

CHARGING MYTHS

*In words
nourished*

Introduction by
Maria Zaczekiewicz
and Jean Medina

From the minerals found deep under the ground in Manono, to the speculative futures that might come as part of their (over)exploitation and extraction, the collective On-Trade-Off has presented us with stories of technology's dependence on natural resources during the exhibition *Charging Myths*.

As this particular iteration of the exhibition draws to a close, we want to bring these stories to a new cycle of thinking, of seeing, of telling. This zine emerges out of hunger for more insight, ideas and conversations unearthed by *Charging Myths* — some educational, some collateral to the topic of mining, some personal.

Our thanks go to all the contributors who sent materials for the zine: to both On-Trade-Off and Atelier Picha, and their extended network of collaborators; Greet and Raf, Nemo and Esther, Joseph. We would also like to thank the Framer Framed team, Katti and Tal, and last but not least our graphic designer Dinara.

We are happy to invite into the pages of this zine, in words, and images, nourished.

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Matter (Black, White, Blue)

SERIES OF INTERVIEWS BY NEMO CAMUS

FR	Dieudonné	14'26"	EN
	La concession de Roche Dure appartient à la société AVZ mais les gens exploitaient avant les minerais là-bas. Quand AVZ est arrivé, il a interdit à toute personne d'exploiter là-bas. Mais suite à la vie misérable que nous vivons à Manono, les gens se sont décidés d'aller exploiter là-bas. Il y avait au moins cinq personnes qui exploitaient là-bas. Quand les gens exploitaient, ils ont trouvé beaucoup de minerais.		The Roche Dure concession is owned by AVZ (Mining company) but people used to exploit the minerals there before. When AVZ came in, they forbade anyone to mine there. But because of the miserable life we live in Manono, people decided to go and exploit there. There were at least five people mining there. When people were mining, they found a lot of minerals.
	Emmanuel	19'17"	
	Ces gens qui travaillent au niveau de la carrière Roche Dure. Ils étaient partis le matin pour le travail, et ils ont vu la disparition de leur ami.		Those people who work at the Roche Dure quarry. They had left in the morning for work, and they saw their friend disappear.
	Leur ami ne se laisse pas voir, il est où, mais ils savent la route qu'il a pris. En suivant les traces, ils commencent à trouver les gouttes de sang.		Their friend doesn't let them see him, where he is, but they know the route he took. Following the tracks, they start to find the blood drops.
	En suivant les gouttes de sang, vers le fond ils ont vu un véhicule de l'AVZ qui s'était arrêté là. Il n'y avait personne, ils ont attendu là pendant 10 minutes, il y a le chauffeur et une autre personne qui sont venus en demandant à ces gens-là "vous avez vu notre frère?" "non, on l'a pas vu"		Following the blood drops, towards the bottom they saw an AVZ vehicle that had stopped there. There was no one there, they waited there for 10 minutes, there was the driver and another person who came and asked these people "have you seen our brother?" "no, we didn't see him". Now these drops of blood, where do these drops go?

Maintenant ces gouttes de sang, où vont ces gouttes-là?

Ils ont pris le feu et du carburant, ils ont brûlés premièrement le véhicule de l'AVZ et à ce moment-là ils ont poursuivi les gouttes de sang mais n'ont pas trouvé leur ami.

Après le temps, il y a les renforts de la police qui sont venus, on a renvoyé tous les gens qui étaient dans les carrières, on les a mis à l'extérieur des carrières et puis on a sécurisé avec les militaires

Et c'est pourquoi ils sont partis encore attaqué l'AVZ tout ça, ils disent que ce sont les gens de l'AVZ qui ont tué Les militaires sont en possession de cet endroit-là.

Personne ne vient creuser jusqu'à ce qu'ils terminent ces problèmes-là, parce que ce sont les concessions privées de l'AVZ, et il y a du lithium, et puis la cassitérite là-bas, c'est pourquoi AVZ a bloqué sa concession.

On n'a pas encore retrouvé le corps jusque là.

They took fire and fuel, they burnt first the AVZ vehicle and at that time they chased the blood drops but did not find their friend.

After some time, the police reinforcements came, all the people who were in the quarries were sent away, they were put outside and then the quarries were secured with the military.

And that's why they went and attacked the AVZ again, they say that it was the people from the AVZ who killed him. The military is in possession of this place.

Nobody comes to dig until they finish these problems, because these are the private concessions of the AVZ, and there is lithium, and then cassiterite there, that's why AVZ has blocked its concession.

The body has not been found yet.

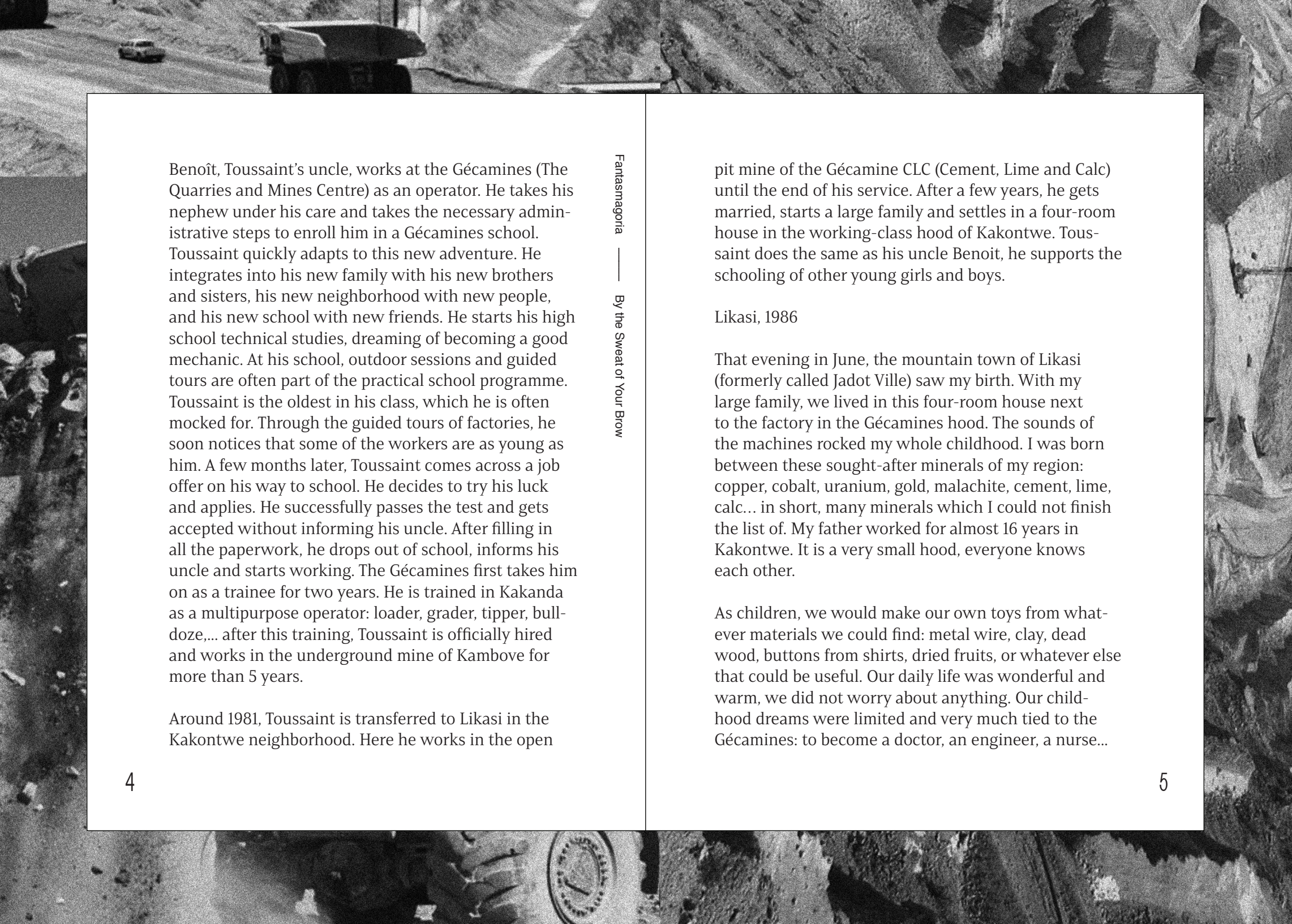
Water (Black, White, Blue)

Fantasmagoria

By the Sweat of Your Brow

On this morning of July 1973, a train from Kabongo stops at Kambove station. A 17-year-old boy gets off with all his luggage. He is visiting his maternal uncle who lives and works in the hood of Kambove. After walking for a bit, he sees that his uncle was waiting for him at the other end of the street with a beautiful smile, accompanied by his family. He receives a warm welcome and introductions are made.

NGOIE MUYA is his name and he is baptised by a Catholic priest under the name of Toussaint. Toussaint makes his journey with one objective in mind: "to continue his high school studies". In the village where he comes from, the school is more than 15 kilometres away and he has no one to pay for his education. So he wrote a letter to his uncle asking for support and his uncle invited him to join him in Kambove, which Toussaint did.



Benoît, Toussaint's uncle, works at the Gécamines (The Quarries and Mines Centre) as an operator. He takes his nephew under his care and takes the necessary administrative steps to enroll him in a Gécamines school. Toussaint quickly adapts to this new adventure. He integrates into his new family with his new brothers and sisters, his new neighborhood with new people, and his new school with new friends. He starts his high school technical studies, dreaming of becoming a good mechanic. At his school, outdoor sessions and guided tours are often part of the practical school programme. Toussaint is the oldest in his class, which he is often mocked for. Through the guided tours of factories, he soon notices that some of the workers are as young as him. A few months later, Toussaint comes across a job offer on his way to school. He decides to try his luck and applies. He successfully passes the test and gets accepted without informing his uncle. After filling in all the paperwork, he drops out of school, informs his uncle and starts working. The Gécamines first takes him on as a trainee for two years. He is trained in Kakanda as a multipurpose operator: loader, grader, tipper, bulldoze,... after this training, Toussaint is officially hired and works in the underground mine of Kambove for more than 5 years.

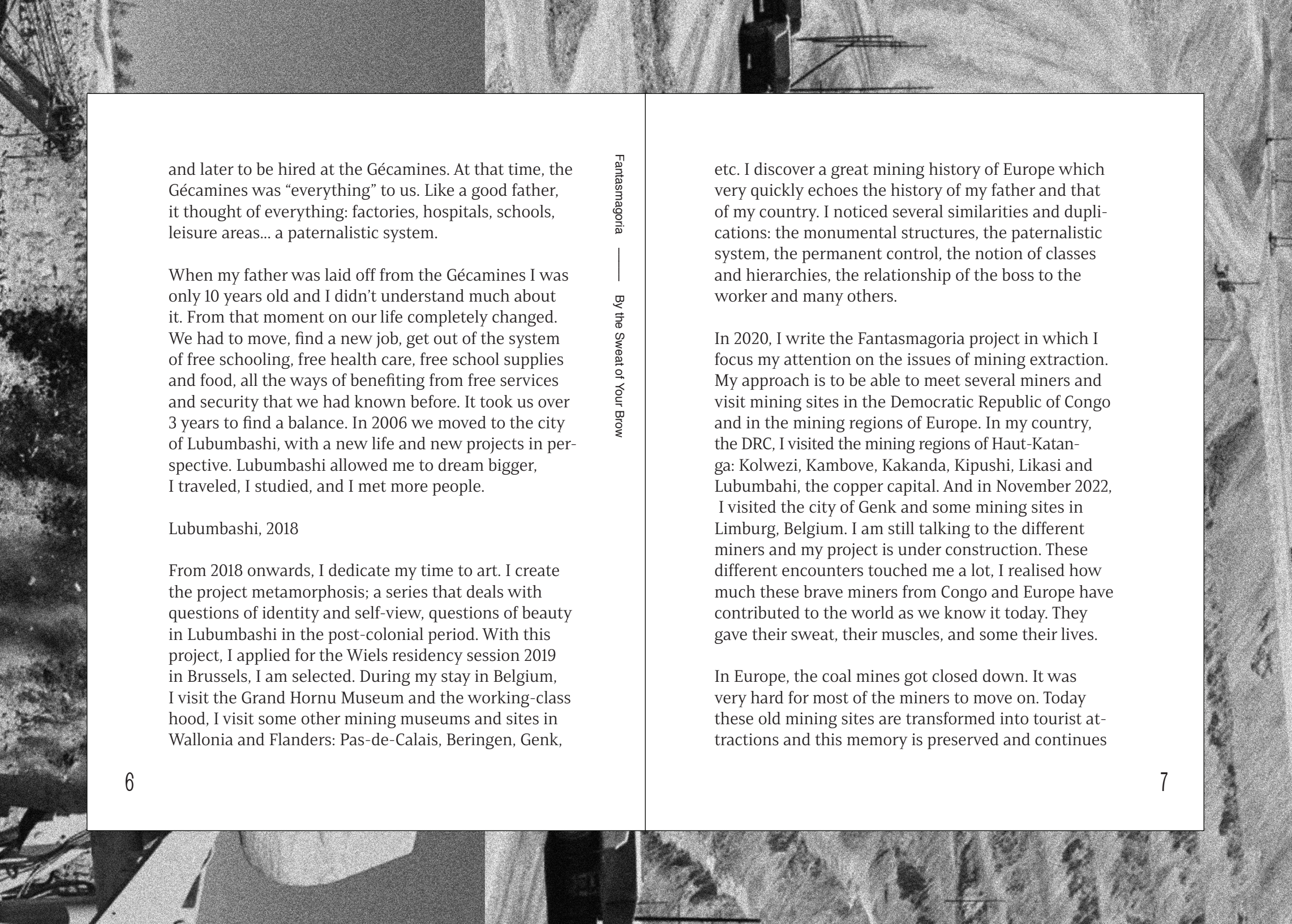
Around 1981, Toussaint is transferred to Likasi in the Kakontwe neighborhood. Here he works in the open

pit mine of the Gécamine CLC (Cement, Lime and Calc) until the end of his service. After a few years, he gets married, starts a large family and settles in a four-room house in the working-class hood of Kakontwe. Toussaint does the same as his uncle Benoit, he supports the schooling of other young girls and boys.

Likasi, 1986

That evening in June, the mountain town of Likasi (formerly called Jadot Ville) saw my birth. With my large family, we lived in this four-room house next to the factory in the Gécamines hood. The sounds of the machines rocked my whole childhood. I was born between these sought-after minerals of my region: copper, cobalt, uranium, gold, malachite, cement, lime, calc... in short, many minerals which I could not finish the list of. My father worked for almost 16 years in Kakontwe. It is a very small hood, everyone knows each other.

As children, we would make our own toys from whatever materials we could find: metal wire, clay, dead wood, buttons from shirts, dried fruits, or whatever else that could be useful. Our daily life was wonderful and warm, we did not worry about anything. Our childhood dreams were limited and very much tied to the Gécamines: to become a doctor, an engineer, a nurse...



and later to be hired at the Gécamines. At that time, the Gécamines was “everything” to us. Like a good father, it thought of everything: factories, hospitals, schools, leisure areas... a paternalistic system.

When my father was laid off from the Gécamines I was only 10 years old and I didn’t understand much about it. From that moment on our life completely changed. We had to move, find a new job, get out of the system of free schooling, free health care, free school supplies and food, all the ways of benefiting from free services and security that we had known before. It took us over 3 years to find a balance. In 2006 we moved to the city of Lubumbashi, with a new life and new projects in perspective. Lubumbashi allowed me to dream bigger, I traveled, I studied, and I met more people.

Lubumbashi, 2018

From 2018 onwards, I dedicate my time to art. I create the project metamorphosis; a series that deals with questions of identity and self-view, questions of beauty in Lubumbashi in the post-colonial period. With this project, I applied for the Wiels residency session 2019 in Brussels, I am selected. During my stay in Belgium, I visit the Grand Hornu Museum and the working-class hood, I visit some other mining museums and sites in Wallonia and Flanders: Pas-de-Calais, Beringen, Genk,

etc. I discover a great mining history of Europe which very quickly echoes the history of my father and that of my country. I noticed several similarities and duplications: the monumental structures, the paternalistic system, the permanent control, the notion of classes and hierarchies, the relationship of the boss to the worker and many others.

In 2020, I write the Fantasmagoria project in which I focus my attention on the issues of mining extraction. My approach is to be able to meet several miners and visit mining sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the mining regions of Europe. In my country, the DRC, I visited the mining regions of Haut-Katanga: Kolwezi, Kambove, Kakanda, Kipushi, Likasi and Lubumbahi, the copper capital. And in November 2022, I visited the city of Genk and some mining sites in Limburg, Belgium. I am still talking to the different miners and my project is under construction. These different encounters touched me a lot, I realised how much these brave miners from Congo and Europe have contributed to the world as we know it today. They gave their sweat, their muscles, and some their lives.

In Europe, the coal mines got closed down. It was very hard for most of the miners to move on. Today these old mining sites are transformed into tourist attractions and this memory is preserved and continues

to be told with a positive outlook. The miners I met and interviewed told me touching stories of their moments of bitterness, pain but also those moments of joy, love and humanity. In DRC, I also listened to some very beautiful and emotional stories but for the most part the end is sad. The Gécamines, which filled the dreams of young people, which was the economic lung of the country, which made other economic activities work, went bankrupt. The workers have been waiting endlessly for their payments, to this day. When I talk to the miners of the Gécamines, this is what they are most disappointed about. Some have even died of a heart attack and others are still keeping a spreadsheet to see how much they will be paid. No transformation has been made, one still notices those monumental structures in the background and the houses that are starting to crack little by little.

The history of the Gécamines is the history of a giant who passed through this region of Katanga; one notices his trace, his works, his imprint in the minds of the people but above all, one also notices the great emptiness it has left, this endless waiting line in the hearts of many miners.

I am still grateful to my father and to all those miners in the world who contributed with their efforts...

Moi d'abord que voici ici, je manque l'emploi. Je suis creuseur sans emploi. Je travaillais à Roche Dure mais vu qu'une affaire ou scandale s'est passé là-bas... On avait tué quelqu'un, c'est pourquoi nous sommes chassés dans la carrière de Roche Dure. J'ai fait presque 10 ans en creusage, 10 ans. J'ai commencé presque à l'âge de 12 ans, jusqu'à maintenant. Je creuse encore. Avec ce métier nous gagnons 10.000 francs, parfois vous gagnez 7.000 francs, parfois 5.000 francs, parfois moins de 5.000. 2 dollars, 3 dollars, 5 dollars. Il y a la bêche, il y a la houe, il y a la machette, il y a la hache. Le bassin... C'est tout presque. Nous travaillons comme ça, à la main. C'est la production qui nous a fait quitter Mille Bêches vers Roche Dure, c'est la production. Car là-bas il y a beaucoup de minerais, ils travaillent très bien et gagnent aussi beaucoup.

First of all, here I am, out of work. I'm an unemployed digger. I used to work in Roche Dure but because of a case or scandal that happened there... Someone had been killed, that's why we were kicked out of the Roche Dure quarry. I did almost 10 years in digging, 10 years. I started almost at the age of 12, until now. I still dig. With this job we earn 10,000 francs, sometimes you earn 7,000 francs, sometimes 5,000 francs, sometimes less than 5,000. 2 dollars, 3 dollars, 5 dollars. There's the spade, there's the hoe, there's the machete, there's the axe. The basin... That's almost all. We work like that, by hand. It was production that made us leave Mille Bêches for Roche Dure, it was production. Because there are a lot of minerals there, they work very well and also earn a lot.

Manono regorge en lui de coopératives minières qui chaque semaine il y a des tonnes et des tonnes qui sont amenées vers des destinations inconnues

Manono is full of mining cooperatives that every week bring out tons and tons to unknown destinations

Et là, nous restons seulement avec des trous

And there we are left with nothing but holes

On prend le nécessaire, et nous, population, nous restons comme ça.

They take what is necessary, and we, the population, remain like that.

Ça dépasse notre compréhension parce qu'à l'heure actuelle, on ne pouvait pas trouver Manono dans les conditions où elle est

It's beyond our comprehension because at the moment, we couldn't find Manono in the conditions it is in



C'est réputé, c'est connu sur l'échelle mondiale "Manono, Manono, Manono, Manono, Manono,..."

Et quand quelqu'un arrive comme ça, et qu'on lui dit que non c'est ça Manono, la réserve mondiale de lithium et autres matières, on trouve que c'est un problème, c'est alarmant quand même

C'est alarmant

It's famous, it's known all over the world Manono, Manono, Manono, Manono, Manono,...

And when someone arrives like that and is told that this is Manono, the world's reserve of lithium and other materials, we find it a problem, it's alarming

It's alarming

FR



Maarten and Musasa in the garden of Picha, Lubumbashi 2019



Daddy Tshikaya working on the Tesla scale model and Musasa in the background painting *Material Matters: Li3* in Picha, Lubumbashi 2019



Daddy Tshikaya starting with the *Tesla scale model* in Picha, Lubumbashi 2019



Daddy Tshikaya, Pathy Tshindele and Maarten Vanden Eynde playing around in the garden of Picha with *Material Matters: Co27* in progress on the table, Lubumbashi 2019

All pictures by Alain Nsenga

The Ocean's Trompe l'Oeil

By Greet Brauwers & Raf Custers

It took the biggest arms manufacturer in the world almost 45 years to get out of the deepsea mining business. It took us 3 weeks to make its giant deep sea mining collector prototype go down. We being David, they truly being Goliath.

What we did is: we drowned a replica of a prototype blueprint of theirs and made it look like a happening.

This is how it went.



Everything in deepsea mining has to do with scale. WYSINWYG: what you see from the miners is not what you'll get.

For one, they know that they'll cause harm but they'll tell you that harm will not be serious. They base this assertion on tests of only a few square kilometers in size. Compare this with the future mining sites. If ever they'll start mining, every operation on the seabed might 'clear' some 300 square kilometers per year of polymetallic nodules, or 9000 square kilometers over a license period of 30 years.(#) These nodules are the primary target of the deepsea miners, because they contain nickel, cobalt and other indispensable metals.

Scale also plays for the machinery. Collector prototypes weigh around 30 tons. Final scrapers are said to weigh 3 to 4 times as much.

Number three, the digital simulations ("moving image artists impressions") made for the miners usually show one machine at work. You'll rarely see 2 or 3 machines at work at once in one site - a simulation from TheMetalsCompany is an exception. And you'll never read that this emerging industry will operate like the agro-industry does, with a multitude of scrapers at work in a v-formation. This method though would seriously increase production volumes, and it is inconceivable that the miners haven't thought about it in their scenarios.

Number four has to do with sediments. Clouds of sediments will be stirred up when machines drive around on the ocean floor. To show that they are aware of this, the deepsea miners have been testing how big these clouds might be and how far they drift of. During one test a collector prototype drove back and forth through the sediment cloud and registered and filmed what happened. This test was called the making of selfies. In digital simulations these clouds are either absent (because they are too complex and too costly to calculate digitally) or minimalised.

They are obscured from our perception.

Anna Tsing gave us a kind of abstract that can help to deal with scale. Scalability, she writes in her famous mushroom-supply-chain study (*), is the ability of a project to change scales smoothly without any change in project frames. Take a 1x1x1m cube for example. Its properties and proportions remain the same if you resize it to a 10x10x10m cube. But what with nature, what with mining tests in nature? Can conclusions drawn from small-scale deepsea mining tests be blown up and remain trustworthy for the exploitation of seabed minerals on industrial scales? This is hard. Scalability, says Tsing, is not an ordinary feature of nature. Nature throws in too many distortions. Any linear up scaling will simply not work.

Everything the deepsea mining pioneers are doing and claiming has therefore to be taken with a big-scale chump of seasalt. If ever they'll receive authorization to proceed to commercial seabed mining they'll have to recalculate and re-do their framing of their ability to neatly ('sustainably') supply the world economies with raw materials and by doing so save humankind. This if ever must be stressed. Sovereign countries can hand out licenses for the exploitation of the resources of the ocean. But for the ocean floor in the abyss of international waters this competence rests with a multilateral body based in Kingston, Jamaica: the International Seabed Authority. This part of the planet belongs to the Commons of Humankind. Exploration is authorized there, but whether or not deep sea mining exploitation will be authorized is under discussion. A lengthy discussion, too, because too much is at stake.

This is where Goliath pops in.

Goliath's real name is Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin, by far the biggest manufacturer of weaponry in the world, has occupied the top rank among the Death Merchants every year since 2009

(+). They do guns, choppers, fighter jets, interceptors, drones, hypersonics, 5G swarms... And they did hunt for raw materials in the deep sea.

At that time Lockheed Martin was taking part in the First Wave of deepsea mining. A few consortia were making equipment and testing it. Lockheed Martin was part of OMCO, alongside petroleum companies (Amoco, Royal Dutch Shell), the mining company Billiton (The Netherlands) and the dredging company Boskalis (The Netherlands). But: in this same epoch the United Nations were discussing the status of the seabed in international waters. These negotiations were concluded in 1982 with the adoption of the Law of the Sea and the principle that this part of the planet is the Common Heritage of Mankind. The USA took part in the discussions but went its own way. And in 1984 the USA granted an exploration license to OMCO. From then on the consortium could do exploration work in two areas in a vast part of the Pacific known as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone. OMCO was given a second exploration license by the US authorities in 1994. These assets were taken over from OMCO by Lockheed Martin when the consortium dissolved in 1995.

Lockheed Martin too built a deep sea mineral collector prototype and tested it in the Pacific. Around 1978 it was photographed in the belly of a ship, and it looked immense. And yet, this was only a prototype. The particularity of the prototype was that it was designed as a 'self-propelling collector'. It rests on two rotating pipes that pull the machine forward in the seabed mud - according to the archimedes screw propulsion principle. We took blueprints of this machine, found in US Patent 4232903 of december 1978, as the starting point for a performance.

Deepsea mining thrives or dives with the markets. The first wave ended with the world economic crisis of the late 1970s when market prices for raw materials weren't worth the investment anymore. The second wave took off in this century's first decade with the raw

materials's super-cycle. Billions have and are being spent on equipment. But only little of this mind-blowing engineering has been put into industrial applications in the deep sea. The only existing example - the company Nautilus in Papua New Guinea - went broke in 2019.

This remains an emerging industry. It does not exist commercially. A handful of companies though tend to create a new sector, hoping to attract investment and make money. They surround their marketing campaigns with imagery and stories that are literally dazzling. They mainly want us to believe that they're saving the world by going after the raw materials that we'll be desperately in need of. They prove their *raison d'être* with 'projected demand': so many EV's will be driving around in 2030, so many rechargeable batteries will therefore be needed, and the number of mines has to triple, quadruple, multiply. Once they're authorized and fully operational, they'll be scraping off the top layer of the seabed.

But these operations will be completely invisible, being far from where we are in the Low Lands, deep in the ocean.

With Lockheed's blueprints in hand we decided to do our own artist's impression of one of the first mining vehicles. The patent has extraordinary details of bolts and conveyors and cylinders but unfortunately the inventors forgot to mention the dimensions. We retrieved them from a film in which a newsreelian off-voice says that this machine was 45 ft long, 30 ft wide, 15 ft high (or roughly 15m long by 10m wide by 5m high ¥¥). Hence we called it the Sea Monster and set off to make a replica of Fig.5 in the Patent, the top plan.

We had a special act in mind for our happening and had to develop, or find, the proper material to make the trick come true. Bioplastics seemed to gather all the qualities needed. Researchers had discovered a bioplastic when trying to develop a biofuel.

Their recipe spoke of a mixture of glycerol and citric acid. It was fully vegetable-based and, importantly for our intervention, biodegradable. No further clues were given. We were inspired by others who had been experimenting with potatoes, and all the more so because they argued that if an experiment went wrong you could always throw the remains in the green bin. Still the results were not satisfactory. Finally, embroidery enthusiasts came to our rescue. They are used to embroidering on a pattern that they can wash away when the embroidery is finished.

And so it was that in august 2021 we stitched together a big sheet on which we copied the top plan blueprint by hand.

Evidently it was scaled: our two dimensional replica measured 6 by 10 meters. We could never have done this alone. 25 people of all walks of life worked with us for three weeks at the Zinneke workshop at Place Masui in Brussels. Since the year 2000, Zinneke organises the bi-annual Zinneke Parade which is a massive outburst of inventiveness, masquerade, drag and drumming in which kids and elderly from all the Brussels neighborhoods participate. While we were doing our measuring and drawings, Zinneke's metals workshop made the construction that we'd use at our final event. At the end of that month all of us gathered for our own parade towards a water basin at the Fish Market in the city center of Brussels. We unrolled the sheet with the Sea Monster drawing from the metals construction and ceremonially carried it towards and into the water basin and when we laid it on the water it immediately disappeared. Scan the QR code below and you'll see more.

This intervention in the Brussels public space echoes the industrial rush to the metals that lie in and on the ocean floor. Projects are being sold to the public opinion in a specific way. Digital animations and simulations project an industrial activity into the future. These impressions are simplified. Companies prefer to draw a green image and hold back problematic aspects of future exploitation in the deep sea. These simulations are a Trompe l'Oeil. Often

we are deliberately distracted by misleading discourse. We are lured into believing the saviors. What else is it that deepsea miners do? But also: what did it mean when the Sea Monster disappeared in the water basin? We've left the options open. Did we drown a replica of a mining vehicle with its industry? Did the monster slide out of our hands and off to the depths of the watery world? Those who were there still haven't overcome our astonishment. It all went so quickly. As we had purposely planned.

It took us 3 weeks to make the Sea Monster and drown it.

Lockheed Martin needed almost half a century to quit deepsea mining. In March of this year, the company sold its two exploration licenses - kept by its subsidiary UK Seabed Resources - to Loke Marine Minerals from Norway. A UK Seabed Resources spokesperson said: 'Following a detailed analysis it was clear that there was a better owner for our business'.





As part of the exhibition *Charging Myths*, with the collective *On-Trade-Off Belly Therapy* workshop — 09/05/2023 — Pélagie Gbaguidi with Emma Missal (assistant) and the participating students Leyla Sonnenwold, Iulia Alonesi, Andrea Eleva, Jhor VanderHorst, Ilja Schamle



Sami

44'43"

Toutes les multinationales aujourd'hui sont focalisées sur le lithium, ça signifie qu'il y a de l'argent qui est apporté dans l'exploitation.

Mais est-ce que Manono en profite? Est-ce que Manono en profite?

Le Congolais lambda se trouve toujours là où il est, en faisant des trous plus profonds pour aller trouver le lithium qui était un peu plus en profondeur puisqu'il a sorti tout ce qui était en surface

Donc on a des trous qui ne sont pas compensés et après il y a des gens qui s'enrichissent quelque part

Moi je me dis en RDC on ne devait pas exploiter le lithium, parce qu'il ne nous servait à rien!

Ça donne même à rire puisque quand vous regardez, on utilise de l'énergie qui pollue pour trouver des éléments qui ne vont pas polluer à l'avenir, donc ça ne sert à rien d'une manière plus logique, ça ne sert à rien

Je me dis que nous avons un grand travail à faire, puisque cette extraction-là pour nous, ça ne nous aide pas

Évidemment, il y a des taxes qui sont payées, il y a de l'argent, il y a des exploitants artisanaux qui sont là, qui du matin au soir peuvent avoir quelque chose de quoi se nourrir — pas assez, car c'est le quotidien seulement du creuseur qui entre, qui peut travailler, qui peut

All the multinationals today are focused on lithium, which means that there is money to be brought into exploitation.

But does Manono benefit from this?

The average Congolese man is still there, making deeper holes to find the lithium that was a bit deep because he took out everything that was on the surface

So we have holes that are not compensated for and then there are people who get rich somewhere

I say to myself that in the DRC we shouldn't have exploited lithium, because it was useless!

It's even funny because when you look at it, we use energy that pollutes to find elements that won't pollute in the future, so it's useless,

In a more logical way, it's useless I say to myself that we have a great deal of work to do, because this extraction does not help us

Of course, there are taxes paid, there is money, there are artisanal miners who are there, who from morning to night can have something to eat - not enough, because it's only for the daily life of the digger who comes in, who can work, who can sell and then he has his food for a day, so it's no use for, in any case, the overall scale of the country.

Manono (Congo, Africa, Africa)

[Signature]

[Signature]

vendre et après il a sa bouffe pour un jour, donc ça ne sert à rien pour, en tout cas, l'échelle globale du pays.

Parce que il y a de l'argent qui entre, il y a des contrats qui entrent, soit ils sont mal signés soit s'ils sont bien signés, et c'est à la caisse où l'argent peut être utilisé à autre chose

Moi je me dis, je pense qu'on ne devrait pas exploiter toutes les commodités qu'on trouve à RDC

On pourrait se dire malgré le commerce international qui bouge sur le lithium on dit "on arrête", à moins que ça soit des projets avec un pacte visible sur la population

Parce que juste pour le courant, il n'y en a pas, donc que demander de plus? Des voitures électriques? Elles ne servent à rien, elles ne serviront à rien ici, donc pourquoi on fait ça alors?

C'est la question que je me pose

Célestin

48'27"

Le rythme avec lequel on est en train d'exploiter les minerais ici chez nous

C'est un rythme très très alarmant

Si je prends le cobalt par exemple, les réserves les plus importantes se trouvent ici en RDC

Et ça représente environ 52% de réserves mondiales

Because there is money coming in, contracts coming in, either they are badly signed or they are well signed, and it is at the cash desk where the money can be used for something else

I think that we should not exploit all the commodities that we find in the DRC We could say, despite the international trade that moves on the --- we say "we stop" unless it's projects with a visible impact on the population

Because just for electricity, there isn't any here, so what more can you ask for? Electric cars? They're useless, they will always be useless here, so why are we doing this then?

That's the question I ask myself.

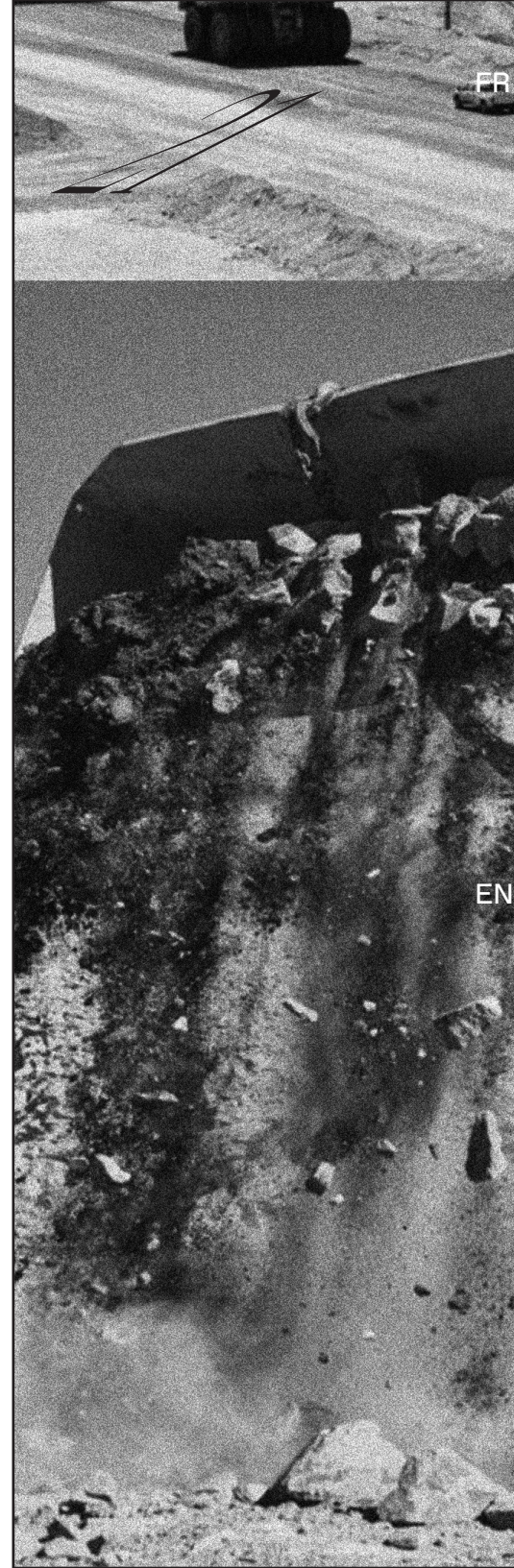
And the rate at which the minerals are being mined here at home

It's a very very alarming rate

If I take cobalt for example, the largest reserves are here in the DRC

And that represents about 52% of the world's reserves

Martin (Black, White, Blue)



FR

EN

Aujourd'hui par exemple, avec la transition énergétique, la demande en métaux est devenue très importante, et même le prix des métaux a augmenté

Mais ce qui est un peu, assez inquiétant, c'est qu'aujourd'hui l'exploitation est concentrée beaucoup plus sur la RDC, et la production annuelle au niveau mondial est estimée à 124 000 tonnes

Les experts en la matière, donc du secteur minier, estiment que les réserves en cobalt pourraient s'épuiser en 2120. Alors je suis entrain de me demander le rythme avec lequel on exploite ces minerais aujourd'hui lorsqu'on va arriver à l'an 2120 qui est considéré comme étant la période au cours de laquelle les gisements de cobalt pourraient s'épuiser, ça signifie que ici chez nous nous allons rester avec des trous seulement

Today, for example, with the energy transition, the demand for metals has become very important, and even the price of metals has increased

But what is a bit, actually quite worrying, is that today the exploitation is concentrated much more on the DRC, and the annual production at a world level is estimated at 124,000 tons

Experts in the mining sector estimate that cobalt reserves could run out in 2120 So I'm wondering how fast these minerals are being mined today, and when we get to 2120, which is considered to be the time when cobalt deposits could run out, does that mean we're going to be left here at home with the holes only?

A research project
of Josph Kasau
& Stéphane Kabila



Gestures of the Gods

This text does not tell a lived story. This text, or in any case what I am telling, may shock, or it may please. It has already shocked, and it has already pleased. In reality, this text is an attempt to reconstitute, to reconstruct and reflect on a journey, a research itinerary that we began in 2021 and that Stéphane Kabila and I are still following today in the context of our Gesture of the Gods project. This journey has gradually enabled us to understand and try to talk about it, often in the wrong way, but always with the aim of internalising and making our fight being waged by many (indigenous) peoples in Africa, Latin America, Asia and all over the world.

This fight, made invisible by many of the slogans in vogue today in what we consider to be ecological propaganda, is deeply rooted in time and has fairly close links with the colonial system, which it is dangerous to regard as part of the past. It is for this reason that we agree with Guillaume Blanc when he speaks of green colonialism. (1)

Before going any further, it is urgent to remind ourselves of the purpose of this text: it is not about ecology. No, it is about the way in which ecological issues are approached in Africa in particular, and from what perspective a reversal of narrative can take place on the basis of a decolonial debate on the protection of nature. This brings us back to a second important reading throughout our itinerary, that proposed by Fiore Longo based on field testimonies gathered during her work with the organisation Survival International : *Décolonisons la protection de la nature ! Plaidoyer pour les peuples autochtones et l'environnement* (Let's decolonise the protection of nature! A Plea for Indigenous Peoples and the Environment). (2)

* The collective international fiction:

In a remote corner of the world, a dense forest. The camera moves in for an aerial view, revealing an infinite variety of tropical trees, just as wild, just as tall, just as colourful and just as untouched. As if in a dream... In the distance, bonobos cross the savannah, the mountains separate the scenery, the greenery intensifies the mystery and, very melodically, birdsongs and animal cries combine with the whistle of the fresh wind...

This is what many would have liked to see in a film about Africa. This raw, wild nature that exists in almost every wildlife documentary, intensifying the Western imagination and fuelling the dream of many to make their first trips to Africa. In reality, "this Africa does not exist! There are no vast territories untouched by human presence, and surveyed only by the hordes of wild animals that are the delight of tourist safaris. There are peoples who have been around for thousands of years, who have settled here, who have become breeders here or farmers there. Yet these men, women and children have been - and are still being - expelled by the thousands from Africa's natural parks, where they now suffer the daily violence of eco-guards supported by UNESCO, the WWF and so many other NGOs." (3) But who is ready to give up this vision of Africa as "the home of nature, inevitable from its very beginnings (...) a solitary Africa that gives us a feeling of eternity, a reassuring emotion in the face of the damage caused everywhere else by 'our' modernity"? (4)

Even I am sometimes tempted to believe the opposite when I see the films we watch every day on Disney, National Geographic, Netflix and Amazon about ecological propaganda. This is what I sincerely told a European

(1) Guillaume Blanc, *L'Invention du Colonialisme Vert, Pour en Finir avec le Mythe de l'Eden Africain*, Ed. Flammarion, Paris, 2020, 346p.

(2) Fiore Longo, *Décolonisons la Protection de la Nature. Plaidoyer Pour les Peuples Autochtones et l'Environnement*, Ed. Double Ponctuation, Coll. Point virgule, Normandie, 2023, 183p.

(3) Guillaume Blanc, *O.p. Cit.*, pp. 15-16.

(4) Guillaume Blanc, *O.p. Cit.*, pp. 15-16.

(5)

Francois-Xavier Fauvelle,
Preface of Guillaume
Blanc, *L'invention du
Colonialisme Vert, Pour
en Finir avec le Mythe
de l'Eden Africain*, Ed.
Flamarion, Paris, 2020.

an colleague who was talking to me about the need for development in Africa and the beauty of national parks, which lies precisely in the fact that they need to be protected from (African) humans. The answer I gave her was well articulated by François-Xavier Fauvelle in his preface to *The Invention of Green Colonialism*...

"While resources and environments everywhere else have been exploited for the benefit of industrialisation, urbanisation and development, Africa would appear to have remained a sanctuary, between red earth and blue sky, where the origins of life have been fragilely renewed every day since the dawn of time. Or so we would like to believe. This Eden, miraculously preserved by Africans over the millennia, is now under threat and in urgent need of saving. And Africa's natural parks are the last traces of a once pristine and wild world that in reality never existed. Populations are forcibly relocated there, with fines, prison sentences, social destructuring, beatings, sometimes rape and even murder, dehumanising Africa in order to establish a Western vision of Africa as a global sanctuary of ecological balance." (5)

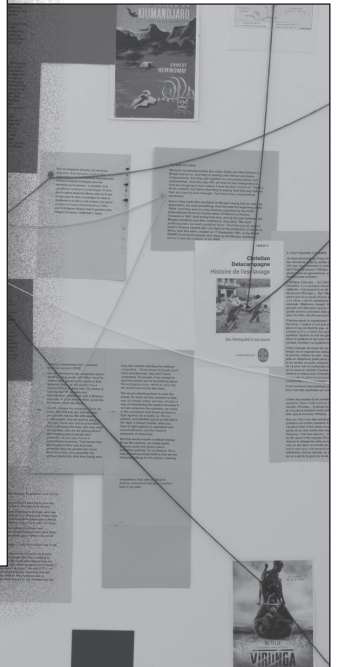
This imaginary world therefore needs to be deconstructed, confronted and, in the best of cases, brought together so that a number of avenues can be explored other than those of the major international organisations, which are the problem but which want to position themselves as the solution, proposing to save Africa from the Africans for the benefit of humanity (Europe).

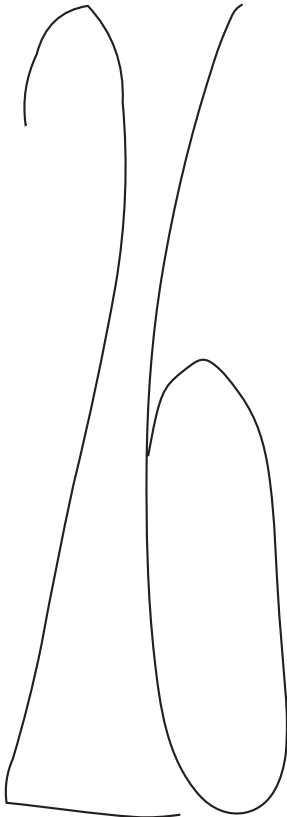
* A study case

In 2021, Stéphane Kabila and I began a research project, a journey. The basis of our quest was to understand the mechanisms of violence of colonialism based on the environment. And our starting point was an interesting case study:

"Kalera is a village located in a hunting area between two national parks (Kundelungu and Upemba). While Deutsch Bank proposed to finance the unification of the two parks to create one of the largest tourist complexes in Central Africa, resistance from the Kalera chief and his royal family put a stop to the project, which never saw the light of day. How long will this resistance last? How did this resistance come about? How can we tell the story of this resistance and promote alternative narratives on this global issue of green colonialism?"

This is the question at the root of our artistic research movement, the first phase of which culminated in a group exhibition in Basel and Lugano organised by the Waza Art Centre and City Salts in Switzerland between October 2021 and April 2022. Our proposal was an installation in three parts called *Gestures of the Gods*: The first part, through a series of discussions between artists, activists, researchers, traditional chiefs and curators, set up an exchange mechanism that we had conceived during the residency. The discussions were compiled into a sound piece in which we put the different conversations into dialogue to form what would later become our field of research.





The second part was a metaphorical video that takes a critical look at the earth as space, matter and idea: a space where indigenous communities live, where they produce food and which they preserve thanks to ancestral knowledge that science and capitalism are reducing to their most ridiculous expressions.

The third part is a sculpture in plexiglass on which three levels of maps are printed and supported by 26 cups (a reference to COP 26). The work questions the way in which borders are drawn and how the lines affect the reality of life in local communities. Kalera is 292 km away from Lubumbashi, with a hydroelectric dam being built on its river, so-called 'development' projects and the reunification of the two national parks that surround it, threatening to evict the local population. The lines on the maps are changing. The cartographic line becomes a performative gesture of power that creates space rather than represents it.



* Questioning future gestures:
diving into troubled waters

Following Switzerland, a visit to the field was necessary. But how, in our own country, with our position as artists, can we deal with a community that is used to being in contact with NGOs and international bodies whose extractivist practices reinforce the communities' ideological, financial and cultural dependence? This makes it uncertain whether we can have a genuine exchange with people like us, who are also foreigners because they come from the city?

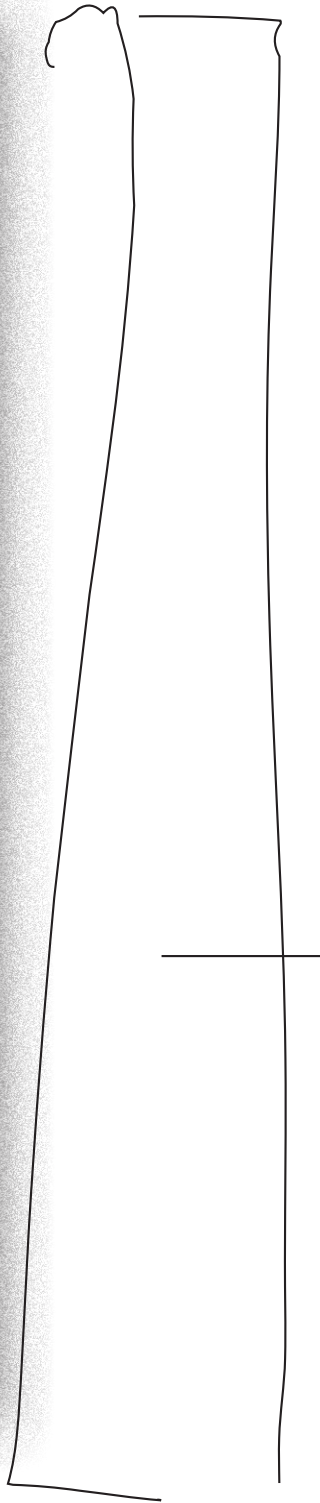
In this context, our initial objectives were quickly adapted to allow us to just listen, learn and try to start a dialogue on the spot. As we moved from one place to another, we managed not to tackle the issues head-on, but to create links in three large villages (Kalera, Kyubo and Mufunga Sampwe) with cooperatives, journalists, farmers, sportsmen, teachers, etc. who were ready to welcome us on future occasions.

It's a very slow process, but it's necessary, especially when you realise that people's sensitivities are very different, and that the risks they face are enormous, forcing them to tackle the fundamental issue straight away, like the Kalera chief we met, who is painted by all those who have been there as the villain of the story, blocking the community's development because he refused to give way to the very people who want to drive out the population.

This is our journey. It is not a story, it is a fight so that many other people can have the chance to tell their story. So that another story can replace that of the gods who have been acting for years in the name of environmental protection. This story, if it is one, is one that begins with a dream from which we must all wake up.

Joseph K. Kasau Wa Mambwe
a r t i s t

Photos by
Nicolas Gysin_city salts





Electrify Everything: Experiments and Observations on Electricity
performance — 27/05/2023 — Marjolin Dijkman with Pom Bouvier b.
and Jean Katambayi Mukendi. Photos by Maarten Nauw



Minerai Noir (1956)
by René Depestre



47'17"

Quand la sueur de l'Indien se trouva brusquement tarie par le soleil
Quand la frénésie de l'or draina au marché la dernière goutte de sang indien
De sorte qu'il ne resta plus un seul Indien aux alentours des mines d'or
On se tourna vers le fleuve musculaire de l'Afrique
Pour assurer la relève du désespoir
Alors commença la ruée vers l'inépuisable
Trésorerie de la chair noire
Alors commença la bousculade échevelée
Vers le rayonnant midi du corps noir
Et toute la terre retentit du vacarme des pioches
Dans l'épaisseur du minerai noir

FR

EN

When the Indian's sweat was suddenly dried up by the sun
When the gold frenzy drained the last drop of Indian blood at the market
So that not a single Indian was left around the gold mines
They turned to the muscular river of Africa
To provide the relief of despair
Then began the rush for the inexhaustible
Treasury of the black flesh
Then began the mad scramble
To the radiant noon of the black body
And the whole earth resounded with the din of the pickaxes
In the thickness of the black mineral

Maarten Nauw (March 2023)



Read by Sami

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