

In Transition

This exhibition presents James's work in progress. It is his engagement with a city and by extension a country in transition. A transition that has been expected for long. Recent strides in business opportunities with the east, consumer spending, inflows of currency from the Diaspora and other factors fueling it.

Many streets and neighborhoods in Nairobi are being transformed every day by its shifting architecture. In the last few years road infrastructure set the pace for expansion and land prices sky-rocketed as developers and speculators go for every available square foot. There are many that are left out relegated to spectators. They hear and read about development statistics, and work on the very spaces that generate the statistics.

Many of those left searching for hope, console themselves as having found it in the Pentecostal phenomena, which is not left behind in the rush for growth and expansion. The church leaders quest to conquer new grounds in the sprawling peri-urban and rural landscapes. They wear smart and flamboyant attire oozing confidence in the name of Jesus and rebuke the spirit of hopelessness and despair from their followers, who are only required to make a generous contribution to the work of God.

The new youngsters have their space too. It is a generation that is highly connected to the rest of the world as it has grown knowing the mobile phone and the internet.. Alternative attire and apparels have been coming from China and style found common ground in the public transport. The ever vibrant Matatu (aka ma-three or matt e.t.c) has had it's internal metamorphosis, each stage claimed by it's generation. It has become an icon, at least to many in Nairobi, of an urban culture and identity.

