

World Social Forum 20th-25th January 2007, Nairobi

**Moving People: Africa-Asia Interface on
Migration/Refugee/Exile/Diaspora**

**at GoDown Art Centres, Dunga Rd (off Lusaka Rd, next to Giro Bank)
and Block L Near Entrance 5 at Kasarani**

Organisers:

@Culture, India (a network of Majlis, Magic Lantern Foundation, Point of View and independent artists) with Focus on Global South; Centre for Creative Arts (UKZN), Durban; GoDown Arts Centre & Kwani Trust, Nairobi

The cusp of post colonial and neo-colonial phases in countries of Africa and Asia is resulting in more and more people 'moving'. In this time when the global village is a much applauded market phenomena, people's physical movement in relation to space and its ownership has grown to be the nucleus of political realities. Migration, refuge, diaspora, exile, trafficking, slavery, captivity, invasion – each poses a myriad of questions and also exposes the current world order. We aim to explore this phenomenon to its various roots, implications, overlaps, alteration and also the resistance to it. The programme will also witness inter-disciplinary dialogues among practitioners of various art forms, academics and activists as well as collaboration amongst groups and individuals from 18 countries in Africa and Asia.

Background

The World Social Forum has reached the continent of Africa. The most laudable and voluminous resistance to the onslaught of Globalisation and market and invasion oriented homogenization in the world is WSF. Started in 2001 at Porto Alegre, Brazil, the forum is the broadest platform of solidarity, networking and alliance making of millions of formal and informal groups working in their local spaces/processes to resist the forces championed by WEO and the World Bank.

Since 2001, every year the forum takes place in the month of January while the WEO meets at Davos, Switzerland. After three consecutive years in Brazil, in the year 2004 the forum was held in India. While the earlier editions witnessed the South American political finesse and robust energy, the Indian edition brought a distinct change in the texture of the forum. The change was in the realm of layered multiplicity and an innovative process/structure to accommodate myriad forms of representation. One of the main highlights of Mumbai forum was that for the first time Culture as a voice of protest and political discourse was fore grounded at par with theories and action within the scheme. 3000 artists participated from all over the world, art works became a major source of political mobilizations and the gap between art practices and political activism was narrowed dramatically. In short, a new era of protest culture and political art practices has had begun.

After having one more edition of WSF in Porte Alegre in 2005 and three smaller polycentric forums in Venezuela, Pakistan and Mali in 2006, the forum is going to take place in Africa in 2007, hopefully opening yet another new chapter in world history. As the Forum process gathered momentum we were overwhelmed by the commonality within the cultural-political-economic realities between Asia and Africa. Our historical dependence, both in intellectual and political spheres, on the European initiatives has barred us so far to evolve an effective Asia-Africa interface. We believe that time has come to pro-actively forge that alliance.

Madhusree Dutta,
Principal Curator
Moving People project