

SAM HOPKINS_BIO_2015

Sam Hopkins is an artist whose work responds to the specific social and political context within which he is living; as such he can be described as a contextual artist. In a sense his art is maybe more akin to documentary; probing, investigating and re-imagining stories, characters and elements of daily life. Rather than work with strategies of reference and allusion, his position is to try to make autonomous works; art which can be 'read' without necessarily knowing a specific canon of Art.

As his practice is triggered and defined by a context, it exhibits a broad spectrum of both media and content. Although wary of grand narratives, much of his work does seem to orbit around issues of public space and the negotiation of participatory practice. Critical to this engagement is a keen attentiveness to the ways in which media produce realities, as opposed to simply transmitting them. This investigation is often process-based, and long term, as expressed in projects such as Slum TV and Urban Mirror but his practice also encompasses a more immediate and formal approach such as the body of installations which explore the peculiarities and aesthetics of the 'Development' sector in Kenya.

Born in 1979 in Rome, he was raised in Kenya and England before studying History and Spanish in Edinburgh and Cuba. He then proceeded to postgraduate studies in Contemporary Art in Oxford and Weimar, returning to Nairobi on a permanent basis in 2006. As well as working with Slum TV and Urban Mirror he is also a frequent collaborator of the Nairobi-based collective Maasai Mbili. He has participated in, both as artist and curator, a broad spectrum of local and international exhibitions. He is currently a PhD research candidate at the University of the Arts London (UAL) and works as a Kulturstiftung des Bundes Guest Curator at the Iwalewahaus Bayreuth. He was recently named one of the 100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2014 by Foreign Policy (FP) Magazine.