

They carve these poems collectively from the individual experiences of their shoes. The places their shoes have traveled mark the space, the same walls echoing with altogether different invocations of place from the week before. “You’re going to create a rhythm between reading out the English and speaking the Swahili translation,” says Gloria. When the performance is over, everyone claps. Grins, Laughs, Delight, fill the room.

Gloria altered the form of this exercise to fit the vocabulary and transformative possibilities she gathered from the group. Instead of writing themselves, they spoke and she wrote. Instead of individually working on their own stories, they created a communal one out of the shards of their own.

Everyone say after me: I deserve to tell my story. I deserve to be heard. When it comes to telling our stories, I am a poet. Raise your hand if you are a poet? Some are dancers, some are singers. *How many just like to tell it?* Just say your story, you know? How many of you like to tell a story through art? Don't feel you have to tell your story the way I do. It can be poetry. But it can be whatever form you want. (Gloria, Day 4, Ndejje)

The zines made from fragments of these collective stories will then travel home, to Ndejje, and out into the world, through the participants' processes of diffusion and our own. Through informal show-and-tell, and formal exhibitions. Through the multiplication of platforms of display the group will have agreed on: maybe "3000 kilometers over months."

The Soundtrack

Everything here can speak. (Charity, collage exercise, Day 4, ArtVism)

Sound makes space too. So sound and space can't be severed into two distinct lenses for relating what happened here. They overlap, loop into each other, spool out of each other. But that doesn't mean they don't each deserve their own entrance.

Here are some sounds and what they did:

Squawking ibis outside; contagious laughter; Gloria's zine-making/dance-break playlists: these are the sounds that make me homesick for Kampala, and make the workshop space spill out of the screen, acquire that missing third dimension, take over my Malakoff kitchen. It is sound that opens the trap door, the secret passage way, the rabbit hole. Allowing me to travel. To be there in sound waves rather than just the bites promised by the screen. They make the echo chamber that brings me back in.

With the ArtVism group, it is the beats and tunes that accompany their zine-making work that conjure me into their circle of productivity. I too learn to make zines. Albeit clumsily.

With the Ndejje group, it is the familiar tempos and melodies that kick off dance-breaks that raise me from my stool and get my feet moving. I too join the dance circle. Albeit clumsily.

The sound of writing

Here's a general prompt: let's write a poem about how we feel in society. We all have different focuses: identity, activism, passion. Close your eyes: think about the last time you had an interaction which brought up a strong emotion, on the phone, with someone, online.

- 1) What did you see?
- 2) What were the textures?
- 3) What was the light like?
- 4) Who were the people around?

- 5) Were you in a crowded place? Were you on the computer?
- 6) **What did you hear? Tones of voice? Silence, birds, machinery, heartbeat, music? What kind of music?**
- 7) What were you feeling? Were you touching? Were you hot, cold, alone, a sensual experience? Was your pulse high? Temperature up? So energetic that you could have jumped off something? Excited? The feeling when you need to brush your teeth? Fresh peppermint? Were you tasting somebody else?
- 8) What were you smelling? Someone near you? offensive? Fresh air? The lake? Fish? Did it trigger any memories? How did you come away from the experience?

You have 30 minutes to write. Take a clean sheet of paper to write on. (Gloria, poetry writing exercise, Day 2, ArtVism)

It dawns on me even then, in real time as I listen to these prompts for poetry writing, that Gloria is giving me the road map I must follow to write this: an account of what happened during the workshops and the potentialities of the zine form they explored. Translated into the economy of language she adopts for the Ndejje group: "the detail/imagery/focus comes from sensory language: what do you hear? See? Smell? Feel? Taste?" (Gloria, story-telling exercise, Day 3, Ndejje). Eureka! I think. If we are exploring what queering the form means, we must also queer the form evaluation takes. Queering evaluation might look something like performing the exercises the facilitators asked of the participants, with as matter for transformation, the transcription of workshop proceedings and all the artifacts produced during the workshops. Evaluation as artifact of the artifacts.

Repetition. Practice. Repetition. Practice.

Can we really evaluate something we haven't practiced ourselves?

Maybe this is the difference between questioning and queering: one's engagement with practice?

If you are not a poet, can you make zines? YES.

Prompt: what do you hear?

The sounds of writing, with Gloria; the sounds of making with Charity; these are not airtight either. They loop in and out of each other, like space and sound do. With Gloria there are scissors cutting plain paper, construction paper, breathing in and out close to paper, pinheads perforating perfectly good tables. The sounds of making journal zines and one sheet zines. With Charity, there are magic markers against flip board. Voices declaiming, singing, humming. The sounds of crackling plastic cups as paint brushes swirl to absorb the paint. A goat bahhhing the time. A radio murmur. A quiet conversation with one not present. All memorabilia—spells—to access return to those 2 weeks, to explore what went down.

There are the sounds the poems themselves make:

She pulled me to her chest, hugged me so tight. I could hear the sound of music her heart beat sung! (from one of the participant's cut & paste poems, ArtVism)

There is Songa Bahati telling his story of how he came to poetry as a young Congolese refugee. Zoom voice reading out poetry from the screen. The screech of chairs being dragged across fake wood floors to make a semi-circle of attention embracing the center of the room.

Laughter and song through all of it. Quiet concentration. The repeated reminder of the other forms out there: "Music is also a form of art. Sometimes people are not interested in writing, and putting it to music helps" (Gloria, Day 1, ArtVism).

Banange, don't give up!

The sound of making. The sound of bodies arched over making things: Gloria and Dena ask everyone to take deep breaths, often, prepping the participants for action.

For the first group, the soundtrack to solo working moments came from Gloria's work playlist: Oliver N'Goma, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Salt-N-Pepa, Curtis Mayfield, Childish Gambino . . . adding a nod of the head, an impromptu singalong, a sway of the hip to otherwise still concentration over the task at hand.

Transition tunes: twice a day, once mid-morning, once mid-afternoon, the women are compelled to leave their work behind for a tea break. After the sounds of a shift in activity—chairs pulled back, conversations commencing, laughter echoing about the room, and bodies moving toward the tea table—I hear only Gloria declare her intention to turn on a tune, and "when it's up, everyone get back to their desks!" Then music and movement. And conversing, as it is clear that "when they are in the process of making, there's no sense trying to talk to 'em. They're all super independent, used to doing things on their own" (Gloria, Day 2, ArtVism). So there's music for working, music for stopping working, music for signaling when to get up, rehydrate, refuel with g-nuts, bananas, samosas, and shared words.

To write lines of poetry: no music. Silence is the chosen sound. Although still, bodies move. There are moments of wandering and whispering freely about the room. I imagine these moments as materializing the gift of selves to each other that this zine-making space has initiated. When whispers give way to steps resounding, laughter emanating, noise accumulating from my screen, I know there is something going on that will soon require my attention. The concatenation of sounds, a signal for me to stop my own wandering and re-enter the relation of screen to space. These are sounds of bonds being made.

Some of the participants in the ArtVism group remarked in their interviews, when prompted, that more physical activity might be a good thing to add to the week's design, to periodically pause hands, fingers, and brains from their

work and get blood flowing through the rest of the body. For the second group then, the Trio took the suggestion and ran with it.

Music as energizer. Day 1, after lunch, Gloria establishes the ritual: everyone gets up and stands in a circle in the middle of the room. "Each one of us is going to do a dance move and the others follow. Ready?" I'm included in this ritual launch, adding my own moves to the mix. "Let's get loose, then get to work!" We are off to New Bell, Douala for 3:44 minutes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyUenLLUiYo&list=PLArZ2I0qa5N9Ra13x0T2_GqtL7PES5H3n&index=54

To close that first day, just as they are finishing up making their journals, Gloria asks them again, "who wants to dance now?" And the room is still full of concentration over threading spines, choosing colors, suturing with beads . . . it is harder this time to pause a first go at creating this vessel for their thoughts to buttress the group bond through dance. "Why are you pretending to be shy like I didn't see you before?" (Gloria, Day 1, Ndejje). And that was enough to shift their energy to the dance floor.

Tea & Tunes: the armature of our zine-making soundscape.

The sound of a happening. Sound is also time. It generates an audio map of proceedings, focusing attention on what happened (over time) rather than what's there (to see). "They managed to do something in 5 days that it would take me a year to do." (Kate to me, debrief). This was echoed by an ArtVism group participant in our interview: "I learned more in these few days than the whole of this year. This is the one thing I will get from 2020." What Kate was remarking on was the productive energy, excitement, and pride that filled the room on the last day of the workshops, when all the participants presented their week's work in a *huis clos* exhibition format for which we three satellites zoomed in. "We thought there would be these zines and they would be THE thing, but of course, it's about the practice of the zines!" Another eureka moment. Yes, the final products were beautiful and brave; the artists prolific and enthusiastic about their achievements. But what was even more amazing was that this level of engagement and energy was garnered in just 5 days. And reproduced, differently, with a whole different group of women. There was something in the particular practice of zine-making nurtured by the Trio, more than in the zines themselves, that generated a collective momentum difficult to achieve in other circumstances.

There are the sounds the zines make, and the sounds the making of the zines make.

Before we begin the actual 2 weeks of workshoping, we are all stuck in a time loop: waiting, pacing, reworking, preparing, transferring money, ideas, time. And then we begin,

and it is the reverberation of sounds through the space that produce the buzz that moves the practice along, syncopated by the technology in use. Sounds of writing, making, relating as artifacts of the happening. Collecting them allows me to mime presence to relate what they made all together at Grand Global.

The Stuff

Emotional stripper: ingredients per 100g serving. (from an ArtVism participant zine)

Wouldn't you like to know! Working backward from the end: the visuals are loud. In the last day exhibitions, it is the proliferation of shapes, colors, and textures coming together that materializes the energy in the room. You can hear the sound green paint splattered across a blue flowered zine makes by looking at it. The silver glitter on a multi-blue globe. It is tectonic sound (Ndejje communal zine).

3:00am zine—by Fortunate T.

I see the sound of my alarm clock captured here, captured by the light trapped in a pink diamond. (ArtVism participant zine)

In the artist's words, during the Friday exhibition: "it is this ka-moment when you wake up and the mosquitos are buzzing and you can't sleep and you are looking at the ceiling, the cobwebs, and then the cock crows and you wake up and take a pain killer."

I see groups of women crouching around paper with glitter at the ready, covering all white glue with sparkling color.

I see a serious looking Ugandan man from a newspaper cutout glued onto a blue piece of construction paper, with his head full of fantasized women, his chest exposed by a pink rose, his lips splashed with glossy pink, his nose pierced, neck laced, head crowned with kitenge. The women put words in his mouth: "do they know? Don't dull my rainbow. Duck duck goose" (group collage, ArtVism).

I see a fragile piece of red patterned cloth whose initial use is impossible to determine, cut, pasted, white strings dangling down an empty triangular middle: "strings in my cleft" goes the text pointing at it. "Roses are Red/Violets are Blue/Breathing anew" (group collage, ArtVism).

I see pale tones running into each other, dripping down, as if trying to escape the confines of the page. Why does paint sometimes dribble, sometimes dab, sometimes spread out into whiteness, losing its substance as it spreads; existing only as a reminder of the contact that happened through the colored outline that remains? Did it rain? (paint exercise, Ndejje).

It's all about the materials. Yes! No. The materials don't have to be special. They don't have to be expensive imports from

across the world. They don't have to come from the arts & crafts section of your grocery store. Charity repeats this over and over again, in loud and hushed tones. An incantation for zine-making empowerment. That is where the magic lies: making wondrous unique creations out of everyone's everydayness. Monotony unbound. The delight of *detournement*.

Stuff specifies place. Charcoal, beetroot, turmeric from your kitchen, bits of unused fabrics and thread from your neighborhood tailor, beads, bookboard, powdered pigments, glue, glitter, paper, sand, tinfoil, shells, scissors, rulers, pins, newspaper from markets, dumps, corner shops, street vendors. To become a zine-maker is to transform other people's trash into templates of life being lived. To stalk the present for matter to modify. To make magical miniatures that evoke one's place in the world; that provoke others to enter the enchantment, and then to make their own.

As Charity stressed, "charcoal and glitter are materials that we Ugandan women are very familiar with" (Day 1, ArtVism). Charcoal symbolizes their role as homemakers, responding to the demands of family; glitter symbolizes their role as objects of desire, responding to the demands of men. How to play with this? Play is sparked by the vast array of materials available in the everyday once you're awake to them. Play is the action of collecting, transforming, and translating them into zines. "The medium is the message," Charity explains: "What if you write a poem about the everyday hustle. How can you use this black plastic bag to give more meaning to your work?" (Day 2, ArtVism). She gives them permission to explode their imaginations. At first, I think maybe they will feel too savvy for this kind of talk. But no. It is exactly what is needed to stimulate play and the altering of perception. "Why not use ginger if you are writing about spices? The person who will smell your work will already get there." Textures bear meaning, she probes. "Why don't you start collecting textures as you write? Rubbing a pencil on a sheet of paper that you can place over almost anything flat enough. Find anything that speaks to your poetry."

Charity mixes colors like potions, sprinkles pigments in glue, encouraging them to collect leaves, flowers, "give a bit of glue and stick it in your work."

Around the zine has grown a kabbalah. Eight women amble about the room looking for textures. Collecting matter with brushes, paper plates, plastic cups, keeping their brushes moist. Play is the mainstay in storytelling through collage, clustering beads, writing speech bubbles, cutting out patterns from lace scraps, braiding extensions into your work.

Each material carries within it its own language.

Majestic Plaza is the best! (Day 3, ArtVism)

Most had never heard of zines before the workshop. This was part of the enchantment. The wonder of initiation. By

the end, the ArtVism group was making grand storage boxes for their zines. The prediction stitched into their sides: There will be more to come.

The stuff they come with and the stuff they leave with. The ArtVism group comes with pens and notebooks or computers.

The Ndejje group comes with their voices.

Voice (n); /vo-y-s/ syn: opinion, power, identity. Something I was apparently born with but need permission to use. Fat-phobic homophobic bigots, is it yet time for me to use mine? (Dictionary entry single-sheet zine exercise, ArtVism)

In the first group, there is more telling and less showing. In the second group, it is the other way around. They participate in different economies of language. Yet they all come out of the workshops with a practice of pushing the boundaries of their languages, of thinking real big with something real small. Or the other way around. Zines come in all shapes and sizes.

ArtVism: zines as a gateway between art and activism.

Ndejje: zines as a gateway between self and community.

In many ways, these are two facets of the same coin played out differently in the two workshops. Named differently, translated differently but ultimately striving toward the same end of connection, relation, and transformation. Of learning to speak under and over words.

They all leave with leftover stuff to continue making zines with afterward. Back home. And a promise of more stuff to come.

Something's Happenin' Here

“Now I will make a ka-zine and title it the time of the day. It will become an exciting daily practice.” (Interview with ArtVism participant)

“S’he” (from ArtVism zines)

“I love me” (from ArtVism zines)

Last day exhibitions. Friday is here and it’s time to celebrate by showing and admiring the work.

The Trio are all action: changing the look of the workshop room. Gloria sweeping. Charity propping up zines. Shawn moving tables around to get the right form. Tada! an exhibition room is made.

Proceedings open with a dance moment when the women first enter the reconfigured space. I am being carried around like a baby, still. Kate has made zines to show too.

Everyone walks around looking at each other’s work on display.

The song keeps time: “move around until the song is through then you can all sit” (Gloria).

All but two in each group are happy to show their work.

“Clap for yourselves!” And the clapping is immense, the smiles intense

This is my first time presenting something like this. I am proud to be an African girl. Wherever I go, where I be, I know I can do something. Myself and others. (Ndejje participant presenting her work)

The Ndejje group presents their two communal zines, which turn out to be thankyou zines summing up their experiences in the workshop. But also, they are invocations of the promise of being a zine-maker alongside the difficulties of being a refugee in Kampala. When the second group presents their co-produced zine, they tell how everyone contributed words. How this marks “our time,” “our moment” where “we met the meaning of art in our lives.”

They took us to Grand Global Hotel and . . .

The inspiration for this zine comes from the care that circulated in this space.

After receiving and returning all of this last day emotion, Dena and the Trio get practical. Talk turns to the numerous ways in which they might use their skills to promote their business ideas: zines as self-promotion, what you can do, what you can sell, hip student notebooks, zine menus, and so on. If the zine is made from everydayness, then it must be integrated back into that everydayness with a twist, a spark, a shine, a possibility that wasn’t there before. So that these Friday finales become the celebrations of the process both behind and before them.

To mark this, Gloria finds us an ending song, that allows us all to join from our various “out there’s” and point to each other in turn singing along:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2qjSbdtFJY>

Earthgang—Proud of U

The spoils of left-over materials are divvied up.

Transport and childcare envelopes distributed.

And all go off for a last lunch together before departure.

Beyond my sight.

Looking at the communal zines made by the Ndejje group, I see zine-making and the space in which it took place as a kind of bulwark against the myriad forms of vulnerability produced by life on the outside. They reflect back to me a sense of competence achievable in such a short period of

time. One that inevitably translates into pride in one's abilities. Where Gloria felt they may only have scratched the surface when it comes to poetry writing, the women themselves seem to feel a whole world of practice had been opened up to them (Ndejje interviews.) There was a unanimous sense across the two groups that a world of making art had been introduced to them. The tricks of the trade, so to speak.

So that something that appeared to require such immense expertise was made accessible.

So that something so beautiful and precious could be made by them. They could do it too.

How do we decant this?

Telling my story. "My name is peacocko" Peacock. By Splash . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sd84IX-4dRk> (Dance break song Day 2, Ndejje)

Does everybody here have a story to tell?

Repeat after me: I have a story. Yes.

Do you believe you deserve to tell that story?

Does anybody not?

Everyone say after me: I deserve to tell my story. I deserve to be heard.

We deserve to tell our story when we're ready. (Gloria, Day 4, Ndejje)

Two big anchors were dropped into this theme that ran its course through both workshops: The first was to get participants to think about and experiment with different ways of exploring their stories. The second was to make sure they understood their stories and the time of their telling belonged strictly to them.

From the journaling exercises to the poetry writing ones, it was clear that the ArtVism group already had a practice of thinking about and telling their stories, and so it was about getting creative on how to impart them. Like playing with pronouns: "writing a poem without using I. that was amazing. I'd never done that before. All I knew about was I. It made me ask a lot of questions" (interview ArtVism participant). Or practicing communal writing, letting others reconfigure your work.

With the Ndejje group, there was more ground work to do. Journaling had to be sold as an emotional healing and story storing practice first. They had to be convinced of its value. Then, they had to be empowered to take the plunge and pick up the pen. It's not clear that taking the time to write out the details of the day or one's overwhelming emotions out on the page was the thing for everyone. But the idea that stuff had to come out one way or the other for a kind of mental and emotional relief to ensue was certainly passed on. As were the confidence-boosting practices, Dena talked about to face up to most any daunting task. Hero pose.

For this group, telling their stories was just as much about self as other. They interviewed each other to practice telling another person's story. They orally constructed a communal poem out of bits of their own stories.

The second anchor—the sense of ownership over "my story"—was enhanced by both Gloria and Charity insisting on working with what's already there. The skills they already have; the materials all around them. The point was to transform and enhance what was there, not to invent something new out of thin air.

Using your own resources around you. This is the impulse of the zine. (interview, ArtVism participant)

Around you and inside you. Your world and your story.

The "impulse of the zine" is to foster independence in the creative process, yes. But also in the publishing process. "We don't need complex things like access to a printing press or anything. We can do it on our own. We don't need others too much" (ArtVism participant interview). This idea of empowerment through easy access to what you need to create was more strongly articulated by the ArtVism group than the Ndejje group. The latter spoke about needing materials to return home with to then be able to work with what's there. For them it was a two-step process, the first step of which had to be accumulating initial materials. And the "what's there" more a reference to the people they would work with—other Ndejje residents and their stories—than the actual materials out of which to make visual art.

In time. Much of the Trio's ongoing work was to establish a group momentum driven timeframe over the course of the workshop. This couldn't be pre-established. It had to be built by all as they went.

They keep making more and more things, adding work on themselves so there's no time for collective zines. It's hard to force each of them to stop working on one thing to move to the next. (Gloria, Day 4, ArtVism)

In the Interview exercise with the Ndejje group, it became clear that the pace had to be slowed down, that time had to be left for things to be said. At the same time, the exercise had to keep rolling along. "They are loving working," I write as I watch. "But it's time to get up and dance!"

One participant in the Ndejje group said it point blank in our interview: "The breaks are too much. I want to keep working!" How exhilarating is that.

When prompted to say what they might do differently as potential workshop organizers themselves, almost everyone said they wanted more time. A consensus forms around 7 days rather than 5 days for the workshop though what they wanted from that extra time was diverse: to exchange more with the Trio and learn from them, to focus on their own

work and make something more meaningful to present, to be all together, outside of their everyday lives, and learn from each other's skills. These comments sort of undermine the sense we all got that the ArtVism group was more interested in individual work and the Ndejje group in collective making. Many in the former said they would use the extra days to learn from and share their skills with the other participants. And a few in the latter said they would use that time to practice their individual crafts.

The time of the workshop itself should be extended, but also, and especially, the time of zine-making beyond the workshop.

I asked Gloria, after the workshop, can we have materials? So I don't lose the things that were in my head. (interview, Ndejje participant)

To continue to mine "the things that were in my head." That's proof that the point of "telling my story" was well understood.

From my interview with Dena emerged thoughts about before the workshop too. She explained how the group of women initially selected to participate in the workshop months before had not been communicated with over the interim period and therefore had gone their separate ways. She pointed to the transitory nature of life in Ndejje among a refugee community that has to make ends meet, day after day. Many use Ndejje as a home base, but will leave for 6 months to a job and then come back. Gainful employment for refugees is no easy thing to come by in Kampala. So her suggestion: We need to communicate regularly with the participants, update them and allow them to update us on where they're at.

In terms of content, the ArtVism group's practice was overtly predicated on the relation between their art and their activism. How do you make your poetry speak louder, differently, to larger publics? What zine-making introduced were the ways in which activism through art could be more effective than only through words. Art changes the temporality of engagement. It makes people pause to understand. To question what's happening here instead of being lectured at. In Juliette's words, Day 1, ArtVism:

Art offers a variety of things. You don't need to risk your life in a certain way. And it gives the audience time to pause and digest. It allows for the art piece to speak on behalf of the creator. People get a different kind of experience . . . it allows the consumers to do so without necessarily thinking of the creator. And so it doesn't expose to violence.

Zines invite their potential readers to take time, to enter into the zine world, and to possibly quell the violence that a message, more didactically framed, might provoke.

In form. In terms of content, the Ndejje group's practice was predicated on establishing a link between art and mental health. To do so meant adhering to the words so often spoken throughout: I believe in you. For belief to materialize, the form of the exercises had to be changed to allow the participants to access their own skills. Written exercises had to morph into oral and visual ones.

Maybe we focus more on visual zines.

Maybe we do something more like shouting. (Gloria, Day 2)

The key was to make the form of the workshop feel as distant from a traditional school setting as possible. Every time Gloria began explaining something with too complicated words, or that lasted too long, or involving any trigger that was remotely reminiscent of the classroom, a formality set in that was contrary to the engagement she was trying to solicit. So changing the form is what saved the workshop, allowing different kinds of meaning to be made in different shades.

As for the mental health aspect, in Gloria's words:

We can't claim anything, but we've given them a week away from everything. A break. Whatever that does for their mental health. We promised a safe space where they can talk. And we did that. Casually at dinner, in our rooms. Off the record. (end of Ndejje workshop interview)

When asked how they might change the form of the workshop, there was a loud sense, especially from the Ndejje group, that more people should have been given the opportunity to learn, eat, sleep, and play here. So that instead of seeing their presence as partaking in a scarce resource to be guarded, they saw it as a good thing that as such, had to be shared not hoarded. No liberal economic logic was inspired by the zine-making process here.

It is better to make everyone to learn. In future it will help them. And it is better to have enough time to learn. No playing. Better to teach everyone. (interview Ndejje participant)

There are many, there are so many who would benefit. We could grow bigger and bigger. (interview Ndejje participant)

Some suggested three more people might be added to make an even 10. This was not only about extending the invitation to other neophytes, but also to ensure an even number of participants, "so that no one will be embarrassed or alone" (Ndejje participant interview). Others, in unabashed exuberance, said as many people should join as wanted to come as long as they did not disturb. The play on form with the ArtVism group took the shape of suggestions on how to extend the workshop to a kind of mentorship, or residency type format. Others spoke of including a performance

component alongside art and writing, for the orators or story-tellers among them. A few proposed stretching the form to include more physical activities, more blood-circulating exercises. For Shawn, the play was on what the zine form itself could accomplish. He saw it as potentially suited to documenting his own work as a freelance activist and paralegal. “When we’re not attached to an organization, our work gets lost in translation” (interview, end of ArtVism workshop). Zine-making might be the right practice to keep records of work otherwise left unchronicled.

One way of questioning the form inhabited by the participants was through play. Not just with the materials at hand but also with their names, how they designated themselves within the zine-making workshop space. We had Lion Miguela, Shakira Naomi, Yvette, Mireille, Marybud, Alice Dark, and so on.

Legal names were largely left outside Grand Global.

To make zines, another nomenclature was to be found, full of power and potential to engage in this new experience. Wearing their preferred aliases, they could debate with fervor the place of things. With scraps of fabric strewn about the ground in a chaos of color:

Here are all the materials. Let’s debate about where things go, I love it! [Someone brings a new cut out to put on the communal collage.] There is always space. Let’s find space. But there she’s separated from her body. I like it. Keep adding. Is she taking up too much space now? Is she Beyoncé? (communal collage exercise with Charity, Day 3, Ndejje)

With others. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6O9InMi8B0>

FOKN Bois—Gimme Pinch

The communities formed around zine-making during these two workshops exploded the temporality of the workshops themselves. The call, emanating from within, was to bring zine-making out. Outside the walls of Grand Global. Outside the week of making. The flexible form the Trio was able to give to this time and space of zine-making is the inspiration. If we commit to this practice, then we have to commit to what it tells us.

What happened in both groups was that the zine form formed communities, and by doing so, formed the desire to expand those communities out to other LBTQ activist-artists, to other refugee women struggling with mental health issues in Ndejje, to and through the relations the participants have outside the workshop space. This call to grow the army of zine-makers would not have been formulated had the zine-making experience gone otherwise than it did.

Je peux apprendre, je m’en sortirais. Si j’ai l’opportunité j’enseignerai aux filles qui veulent. J’aime partager les bonnes choses.

When I reach to Ndejje, I will keep on practicing work that I am learning, when we have enough materials, I would like to

teach others. My little sisters and brothers, how to write their poems.

I would say I am so grateful for the project, for identifying me and helping people. Skills are good. Now it is depending on me to use it or leave it. (Ndejje interviews)

There is a sense of responsibility to do something with what one has learnt that carried these words to me. Does this come with the territory of the zine? Or is it rather a reflection of the situated lives of the women and the value-systems adopted to make living work for them? Again, I hear a particular economy established here that is anchored in the idea that when you have something to share, you share it. You don’t keep it to yourself. This seems integral to the form given to the workshops, if not to the zine form itself. Certainly, it’s a central tenant of what went down. One we need to think about how to preserve in future iterations of zine-making events.

There were other ways of building community and sharing skills that took place within the workshops themselves, between participants. During the last day exhibitions, many of the women from ArtVism acknowledged each other’s talents and remarked on how they might be pooled. How each could teach the other what they were good at. Maybe something unique about the zine form is that practicing it enables you to identify and nurture the particular skills you already have. And so as a multimedia form, you can appropriate different aspects of it quickly enough to imagine teaching it to others. Building a zine-making community around an exchange of skills and admiration for each member’s particular skills. As one Ndejje participant expressed in our interview, “for the others to say, you’re the one doing this? Oh!” *Une tontine du zine!*

If these workshops were spaces of learning from Gloria and Charity, then the next version might be spaces of learning from each other.

I want to tell you to continue this because it is good. (Ndejje participant interview)

Questioning—Decolonizing—Queering THE FORM

oui maintenant c’est comme ça (Jovi 50-50 ft. Reniss—Produced by Le Monstre)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojwpxiva-Lc&list=PLArZ210qa5N9Ra13x0T2_GqtL7PES5H3n&index=55
(from the dance break playlist for the Ndejje group)

THE FORM, in this section, includes the structures, infra-structures, and relations that went into realizing the two workshops. With Lauren Berlant (2016), I am thinking structure as “that which organizes transformation and infrastructure as that which binds us to the world in movement and keeps the world practically bound to itself” (p. 394).

With Berlant too, I am thinking infrastructures as made “from within relation.” What this zine-making project has illuminated is the need to produce new infrastructures made from within queered relations.

The relations in question were sometimes congealed within structures that reproduce certain well-worn power dynamics of the development project world, which itself reproduces the power dynamics born of the colonial project world; and sometimes managed to break free and reconfigure these dynamics. What is it that we can do today to channel the latter matrix to move beyond questioning to decolonizing and queering the former?

What constitutes the matter of the workshops that will allow us to push questioning on passed decolonizing to queering? In the present continuous? To create a form for this project that can accommodate the kind of flexibility the facilitators of the workshops inaugurated by their willingness to veer off course when necessary for relating and creating aims to be met. To explore other temporalities, other languages, other materials that enabled both groups to thrive through the encounter with their own divergent creative processes.

Allowing the context of crisis (Covid19) to push the boundaries of what we imagine the form of a project to be seems critical to keeping our infrastructures relevant, interesting, and open to change with the processes they are meant to enable. To keep “binding us to the world in movement,” as Lauren Berlant would have it.

What is freedom?

“You’re free” they say

But

I feel no breeze of it.

What is freedom?

I can’t say

Or do

Things I fancy in my mind.

What is freedom?

All that is free

To do

Is satisfy the opposer.

(poem set under a drawing of a green birdcage with its door open setting free two birds, one yellow, one purple. ArtVism group)

This poem reaches me in the form of a photograph, with lying just under it at an angle, a collage inhabiting a bright orange sheet of construction paper that invites a critique of contemporary Uganda as depicted in the media. “58 years of independence” it boasts at its center, while all around it spools out the chatter from newspapers of what this means: “unity,” “disaster,” “sexual harassment,” “nation-building,” “embracing,” “race bias,” and “victims” parade their importance in alternating font size and position. A “wake-up call” or a “cover” up?

Conclusion

These workshops were conducted in lockdown, in crisis, in Kampala. What does the practice of zine-making undertaken during these workshops suggest about form? What can we do to extend or reconfigure the structures, infrastructures, and relations we bring and produce within these art-project interventions that take place in the global South? Learning how to make zines is learning how to layer content, to make meaning in unexpected ways through that layering, and to invite alternative interpretative practices into our day-to-day apprehension of the world and our lives within it. As a practice, much like the work of translation, it carries over the hope of creating communities that might not otherwise exist. As the debate around how best to name our endeavor—questioning or queering the form?—shows, zine-makers become a community around a practice, but once out in the world, depending on where and how they are placed, they also bear with them the promise of creating unprecedented communities of viewers. Making zines transforms practitioners into potential teachers. As objects, they express a temporality of making things which is quite different from the temporality of saying things, producing a kind of “speech” or engagement that takes place both under and over words. Embedded in the zine, as form, is a contestation of patriarchal norms of individual authorship, since zines are openly and proudly made out of already existing words and materials. They are unique compositions built from tangible content; riffs on scored tunes.

We can learn from the zine’s potentially endless queering of form how to queer the relations that undergird the structures and infrastructures we deploy to make these kinds of projects happen at the intersection of art and development. This realization is certainly a part of the celebration that took place during these 2 × 5 days of zine-making. A community was formed. As Piepmeir writes, “Zines bring people into conversation, provide them with a space to be creative and imperfect” (p. 85). Our work was later celebrated at a workshop/exhibition at 32 degrees East in Kampala, in September 2021.

This is only the first iteration of the zine. We also aim to celebrate the form of the zine by turning this piece above back into its form, into a zine, that is, words + images + materials. We offer this article as a provisional celebration of an art form that is itself a gift, a form that can be shared, and an invitational space of practice (Piepmeier, 2009). Zines offer a space of community, as well as a space that is queered by its very form. The women who participated in these workshops continue to make living work for them under arduous circumstances of continual crisis. The Covid 19 pandemic did not mark the beginning of “crisis” in their lives but rather added a layer of strain and unpredictability to contend with. What the practice of zine-making has opened up, according to some of the participants interviewed during the exhibition, is a way of performing the

realization that life goes on despite forced immobility. Concretely, this means setting a process of creation in motion without knowing beforehand how it will all turn out. In other words, a praxis of the present.

“Zines make visible the connections among pleasure, gift economies, materiality, and the human body . . . [they] recognise the care that is a crucial part of embodied community, care that is invested in the material” (Piepmeier, 2009 p. 83). The materiality of the zine is in itself an invitation to making. The form of the zine invites a flipping of the notion of maker—all are makers who make zines. The embodied nature of the zine invites a sort of freedom of the body itself—a profoundly feminist space of practice, as Piepmeier (p. 83) observes, “. . . zines offer girls and women a way of leveraging their embodiment, experiencing it differently, or utilizing it in particular expressive or activist ways.” Zines invite an attention to materiality and the here and now, which has been borne out in our experience with these workshops.

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Notes

1. This project was first named “Queering the form” but was changed to “Questioning the form” in relation to AHRC and Manchester University precautions about the potential dangers of visibility for the LGBTQ+ community in Uganda at the time. Once Shawn Mugisha had secured Grand Global Hotel as a safe space for the workshops to take place in, we returned to the initial idea of “queering” as an action closer to what we had intended the approach to zine-making here to be. When I asked the participants on their last day of the workshops which name they preferred, about half of them preferred “queering” for the transformative power it seemed to garner; the other half preferred “questioning” for the wider inclusivity such a label might offer future participants.
2. ArtVism: <https://www.facebook.com/Artvism-Uganda-344992943009043>; Strong Minds: <https://strongminds.org>

Quotes are taken from my notes and referenced in the text to show progression in time and which workshop group is being discussed. My aim in this account was to treat what happened thematically so as to bridge the two groups and see similarities and differences up close rather than to treat them separately. Participants remain anonymous. Only facilitators are named.

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Gloria Kiconco is a Ugandan poet, essayist, and zine-maker based in Kampala. She has been producing poetry zine collections (solo and collaborative) since 2016 and running workshops teaching zine-making for poets and artists with a focus on LGBTQI+ folk.

Charity Atukunda is a visual artist, her work aims to unify the tactile and digital by collecting textures, patterns, illustrations she creates by hand then uses digital tools to combine these diverse elements, creating her own unique style. Atukunda’s work often explores and questions the ideas, beliefs and systems that govern our lives. She currently resides in Kampala, Uganda.

Kate Pahl is Professor of Arts and Literacy at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her work is concerned with co-production, poetry and creative meaning making in schools and communities. She is currently involved in a NERC funded project called Voices of the Future which is concerned with children and young people and trees.