

PART II

Creative Arts

Artwork | pastelDAR

HASSAN KISAMO

pastelDAR is a series of photographs showcasing the cross section of urban street life in the historical Swahili coastal towns of Stone Town, Zanzibar, and Dar es-Salaam.

This title is inspired by the pastel tones of the buildings documented while traveling between Dar es-Salaam and Zanzibar. The muted scenes of pastelDAR stand out, displaying an intimate and very local perspective of a place that goes unnoticed by most people.

Since its relatively recent foundation a little over a century ago, Dar es-Salaam has undergone many challenges and has always reaffirmed itself as a cultural, economic, and even political hub of Tanzania. Today, the city's historic fabric tells the remarkable story of a nation coming into its own, from its days as a Zanzibari trading outpost to the era of colonialism—from the fight for independence to its dynamic present moment.

pastelDAR serves as an ongoing exploration and social documentary project of the Swahili coast, using photographic practice to identify people within social hierarchies and dynamics that are constantly shifting to accommodate the rapid expansion and development in Tanzania. By documenting our architectural heritage and populous street culture, pastelDAR aims to present the life of Swahili people as an alternative to the dysfunctional portrayals of Africa, Africans, and the African way of life by the mainstream media.

It has fallen to us to promote and protect our heritage. We defend this city to protect not its stones, but rather the people living in these walls and its historical significance.

Hassan Kisamo is a documentary photographer and draftsman based in Dar es-Salaam. He is the Co-Founder and Freelance Creative Director of Sweetleaf Skateboards, a skateboarding company founded by members of Tanzania Skate Society to provide skateboarding equipment and tools to the local skate community. Kisamo received his Civil Drafting Vocational Training Certificate at VETA RVTSC Dar es-Salaam in 2019. His work takes the form of photography, film, photo books and architectural projects which explores themes related to heritage preservation, history, visual art, sustainable architecture, and urbanism.



Hassan Kisamo, *Dar es Salaam City Scape on a Gloomy Day*, 2018. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist

Hassan Kisamo, *Joe le taxi*, *Dar es Salaam*, 2017. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.





Hassan Kisamo, *Khoja Shia Mosque, Dar es Salaam, 2018*. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Hassan Kisamo, *Abouy Amour Hardflips House of Wonders, Stone Town, Zanzibar, 2018*. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Aboubakar ‘Abouy’ Amour, born in 1998, is a member of Sweetleaf Skateboards and a graduate of Feza High School. A Zanzibari native, he spends most of his time between Zanzibar, Dar es-Salaam and Dodoma, where he usually skates with his friends. I met Abouy through the Flat Ground League skateboarding contests held at Dar es-Salaam, and since then he has become one of my closest friends and my go-to guy to hang out with whenever I’m in Stone Town. “Helping people and seeing other people happy is what gives meaning to my life. It is the reason why I’ve decided to pursue health-related courses, but skateboarding and inspiring the young generation in our community to skate is something that I like doing as well,” he said. “[I work towards] achieving my dreams, which are all about helping people,” he added, “and to see skateboarding being treated and perceived as a normal game and given full rights.”



Hassan Kisamo, “*All men are drawn to the sea, perilous though it may be*” Stone Town, Zanzibar, 2018. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Hassan Kisamo, *Rush hour traffic jam at Ubungo Terminal, Dar es Salaam, 2017*. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Hassan Kisamo, *Fisherman offloading catch of the day, Stone Town, Zanzibar, 2017*. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Hassan Kisamo, *Postcard from Stone Town, Zanzibar*, 2018. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Hassan Kisamo, *Daniel the machungwa vendor, Dar es Salaam*, 2017. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.





Hassan Kisamo, *If you walk around Dar es Salaam and you don't see a coconut vendor, are you even in Dar?* 2017. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.



Hassan Kisamo, *Harbour view, Dar es Salaam*, 2018. Digital photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

