

PASSAGEWAYS

Doors and Passageways of Return Association or *Passageways* is an Association made up of Artists and arts professionals living and working in Senegal with the purpose of promoting **holistic“development”* in Africa. The Association is presently working toward creating a Holistic Art Center in Mbodiene, a rural area of Senegal where they possess 10 acres of land. This project involves community, agricultural, artistic and cultural development issues.

**Passageways defines Holistic as being those things which are integrally related and together which form a whole.*

History

The Doors and Passageways of Return Foundation was founded in 2000 in Washington DC in response to the African American visual artist, Muhsana Ali's experience working in Africa between 1996 and 2000. Her experience involved researching traditional and contemporary African Art in over seven different countries and landing in Cote d'Ivoire to produce the Abidjan exhibition in 1999 entitled, "Doors and Passageways of Return". This major exhibition was the result of a two year project working in a ruin with over 40 wayward, drug-addicted, violent-prone street youth to whom the building was home. She took the young men under her wing and in turn learned from them many of the keys to understanding contemporary African society. Muhsana later conceptualized the plan to create an Art Center in a rural area of the country that would serve to assist many of the African youth and adults who seem to have lost an understanding and respect for traditional African values; values that might enable them to develop "creative" responses to seemingly hopeless situations. The Civil war in Ivory Coast and her marriage to Senegalese artist, Amadou Kane Sy, lead the two artists to collaborate together with like minded-individuals in relocating the project to Senegal's rural community of Mbodiene, where Sy had (in association with the artist group Huit Facettes Interaction) established a history of community-based artistic activity since 1998. **Passageways** was officially established in 2005 as a branch of the *Doors and Passageways of Return Foundation*.

Mission

To promote holistic consciousness toward the integral development of the arts and sciences within the society.

To encourage intercultural exchange between societies on the African continent and beyond.

To honour Africa's traditions, while resisting the tendency to be imprisoned by them.

To make available a new understanding of the notion of "Development" as we interpret it within the context of our Holistic approach toward the evolution of African societies.

To develop a model **Holistic Art Center** in Senegal.

Holistic Art Center

In May 2005, Passageways was awarded ten acres of land by the Rural Community of Ngueniène on which to realize its vision of a **Holistic Art Center**. The Center is to be comprised of various programs and projects designed to encourage maintenance of the physical and spiritual well-being of the individual and the developing society in which he/she lives. Passageways has chosen a rural setting for its center in order to take advantage of the earth's resources in the most wholesome sense. In addition, it is understood that Africa's traditions have remained strongest in places where the communities live close to the land. The Center's goal is to represent the heart of the neighbouring cities by offering information, creative solutions, and opportunities for intercultural exchange and cultural resources that replenish and nourish these areas and restore them with vibrancy, beauty, self-sufficiency and pride for the collective and individual inhabitants. We seek to achieve our goals through the implementation of programs that include but are not restricted to: art and cultural development, reforestation and agricultural development, health and nutritional development. While not proposing to be experts in any of the above mentioned areas, The Holistic Art Center will exist as a location where experts might be invited from various fields in order to engage in exchange centering on holistic development for the continent. The Center will include residency program for exchange, research and special projects.

The most significant African cultural value we have identified is that of "Wholism". The center is based on this concept which we define as scientifically and spiritually sound. The Wholism concept nourishes the individual self as well as the collective communal whole. We therefore have positioned this value at the core of our concept in developing the Wholistic Art Center.

Location

Passageways seeks to strengthen links in and outside of the African continent in order to bring about sustained relationships based on intercultural exchange and spiritual development. In order to realize this goal, Passageways has chosen to create a center for holistic development in a rural region of Senegal. Collaborations between the city of Joal and board members of Passageways has led to an interest in the Ngenieune region of Senegal for the establishment of the Center. The region of Ngeniene is located approximately 130km south of Dakar on the coastal region known as "La Petite Cote". Ngeniene is comprised of areas which include Modiene and Ngazobil.

In 2005, Passageways was awarded 10 acres of land in Mbodiene, which is situated along the main road approximately 4 kilometers from Joal, the location of one of the most important fishing ports in Senegal and home of the former President of Senegal, Leopold Sedar Senghor. This land was allotted to the Association by the Rural Community of Ngueniene. The land borders Ngazobile which includes an area of forest reserve owned by the catholic church. The proximity to Ngazobile reinforces Passageways objectives of promoting its agricultural and reforestation projects for the surrounding area. The allocation was made as a result of the success of former projects organized in that region in which Passageways board members were significantly involved.

In 1998 senior board members Mamadou Sarr and Amadou Kane Sy collaborated on the development of the artist's residency project *Ici et Maintenant*. This project, initiated by Huit Facettes-Interaction and Belgian NGO Veco in collaboration with the Town Hall of Joal, took place in Mbodiene and involved 12 artists from Ivory Coast, France, Belgium, Kolda (Senegal) and Hamdallaye (Senegal). In 2004, Passageways co-founder, Muhsana Ali joined her two colleagues in taking part in the realization of the project *Universel?*, which took place in the town of Joal. *Universel?* brought twelve different artists from Brazil, United States, Portugal, France, Haiti, Senegal, Gabon, The Reunion Islands, Palestine and Albania. This project resulted in an exhibition which has travelled to five different countries in Europe and Africa. Both projects involved collaborations with the Mairie of Joal and involved the entire community of Joal and Fadiouth. Having collaborated as artists in the project *Universel?*, Ali and Sy were both, as a result of this project, made honorary citizens of Joal. This award served to solidify ties with the region as well as with Sarr, himself a longtime resident of Joal, Sociologist and cultural Attache of the Town Hall itself. Presently, Passageways offices are housed in Dakar, while most Passageways projects take place in the Ngeniene region.

Who Do We Serve?

Passageways Foundation's purpose is to serve the community at large. Passageways maintains the holistic outlook that states that all things are interconnected and thus, must be looked at from that perspective.

In choosing a rural setting for our Center, we are tackling the roots of many of Africa's difficulties. It is evident that the majority of traditional values find expression within the rural context. Imposed Western cultural values are fast gaining hold of all levels of African societies, even the most remote. We believe that the great difficulty facing Africa is the inability to properly integrate such values within the cultural context. Such uncertainty creates individuals who live in a world of cultural confusion.

Passageways exists as a forum for discussion, analysis and problem solving for such issues.

As artists working through the transversal medium which touches human beings at various levels, a significant part of our mission is to help identify African values that are useful to today's society. We desire to help Africans and others to place those values in a position of strength so that they may be properly appreciated and contribute positively in today's changing world.

Passageways believes in initiating endeavors that are vast and far reaching in effect. The vision of a Holistic Art Center serves as a concrete model plan that would serve as a home base for our activities, however, we do not restrict our activities or existence to this locale.

Passageways's experience in the region destined for the Holistic Art Center has resulted in strengthening personal relationships between our members and its residents, which has resulted in a deepened understanding of the needs of the area.

Members of the Rural Community of Ngeniene, largely made up of local farmers, have expressed a commitment to working with Passageways in developing the agricultural requirements of the Holistic Art Center. Passageways has a commitment to the Rural Community of Ngeniene as well as to the Mairie of Joal to raising the awareness of *creative*

values (given the varied definitions attributable to this term) and to helping improve the manner in which such values are manifested in the everyday lives of the inhabitants throughout the region. Intercultural exchange from all parts of the world will be encouraged through our programs in order to increase the dynamic manner in which African “development” may be enhanced.

Current Programs:

The Atelier

Passageways presently maintains temporary legal occupation of a former warehouse space located in Mbodiene. The warehouse is comprised of approximately 400 square meters and is known to the artists as the *Atelier*. The Atelier serves as a headquarters for *Passageways* artistic activities.

Art Gallery: Young Artist Residencies at Atelier

Passageways regularly sponsors young local artists who are in need of studio space under its artist in residence program. Requirements are that the artist be either in need of space in which to work or that he or she desires distance from the distractions that make it difficult to produce. *Passageways* artist professionals provide artistic guidance and critique for the young artist and a per-diem which permits the artist to provide for food and materials.

Passageways also organizes an exhibition at the termination of the artists residency. Artists lodge at the Atelier and are required to maintain upkeep of the studio and housing areas. Length of Artist Residencies vary according to need and availability.

***Suwere* (Under-Glass) Painting workshop**

Each year *Passageways* organizes a *suwere* workshop for young artists and anyone interested in learning this traditional form of painting. The *suwere* workshops are take place over one weekend during the month of March.

Under Development:

Holistic Art Center

Description of Proposed Activities for Holistic Art Center

-Reforestation and Land Preservation

a portion of our land will be reserved for the growth and protection of trees and plants that have grown scarce in the region. There will also be efforts to implement reforestation efforts and land preservation awareness throughout the region.

-Main Activities Building

a main building which would serve to house the center's main activities. The center's main activities include meetings, conferences, and classes that center around holistic development. Guests will be invited from within the immediate and surrounding communities to participate as well as those from international communities.

-Lodging Facilities

Lodging facilities for individuals participating in the Center's residencies, conferences and workshops.

-Food and Herb Preparation Facility

A center for herbal/medicinal research and development, this facility would also serve as a location for herb and food preparation, conservation and consumption.

-Facility for Spiritual Rejuvenation

the holistic approach being spiritual in nature, it is important that a portion of the land be designated for the purpose of communing with the Divine. Entirely non-denominational, this facility would be open to individuals of all religious backgrounds as a place for replenishment, contemplation and prayer.

-Agricultural Development

A portion of the land will be reserved for the cultivation of vegetables, fruits and herbs.

-Facility for Creative Activity

The creative activities now taking place at the atelier would eventually evolve into activities that would be shared and expanded upon in the Center. A more substantial studio space would be constructed, better equipped to assist in the production of creative works involving larger groups. -see attachment with map and illustrations

METHOD

Design and Structure of Holistic Art Center

Passageways priorities in approaching architectural design are energy conservation, use of local materials, beauty and purposefulness. Traditional building methods will be explored and expanded upon. Efforts will be made to employ primarily local professionals and workers.

Land Distribution

The largest portion of acquired land would be allocated for the reforestation project. The forest would, in fact surround and be interspersed within the entire portion of land on the compound. The second largest portion of land would be for the development of agricultural produce and finally, construction of the individual buildings required.

Who We Are

Passageways is comprised of professional artists and arts and culture professionals as well as professionals in the social work field and in the Development sector for Africa who have a track record of organizing and producing programs that have a significant social impact on their surrounding communities. Below a list of our officers are provided along with their C.V.s and track records. Many of our members have worked together previously on cultural projects before coming together to form **Passageways**.

Senior Board Members:

Amadou Kane Sy, President (Senegal)

Professional Visual Artist. President and Co-Founder of **Passageways/Senegal**. Sy has practiced visual art for over 20 years and has a background in Law studies. He is a multi-dimensional artist whose forms of expression include painting, sculptural works, installation, photography, poetry and video. He has served on the board of various associations and non profit organizations. He is the former president and co-founder of **Man Keneen-Ki**, a non profit art organization for homeless youth in Dakar. He is a founding member and president of the Senegalese artist association, **Huit Facettes-Interaction**. **Huit Facettes** has a history of practicing art for social change and is known for their work introducing artistic practice for self –sufficiency in the Senegalese village of **Hamdallaye**. Sy has organized and participated in numerous artists’ residencies, exhibitions and seminars throughout Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Muhsana Ali, Secretary (Senegal, U.S.A.)

Professional visual artist. Co-founder and President of the **Doors and Passageways of Return Foundation** (Washington DC); Co-founder and Secretary of **Passageways/Senegal**. Practicing visual art for over twenty years, Ali has exhibited throughout the US Africa and Europe. She is proficient in painting, sculpture, installation and interactive art as well as video production. She has an MA in Art Education and a BFA in Fine Art. Ali is the recipient of a Pew Fellowship in the Arts and a Fulbright Fellowship. Under the Fulbright Fellowship she produced the two-year exhibition project **Doors and Passageways of Return** in an abandoned building in Abidjan Cote D’Ivoire. The lieu for the exhibition was the home to a gang of over 40 homeless teens who Ali incorporated into her project, teaching them art and organizing an exhibition of their works at the close of her fellowship period. As a result of this project, she formed the **Doors and Passageways of Return Foundation** in 2000 in Washington DC. The goal of the Foundation was to build an art center in Africa that would involve working with troubled youth and encouraging intercultural exchange within the Continent. **Passageways Foundation** has organized a 2000 exhibition for the Ivorian homeless youth at the Ramee,Gallery, Washington, D.C. Ali has extensive experience as an Art instructor, organizing workshops, and art exhibitions

Mamadou Sarr, Treasurer (Senegal)

Sociologist. Mamadou Sarr is the Director of Cultural Affairs for the Mairie of Joal. Also having been raised on La Petite Cote, Sarr has a deep understanding of the dynamics facing that particular community. Sarr has been involved in several cultural projects involving both Sy and Ali, thus the three collaborators have developed a track record in working together. Sarr is also owner a a farm in region and thus has working knowledge and expertise in agricultural development and how the the environment.

Members:

Momar Lisa Ba (Senegal, Italy)

Cultural Administrator. Administrator and member of Huit Facettes Interaction. Ba has been involved in the conception and realization of numerous cultural projects in Europe and Senegal.

Mizanekristos Yohannes (Ethiopia, U.S.A.)

Yohannes has been involved in the development sector for over 15 years in Africa and has worked to mobilize communities at the grass roots level as well as administratively. Yohannes has worked for the African Development Bank (Cote d'Ivoire), Isodec (Ghana) and is cofounder of Greener Ethiopia, Grassroots Africa and Doors and Passageways of Return Foundation. He has also served as a communications representative for the film company, Sankofa.

Cheikh Niass (Senegal, Austria)

Visual Artist. Member of Huit Facettes Interaction.

Coleman Jordan (U.S.A.)

Architect. Professor of Architectural Studies, University of Michigan.

Mecca Abney (U.S.A.)

Photographer. Bachelor in African Studies.