



Renée Akitelek Mboya is a writer, curator and filmmaker working between Dakar and Nairobi and is collaborative editor and member of the Wali Chafu Collective, Nairobi, KE. Her custom is one that relies on biography and storytelling as a form of research and production.

Kara Blackmore is a curator and academic who works at the intersections of art, heritage, and social repair after conflict. She has curated exhibitions across the globe, including in Uganda, South Africa and the UK and her writing is published widely including the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Wasafiri*, *Critical Arts*, *Biennial Foundation Magazine*, *C&A* and *Art Africa Magazine*.

Due to social distancing measures, the reading room can accommodate three visitors at one time. Following new current government guidance, visitors are required to wear a protective face mask indoors.

Cell Project Space
258 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA
+44(0)207 241 3600
info@cellprojects.org
cellprojects.org

With thanks to: Forcast Platform
Supported by Arts Council England &
The Cultural Recovery Fund



A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me

Renée Akitelek Mboya

4th December - 19th December 2021

Open 12-6pm Thursday-Saturday

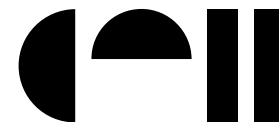
A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me is the first solo presentation of the work of Kenyan filmmaker, writer and curator Renée Akitelek Mboya in the UK. Upon the artist's invitation, curator and academic Kara Blackmore will inaugurate the event in the form of introduction to Mboya's film on the opening day of the three-week-long screening as well as mediate the work through discursive audio and textual materials throughout normal opening hours.

The eponymously-titled short film *A Glossary Of Words My Mother Never Taught Me* follows the heritage of the 1966 film *Africa Addio* (also known as *Africa Blood & Guts* in the United States, and *Africa Farewell* in the United Kingdom). *Africa Addio* is a sensationalist Italian documentary about the end of the colonial era in Africa, shot over a period of three years by Gualtiero Jacopetti and Franco Prosperi, who had gained fame as the directors of *Mondo Cane* in 1962. This film ensured the viability of the so-called Mondo film genre, a cycle of "shockumentaries" — a description that largely characterizes *Africa Addio*. In appropriating the form and material of *Africa Addio*, Mboya subverts the film's material to articulate the forensic function of image as evidence of the racist regime that portrays certain bodies as criminal, or worse.

In appropriating the form and material of *Africa Addio*, Mboya subverts the film's material

to articulate the forensic function of the image as evidence of the racist regime that portrays certain bodies as criminal, or worse. In *A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me*, the artist's voice superimposes an element of autobiographical narration over the pseudo-documentary Mondo footage. Unfolding memories of a more recent past suggest that Kenya's political independence from British colonial rule as a historical fact in itself did not entail a disappearance of the inherited forms of oppression from the country's public domain. In building the independent post-colonial nation, generations of political regimes have keenly constructed official versions of history — in Kenya and beyond — haunted by the parts of the past it suppresses. *A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me* traces this internal impulse to efface the memory of colonial injustices as it exposes friction between decolonisation as historical emancipation of nation-states and the colonial matrix of power that continues to permeate the psychosocial fabric of the present.

Alongside the film, to interlocute in the violent history its imagery evidences, Renée Akitelek Mboya reimagines a songbook of 1960s and 1970s ideological 'freedom' songs as part of a nation-building tool kit, presented alongside an audio-conversation between the artist and academic Kara Blackmore as well as reading companions offering methodological inroads into the ongoing operations of coloniality.



cellprojects.org

Event Space

A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me, 2021
HD digital video 14:40

Reading Room

1. Headphones

In Conversation Kara Blackmore & Renée Akitelek Mboya

digital audio:49:32 on loop

<https://soundcloud.com/cell-project-space/kara-blackmore-in-conversation-with-renee-akitelek-mboya?si=9430a290457847e6aefba955331bb00f>

2. Audio Playlist

Songbook Artist/Musicians:

Kenya Nchi Yangu
Kakai Kilonzo

Pole Mzee
Miriam Makeba

Tawala Kenya Tawala
Mwalimu Thomas Wesonga

Tushangilie Kenya
Mwalimu Thomas Wesonga

Wimbo Wa Historia
Enock Ondego

digital audio:17:57 on loop

3. Book Shelves

Songbook, A Glossary of Words My Mother Never Taught Me, 2021
digital print on paper

4. Table of Reading Material & Book Marks

Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism
Ariella Aïsha Azoulay
Pub. Verso 2019
ISBN 978-1-78873-571-1

Frottage: Frictions of Intimacy across the Black Diaspora: 11 (Sexual Cultures)
Keguro Macharia
Pub. New York University Press 2019
ISBN-978-1-4798-6501-7

A Decolonial Feminism
Vergès, Françoise
Pub. Pluto Press
ISBN- 976-0-7453-4112-5

Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times (a John Hope Franklin Center Book)
Ann Laura Stoler
Pub.Duke University Press
ISBN- 978-0-8223-6267-8

Spill: Scenes of Black Feminist Fugitivity
Alexis Pauline Gumbs
Pub.Duke University Press
ISBN-978-0-8223-6272-2

Collective Amnesia
Putuma, Koleka
Amazon Press
ISBN-978-0-6209-0736-1

5. Text

On Memory Work And Care,
December 4th 2021
Kara Blackmore