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Shared Heritage Africa Rediscovering Masterpieces

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DOI

[10.52200/docomomo.69.ed](https://doi.org/10.52200/docomomo.69.ed)

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

DOCOMOMO Journal

Citation (APA)

Pottgiesser, U., & Quist, W. (2023). Shared Heritage Africa: Rediscovering Masterpieces. *DOCOMOMO Journal*, 2023(69), 2-3. <https://doi.org/10.52200/docomomo.69.ed>

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EDITORIAL

Uta Pottgiesser & Wido Quist

Editors-in-Chief

SHARED HERITAGE AFRICA REDISCOVERING MASTERPIECES

Docomomo International is proud to present the results of the international project *Shared Heritage Africa: Rediscovering Masterpieces* and other selected papers from our call for papers *Shared Heritage Africa – Campuses*, published in December 2022. The SHA project itself, coordinated by Docomomo Germany, focused on rediscovering post-war modern buildings from the 1950s-1980s in the partner countries Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda.¹ This period of independence from colonial rule, from the United Kingdom (Ghana 1957, Nigeria 1960, and Uganda 1962) and from Belgium (Rwanda 1962), has a great socio-political significance and influence on the educational systems and buildings. The rediscovery of this heritage focuses on exploring the values, challenges, and opportunities through the eyes of their contemporary users. Concentrating on the post-war modern buildings constructed after independence from colonial rule, the project celebrated projects that are situated at the periphery of the architectural discourse and, therefore, seldom documented despite their social, economic, and political significance.²

This Docomomo journal highlights the importance of the combination of local workshops, including student writing and photography workshops, exhibitions and 'digital fellowships' using the internet for dissemination. Exploratory interviews and narratives are used to collect testimonies of contemporary users applied in the SHA project as well as in the other articles. Aspects discussed are, among others, the physical; deterioration (technical, functional, social), the cosmological; through the sense of identity, community, place attachment, maintenance and taking care, ownership and appropriation, and the environmental; considering the quality, and sustainability of spaces, and also conditions of comfort and satisfaction. While the method is in development, preliminary conclusions can already be sketched. The written, visual, and digital documentation of the built cultural heritage of Africa is a prerequisite for sustainable urban and social development. The approach builds upon African and international Docomomo initiatives and identifies students and young professionals as important groups to develop social, cultural, and political awareness and to further advance participatory tools.

Most relevant were the partners in and from Africa who helped with their networks in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda during the excursions and exhibitions: Ola Uduku (University of Liverpool), Taibat Lawanson (University of



01 University of Lagos, photo taken during the SHA project visit to Lagos and Nigeria. © Jean Molitor, 2022.

Lagos) are well-known and respected for their research on education buildings and urban development in Africa. Their commitment to the younger generations and the (built) heritage of Africa and their enthusiasm were instrumental to the achievements of the SHA project. Kuukuwa Manful from Docomomo Accra Chapter in Ghana finished her dissertation within the ERC program 'African State Architecture' during the project duration, and Mark Olweny (Uganda Martyrs University) in Kampala, Uganda, greatly supported the visit to Uganda and Rwanda. The photography and writing workshops and exhibitions were strongly supported by the project partners, namely photographer Jean Molitor, who has initiated his own art project 'bau1 haus', is experienced in setting up exhibitions and shared his knowledge enthusiastically with the SHA-Fellows. Christian Burkhard brought in the competence of Architectuul, an architectural platform that, through its co-workers in various countries, forms an international architecture community. Finally, Anica Dragutinovic (TH OWL) coordinated the contact amongst the SHA-Fellows from the very beginning and during their visits to Europe to the 17th International Docomomo Conference in Valencia in 2022 and to the 19th Docomomo Germany Conference in Frankfurt 2023. Three exhibitions were organized: in Lagos in 2022, in Kampala and in Frankfurt in 2023.³

We also like to thank the members of the SHA project's Advisory board: Ana Tostoes (University of Lisbon), Iain Jackson (University of Liverpool), Irene Appeaning Addo (University of Ghana), Kaija Voss (Architectural Historian), and Tino Mager (ICOMOS Germany).

Finally, we are grateful to the German Federal Foreign Ministry that supported the project with a grant (AZ99210073) from 2021-2023, and it is with great pleasure that we are launching this issue of the Docomomo journal, published both in print and online via www.docomomojournal.com.

- 1 <https://docomomo.com/research-projects/#sha> (visited November 17th 2023).
- 2 Denison, E., & Vawda, S. (2022). Modern Heritage in the Anthropocene. Proceedings Global Symposium, 2022, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/sites/bartlett_architecture/files/book_of_abstracts.pdf
- 3 <https://sha.architectuul.com>