

ARTIST'S STATEMENT (2004)

Jaffa Lam

Can you see me? Still there...

Installation (ink on fabric, wire), each 230(h)x 50(diameter)cm
Kuona Trust Wasanii 4th International Artists' Workshop 2004, Fort Museum,
Lamu, Kenya (27th August -11th September 2004)

Total 11 pieces occupied the eleven arches of Fort Museum, Lamu, Kenya. The inspiration of work is from the door pattern and architectural detail in Lamu town, Kenya. Mosquito net is a necessity in Lamu due to mosquitoes and Malaria. The form of the net also refers to the arch of Muslim building.

Lamu culture was influenced by China four hundreds years ago, the words for tea - chai - is the same in Swahili and Mandarin. Hundreds of Chinese pottery have been found in Lamu Museum and among the ruins. Redrawing of those door patterns in Chinese blue lets people find out the relation between Lamu and Chinese art easily.

I drew those 11 pieces by Chinese brush and ink mixed with acrylic throughout 2 weeks, I enjoyed the peaceful and calmness in the reproduction and repeated process.

Most Lamu residents are Muslims; ladies should put on their black cloak "Buibui" and should not face to camera. In Muslim culture, ladies can show only their eyes. In my work, I block the eyes by a mask with two tiny holes.

The meaning of net changed under different cultural context: When a Muslim girl gets into the net, it shows the conflict between her tradition. Mosquito net can also be the wedding dress, another Christian girl get into the net. When those nets catch the wind, they seem like the cloak recalling the spirit in Chinese tradition, especially when it is raining... A door in a door, an entrance in another entrance.

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