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Douala Final Report

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table of contents

3  2.1.1 Culture and safety in Douala: the cases of New Bell and Bessengue
12  2.1.2 Panoramic Report
49  2.1.3 Case study report: Bessengue
57  2.1.4 Case study report: New Bell
70  2.1.5 List of public artworks
2.1.1 Culture and safety in Douala: the cases of New Bell and Bessengue

Douala is a chaotic metropolis of the Sub-Saharan Africa faced to the Atlantic Ocean habituated by three million of people. It is the economic and most developed city of Cameroun, in continuous horizontal expansion, formally divided in six administrative districts including a total of 118 neighborhoods. With the exception of few prestigious neighborhoods, Douala is characterized by a lack of public services (like regular electivity, access to water, sewers, and paved roads), the presence of informal settlements, widespread poverty and diffused unemployment (Loe & Meutchehé Ngomsi, 2004). This situation generates a complex urban landscape, in which since the last twenty years a new contemporary cultural sector has flourished, making of the city a stage of art festivals, workshops, trainings, as well as ephemeral and permanent art installations addressed to the local public (Babina & Bell, 2008; Diwota-Kotto & Manga, 2011; ICU, 2012).

According to Marilyn Douala Bell, president of doual’art, a local contemporary art center working and funding public art into the city, permanent art installations can be classified as follows:

1. Monumental installations: large scale sculptures generally positioned in traffic places.
2. Passageways artworks: murals and small scales sculptures positioned along the roads of poor neighborhoods.
3. Proximity artworks: architectural installations with very specific functions located close to living spaces of marginalized neighborhoods.

Two main popular and central neighborhoods, New Bell and Bessengue, have been selected as case studies to run an ethnographic study, conducted from December 2012 to January 2013, aiming to understand the impact of permanent art installations on safety and security. The choice of these two neighborhoods has been based on the different types of permanent art installations they host.

In the district of New Bell\(^1\), the research has been focused around the monumental Colonne Pascal of Pascal Marthine Tayou (2010), a twelve meters installation made of enamel pots superimposed in the heart of the very busy roundabout of Shell New Bell (Fig. 1); and Les Mots écrits de New Bell of Hervé Yamguen (2010), a series of five mural installations dislocated around the Ngangue neighborhood (Fig. 2). In Bessengue, the investigation turned

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1 With prestigious neighborhoods I'm referring to the ones located at the cost site of the city, in particular Bonanjo, Bonapriso, Bali, Akwa, and to the new residential area located at North East of the city, including Bonamoussadi, Kotto, Makepe and Logpom.
2 Personal conversation with Marilyn Douala Bell, president of doual’art, 08/01/2013.
3 Formally the city is divided in six administrative districts or arrondissements, each one hosting different neighborhoods. New Bell is the arrondissement of Douala II to which belongs the Ngangue neighborhood. Differently, Bessengue is a neighborhood belonging to the arrondissement Douala I (which major headquarters is based in Bonanjo).
around two proximity artworks: the *Borne Fontaine of Bessengue* (Fig. 3) of Danielle Diwouta Kotto (2003), a fountain kiosk built around a frame structure and steel beams covered with an inverted sloping roof which recalls the shape of a butterfly’s wings; and the *Passerelle de Bessengue*, (Fig. 4) a wooden bridge with iron handrails representing people of different ethnic groups holding hands, designed by the artist Alioum Moussa (2005).

After a brief contextualization of New Bell and Bessengue, the outcomes of the research will be presented divided for types of installations.

**New Bell**

New Bell is the typical kwatt of Douala, where “you’re going to walk and fall down in the mud, you’re going to cross dirty rivulets to go in the sub district, you’re going to enter people’s homes to go to your”.

It is divided in 32 neighborhoods that, since after the First World War, have been spontaneously occupied by immigrant population moved to Douala in search of work (Schler, 2008). The whole district lacks of urban management and the regular provision of basic services, such as access to running water, sewers, and waste collection, generating a serious unhealthy environment. At the same time, the absence of a public enlightenment system, the diffuse poverty and unemployment often drives people to commit thefts and aggressions, addressing the district a very dangerous reputation (Loe & Meutchehé Ngomsi, 2004). The research has been circumscribed only on New Bell Ngangue, one of the liveliest neighborhoods, at whose boundary the Shall New Bell square hosts the monumental Colonne Pascal of Pascal Marthine Tayou, while all along its streets it is possible to run into Les Mots Écrits de New Bell of Hervé Yamguen.

**Monumental installations: the case of La Colonne Pascal**

Monumental installations are not always welcomed by the community. This may depends both from their location and their process of production. The public places where they are installed, in general traffic and busy roundabouts, do not allow to easily opening a dialogue with inhabitants. Rather, and differently from other types of installations, monuments receive significant attention both from media and local authorities (Malaquais, 2006). During the art production process, the negotiation on the artwork happens between the funding agency (doual’art) and the artists, without making local community’s voices participant of the artwork development. From traditional authorities point of view, this direct flux of decision-making can be perceived as imposed, and sometimes it generates negative reactions, popular discontents and ambiguous attitudes toward the installation.
The case of the Colonne Pascal is representative of this public response. There are two main critics given by those who do not appreciate the installation (36%). The first one, strongly supported by the traditional chief of the neighborhood, considers the installation as unacceptable of the memory of the place: “this (The Colonne Pascal) does not reflect the history of the area. We should build a monument to present our children as well as our grandchildren”. The reasons can be related to the riots of May 1955, preceding the independence of Cameroun, during which around one thousand of people have died (as recalled by Avenue de l’Indipendance, the main road crossing the square). A second negative critic interprets the installation as “the evidence that New Bell’s inhabitants have the hungry belly”. At the same time, more than half of the population attributes to the Colonne Pascal a sense of requalification of the public space (20%), of modernity (12%), and in few cases as a tribute to the African woman (4%). Despite this gap in the public opinion any correlations have emerged toward interviewees’ perceived impact of the installation in term of safety and security. Almost everyone (96%) perceives Shell New Bell as a safe landmark for mobility, but even for dating partners, meeting friends, having lunch or enjoying a beer.

The place indeed, after the installation of the Colonne Pascal has become a place for locals’ shopping and the number of informal markets offering bakery products and take away foods has exponentially increased. Concerning security and criminality issues, 84% of the interviewees report that aggressions are diminished, thanks to a recent established self-defense group and the mutual surveillance of informal traders. Despite those declarations, a signifi-

5 Quotation reported from the survey conducted in Shell New Bell on 18 January 2013.
6 Ibid.
A significant number of people (64%) suggests that during the night and the first hours of the morning, when nobody circulate for the place, their perceived level of security strongly decreases.

Standing to locals’ statements the reputation of the area is improved, and also tourists are increased even if their presence is not regular. This can be related to the resounding media attention given to the Colonne Pascal by newspaper, newscasts, and TV series for representing the entire district.

This improvement in reputation has also fostered public authorities to take some measures to fight the disorder: first of all, bins have been located on the sides of the roundabout and the state-controlled company in service to collect garbage (HYSACAM) passes from there every morning. Finally, the police have increased the frequency of patrols accessing the area, even if interviewees of Shell New Bell demand for regularity and efficiency of their interventions.

**Passageways installation: the case of Les Mots Écrits de New Bell**

The impact of artworks positioned in passageways, is completely different from monumental installations, and certainly it is more integrated in the ordinary life of inhabitants. In New Bell Ngangue, people are honored to host public art and their presence is totally (100%) accepted, appreciated and interrogated. A spread enthusiasm towards the installations emerges from interviews and questionnaires, and it seems to be strictly related to people’s feeling of inclusion and participation to the art production process. First of all, it should be notice that the artist Hervé Yamguen is living and working in the same neighborhood and he is widely respected by the community. Secondly, for the Mots Écrits de New Bell, he directly involved three local rappers in the record production of songs, from which Yamguen has extrapolated the sentences that nowadays appears on the wall of the neighborhoods. During this process, dwellers were introduced to the project through performances, ephemeral events, and meetings, creating new opportunities for debates around the role of the art and safety issues emerging from song texts. When it came to decide the location of installations, inhabitants decided to donate the façades of their houses (or their commercial activities) for hosting public art installations, at the point that inhabitants’ offers surpassed the demand of locations by the artist.

After two years of their production, Ngangue’s dwellers address public art a social and educative role making “shine the neighborhood”. The Mots Écrits de New Bell are embedded on the society, and interpreted as “another vision of our realities as shout of alarm”.  

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7 Quotation reported from the survey conducted in New Bell Ngangue on 17 January 2013.
8 Ibid.
people self-esteem toward their neighborhood, contributing to improve its image within the city, by publically showing “the originality of a district judged as wild”, and opening new possibilities toward modernity, progress, and renaissance of public spaces. At the same time, as declared by a schoolteacher, public art “awakes. It awakens great people as it awakes children. Pupils also took leaves in classrooms. They made drawings. Actually, it was like a competition”. Beside the imitation of children, within the neighborhood is possible to notice the facades of some houses reproducing similar drawing to that of Hervé Yamguen’s habitation. At individual level, the presence of art installation has stimulated inhabitants to take care of their private and public surrounded environment. Some evidences include the introduction of plants and flowers outside informal settlements located around the installation, as well as panels forbidding people to through garbage on the ground.

The desire of renovation and requalification of public space has also been declared by the owner of “La joie de Ndogmabi”, the bar hosting the blue neon, who affirms to renew the facade of its bar every year. Moreover, he has also decided to pay for electricity on his own, in order to ensure the visibility of the artwork, and to improve and enlarge the surface of the bar, by tiling the floor and changing old wood tables, with plastic one, more practical to move and to clean. Compared with other clubs of the neighborhoods, the Joie de Ndogmabi is now considered a safe landmark also from young and women, even during the night, when in Ngangue the security level is not guarantee.

The murals of the Ecole CBC Babylon, have generated astonished impact in term of reputation, providing the institution with an image of cleanliness, modernity and seriousness. In less than three years, the number of students enrolled has increased from 57 to 400; ten

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9 Ibid.
10 Personal conversation with teacher David from the CBC Babilon school (11/12/2012).
more teachers have been employed; a new block have been built; and the school curriculum has become bilingual. The school is now frequented also by tourists, who often access it to take photos and ask for information, but also by locals coming from the near sub-districts, who are attracted there by curiosity and desire to enroll their children.

Despite those artworks formally belong the local authority, i.e. the Urban Community of Douala (CUD), the public intervention on this neighborhood until now has been limited to the introduction of few bins along the main paved road of the neighborhood, even if the service for collective them is not always regular in to the district. Two cultural and security issues still remains opened. The first one regards the maintenance of artworks and wall paints that after few years require to be restored. And the second one concerns the implementation of security measures to respond local community requests. Since September 2012, indeed, Ngangue’s dwellers driven by the artist Hervé Yamgen, have started a petition against public disorder, aggressions, violence and prostitutions which perpetuate around two main bars of the neighborhood: “prolongation” et “exclusive dream”. Until not their demands is not yet been considered.

Bessengue

Bessengue is a small and overcrowded stretch of informal settlements, enclosed in a wedged valley between two watercourses: the Mbopi and Nguété rivers and two main streets: the Boulevard de la Republique and the Boulevard de l’Unité. This position is particularly disadvantaged during rain seasons as the risk to remains obstructed by its borders during floods is particularly high (The World Bank, 2010). Two main ethnic groups populate Bessengue: the Bamoun, emigrated from the North-West of Cameroun, and the native Duala. Until now, Bamoun and Duala are struggling to live peacefully, due to historical reasons related to the urbanization process of the area. The current disputes between the two ethnic groups depend by the fact that the native Duala accuses the halogens Bamoun to have denigrated their lands, making them unhealthy and taking welfare away from others.

Proximity artworks: the cases of La Passerelle and La Borne-Fontaine de Bessengue

Bessengue is the first district in which proximity artworks have been produced. During the years the process of art production of this type of installation has been refined, including foreigner artists in the production of artwork, invited for two residences into the neighborhood, in order to directly negotiate with the community their public art concept. However, in the specific case of Bessengue, the process have been slightly different: after a long negotiation between doual’art and the community, the concept of the installation was defined, and local communities selected the artist who better represent their ideals. This strong commitment of inhabitants is used to generate art installations that embedded very specific utilitarian features.
After ten years of the Passerelle and the Borne Fontaine production, only 12% of the population recognizes these installations as artworks. When inhabitants were demanded about their meaning three main words come out: aid, development and utility - in accessing water and facilitating the circulation of people and vehicles. People’s feelings of social exclusion are strongly decreased: they explicitly affirm that the Passerelle and the Borne-fontaine are the demonstration that someone has finally noticed (and improved) their previously austere situation. Almost all interviewees (98%), indeed, are proud of those installations, also because now they can “be protected from the cholera” and “live in a more pleasant, coloured environment”. Two persons, talking about the bridge, have indicated that the handrails produced by Alioum Moussa means the peaceful collaboration between Bamoun and Douala ethnic groups.

The process of production of the Passerelle has generated not only advantages in term of facilities, but also social cohesion and responsibility. Just after the production of the Passerelle de Bessengue, members of different ethnic groups living into the neighborhood decided to establish a Development Committee (Communoté de Developpement de Bessengue – Akwa, CDBA), asking doual’art to be trained on development project management. The work of the CDBA is completely voluntary and still nowadays, every month they organize a regular meeting to discuss about district improvements. The active engagement of the CDBA has attracted international funds, making of Bessengue a pilot district for development projects supported by the World Bank (UN-Habitat, 2011). Without CDBA’s presence and actions for improving Bessengue, the participatory strategy of funding agencies would not be possible.

After the implementation of the Passerelle and the Borne Fontaine, others two water pumps have been installed into the second and third blocks of the Bessengue. The lanes of the valley have been paved, and a wide patch has been created along the Mbopi River, allowing am-

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11 Quotation reported from the survey conducted in Bessengue on 16 January 2013.
12 Ibid.
bulance and firemen to access the district in case of emergency. As declared by Ndombe Ebenezer, the president of the CDBA:

"Before the bridge and before all the pedestrian passageways, it was a landlocked area. That is to say, it was not possible to get around the neighborhood, and people did not have access to the area. And even for the disposal of refuse, bringing them on the road where now you can see the bins, it was not possible. And even taxis couldn’t enter the area in case of an emergency such as illness during the night. And even when there were fires, (as we have recently had a fire here), the cars of the firefighters had no access to the area to extinguish the fire".  

At the same time the CDBA has also demanded and obtained a certain support from the Urban Community of Douala, in order to drain the bad of the Mbopi River, taking off plastic garbage, for helping the soil to absorb raining waters. This operation is now guaranteed every two years, allowing the prevention and reduction of the risk of floods and human disaster. Moreover, just out of the district two bins have been placed to collect wasted material. The agency in charge of this service, HYSACAM, passes every day to gut it. These actions have also inducted local communities to take care of their surrounding environment by sweeping streets outside their houses and engaging adolescents for cleaning activities, such as pulling weeds and collecting the dirt.

Finally, the creation of the Passerelle has disclosed the neighborhood to the commercial district of Akwa, and opened a new squared area between the bridge and the Borne Fontaine. This square is become a safe landmark for children’s open-air plays, while women meet there for chatting around the fountain or for doing shopping. In this area new informal business activities have sprouted, or improve their commercial activities, including coffee shops, hair salons, tailoring shops, boutiques (12%), call boxes, restaurants and bakery vendors, counter sales of fruits and vegetables, and informal pharmacies.

**Conclusion**

This paper describes the impact of monuments, passageways and proximity artworks on urban safety and security. It can be argue that public art generates positive effects on the urban landscape and local community actions. The impact of public art depends on the types of the installation and the negotiation processes between funding agency, artists and local communities. In some cases, the influence of public art on safety and security is more direct, while in other cases it happen is a subtler way, i.e. more an individual level rather than a collective one.

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13 Personal conversation with Ndombe Ebenezer, President Communauté Développement Bessengue-Akwa (14/12/2102).
Finally, it is important to notice that it is not the mere presence of public artworks that generate safety and security but it is the quality of the production process, the intellectual value of the artwork, and the engagement of local communities, that in Douala trigger social reactions and civic responsibilities of citizens and public authorities.

References
2.1.2 Panoramic report

Abstract
In Douala public art installations have different meanings and functions as they range from sculptures and wall paintings to architectural infrastructures such as fountains and bridges. The effects of public art installations on urban safety and security vary a lot depending on the neighborhoods where they have been installed and from the specific features of their communities.

Public art installations can be perceived by local communities as projects of development, when their functionality supplies specific needs. In other cases, when the functionality of public art installations is less evident, the informal learning and cultural awareness of local communities are more evident. The process of public art production enhances the active participation of local communities in order to protect and advance the work of requalification and improvement of their living space, by enhancing social responsibility of individuals (i.e. people start cleaning the streets) and civic cohabitation (i.e. the establishment of “development communities”).

In Douala public art fosters the creation of shared spaces and increases the flux of people (both inhabitants and tourists) passing by the installations to use them or simply to enjoy the space. The creation of new business activities or the requalification of existing ones can be facilitated by the presence of art installations, contributing to the improvement of citizens’ quality of life and to the enhancement of the district reputation.

This essay describes and analyses the cultural and safety context of Douala and the relationship between public art installations, safety and security issues in two central neighborhoods of Douala (New Bell and Bessengue). The analysis includes: the classification of permanent public art and the process of public art production; the safety and security context of Douala, and insights on social and educational issues; the results of forty qualitative interviews and two hundred questionnaires, describing changes on the urban areas, on people’s safety, security perception, behaviors, and informal learning that have been fostered by public art installations.

Background
This chapter aims to provide an overview of the urban, cultural and safety context of Douala. Information presented here has been collected from existing documentation (printed and digital) and reworked in three main paragraphs: in the first part, historical notes introduce the urbanization process of the city, followed by a description of the current urban and political administration; the second paragraph presents the main cultural institutions and artistic groups working in Douala as well as all the public art projects produced since 1991. Finally, the third paragraph focuses on safety and security, highlighting the urban context of Douala.
The city and the urban planning

"Douala represents the prototype of African cities. It is a city in the making. Nothing there seems permanently acquired. It summarizes all chances and vicissitudes of Cameroon, trying to adapt itself to the pace of the modern world. It is from Douala that the main mutations of contemporary Cameroon have risen up." (Mainet 1985)

Historical and political context

Douala is the largest city of Cameroon with three millions of inhabitants. It is positioned on the estuary of Wouri river, baptized “Río dos Camarões” (literally “river of shrimps”) by Portuguese navigators during the 15th century, due to the abundance of shrimps in its water. It is indeed from the Douala’s river that the entire country takes the name of Cameroon (Austen & Derrick, 1999). The city’s name instead comes from the native Duala family governing the region until the German colonization in 1884, still present as traditional royal authority. The German sovereignty lasted until the First World War; the colonizers built a number of public infrastructures and travel connections between Douala and the Equatorial Africa. With the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919, Douala and the major part of Cameroon became a French colony. Thirty-five years later, in 1955, Douala is the target of a violent French campaign against the riots of the UPC - Union des Populations de Cameroun (“Union of Cameroon’s People”) asking for independence. After a violent massacre in 1958, the French superintendant Xavier Torres announces the independence of Cameroon on the 1st of January 1960, followed by the unification of the French and English regions in 1961 through a popular referendum (Lugan 2009). The political capital is established in Yaoundé, while Douala becomes the official economic and commercial hub, due to the presence of its strategic harbor on the Atlantic Ocean and its active role as trade intermediate for Cameroon and the whole central Africa. As a consequence, a non-regulated economic development starts increasing in Douala, also allowed by a substantial lack of politic and administrative regulations from national and local authorities. The result is a rapid, uncontrolled, and horizontal urbanization of Douala, where different social groups converge upon the city.

The city urbanization

The urbanization process of Douala has been absolutely neglected by national and local authorities. The most important urban plan, the “Plan d’urbanisme et d’extension de Douala” goes back to 1914, during the German colonization. This plan has been inherited and followed by French until 1950 (Njoh 2007), when the population of Douala duplicated from 55’000 in 1945 to 110’000 in 1958 (Sinou, Poinsot & Sternadel 1989). The following urban blueprint released by French authorities (Plan Directeur d’Urbanisme) integrates the German one with numerous infrastructures for commercial activities, like the chamber of commerce, the post office, markets and railway stations but also schools, churches, police stations, and hospitals
The colonizers settled all along the coast of Douala and in the area of the commercial port, while locals are moved into the inner part of the city. Nowadays, the urban plan still reflects the idea of colonizers to create their own living area well separated from the local ones. This distinction is still evident and it highlights the polarization between the rich and poor communities of Douala (see map 1). The richer area includes: the administrative and commercial centers, respectively Bonanjo and Akwa, and two residential neighborhoods, Bonapriso and Bali. All the other neighborhoods are mainly built as informal settlements, and they do not have any real estate value as frequently it is not even clear to whom really belong the land where people have installed their houses.

The city is divided in six districts including a total of 118 neighborhoods that strongly differ from each other for cultural, ethnic, and religious causes. Moreover, the absence of the State in urban management has allowed quarters to growth spontaneously, with few connections and no integration among them. This situation is accentuated by continuous migrations, an exponential demographic growth and socio-economical polarization and inequalities, getting worst due to diffused unemployment, environment degradation, and urban violence. In 1993 Douala is the main migrant pole of the country, and statistics preview that in 2030 more than half Cameroonians will live in the city (Akam & Mimche 2009). Historically Douala has known three big demographic explosions, paradoxically coinciding with the three national censuses: the first one, just after the independence (1960-1976) was mainly due to labor demand for port activities. The second one (1976-1987) was related to the development and concentration of educational infrastructures, for satisfying the request of education. In 1987, the migrant population in Douala was already higher than natives, and it lived especially on the sides of the Wouri River (ibid.). The third change in the population growth is less regular and it fluctuates from 1987 to 2008. At the end of the 1980s a strong economic crisis affected the country, upsetting the work, salaries and life style of Cameroonians, and the optimism that “development” had created falls down, pushing young to come back to their rural village. Since the new millennium, other development perspectives (like the decentralization, the development of big mining sites in the eastern and the southern part of the country, as well as the development of new media of communication) are giving

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1 Before the colonization there were three main divisions of Douala lands, corresponding to the three different ethnicity of the region: 1) Duala zone: Canton Bell, Akwa, Deido, Bonaberi and the district of New Bell; 2) Basaa zone: all the districts of the canton (township) Basaa du Wouri; 3) Bakoko zone at the south-east of Douala (Philémon & Fonndé, 2011). Douala in its quickly and deepen urbanisation process, it swallowed the zones of the three ethnic groups (Duala, Basaa and Bakoko), that became simple urban district.

2 According to Franc Danjou, a French realtor based and working in Douala, the ownership of the lands is one of the biggest problems. Legally, made exception of the prestigious neighborhoods, he declares that all lands belong to the state, which has expropriated the former indigenous families of their properties. However, the indigenous families are still selling their lands, providing contracts that document their ownership on those lands and the related act of selling.
people the chance to often move away and come back to Douala to improve their economic conditions or to advance in their career. In term of impact, migrants are used to re-join family of friends coming from the same region, building in this ways ethnic and cultural sub-communities internal to Douala (Akam & Mimche 2009). Despite this rapid urbanization, the urban plan of Douala was not yet completed. The city organization followed people settlement, at the point that citizens do not use in their daily practices (and often even do not know) as landmarks streets and places’ names, but rather names associated to the areas, or spotted buildings (easily recognizable), be them public or private. The urbanization process of a district of Douala, New Bell, and a central neighborhood, Bessengue, is treated in the case studies section before the analysis of the impact that public art installations have on the urban environment in relation to safety and security issues.

Here it is important to notice that a new urban plan is going to be processed by the local authority of the city, i.e. the Urban Community of Douala. The plan aims to expand and improve the circulation of the city as well as to completely renew the area of some neighborhoods, in particular New Bell. This popular neighborhood is an immigrant pole located in the center of the city, that happens to be particularly interesting for local authorities as it borders the above-cited most prestigious areas of Douala. In addition, New Bell also hosts the two most important markets of Douala: the Marché Central and the Marché Congo, which seems to be the most dangerous places of the city, in terms of criminality. At the same time, for slum dwellers these markets are more important not only for the supply of low-cost goods, but also as places for teaching and learning professional activities such as seamstress, beautician, hairdresser, etc.
Inhabitants of New Bell will be obliged to leave their settlements and to move in new areas of the city. So far the plan could be adopted as there was not yet a secure plan for re-housing inhabitants.3

**The city administration**

Since 1960, when the country officially became the Republic of Cameroon, only two presidents have been in charge: Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo (1969-1982) and the current Paul Biya (1982-). The president of Cameroon is the only person in charge of shaping the government and taking decisions. His power globally includes the definition and hiring of ministers, magistrates, military generals, regional governors, city government delegates, and heads of semi-state company. He has the veto power for regulations, financial expenditures, for declaring state of emergency, and spending profits of semi-state company (MSU, 2012).

Concerning the public administration of Douala, the city is formally an Urban Community (*Communauté Urbaine de Douala*) directed since 2006 by the government delegate Fritz Ntoné Ntoné (nominated by the president) and the Douala City Council (CUD). The power of each Urban Community is decentralized in six administrative districts or municipalities (*Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala*), which are:

- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala I - Based in Bonanjo
- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala II - Based in New-Bell
- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala III - Based in Logbaba
- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala IV - Based in Bonassama
- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala V - Based in Kotto
- Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala VI - Based in Manoka

Each district is led by a mayor, elected by the population every five years. Six mayors and thirty other councilors, also elected by the population, compose the CUD, and the government delegate leads them. In general, mayors and councilors belong to the political opposition of the national government, and they have limited power of decision and economic capacity, considering that the administrative, development, and budgetary functions are managed exclusively from the capital, Yaoundé.

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3 Personal conversation with Jean Yango, director of the urbanization department of the municipality of Douala (*Direction des etudes de la planification des investissements et du developpement durable*), 3 January 2013.
Cultural and artistic context

“...not a simple ‘demographic container’, it is rather a ‘space of life’, a real well of micro-cultures where anybody can gather regardless one’s own identity” (Philémon & Foondé, 2011, p. 240-241).

Douala cultural institutions and groups

Since 1991 several cultural institutions and collective of artists have operated in the urban space of Douala.

First of all, doual’art, a contemporary art space based in Bonanjo, has worked in and for the city since 1991. Doual’art is the oldest art center of Douala, addressing its work to the urban environment in order “to provide the city with human identity”.§ Doual’art, besides hosting an exhibition space, is especially a hub of experimentation of public art, inviting artists from all over the nation and the world to reflect on the city and to produce permanent or ephemeral public art installations. The goal is to make Douala a more enjoyable and livable place, by improving public and common spaces through artistic, monumental, and architectural projects. From 2007, doual’art is the organizer of the SUD – Salon Urban de Douala – a triennial contemporary urban festival in which permanent and ephemeral art installations are presented and offered to the city.

The second important cultural institution operating in Douala is the MAM gallery, an exhibition space founded by Marem Malong Meslin Samb in 1996. The MAM gallery has worked from 2005 to 2010 in collaboration with MTN foundation (MTN is the main telecommunications operator), under the direction of Guy Bolivar. The most relevant output from the collaboration between MAM and MTN, affecting urban issues at large, is their education program addressed to disadvantaged children, living in extremely poor conditions and affected by AIDS. This one-year program aimed to make local communities aware of contemporary art, and to develop children creativity through artists’ teaching activities and visiting ateliers.¶ At the end of each year, an exhibition of works by children was organized, opening the gallery’s doors to a more unusual public: children’s parents and friends coming from the most remote neighborhoods of the city.

The third interesting space is ArtBakery, an art center located in Bonendale, a village outside Douala usually known as the artists’ village. At ArtBakery, which is currently managed by Justine Gaga, national and international artists are invited for residencies, workshops, and training that often provides them with multimedia competences. Many artists, after having experienced ArtBakery, have decided to definitively settle into the village for

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§ Personal conversation with Marylin Douala Manga Bell, President of doual’art, 8 January 2013.
¶ Personal conversation with Guy Bolivar, director of the educational program at MAM gallery, 21 December 2012.
living outside the crowded and chaotic Douala. Bonendale currently hosts a commemorative monument dedicated to the founder Goddy Leye, died in 2011.

Finally, the Cercle Kapsiki, a group of Cameroonian artists in Douala, deserves due attention. It is composed by Hervé Youmbi, Hervé Yamguen, Salifou Lindou, Blaise Bang, and Jules Wokam, who gathered in a formal group in 1998, setting up the K-FACTORY, a contemporary art space in the district of New Bell. These five artists, besides having a busy and international personal career, have unified their efforts in order to realize cultural activities in the New Bell district in order to get inhabitants closer to the arts. The main goal is to provide local communities with artistic experiences by showing, giving back or even discussing social issues present in the works by artists who have been inspired by the environment where they live.

**Urban art initiatives in Douala**

The production of public artworks has been initiated by doual’art at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1992, doual’art offered to the city *Art Venture*, the first mural installation composed by four triptych of plexiglas produced by Koko Komégné, Monie, Joël Mpah Dooh, and Etienne Delacroix in the Place du Gouvernement of Bonanjo. One year later, in march 1993, doual’art funded a new mural on a palisade of 150 meters in the district of Madagascar painted by the artists Joël Mpah Dooh, Koko Komégné, Baby Kouo, René Tchébetchou, Aimé Tallo, and a group of 25 young people from the neighborhood. In 1996, the *Nouvelle Liberté* by Joseph Francis Sumegné, a majestic 12 meters tall sculpture made from scrap metals, was erected in the middle of one of the busiest roundabouts of Douala, the Rond Point Deido. Today the *Nouvellé Liberté* is the icon and symbol of the city of Douala.

In 1998, the Cercle Kapsiki and doual’art organized *Hors les murs*, a workshop and a street art exhibition along the road connecting the neighborhoods of Akwa and Bonanjo. This ephemeral event, promoted by UNESCO and the Institut Français de Cameroon of Douala, is of main importance for the impact and reactions it triggered in local communities and local authorities. For this exhibition the Cercle Kapsiki and three other artists (Abi, Bernard Bayifang, and Emati) selected each one a street child with whom they collaborated for one month in the production of artworks. Doual’art staged the exhibition during the night in order to surprise local communities with such an unusual event. The most impressive installation was the one created by Salifou Lindou in which he hung on a transparent nylon thread broken loaves of bread painted in red on an extremity. The reaction of inhabitants was astonishing as recorded in a video documentation showing the animated discussions triggered by this event in the population: they started questioning about the meaning of the pieces, and interpreting them in relation to their living conditions. This situation immediately generated confusion, recalling the attention and intervention of the police. Once the police arrived, they destroyed the exhibition, due to a lack
of communication between local authorities that forgot to alert each office for the legal authorization of the event.\footnote{Personal conversation with Marylin Douala Manga Bell, president of doual’art, 8 January 2013.}

The beginning of the 21st century coincided with a period of violence, tortures, and extra-judicial killings by the Operational Command,\footnote{The Operation Command (Commandement Opérationnel) is a paramilitary body established by the government the 20 February 2000 to put an end to criminality in Douala (see Malaquais, 2009).} yet it is paradoxically flourishing in terms of cultural events in the urban spaces.

In 2001, doual’art organizes the \textit{Ateliers Urbains} in Bessengue. Twenty artists were invited to animate with performances and art installations a district suffering from extreme poverty, difficulty accessible, and with lack of services. The most impressive performance was undoubtedly the one produced by Malam, a Cameroonian artist who threw into the drain of the neighborhood two burned dummies of women, as a denounce of the violence that was affecting Douala during those years (Malaquais, 2011).

During the same year two other artistic workshops were organized around the city: \textit{Squatt’art} and \textit{Scénographies Urbaines}. The first one was organized by the artist Koko Komégné in the district of Bali, where he provided a space and an occasion for the generation of younger artists to produce artworks, and experience a final collective exhibition. Koko Komégné acquired the status of godfather of Cameroonian artists with this initiative, replicated also a year later. The second workshop, entitled \textit{Scénographies Urbaines}, was an urban art festival organized by the Cercle Kapsiki, in collaboration with scU2,\footnote{scU2 is a collective of two scenographers, Jean-Christophe Lanquetin et François Duconseille.} at the turn of the years 2001 and 2002 in the district of New Bell. On this occasion thirty artists were invited for a residency in the largest historical and popular district of the city: condition \textit{sine qua non} for participation was being hosted by slum dwellers. The goal was twofold: on one side, to allow inhabitants to discover and be involved in an international art project, and on the other side to stimulate artists to get inspiration from the community. Several urban art interventions were produced, and some traces of murals are still evident. The festival culminated in a fashion show, gathering to New Bell a wide audience of locals and people coming from prestigious districts of the city (probably for the first time).\footnote{Personal conversation with Hervé Yamguen and Hervé Youmbi artists and organizers of Scenographies Urbaines, 9 January 2013.}

In 2002 Goody Leye, the founder of Artbekery, coordinated the workshop \textit{Bessengue city} in collaboration with three international artists: James Beckett, Hartanto, and Jesus Palominho. \textit{Bessengue city} was composed of five main projects: a community radio (\textit{Radio Bessengue city}) managed by local young people; \textit{Bouquet de souris}, a video project showing smiling portraits of inhabitants; an informal house built at the entrance of the district, made with colored, recycled, and resistant materials; a chat website linking two Cameroonian women, one living...
in Bessengue, and the other in Indonesia; and finally, the *Hope box* collecting local communities’ thoughts and proposals for the district improvement.

In 2003, doual’art, under the initiative of the artist Rienke Enghardt, organized the workshop *Cadavres exquis*, resulting in an exhibition as well as a triptych wall painting at the boundary between the neighborhoods of Bessengue and Akwa Nord. During the same year, doual’art commissioned to the Cameroonian architect Danielle Diwouta Kotto its first architectural installation: the *Borne-Fontaine* of Bessengue. It is a fountain kiosk built around a frame structure and steel beams, covered with an inverted sloping roof, recalling the shape of a butterfly’s wings. The fountain, built in collaboration with the development committee of the neighborhood, is equipped with three water taps and a small shop whose rental fee allows for collecting some money for the maintenance. Two years later doual’art also contributed to the realization of the *Passerelle de Bessengue* through an artistic contest gained by the artist Alioum Moussa who designed the handrail of the bridge. The *Passerelle* is a wooden bridge with iron handrails painted in different colors, each one representing people of different ethnic groups holding hands.

From 2005 to nowadays, public art installations produced by doual’art have constantly increased, mainly framed into the triennial event they organized since 2007: the Salon Urbain of Douala (SUD). Before going into details with all the public projects concerning the SUD, two recent urban art projects must be mentioned. The first one is the *Marché des Art Plastiques* (MAP), a visual art market, which has experienced its third edition in 2013. The MAP is organized along the street of Bali where artists were invited to exhibit and sell their artworks. The second one includes the series of murals promoted by the government in 2011, in occasion of the national “Day of Cleanliness”. Artists have painted the façades of three public secondary schools of Douala, in the district of Akwa, Deido, and Bonaberi, with explicit educational messages related to the importance of preventing diseases and taking care of the urban environment.

**The SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala**

SUD is a triennial international festival, organized by doual’art in order to produce public art installations and to promote the contemporary cultural identity of Douala. It was conceived during the art&urbis 2005, an international symposium gathering together cultural actors, artists, architects, urban planners, anthropologists, art critics, and sociologists in order to reflect on the relationship between art and urban spaces in a complex city like Douala (Babina & Bell 2008).

In 2007 Doual’art organizes the first edition of the SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala. In this occasion artists have produce performances and ephemeral and permanent installations on different themes, such as informal economy, the mobility and sounds of the city, the recycling and recovery process, traditional and modern practices of the city. The projects
produced during SUD 2007 that can still be found in the city are: *Njé Mo Yé* (“What’s that” in Duala language) by Koko Komégné, a 5 meters tall sculpture with a wingspan of 2.5 meters, made of red painted steel tubes with a diameter of 12 cm, located at the crossroad “Dernier Poteau”, an important junction on the road of New Bell. The *Sud Obelisk* by Faouzi Laatiris, a pillar stone in the Place du Gouvernement of Bonanjo that recalls the ancient roots of Douala, and celebrates the city as an important place for contemporary culture. The obelisk bears engraved the names of towns hosting contemporary art centers. The *Arbre à Palabres* by Frédéric Keïff is a palaver tree whose trunk and branches are made of painted iron poles, while attached glass and plastic fragments represent leaves. The installation, located in the garden behind the building hosting doual’art, is more than 5 meters tall with a canopy circumference of 7 meters, and it is equipped with wooden slabs embedded in the trunk, serving as benches.

The edition of SUD 2010 is richer in terms of permanent art production, and this time the event is focused on a specific theme: water. Among several performances and ephemeral installations, public artworks that are still present in the city are: the *Colonne Pascal* by Pascal Martin Tayou, a totem made of superimposed enameled pots rising toward the sky, in the heart of the very busy roundabout of Shell New Bell. *Les Mots écrits de New Bell* by Hervé Yamguen are a series of six mural interventions and lighting installations dislocated around the district of New Bell Ngangué. These installations showcase written messages coming from the lyrics of songs by two local rappers. *New Walk Ways in New Bell* by Kamiel Verschuren is a 500 meters long installation made of wooden planks covering open gutters of the district: the planks bear perforated text fragments. The *Jardin Sonore* by Lucas Grandin, is a wooden structure built on three floors that serves both as a panoramic viewpoint on the Wouri River and as a botanical garden. *Face à l’eau* by Salifou Lindou is an installation positioned just below the *Jardin Sonore*, on the bank of Wouri River. It is composed of five vertical panels of 3.70 m height, made of wood, metal, and colored plastic sheets arranged in a way that, at a certain distance, they create the illusion of a single screen. *Le Pont Source* is a wooden bridge, but also the concrete heritage of a series of artistic and ephemeral interventions, entitled *Diving in deep*, inspired to Ties Ten Bosch by the daily life of people living in the district of Ndogpassi III. The *Pirogue Céleste* by Hervé Youmbi, is the representation of a traditional canoe made with forged metal and meticulously decorated on the bow installed at the square of the esplanade of the Old Airport, in Bonapriso. *Corps d’eau* by Aser Kash are five different sculptures made of metal representing water pitchers and located in front of a drilling site of a school of the Cité Sic district. Finally, *Chorfa #7* by Younès Rahmoun is a wooden building on stilts on the edge of the Wouri river under the mangroves, near a village of fishers immigrated from Nigeria.

The 2013 edition of SUD is planned for December and it focuses on the theme of city metamorphose.
Safety and security context

Douala is a city characterized by huge safety and security problems. First of all a distinction between safety and security has to be made. According to the Oxford dictionary, safety corresponds to “the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury”,\(^{10}\) while security is the “state of being free from danger or threat”.\(^{11}\) Even if this difference seems to be so subtle, this report makes a clear distinction between the two terms, considering safety (coming from the Latin salvus) as all the conditions contributing to create a “healthy” environment; while security (coming from the Latin securus, meaning “free of concern”), as all the intentional actions involving the “control” and “protection” of a person, building, organization, or even a country against intentional threats such as crime or attacks.

In Douala problems related to safety include floods, pollution, lack of sewers, and a widespread waste collection system, causing serious diseases among the population. On the other side, problems of security concern mainly criminality and all the lack of public facilities, such as the lighting system or police stations, that do not guarantee control and people protection, favoring a sense of insecurity along the streets.

From a safety perspective, it should be considered that every year Douala counts around 4'200 mm of rain (Takem, Chandrasekharam, Ayonghe & Thambidurai, 2010). From April to September, rains flood entire neighborhoods located inside the topographic depressions of the city, causing victims and heavy damages to the areas affected. Beside this abundance of water, only half of the population (49%) has access to running water supplied by the Cameroon National Company of Water (CAMWATER). The remaining half of inhabitants stokes water through shared wells, that are often polluted and not more than 1.5 m deep (Guévart et al. 2006). Studies (Ako, Nkeng & Takem 2009; Epule, Peng, Mirielle Wase & Mafany 2011) have demonstrated that people in some neighborhoods are also used to drink raining water, without taking some preventive measures like filtration or boiling. According to Joséphine (et al. 2008), 56% of households evacuate solid waste in public refuse vats; 21% discharge household’s waste-water around houses or in rivers (20%) and 52% of households deposit their excrement in latrines (Joséphine et al. 2008) later discharged into the environment (Guévart et al. 2006). Consequently, contaminated water flows into drains coursing around houses, attracting malaria mosquitoes and provoking hydro-diseases, such as diarrheea, dysentery, typhoid fever, and skin diseases (tнетers, herpes, scabies, and tinea capitis, Joséphine et al. 2008).

From a security perspective, citizens’ sense of exclusion and the lack of urban services prompt the diffusion of criminality and violence. The Diagnostic de la délinquance urbaine à Douala

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\(^{10}\) Safety definition: [http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/safety](http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/safety)

\(^{11}\) Security definition: [http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/security](http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/security)
Douala Final Report

(Loe & Meutchehé Ngomsi, 2004), a national document describing delinquency in Douala and identifying its causes, shows that 60% of citizens feels insecure in their district as well as in their home. Women and young people are the main targets who live in a permanent fear of swindles, especially due to the phenomenon of “feymania”.

The most diffused actions of crime are: frauds (28.9%) pickpocketing (26.2%), burglary at home (16.7%), and physical aggression (13.8%) followed by armed robbery, hold-up of vehicles, domestic violence, and rape. Furthermore, citizens do not trust or even count on the protection of police, having a bad consideration of their operate due to claimed corruption of police (45.5%) and a general impunity of violence (27.4%). Indeed, less than one third of episodes of violence are denounced to the police, as people consider it useless (32.7%), admitting the inefficacy of police to maintain the urban order (22.3%).

The causes of this unhealthy and insecure situation can be combined with the economic crisis of the late 1980s, when the International Monetary Fund (FMI) imposed structural adjustment plans to the government of Cameroon. According to Konings (1996), from that period, the country started suffering a real economic down: the government took some financial measures to reduce public costs, including a reduction of the 30% + 50 % of public salaries, the closure of semi-state companies and the decline in oil production in Cameroon. In 1994 the currency of Cameroon, the CFA Franc, was devaluated of 50%, and the purchasing power and income of household strongly decreased (halved) with a consequent disappearance of the middle class and an exponential rise of the poor one (Konings, 1996), to such an extent that World Bank statistics (2007) suggest that 40% of Cameroon’s population is below the national poverty line. This situation of poverty has accentuated the proliferation of social problems related to unemployment and economic needs such as child prostitution, mendicants, street children, feymans, alcoholism, and gambling debts.

It is important to notice that this critical situation of insecurity also reflects the history of violence characterizing Douala in the last twenty years. The city population, indeed, despite living in poor conditions, has also suffered three main violent attacks from the government, that have generated a completely inertia from their part in reacting to criminality, and in facing safety problems. First on all, in 1991 Douala was the explosive fuse of the so-called phenomenon called Villes mortes (“Ghost cities”). “Ghost cities” is the denomination of the historical period prior to the first multiparty election in Cameroon, characterized by a

12 According to Basile Ndjio, a social anthropologist living and working in Douala, “the term ‘feymania’ have become an all-purpose concept for explaining illicit forms of wealth accumulation, unlawful economic activities, riches acquired by occult means, ill-gotten fortunes, and above all fantastic forms of wealth creation, which are officially unsanctioned because they derive from business activities or economic practices which contravene conventional norms and moral values, and especially circumvent official economic regulatory channels” (Ndjio, 2008, p. 6).

13 Reference: “liberalisation book”
real slaughter of the population, including arrests, violence, and tortures to the exponents of the opposition party. The manifestations spread all over the country, while press and newspapers closed, and in Douala the poorest neighborhoods were almost razed to the ground by the army in search of the zoua-zoua, an illicit and cheaper petrol coming from Nigeria (Dibussi, 2011).

Less than ten years later, in January 2000, the government of Cameroon instituted a new special paramilitary body, the Commandement Opérationnel (CO), to fight insecurity and city banditry in Douala. The result was a second butchery, a legalized violence against the population including a thousand people fallen victim of extra-judicial killing, and an unknown number of people disappeared (Malaquais 2009). In 2008, the strong inflation of the CFA franc, and the diffuse unemployment rate brought citizens of Douala to organize violent social movements, the so-called “Emeutes de la faim” (“Hunger riots”), asking for a balance in the price of bread. During these periods several thefts, rackets, armed violence, and burning shop were an everyday issue. Government repressed the manifestations with the army (Belomo Essono, 2011).

It is interesting to notice how some meaningful events and security problems emerged from the informal names of city landmarks (toponyms), rather than from formal communication media. According to Philémon & Foondé (2011), the toponyms of Douala can reveal:
1. The name of the family which owned the land;
2. The physical and natural elements of the area;
3. The use that was made of the area (including historical and meaningful features).

In the frame of this project the last category of toponyms is particularly interesting, as they express urban safety and security problems or events chronicles that have marked and injured the city. According to Fondée Megopé, among the names of neighborhoods or landmarks reporting incidents and violence there are: Carrefour trois morts (“three dead crossroad”), in which three people were victims of a fatal accident hit by a car; Carrefour trois voleurs (“three thieves crossroads”) dominated by three magnificent buildings owned by three, probably corrupted, individuals who held high positions in the administration. The opinion assumes that their work is the result of misuse of public funds; Bepanda Double-ball (“double-shot”) is referred to a fight between rebels and police in the time of great turmoil in the early 1960s, when a shot had torn the lives of two people at once; Nkololoun which in Ewondo (a local language of Douala) means “Mount of anger”, owes its name to the presence of a movie theater where drug addicts and pickpockets were always trying to fight or face the police forces. Some other areas witness the problem of alcoholism, one of the most widespread plagues of Douala, such as the Quartier Non-Clace (“no-ice-district”) taking its name from a bar serving only beer that was not cold; or the Rue de la joie (“street of happiness”), one of the most popular and hottest meeting points of nightlife in Douala with its many bars and informal restaurants. Prostitution is also represented by the names: Nkané, meaning “prostitute” in
Ejagham (a language of the South East of Cameroon), Trois Bordelles (“three brothels”) and Rond point j’ai raté ma vie (“Roundabout I-Wasted-My-Life”). Also the issues of immigration and land appropriation are not forgotten, since the areas of Ngoui Kwadé, Nylon, and Safari show that locals have not appreciated the foreign settlements in Douala. The neighborhoods Koumassi, Cocodi, Brazzaville, Lagos, and Congo derive their names from the presence of many immigrants from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Congo, Nigeria, and Zaire living there. In terms of safety, the name of the neighborhood of Madagascar comes from the difficulties to reach the place during seasonal rains, as it is subject to floods and it becomes as isolated as an island, surrounded by a marshy pond. The situation of precariousness faced by the inhabitants of Douala is also expressed by the toponyms Mille Problèmes (“thousand problems”) and Venez-Voir (“come and see”). Dirt and waste are part of everyday life, and this is represented by the names of the areas such as Njongmbe, Sobinan and Bepanda-Voiri. Finally, also the access to modernity and welfare is not excluded, showing citizen aspirations in districts like Vie Tranquille (“calm life”), Petit-Paris (“small Paris”), Denver, and Santa Barbara.

Analysis and Review
This chapter reviews the documentation concerning the cultural and safety context, based on the analysis of forty interviews conducted in Douala from December 2012 to January 2013. Interviews were addressed to private and public stakeholders, artists and local communities, in order to understand:

1. the process of public art production and the relationships among stakeholders;
2. public measures aiming to solve safety and security problems as well as the ordinary reaction of local communities in facing an unhealthy and violent context;
3. emerging social issues and the educational context.

Artwork and cultural events
“We argue that a city must have a human face, and that public art installations contribute to humanize the city, to provide an aesthetic soul to the environment, not as a decoration, but as an aesthetic reflective marker.” Marilyn Douala Bell

Process of public art production
In Douala permanent contemporary public art installations have been supported by doual’art. Since 2007, the SUD – Salon Urbain de Douala – is the official event through which doual’art

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14 Personal conversation with Marilyn Douala Manga bell, President of doual’art, 8 January 2013: «Nous défendons l'idée qu'une ville doit avoir un visage humain, et que les que les œuvres d'art public participe à humaniser la ville, à donner une âme esthétique à la ville, pas comme décoration, mais l'esthétique comme repère réfléchissante». 
promotes and presents the new production of public art at local and international level. The SUD is conceived as an event and a process in itself. Doual’art invites artists from outside Douala for residencies, in order to allow them to explore and immerse themselves into the neighborhoods of the city, to deal with local communities, and to produce permanent or ephemeral art installations. During SUD-2010, a three-months journal, titled “Liqiude”, was distributed in the five neighborhoods that were at the center of SUD, constituting an important source of information about the issue of water in the city, as well as a link of all the artistic projects development.

The process of public art production allows to delineate the relationships among doual’art, artists and local communities, as well as to understand the impact that public art has on citizens in term of appreciation, identification and appropriation.

In general, prior to producing an artwork, doual’art commission (composed by doual’art’s president and artistic director – Marilyn Douala Manga Bell and Didier Schaub – and international curators engaged with SUD over the years) selects arbitrarily a certain number of artists who have already experienced an interest in urban productions through their artistic research.

Once selected, these artists are invited for two residencies in Douala, in order to explore the context, to understand what matters for the community, and to propose their related urban artistic project. During the first residence artists have to:

1. select the site where they intend to work;
2. deal with inhabitants in order to understand their needs and preferences, and directly involve them since the first steps of the project conception;
3. envision the (permanent or ephemeral) art installation to produce and present a draft to doual’art.

Once the artist has chosen the site, doual’art asks for legal permission to the district mayor in order to construct on the public land. Secondly, together with the artists, doual’art starts a series of meetings to get familiar with the policy maker (i.e. the designated local chief of the district). In the period between the two residences, in some cases doual’art develops an in-depth research on the peculiarity of the area through questionnaires and interviews to local communities and authorities. The aim of this research is to create a profile of the area including ethnic groups, safety problems (such as access to water), and maps. Frequently doual’art involves young inhabitants of the selected area to conduct the survey with the goal to make people care about the project, and at the same time to get reliable data.

During the second residence, the artist physically realizes the project with the technical support of doual’art. The artist’s installation is then presented and inaugurated during the Salon Urbain of Douala to an audience, composed by inhabitants, government stakeholders, and national and international visitors. SUD is also the official occasion for doual’art to donate permanent public art installations to the Urban Community of Douala (CUD).
The work of doual’art consists in the orchestration and coordination of all artistic projects in terms of artists’ selection, project funding, public art production, organization and documentation in order to fit every piece of work into the frame of the Salon Urbain de Douala.

**Public art and the CUD**

From the interviews it emerged that the government has always collaborated with doual’art in providing the authorization for the occupation of public soil. At the same time, the CUD is invited to assist to the SUD when public artworks are officially presented. After the SUD permanent installations are donated from doual’art to the city of Douala, becoming state-owned properties.

Beside the act of donation, there is a signed contract between doual’art and the CUD, encompassing that the local authority commits itself to the maintenance of artworks. However, this happens only in few exceptions. One of the most interesting cases is *La Nouvellé Liberté* by Joseph-Francis Sumegné, located in a very busy crossroad of Douala, the Rond Point Deido. The government has forced evictions of informal markets around that installation. From interviews with locals it emerged that the place has become safer since the possibility of being robbed in markets is generally strongly increased. A certain order has been established, through the cleaning of streets, the presence of bins collected every day by Hysacam. Furthermore the crossroad has been restored and lightened. In particular it was really interesting to see colored Christmas lights decorating the installation, even if from the artist’s perspective they ruin the fruition of his artwork. Although in most cases there are no real maintenance works as promised by the government, public art has certainly led local authorities to take into consideration territories that would otherwise remain completely isolated and far from any public attention.

Finally the presence of public art installations has also inspired the government to produce other artworks on their own. As explicitly declared by Séna Mouelé, director of the administration of human resource and heritage, the presence of public art installations around Douala has triggered her decision to propose and fund the production of artistic murals.¹⁵ Murals, long more than 100 meters, have been produced by local artists all along the street perimeter of three central public schools in Akwa, Deido, and Cité Sic neighborhoods. They have been inaugurated in 2011 during the *Journées Citoyennes de Propreté* (“Citizens’ cleanliness days”) and they present visual educational messages about how to improve safety conditions and prevent diseases.

¹⁵ Personal conversation with Séna Mouelé Marcelline, director of the administration of human resource and heritage of the Urban Community of Douala, 21 January 2013.
Public art and the urban space
According to the interview with Marilyn Douala Manga Bell, it emerges that in Douala there are three areas of implementation of public art. There are “traffic places”, such as crossroads and circular places, usually in the most urbanized city; “proximity places”, areas that are close to where people live; and finally “passageways”, generally in marginalized neighborhoods, where people are used to walk. Different typologies of public art installations can be associated to these different locations.

At the main traffic nodes there are in general monumental installations. They are large-scale sculptures easily recognizable, especially for their dimensions and central position. We can include in this category the Nouvelle Liberté, the Colonne Pascal, Njé Mo Yé, the Pirogue Céleste, the Sud Obelisque and Globe-Trotter. This latter is an installation offered by the artist Philippine Barbou to doual’art, and located in the district of Bali, made of yellow painted iron beams that graphically represent two travellers.

The second typology of installations is associated with proximity places of marginalized neighborhoods where dwellers live in informal settlements without basic infrastructures and services (such as access to water, sewer, regular electricity). These residential areas host architectural installations that have the double value to serve the community, as they satisfy specific service needs, and to strengthen the relation between citizens and their aesthetic reflection before, during and after the process of work production. This category of installations can sometimes pass unnoticed to untrained eyes, as they are perfectly integrated into the public environment, presenting specific utilitarian features. The aesthetic aspect of these installations is sometimes negotiated with local communities, who participate to the process of artworks production and design decision. To this typology of installations belong: the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine in Bessengué, facilitating the circulation of people and the access to water; the Jardin Sonore and Face à l'eau in Bonamouti, the first one for offering to local communities a place where they can come to rest in a fresh place with trees and medical plants, while the second one is meant for protecting the nudity of fishermen from people’s eyes when they wash themselves at the end of the workday; the Pont Source in Ndogpassi III, facilitating the connection between blocks of the neighborhood; and finally, New Walk Ways in New Bell, protecting gutters from garbage and allowing the filtration of water.

The last category of public art installations does not have any functional feature or monumental aspect. They can be murals or small sculptures, positioned in passageways of very poor neighborhoods, aiming to provide an aesthetic value to the place where they have been installed. These installations catch the attention of people, especially inhabitants, who may pass by ten times per day. Sometimes they provide an explicit or implicit message, as in the case of the Mots Écrits de New Bell and the Corps d'eau (Asher Kash, 2010), and sometimes they renovate the façade of a building, as in the case of Triptyques Adventures, or of a school, as Oasis by Tracy Rose (2010). This category of public art strengthen the identity of the district.
and at the same time improve the landscape for inhabitants looking at them. These works allow people to contemplate art as something completely useless, yet it gratifies their sight and makes them feel a sense of inclusion and participation to a neighborhood with something special and different from the others.

The discourse of people around public art installation and their aesthetical relationship with the object strongly depends as well on the location. In traffic places the meeting and dialogue among people and artworks is difficult. The artist takes decisions concerning the work without in general engaging local communities. It is mainly for this reason that sometimes, as in the case of *Nouvelle Liberté* and *Colonne Pascal*, there is reticence from the population in appreciating the artwork. On the other hands artworks in proximity spaces are perfectly integrated, and often demanded by local communities, as they respond to functional needs. The reaction of dwellers towards public art located on passageways of their marginalized neighborhoods is particularly interesting. This category of public art also strengthens the identity of the district. People are in confrontation with public art which brings them to feel, somewhere in a very subtle or virtual way, a sense of being. It allows inhabitants to direct their glance to something completely useless, the artwork, and which is there only for their enjoyment and the gratification of their sight. The mere presence of these installations establishes a relationship between art and locals, who perceive a sense of inclusion and participation to a neighborhood with something different from the others.

**Public art and local communities**

One of the most important aspects of the art production process is the engagement of local communities. Sometimes artists come from the same neighborhood where they work, sometimes from North African or European countries. In the latter cases, the residence becomes extremely important for connecting cultures, for closing the artists into a specific context, and for opening the neighborhood to experiences from “outside”. Dwellers, and especially young people, do not easily leave their district. Adults instead are more used to move, yet their exits commonly depend only from work and family reasons. Inhabitants’ opportunities to meet and get in contact with new people, new experiences, and new cultures, are generally reduced. During residence circumstances, informal learning happens. The foreign artist is immersed in a reality which is precarious, that do not correspond to one’s usual and stable habits. Differently, locals are confronted with their (usually distorted) ideas of outside world, or better of the Western world. Establishing relationships among artists and locals contributes to reduce knowledge distance and perception of the others. It provides new possibilities of discussions, reflections and exchanges on different roots, traditions and needs, and a mutual enrichment in terms of learning, perceptions, and behaviors.

Artists’ residences enhance the locals’ sense of being considered and included into modernity that is represented and made tangible by contemporary public art. Moreover they
trigger curiosity, discussions, and different interpretation on the meaning of the artworks. Inhabitants wish to be included in the process of art production, participating to meetings, and visiting the sites during the production process. Sometimes they offer their house to artists as a place to restore or to develop the installations. Once the installation is created, people develop a sense of appropriation: they use it, they defend it from attacks or they share their knowledge and artworks’ interpretations with visitors and tourists.

At this regard, the case of the Nouvelle liberté by Francis Sumegné deserves particular attention. It is today considered the most important tourist attraction of Douala and the symbolic icon representing the city on postcards, TV programs, and television series. However, since its first installation in 1996, it has raised many controversies among inhabitants. The main local critics started a local media campaign against the aesthetics of this 12 meters tall sculpture produced with recycled material, often referred to as “rubbish”. A second provocative critic marked by media was the origin of the artist, as he was born in the West region of the country, historically in conflict with the autochthonous ethnic group of the city. This fact generated a sharp division in the public opinion between the native and non-native population of Douala. Finally, the gentrification process of the area directed by local authorities, who forced informal markets to move away, further increased negative reactions from the natives who started addressing the sculpture’s symbolic and magical meanings.

The Nouvelle Liberté was named, and is still commonly identified by locals, the Nju-Nju du Rond Point, which can be translated as the evil (or the monster) of the Rond Point. However nowadays, after more than fifteen years, the division of the public opinion on the acceptance of the installation is much more attenuated, at the point that locals have started defending it from attacks. As a matter of fact, in November 2010, a vandal, defined by the press as a madman, climbed on the sculpture trying to damage it by destroying its head. The reaction of inhabitants this time was to group around the Nouvelle Liberté and, without the intervention of local authorities, to take action to prevent vandalizing. Moreover people are addressing educational meanings to the sculpture. From an interview with a taxi driver, he explained that the Nju-Nju “wants to tell us that you can’t throw anything away, everything is helpful, such as old clothes, shoes, everything here can be used”.

In the best case, local communities have been stimulated to change their behavior in respect to the environment, for example by continuing or starting development project into the district without waiting for public or private financial supports (since they difficulty are granted). This is the case of the district of Ndogpassi III, where the traditional chief of the district, after getting in contact with doual’art in the frame of the FOURMI program,17

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16 Personal conversation with a taxman on the meaning of the Sumegné installation, while we were passing around it: “Ça dit qu’on ne peut rien jeter, tout est serviable c’est à dire les habits, les vieilles chaussures, tout ça peut servir”, 15 January 2013.
17 FOURMI is a European funded development program, co-ordination by doual’art from 1995 to 1998.
decided spontaneously to anticipate their interventions by working with young people of the neighborhood on a natural water source accessible to the whole community. He declares “I said, well, we can not stay like this, waiting for people to come from heaven to help us. Ourselves, we can begin to help ourselves first”. Another example is the case of Bonamouti, where locals, after being involved in the project Jardin Sonore by French artist Lucas Grandin, have completely stopped throwing litter the ground of the place that before the installation was a dumping land for garbage. The installation has become a place for young people who go there to meet with friends or for private date, considering the isolated position, the natural covering of plants and the romantic view on the river. As suggested by the artist, another important, and absolutely not obvious, aspect is the gratuity of this space and the absence of security services or guardians to maintain the installation in safety. The Jardin Sonore is self-managed by the community and after four years from its installation no problem has occurred in terms of theft or vandalism. Local communities protect the installation as they consider it important and beneficial for the district, since they use and enjoy it at the maximum. Nevertheless, the natural degradation of the wood has destroyed part of the Jardin Sonore and at the beginning of 2013 the artist and his local team were there to repair the installation.

Finally, another aspect of the society that has deeply changed during the last ten years is the social status of the artist. Before local communities considered an artist was as something of a beggar, but today their social position has undoubtedly established itself.

**Safety and securities issues**

“Sometimes there is a tendency to combat the effects and not the causes. The causes of safety and security problems are certainly related to youth unemployment, with an economic crisis that is so severe, and probably a problem of urban governance, as well as a micro level financial governance preventing direct investments to create jobs for many sectors.” (Jean Yango)

From the interviews with the heads of three CUD departments, it emerges that the lack of an urban plan and a continued significant demographic growth of the population are the major causes generating confusion and insecurity in the city. Douala is a dangerous city both in terms of criminality and in terms of accidents. Criminality, the so-called banditisme

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18 Personal conversation with Jean Marie Ndoutou the traditional chief of the district of Ndogpassi: “J’ai dit, bon, on ne peut pas rester comme cela, que les gens viennent du ciel pour venir nous aider. Nous mêmes nous pouvons commencer à nous aider d’abord”, 8 December 2012.
19 Personal conversation with Lucas Grandin, the artist of the installation Le Jardin Sonore, 15 January 2013.
20 Jean Yango (Direction des etudes de la planification des investissements et du developpement durable) 3 January 2013; Nya Mbenga (Directeur du Departement de lutte contre le desordre Urbaine) 14/01/2013; and Séna Mouele Marcelline (Direction de l'administration, des ressources humaines et de la logistique) 21 January 2013.
(“banditry”), mainly depends on diffused poverty and unemployment. Moreover, some districts, especially the commercial Akwa, host a high number of street children who are forced to fend for themselves by living on the road, sometimes through begging, instilling fear, and committing theft. Going out alone during the night is risky due to aggressions both on streets and on taxis. During the day, the fear of aggressions strongly decreases and it is possible to circulate around the inner neighborhoods. The insecurity depends on the high traffic along the streets and a total disrespect of any street code.

As described also by Nya Mbenga, the head of the Urban Disorder Department, in Douala a perennial conflict between the different types of mobility exists: trucks, cars, motorcycles, and pedestrians. In Douala there are not enough roads and parking lots. Also a municipal police, a system of fines, or of blocking and removal of illegally parked vehicles do no exist. While informal traders occupy the sidewalks, pedestrians have to walk on the road and the risk of accidents becomes higher. The anarchic occupation of space is another problem that the CUD is facing. The whole city is concerned, and it is only a matter of degree, since everywhere, even in the inner city, spaces are anarchically occupied. Moreover, there is a diffused social atony, a distension of the inhabitants against the commonwealth, which translates into vandalism of any kind against equipments.21

From a health’s safety perspective, Douala is a very dirty and unhealthy city, with few sanitarian structures. The majority of districts do not have sewers. People are used to throw everything on the street, gutters, and watercourses, as there are only few bins for collecting garbage and they are located exclusively on the main asphalt roads. The drains around neighborhoods are practically open dumps. The aqueducts are contaminated and water must always be filtrated before drinking. Typhus fever, malaria, and staphylococcal abscess are among the most diffused diseases identified during the fieldwork. Hospitals are fee structures with few medical equipment, and elevated costs in terms of visits and drugs. For this reason, the diffusion of the informal market of drugs and domestic clinics is sizeable as they are the most common and low-cost first aid demanded by and offered to the population.

Measures taken by the government to contrast safety and security problems
In order to contrast the critical safety and security situation in Douala, in 1996 the Government of Cameroon has signed and approved two important programs:

1. The UNDP international program “Villes plus Sûres” (“More secure cities”) with a related strategic plan against urban delinquency of Douala,22 disseminated in December 2007;

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21 Personal conversation with Jean Yango, director of the urbanization department of the municipality of Douala (Direction des études de la planification des investissements et du développement durable), 3 January 2013.
22 Plan d’action stratégique de la lutte contre la delinquence urbaine à Douala edited by the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), the United Nation Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and the Cameroonian Ministry of Urban Development and Human Settlement in conjunction with the Urban Community of Douala.
2. The “Contract de Ville” (“city contract”) with the CUD aiming to take urgent measures for: a) upgrading urban infrastructures (investment program), b) preserving their integrity (maintenance program), and c) reinforcing the capacity building of the CUD institutions (management program).

In January 2011, the investment program has been approved for three years. The CUD released a document, le Nouvel Ordre Urbain (“New Urban Order”), for the division of responsibilities between CUD and the six districts of the city in working for the urban order of Douala. Districts’ mayors are in charge to take measures against disorders related to: the insalubrious issues, the anarchical occupation of public spaces (sidewalks, roadways, parks or public sites), the deterioration of infrastructure and public facilities, the unexpected change in the destination uses of building, the traffic, and advertising. Inhabitants, on their side, are invited to participate to the surveillance of public facilities that are often vandalized without any reaction. Among the most common actions of vandalism are thefts of cables, lamps, and electrical poles leading to darkness, and consequently insecurity in the streets. Similarly, warning signs are stolen in order to be transformed into a variety of objects. The absence of street signage generates confusion in the circulation of vehicles and increases accidents.

The lack of funds and decision power of the local authorities of Douala prevents the development of concrete urban actions on a large scale. According to Yean Yango, the director of the investment planning and sustainable development department, a project for the remediation of storm-water should start during the fiscal year of 2013: nowadays the case of household waste collection has improved in respect to previous years. However, it has not been possible to verify the exact pathway of the waste collection system, as the company in charge (HYSACAM) has refused to collaborate in providing information. Finally, as suggested by Yango and verified during the fieldwork, some public efforts have been done in popular neighborhoods for the improvement of road and lighting system.

Citizens reactions towards safety and security problems
Concerning criminality, still today, public efforts and police interventions for preventing, fighting and punishing crimes and aggressions are almost inexistent. The spread corruption among the police allows bandits to get their freedom easily, under the payment of fees. This system fosters the development of the “popular justice”. The popular justice concerns the reaction of citizens once they stop an aggressor (the so-called “bandit”). In these cases there is no way for the bandit to be saved, they are automatically killed and often burned directly on the place where they have been stopped.

Without institutional supports or impediments some neighborhoods (where social cohesion is strong) have been able to mobilize local initiatives and resources in order to provide essential urban services. In some of them, self-defense groups have been organized under the direction of the local chief and the economical participation of the whole community,
in order to guarantee regular security patrols during the night. In these cases, the traditional chief brings together local young, identifies them through documents, and sometimes provides them with some equipment, like sticks, knives, and various weapons. However, according to part of the community, these groups in general last no more than one year, as the work of young people is not always satisfactory, or sometimes they are even accused of having become criminals. Industry and commercial owners instead have adopted private measures of protection to fight robberies, such as security guards, surveillance cameras, and selling through fences from 19h. A huge effort to fight young criminality is also done by no profit and charity organizations (ONG) working on the territory in order to receive and take care of street children and, when possible, to reintegrate them into families.

Since 1991, with the enactment of the law liberalizing the right of association (no. 90-053), 63% of citizens with older than sixteen years belong to an association, or “reunion” (Seraphine 2000). People participating to these reunions, generally young people with families, discuss actions for the district improvement and its regular maintenance, such as cleanliness, covering of gutters, adjusting broken and dangerous streets, etc. After discussing problems, members of the association make a collection, the so-called *tontines*, for putting in practice the planned activities. Sometimes, these associations become real “development community” acquiring the possibility to collaborate with the CUD or international funding agencies for the development of basic services in the district. But in the majority of cases those reunions remain a leisure opportunity to meet friends, neighbors or colleagues sharing the same interests.

**Education and access to communication technologies**

Safety and security problems indirectly depend on education. At present, Cameroon does not fulfill the Millennium Development Goal of providing universal access to grade 1, and does not achieve a 95% completion rate in primary education. The main causes can be traced back to the financial crisis of the late 1980s that brought the Government of Cameroon to reduce public expenses, to an extent that public schools suffered of a deficit of 30’000 teachers with classroom hosting up to 200 students (Ngonga 2010). The limits of education mainly depend on poor infrastructures and on limited access to contents, human and social resources fostering knowledge development.

First of all, a distinction should be done between the role played by public and private educational institutions. According to the comparative analysis of Ngonga (2010) on key performance indicators for education, students’ performances are higher in private schools. He estimates that 25% of parents, despite the high cost of schooling, make efforts to guide their children in private institutions where classroom host a maximum of 70 students (*ibidem*). Concerning public schools, overcrowded classroom generated problems related to teaching
and learning, and students often need to follow private repetitions for being promoted to the following school year. Indeed, only 60% of students complete the 6 years of primary education without repetition, while the dropout rate surpass 10% of enrollments during the first years of study (ibidem).

Educational problems are not only related to the institutional system. One of the major issues is also the difficult access to infrastructure and content resources, such as libraries and printed books. As declared by two doctoral students in international right, Daniel Doualla and Simon de Gaulle, “Education in Cameroon is a personal affair”, as students should find their own ways to pursue studies, both in terms of economical efforts and in accessing bibliography. The Government of Cameroon does not provide any support to foster education, including scholarship or academic documentation. For the preparation of university exams students count on Open Educational Resources found on Internet (especially on persee.org) and on ancient students’ thesis available at university library. Sometimes professors suggest a bibliography and provide handouts.23

Books are expensive goods due to their rarity. In Douala bookshops specialized on academic publications are not present, and the three bookstores of the city provide manuals for primary and secondary schools, and for entertainment. The Cameroonian publications are generally published in limited editions due to the high costs of production (Pape-Thoma 2010). Actually a public library does not even exist. The biggest library of Douala belongs to the French Institute of Cameroon with a collection of 12’000 documents (including videotapes, CDs, DVDs, films), and 1’770 active members (IFC-Douala, 2011), corresponding to the 0.06% of the population. Other private institutions host specialized libraries: the documentation center of the Port Autonome de Douala, focusing on maritime practices and rights, and the open consultation library of Doual’art providing books, journals and videotapes specialized in arts and urban studies fields.

Access to knowledge and documentation also concern digital information and on-line contents. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Culture of Cameroon does not have a website. On the other hand, despite having set and labeled numerous topics and subtopics for the website of the Urban Community of Douala (http://douala-city.org/fr/?e1=84&kid=1&bnid=84), most of them turn out to be completely empty (including the whole categories of education, environment, culture, and tourism). Problems related to this lack of information are based on a critical access to printed material, not easily stored in archives whose access is often

23 Personal conversation with Simon de Gaulle, doctoral student in Law, University of Douala, 14 December 2012 and Daniel Doualla, doctoral student in international right, University of Douala, 3 January 2013.
denied to personnel in charge of the website. There is no precise work of documentation and this generates a slow bureaucracy where information remains on paperwork most of the time. The missing communication between different offices and the lack of specialized human resources seem to be the biggest causes generating slowness in the production of digital documents. In addition, concerning culture, safety and security, the government seems to have no interest in cataloguing and storing information.

An important step in granting access to knowledge was realized by Orange, the second mobile service provider for subscription in Cameroon (with a 45% of market sharing). Since the beginning of 2012 they are offering free Internet access to Wikipedia through mobile phones as well as low cost Internet solutions to access social networks. Concerning access to information and communication technologies, Internet and computers are still expensive goods, while mobile phones are the most diffused technologies of Cameroon, with a penetration growth of the 11.6% in less than one year, from 2011 to September 2012.

People having access to electricity and computers at home are used to accessing the Internet through GSM modem that allows them to subscribe to an Internet provider and to pay only the actual usage. One day of mobile Internet connection, instead, corresponds to one week of people’s average cost in mobile traffic expenses (i.e. 1’000.– CFA). Internet fairs are paid by recharging the SIM card of a modem or a smartphone. Private access to the Internet is an increasing practice, in particular among university students and scholars. However the most widespread popular alternative is to access to the numerous telecenters located around the city, which are generally the cheapest solution. The biggest problem in the use of Internet is the quality of the service, due to the extreme slowness of connection, with a bandwidth reaching maximum 512 Kb. Cameroon Telecommunication (CAMTEL) is the state-owned company providing fiber optic all around Cameroon. Since 2006, it has shared the market with the two main mobile providers: MTN and Orange, opening the access to mobile Internet solutions.

Finally, it can be predicted that mobile Internet usage will overcome the computer Internet access, considering the ascending curve of mobile penetration in Cameroon (65% in 2012) against the still limited computers penetration in Cameroonian households (7.4% in 2011) (ITU).

Quantitative data collection

The case of crowdsourcing – from unbounded to bounded experience
Considering the mobile diffusion and integration of mobile phones in Cameroon, prior to
fieldwork, plans were made in order to integrate the usage of mobile devices in Douala as a methodology for crowdsourcing information on art and security issues. In addition, the Ushahidi platform was considered as a support for information collection and visualization on interactive maps. Unfortunately these strategies were not successful, probably due to weaknesses in the planned methodology and to limited access to resources and ICT in Douala.

**Crowdsourcing and Ushahidi**

Crowdsourcing is the process of outsourcing tasks to undefined groups of people who participate on a voluntary basis to the production of information demanded by individuals, no profit organizations or institutions. The motivations behind the participation of users to crowdsourcing activities can vary depending on the situation, including economic reasons, social recognition, and self-esteem needs. Based on the audience involved, and on the way the task is communicated, crowdsourcing can be classified in two different typologies:

- Unbounded crowdsourcing, when the task is addressed to a general public, such as the whole population of a city, reached through a flexible open call, communicated through different media (such as radio, television, journals, billboards);
- Bounded crowdsourcing, when the task is addressed to a selected group of people specifically trained on the modalities of participation, and they can be remunerated for their contributions.

Combined with the crowdsourcing activity, the most suitable tool for managing information seemed to be the Ushahidi open source platform, already used to track violence in developing countries. The main advantages of Ushahidi are that:

- It can be synchronized with FrontlineSMS platform, which allows text messages to be transferred from a simple mobile phone to a computer without the need of Internet connection. However, the Internet is needed to link information from FrontlineSMS to Ushahidi;
- It allows the classification of information for topics;
- It allows the visualization of information on interactive maps. However, information received from simple text messages need to contain geographical indications, otherwise they cannot be geolocalized on maps. On the other hand by downloading the Ushahidi mobile app on a smartphone, users can produce reports that are automatically geolocalized through the Global Position System (GPS), and submit them to the on-line Ushahidi crowdsourced map.

**Unbounded crowdsourcing strategy**

Before leaving for fieldwork, an Ushahidi crowdsourced map for the Mobile A2K project (https://mobilea2k.crowdmap.com/) was created; the synchronization with FrontlineSMS
was tested; and an unbounded crowdsourcing strategy was planned. The specific goal of this strategy was to identify security issues around public art installations. A set of ten closed questions was prepared to demand citizens of Douala to rate their perceptions on public art installation in relation to safety and security indicators. The survey should be conducted through mobile phones, while billboards and leaflets were designed to communicate the campaign and the first question of the survey. Billboards would be placed close to public art installations. In order to motivate citizens’ participation, the messages sent as an answer to the survey should be for free, and a prize contest would have stimulated the audience by putting up for grabs a prize at the end of the survey. Once citizens would reply to the first question, their numbers would have automatically been registered by the system of FrontlineSMS. At the same time FrontlineSMS was planned to automatically respond to the senders with a message of thanks, inviting them to take some minutes to finish the survey in order to participate to the extraction of the final award. For each message received, the system was planned to resend the following questions.

Once arrived in Douala, this strategy of unbounded crowdsourcing could not been completed. The main reason concerns the economic barriers found by the team while looking for a green number allowing citizens to send text messages for free. Orange mobile company, already partner of doual’art for other projects, would have supported the crowdsourcing campaign by offering a smartphone as a final award. However, the free number service was not managed directly from them, but from a private company (LMT Group Axess S.A.). After consulting them, it emerged that the cost of the service was absolutely inaccessible for research funds, reaching 3'000.– € for a limit of 500 sent and received messages, corresponding to a sample of 50 persons.

This strategy has therefore been discarded. However, the process of collecting data has been substituted with an experimental bounded crowdsourcing strategy and 200 questionnaires.

**Bounded crowdsourcing strategy**

The new crowdsourcing strategy was reduced in terms of area circumscription and participants. This time the goals of crowdsourcing were to understand security issues of Bessengue, a specific neighborhood selected as a case study, and to compare the area near public art installations in respect to the other blocks. First of all, it was decided to focus the investigation on Bessengue due to its central position, small dimension (it is divided in only five blocks), and the presence of two public art installations in the block 1: the Passerelle of Bessengue and the Borne-Fontaine. Secondly, a group of 5 young people, each one of them living in a different block, was selected and trained to conduct the crowdsourcing activity. A local coordinator was identified to assist the work of participants to the crowdsourcing process and to assess the validity of information provided. Participants were asked to send
a text message each time that a problem of safety and security occurred in their block, indicating:

— Their name or the block of reference;
— Schedule of the fact;
— The fact or event weakening the security of the neighborhood;
— Responsible of the fact or people involved.

This strategy lasted from 17 December to 20 January. At the beginning and the middle of this period, a recharge of 1'000.– francs CFA was accredited on the mobile phone of each participant. At the end of the activity instead, active participants received a reward corresponding to 5'000.– francs CFA (in some cases of mobile traffic). In more than one month, 18 messages were received from three participants living in the block one, two, and three. As suggested by the crowdsourcing coordinator, probably the lack of messages from the block four and five depends from the inactivity of participants rather than from the lack of casualties. However, even if these messages are not enough to generalize information, they allow at least the understanding of the most widespread violence cases and of the most dangerous block. From the block with public art installations (block 1) three messages were received concerning a serious motorcycle accident, an attempted bag snatching, and a fight between two young people due to a disagreement on a football match. The block 2 instead seems to be the most dangerous: eleven messages were received reporting thefts of money and mobile phones, as well as home burglary, armed quarrels, and assaults with knives, fights and death threats, domestic violence against women, and young bullyism. Finally, in the block 3 all reports are all related to fights.

These data, despite offering a picture of security issues in Bessengue, do not allow to trace a meaningful comparison on the security situation near public art installation with respect to the whole neighborhood. However, it seems that violence is reduced in block 1 rather than in the adjacent blocks, and that the most problematic issues concern thefts and fights.

**The Ushahidi failure**

As anticipated, Ushahidi (or MobileA2K crowdsourced map) needs to be synchronized with FrontlineSMS which is the off-line platform where text messages firstly converge, thanks to a cable connected to the mobile phone (or GSM modem) with the SIM card corresponding to the number that people dialed in order to send information. The computer, with the software FrontlineSMS installed and linked to the mobile phone, works as tech hub for receiving and sending text messages, and it needs to be connected to the Internet in order to transfer information to the Ushahidi platform.

Despite complying all the requirements (synchronization of FrontlineSMS with MobileA2K crowdsourced map, the tech-hub, and the presence of an Internet connection), it
was not possible to transfer text messages from FrontlineSMS to Ushahidi platform, and consequently to classify and visualize information on interactive maps.

A parallel experiment was done by downloading the mobile application from the MobileA2K crowdsourced map, in order to test the 3G Internet capacity for uploading information directly on the Ushahidi platform. The experiment consisted in using the mobile app to create reports of public art installations in Douala. Twenty reports were filled in with the name of the public artwork, the author, and a picture of it, as well as geo-referenced automatic information. On twenty reports, only three of them have been transferred to the MobileA2K crowdsourced map.

Both experiments aiming to transfer information (text messages or reports) to the Ushahidi platform were not successful. The main cause can be addressed to the quality of the Internet connection that is so slow and irregular enough to prevent the functioning of Ushahidi in Douala.

**Survey**

In order to complement the few data collected through crowdsourcing, a questionnaire was prepared in Douala with the aim to evaluate the impact of public art installations on urban safety and security as well as to understand people usual methods of communication and relationships within and outside their neighborhood. The survey was conducted by four local young people trained on the explicit meaning of questions. This methodology of outsourcing the survey was particularly useful to validate all the questions during the training and to acquire the entire corpus of fullfilled questionnaires and meaningful results.

**Case studies**

Two neighborhoods of the district of New Bell and the block 1 of Bessengue have been selected as case studies to conduct the survey. This selection depends on the presence of three different typologies of public artworks that can be found in Douala:

— Architectural installations located in proximity places: the Passerelle and the Borne-Fon-taine in Bessengue;
— Monumental installations located in traffic places: the Colonne Pascal at the Shell New Bell crossroad;
— Mural installations located in passageways: the Mots Écrits de New Bell, scattered in the neighborhood of New Bell Ngangué.

Fifty-one close and open questions were submitted to 100 people of Bessengue, 50 of New Bell Ngangué, and 50 around the crossroad Shell New Bell.
The sample
Questionnaires were addressed only to inhabitants or workers of New Bell and Bessengue, in order to access information from people facing and experiencing the reality of those places every single day. The sample is composed mainly by young people (64% are male, 36% female) aged from 18 to 35 years old (73%), who usually leave the neighborhood every day (72%) to work (43%), to meet friends (22%), to go to the market (20.5%) or, especially those living in Bessengue, to go to school (19.5%), as there are no educational institutions.

Usage of mobile phones
People’s usage of mobile phone was also taken into consideration in order to better understand and explore the mobile trend in Douala, in terms of people’s interests and spending power in communication technologies. It emerges that 94% of interviewees owns a mobile phone, which is often a smartphone (60%). Beside traditional functions like calling and texting, people use mobile phone mainly for leisure activities, like storing music (46%), listening to the radio (41%), and taking photos (42%), while 16.5% of them accesses the Internet via mobile, despite the high costs of the mobile connection fee. 43% of people declares to spend less than 1’000.– francs CFA (1.87 CHF) per week in traffic air, corresponding to one-day fee of Internet connection. Anyways, the majority of them is composed by people with a higher purchasing power, ranging from 1’000.– and 2’500.– (4.65 CHF) in the 31% of cases, from 2’500.– and 5’000.– (9.28 CHF) for the 16% and more than 5’000.– for the remaining 9.5%.

Public art knowledge and perception
After the acquisition of demographic and communication data, the questionnaire focuses on people’s knowledge and perceptions of public art installations.

Regarding the identification of public art installations, it emerges that there is a substantial difference between Bessengue and New Bell. In Bessengue, where public art has mainly utilitarian features, the majority of interviewees (88%) do not recognize at a first glance the installation as an artwork. The remaining 12% is mainly composed of students or persons living and working next to the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine. They identify doual’art or the Development Committee of Bessengue-Akwa (CDBA) as the authors of the installation, rather than the artists.

On the other hand, in New Bell, where monumental or mural installations are placed, people are generally aware (71%) about their aesthetical value, recognizing those installations as pieces of art. Anyways, few of them really know the name of the artwork as they are used to identify them based on their visual representation, or the location where they have been introduced. In Shell New Bell, for example, the Colonne Pascal is called the “Poteau des assiettes” (“Pole of pots”), sometimes with a negative nuance, and 22% of people attributes the work to the Municipality of Douala or to the Chinese community (except for two per-
sons). The remaining 78% does not know the name of the author. In Ngangué, instead, the Mots Ecrits de New Bell are always identified with the name of the place or the landmark where they have been installed (such as the school CBC Babylon, the white house laundry, next to the “Hotel La côté”). In New Bell Ngangué more than half of the interviewees (52%) correctly attributes the artworks to Hervé Yamguen, as he lives in the same neighborhood.

Consequently, the meaning addressed to public art installations completely change depending on the location and the typology of installations.

In Bessengue, there are three main words coming out from the question of meaning: aid, development and utility – in accessing water and facilitating the circulation of people and vehicles. There are some interesting declarations revealing that people’s feelings of social exclusion are strongly decreased. The local communities of Bessengue explicitly affirm that the Passerelle and the Borne-fontaine are the demonstration that someone has finally noticed (and improved) their previously austere situation. 98% of interviewees, indeed, are proud of those installations, also because now they can “be protected from the cholera” and “live in a more pleasant, colored environment”. Only two persons, talking about the Passerelle, have indicated that the handrails mean the peaceful collaboration between the Bamoun (marginalized ethnicity of West Cameroon, living in the neighborhood) and the Douala (the autochthone ethnicity).

In New Bell Ngangué, answers given by inhabitants demonstrate that public art is widely perceived, interrogated, and understood in different ways, and at the same time totally (100%) accepted, appreciated, and integrated into the neighborhood. Some of the interviewees attribute to the Mots Ecrits de New Bell the power to promote beauty in the area (requalification, 28%) by bringing “modernity” and “progress” into the neighborhood and fostering its “renaissance”, “openness”, and “renovation” of public spaces (22%). Others instead recognize to the Mots Ecrits de New Bell an educative role for youth in terms of culture, safety, and security (12%) by depicting the stark reality of the present, and the common thoughts of inhabitants (12%). Other interesting people’s interpretations define the installations as gestures of the artist’s solidarity, sensibility, and desire to differentiate New Bell from all others districts of Douala (12%).

24 “Je sens que le quartier n’est pas complètement abandonné”; “On a pensé à nous, les oubliés de Douala”; “On pense à nous, le développement nous concerne aussi”; “Ça démontre qu’il y a de gens qui pensent au quartier”.
25 “La fontaine nous met au répare du choléra”; “Rendre le quartier plus agréable”.
26 Concerning this issue, I want to quote some of the anonymous answers addressing to public art installation positive meanings, including:

1. Sense of beauty: “It makes the neighbourhood shine” (“Çelà fait briller le quartier!”); “It is the originality of a district considered as wild!” (“C’est l’originalité d’un quartier jugé sauvage!”); “C’est l’esthétique au service de la société”.

2. Modernity: “For our neighbourhood, this means opening to modernity, it is a rebirth!” (“C’est l’ouverture de notre quartier à la modernité, c’est une renaissance!”).
Nevertheless in Shell New Bell almost a third of interviewees (28%) is not able to accord a particular meaning to the Colonne Pascal. This is probably because there is a strong distinction between those who appreciate the installation (56%) and those who denied its artistic value (36%), while the remaining part is not able to come to a judgment. People having a positive attitude toward the installation generally recognize to it a sense of requalification of the public space (20%), of modernity (12%), and in few cases a tribute to the African woman (4%). At the same time those who do not appreciate the Colonne Pascale interpret the installation as an evidence of the problems related to hunger issues concerning the district (10%), or as totally useless (8%). Others, instead, consider the installation as unrespectable of the history of the place related to the independence days (6%).

Beside personal interpretations, offering a rich repertory of people’s opinions and perceptions in terms of contemporary public art, it was asked to interviewees to identify, outside their neighborhood, other installations in order to evaluate their general sensibility on public art and to understand which artworks are the most known. 90.7% of people identifies the Nouvelle Liberté by Joseph Francis Sumegné as “The sculpture at Rond point Deido”. Then, in New Bell people have indicated: the “lost soldier” at the Youpwé roundabout (43.7%), the General Leclerc in Bonanjo (28.4 %), and the municipal shower of Akwa (15.2%). In Bessengue 24.7% of respondents has quoted Bonanjo as the main center of public art installations, including the statue of the “unknown soldier”, the general Leclerc, and the Palace of the King Manga Bell. 21% detects public sculptures and school wall paintings located in the adjacent neighborhood. The fact that most of the people attention falls on sculptures or monuments related to “security” figures, such as soldiers and lions, could be the subject of further analysis.

Impact of public art on security
With the exception of Shell New Bell, where one third of people does not like the Colonne Pascal and is not proud of its presence, in New Bell Ngangué and Bessengue (92,9%) people are honored to host public art installations, affirming that after their introduction the reputation of the neighborhood has strongly improved (94%), and artists have been important vectors to renovate and convey this image to the city (79%). The 98% of interviewees perceive the areas where public art installation are installed as safe landmarks of the district, affirming also that places have become decisively cleaner (93%), the criminality around there has finally decreased.

3. Education: “It is the desire of the youth for awareness” (“C’est le désir de conscientisation des jeunes”).
4. The reality: “It’s another vision of our realities in terms of a shout of alarm” (“Une autre vision de nos réalités en terme de cris d’alarme”).
5. Other: “For me, this is the solidarity, as if an artist wants to show his art on a public washer, this for me is volunteering, it’s a predisposition of mind”; “Pour moi cela représente la différence, comme je ne vois pas cela par tout!”. 
diminished (85.5%) and the flux of tourists has generally increased (60%).

In Shell New Bell and New Bell Ngangué the presence of tourists is also quite regular (between three and five tourists per month), and 75% of the population of New Bell and Bessengué believes that tourists are rather in security while they go there and spend their time. 78% of interviewees has never been robbed or aggressed. Among the remaining 22%, half of them (52%) were victim of thefts of mobile phones or money (especially in Ngangué); 36% of petty thefts of personal things, such as cloths, shoes, house wares, (especially in Bessengué); 14% of armed robbery, and 7% of physical aggressions. Anyways, only three persons have reported the fact to the police.

People were also asked if they would feel safe in their neighborhood, and if there were moments during the day when they would feel more exposed to danger. In New Bell Ngangué, practically all interviewees (98%) declare to be completely in security, and half of them states also that there are no problem to circulate even during the night (“We are born here, this is our district!”). However, there is also a 44% claiming that after midnight people should pay more attention. This is because Ngangué is the most populated, and lively until late, neighborhood of New Bell. In Shell New Bell instead the percentage of people feeling completely in security (58%) is lower in respect to the adjacent Ngangué, depending on the fact that this area is mostly crowed during the day, while at night it is almost empty. This is shown by the fact that 64% of the interviewees consider dangerous to circulate alone during the night or at the first light of the morning (especially those who have markets), and 10% of them does not feel in security at all.

In Bessengué results related to perceptions of security are similar to those of Shell New Bell: 53% of people declare to be completely in security, 44% “enough” in security, and only 3% is not in security at all, especially from midnight to 4 AM.

**Impact of public art on life style**
The presence of public art installations has also provoked social changes in the life style of inhabitants. The places where art has been introduced have become meeting spaces (92%) for young (93%) and adults (61.3%).

In Bessengué people are used to meet friends in the place between the Borne-Fontaine and the Passerelle, to spend their time by taking a breath of air (41%), while chatting (82%) about football, love, employment, life issues, generally in front of a cup of coffee or a beer. The alcohol consumption (of beer or palm wine) seems to be one of the major activities according to the opinion of 64% of interviewees. But it is not the only one. They also explain how the place has become also a space for dating and amorous encounters (12%) where people come together to eat a beignet or to have dinner (24%). It has become a meeting space for children to play football after a school day (10%); a space for woman to source water at low prices, to
do shopping, to charge their mobile phones, to make a call at the call box, or to go to the hairdresser. Consequently the impact of the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine is also evident from the increased number of formal and informal businesses sprouting around the place in the last few years. According to 91% of people, new business activities include: bars and coffee shops (58%), hair salons (52%), tailoring shops (9%), boutiques (12%), call boxes (75%), restaurants and bakery vendors (41%), counter sales of fruits and vegetables (64%), and informal pharmacies (14%).

Similarly, next to the installations of Shell New Bell and Ngangué people generally spend their spare time by meeting friends (38%) or partners (28%) with whom they chat (48%), eat (36%) or drink (58%) something. Adults also go there to do shopping (22%), or, in the congested roundabout of Shell New Bell, to take motorbike taxi. Around this latter place, according to interviewees, the commercial activities most developed in the last years are: call boxes, informal commerce made of counter sellers of fruits, vegetables, fritters, peanuts, fish, and meat; and formal businesses like boutiques, bakeries and bars. Also in Ngangué people notice similar business activities: 70% indicate call boxes, 60% street restaurants and bakeries, 48% informal markets of fresh food, cigarettes and hardware, and 30% bars.

Security requests for improvement
At the end of the questionnaires people were asked if they would have some suggestions to improve the lack of security of their district.

In Shell New Bell a third of interviewees (34%) suggests to set a police office. Until now there is a general dissatisfaction on the work and role of the police. People declare that patrols should be more frequent, faster, and accessible everywhere. The police’s interventions call through the phone number 117 should be also more efficient, as agents should stop asking if delinquents are armed or not. In Shell New Bell, from the same environment of police, there is the request for self-defense. This is a responsibility of the local traditional chief who should better organize security groups. This means that the chief should identify and select security group members, define their tasks, provide them with tools and facilities to defend the area, and supervise their work. This process is fundamental since members of the security groups are frequently those who firstly commit crimes. Other important security measures demanded by local communities are: the improvement of the lightening and the electricity system of the neighborhood (12%), the creation of new job opportunities (4%), the improvement of services (4%), such as cleaning out the gutters, providing public bins, and paving the roads.

In New Bell Ngangué, instead, 80% of the population asks for self-defense group to fill security vacuum. In this case only 12% believes that a police office could be useful, followed by a 10% asking for public lighting capillarity. Similar to Ngangué, also in Bessengue only a small percentage of the population (13%) asks
for a new police office, as in general people thinks that self-defense groups (54%) and the lighting system (33%) would allow to solve the majority of problems related to security and aggressions. It is interesting to highlight that in Bessengue 20% of respondents declares that the education and sensitization of young people would be an important stimulus for increasing civil cohabitation and diminishing aggression. At the same time new job opportunities are fundamental for 17%, since in the majority of cases unemployed young people commit the crimes.

**Conclusion**

This report approached the issues of public art an urban safety in the city of Douala. Based on finding from a quantitative and a qualitative study, it describes the cultural and safety urban context as well as the emerging impact of public art on safety and security. Concerning the cultural context, doual’art and the Kapsiki Circle are the main producers of public art in Douala. The Kapsiki Circle is mainly focused on the organization of cultural events and activities in the district of New Bell, while doual’art concentrates its efforts both on permanent and ephemeral art installations, presented and promoted during the SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala. The SUD is a three-year urban art festival organized by doual’art, conceived as an event and a process in itself, where artists are invited for residences to produce public art installations. Artworks presented in this report mainly concern permanent installations produced since 1991, which, depending on the location where they have been installed, can be classified in three typologies:

1. Monumental installations: large scale sculptures generally positioned in traffic places;
2. Architectural installations or proximity artworks, with very specific functions located in marginalized neighborhoods;
3. Murals and small scale sculptures, positioned in passageways of poor neighborhoods.

Depending on the typology of installation, public art impacts the society in different ways. Monumental installations are not always accepted by the community. This may depend both on their location and on the process of art production. As an example, traffic places do not easily allow to open a dialogue with local communities, yet they receive rather significant attention both from media and local authorities. During the art production process, the negotiation happens between the funding agency (doual’art) and the artist, rather than with the typical involvement of local community. These are the cases in which vandalism may happen, and the artwork is more likely to generate local disputes. At the same time these installations foster local authorities to take public measures in order to improve the security of the area, such as lighting of the squares, maintaining of the roads, organizing the waste collection system, and in some cases forcing evictions of informal traders.
The impact of proximity artworks is completely different. In these cases, public art is generally the result of artist-in-residence projects (as defined by Goldstein 2005) in very poor and marginalized neighborhoods. Here the engagement of locals is of main significance for the conceptualization, definition and implementation of artwork, before, during and after the art production process. Proximity artworks, indeed, generally correspond to architectural installations answering to specific functional needs of the society; they are always welcomed and even demanded by locals, and their impact can be assessed more on the community level rather than on that of local authorities. In particular, they trigger social cohesion of inhabitants and increase their civic responsibility toward the living environment, such as the creation of development committee for the maintenance of the neighborhoods, the organization of cleaning activities by the community, and the emergence of new meeting places for youth. It can be argued that this kind of installations also indirectly contribute to support the economic development of the neighborhoods, considering the numerous (formal and informal) commercial activities that have settled around public art installations.

The impact of passageways artworks is the most subtle and integrated into the inhabitants’ lifestyle. It is not only related to the process of production nor to the functionality of artworks, yet it is perceived as an educational and aesthetical vision of the neighborhoods. Public art has an impact on security in terms of reputation of the neighborhood leading to an increased number of tourists and commercial activities. Moreover, inhabitants’ attitudes toward art installations are activating their own reactions in terms of imitation and improvement of the living spaces surrounding art. However, an impact on public and media attention is still limited.

To conclude, it seems that public art is fostering positive impacts on the community of Douala in terms of urban safety and security. However, more research and time need to be invested on specific case studies.
References


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2.1.3 Case study report: Bessengue

Bessengue is one of the neighborhoods selected as a case study to investigate the impact that proximity artworks have had on safety and security. The choice of Bessengue depends on its central position in Douala, and on the fact that a number of art projects have been realized there since 2000, introducing the community to participation to workshops and artistic experiences.

During the months of December 2012 and January 2013, data were collected through ethnographic observations, crowdsourcing, interviews, and questionnaires. Visits to Bessengue were organized every two days and they produced notes and photographic documentation. A crowdsourcing pilot activity was organized, asking to five young people of the Bessengue – each one of them living in a different block of the neighborhood – to send a message each time a problem of safety and security occurred from the December 17th to January 20th. Semi-structured interviews were addressed to Marilyn Douala Manga Bell and Didier Schaub, president and director of doual'art, the public art funding agency; Ndoumbe Ebenezer, president of the Communauté Développement Bessengue-Akwa (CDBA); Ginette Daleu, visual artist who did several projects in Bessengue in 2002 and 2003; Simon de Gaulle, inhabitant and tourist guide of Bessengue; Thomas, the hair stylist working on the square between the two proximity artworks selected as case studies: La Passerelle and La Borne-Fontaine; and the Fontanier, taking care of the functioning and maintenance of the Borne-Fontaine.

Data were also gathered through 100 questionnaires filled in the area between the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine. The questionnaire presented a total of 51 closed and open questions aiming to delineate: interviewees’ profile; mobile phone usage and communication; knowledge and perception of public art; impact of public art on security and life style; security requests for improvement.

This report, after providing background information on the urbanization process of Bessengue and its safety and cultural context, examines results emerged from the observations, interviews, and questionnaires.

Background
Bessengue is a small popular neighborhood located between Akwa, the main commercial center of Douala, and Deido, an autochthon residential area of the city. It is divided into five administrative blocks, headed by the traditional chief Maurice Eyango Mandengue. Observing the district from a higher position, it looks like an overcrowded stretch of informal settlements, with metal sheet roofs and narrow streets where thin streams of water run.

Despite the central position of Bessengue in Douala, the area remains enclosed in a wedged valley between two watercourses: the Mbopi and Nguété rivers. On the perpendicular sides of the area, two main streets limit Bessengue: the Boulevard de la Republique and the Bou-
levar de l’Unité. This position is particularly disadvantaged during rain seasons, as the neighborhood suffers of uncontrolled floods of the bordering watercourses, and it remains obstructed by its borders.

Two main ethnic groups populate Bessengue: the Bamoun, emigrated from the Western region of Cameroun, and the autochthon Duala. Until now, Bamoun and Duala are struggling to live peacefully, due to historical reasons related to the urbanisation process of the area.

**Urbanization of Bessengue**

The urbanization of the Bessengue valley has been rapid and uncontrolled. Before the independence, the whole area was completely uninhabited for its uncomfortable location on a gravel slope next to the Mbopi River. At the same time the river was an important provision-
al resource from which the Duala, settled on the fresher hill over the valley, benefitted from fishing. During the first migration flux affecting the city in the early 1960s, a population coming from the northwest of Cameroun, the Bamoun, occupied the valley in a sponta-
neous and anarchic way, polluting the river from which the Duala made profits. The rubbish thrown into the Mbopi improved the damages in an area that was already disadvantaged by regular floods. From the hill, it became impossible for the Duala to survive from fishing activities and they started moving down toward the valley to get closer to the city in search of new job opportunities.

The current disputes between the two ethnic groups still depend on the fact that the autoch-
thons accuse the Bamoun to have denigrated their lands. The Bamoun have been commonly marked by the stereotypes of being dirty and intrusive: first of all because they occupy and ravage lands making them unhealthy; secondly, because they are reputed to be workers and entrepreneur, taking welfare away from others. These stereotypes are strongly persisting, bequeathed from father to son, and today Bessengue has been derogatively appointed “Bamoun Town” as it also hosts the boss of the traditional authority of the Bamoun. The Mbopi, instead, has become a garbage dump, and it is even much smaller due to the numerous drainage of the riverbed in order to reduce floods and keep out solid waste.

Nevertheless, the rapid urbanization of Bessengue and its still growing population depend on the proximity of places of employment, as well as on the diffusion of modern informal markets providing employment opportunities. In Bessengue there are some of the major markets of the city, large commercial facilities, and equipment allowing newcomers to fit into the city.
Safety and security situation
The disadvantaged position of the neighborhood in a depression valley, and the spontaneous, provisional, and anarchic way in which houses have been built, have made Bessengue an unsafe and unsecure neighborhood. At the beginning of the 1990s, Bessengue did not grant any access to basic services, like potable and running water, electricity, sewers, and road system. The district was totally isolated from the city and it was connected with the main roads by two wobbly wooden planks crossing the rivers. In case of fire there was no chance to access the district to douse. Furthermore, this enclosure provided a safe hidden place for criminals and the district became a cove for bandits, not easily approachable by the police. Due to a lack of government protection of inhabitants, people made confidence on criminals, developing a code of silence. Two main bandits are remembered and sometimes estimated by the Bessengue society: Sosso, the gentleman thief, stealing only outside the district and distributing the loot among the population; and Sankara, who had the reputation to be the biggest and strongest man of all neighborhoods of Douala, who defended Bessengue by keeping foreign bandits away. From the point of view of people living outside Bessengue, in the year 2000, if you lived in Bessengue you were a bandit or a prostitute in the majority of cases. Nowadays, the situation is calmer, and security problems are mainly related to fights among inhabitants, rather than robberies and aggressions.

From the crowdsourcing activity it emerges that the second block of Bessengue, which borders with the one hosting public art installations is the most dangerous one. Eleven messages on a total of eighteen have reported thefts, burglary of homes, and aggressions. In the block one, instead, the lack of security seems depending on accidents with vehicles, pickpocketing, and fights among young people.

Artistic interventions in Bessengue
Since 2000, Bessengue has been the stage of artistic projects. In 2001 doual’art organized the “Atelier Urbain de Bessengue” (2001), a workshop where twenty artists from Central Africa were invited to animate with performance and art installations the neighborhood. In 2003, Goddy Leye, (an artist and founder of Art Bakery) coordinated “Bessengue city”, a workshop including five projects managed by international artists: Radio Bessengue city (a community radio); Bouquet de Souris (a video project); an informal house built at the entrance of the district, made with colored, recycled and resistant materials; a chat website linking two Cameroonian women, one living in Bessengue and the other in Indonesia; and the Hope box, collecting local

1 Personal conversations with Simon de Gaulle, doctoral student in Law, University of Douala, inhabitant of Bessengue and tourist guide, 14 December 2012.
2 Personal conversation with Ginette Daleu, local artist who participated to Bessengue City project, 9 January 2013.
communities’ thoughts and proposals for the district improvement. In 2003, doual’art under the initiative of the artist Rienke Enghardt, organized the workshop Cadavre exquis, resulting in a triptych wall painting at the boundary between the neighborhoods of Bessengue and Akwa Nord.

During the same year, Doual’art commissioned the first proximity artwork: the Borne-Fontaine of Bessengue, a fountain kiosk equipped with three water taps and a small shop whose rental fee allows to collect some money for the maintenance. The Borne-Fontaine has been designed by the Cameroonian architect Danielle Diwota-Kotto and built at the entrance of the block one of Bessengue. The building of the Borne-Fontaine seems to recall the shape of a butterfly’s wings, due to the inverted sloping roof, covering the frame structure and steel beams.

After two years, in 2005, the second proximity artwork was built: la Passerelle de Bessengué. The Passerelle is a wooden bridge located at the entrance of the neighborhood and disclosing it to the Boulevard de la République. The iron handrail of the Passerelle is painted in different colors, each one representing people of different ethnic groups holding hands. It was designed by the artist Alioum Moussa, who won the artistic contest organized by doual’art and assessed by a jury made of representative members of the local community of Bessengue.

After all these interventions, doual’art stopped its activities in Bessengue to leave space to the development committee of the district to realize its actions for improvement on its own. After eight years of doual’art inactivity, for the next SUD 2013 some other interventions are planned.

**Key findings from observation and interviews**
From the interviews it emerges that since the installation of the Borne-Fontaine and the Passerelle, the living conditions of the communities are decisively increased. The impact that those installations have generated includes: the acceleration of development activities (in terms of services and infrastructures), social responsibility of local communities, the development of new commercial activities, and the creation of a public meeting place.

**Impact of public art on development issues**
The process of production of proximity artworks can be considered as community-based in Bessengue. Doual’art has involved the local community in the conceptualization steps of the project through meetings and discussions aiming to understand local needs and requirements. After the project idea was conceived, a restricted part of the community contributed to the physical production of the artwork. This community-based process has prompted the creation of the Development Committee
of Bessengue (Communauté de Développement de Bessengue-Akwa – CDBA) who asked doual’art to be trained in the management of activities aiming to improve the neighborhood. The CDBA is still nowadays active and composed of members selected by inhabitants, representing each one a different ethnic group living in the neighborhood. The work of the CDBA is completely voluntary, and they organize a monthly meeting to discuss about district improvements.

An impressive form of impact is that the active work of doual’art on the neighborhood and the existence of a development community already active and formally established have attracted the attention of global international organization, such as the World Bank. Indeed, Bessengue has been chosen as pilot district in Douala by the World Bank in order to work through a participatory strategy and fund new development projects. As a result, after the implementation of the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine, two more water pumps have been installed into the second and third blocks of Bessengue. The lanes of the valley have been paved, and a wide dirt patch was created along the Mbopi River, allowing ambulances and firemen to access the district in case of emergency.

In Bessengue the risk of floods is strongly decreased as the CDBA every two years prompts the Urban Community of Douala to drain the bed of the Mbopi River, taking off plastic garbage, for helping the soil to absorb raining waters. Moreover, a bin has been placed in order to collect wasted material just out of the district. The agency in charge of this service, HYS-ACAM, empties it every day.

The Borne-Fontaine has also contributed to produce sustainability. Since the CDBA rarely receives financial support from the CUD and International funds, with the fee from the rental of the Borne-Fontaine shop (15’000 CFA per month), the CDBA can support the costs of small maintenance services, like changing light bulbs of the lamps, painting public walls, and restoring broken facilities.

**Impact of public art on social responsibilities, economic growth and meeting places**

The fact of putting people, especially young ones, in contact with artists, foreigners, and ephemeral activities, like for example the radio community project, have made them feel valorized and considered from an outside community, increasing their self-esteem and hopes for the future.4

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4 Personal conversation with Ginette Daleu, a local artist who participated to Bessengue City project, 9 January 2013.
One of the most interesting forms of impact is that social responsibility of locals emerged in the process of taking care of their living environment by sweeping streets and engaging adolescents for cleaning activities, such as pulling weeds and collecting the dirt. The district, besides informal houses and an evident poverty of the population, appears in a status of order.

The creation of the Passerelle has disclosed the neighborhood to the commercial district of Akwa, and opened a new squared area between the bridge and the Borne-Fontaine. In this area new informal business activities have sprouted. One of the most interesting cases is certainly the hairdresser “Thomas” who, in the last five years, has increased three times the surface of his hair salon. His socio-economic position has definitely improved, thanks to the increased flux of customers (coming also from other neighborhoods) that he got for the visibility gained by opening the neighborhood to the Boulevard de la Republique.

The area between the two installations has become a public and enjoyable meeting place. Children go there during the afternoon to play football, while adults and young people for having dinner in the numerous informal restaurants that have populated the street out of the Passerelle. The facilities that have followed the creation of the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine have increased the nightlife and professional activities of the district. People’s perception of security has improved as the risk of being aggressed has decreased, considering that it is now possible to go out for dinner until midnight.

**Key Findings from questionnaires**
One hundred questionnaires have been submitted in the area between the entrance of block one of Bessengue, opened by the Passerelle, and the Borne-Fontaine. Respondents are inhabitants or workers of Bessengue (40% women and 60% males) between eighteen and thirty-five years old (86%). Despite the small dimension of the neighborhood, and the lack of recreational spaces, only 7% of the interviewees declared to go out from the district for leisure activities, such as meeting friends. People are used to go out for first need activities such as working (39%), schooling (26%, as the neighborhood does not have a school), and shopping (18%).

**Artworks knowledge and perception**
Proximity artworks of Bessengue are not always recognized as public art installation. Only 12% of respondents identify themselves as artworks, and doual’art or the Development committee as authors. This data is strictly correlated to the functional features of the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine, as well as to the meaning given to the installation of aid, development, and utility in accessing water and facilitating the circulation of people and vehicles. From the viewpoint of the interpretation of the artworks’ meaning, interesting local percep-
tions have emerged, since people declared: “Je sens que le quartier n’est pas complètement abandonné” (“I feel the neighborhood has not been completely abandoned”), “On a pensé à nous, les oubliés de Douala” (“They think of us, the forgotten people of Douala”), “On pense à nous, le développement nous concerne aussi” (“They think of us, development concerns us as well”), “Ça démontre qu’il y a des gens qui pensent au quartier” (“It shows that there are people who think about us”).

These statements indicate that respondents’ feeling of social exclusions has strongly decreased, and that after the installation of the Borne-Fontaine and the Passerelle, their previous austere situation has improved, also because now they can “be protected from the cholera” and “live in a more pleasant, colored environment”. However, only two persons indicated the meaning of the Passerelle’s handrail as an example of peaceful collaboration between different ethnicities of the neighborhood.

Impact of public art on security
In Bessengue practically all respondents (98%) are proud of the presence of the installations. They affirm that the reputation of the neighborhood has improved thanks to the capacity of public art to renovate and convey a new image of the neighborhood. The place around the Borne-Fontaine has become cleaner. For half of respondents (53%) also the flux of tourists has increased, even if it is not regular. 69% of people affirm that aggressions have diminished. However, small theft seems to be quite diffused as there is still a 11% of respondents who have been robbed at home of clothes, shoes, gas, oil, food; while a 9% has been victim of aggression and theft of money and mobile phones. Concerning the security perception, only half of respondents (53%) declare to feel completely in security, 44% “enough” in security, and only 3% feels not in security at all, especially from midnight to 4 a.m. People demand for self-defense groups (54%) and the lighting system (33%) as measures to prevent insecurity. It is also interesting that education and sensitization of young people are considered by 20% of the interviewees as an important stimulus for increasing civil cohabitation and diminishing aggression. At the same time new job opportunities are fundamental for the 17% as in the majority of cases the offenders are unemployed young people.

Impact of public art on life style
The place between the Borne-Fontaine and the Passerelle has become a safe landmark and meeting place for inhabitants. People are used to spend their time there by taking a breath of air (41%), while chatting (82%) about football, love, employment, life issues, generally in front of a coffee or a beer. The alcohol consumption (of beer or palm wine) seems to be one of the major activities according the opinion of 64% of interviewees. Yet it is not the only one. They also explain how the place has become also a space for dating and amorous encounters (12%)
where people go together to eat a beignet or to have dinner (24%). It has become a meeting space for children to play football after a school day (10%); a space for women to source water at low prices, to do shopping, to charge their mobile phones, to make a call at the call box, or to make them fair at the hairdresser. Consequently the impact of the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine is also evident from the increased number of formal and informal businesses sprouting around the place in the last few years. According to 91% of people new business activities include: bars and coffee shops (58%), hair salons (52%), tailoring shops (9%), boutiques (12%), call boxes (75%), restaurants and bakery vendors (41%), counter sales of fruits and vegetables (64%), and informal pharmacies (14%).

Conclusions
This report on Bessengue presents the impact that public art installations and the process of production has had on the safety and security of the neighborhood.

It can be concluded that the presence of public art has triggered the urbanization process of the neighborhood, by fostering the creation of Development community, which in turn has attracted international funds. The urbanization process of Bessengue includes the provision of water and electricity, contributing to reduce the risk of diseases and aggressions, the improvement of the circulation inside and outside the district, as well as an increase of commercial activities. However, these new shops emerged in the place between the Passerelle and the Borne-Fontaine have been built in a spontaneous way, with precarious materials, and without any legitimation. Informal traders are positioned on the border of the Mbopi River, running the risk of floods during season rains.

Finally, it seems that it is not only the mere presence of public art that produces effects on urban safety and security, but it is the community-based approach behind their production which has generated the most important and concrete effects.
2.1.4 Case study report: New Bell

Introduction
New Bell is one of the districts of Douala selected as a case study for exploring the impact of public art on urban safety and security. The choice of New Bell depends on two main reasons: first of all because of its central position in Douala. It borders with the most prestigious neighborhoods of the city, yet it looks like an overcrowded and spontaneously grown area made of informal houses and characterized by serious safety and security problems. Secondly, because since 2000 it has been target of cultural activities and permanent art installations, including monuments, proximity artworks and passageways installations.

In order to document and assess the impact of public art, an ethnographic study was conducted from December 2012 to January 2013, and data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews were addressed to Hervé Yamguen, Picsou, and Moctomoflar, the artist and musicians of the installation Les Mots Écrits de New Bell; the director and a teacher of the CBC Babylon School, whose façade hosts Les Mots Écrits de New Bell; and Kakanu, the owner of the bar hosting a piece of the same series of installations; the traditional chief of the block number 5 of New Bell, supervising the areas of New Bell Ngangue and Babylon; Marilyn Douala Manga Bell and Didier Schaub, president and director of doual’art, the public art funding agency; Jean Yango, director of the Urban Planning and Development Department of the City Council of Douala (CUD); Junior Ndalle, journalist of Douala; and Adrien Kouomou Monting, inhabitant and part-time journalist from New Bell.

Data were also gathered through 100 questionnaires filled in around two main areas of New Bell: the Ngangue neighborhood, hosting Les Mots Écrits de New Bell by Hervé Yamguen, and the Shell New Bell crossroad, hosting the monumental Colonne Pascal by Pascal Martin Tayou. The questionnaire presented a total of 51 closed and open questions aiming to delineate: interviewees’ profile; mobile phone usage and communication; knowledge and perception of public art; impact of public art on security and life style; requests for improvement in terms of security.

Previous studies on New Bell (Njoh, 2007; Schler, 2005, 2008; Simone, 2005, 2006, 2008) allowed tracing the history and urbanization process of the neighborhood. This report, after providing background information on New Bell, with a specific focus on its safety and cultural context, examines results emerged from interviews and questionnaires, concerning public art knowledge and perceptions and its effects on district’s improvement, communities’ behaviors and lifestyles, as well as security.

Background
New Bell is one of the oldest, and certainly the biggest, district of Douala, designated as home for Douala’s non-indigenous African population (Njoh, 2007). Its huge dimension and the variety of ethnic groups populating the district allow considering New Bell as a city into the city.
New Bell is the typical kwatt of Douala, where “You’re going to walk and fall down in the mud, you’re going to cross dirty rivulets to go to the sub district, you’re going to enter people’s homes to go to yours”: Historically, it has been stigmatized by a bad reputation, due to the poor living conditions of inhabitants, a diffused criminality, and the fact that it hosts the central jail of Douala, one of the worst of Cameroun (Amnesty international, 2008).

Despite its negative reputation, it has been noticed a strong people’s sense of belonging to the district. Inhabitants are convinced to be perfectly recognizable from all others dwellers of Douala, for their way of being, of moving, of talking, and relating with others. From a foreigner, their welcoming attitude is one of the extraordinary features of New Bell inhabitants, which probably comes from their multicultural experiences acquired by living in an immigrant districts.

**Urbanization of New Bell**

The roots of New Bell come from the first urban plan of Douala conceived by German colonizers in 1890. Germans arrived in Douala in 1884, forcing natives to move from the coast (the Plateau Joss area, the current Bonanjo) to an inner area of the city, far from their settlements and from the strategic position on the sea. The area where natives were transferred was named “New Bell” and it was separated from Western’s settlements by a green area about one kilometer long, due to the colonizers’ fear of being contaminated by unknown diseases (Njoh, 2007).

With the advent of the First World War, Germans lost their colonies and French acquired the sovereignty of the majority of Cameroun’s territories, including Douala. During this period, the natives took advantage of the Western political instability to move from New Bell to the green hills of Bali, being impossible to retrieve their original lands. However, New Bell was soon occupied by immigrant waves of no-native people coming both from others regions of Cameroun and from abroad, especially from Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast. Being all immigrants looking for a place where they could settle and survive, they were able to mash up and to integrate peacefully together (Schler, 2008).

In recent years, following the exponential demographic growth and the uncontrolled horizontal urbanization of Douala, the city administration has been decentralized into six districts or municipalities, the so-called Communes d’Arrondissement de Douala. The huge dimension of New Bell, including a total of 32 neighborhoods already divided in eight blocks, have made of New Bell the second and central district of Douala: the Commune d’Arrondissement de Douala II.

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1 Kwatt is the pidgin expression standing for quartier i.e. neighborhood.
2 Conversation with Junior Ndalle, journalist living and working in Douala, 19 December 2012.
3 New Bell indicates the assignment of a new land to the Bell family, the autochthonous royal family governing the Duala ethnic group.
Safety and security in New Bell

Despite recent changes in the political administration of New Bell, the district is still facing critical problems. Safety issues depend on the lack of urban management, facilities and basic services. Into the districts sewers and gutters are opened, running all along the main paved roads and creating boundaries between neighborhoods. The absence of a long-term and regular maintenance has caused the misuse of public infrastructures by the population. Gutters and watercourses are used as garbage dumps, hence they cannot satisfy their tasks during seasonal rains. The company in charge of collecting garbage, HYSACAM (which was established in 2007, but is active in New Bell only since 2010) has placed some bins on the main paved road. However, they are not at all sufficient to satisfy the needs of households and shops, making garbage overflow and litter the ground. Water is another critical problem of New Bell: in the entire district public fountains were closed down. Inhabitants supply water from shallow wells, generating a seriously unhealthy environment.

In relation to security, New Bell is characterized by a bad reputation depending on diffused poverty and criminality, often featuring young delinquency. A code of silence of the community protects criminals from the police. Unemployment and lack of education are the main causes fostering young criminality. Poverty in New Bell drives people to commit even small thefts (such as stealing cloths hanged to dry, or steals of food from houses), demonstrating the condition of sufferance affecting the district. During the day, the most dangerous places are formal and informal markets, such as the Marché Central, the biggest in Douala (Loe & Ngomsi, 2004).

During the night, the presence of numerous bars and discos animated by young people, music and alcohol, generates confusion and limited social control. Consequently, the risk of aggressions increases especially at the entrance of neighborhoods where people move in the complete obscurity, due to the absence of a public lighting system (Ibid.).

Artistic interventions in New Bell

Despite safety and security conditions, New Bell is a vibrant district, stage of cultural and artistic initiatives that directly engage local community and attract international attention. One of the most active groups working in New Bell is the Cercle Kapsiki, founded in 1998 by the artists Hervé Youmbi, Hervé Yamguen, Salifou Lindou, Blaise Bang, and Jules Wokam. Since its constitution in a formal group, the Cercle Kapsiki set up the K-FACTORY, a contemporary art space in the New Bell Ngangue neighborhood. However, due to the busy international career of artists the gallery has been temporarily closed.

Among the most impressive art initiatives proposed by the Cercle Kapsiki, there is Scenographie Urbaine (“Urban scenography”), organized in collaboration with Scu2 at the turn of 2001 and 2002. Scenographie Urbaine, at that time on its first edition, is an itinerant festival devoted to urban art. It lasted three weeks and it was the first occasion for New Bell inhabitants
to be engaged in contemporary art projects. Dwellers were demanded to host artists coming from all over the world into their houses, while it was compulsory for artists to share living spaces with inhabitants and to get inspired by them in the production of their art projects. During those weeks, several permanent and ephemeral urban art installations were produced, while the festival culminated with a fashion show, gathering to the neighborhood a wide audience of locals as well as people coming from the most prestigious areas of the city.

The Cercle Kapsiki has also organized numerous activities in the neighborhood aiming to communicate and create a link with the community and to raise their interest in art and culture. Among others, some of them deserve a special attention, considering the impact and participation they got from inhabitants. First of all, the exhibition Coonics, where all the best Cameroonian caricaturists were invited to present their works to the children of the main schools of New Bell, during their exhibition at the K-FACTORY. Secondly, the theater program: in partnership with the Institut Culturel Français (ICF), the Cercle Kapsiki invited actors to reproduce for free the same show previously presented at the stage of the ICF, in the streets or main crossroads of New Bell. And finally, the Cinemas du kwatt: night movie projections on the walls of schools attracting more than 500 persons per show coming from different neighborhoods and social classes.

Concerning permanent art installations, doual’art is the main contemporary art center funding the production of artworks, taking care of their final quality and promoting them during the SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala (“Urban Salon of Douala”), an international festival addressing urban issues held every three years. In New Bell doual’art has supported the production of:

- two monumental installations: the Njé Mo Yé by Koko Komengé, a five meters tall sculpture made of red painted steel tubes of 12 cm diameter conceptualizing the Cameroonian family positioned at the crossroad “Dernier Poteau”; and the Colonne Pascal by Marthine Tayou, a twelve meters totem made of enamel pots superimposed located in the middle of Shell New Bell roundabout;
- two proximity artworks: the New Walk Ways by Kamiel Vershuren, a 500 meters long installation made of wooden planks covering open gutters of the district, featuring perforated text fragments, and Le puit (“the well”) by Loris Chechini, who coated and shaped the external perimeter of a well with reproductions made of concrete of the tanks generally used to collect the water in the neighborhood;
- passageways artworks: Oasis by Tracy Rose, a mural installation located inside the walls of the CBC Babylon School, and Les Mots Écrits de New Bell by Hervé Yamguen, a series of six mural installations dislocated around the neighborhood of New Bell Ngangue.
**Key findings from interviews**

**Impact of public art on local community behaviors**

The impact of public art in New Bell is very subtle and profound, without immediate benefits, but the presence of art has intrinsically touched and modifies inhabitants’ attitudes toward the quality of their urban space. Probably people’s habits have not been completely revolutionized in terms of access to services; a direct impact on safety and security is not so evident. What instead has changed is people sensibility toward urban space and artistic experiences; they are nor more extraneous to artistic acts placed into the district, but on the contrary they strongly demand for them, asking for a renovation of artworks, maintenance, or even changing the colors of monuments such as the *Nje Mo Yé* by Komégné.

One of the most interesting effects of public art processes in New Bell is their capacity to foster in dwellers a sense of appropriation of the artworks. People in New Bell are used to fight for survival; especially young people are often unemployed, victims of a society dominated by problems that reduce their possibilities to feel good, to enjoy their youth, and to dream for a better future. Public art does not allow them to survive, yet it operates on a more slightly educational level, making people reflect on the importance of beauty, of environment, of their habits; and at the same time it prompted them to act, to facilitate art processes, to contribute to the dissemination of meanings, and to indirectly change their negative perceptions toward the urban space.

During the two-years process of production of *Les Mots Écrits de New Bell*, realized by Hervé Yamguen in collaboration with rappers of the district, the local community was initially introduced to the project through performances. At the beginning they questioned about the meaning of those actions, sometimes relating them to something “mystic”. These events created new opportunities for debates among local communities, and the artist followed them by organizing meetings where the idea behind the project was discussed. By discussing the art project, social issues concerning the districts arouse from the community, transforming the meeting in an opportunity for debating about safety and living conditions. After few days, local communities started to donate the façades of their houses for hosting public art installations. They started feeling proud to contribute to the improvement of their districts, increasing their self-esteem and wish to be noticed. The owner of the “Joie de Ngogmabi”, a bar hosting a light installation, has offered spontaneously to pay electricity in order to maintain the installation switched on during the night. The director of the CBC Babylon School, where mural interventions were installed inside and outside the institution, was inspired to plant flowers in order to improve the school surrounded environment. She also put signage in order to avoid people throw garbage on the ground. A teacher of the CBC Babylon School further declares:
Dwellers, on their hand, have started to paint the wall of their houses reproducing the blue colors of some installations or imitating the drawing of the façade of Hervé Yamguen’s house. In the case of the New Walk Ways of Kamil Verschuren, sometimes local communities have replaced the deteriorated wooden planks with new ones, even though the artist had deliberately chosen to place them in places of common passage, that do not belong to any households.

These are some examples of how local community engagement has developed a sense of appropriation of public art installation, contributing sometimes to the aesthetic requalification of the district. Public art has also fostered pride among local community due to the exclusivity of their district experience.

Impact of public art on district improvement

From a practical perspective, public art installations have contributed to improve the reputation of the district, to increase economical activities, as well as to encourage the CUD to take care of the wasting collection system around installations.

The presence of Tracey Rose’s and Hervé Yamguen’s installations on the internal and external walls of the CBC Babylon school have generated astonishing effects on the school, in terms of advertisement, reputation, educational offer, and number of students enrolled. CBC Babylon School is a private Baptist educational institution of New Bell Ngangué, including a kindergarten and a primary school. From the director’s declarations it emerges that prior to art installations, the school hosted fifty-seven students and four teachers. In 2011 students were 200, while one year later she could add a new wooden building for introducing the Anglophone session composed by six classrooms. At the end of 2012, 14 teachers taught to the 400 students enrolled at the CBC. The presence of murals had a direct impact on the reputation of the school by providing the institution with an image of cleanliness, modernity, and seriousness. Nowadays, tourists enter the school for visiting murals and taking photos, while local communities also come from the near neighborhoods attracted by the curiosity and the desire to enroll their children there.

Similarly, the owner of the bar hosting another Les Mots Écrits installation is absolutely satisfied by the personalized image the artwork has provided to his business activity. After

4 Personal conversation with Ms. David, teacher of The CBC Babylon school, “If I can add something, I would say those actions like this (the mural at the CBC School) are really good. They awaken. They awaken great people, as well as small children. I told you last time that through these drawings, in classroom children took their leaves. They start making drawings. Actually, it was like a competition”, 11 December 2012.
its installation the bar has enlarged its surface thanks to increased revenues, due to the curiosity of locals and foreigners coming there during the night for seeing the installation lit up (especially during the first year). The presence of the installation has clearly prompted the owner to restore its surrounded space, by renewing the wall drawings of its bar every year, by tiling the floor and changing old wood tables with plastic one, more practical to move and to clean. The bar has become a landmark for young people and women, due to the presence of a pleasant atmosphere and safe environment (the bar indeed does not employs security agents).

If the previous installations are located outside private spaces, clearly opened and visible to the whole audience, there are some other installations that can be defined as more anonymous. It is the case of the mural at the corner of “Entrée Source” of New Bell. The installation has completely changed the aspect of the street. The “Entrée Source” is located few meters away from people’ houses and the wall where the mural has been produced is just in front of a gutter that divides it from a busy axe of New Bell. All along the wall and into the gutter, prior to Yamguen’s installation there was an actual mountain of garbage, as the waste collection service did not pass by there. Nowadays, HYSACAM has placed two bins just next to the installation, even if they are not yet enough, and pass by there every day. This installation is particularly meaningful as it is composed of mirrors and sentences inviting walkers to look at themselves and to be caught by the messages “La Vie saine”, “La Joie de se sentir bien”, L’Envie de vivre de Bonheur” (“The healthy life”, “The joy of feeling good”, “The desire to live happily”).

Thus public artworks invite people to change their sight, to approach their neighborhood in a positive way, producing small impacts at an individual level. The artwork is always positioned in places that become source of discussions, where people go inevitably to question many other aspects of the neighborhood’s life. Public art in New Bell becomes the spark of debate, marking the quality of reflections and relationships among citizens.

Two cultural and security issues still remain open. The first one concerns the maintenance of artworks and wall paints that after few years require to be restored. And the second one regards the implementation of security measures to respond local community requests against criminality. In New Bell, the role of artists seems to be particularly important in order to prompt local administration to take actions. In November 2012, the artist Hervé Yamguen, after being aggressed outside his house, has started a petition against public disorder, aggressions, violence and prostitutions which is perpetuated around two main bars of the neighborhood: “Prolongation” and “Exclusive dream”. On January 9th 2013, 106 persons had signed the petition addressed to traditional authorities, the police and the urban community of Douala (CUD).
Key findings from questionnaires
A second significant corpus of data comes from one hundred questionnaires filled in around two specific areas of New Bell: 1. Shell New Bell roundabout hosting the Colonne Pascal; and 2. New Bell Ngangué neighborhood with the already discussed Les Mots Écrits de New Bell.

Respondents are inhabitants or workers of New Bell. Two thirds of them are males (67% - 33% females), between 18 and 35 years old (59%), used to go out from the district mainly to work (58%), meet friends (40%), go to the church (26%), or to the university (18%). The huge dimension of New Bell allows people to accomplish the main activities into the boundaries of the district.

Artworks knowledge and perception
In New Bell, 71% of respondents recognize the Colonne Pascal and Les Mots Écrits de New Bell as public art installations, even if practically none of them (2%) really know the name of the artwork. People are used to identify artworks based on their visual representation or the location where they were introduced. However, local perceptions toward monumental and passageways installations are strongly different, depending both from the place where they have been installed, and from their process of production.

In the case of the Colonne Pascal of Shell New Bell, the exclusion of locals from the production process has made perceive the installation as imposed, generating negative reactions, popular discontent, and ambiguous attitudes toward it. Tayou’s installation, commonly called “Poteau des Assiettes” (“Pole of pots”) is considered unrespectable of the memory of the square. As reported during the survey by an old inhabitant of New Bell: “This [the Colonne Pascal] does not reflect the history of the area. We should build a monument to present our children as well as our grandchildren”.

The reasons behind this critic are related to the riots of May 1955, preceding the independence of Cameroun, when around one thousand people died (as recalled by Avenue de l’Indipendance, i.e. the main road crossing the square). A second critic moved by surveyed locals gives an interpretation of the installation as an evidence of problems related to hunger.

Differently, the presence of artworks positioned in passageways is certainly more appreciated and integrated in the ordinary life of inhabitants. Les Mots Écrits de New Bell is always identified with the name of the place or the landmark where the work has been installed (such as the school CBC Babylon, the white house laundry, next to the “Hotel La Côte”). In New Bell Ngangué more than half of the interviewees (52%) correctly attributes the artworks to Hervé Yamguen, and their presence is totally (100%) accepted, appreciated and interrogated. People are honored to host public art and Ngangue’s dwellers address it a social and edu-

5 Quotation reported from the survey conducted in Shell New Bell on 18 January 2013.
cative role making “shine the neighborhood”. This enthusiasm toward the installation can be related to the fact that the artist is living and working into the district, and so he shares values and practices with the local community. This can explain why Les Mots Écrits de New Bell are interpreted by respondents as “another vision of our realities as a shout of alarm”, or they foster people’s self-esteem toward their neighborhood. The presence of public art is also contributing to improve the image of New Bell Ngangué within the city, by publicly showing “the originality of a district judged as wild”, and opening new possibilities toward modernity, progress, and renaissance of public spaces.

Impact of public art on security
Despite this gap in the public opinion, any significant correlation has emerged regarding interviewees’ perceived impact of the installation in terms of safety and security. Almost everyone (96%) perceives Shell New Bell as a safe landmark for motorbike and taxi transfers, but even for dating partners, meeting friends, having lunch or enjoying a beer. Moreover, 88% of interviewees affirm that the place has become decidedly cleaner, the criminality around there has finally diminished (88%), and the flux of tourists has generally increased (66%). Both in Shell New Bell and New Bell Ngangué the presence of tourists is also quite regular (between three and five tourists per month) and 78% of the population of New Bell believes that tourists are rather in security going there to spend their time.

Both in Shell New Bell and Ngangué, one fourth of the population has been victim of thefts of mobile phones and money, pickpocketing and house robbery. Anyways, only three persons have reported the fact to the police.

People’s perception of security is particularly interesting in the area of New Bell Ngangue. Practically all interviewees (98%) in the area declare to be completely in security, and half of them also states that there are no problems in circulation even during the night (“We are born here, this is our district!”). However, there is a significant number of inhabitants (48%) claiming that after midnight people should pay more attention. It would be interesting to compare the perception of security of non-inhabitants of New Bell Ngangué, in order to verify the alignment and misalignment of these data with the perceptions of district’s foreigners.

On the other hand, in Shell New Bell only 58% of the interviewees feel completely in security, while a 10% do not feel in security at all. This area is mostly crowded during the day, allowing

6 Quotation reported from the survey conducted in New Bell Ngangue on 17 January 2013.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
sometimes for social control, especially among informal traders, but during the night it is almost empty and 64% of the interviewees consider dangerous to circulate alone during the night or at the first light of the morning (especially those who work in markets). Indeed Shell New Bell square is the only area (where questionnaires were submitted) where a self-defense group was established for preventing the risk of being aggressed. According to locals, 84% of the interviewees report that aggressions are diminished, improving security and criminality conditions, even if 34% of them suggest that a police office should be set up into the place, and patrols should be more frequent, faster, and accessible everywhere. Other important security measures demanded by the community of Shell New Bell are:

— the improvement of the lightening and the electricity system of the neighborhood (12%);
— the creation of new job opportunities (4%);
— the improvement of services (4%), such as cleaning out the gutters, provide public bins, and pave the roads.

In Ngangué, instead, 80% of the population ask for self-defense groups to fill security vacuum. In this case only 12% believe that a police office could be useful, followed by a 10% asking for public lighting capillarity.

**Impact of public art on life style**

Places where public art have been installed also have slightly influenced people life style. Around the Colonne Pascal, locals are used to meet for shopping, and the number of informal markets offering bakery products and take away foods has increased exponentially. People go both to Shell New Bell and to Ngangué in order to spend their free time by meeting friends (38%) or partners (28%) with whom they chat (48%), eat (36%) or drink (58%) something. Adults also go there to do shopping (22%), or, in the congested roundabout of Shell New Bell, to take motorbike taxis. Around this latter place, according to interviewees, the commercial activities most developed in the last years are: call boxes, informal commerce made of counter sellers of fruits, vegetables, fritters, peanuts, fish and meat; and formal businesses such as boutiques, bakeries, and bars. Also in Ngangué people notice an increasing number of similar business activities: 70% indicate call boxes, 60% street restaurants and bakeries, 48% informal markets of fresh food, cigarettes and quincailleries, and 30% bars.

According to locals’ statements the reputation of the area has improved, and also tourists are increased even if their presence is not regular. This can be related to the resounding media attention given to the Colonne Pascal by newspaper, newscasts, and TV series for representing the entire district.

This improvement in reputation has also fostered public authorities to take some measures to fight the disorder: first of all, bins have been located on the sides of the roundabout and the state-controlled company in service to collect garbage (HYSACAM) covers the
area every morning. Finally, the police have increased the frequency of patrols accessing the area, even if interviewees of Shell New Bell demand for regularity and efficiency of their interventions.

**Conclusion**

The results from the research in New Bell clearly show that public art impact the society in different ways. The concept of safety and security is not easily approachable and can be considered in terms of district’s improvements, and changes in community’s behaviors and lifestyles. The impact on security, even if discussed and reported by locals, is not always measurable. It seems that it is the process of art production which generate positive public response rather that the presence of the artwork itself. However an important distinction should be done between the types of art installations. Monuments are not easily integrated into locals’ daily practices, even if they seem to trigger a larger economic development, as well as public and media attention. On the other hand, passageways artworks can be considered community-based projects, where the artist is invited to build and strengthen relationships directly with the local community, in parallel with the funding agency. Community’s involvement seems to be the key point allowing the artworks to be appreciated, welcomed, and integrated into the urban space.
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11/12/12: Hervé Youmbi, artist and member of the Cercle Kapsiki
11/12/12: Didier Schaub, artistic director doua’art
12/12/12: Ms David, teacher CBC school
12/12/12: Thomas, hair stylist Bessengue
12/12/12: Traditional chief, block 5 Babylon
12/12/12: School director Babylon CBC
13/12/12: Moctomoflar, rapper New Bell
14/12/12: Simon de Gaulle, doctoral student on Law at the University of Douala, touristic guide of doua’art and inhabitant of Bessengue.
14/12/12: Ndoumbe Ebenezer, President Communté Developpement Bessengue Akwa (CDBA)
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15/01/13: Taxi Man
16/01/13: Lionel Manga
17/01/13: Séna Mouelè, Communauté Urbain de Douala: Directeur de l’Administration des Ressources Humaines et du Patrimoine
21/01/13: Adrien Kouomou Moning, inhabitant of New Bell
2.1.5 List of public artworks

1. **Name of Artwork**
   La Passerelle de Bessengue, 2005

**Location and Accessibility**
The artwork is located at the perpendicular side of the Boulevard de la République, at the entrance of the Vallée Bessengue, crossing a thin branch of the Mbopi River.

**Level of Significance**
Proximity artwork – Architectural Installation – Community-embedded work

**About the Artwork**
The Passerelle de Bessengue is a wooden bridge with an iron handrail, painted in different colors, each one representing people of different ethnic groups holding hands. La Passerelle was designed by the Cameroonian artist Alioum Moussa. It was initially conceived as a cooperation development project funded by the Institut Régional de Coopération-Développement d’Alsace (Ircod-Alsace), the Municipality of Douala I, and doual’art. As project coordinator, doual’art ran a community-based approach involving the local Development Community of Bessengue-Akwa (CDBA) from the conceptualization phase to the project production. During the process, an artistic contest was organized in order to provide La Passerelle with aesthetical features. On five projects submitted, the selection fell on Alioum Moussa. His proposal aroused among the community a critical discussion and self-reflection about historical conflicts among autochthonous and non-native populations. The success of the project by Moussa was to create a link between art and community experiences, documenting shared intentions to promote and pursue a peaceful collaboration for future generations. La Passerelle was officially inaugurated during the SUD 2007 and restored two times. In 2009, Malika Ouedraogo and Cecile Demessine repainted the handrail. In the occasion of the SUD 2013, the Municipality of Douala funded the replacement of a handrail side and some broken wood planches.

**About the location**
Bessengue is a small popular district divided into five blocks, enclosed between two watercourses. It is located in a depression valley suffering of disastrous floods during rainy seasons. La Passerelle has disclosed the block 1 of Bessengue to one of the busiest roads of Douala, facilitating the circulation of people, vehicles, and the provision of public services. Its position at the entrance of the neighborhood has contributed to create a square between La Passerelle and the first houses. This area, commonly known as Vallée Bessengue, has become an important landmark for children, young people and women who meet there to play, to date and to shop, surrounded by other art installations.
Name of Artwork
La Borne-Fontaine de Bessengue, 2003

Location and Accessibility
The artwork is located in the Vallée Bessengue, thirty meters after the entrance from the Boulevard de la République. It is accessible by crossing the Passerelle de Bessengue.

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation – Community-embedded work

About the Artwork
The Borne-Fontaine is a fountain kiosk built around a frame structure and steel beams, covered with an inverted sloping roof, recalling the shape of butterfly’s wings. It was designed by the Cameroonian architect Danielle Diwouta Kotto who was commissioned by doual’art, the Institut Régional de Coopération-Développement d’Alsace (Ircod-Alsace), and the Municipality of Douala I. The Borne-Fontaine, built in collaboration with the development committee of the neighborhood, is equipped with three water taps and a small shop whose rental fee allows for its maintenance. The Borne-Fontaine was inaugurated during SUD 2007 and restored for SUD 2013.

About the location
Bessengue is a neighborhood that strongly lacks for basic public service. Still nowadays dwellers do not have access to running water (and sewers) in their houses, and this generates a seriously unhealthy environment. The Borne-Fontaine is the only public point for accessing clean water in the block 1 of the neighborhood. After its installation, Bessengue was chosen by the World Bank as one of the pilot district of Douala where funding new development projects through a participatory strategy: two more water pumps were installed in the second and third blocks of Bessengue. The lanes of the valley were paved, and a wide dirt patch was created along the Mbopi River, allowing ambulances and firemen to access the district in case of emergency.
Name of Artwork
Tête de rêves, 2013

Location and Accessibility
The artwork is located in the square of Vallée Bessengue, 10 meters after the entrance from the Boulevard de la République. It is accessible by crossing the Passerelle de Bessengue.

Level of Significance
Passageway installation – mural

About the Artworks
Tête de rêves is the artwork produced by the Gabonese artist Boris Nzebo for SUD 2013. The artist, known for his research approach that relates the traditional and contemporary culture of African hairstyles with urban environment, worked on the external walls of the shop “Thomas fashion”, a hair salon located at the heart of the Vallée Bessengue. Tête de rêves occupies the two most visible sides of the hair salon. The main façade shows a bright wall painting, representing the profiles of mannequins for hairdressers and geometrical shapes. This façade was produced in collaboration with Joe Kessy, an artist living and working in the neighborhood. On the front side of the salon, the artist has hanged a 3 meters long metal plate on which he has applied three giant portraits of mannequins for hairdressers, with more elaborated and contemporary hairstyle.

About the location
Thomas Fashion is the biggest of the economical activities flourished in the place of the Vallée Bessengue after the production of La Passerelle. In the same area it is possible to find three different hairstyle salons and craft shops, such as tailors and shoemakers, built with recovery and disposable materials on the dangerous bank of the Mbopi River. Thomas fashion is the only formal activity, with a concrete structure, positioned in the middle of the Vallée Bessengue square.
4 **Name of Artwork**  
Espace de jeux, 2013

**Location and Accessibility**  
The artwork is located in the square of Vallée Bessengue. It is accessible by crossing the Passerelle de Bessengue and it is positioned on its left side.

**Level of Significance**  
Proximity artwork, architectural installation

**About the Artwork**  
Espace de jeux is the prototype installation of a playground produced by Raumlabor, a group of architects from Berlin, for SUD 2013. The installation is a wooden structure, in form of a prolongation of the trunk of the only tree positioned on the border of the Mbopi River. Espace de jeux is built on many levels that reach the first branches of the tree. It offers scaffolds of different areas and heights for people to sit and rest in the shadow.

**About the location**  
Espace de jeux is positioned at the entrance of the square Vallée Bessengue, in front of Thomas Fashion Shop. In the last ten years, the Vallée Bessengue has become a meeting place for children, who are used to go there to spend their afternoon playing football; for young people, who meet and date there in security during the night thanks to the recent installation of lampposts; and even for women, who meet there for chatting while shopping. However, the only conviviality space to sit and rest under the shadow (or lampposts) is at the other side of the place, around the Borne-Fontaine. Espace de jeux provides a new conviviality space, primarily dedicated to children.
5 Name of Artworks
Madiba square, 2013

Location and Accessibility
Three installations are located throughout the Block 1 of the Bessengue neighbourhood. They are accessible passing by the Vallée Bessengue.

Level of Significance
Proximity-passageway artwork

About the Artworks
Madiba square is a set of three installations conceptualized by Pascale Martine Tayou for SUD 2013. Each set is composed of a group of three concrete columns, each one placed on a circular base, large enough to sit down. At the upper end of each column there is a reversed basin or bucket of common use, made of plastic and of different colors. Each group of columns forms an area on its own, within which a rectangular block of concrete serves as a bench. The idea of the artist was to strengthen the recreational activities in the areas of transition of the neighborhood by providing footholds and conviviality points in the proximity of houses, where it is possible to stop, to lean against, and to rest.

About the location
The installations of Madiba Square are all located in Block 1 of Bessengue, following a path inside the neighborhood that was paved after the installation of the Borne-Fontaine by a World Bank Project. The path of Madiba Square leads from the Borne-Fontaine of the Vallée Bessengue to a well of the inner neighborhood.
Les Mots Écrits de New Bell, 2013

New Bell Ngangue Neighborhood: École CBC Babylon, Chez Kakanu Bar, Entrée source, La Laverie, Cimetière

Passageway installations, murals

Les Mots Écrits de New Bell is a set of six mural installations by Hervé Yamguen. It is part of “Liquid projects”, a program of SUD2010 that financed the production of permanent artworks (dedicated to the theme of water) in the neighborhoods of residence of four local artists. In New Bell, Yamguen worked in collaboration with two local rappers, Picsou and Moctomoflar, engaging them in the recording (and releasing) of a four songs album about water. During the production process the artist also introduced young people and local residents to the project through night performances and discussion meetings. From the lyrics of rappers, Yamguen extracted text fragments, reproducing them on six façades of Ngangue’s neighborhood that were spontaneously offered by locals. Les Mots Écrits de New Bell were produced on different supports: neon lights, tile mosaics, mirrors, iron rods, and painting. The text fragments selected by Yamguen clearly depict the reality of hardship and hope of New Bell’s inhabitants. However, two of these installations were removed: the first one – “Wash ma life, Lave mon âme, Wash mes ways, Lave mon kwatt” – for degradation, due to its position on the wall of a car washer; the second one – “Dans les eaux sales du quartier, dans ma ruelle, ma jeunesse rebelle” – was vandalized by the owner of the wall due to hard discussions with the rapper who wrote the sentence.

New Bell is the largest popular and historic district of Douala. Designed at the end of the 19th century by the German colonizers as a zone for isolating the indigenous population, New Bell has become today a central district of the city, including 32 neighborhoods and inhabited primarily by nationals and foreigners, relatives of immigrants of the second-third generation. New Bell is often labeled with a bad reputation, due to the precarious living conditions of its inhabitants, as well as to the presence of the prison and the main central market of the city, making it an easy target for criminals. Ngangue is just one of the neighborhoods of New Bell, characterized by informal settlements, difficult access to water and public services.
Douala Final Report

1. Après le temps mort vient le temps vif comme un coup de foudre. Ne pleure pas maman, tous les yeux de la ville pleuvent sur moi. Tranquille papa on ne panique pas;
2. La vie saine, la joie de se sentir bien,
3. l’envie de vivre de bonheur;
4. La nuit le bonheur c’est dans les moustiquaires;
5. Wash ma life, Lave mon âme; Wash mes ways, Lave mon kwatt;
6. Dans les eaux sales du quartier, dans ma ruelle, ma jeunesse rebelle.
Name of Artworks
Oasis, 2010

Location and Accessibility
New Bell Ngangue-Babylon: courtyard École CBC Babylon

Level of Significance
Passageway installation – wall painting

About the Artworks
Oasis is a set of two wall paintings by the South African artist Tracey Rose produced for SUD 2010 in the inner courtyard of the CBC Babylon school. On one wall, the artist drew an oasis of plants, tropical flowers, and a gorilla. These paintings, which appear childish at first glance, were voluntarily drawn without any proportional rule, and they appear distorted as to indicate the superiority and violence of the nature over man. On the other wall, the artist reproduced, in beautiful calligraphy and with different colours, scientific names of plants that are typical of the mangrove forest of this region. Many of these plants are now in danger of extinction due to pollution of the waters of the Wouri River, the primary resource of the city.

About the location
The École CBC Babylon is a private Baptist educational institution of New Bell Ngangué, including a kindergarten and a primary school. Beside its educational offer, the school has become nowadays a famous landmark of New Bell for public art and cultural activities. On the external wall it is possible to see one of the installations Les Mots Écrits de New Bell by Hervé Yamguen reproduced as a mosaic of tiles. The courtyard of the school, instead, was used as an open-air space for movie projections organized at night in the frame of the cultural program “Cinema du Kwatt” by the Group Kapsiki in 2010. Thanks to the direct engagement of the school director to cultural activities, the reputation of the school has strongly increased, attracting new visitors (both foreign tourists and locals from other neighborhoods) and augmenting of eight times the number of pupils’ enrollments.
8

**Name of Artwork**
Le puit, 2010

**Location and Accessibility**
New Bell Ngangue, facing Yamguen House

**Level of Significance**
Passageway installation

**About the Artwork**
The Puit is a work by Loris Cecchini produced for SUD 2010. The artist designed to coat and to shape the external perimeter of a well with reproductions made of concrete of the tanks, generally used to collect the water in the neighborhood. The concrete tanks have been irregularly displayed on two levels, echoing the weight of the difficult access to water, frequently transported by women and children on their neck.

**About the location**
The well is located outside the courtyard of the house of artist Hervé Yamguen. On one side it is surrounded by a small botanical garden belonging to the artist, where one can find plants of traditional medicine. On the other side, the well is accessible by a dirty patch crossing the neighborhood. The area surrounding Yamguen’s house has become an important cultural landmark for locals, and for an international audience who accesses the neighborhood mainly to visit the artist’s atelier. Since 2002, Hervé Yamguen and the Kapsiki Circle, a collective of artists from Douala, have organized in and around this courtyard a variety of events, including: a fashion show, night movie projections, and several art exhibitions at the K-Factory, the first exhibition space of New Bell, set-up by the Kapsiki circle, in the building just in front of Yamguen’s house.
**Name of Artwork**
New Walk Ways in New Bell, 2010

**Location and Accessibility**
New Bell

**Level of Significance**
Proximity artwork

**About the Artwork**
New Walk Ways in New Bell by Kamiel Verschuren is a 500 meters long installation made of wooden planks covering the open gutters of the district: the planks bear perforated text fragments. The text fragments recall the theme of SUD 2010, and report sentences and adjectives related to water properties, to its driving force, and to its ability to take different shapes, colors, and statuses. At the same time the planks by Verschuren have the functional purpose of protecting gutters from garbage (especially during rain seasons when the risk of floods is particularly high), allowing the filtration of water. They are positioned on shared, public spaces that do not supply a merely individual benefit to anybody, but rather act in favor of the community. However, the degradability of the wood makes this installation more a temporary work than a permanent one, and after three years, the New Walk Ways in New Bell have only partially been preserved. Nevertheless, in some cases this work stimulated the local population to restore and replace the broken or damaged planks with new ones, pushing dwellers to contribute to a collective good and to pursue the functional idea of the work.

**About the location**
The entire district of New Bell is characterized by serious problems of unhealthiness, due to the absence of sewers and an irregular waste collection system. To overcome the risk of seasonal floods, the community of Douala has built concrete drains on the edge of the paved roads. These channels should channel the rainwater towards peripheral, uninhabited lands. However, the maintenance and cleaning of the channels are not guaranteed. Drains usually serve as landfills and sewers, obstructing the flow of water and attracting rodents and insects carrying diseases. Only since 2011 the public waste collection service has started placing some trash bins on the paved roads of the district, collecting the garbage once a day. However, the waste problem is not yet solved and seasonal floods continue to harm New Bell.
10

Name of Artwork
Colonne Pascal, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Shell New Bell

Level of Significance
Monumental installation

About the Artwork
The Colonne Pascal is a totem made of superimposed enameled traditional pots rising toward the sky, in the heart of the very busy roundabout of Shell New Bell. The work by Pascal Martin Tayou, a Cameroonian artist based in France, was produced for SUD 2010. The intention of the artist was to pay homage to African women giving value to the culinary culture of the Cameroonian tradition. Nevertheless, the artwork was the subject of debates and tensions from local residents. People’s controversies depend both on the physical position of the Colonne Pascal, appealing to historical events (the square was the epicenter of the riots that led to the independence of the country), and for its symbolic interpretation, since according to many people the artwork recalls and highlights the poverty of New Bell.

About the location
Shell New Bell is a crowded roundabout of New Bell and an important landmark for citizens’ mobility. Very close to the city center, it allows people to easily reach also the periphery of the city in a reasonable time, thanks to the abundance of taxis and motorbike-taxis available there. This area also functions as a small market for quick shopping at the informal counter sellers of fruits, vegetables, fritters, peanuts, fish, and meat. On one side of the Colonne Pascal, the Municipality of Douala arranged a small park with some benches and a tiled monument with an eagle on its upper end. This green area has become a conviviality and free space for young people who meet there during the evening to chat and to rest under some lampposts. However, during the night, Shell New Bell is almost empty and the risk of aggression increases drastically.
Name of Artwork
Njé Mo Jé, 2007

Location and Accessibility
New Bell, Nkololoun, Dernier poteau

Level of Significance
Monumental installation

About the Artwork
Njé Mo Yé is a monument by Koko Komégné, a Cameroonian artist widely regarded as the “father of Douala’s artists”. It is a 5 meters tall sculpture with a wingspan of 2.5 meters, made of red painted steel tubes with a diameter of 12 cm. The work graphically depicts a man and a woman holding hands and standing on three legs. With this artwork, Komégné aims to convey a message about the values of the family and the importance of the stability in the union of the couple. The name of the artwork, Njé Mo Yé, contrasts with the figurative representation: in Duala language, it means “What’s that?”, as a criticism of the patchwork families, typical of the contemporary generation, and the consequent loss of the family ties that characterized the original Cameroonian tradition. The work was inaugurated during SUD 2007 in the district where the artist has lived and observed the contemporary society for over 20 years. It belongs to the Municipality of Douala, which in 2013, after a car accident that damaged the artwork, financed its restoration.

About the location
The artwork is located on a traffic island in the middle of the crossroad “Dernier Poteau” which literally means “last light pole” to indicate the point where, until the eighties, the darkness began. This crossroad belongs to the Nkololoun neighborhood, which in Duala language means “hill of anger”. Nowadays, Dernier Poteau is not anymore an isolated area, but a widely recognized landmark signing the end of the New Bell district and the beginning of the industrial zone of Douala.
**Name of Artwork**
La Nouvelle Liberté, 1996

**Location and Accessibility**
Rond Point Deido

**Level of Significance**
Monumental installation

**About the Artwork**
La Nouvelle Liberté is the most famous and emblematic artwork of Douala, which today has become a symbol of the city. Produced by Joseph Francis Sumegné in 1996, the Nouvelle Liberté is a majestic 12 meters tall sculpture made of scrap metals, erected in the middle of the busiest roundabouts of Douala, the Rond Point Deido.

This artwork pays tribute to the contemporary culture of the city: the culture of recycling, of the assembly and disassembly of objects, of the ability of citizens in “se débrouiller” (getting by) in many complex situations. Despite today La Nouvelle Liberté has become an icon of the city, this sculpture is still often nicknamed the Njo Njo of Deido (meaning the evil, the monster of Deido). This negative designation is based on the strong protests carried on by local media and native populations against La Nouvelle Liberté. Despite the first polemics mainly concerned the aesthetical features of the sculpture, a violent controversy was raised by media on the origins of the artist (coming from the West Region of Cameroun) taking the fold of an ethnic struggle between the native and not native population of Douala. These diatribes led to subsequent attacks and vandalism of the work. For these reasons, La Nouvelle Liberté was officially inaugurated eleven years later during SUD2007, and donated to the Municipality of Douala. This latter funded the pedestal on which the sculpture stands today.

**About the location**
Deido is one of the most important cantons of Douala. The canton is a series of villages under the sovereignty of a traditional royal family. Differently from other cantons, Deido is still inhabited by a majority of native population, which has strong political and cultural power in preserving the Sawa tradition (the regional ethnic group). The crossroad where La Nouvelle Liberté was installed is considered the gateway of the city, the most important traffic hub from which the main boulevards of the city bring towards the center (through Akwa district), the Eastern popular districts, and out of Douala (through the Wouri Bridge and Bonaberi district). After the installation and donation of La Nouvelle Liberté to the Municipality of Douala, this latter has considerably invested on the urbanization of the Rond Point Deido, in particular through the eviction of informal markets surrounding the area, through the installation of street lights, new flooring works, and through the care of the garden of the roundabout.
Name of Artwork
Le Jardin Sonore, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Bonamouti-Deido

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation - Community-embedded work

About the Artwork
The Jardin Sonore by Lucas Grandin, is a wooden structure built on three floors that serves both as a panoramic viewpoint on the Wouri River and as a botanical garden. During SUD 2010, the artist engaged the inhabitants of Bonamouti in the production process of the work though preparatory meetings, the requalification of the area (used before as dumpster on the edge of the river), and the building structure. The botanical garden, located on the perimeter of the wooden structure, hosts flowering, pharmaceutical and grocery plants. The Jardin Sonore is equipped with a sustainable “drop by drop” irrigation system, which allows reaching water autonomy up to 6 months. The rainwater is collected in aluminum boxes arranged all around the frame structure from which a network of thin plastic pipes systematically channels drop-wise water into the vessels. This system does not allow for water dispersion and, at the same time, it does not require regular watering from inhabitants. However, due to wood degradability and the assiduous attendance of the Jardin Sonore by locals, the installation was already restored two times by the artist himself and by the team of Bonamouti.

About the Location
Bonamouti-Deido, commonly known as “Deido Plage” (Deido Beach), is one of the few neighborhoods having a direct access to the edge of the Wouri river. Bonamouti is an ancient village of fishers completely absorbed by the city and still perceived by many as such. Despite recent public works of asphalting and lighting of the main streets, the waste collection system does not reach yet this neighbourhood of the city. The area where the Jardin Sonore is located was completely reclaimed and cleaned from mud and waste, thus opening just in front of the installation a new square, where children often play. The Jardin Sonore has also become a romantic area for young lovers, who meet on the upper floors to contemplate the river view.
Name of Artwork
Face à l’eau, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Bonamouti-Deido positioned just below the Jardin Sonore, on the bank of Wouri River

Level of Significance
Passageway installation

About the Artwork
Face à l’eau by Salifou Lindou is an installation composed of five vertical panels of 3.70 m height, made of wood, black metal, and colored plastic sheets arranged in a way that, at a certain distance, they create the illusion of a single screen. The installation is positioned on the bank of the Wouri River and it was presented during SUD 2010 in the frame of the program Liquid Projects. The artist, who lives and works in the neighborhood, wanted to pay homage to the fishing tradition of the village of Bonamouti, now completely incorporated into the city but still recognized by many as the “fishers’ village”. Face à l’eau was restored and dislocated for SUD 2013, due to the complete appropriation of the installation by the river’s dwellers, who used it as an annex of their homes where they hung clothes and beloved objects. This appropriation damaged the installation: some plastic sheets fell down, and also lost their bright colors after three years. Despite the appropriation, the work was relocated close to its original place, but in a more elevated position and away from houses.

About the location
The work of Lindou is located in Bonamouti-Deido, on the banks of the muddy Wouri river. A few meters from Face à l’eau, there are three more installations, including: the Jardin Sonore by Lucas Grandin, Floating Quai by Juan Fernando Herrano, and one of the numerous mural installations conceived by the Group C.A.I.R.E. and painted by Leah Touitou.
Name of Artworks
C.A.I.R.E., 2013

Location and Accessibility
Bonamouti-Deido

Level of Significance
Proximity and passageway artworks - Architectural and mural Installation

About the Artworks
C.A.I.R.E., an acronym standing for Collective Artistic/Architectural Interventions that are Responsible and Ethical, is a large and ambitious project conceived by a group of three international artists, Kamiel Verschuren (NL), Lucas Grandin (FR) and Amandine Braud (FR), who have “metamorphosed” the neighborhood of Bonamouti-Deido for SUD 2013. The art process and the final results are perfectly interwoven, producing what can be considered as relational art. The C.A.I.R.E. group negotiated a sort of “barter” with dwellers: a development work of the domestic area in exchange of the authorization to use a façade of their house for producing an artistic intervention. A process embedded in the local context, with the aim to be involved in families’ stories, to understand their priorities, and to select the group of inhabitants with whom exchange art for development. A stairway over the mud for a disable woman, outdoor curtains for protecting from the hot sun, doors, terraces, amenities, and a commercial start-up are all the development projects produced by C.A.I.R.E.

For the production of artworks, C.A.I.R.E. further opened the boundaries of the neighborhood, inviting a group of national and international artists, including Salifou Lindou (living and working in Bonamouti-Deido), Romuald Dikomémé (CM), Aser Kash (CM), Leah Touitou (FR) and Malala Andrialavidrazana (MC), to enter locals’ private spaces, involving them in the art process. Featured artists proposed graffiti, stamps, poetries, and innovative photographic techniques to reshape and give value to the entire neighborhood.

About the location
Bonamouti-Deido is a residential neighborhood of Deido, mainly inhabited by natives. One of the main areas selected by the C.A.I.R.E. is commonly known as “Pied dans l’eau” (foot in the water). It is a very marshy zone on the edge of the Wouri river, subject to numerous flooding.

The houses are built on the mud (which is present all year long) attached one to each other. There are no real roads for accessing the area, but a corridor of less than one meter of width allows reaching the houses, whose doors are often protected with simple curtains or discarded doors.
Name of Artwork
Floating Quai, 2013

Location and Accessibility
Bonamouti-Deido

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation

About the Artwork
Floating Quai is a work by the Colombian artist Juan Fernando Herran, started for SUD 2013, and ended in January 2014 with the support of architect Mauro Lugaresi. It is a wooden scaffolding on the bank of the Wouri river made of several pontoons recalling the shape of traditional canoes. With this work the artist wanted to pay homage to the fluvial tradition of Bonamouti dwellers, a population of fishermen who still today make use of dugouts (traditional canoes carved into the wood) to run their business. The floating dock offers a foothold and shelter for canoes, allowing fishermen to land on the shore regardless of the tide.

About the location
Bonamouti-Deido is one of the few neighborhoods in Douala with a direct access to the beach of the Wouri river. It is a fishers’ village, still today considered as “untouched” by the rapid urbanization of the city. Indeed, guided tours in Bonamouti-Deido are often organized in order to allow foreign visitors to discover and to immerse themselves in an “original, traditional” village just few kilometers far from the city center.
Name of Artwork
Arbre à Palabre, 2007

Location and Accessibility
Bonanjo, Rue de la Monte Piquet

Level of Significance
Monumental installation

About the Artwork
The Arbre à Palabre by Frédéric Keiff is a palaver tree whose trunk and branches are made of painted iron rods, while attached fragments of colored glass represent leaves. The installation is more than 5 meters tall with a canopy circumference of 7 meters, and it is equipped with wooden slabs embedded in the trunk, serving as benches. Initially conceived to substitute the former palaver tree of Douala, a huge baobab located in the district of Bonaberi, which fell down in 1993, the symbolic meaning of the installation forced some changes in the process. Traditionally, around the palaver tree, the chief of the village and the council members (the so-called notables) met and sat in order to take the most important political and social decisions concerning the community, and it is there that tradition values were orally transmitted through generations.

This artwork became the subject of a long discussion between the chief of the village and the notables, who finally decided to forbid a foreign artist to place his artwork next to the rest of the former palaver tree. However, it was important that Keiff’s installation was positioned in a public space, easily accessible to inhabitants in order to guarantee that the contemporary palaver tree would keep on holding its symbolic function as a meeting, discussion, and sharing point. The superior chief of Douala, the Prince René Duala Manga Bell, offered one of his properties in Bonanjo for repositioning the Arbre à Palabre that was inaugurated for SUD 2007 and officially donated to the city of Douala.

About the location
The park where the Arbre à Palabre is located belongs to the Bell family, even if the installation itself is in the public domain. This area is surrounded by three historical monuments of Douala: to the North, the Vault of kings Bell, where today the same René Douala Manga Bell lies; to the South, the Espace doual’art (funding agency of the project) from which one can clearly see the Palace of king Bell, commonly known as “La Pagode”, built in 1905 by German colonizers for the king Auguste Manga Ndoumbe; and, finally, to the West, the Old law court building.
18  

**Name of Artwork**  
Sud-Obelisk, 2007

**Location and Accessibility**  
Bonanjo, Place de Gouvernement

**Level of Significance**  
Monumental installation

**About the Artwork**  
The artwork was produced by Faouzi Laatiris for SUD 2007. Sud-Obelisk is a 9 meters tall pillar stone in the Place du Gouvernement of Bonanjo with a pyramidal shape, with a square base measuring one meter side. Sud-Obelisk is made of concrete and covered with a black layer of marble, bearing engraved in gold the Latin names of towns hosting other obelisks and contemporary art centers. With this monumental installation the artist wanted to celebrate both the former Egyptian roots of the African traditions, as well as the city as an important place for contemporary culture.

**About the location**  
SUD-Obelisk is located in front of the Palace of king Bell (La Pagode) and in the middle of a small roundabout leading to the park that hosts the Arbre à palabre.
**Name of Artwork**
Cameroonian Heroes, 2013

**Location and Accessibility**
Doual’art Bonanjo, garden of the old law courts in Douala

**Level of Significance**
Passageway installation

**About the Artwork**
Cameroonian Heros is the mural installation produced by Hervé Youmbi for SUD 2013. It represents the portraits of five Cameroonian politicians who, in different historical periods, fought and died for the independence: Ernest Ouandi, Ruben Um Nyobe, John Ngu Foncha, Felix Moumie, and Rudolf Douala Manga Bell. Despite their popularity, the current political establishment refuses to honor them. Youmbi decided to pay homage to these heroes of the resistance, symbolically dedicating them the names of streets, as reported by the metal plates below each portrait. Each plaque depicts, in addition to the politician’s name and his date of birth and death, two flags. The first one, which is common to all portraits, is the Cameroonian flag, to indicate the home country of each personality. The second flag, instead, belongs to the nation that has caused the death of the portrayed politician. Another correlation is evident in the different shapes of the metal plates: each of them was chosen according to the typical plaque of streets that is possible to find in the country deemed guilty of the death of each politician. With this symbolic gesture, the artist intends to dedicate to Cameroonian heroes the streets of Paris, Berlin, and Yaounde.

**About the location**
Cameroonian Heroes was originally intended to be placed on a visible street wall in Bonanjo, right next to some administrative and political institutions. Request to the authorities didn’t work and negotiations failed. Youmbi’s artwork was finally installed in the garden of the Espace Doual’art. This position, however, seems even more consistent with the message of the artist, as the wall where the five portraits are displayed belongs to the Old Court Law of Douala.
Name of Artwork
La pirogue céleste, 2011

Location and Accessibility
Square of the esplanade of the Old Airport, in Bonapriso

Level of Significance
Passageway installation - Medium scale installation

About the Artwork
La pirogue céleste by Hervé Youmbi is an artwork belonging to the Liquide projects conceived for SUD 2010 but inaugurated one year later. The artwork, whose theme should be the water, pays homage to the fluvial and pirogue tradition of the Sawa people. La pirogue céleste represents a traditional canoe, made of wood, and with only spur of the bow, meticulously decorated with forged metal. The decoration represents people and contemporary signs (such as the divinity Mamy Wata, a group of skyscrapers, an umbrella, a burden over the head of a figure) indicating the complex relationship between traditional and contemporary society. The interior of La pirogue céleste was designed to serve as a planter, and on both sides of the sculpture some wooden planks were arranged in order to serve as benches. During the art production process, Youmbi actively engaged a group of young and old inhabitants in the researches about the techniques of construction and the symbolic meaning of the pirogue. The artwork was officially inaugurated during the Rencontre Ars&Urbis 2011, a conference organized by doual’art, and donated to the Municipality of Douala. Nevertheless, the artwork still lacks the additional aesthetical features (such as flowers and enlightenment) that the Municipality should take care of and were never supplied.

About the location
La pirogue céleste is located in the artist’s neighborhood of residence, Bonapriso, one of the most prestigious and better served areas of Douala. However, before of the urbanization, as Youumbi remembers, “It was a fishers’ village with an access to the river, where we (children) met to play, to swim, and to take courses of pirogues supervised by fishers patching their nets”. Nowadays, it is not longer possible to access the beach. The location of La pirogue céleste changed twice. It was initially installed in a small, central and open plot of land, which was polished up with the aim to use it as children park. Because of changing permissions and priorities of the land’s owner, La pirogue céleste was dismantled and definitively placed in the square of the esplanade of the Old Airport. Nevertheless, this position does not perfectly match with the artist’s expectations, as La pirogue céleste is now less visible and less close to inhabitants’ houses.
21

**Name of Artwork**
Les Globe-Trotters, 2009

**Location and Accessibility**
Bali

**Level of Significance**
Passageway installation - Medium scale installation

**About the Artwork**
Les Globe-Trotters is an installation offered by the artist Philippine Barbou to doual’art, made of yellow painted iron rebars that graphically represent two travellers. The artist wanted to pay tribute to the city not as a touristic destination itself, but as a fundamental step, where all travellers converge to rest and to leave for outside the country.

**About the location**
The installation is located in the district of Bali, the neighborhood of the Princes of Douala, inhabited by the Duala Bell family who holds the traditional power in the city. Precisely, the work is positioned at the intersection between Bonamikengue and the concrete stairway leading to Bonamandolé street and King Bell street.
Name of Artworks
Corps d’eau, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Cité Sic

Level of Significance
Passageway installation - Small scale installations

About the Artworks
Corps d’eau by Aser Kash are five different sculptures made of plastic and iron representing water pitchers of different shapes and dimensions. The installation was presented for SUD 2010, within the Liquide Project program, requiring artists to produce artworks in their neighborhood of residence and to deal with the theme of water. The artist, who has lived in Cité Sic district for over ten years, decided to elaborate his art concept in front of a drilling site of a school of the Cité Sic district, reflecting on the aesthetical and educative role of art production.

About the location
The neighborhood Cité Sic belongs to the original lands of the Bassa ethnic group. It is the oldest industrial area of Douala ("Sic" stays for "Société Industriel Camerounaise") processing and transforming agricultural raw materials into finished products (such as chocolate, fruit juices and milk powder) that are distributed all over the national territory. Since 2000, the neighborhood also hosts the University of Douala that has contributed to attracting young population and to exponentially increase and diversify the social activities of the area.
Name of Artwork/s
Le pont source, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Ndogpassi III

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation - Community-embedded work

About the Artwork
Le pont source by Ties Ten Bosch is a wooden bridge produced for SUD 2010 in Ndogpassi III. This permanent installation is the heritage of a series of artistic and ephemeral interventions, entitled Diving in deep, developed by the artist during his two-months residence in this district. Diving in deep includes the production of an open-air atelier for art production, Le Plongeoir, as well as the video recording and projections inspired by the daily life of inhabitants. The production process of Le pont source actively engaged the community since the conceptualization phase to the physical production of the installation.

About the location
Ndogpassi III is a new, peripheral and landlocked neighborhood at the South-East of Douala, spontaneously occupied by informal settlers since 2000. It is located on a fluvial depression sunken below the area of Village’s neighborhood, characterized by a muddy ground and regular floods during the rain season.
Ndogpassi III does not have access to any public service. Le pont source is positioned between two blocks of the neighborhood over a dirty course of water, opening a safe passageway toward the only natural water source and the primary school of the area.
Name of Artwork
Le théâtre source, 2013

Location and Accessibility
Ndogpassi III

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation

About the Artwork
Le théâtre source is an amphitheater made of concrete, designed by the Belgian artist Philippe Aguirre for SUD 2013, and built with the help of architect Mauro Lugaresi. According to the theme of SUD 2013, the artist decided to metamorphose the natural shape of the area surrounding the water source of Ndogpassi III with a structure typical to ancient Rome. Le théâtre source presents six different levels, each one of about twenty meters of length, and three scenic plateaus, accessible from three flights of stairs (two laterals and one central-positioned). The installation allows accommodating nearly one thousand people. The production process of Le théâtre source lasted three years, requiring a long mediation with local community.

About the location
Ndogpassi III is an isolated and marginalized informal settlement out of Douala, inhabited by immigrant population since the last ten years. The area inspiring Philippe Aguirre’s work was a multi-level depression ground of mud over the only source of water of Ndogpassi III. The water source is a natural spring arranged in 2005 by an international development project (FOURMI) run by doual’art, and the active collaboration of local communities. The natural water is located at the ground level of Le théâtre source in a central position, and it remains an important landmark for locals, especially women and children, who used to meet there for chatting and playing football. The lateral stairs of the installation facilitate the passage between two dirty roads, which were disconnected earlier.
Name of Artwork
Caravane d’images, 2013

Location and Accessibility
Ndogpassi III

Level of Significance
Passageway installation, murals, community embedded works

About the Artwork
Caravane d’images is an itinerant art project by the French artist Leah Touitou presented for SUD 2013. Touitou, in collaboration with the local artist Edwige Ndjeng directed a series of open-air ateliers of painting and production of murals. The project was an opportunity for children and mothers to learn the basic techniques of painting, and to exhibit their drawings (around 40 pieces) during SUD 2013. At the same time, the artists directly involved a group of local young people in the conceptualization and production of murals, presenting textual, graphic and figurative signs.

About the location
Caravane d’images created a permanent visual pathway into Ndogpassi III, leading from the house of the neighborhood’s chief to Le théâtre source, the amphitheater near the water source, produced by Philippe Aguirre.
Name of Artwork
Ghorfa #7, 2010

Location and Accessibility
Mangrove forest in the South of Douala

Level of Significance
Proximity artwork – Architectural installation

About the Artwork
Ghorfa #7 is a wooden building on stilts produced by Younès Rahmoun for SUD 2010. Ghorfa is a typical Berber room located in a vaulted building traditionally used to store grain. However, for the artist it symbolizes the intimate space he used in his family’s house in Tetouan to work and reflects on his artistic practices. The number 7 corresponds to the seventh reproduction of the Ghorfa, this time commissioned by doual’art and made with local wood and on the waters of the Wouri River. For the production of the artwork all materials, and the final building, were carried on boat.

About the location
The artwork is located on the edge of the Wouri river under the mangroves, near a village of fishers immigrated from Nigeria. This isolated position makes the access to Ghorfa #7 is quite complicated and requires taking a boat.
Mobile Access to Knowledge: Culture and Safety in Africa
Documenting and assessing the impact of cultural events and public art on urban safety

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