

Plaidoirie pour vendre le Congo

(A Plea to Sell the Congo)

A bilingual performance – Fragments of an original play by

Sinzo Aanza

Performed by **Azani V. Ebengou** Directed by **Antu Yacob**

English translation from the French by **Madhuri Mukherjee**

After the Congolese army mistook a group of football supporters for an uprising against the postponement of elections, a Kinshasa neighborhood's oversight committee meets up. The state has agreed to compensate the families of the dead; the committee is tasked with setting a financial sum appropriate for each death.

While some are hoping to obtain reparations and others believe that accepting the money makes one an accomplice to the violence, it slowly becomes clear that the game is rigged.

Then a bold proposition is made: Let's sell the Congo!

A Presentation by Sinzo Aanza will precede the performance and a Q&A will follow

Friday, April 2nd, 1-2:30 pm



Sinzo Aanza is a Congolese photographer, visual artist, and writer, whose work deals with the radicality of fiction. It questions the ways of storytelling, speaking and doing within established social fictions such as his own country, the Congo, but also mobile fictions such as ideals and technological virtualities, marginal fictions such as self-images, enveloping fictions such as political and religious communities, etc., to the extent that they determine and nurture forms of identification as well as the relation to the world and being-in-the-world of their creators, animators, or adherents. Sinzo writes short stories, novels, poetry, and plays; his literary work has been widely presented (Festival Ça se passe, Halle de la Gombé, Centre Wallonie Bruxelles, and Tarmac des Auteurs, Kinshasa; Halle de l'Etoile, Lubumbashi; Maison de la Poésie and Tarmac theater, Paris; Récréâtrales, Ouagadougou; Praticables, Bamako; University of Milan; Rutgers University; Literaturhaus, Stuttgart; Festival d'Avignon; Théâtre Nouvelle Génération, Lyon; Kulturfabrik, Luxembourg; Espace Bernard-Marie Koltès, Metz, etc.). Sinzo's photography and installation art have been shown in the Congo (Biennale de Lubumbashi), in France (Rencontres d'Arles, Biennale de Lyon, MIAM de Sète, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Galerie Imane Farès), in Belgium (WIELS, Brussels), and in Switzerland (Museum Rietberg, Zürich).



Born in France to Congolese and French parents, **Azani V. Ebengou** is an actress, writer, and researcher. After completing her acting training in France (École de la Comédie de Saint-Étienne; Conservatoire de Lyon), she started the Graduate Program in French at Rutgers University in 2019. She is currently working on her Master's thesis, provisionally titled "*Le Théâtre Noir de Paris, 1975-1989: The Erased Memory of A Black Consciousness In The Making.*" Azani is engaged in Afrofeminist activism; thinking and acting out decolonization is constitutive of all her endeavors. If research allows her room to think, the stage (or its equivalents) gives her space to breathe. In performing arts, what interests her is how air, musicality and light can enter bodies through words, and how theater can be a spiritual and diasporic practice.

Madhuri Mukherjee earned her Ph.D. in French from Rutgers. She is an Associate professor at William Paterson University. In addition to translating Sinzo Aanza's *Plaidorie pour vendre le Congo*, she has translated Malagasy cultural anthropologist Bodo Ravololomanga's *Sambatra Antambahoaka a Mananjary: Rituel ancestral pour la Cohésion et la Réconciliation*, an essay about the ritual of mass circumcisions that takes place once every seven years in the town of Mananjary in Madagascar, where Madhuri served in 2020-2021 as a volunteer with the Peace Corps.

Antu Yacob was born in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia and raised in California and Minnesota. She is an actor, filmmaker, producer and playwright. Her film *Love in Submission* just completed its cinema tour through Full Spectrum Features' collection: *Our Right to Gaze: Black Film Identities*. Her tv/film acting credits include *Night Comes On*, *Daredevil*, *Gypsy*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *Brooklyn Park*, *Adieu Lacan*, *Signs of Aging*. Her plays have premiered at Kampala International Theatre Festival (Uganda), Project Y Theatre, Theatre167 and Mile Square Theatre. She received her MFA in Acting from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

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