



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

May 17th 2022

Friche la Belle de Mai - Marseille

Cultural Third Spaces?

Towards new means of cooperation between Africa and France?

To attend this conference at La Friche (FR/GB, with simultaneous interpretation):
Conference attendance is free of charge, but reservation is required : billetterie.lafriche.org

To attend the conference via live streaming: [please register here](#)

The international conference «Cultural Third Spaces ? Towards New Means of Cooperation between Africa and France ?» will take place on May 17 at Friche la Belle de Mai in Marseille. It is organized by Friche la Belle de Mai and by Campus AFD (Agence Française de Développement), in their ongoing commitment to supporting the cultural third spaces that create learning ecosystems to encourage sustainable transitions.

This conference is in line with the dynamic behind the Africa-France Summit and Saison Africa 2020. It aims to pool existing thought processes and dynamics related to cultural third spaces, and to pave the way for the formation of a network.

This conference will bring together the heads of cultural hubs from several countries in Africa (Mozambique, Senegal, Mali, South Africa, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Morocco, Tunisia) as well as France, and will include on-site visits and interactions with the cultural third spaces of Marseille, including the long-standing exemplar Friche la Belle de Mai. Discussions and round tables will be enriched by the presence of two philosophers: **Achille Mbembe** and **Gabrielle Halpern**.

With the support of



Thursday, May 17 • from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm

Grand Plateau – Friche la Belle de Mai

In contrast to the formality of traditional cultural establishments, third places allow the creation and dissemination of culture to take place in spaces that are open to the public, multi-use, and ever-changing (Besson, 2018). These venues are primed to kindle both formal and informal exchanges among a diverse group of individuals: cultural actors, students, gardeners, researchers, manufacturers, craftspeople, entrepreneurs, urbanists, artists, and even local residents, children, amateur creators, and other users.

The objective of this conference is to present and discuss cultural third places in Africa in terms of the following:

- Venues and models of governance and economic exchange within cultural third spaces.
- Transformations within the sphere of cultural and artistic action. Cultural third places in Africa are at the forefront of important questions about the role of culture and the arts in society. They are rewriting the narrative about the status of artists and artworks, the position of audiences and viewers, the function of mediation and cultural action, and the role of cultural facilities and heritage, among other aspects.
- Ramifications in the fields of educational action and learning systems, considering the major challenges around education in Africa.
- Impacts on the issues of transitions toward sustainability in Africa—including drought, water access, climate, agriculture, food security, gender equality, social ties, the (re)construction or reappropriation of cultural identity—and local and international public action.

08:45 am — 09:30 am • REGISTRATION

09:30 am — 10:00 am • INTRODUCTION

10:00 am — 10:45 am • PRESENTATION

Cultural Third Spaces and Learning Ecosystems in Africa: Latest Developments

Participants

Sylvia Andriantsimahavandy and Raphaël Besson, authors of a report titled “Understanding the Dynamic of Learning Ecosystems in Africa” (published in French as “Comprendre la dynamique des écosystèmes apprenants en Afrique”)

11:00 am — 12:30 pm • ROUND TABLE #1

Cultural Third Places in France and Africa: Models and Characteristics

Participants

Terra Alta (Ghana), 16Neto (Mozambique), Complexe Culturel Blonba (Mali), Ishyo arts center (Rwanda), La Fabulerie (Marseille), Les Ateliers Blancarde (Marseille), Les Grandes Tables (Marseille)

Cultural third places are alternative, hybrid spaces that raise important issues around artistic creation, redefining governance, how institutions are generated, and economic models and managerial practices for cultural spaces. They aim to reinvent the relationship between art and society by experimenting with new forms of art and culture. What are the main characteristics of these innovative cultural spaces? How are they different from traditional cultural institutions, “New Art Territories,” cultural intermediary spaces, and other types of cultural center? Should we view these new cultural spaces as nothing more than the latest trend—so much smoke and mirrors? Or do they represent the emergence of a model paving the way for a new age of cultural policies and institutions?

02:00 pm — 03:30 pm · ROUND TABLE #2

New Frameworks for Cultural and Educational action

Participants

Think Tanger (Tanger, Morocco), Kër Thiossane (Senegal), Kin ArtStudio (DRC), Kabakoo Académies (Mali), Le Cri – Learning Planet, Synergie Family (Marseille), Les Ateliers Jeanne Barret (Marseille), Tiers Lieux Edu, The Innovation Lab at La Plateforme (Marseille)

Cultural third places are at the forefront of important questions about the role of culture and the arts in society. They are rewriting the narrative about the status of artists and artworks, the position of audiences and viewers, the function of mediation and cultural action, and the role of cultural facilities and heritage, among other aspects. At the same time, cultural third places are bringing transformation to the fields of educational action and learning systems, considering the major challenges around education in Africa. These “innovative pedagogical systems” bring together an array of education-focused initiatives, by offering a both formal and informal curricula comprising educational resources and methods, as well as a team of educators and facilitators who provide the means for the beneficiaries to learn or teach differently.

03:45 pm — 05:00 pm · ROUND TABLE #3

The Territorial Impact of Cultural Third Places

Participants

Victoria Yards (Johannesburg, South Africa), B7L9 – Fondation Lazaar (Tunisia)
ReFFAO (The FabLab Network of West Africa),
LICA (Laboratoire d’intelligence collective artificielle – Marseille)
Antoine Plane, Yes We Camp (Marseille); France Tiers Lieux
Dorothee Munyaneza, author, musician and choreographer
Karen Bouvet, Caisse des dépôts et consignations

Ever since their creation, third places have made a number of promises regarding their presumed effects on cultural and territorial development, ecological and digital transition, the commons, creativity and learning processes, collaboration, and the creation or invention of new ways of working. How should these promises be evaluated? What can be said about those actions that have been effectively carried out by cultural third places, and their direct and indirect effects?

05:30 pm to 06:30 pm · CLÔTURE

Cultural Third Spaces in France and Africa: Political and Philosophical Perspectives

Animation Raphaël Besson

Participants

Philosopher and historian Achille Mbembe (Cameroon), philosopher Gabrielle Halpern,
Rémy Rioux, chief executive of Agence Française de Développement

Following the various work sessions and resulting discussions, this round table will focus on political and philosophical considerations of cultural third places. Initially, third places were defined as venues for sociability that perform an essential function in civil society, democracy, and civic engagement. To what extent do cultural third places in Africa have a political destiny? Do their innovative qualities promote cultural rights? Can they be venues for redefining relations and cooperation between France and Africa? Will they become new meeting-places for important actors in African and French civil society? How do they resonate with contemporary decolonial and postcolonial studies?