

## **Protest against the entry restrictions for artists from non-European countries**

**Friday, 11 August 2017, 11h**

**Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland // Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany**

**Werderscher Markt 1**

**10117 Berlin, Germany**

Our guests, the "Team of Love", from South Sudan, were denied entry into Germany by the German Embassy in Cairo.

As a publicly funded institution, the nGbK invited the artists for the project 'The Swan Song Operetta'. The Embassy in Cairo concluded that the "purpose and conditions of the intended stay were not credible". We are outraged by this assumption and we want to express our dissatisfaction in their decision.

It is absolutely necessary for our work as artists, to have meaningful exchanges with people from different regions and different backgrounds. The refusal of our guests application, to share their artistic work here in Germany, means an impediment and constraint of our own work as well. Furthermore, the rejection of their visa applications included phrases such as "doubts regarding return", which we perceive as discriminatory and which we resolutely protest.

**In protest against the decision of the German foreign representation in Cairo and therefore against the procedure of German authorities, we will hold a demonstration on 11 August, 2017 at 11am in front of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin.**

**We cordially invite you to participate!**

The background:

The artist group "Team of Love" from South Sudan was invited by the neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (nGbK) to participate as musicians and performers in the project "The Swan Song Operetta". The invitation process was initiated six months before the start of the project. Because of the civil war prevailing in South Sudan, the artists of the "Team of Love" are living in Cairo. The German Embassy in Cairo was presented with a description of the project, explanations on the content of the work of the "Team of Love", and the coverage of the cost of travel, insurance and provisions during their stay.

Nevertheless, the artists' application was categorized as "not credible" in the decree. It was doubted that the guests "have sufficient means of subsistence for the duration of

their intended stay or for their return to their home or country of residence". In the letter of rejection, it is also stated that the applicants "do not have sufficient family, social or economic ties" in their current country of residence and that, as a result, doubts about their return could not be excluded.

We find these formulations discriminatory.

*We invited the members of the "Team of Love" as professional artists to participate in an art project. This does not seem to play any role in the refusal. Our guests are classified as potential asylum seekers in Germany because of their origin in a country where civil war prevails and because of their uncertain status in Egypt. This seems to be a reason to restrict their freedom of movement and to prevent our artistic collaboration with them.*

*We are angry and we protest against the treatment of our guests. We oppose the paternalism which is exercised against us as hosts. We want to be able to choose our cooperation partners.*

*Only in this way can we create art that is independent and reflective of the challenges of our time.*

Project team "The Swan Song Operetta"

**Claudia Burbaum, Martin Ertl, Tina-Marie Friedrich,  
Christine Kriegerowski, Keren Ida Nathan**

Press contact: Benita Piechaczek, [presse@ngbk.de](mailto:presse@ngbk.de), +49-(0)30 - 616 513 13