

Critical Dialogue: Christian Mounzeo and Pierre Mujombo

freeDimensional is an organization that pairs residency programs with nominating organizations in order to find safe havens for artists and activists in all disciplines who have been put in danger directly due to their work. Additionally, the organization does a variety of advocacy work and one of the new pilot areas we are developing is 'critical pairing' by which we initiate interaction between artists and activists from the same region and/or working on the same issues. The first such pairings we have begun focuses on the CONGO, broadly defined (Congo Brazzaville, Congo Kinshasa, a conceptual Congo that conjures an image of a place w/ a shared name.) The two individuals involved in this dialogue are Pierre Mujombo and Christian Mounzeo. (Full bios below.)

We have introduced Pierre and Christian for the primary goal of creating a support system, mentoring and friendship between these two individuals who have needed to leave this region. On October 20, Pierre and Christian met at the Omi International Arts Center (Ghent, New York) where Pierre enjoyed a spring '07 residency thru a freeDimensional nomination. At this conference they discussed their backgrounds and personal histories for two hours.

freeDimensional would like to help facilitate this dialogue further. Working with the support and hospitality of Columbia University, a second conference has been scheduled for Monday, November 12th from 12:00-1:30PM. The meeting will be held in the Board Room of the Heyman Center for the Humanities on the Columbia campus.

Ultimately, freeDimensional envisions a framework, such as an interview with Pierre and Christian that can be published on our websites and in a print edition. All those who might be interested in this dialogue are welcome to attend.

Pierre Mumbere Mujomba, Congolese playwright and novelist, is the author of seven plays and a novel, *Ecce Ego*, which was published in France in 2002. His conflict with the Congolese government began in January 2003, after the performance in French of his play, *The Last Envelope*, in Kinshasa. A "commedia-style" farce with extravagant language, a detailed plot and underhanded allegory, the play reveals excesses of the Mobutu regime in the former Zaire. Shortly after its first performance, Mujomba was threatened and his landlord was kidnapped. Pierre is a recent Human Rights Watch Hellman-Hammett Award winner and is in residence at Art Omi's Ledig House in upstate New York through May 2007.

Christian Mounzeo (Congo-Brazzaville), President of Meeting for Peace and Human Rights (RPHD), national coordinator of Publish What You Pay Coalition, and member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Board, advocates for accountable and transparent management of Congo's oil wealth.