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“Why and how are we here?”

The Presence and Representation of Contemporary

Sub-Saharan Africa Arts at the Venice Biennale from 1990 to 2017

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Abstract

In recent decades, there has been an increased participation and presence of African contemporary arts in some of the world's most important events related to visual arts, either through the works of individual artists, or in the case of the Venice Art Biennale, through national pavilions.

For example, at the 56th edition of the Venice biennale, in 2015, three of the five countries that participated in the show for the first time were from the African continent. However, very little research has been done to try to understand this phenomenon and analyze the curatorial strategies that are adopted in such exhibitions.

In this context, by focused on the Venice art biennale, the purpose of the present research is not only to try to understand how African art exhibitions are curated, but also to identify what motivates African countries and artists to attend international art exhibitions outside the African continent.

In order to capture the full picture of the phenomenon, the research was conducted by analysing the exhibitions realized from 1990 to 2019, and within the aforementioned time frame the investigation will focus on three types of exhibitions or participations case studies: 1) especial or collective exhibitions; 2) national pavilions; and 3) and Artists participation in the main exhibition.

Through the comparison within and across the contexts of the three different types of art show venues represented by these case studies, we intend to identify the essential elements that characterize the exhibition of contemporary African art in the most important visual art event around the globe.

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INTRODUCTION

MORE THAN LITERATURE GAP PRETENTION: The relevance of an analysis of the sub-Saharan-African participation at the *La Biennale*.

The Venice Art Biennale is the oldest most important art exhibition and has been unique, until now the government institutions are able to organize art shows in the representation of the Nations-states.

Indeed, one of the main structural characteristics of *La Biennale*, is the fact that a significant part of the art show is organized through National Pavilions.

However, it is important to mention that the permanent participation of those countries in the show started only after the 90's.

As I will discuss later on in the dissertation, one of the main factors that has influenced this changes is the emergence of postmodern theory.

Considering the significance and importance of the Venice Biennale much research had been made in order to analyse the show.

That research has adopted not only different focus and perspectives but also a multidisciplinary perspective that has reflected the fact that several disciplines has been interested in examining the show.

However, most of those analyses had as focus the countries that in the presented dissertation I have labeled as the old participants to mean those countries that used to attend La Biennale when the only official location was the Giardini biennale.

There is little research about the participation of sub-Saharan African countries in the Venice Biennale.

So, there is a gap when it comes to the research that has focused the participation of countries from sub-Saharan Africa countries.

However, more than covering a research gap one of the main commitments of this dissertation was the one to try to at same time conduct research that could be useful to understand in the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

That exigency became more relevant considering the fact that in accordance with the beginning of the start of the permanent participation of countries and artists from sub-Saharan Africa, in 1990, *La Biennale*, had realized several structural changes.

And it was by having that commitment in mind that since the beginning of the present research that strategically I had chosen to have a multi-source of data.

During the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale in 2015, where I had the idea to conduct the research and observed in depth the participation of the countries and artists from sub-Saharan Africa. And I termed that phase as field work.

After that I had collected the data on the archive of the Venice Biennale and then the successive step was to examine the literature about the Venice Biennale.

I will describe in a more detailed manner how I conducted the present research later on in chapter 2.

However, here one of my main concern, in order to articulated it is important to mention that in addition to the need to conduct a research could be relevant at same time to understand in the overall structure of the Venice Biennale, my main concern was to try to answer the following question: What was the most theoretically relevant perspective to conduct research about the sub-Saharan African participation to the Venice Biennale?

My intuition was that by proceeding in that direction I could at same time not only examine African participation that was a relevant research gap and also contribute to improving the understanding of overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

I. The Research: Context and Main Frames

In the present chapter, the first of my dissertation, as illustrated in the title I will describe and argue the main research frames.

I understand as research frames those aspects that on the one hand, I consider as relevant for the justification of the theoretical relevance of my dissertation and in other hand are also helpful to sustain the overall methodological apparatus adopted to conduct the research.

Methodologically those aspects are the borders or limits within which I had construed my argument: the space, the view point, the time and theoretical frame.

By arguing about the research frames in the present chapter, I hope to be able to help the readers firstly to understand the motivations that I guided me on the choice of the research topic and secondly to orient them on the understanding and interpretation of my examination.

However, it is also important to add that for better understanding it could also be advisable to consider the chapter in which I present the strategies through which I had conducted the research.

Returning to the chapter content, I may affirm that here what I will do is try to answer one of the first questions that I was exposed to by whoever I presented my research topic: why?

So, why Venice Biennale? Why Sub-Saharan African countries and Artists? Why 1990? Therefore, in the following lines I will be responding to the several why's that could be made to understand the present research.

The present chapter will then be organized as follows:

In the first section I will briefly present the Venice Biennale and considering the fact that there research about it¹ I will discuss why I consider it relevant to still research it and also how my research will somehow be helpful to better understand the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

The second section will be about what I termed as the view point, and in the case of the present research mean the sub-Sahara African attendants on the show.

And as like with La Biennale, also for this frame I will argue about why I consider it relevant and discuss the challenges that this viewpoint implies in conducting research on the Venice Biennale.

The third section will be about the time frame considered in my research, so we will discuss why I chose it and how it is relevant and adequate to start the time frame of the dissertation on that year and not in another.

The last section, fourth, will be about my theoretical hypothesis, because I acknowledge that African arts started to be displayed at the Venice Biennale because curatorial practices had changed as a result of the influence of the postmodern theories.

So, by considering those four frames that I consider that it was theoretically relevant to undertake the research that I did and write the present dissertation.

¹ See for example, Jones, C. A. (2016). *The global work of art: World's fairs, biennials, and the aesthetics of experience*. University of Chicago press and for more specific examination Clarissa Ricci *La Biennale di Venezia 1993-2003. L'esposizione come piattaforma*, doctoral thesis, Ca' Foscari, 2012.

1.1 The Venice Biennale as the Public Sphere of Global Contemporary Art.

“Why do key events occur at a certain points, in certain place rather in others?²”

In this section I will conceive of the Venice Biennale through the concept of Habermas public sphere.

In our perspective it could be adequate because it could allow us to not only acquire an understanding of its overall structure but also to make sense of the reason why edition after edition, the number of national participants is increasing.

At this point of our argumentation, it could be relevant to clarify that we will apply the concept of public sphere in the sense how it was conceptualized by Jürgen Habermas.

Habermas(2006), had conceptualized the public sphere as “ a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.”³

Expanding this conception to the art field, we perceive the Venice Biennale as a public sphere in which the ideas about what is art and the dominant discourses about art are created, discussed and legitimized.

In addition, in our understanding this role is not something that has only happened recently but is embedded in the Venice Biennale essence since its creation.

However, we are aware that our interpretation of the Venice Biennale as such is strongly related to the concept of normative and institutional definition of what is art. But, unfortunately, we will not cover the debate around this issue here.⁴

² Appadurai 2006: 600

³ Habermas 2006:73

⁴ For such a debate the follow reference could be adequate: Enwezor, O. (2010). Mega-Exhibitions and the antinomies of a transnational global form. In E. Filipovic, M. V. Hal, & S. Øvstebø (Eds.),

Also, by conceiving the Venice Biennale as a type of public sphere, it does not mean that we are completely in favor of its structure and how it operates.

But by adopting that perspective, I would like to emphasize how La Biennale, as an institution, mainly from the 90s had shifted a structural and started to display an “apparent openness” to the art from all over the world, in Habermas sense.

But by taking further our formulation, we could a the one hand make sense of the massive increase in newcomer countries and the art institutions that are increasingly attending.

And in the other, speculating that the openness was also an effect of the country's demands to be included on the show and criticisms regarding the national pavilions structure.

In addition, we speculate that the openness was also an institutional need to enable the biennale to maintain its position within the art world.

However, following Habermas conceptualization of public sphere, as the author reminds as “the public sphere [...] must now mediate these demands,[but also at same time] becomes a field for the competition of interests.”⁵

And from the demands and interests mentioned in Habermas formulation we can end up interpreting La Biennale’s openness through the lens of transnational capitalism.

Indeed, demands and interests are often driven not only by art matters but at same time by some that use to have as many sources what we can term as transnational capital dynamics.

The biennial reader: [An anthology on large-scale perennial exhibitions of contemporary art] (pp. 427–444). Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz Verlag.

⁵ Habermas 2006:77

As such, as it happens with other similar institutions, as Hal Foster argued, it is crucial to have in mind that "now these institutions are governed by capital and [also] serves its interested."⁶

So, in this section we will try not only to briefly describe some of the main features of the Venice Biennale, but at same time to discuss its transformations and role within the global art world.

Since its creation in 1895 the Venice Biennale has managed to position itself as one of the central nodes of the global art world.

Before going ahead it is relevant to mention that we are applying the concept of the global art world as it was theorized by Hans Belting⁷.

For Belting, the global art world means "following the model of Goldsmith College, London, dominate curatorial education today as a different paradigm, replace art history with it transdisciplinary aims."⁸

So going back to our main issue here, La Biennale's position within the global art world, is built upon its historical and symbolic status as the oldest biennale of the world. However, the historically bound capital is not the only one factor that contributes to La Biennales position.

Indeed, there are other attributes that are contributing to maintain and reinforce the Venice Biennale's status, such as the fact that for its organization there are numerous actors involved.

And again as we had already mentioned above that implies the coexistence of diverse interests within the space of the Venice biennale. And in an eventual excessive repetition

⁶ Foster 1985: 143

⁷ Belting, H., & Buddensieg, A. (Eds.). (2009). *The Global Art World Audiences, markets and Museums*. Hatje Cantz Verlag.

⁸ Belting 2009: 48

we will remind that regarding the diverse interest that may be identified behind the participations or exhibitions will discuss in detail on the chapter 4 of the present thesis.

Going back to the issue here, the role and position of the Venice biennale within the global art world in addition of what we had already mentioned, we can emphasize that that openness was not always a feature of La biennale

[could be relevant to remind that we understand as openness that fact that any country of the world can potentially officially attend La biennale even when their exhibition space, pavilions, are located outside of the Venice biennale main venues, Giardini and Arsenale. This is also extended to all art institutions that wish to attend by proposing parallel events.]

Indeed, since the 45th edition curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, in 1993, countries and other art institutions that did not own a pavilion had been allowed to attend by independently organizing their own pavilion even outside the Venice main venues.

However, the Venice Biennale magnetic characteristic does not only manifest through the increment of countries attendants but also for examples through the exhibitions or artistic projects that are classified as collateral exhibitions or projects.

In fact, through our consultation to the Venice biennale archive we realize that the number of the proposals for each edition is actually bigger than those that end up by being accepted to take part.

And as we are conceiving La Biennale as a public sphere we can add that this openness could be in line with one of main characteristics that any public sphere should have.

Indeed, according to Habermas when it comes to public spheres “ access is guaranteed to all citizens[in our case to all countries or actors interested].⁹”

⁹ Habermas 2006:73

Therefore, the fact that several actors are officially attending the Venice Biennale has a significant meaning.

The reader can notice that I used the word officially, because, it is important to make a distinction between all the exhibitions and art projects that happened to be displayed in Venice during each edition of La Biennale, and those that the Artistic Director and the directive council of Fondazione Biennale recognize as part of the official attendants of the edition.

To be considered an official pavilion or collateral event, the approval mentioned above, is guided by the evaluation of the proponents in terms of their status and the curatorial relevance of the exhibition or project proposed.

Besides the approval, the nation or art institution has to pay an amount of money that will allow them to use the biennale logo and to be included on the edition catalogue.

However, as we had already mentioned, despite bureaucratic and financial procedures, the number of attendants is continuing to grow. For example, let's start from the first year considered as the time frame of our research, 1990, it was the edition of the Venice Biennale and had as attendants....countries.

At the last year of our time frame, 2017, the edition, La Biennale was attended by countries.

On trying to make sense of that trend, in addition to what we had just mentioned above, for some scholars, that could be related to the fact that attending international art exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale, is considered as a path to acquire legitimacy both for the institutional actors and for the artworks displayed.

Indeed, that attendance should “fit to the show” in Hans Haacke terms, and that concern had been one of the main issues when it comes to consider the debate about the concepts and theories encapsulated within the institutional critic formulations¹⁰.

Therefore, on one hand we realize that However, against all the aforementioned criticisms, it seems that attending La biennale is still considered as crucial for the numerous actors of the artworld.

On the other hand, for La biennale it is crucial that those actors (countries, artists, and art institutions) are taking part in the show, because as we mention above it increases its prestige.

After what we had argued until now the logical step could be the one to discuss or try to identify the interests that the African countries are bringing to the La biennale as the public sphere of the global art world.

But unfortunately that will be the issue in chapter 4 and 5 of the present dissertation.

Before concluding this section, another issue that could enable us to understand the role and position of La biennale could be related with other similar international exhibitions.

Indeed, since its creation the Venice Biennale, had influenced other international art exhibitions in the world in a process that some scholars termed as “ Biennialization.¹¹”

And consider the fact that the Venice exhibitions is the world oldest biennale that is why its influence to the other international exhibitions is not only restricted to those created recently.

Indeed, one of the theoretical relevant examples is the San Paulo Biennale, created

¹⁰ See Haacke, H. (1996). All the Art That’s Fit to Show. In K. Stiles & P. Selz (Eds.), *Theories and documents of contemporary art: A sourcebook of artists’ writings*. (pp. 53–55). University of California Press.

¹¹ See for example Kompatsiaris, P. (2017). *The politics of contemporary Art biennials Spectacles of Critique, Theory and Art*. Routledge.

in "1951 by Francisco Maratazzo Sobrinho, a rich entrepreneur of Italian origins¹²" that was based in the city.

I mentioned the Sao Paulo example as a theoretically relevant example, because it had started by applying the exact structure of the Venice Biennale, such as the national pavilions, but after while they had abandoned that arrangement.

Therefore, one question that can come up is why the Sao Paulo Biennale abandoned the national pavilions arrangements and Venice is still able to maintain it even under long term criticism? We hope that our data can allow us to acquire some consistent evidence that could enable us to have an answer about this matter.

On the other hand it is important to remember that some of the features and aims of the Venice Biennale, that we had briefly presented above, had been somehow influenced by the world exhibitions.

One of those for example is its embedded desire to fulfilling its public expectations by presenting the "world's picture."¹³

And have that in mind one question that could arise is the following: how the desire to show the world picture is related to its automatic transformation as a Public Sphere?

Therefore, from the answer to that question we can realize that since its creation La Biennale had adopted some features of a public sphere.

However, it was not always being open for all the interested or actors interested.

Indeed it used to be more of a space of presence rather than representation.

And this last issue is somehow the link with our next section in which by describing and discussing another important component of our research context: the Sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists.

¹² Ricci 2012: 9. I made the translation from Italian to English.

¹³ Jones 2016: 84

And somehow those nations and artists will enable us not only to discuss further the concepts of presence and representation¹⁴, but at same time will allow us to make a reflection that could be extended to all those countries that we consider as the newcomers to the Venice Biennale.

In the present dissertation we termed as newcomers all the countries and artists from those nations that only from the 90's had started to be quite often present at the exhibition.

Obviously the newcomers nations are internally diverse as used to happening with any group.

For example some of those countries have their own biennale or an international art exhibition organized with a certain frequency.

This issue will be discussed in a more detailed manner in the next section, by having the sub-Saharan Africa countries as a starting point.

In conclusion, in this section we tried to briefly frame the Venice Biennale through the concept of public sphere in order to start to discuss its relevance and about why several actors from the art world are interested to attend it.

Starting this discussion here is a kind of anticipation of the exercise that we are willing to do in order to find a consistent answer for one of our research questions.

So, by presenting and describing the arrangements of the Venice Biennale our aims is also to be able to start to show the relationship between for example its structural transformations and the increasing number of nations' participation.

But as we had mentioned above the venice biennale is also, interested in the increasing number of the country participants.

¹⁴ I will define and discuss these concepts in Chapter 3. However, here I can anticipate that my understanding of them was influenced by Spivak (1988) and Hal (1997).

Indeed, as we will describe and discuss in the present dissertation the national pavilions is one of the many features of the La biennale.

And it's important to have in mind that this is not something new, but something that is present since its creation. What is new related to the attendance, and here that can sound as a sort of repetition of somethings that we had mentioned, is the fact that the countries or art institutions are free to their own participation.

It is because the Venice biennale is interested in maintaining its position in the art world that it, as an institution, is quite often changing its structural and exhibition arrangements.

That saying, even if we will discuss with more details later on we can anticipate as due to those transformations that La Biennale and not only resisted the criticisms, but also maintained its position in the art world.

For example the fact that La Biennale had opened the participation to the locations outside the mains venues had reduced the impact of the criticism on the national pavilions structure.

And regarding the institutional structural arrangements it went from a communal entity to La Fondazione Biennale, that allows or makes easy the participation of private entities.

As I already mentioned, the nations that do not own the pavilions at the Giardini della biennale, or renting the space at the Arsenale are free to establish the pavilion in an area of Venice.

1.2 Focus on arts from sub-Saharan Africa why?

“Why are some states resisting the global stage while others are clamoring to get in?¹⁵”

Our research context is twofold because it is composed on one hand of the Venice Art Biennale, as a global public arena, and on the other hand sub-Saharan African countries. So, in this section we will focus on the presentation and the description of sub-Saharan African that in methodological perspective could be consider also as our unity of analyses though which we study the Venice Biennale.

This section argumentation will be organized as follows.

On the first part we will explain how we use the terms sub-Saharan Africa, secondly we will briefly discuss why we had decided to combine the two research context.

Finally the most important, we will argue about why do we think that focus our study on the sub-Saharan African will be relevant to the advancement of the understanding of the overall Venice Biennale.

It is important to mention that the second and the third parts of this section will be enlarged on the chapter 2, in which we will present and discuss our methodological apparatus.

Under those circumstances, the main goal of this section is to take further the description of our research by focusing one that could be consider as both a research context and unity of analyses. Meaning in this section I present the question that I had posed to try to identify the reasons to justify our focus on the so called countries from the sub-Saharan

¹⁵ Appadurai 2006: 600.

Africa and how an study of the Venice Biennale with this newcomer attendants could be theoretical relevant?

As we affirmed above we will start the present section by discussing how we conceive the sub-Saharan African and how we will use the term in our dissertation. First of all we are aware that the use of the term could be problematic because so many scholars don't easily agree on how the African continent is divided by applying this term.¹⁶

I also did not agree on the use of the term, specifically on with the homogeneous division that it create, however, at same time, we consider that use it after a proper definition, as we did, could offer a relevant theoretical viewpoint though which analyse the Venice Biennale. Then starting to presenting our justification for the use of the term we can say that one of the reason that had influence us to apply anyway the term sub-Saharan Africa as unity of analysis was mainly influenced by the articulation that Edward Said made about the concept of orient.

One the main points of Said's articulation of the concept of Orient, among others, was the objection of its quasi natural conception, but according to him “Orient is not an inert fact of nature.”¹⁷

As we mention above the term sub-Saharan Africa is use to be applied as such a description of place that is natural and formed once and for all. Nevertheless, as Foucault remind us, “ the unity of a discourse is based not so much on the permanence and uniqueness of an object as on the space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed.”¹⁸

¹⁶ For a fuller discussion, see , for example Mudimbe, V. Y. (1988). *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*. Indiana University Press.

¹⁷ Said 1979: 4

¹⁸ Foucault 1972: 32

Then by making linkages with the concept of Orient articulated by Said and considering the Foucault suggestions, for us, more than for geographical reasons, we choose to use that term sub-Saharan Africa because we consider it as a discursive entity.

However, as like all discursive entities, it is important to specify the characteristics that we attribute to him in a certain context. About its characteristics we will describe them later on.

In the first place we will argue about what the use of the term will allow us to do. So, use the term will allow us to be able to circumscribe your research focus on those African countries that only recently had started to attend the Venice Biennale.

That is to say, here maybe we will do a sort of repetition, that we will analyse the overall Venice Biennale by having as a view point those countries. Then one of the questions that may come after that is the following: why focus on those countries and not on the others? We can reply to that question in two steps. The first one by saying that it was a methodological choice, that was matured during the research process.

Secondly, we can argue that we limited our focus on those countries because we believe that those countries have somehow the same starting point as long as most of them could not have been able to attend the Venice Biennale for some many years.

Therefore, we termed those countries as the newcomers. It is true that there are other countries, from other parts of the world that are also the newcomers as attendants to the Venice Biennale, but the main difference is the fact that those could not constitute a numerous group of countries, from the same world region that had joined the show, for the first time only a few years ago.

Another key point is the fact that those countries that had recently started to attend, had been excluded for some many years from the Venice Biennale because their art production was not included in the canon of contemporary art.

However, that condition was also true to others, as Crowther emphasized, “ women and no-western racial groups have been institutionally excluded from participation in the development of the canon.¹⁹”

As we will also argue in chapter 3, in the specific case of the sub-Saharan African countries and artists how and why this change had occurred? And happened only in the Venice Biennale context or also on the bases of cannon of contemporary art?

Connected with that question, something that could automatically come out is the temptation to try to find out how we can characterize this process: incorporation or commodification?

However, before start to answer the last question, first that one must remember is the fact that one of the reasons for the non-attendance of those countries was the fact that they had been for so long colonies of the western countries therefore, as a colonies was not possible to them to autonomously attend the Venice Biennale.

So, to be able to attend the Venice Biennale could be interpreted as a sort of a post-colonial condition, therefore, focus on those countries can allow us to analyse how eventually the post-colonial discourse and practices had been articulated and played in the art field by those countries and artists.

Going back to the cannon issue, other important viewpoint that one have to consider when it comes consequent postcolonial condition, was the fact that, often the art

¹⁹ Crowther 2002: 374

production from those countries as classified as primitive art and therefore excluded from the shows like the Venice Biennale.

So, as now those countries are attending how they are able to fit with the Venice Biennale that is one of most prestigious representatives of the “ western artworld’s managerial structure²⁰” as termed by Crowther?

As we did with the question introduced above, it is important to mention one of important notions relevant to take in count before starting to answer that question, and in that case it's related to the complexities of the field of contemporary in which the Venice Biennale is encapsulated.

Yet, as Okwui Enwezor has observed the “contemporary Art today is refracted, not of the specific, not just, from the specific site of culture and history but in a more critical sense, from the standpoint of a complex geopolitical configuration that defines all systems of production.²¹”

And Enwezor goes on characterizing that relation of exchange as “consequence of globalization after imperialism.”²²

So, the question of the postcolonial condition keeps coming back to us, then we must address it.

However, one of the most important aspects that we must keep in mind is the fact that, in some way, a kind of a shift had occurred, therefore the countries and artists from sub-Saharan Africa had started to attend la Biennale.

To interpret that shift, one direction could be under the lens of the functional analysis perspective. For example, we can try to expand the Robert Merton postulate of indispensability that he had originally as follow: “First, it is assumed that there are certain

²⁰ Crowther 2002: 373

²¹ Enwezor 2003: 58

²² Ibidem

functions which are indispensable in the sense that, unless they are performed, the society (or group or individual) will not persist.”²³

We had also discussed that issue in the previous section, however, I can say it again here, one interpretation could be the one in which the Venice biennale had to change in order to continue to exist.

Another perspective through which we can briefly make sense of that shift, this time having the countries as a starting point, is by considering what Hal Foster has stated in an article entitled “Subversive Signs.”²⁴

Foster pointed out that it is important “to accept the status of art as a social sign entangled with other signs in systems productive of value, power and prestige.”²⁵

This all converges with our archival research discovering, where we find out that some countries had been keeping asking the Venice Biennale to attend the show.

So, focusing on those countries will not only allow us to understand how the relations between the countries and la biennale used to be, but also what are the procedures and actors involved. About that specific issue we will dedicate the entire chapter 4.

Taking further the aspects related to the attendance, another outcome of our analyses will enable us to understand the patterns of those countries’ participation because it could be naïve to pretend that those countries have an homogenous *modus operandi*.

So, here we can find out another relevant question that can allow us to go further in our inquiry: what are the structural arrangements through which those countries are attending the

²³ Merton 1968: 87

²⁴ Hal 1985

²⁵ Hal 1985:100

Venice Biennale and how those diverse institutional arrangements can help us to better understand the overall structure of the Venice Biennale?

And as we will find out in a detailed manner in chapter 4 our hypothesis is that the institutional structural arrangements of the pavilions have an impact on the type of content that will be composed by.

About these issues here we can briefly mention that considering that perspective to analyse the participation of those countries and their exhibitions will allow us to avoid analysing the art field isolated to other fields that often are able to influence it. Indeed the structural arrangements that are composing the pavilions often include actors that are active in other fields, such economic, political.

Considering that we can come out with other questions that could look like as follows: And how those attendances are related and influenced by other dimensions of the world dynamics more than the ones strictly related to the art field? For example there is the notion that the cultural(of course art field included) passively reflects the economy.

As we had mentioned we will fully discuss that in the next chapters.

1.3 The 1990 as a point of departure

This section will mainly focus on the justification of the methodological decision concerning the choice of the time frame considered on the present dissertation.

From 1990 to 2017, 14th edition of the Venice Biennale had been realized. And as I had already stated somewhere in this period the presence of the sub-Saharan Africa not only had started but successively had increased more than in other times.

In addition at that period the presence and representation of the sub-Saharan Africa, as I will discuss and illustrate later on, was not related exclusively of National Pavilions but also through other aspects of the exhibition structural arrangements such the main exhibition, the international jury and very recently by artistic director of the edition, most known as the edition curator.

My argumentation on this section will be guided by the following questions: why I choose to focus the research on that period? Why was this period relevant? And how was that period as characterized?

So, I will start by answering the first question, and could be pertinent to mention that that question can be reframed as follows: Why focus on that period and not on the other?

Other important thing important to mention at this point is the fact that addressing that question here can be a sort of anticipation about how I had built the overall methodological apparatus of the present dissertation. Therefore, this section is strongly related to the issues that I will discuss in more detailed manner on the chapter 2.

Back to the question, the first and quickly answer could be related to the availability of data. And here again, I have already discussed the quasi historical exclusion of the African participation to the Venice Biennale before that period.

So, focusing on another period, specifically before 1990, could not be theoretically relevant considering the amount of data available.

That to say that the point of departure of the time frame considered, 1990, was related to the fact that only after that year the sub-Saharan African presence and representation started to be more consistent.

However, to add more complexity on the argumentation related to the definition of the time frame other questions that could be answered are: how was that period characterized? Why could this period be theoretically significant to focus the present study on?

Proceeding by inverting the order of the questions, then first addressing the question about the theoretically significant time frame considered here: 1990 to 2017.

The first part of the answer to that question is related to something that I have already affirmed, the availability of the data.

The second part, is related to the fact during the considered time frame, not only more countries had started, as I already mention, but also the patterns of the countries' attendances had been diverse.

So, on the present dissertation one notion that I would like to acquire is about what drove that diversification of attendance patterns ?

And by following that understanding could be adequate to identify the actors involved in that process.

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify that here I understand attendance patterns as the structural arrangements that characterize the National Pavilions or other types of attendances such as the collective exhibitions that in the case of the Venice Biennale are considered as collateral exhibitions.

But about this time frame other crucial issue that I would like to acquire is about how this process of attendance had started, because one of my hypothesis is that the strategy for the inclusion or incorporation of non-western countries, and participants for the case of artists, to the Venice Biennale was same.

I will fully discuss that in depth in questions on the chapters 3 and 5.

Going back to the issue of theoretical relevance of that period I can add the fact that the increased attendance of sub-Saharan countries, artists had occurred simultaneously with structural changes on the institutional and organizational arrangements of the Venice Biennale.

So by focusing on that period could be possible to find out the functionalist relation between the attendance of sub-Saharan Africa countries and art practitioners and the institutional changes within the Venice Biennale structure.

At this point, I can proceed, by answer the first question that I posed above <<how was that period characterized?>>

And again as well as the other question same to this one, I will apply my usual answering strategy, that is to say, divide the answer in parts.

This time it will have two parts: the broader and the specific one. By broader answer I mean the one that will briefly describe the time frame by considering its general characteristics and the specific, will be related specifically to the Venice Biennale.

Related to that two steps answer is important to note that the broader one will somehow take further some aspects that I have already mentioned regarding the connection between the cultural(in case of this dissertation artistic one) the other fields of the global or world structure.

And for how the Venice Biennale was specifically characterized at that period and the structural changes that happened, as I have already mentioned that issue will be also discussed in other sections and chapters of the present dissertation.

So related to the broader characteristics of our considered time frame, the one that I can start from in to meant is related to the geopolitical configuration and then changes that the world structure had observed and consequently had characterized that period. At least the begging of it.

That idea can be framed under the idea of being achieved “the end” of many, until that time, stable ideas or grand narratives.

And before continuing the discretion of what I mean by “the end” is important to anticipate that the next section I will fully discuss how the end of the influence of the “grand narratives” had influenced the exhibition practices.

So it was declared for example “the end of history” by Francis Fukuyama²⁶, and “the end of art history” was diagnosed by Hans Belting²⁷.

On top of that theoretical elaboration the world had assisted the fall of the Berlin Wall that had symbolized the end of the division of the world in two blocs.

On a more specific art perspective Hal Foster has characterized this period as "a moment of ideological polarity and historical dislocation."²⁸

It is important to emphasize that I had intentionally included the references about the “end of history” and the fall of Berlin to be able to briefly discuss an idea that often is taken without question, namely the autonomy of the art sphere.

²⁶ Fukuyama(2006)

²⁷ Belting (1987)

²⁸ Foster 1985: 139

And to somehow proof that the discussion about the autonomy of the art field is not something that I have invented I reproducing here how it was pointed out by Foster " However incisive, all at these critics still see the cultural and the economic[and I add the geopolitical] as (semi) autonomous realms²⁹"

And Foster goes on stating that already at the time that he wrote and publish his article there was some artistic, critics and theorist " concerned with the demystification of this separation, with the silences created by it.³⁰"

Therefore, in addition to what I had already stated above, starting the research time frame from 1990 will allow me to also engage in this process of demystification of the autonomy of the art field and somehow highlight it is interconnect with other fields.

So, in a broad sense start the analysis from 1990 was not only a great occasion to reflect about how art is connected and influenced by other spheres of the world superstructure but also an opportunity to highlight what was so aptly affirmed by Crowther " that the aesthetic judgments concerning art are themselves authentically historicized.³¹"

Continuing on that macro dimension of the episodes, another aspect that it is important to emphasize, at this stage of my argumentation, concerned to the starting point of the research time frame, is the fact that first exhibition of arts from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale was somehow an effect of a trend that had started some years before.

And that glance and consequently how I will address it could be framed as an answer to the question: why the sub-Saharan Africa arts stated to be included at the venice biennale only from 1990?

²⁹ Foster 1985: 145

³⁰ Foster 1985: 145

³¹ Crowther 2002: 374

Here I can mention two examples of exhibitions that had happened before the one at the Venice Biennale. That say it is important to mention that the first exhibition of the contemporary sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale happened at 1991.

And about the chronology of the exhibition I will deeply argue on the chapter 3.

So, going back to the issue here, the first one happened in 1987, at the Center for African Art in New York and was entitled “Perspectives: Angles on Africa Art.” The show was curated by Susan Vogel³². Vogel was the main curator and for that show she had worked with other co-curators³³.

I had mention intentionally that show because the curator, Susan Vogel, was also involved on the team that had organized the second collective exhibition of sub-Saharan African arts that happened in 1993.

At this point I can adding more material to one of my main hypothesis by quickly stating that collective exhibitions were the strategy applied in order to incorporate the newcomers, the non-western countries, that had been previously excluded as attendants to the Venice Biennale. And that strategy was applied not only to the sub-Saharan African countries but also to others. However more details about that process will be discussed in this dissertation in the follow chapters, specifically on the chapter 3.

The second example is the milestone but at same time controversial exhibition *Magicians de la Terre*.

This exhibition had happened one year before the start of the time frame considered in this research, 1989.

³² The exhibition curated by Susan Vogel was mentioned By Kwame(1991) The exhibition was entitled “Perspectives: Angles on African Art.” And was organized by the Center for African Art, an art institution based in New York. It is important to mention that 1993 Susan Vogel had curated an exhibition at the Venice Biennale that I will examine later on.

³³ Appiah 1991: 336

Some scholars such as Hans Belting, frame *Les Magiciens de la Terre* as the first exhibitions of the global contemporary art³⁴.

Considering that statement, as I totally agree, I have to confess that exhibition played an important role on process of definition of the time frame of the present dissertation.

Indeed, one of my speculation is that this exhibition had influenced the starting of the process of incorporation, acceptance and commodification of the art from non-western countries within the western mainstream institutions.

And it important to mention that the exhibition as a collective one, and again here, I can go back to my argumentation about the role that collective exhibition played on that process.

Going back to the *Magiciens de la Terre*, I can that more than for the exhibition idea what made that show remarkable was the ability that it had to generate a debate that had continued even after the exhibition dates.

As I mentioned before many scholars had wrote and are continue to write about different aspects related to the exhibition curatorial strategies and its historical significance.

One of those was Bruce Altshuler who had stated something that could be useful to show how, once again the field of arts is not separated from the other global spheres. Indeed he suggested to " view the importance of *Magiciens de la Terre*[...] focusing on its ideological use within the cultural politics of the period."³⁵

Other scholars, such as Enwezor, interpreted the exhibition as a sort of " response to the question that has vexed the modernist museum from its earliest inception, namely, the

³⁴ Belting, Hans ,*Contemporary Art as Global Art A Critical Estimate* in in: Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg(eds.) *The global art world: audiences, markets, and museums*), 2009, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2009, pp. 38-73.

³⁵ Altshuler 2010/11: 12

status and place of non-Western art within the history of modernism and contemporary art.”³⁶

Therefore, in one hand is true that zeitgeist could had influenced the Venice Biennale openness to the non-western art such as from Sub-Saharan Africa, but in the other hand, it was from that same period that the Venice Biennale had started some reforms that had resulted on the modification of the institutional and organizational structure of the show. On the above phrase I have used simultaneously the terms institutional and organizational structures. By institutional I mean the issues related specifically to the Venice Biennial as entity and by organizational structure I mean those related to the exhibition arrangements.

Indeed from 1990 changes had happened on the Venice Biennale on those two levels and at the present section I hope to briefly describe and discuss them.

And from here I will lastly and briefly describe those aspect that specifically had characterized the time frame considered in this dissertation.

Once again, is important to note that the argumentation about the organizational and structural changes of the Venice Biennale that I will start here will be taken further in the subsequent chapters of the present dissertations meanly on the one in which I will do an chronological overview of the sub-Saharan participation to the Venice Biennale.

However, here as structural institutional modifications I can mention the fact that from the *ente autonomo* La biennale di Venezia, it was transformed to become first *Società di*

³⁶ Enwezor 2003: 68

Cultura La Biennale di Venezia, in 1998 and finally to *La Fondazione* La Biennale di Venezia, in 2004.

Related to the organizational structure aspects, from 1995 Venice Biennale started to select, invite, accepted the attendance of countries that without pavilion within the Giardini della Biennale.

Before that shift , countries without pavilions used to be located at the space of the biennale in Giardini. In that case the space and some aspects of the attendance was provided and arrangement by La Biennale. With the change introduced in 1995 what had happened was the fact the countries are supposed to find by themselves their own space in which set up the exhibition.

This was a significant change because, before, countries could not be part of the show due to the unavailability of space.

However, that organizational modification can be framed as one of the several aspects of the process that I label as the outsourcing of the biennale.

By biennale outsourcing I mean all those changes made by the organizers of the show in order to not reduce or eliminate their direct intervention in the process of the countries participations or organization of collateral exhibitions.

However, that change allowed many countries to join the show even though their exhibition spaces are not located inside the main venues.

Other important aspect that is important to mention concerned location of the exhibition spaces is the fact that from 1993 the spaces of Arsenale, at the begging only the Coriaderia³⁷ space had started to be used to host the International Art Exhibition.

³⁷ Ricci 2012: 40

And actually countries that don't have their own pavilion at Giardini della biennale, that which to be located in the Venice Biennale main venues are able to rent the spaces at the Arsenale.

So, to sum up in this section I had described the broad and specific aspects that characterized the period of the research time frame. Additionally I had discussed how I chose to focus on it and how it is theoretically relevant.

As I had stated somewhere in this section what I had discussed here, is strongly related to the main argument of the next section.

1.4 The question of exhibition practices and the postmodern Theory

Following the previous sections, on which I had started to describe and argue about what I consider as the research context, in the present section I will take the work further.

Indeed, in the upcoming lines I will describe and discuss another aspect that I consider as relevant: a dimension to contextualize and understand the research that I have conducted.

The aspect that I will focus in this section is the one that I have termed as the curatorial question and the postmodern theory. Mainly, in the present section I speculate about how the emergence of the curatorial question was one reasons why, the arts from the countries Sub-Saharan African, as well as all other countries from the so called global south³⁸, had started to be part not only specifically to the on the case of the Venice Biennale, but also to other International art shows hosted by western mainstream institution in a more consistent manners.

Before going further, it is important to mention that I consider that speculation was the main argument of this section.

Therefore, to make sure that it is understandable I will rephrase in other words that could be like: one my main working hypothesis is that behind the openness to the participations of the so called newcomers one of the main factors was a disciplinary shift in exhibition and curatorial practices.

Those curatorial changings that are considered here had, on one hand, influenced scholars, such as Hans Belting, to start to consider " contemporary art as global art"³⁹ on

³⁸ One of the authors that had articulated and defined the concept of Global South is Santos(2015) in one of his books. Santos, B. D. (2015). *Epistemologies of the south: Justice against Epistemicide*. Routledge. Another book that could be relevant to understand the concept of global south could be Hardt and Negri (2000).

³⁹ Belting 2009.

the other, they had challenged and questioned what or when a creation should be considered as art.

And in the following lines I will argue about those changes, by discussing first of all why I had termed them as the curatorial question, successively I will focus on its theoretical sources and then on its implications and manifestations within the exhibition space. And considering the theme of my dissertation and the aim of the present section I will argue about how those changes had influenced the process of the participation of the sub-Saharan countries to the Venice Biennale.

To move forward I will quickly clarify that what I consider as the curatorial question was made possible by combining two perspectives.

On one side the changes on the exhibition practices and on the other the postmodern theory, specifically its influences on the exhibition practices and theories.

However, it is important to take in consideration that these two components are strongly connected, therefore it is often not possible to see the limit between them. They coexist encapsulated in a sort of circular connection, in which in one side the theory influences the practices and successively the practices produces the examples and evidence that the theory uses to sustain its legitimation.

Specifically related to the exhibition making it mean that new practices, objects and formats of exhibitions had started to be accepted, displayed and performed.

Proceeding in steps first I will argue about the changes in the exhibition practices and successively about how those changes had been influenced or related to the postmodern theory.

Because my hypotheses related to that issue is the fact that the changes in exhibition practices had been one of the effects of postmodern theory. And when I mention exhibition practices obviously the curatorial aspects are included, but I hope to have

enough space to demonstrate that those changes had also challenged other components of the exhibition practices.

Going back to the description of my proposal in this section, the last one will be to discuss how "the curatorial question" had influenced the Venice Biennale.

Regarding the changes in the exhibitions practices, the conceptualization of the curatorial question was strongly influenced by the concept of "discursive turn", that was brilliantly conceptualized by Bruce Ferguson and others scholars⁴⁰.

In an article written collaboratively by Ferguson and Hoegsberg and entitled " Talking and Thinking about biennials: the potential of discursivity⁴¹" they had discussed the idea of the discursive turn in the exhibition practices.

By considering the changes in the exhibitions practices diagnosed by them, firstly I followed the intuition to try to expand their analysis by the overall curatorial practices. Secondly, did a sort of genealogical analysis of those changes in the exhibition practices and then analyzes them through the postmodern theory lens.

Here again it possible to realize how the two components of the curatorial question are strongly connected. Indeed both exercise genealogical analysis of one and trace described above include a certain point some of the main features of the postmodern theory.

At this point of my argumentation it is important to refer to another source of inspiration as Paul O'Neil and his diagnoses about the curatorial turn⁴².

⁴⁰ See Ferguson, B. W., & Hoegsberg, M. M. (2010). Talking and Thinking about Biennials: The Potential of Discursivity. In E. Filipovic, M. V. Hal, & S. Øvstebø (Eds.), *The biennial reader: [An anthology on large-scale perennial exhibitions of contemporary art]* (pp. 360–373). Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz Verlag.

⁴¹ Ibidem

⁴² The O'Neil diagnoses about the curatorial turn in O'Neil(2010)

However in my dissertation I chose to use the term "question" instead of the "turn" because to expand the implication of the changes on curatorial practices within the overall realm of the exhibition practices.

According to O'Neil the curatorial turn was an analysis related specifically to the sphere of curatorial criticism.

Indeed, on the above mentioned article he stated that "During the sixties, the primary discourse around art-in-exhibition began to turn away from forms of critique of the artwork as autonomous object of study/critique towards a form of curatorial criticism in which the space of exhibition was given critical precedence over that of the object of art.⁴³"

In addition, as is clear in the above quote his analysis concerned a period prior to the one considered as the reference timeframe and also what I consider as curatorial questions, as I have stated above, is something that is related to the overall exhibition practices.

Going back to the actual main purpose here, that is to say, describe the Ferguson and Hoegsberg diagnoses.

So, according to Ferguson and Hoegsberg the "discursive turn in exhibition practice more generally has shifted the focus from the exclusive presentation of concrete and autonomous objects (display) in art institutions of various kinds (museums, art centers, Kunsthallen) towards the engagement of the audience in listening, reading, studying or participating rather than merely looking.⁴⁴"

So in the first glance what I did, as I have already mentioned, was to expand the impact of their analysis by considering those changes as not only restricted to the discursive aspects but also to the overall exhibition practices.

⁴³ O'Neil 2010: 241

⁴⁴ Ferguson and Hoegsberg 2010: 361

Furthermore, the authors had observed that it " become more and more the case that biennials and other such perennial exhibitions have become privileged platforms for exhibiting discursivity."

But why extended those changes and considered them, also, as a matter of exhibition practices and not just restrictively and discursive aspects?

First of all because I consider the discursive elements of an exhibition as a component that is encapsulated within the overall exhibition practices.

Therefore, what had happened was not only the emergence of the discursive turn but the overall shift in exhibition practices.

That interpretation finds a sort of support by following how Bruce Altshuler⁴⁵ had once interpreted the new refinements concerning the exhibition making.

Indeed, Altshuler had characterized this situation by applying the following description "most general are changes in how we conceive of what an exhibition is."⁴⁶

Therefore, what could modify or at least challenge our understanding of what an exhibition is more than the changes in the overall exhibition practices?

Once again, maybe is relevant, to restate that I consider the exhibition practices as composed by several dimensions, such as the discourse itself but also by other curatorial and structural aspects.

So, take in consideration that inference, the exhibition practices shifts a one of the features that are fundamental not only to contextualize the research but also justify, once again, its theoretical relevance.

At this point could be adequate to mention that in the present dissertation, the concept of discourse is being used in line with how it was clearly defined by Henrietta Lidchi as "

⁴⁵ Ibidem

⁴⁶ Altshuler 2010/2012: 8

a group of statements which provides a language for talking about a particular topic, one that constructs that topic in a particular way.⁴⁷”

Also it is important to mention that the discourse was something that had always been present as one of the main features of the exhibition practices.

So, what was the new perspective that the shift that I am describing had originated? How it was characterized and how it had impacted the exhibition practices and last why it had done so?

As I’m running out of space to fully cover that questions could be crucial to address the second aim of this section mainly show how the changes in the exhibition practices are related to postmodern theory.

The point of entry could be by affirming that the discursivity that had characterized the period before the shift that I am explain here, was the one that aptly Tony Bennett had described as a “ “public dramaturgy of power⁴⁸”

But as I had affirmed above this period consider as the time frame of the present dissertation and the one which saw the shift on the overall exhibition practices was also characterized by end of the grand narratives hegemony, so that dramaturgy of power was not any more possible performable.

One of the signs of the shift was the fact that the exhibition spaces could not anymore be sites where as possible to “inscribing and broadcasting the message of power⁴⁹” as Bennett once had diagnosed.

Instead the exhibition practices become a site in which the legitimacy was constructed through a discussion, as proposed by Jurgen Habermas.

⁴⁷ Lidchi 1997: 185

⁴⁸ Bennett 1988: 73

⁴⁹ Bennett: 74

That discussion was related to the fact that exhibition sites or shows like the Venice Biennale had become what I had termed in the section 1.2 as global art arenas emerged as a result of the influence of postmodern theory.

And here could be relevant to mention that I understand post-modern theory as it was eloquently defined by Lyotard meanly as “ incredulity toward metanarratives⁵⁰.”

So the exhibition space as “no longer a medium for the relay [only] of signs of power.⁵¹”

And one way through which the canon of power used to manifest in the art field as though the definition of what as art and was not.

Then as the understanding of the art object had been challenged, the overall exhibition practices had to change in order to follow that trend.

Concerned specifically to the Venice Biennale, as I had already started to discuss on the section 1.2, on one hand one of the effects there was the pressure to open up its doors to other types of art objects. Because the concept of art or the metanarrative that used to sustain what is considered as art was no longer enough to consensual.

On the other hand, as Lyotard asks “ where, after metanarratives, can legitimacy reside⁵²?

And by answeing that question I had I maybe I found the answer to one of my main dissertation questions << Why the African countries are attending the Venice Biennale?>>

But I prefer to leave that moment to successive chapters also because I will have more empirical material to sustain my answer.

⁵⁰ Lyotard, 1984: xxiv

⁵¹ Bennett 1988: 77

⁵² Lyotard, 1984: xxiv

I hope that this chapter was effective in showing the reasons why I have decided to undertake the present research and why I consider it as relevant to understanding the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

As I had stated in the above lines, one of the main working hypothesis, that I hope that I had been able to illustrate in the present chapter, concern the fact that I sustain that by examine the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa it's possible also to understand the participation not only of those countries but also of the all the other countries that use to attend La Biennale di Venezia.

Indeed, I went further by affirming that the difference that could be found between the newcomers, meaning the new countries that are attending La Biennale, and those that I attending since the beginning, is the fact that in one hand the some features that a manifest in the newcomers are hidden in the old attendants. On the other hand, the exhibitions practices now adopted by the new attendants used to be also adopted by the old attendants.

And about the last point I am meaningfully referring to how the exhibitions narratives are countries and for each purpose. Indeed now and then the art exhibitions, at least those organized by the national governments institutions, were mainly with the purpose of displaying power and diffuse rhetorics that are relevant for the process of nation-building then and national branding and cultural diplomacy now.

In fact, I consider the Venice Biennale as the unique opportunity that the countries, once again not only those from sub-Saharan Africa, have in the western context, in which through a quasi-permanent manner set up an activity that I could characterize as a sort of cultural diplomacy that otherwise they are not able to do in same context.

And it is important to mention that the countries governments and their related institutions are able to do that because one of the main features of the Venice Biennale,

despite the criticism, is the fact that the organization of the exhibitions and the participation occurs mainly through the countries national pavilions.

And it is important to mention that the countries governments and their related institutions are able to do that because one of the main features of the Venice Biennale, despite the criticism, is the fact that the organization of the exhibitions and the participation occurs mainly through the countries National pavilions.

However, as I have mentioned elsewhere there are other modes through which, in this case, artists may attend the La Biennale.

The other spaces within which the artists may attend the Venice Biennale are the main exhibition and the parallel exhibitions, also known as collateral events.

In the upcoming chapters I hope to examine those several types of exhibitions and their implication regarding the exhibition practices.

But one thing that I can anticipate here is the fact that within those diverse exhibitions the practices and mainly the narratives have diverse approaches. However, the exhibitions within the national pavilions, as are the core of the Venice biennale.

Indeed, in the present dissertation the countries participation are classified as cultural diplomacy.

And it will be more clear when I will discuss the exhibitions narratives and the reason why with different structure of the pavilions organizational arrangements the content and aims of the exhibitions are also diverse.

Indeed, it is by considering that aspect that I had dedicated an entire section to examine the relation between the exhibition narrative and the structural arrangements of the pavilions.

On that examination, I will go further by first try to understand who are the audiences of those exhibitions and how the exhibitions are received and with what will emerge on that exercise I hope that I will be able to gain some insight that could help me to answer to one of my main reader has questions, specifically the why question.

But before arrive to that point of my examination, in the next chapter I will describe and discussed about the methodological strategies that I had applied not only to build argument but to once again justify the theoretical relevance of the present dissertation

II. Theoretical and methodological apparatus

In this chapter we will present the methodological architecture of the present dissertation.

In our opinion, this part is the core of our work, because it is here where the innovative contribution, that are requested to an academic dissertation, had to be constructed, explained and then be employed in the other sections of the current study.

We will start the process, the first section, by providing a systematic bibliographic review of the practices, methods and theories that used to be applied on earlier Venice Biennale studies.

Earlier, referring to the bibliographic review, we had to mention the notion of systematic because what we had done was to cover on it only those works that we had considering as relevant to argue about the dissertation topic.

After we had made that choice, regarding how to conduct the bibliography review, the successive step was the one to aimed to identify the works that could fit on the present research goals.

However, it is important to mention that the main bibliography review will be enriched with the other bibliography references that will be made on each specific chapter, also because, intentionally, the present thesis is organized in a way that each singular chapter can be treated as a separate entities.

Another significant option that could be relevant to clarify, at this point, is related to the fact that most of the studies that will be considered here had not had, specifically, Africa

or sub-Saharan Africa as the focus of the research, however, it is important to consider them to create what Thomas Kuhn termed as the route of the science.⁵³

On the second section we will introduce our preliminary case study, the first participation of Mozambique at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. That saying, could be relevant to anticipate that the case study was one of the methods that we had applied to pursue the research.

Therefore, the case of Mozambique had served not only as a source to get the research idea, but also as the first instance where we started to discuss about the methodological challenges that could be faced by undertaking a survey about the sub-Saharan African participation to the Venice Biennale.

Before introducing the third section, we would like to clarify that on this research to be more specific we will refer to our research subject as the countries from sub-Saharan Africa. That choice excludes for example countries such as Egypt, that had been attending the Venice Biennale since 1932⁵⁴.

We had articulated an expanded argumentation about that methodological choice in the chapter 1.

However, here, briefly we can just mention that also in this we will argue more about that methodological decision.

On the third section we will discuss about the practical methods that we had employed to carry out our dissertation.

⁵³According to Kuhn the route of science meaning that the research should be “firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for it further practice.” Kuhn, 1968: 10.

⁵⁴ See Mulazzani, M. (2014). Guide to the pavilions of the Venice biennale since 1887. Mondadori Electra Spa.

As we mentioned before, one of those methods was the case study, but the main methodological strategy was the archival work.

The main source of evidences used on this survey had being collected on archive of the Venice Biennale, the historical archives of Contemporary Arts (ASAC).

The last section, the fourth, will somehow expand what we had discussed on the previous sections, because it will be focused on the data collecting process.

For the sake of clarity, for the present research we consider two sites of data. The main one, the archive and the exhibitions displayed during the 57th edition of the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, to collect the data we had combined an art historian approach, the archival research with a quasi-anthropological procedure that we termed as field work. We will discuss about this issue in a more detailed manner on the third section of this chapter.

2.1 Researching Venice Art Biennale

In this section we will present the previous studies that had been conducted about the Venice Biennale and how we had used them as the foundation to construct the methodological apparatus through which we built the argumentation of our dissertation.

It was quite challenging to undertake the present research, not only considering the fact that there was so many outstanding and relevant previous studies made about the Venice Biennale, but mainly because those studies had been made by applying several and distinct theoretical perspectives.

Therefore, the choice of one, or a sort of multi-perspective structure, was more complicated even in case like ours which it still somehow a research gap⁵⁵.

That is why we will not cover all the research that had been made on the topic, but we will focus only those works that had been considered as relevant for our survey.

Indeed we used the systematic review approach not to do a sort of exhaustive bibliographic review, rather our main interest, could be described as Nelson Goodman has observed as a “ process involved in building a world out of others.”⁵⁶

And according to Carney and Geddes (2002) cited on Booth at all 2012, “systematic reviews are syntheses of primary research studies that use (and describe) specific, explicit and therefore reproducible methodological strategies to identify, assemble, critical appraise and synthesise all relevant issues on a specific topic(p.19).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ As we argued on the chapter 1, we consider the need of solving the bibliographic gap regarding the research about the African participation at the Venice Biennale as one of the main propose of our research.

⁵⁶ (Goodman, 1978)(Indianapolis: Hackett,1978),

⁵⁷ Booth, Papaionnou, and Sutton (2016), *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*, (Los Angeles: Sage,2016).

Practically, to us apply the systematic review approach meant to first of all identify the research traditions and the approach through which the considerable amount of research about the Venice Biennale used to be undertaken. The second step was the voted to the identification of some relevant works that could fit to that research approaches.

The systematic literature review is applied not only to trace backward the scientific knowledge produced in the research of the Venice Biennale but also to be informed about how we could make a contribution to increase the understanding of the phenomenon under analysis.

Indeed, for us it was not satisfactory to fulfill the research gap, that was the case of the research of the African participation to the Venice Biennale, but our aspiration was also to be able to engage with the overall features of the Venice Biennale phenomena.

But before going further on the explanation about how we did the review could be pertinent to briefly discuss why we did the systematic review and what the systematic review, exactly, means.

On the one hand one of our main constraints was the fact that the Venice Biennale had been object of research for so long time, so it could not be possible to cover all the studies made in the past, here.

On the other hand, one of the benefits that we could achieve, by applying the systematic review approach, was the fact that it had allowed us not only to found the bases to

address our research questions but at same time, somehow improve the knowledge about the Venice Biennale.

These commitments, mentioned above, need great emphasis and we had acknowledged that comprehension inspired by Goodman, when he affirmed that “ Such growth in knowledge is not by formation or fixation or belief but by the advancement of understanding.⁵⁸”

But going back to the review procedures, to add more reliability to the process and to avoid some bias on identify the works we tried to answer the following question: How the research about the Venice Biennale had been made in the past studies ? Through which perspectives, theories and practices?

So in our understanding the research about the Venice Biennale have been made by adopting several perspectives such as (a) the historical and chronological⁵⁹; (b) nationalistic one, focused on the national pavilions, one of the structural main features of the Venice Biennale⁶⁰; (c) the political site perspective though which venice is a public sphere where several discourse are competing ⁶¹; (d) the Venice Biennale, and other similar shows as a global events, and we termed this as the globalization perspective⁶²; (f) the recently adopted curatorial perspective⁶³; (g) the one focused on single artist participation, fortunately I will not cover this perspective in this section and finally⁶⁴ (h)

⁵⁸ Goodman 1978: 21.

⁵⁹ Ricci 2012

⁶⁰ Mulazzani 2014

⁶¹ Wyss and Scheller 2011

⁶² Ferguson and Hoegsberg 2010

⁶³ Di Martino 1995

⁶⁴ Di Martino 1995

the institutional perspective in which we include those studies that are focus on how the Venice as institution is related to the exhibition content⁶⁵.

We are aware that other researchers may have made different classification, but we are quite confident that the eventual discrepancies between ours and their classification could be only in terms of how they named the perspectives and not in terms of the content encapsulated through them.

In addition, conceptually we can affirm that the distinctions will be not on what the previous studies concretely are about, but on how other scholars interpret and classify them.

And we can expand that elaboration, by borrowing Thomas Kuhn's idea, when he argued that " what differentiated these various schools was not one or another failure of method- they were all "scientific"- but what we shall come to call their incommensurable ways of seeing the world and of practicing science in it."⁶⁶

So considering the fact that our classification will not be notably novel, we will restrict our literature review under the aforementioned areas or research perspectives. Additional details and discussions about the works that will be mentioned will be encountered in the other chapters of the present dissertation.

One major theoretical approach that has dominated the field of research about the Venice Biennale, for many years concerned the historical and chronological approach.

⁶⁵ Wyss and Scheller 2011

⁶⁶ Kuhn 1996[1962]:4

One of the books that we had considered as emblematic of the approach is the one written by Amelia Jones (2016)⁶⁷ in which the chronological history of the Venice Biennale is situated in within the global context.

Jones work discusses about the chronological history of La Biennale, since its creation in 1895⁶⁸ and she describes it by the following words “ The Venice Biennale was born in the dusk of the nineteenth century, its ontogeny recapitulating the ontology of world’s fairs.”⁶⁹

Indeed according to Jones (2016), one of the arguments that the book want to show is the fact that the “contemporary art biennial is linked to a far longer past.”⁷⁰

On her historical and chronological effort, she goes on stating that “ tracing continuities between the biennial and its antecedents in the fairs, I find evidences for historical connections linking fairs, tourism, biennials, and spectacular urbanism, but also contend that changing artistic tactics have reframed these discourse, offering a critical globalism for the present.”⁷¹

Other reference work that could be included within this research perspective is the Di Martino (1995)⁷² in which the author narrates the chronological history of the Venice Biennale in a more detailed manner.

Successively, Di Martino, had published another book, with same title and structure, in which he successively brooded the period covered, until 2013⁷³.

⁶⁷ Jones, *The Global Work of Art : World’s Fairs, Biennials, and the Aesthetics of Experience* (Chicago: University Press, 2016).

⁶⁸ To more details and discuss about the Venice Biennale history and chronology see Jones(2016), Di Martino (1995 and 2013).

⁶⁹ Jones, *The Global Work of Art : World’s Fairs, Biennials, and the Aesthetics of Experience*, 81.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p.84.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*

⁷² Di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale 1895-2005*, (Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005).

⁷³ Di Martino, *La Biennale Di Venezia: 1995-2013*

After the historical approach, successively we will describe and discuss the one that we had classified as the nationalistic perspective, meaning those types of research that are focus on the national participations.

However, it is crucial to mention at this stage that, mainly, those type of research are used to focus on the pavilions that are located in the Giardini, so the old attendants.

One of the main characteristics of those types of research is the use of chronological data to analyse different aspects related to the pavilion that is why those types of survey of often be made about countries that actually have significant amounts of date available.

As an example of that perspective we can mention the research undertake under the direction of the Prof. Beat Wyss⁷⁴ in which several research had be conducted about some of the old attendants of the biennale.

One of the innovations of that study was the fact that by the end they had applied a comparative approach.

The main source of theoretical relevance of those types of research is founded on the amounts of the data available. So for example for your research topic, we think that it could not be relevant now, 2018, to elaborated a dissertation based on the participation of single nation from an sub-Saharan Africa.

The nationalist structure or the national pavilions exhibitions, is the characteristic of the Venice Biennale. And it’s exactly regarding that main structural feature of Venice Biennale, that several attempts had been made, and still, try to end the national pavilion structure.

According to main scholars, such as Bruce Ferguson and his colleagues, one of the motivations for asking for its end is the fact that: “Nation-states are often out of step with the networks of communications and economic, as well as artistic, discourses.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The project with which Beat Wyss was leading is called *Fokus Projekt* <<*Kunstbetrieb*>>- Biennale Project, though which research to some pavilions such as the Hungarian and the US had been conducted.

⁷⁵ Ferguson, at al., *Thinking about Exhibitions* (Bergen: Kunsthalle, 2010, 364).

Another source for the criticism was the proliferation of the biennales around the world, coincidentally some of the countries that at same time had in the meanwhile became the new comers attendants to the Venice Biennale.

One of our research question seeks to capture exactly why some countries, the ones that we termed as the newcomers, are deciding to attend the Venice Biennale even though the national dimension of the shows had been for so long criticized.

For us it could be an act of intellectual honesty to confess that one of pre-research answer droved us to relate to the Venice Biennale as a political site perspective that we will briefly discuss in the following lines.

Indeed, if the Venice Biennale and similar international mega exhibition are perceived as political sites so the countries as political actors don't want to be absent of that arena.

However, as we will discuss on the chapter 4, the Venice Biennale could be considered as the one of the few spaces in the western context in which the countries like the ones in which we focus our study are able to perform what we can classify as cultural diplomacy.

Returning to the description of the biennale as a site of political action, the author Panos Kompatsiris(2017) describe them as follows " they are sites of coded dissent, where members of the art world employ idiosyncratic languages to enable resistances against dominant hierarchies or raise awareness on the issues of the day."⁷⁶

In this way, the research grouped under this research perspective are focus on how the political practices and discourses are using the Venice Biennale exhibition spaces as a platform for the articulation and diffusion of their claims.

And somehow we don't agree with the statement made by Kompatsiaris (2017) when he had affirmed that " the idea that biennials are primarily platforms of political rather than aesthetic interventions is a relatively recent phenomenon."⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Kompatsiaris, Panos. The politics of contemporary Art biennials. Spectacles of Critique, Theory and Art.(New York: Routledge, 2017, 2).

⁷⁷ Kompatsiaris, The politics of contemporary Art biennials, 5.

Indeed, we believe that since the beginning of the Venice Biennale and its national pavilions had been a site not only of aesthetic discourse but also to perform political actions.

However, in the overall statement, in parts, we can agree with Kompatsiaris(2017), specifically considering the fact that, actually, the political interventions and discourse had become more visible and dominant on the show like the Venice Biennale.

But, in respect of this issue, Walter Benjamin points out as warning that “ Their political tendency alone is not enough. Benjamin(1934),⁷⁸ that is why within the exhibitions it is possible to find out several types of discourses and narratives.

It is important to notice that that abundances of narratives and discourse does not happen only because the exhibition makers have different interests and approach but also somehow, according to Jones(2006)⁷⁹ in a manner it’s exactly one of the key features of the event like La biennale.

Indeed, Jones (2016) considering the history of the Venice Biennale, takes further her argumentation by claiming that “ la Biennale de Venezia arrives, plumping for cosmopolitanism in the world picture.”⁸⁰

And it is exactly from this desire to provide the “world picture” that successively we will discuss the consecutive perspective through which the research about the Venice Biennale used to be undertaken. Through the following the Venice Biennale is considered as a global event and then analyse are done the lens of globalization.

⁷⁸ Benjamin, Walter, “The author as producer,.” *New Left Review*, (1934): 306. Something is wrong with the date, new left review did not exist 1934. It was 1970, even though the text is written much earlier of course.

⁷⁹ Jones (2016, p. 84).

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 84

Therefore, significant number of scholars analyse La Biennale within the context globalization and considering its history and symbolic meaning as one of the most important constituents of the so called global art world.

However, not all the analyses and then scholars about la biennale, portrayed as global art event conceive it in a positive prospect. One of those is George Becker (2010) which in an article in response to Okwui Enwezor, argues that “this society [the global one] eliminates geographical distance only to reap distance internally in the form of spectacular separation.”⁸¹

So, according to Backer(2010) and other scholars the world hipper connections of the artists practices and exhibition discourses at same time create a internally disruptions. One of that disruptions, in our understanding, is regarding the fact that, quite often the artists practices and the exhibitions discourses tend to create a kind of distance with the local practices and at same time to some extent a certain homogeneity.

Indeed, Jones(2016) had been committed herself “to analyse the dominance of installation art and projected video during the rise of biennials in the 1980s, and the emergence of performative events in the 2000s, linked to specific geopolitical, economic, and aesthetic conditions.”⁸²

And as a consequence of this trend we may affirm that one of the main criticism when it comes to see Venice Biennale as a global event could very well be summed- up as Ivan Gaskell(2012) once asked “In response to globalization is there to be a single, homogeneous set of aesthetic values governing the production of consumption of art?”⁸³

⁸¹ Baker 2010: 447

⁸² Jones, 2016: 86

⁸³ See Gaskell, Ivan. “Spilt Ink: Aesthetic Globalization and Contemporary Chinese Art,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* (2012): 1-16.

On the other hand, scholars such as Kompatsiaris (2017) argue that “biennials are the most influential engines of artistic globalisation, in the sense of propagating, enabling and materialising art’s vocabularies in and across local settings.”⁸⁴

Therefore, as we can realize, like some of the other perspectives presented previously, related to the analysis the biennale, also for the globalization, the interpretation, significance and its meaning are immersed in a controversy.

When it comes to the Venice Biennale and its global predicaments, another source of criticism is related to the artworks included on the exhibitions.

Recalling what we had discussed on the previous chapter, the definition of what constitutes contemporary art, is still under discussion and at this point we can mention point of the debate that asks << which practices are contemporary?>>

So the criticism regarding the artworks included on the show could be captured through questions such as << are all the artworks that are displayed with the central exhibition and national pavilions relevant to be displayed at the show?>>

In addition, some scholars expand that question by adding <<to whom?>>

It is very interesting that the way how the criticism is expressed could be linked and interpreted under the lens of some very old, unfortunately still ongoing, debates in the realm of arts.

One of those debates is the one regarding the definition of art that could be translated through the question <<what is art?⁸⁵>>

However, consider the aims of our research, unfortunately we will not discuss here about the concept of art.

Another debate that the criticism could be interpreted is the one related to institutional critique on which the role of the institutions, such as the Venice Biennale on the definition

⁸⁴ Kompatsiaris 2017: 8.

⁸⁵ To gain some insights about these debate could be relevant to see Danto, Artur, The End of Art: a Philosophical defense, History and Theory, Vol.37, No.4, (Dec.,1998), pp. 127-143.

of art is discussed. And for the purpose of the present research, we will consider the former.

Therefore, we must take a step further and clarify that we understand the institutional criticism not only as the << normative definition of art⁸⁶>> but mainly as the one that very eloquently was framed as Hans Haacke once expressed it << all art that’s fit to the show⁸⁷.>>

And regarding what is being discussed here, criticism the artworks that used to be included on shows such the Venice Biennale face, it can conduct us to the sequential perspective though which the research about the Venice Biennale use to be frame: The curatorial perspective.

However, before starting to describe and discuss about the curatorial perspective could be significant to referring that in reality the debate aroused by the artworks displayed in the shows could conducted us not only to the curatorial perspective but also to the institutional one, that will be the last that we will describe here.

Both are a sort of an analyse of the decision making process that takes place beyond the display. We will return to the issue on the successive chapters however, could be significant to remind how this process was framed and described under the institutional critique lens.

Indeed, Hans Haacke had described it as follows: “Products which are considered “works of art” have been singled out as culturally significant objects by those who, at any given time and social stratum, wield the power to confer the predicate “work of art” onto them.⁸⁸”

⁸⁶ Crowther, Paul, “Defining art, defending the cannon, contesting culture”, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, V.44, No.4(2004-336-377), 371.

⁸⁷ Haacke, Hans, All the art that’s fit to show.” one of the many arguments that the author discuss is the role of the institutions such as << museums and comparable art institutions>> play on the process of the definition of what is art. About the role of the institutions we will discuss further on the chapter 4 of the present thesis.

⁸⁸ Haacke, Hans, All the art that’s fit to show, p.53 in Stiles and Selz(eds.), *From theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, Berkeley, Un. Of California Press, 1996.

So, going back to the successive perspective that we will consider, the curatorial perspective, under which we include all the research and works that focused on analysing the curatorial discourses and strategies that by the end have an significant on the choice of the art works that are included and excluded on the shows.

Regarding the curatorial perspective, the one that is focused on the exhibition content one of the key authors is Bruce Ferguson, some of his outstanding works in which he argues on this perspective are the book edited Greenberg and Naime (1996)⁸⁹ and the successive such article "talking and thinking about biennials: the potential of discursivity."⁹⁰

In our interpretation the curatorial discourse was in some way strongly influenced by the theory of postmodernism. Indeed, it was since its beginnings, as well as the theory, had assumed any orientation in a very visible opposition to "the meta-languages, meta-theories, and meta-narratives of modernism"⁹¹ as David Harvey once expressed it.

That orientation had been pushed by what Kompatsiaris had expressed by citing Benjamin's idea of the history of the oppressed (Benjamin, 1999), that is to say the purposeful resurfacing of oppressed historical moments so as to combat the homogeneity and linearity of dominant historical narratives, provided a guide for the Biennale's curatorial strategies.⁹²

As we already had pointed out, these studies are focused not only on the exhibition as such but more specifically on what are being produced though and within them in terms of discourses and practices.

⁸⁹ See Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Naime, "Mapping the international Exhibitions," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Naime(ds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Routledge, London & New York, 1996.

⁹⁰ Ferguson, Bruce and Hoegsberg, Milena. "Talking and Thinking about biennials: the potential of discursivity," (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthalle, 2010).

⁹¹ Harvey, *The condition of post modernity*, (Cambridge: Blackwell: 1989), 113.

⁹² Kompatsiaris, *The politics of contemporary Art biennials*, 2017, 1.

Indeed Ferguson at all. had termed this phase as “the discursive turn” and on same article, with same accordance, they went on stating that “one question might be why these “discursive biennials” are starting to appear now, just when the biennials is actually doing better than it ever has in terms of both numbers and cultural status.⁹³”

As the reader can realize somehow the curatorial perspective is not only related to the institutional one, that we will discuss successively, but also to the political that we had considered previously.

Indeed, the discourses are at the center of both and as a consequence the exhibition space is conceptualized not just as aesthetic place but mainly as arena in which discourses can emerge and be created.

And here we are going to enter on the decisive point of this systematic review by talking about the last perspective that we had identified, the institutional one.

Here we understand institution as defined by Douglas North, who affirmed that “Institutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions.⁹⁴”

It is very exciting that Roger Hollingsworth had interpreted that definition citing other North work, and for him institutions are defined as “rules of the game in a society.⁹⁵”

As the reader can note to argue about the institutional perspective, we had borrowed literature and theoretical frameworks from the field of economy and innovation studies.

⁹³ Ferguson at al., Talking and Thing about biennials, 361.

⁹⁴ North, Douglas, “Institutions,” *Journal of Economic Perspective*, V. 5, N.1 (1991, 97-112), 97.

⁹⁵ Hollingsworth, J. Rogers, “Doing institutional analysis: implications for study of innovations, *Review of International Political Economy* (2000: 595-644).

We proceeded in this manner because we would like to going further of the ways institution is issued to be defined when it comes to studies on the Venice Biennale or the overall field of art history.

Indeed, for us, we classify under the institutional perspectives those studies that have as focus the rules governing the Venice Biennale.

Again, as with the previous perspectives that we had discussed, also in this case it is very difficult to establish a boundary between the institutional and for example the historical and chronological research.

Indeed, the rules and the overall arrangements of the Venice Biennale are often covered when it comes to trace how La Biennale had transformed though time.

Other frame can be the aforementioned, institutional critique, in which the exhibition content is used to be analysed in relation to the structure of the exhibition organizer.

However, for us those approaches, the one included on the historical research and the institutional critique analyses can be considered as macro analyses of the process of the exhibition making. Indeed, they tend to focus on the overall structure of the exhibitions.

One work that we can mention as any example of the overall analyses of the exhibition structure, even if is not specifically focused on the Venice Biennale is the Tony Bennett article entitled “The Exhibition Complex.”⁹⁶

In his article Bennett though the analyses what he described as “institutional articulations of power and knowledge relations”⁹⁷ he ends up illustrating the transformation of the overall exhibitional structure.

Once again, this perspective is not exclusively focused on the Venice Biennale and somehow it can be encapsulated on the institutional history, could me relevant to mention

⁹⁶ Bennett, “The Exhibition Complex, *New Formations*, (1988:73-102)

⁹⁷ Bennett 1988: 73.

the studies on that can be conducted by looking on how the exhibition complex had changed until how they actually look like in terms of institutional arrangements.

After we have covered and briefly described the research perspectives mentioned above your question was: Which approach we should adopt on our research?

Even if we had already briefly discussed above, we may start to answer that question by saying that one of the easiest approach that we could is the one that aims to fulfill what “the concept of development-by-accumulation assigns to them⁹⁸.”

We would once again like to emphasise that inspired by Thomas Kuhn we added to that question the commitment to be able to identify some details that could make your research became more relevant.

Indeed, in his extemporal book he had advocated to that commitment as follows “ in addition, since any description must be partial the typical natural history often omits from its immensely circumstantial accounts just those details that latter scientists will find sources of important illumination.⁹⁹”

Continuing his scrutiny Kuhn in his aforementioned groundbreaking book stated that “see scientific development as a process of accretion (accumulation, increment) science have begun to ask new sorts of questions and to trace different, and often less than cumulative, developmental lines for the sciences¹⁰⁰.”

⁹⁸ For deeper discuss about the procedure of accumulation of knowledge in science see Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Third edition). University of Chicago press.

⁹⁹ Kuhn 1996: 16.

¹⁰⁰ Kuhn 1996: 2.

So one of our main goals was the one to try to conduct the present research by applying a theoretical and methodological apparatus that could enable us to have a relevant picture of the phenomenon. We had termed our approach, the sub-Saharan Africa approach to study the Venice Biennale.

By that term what we want to state is the fact that our research could consist in a just the replication of methods or theories previously applied on the research of the Venice Biennale to our subject, sub-Saharan African to the Venice Biennale, but to try to individuate on that was able to enable us to capture the relevant features of our research object.

Indeed, with the present research we hope to somehow individuate a new perspective thought which could be possible to research the Venice Biennale.

However, it is important to mention that the new doesn't to create something that doesn't exist yet, but to affirm that the perspective that will be applied was a result of combination of the previous approaches with the certain mythological sensibility strongly influenced by grounded theory. But about the methodological apparatus of the present research we will discuss in a more detailed manner in the follow sections.

Specifically , what we termed as African perspective on research on Venice Biennale is an approach that first of all tries to identify what could be the most relevant theoretical focus that a research about the sub/Saharan participation to the Venice Biennale could adopt.

And not merely applied the perspectives that had been previously adopted, some of them had been presented here.

Before concluding this section we would like to remind that one of the theories that had informed our intuition is the one elaborated by Douglas North, that is very influential in the economic studies, in which the performance of an society, event such the overall Venice Biennale and national participation is related to the institutional structure.

So, to try to find the answer for our research question we will identify the institutional arrangements of the sub-Saharan Africa national pavilions.

Therefore, somehow our dissertation can be seen as a sort of what Kuhn had characterized as the third class of route of normal science, in which in his own words a intended to “to articulate the paradigm theory, resolving some of its residual ambiguities and permitting the solution of problems to which it had previously only drawn attention.¹⁰¹”

As in any serious research the systematic review presented here was crucial as a source to create the research apparatus that by the end was adopted to undertake the presenter research. So, in this section we had tried to build the methodological structure that will guide our dissertation.

To try to show how this challenges a very concreted and how to face them in a research process in the next section I will present once example that I consider was the preliminary case study, mean the one that had the idea to design a long and more extensive research about the sub-Saharan participation at the Venice Biennale.

¹⁰¹ Kuhn 1996: 27.

However, to conclude the process of construction of our methodological structure it is important to mention that we are aware that for some research's like our one could be attempted to use some theoretical frames that for some scholars could be the most adequate to apply.

But one principle that had guided us was the one to try to figured out to apply or to conduct the research that not only could fill the gap regarding the research on Venice Biennale related to the participation and representation of countries and artists from sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed your other aim, as we had mention before, was the one to improve the understanding of the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

Also, according to some scholars filling the literature gap does always mean that the dissertation could be considered as theoretically relevant.

Considering the time and resources applied we had to be committed to both.

2.2 Mozambique as a preliminary case study

As we had mentioned we will not only discuss about how we came up with the idea to undertake the present research project but also about how since our work on the Mozambique national pavilion, what we term here as the preliminary case study, we had faced the methodological challenges.

Therefore we include the case of the first participation of Mozambique to the Venice Biennale here, can serve also was some sort of practical justification for the methodological choices that we had discussed above.

Indeed, it can be one immediate example about how the challenges could be and how to solve them in the present section we will be present the one that we consider as a preliminary case study.

I have worked for the first participation of Mozambique to the Venice Biennale, both Architecture (2014) and Art (2015). The main features of this experience guided me to think about the participation and presentation of contemporary African art in international exhibitions.

For the occasion of the Venice art biennial participation I had a chance to work closely with the curator of the Mozambique National Pavilion. As a collaborator of the pavilion, my main task was to manage the daily operations and functioning of all aspects of the pavilion. However, considering my background in communication issues I was also in charge of the design and production of some exhibition communication materials.

The privilege to work for more than 13 months in the Venice Biennale combined with some of my previous experiences in cultural and art fields had guided me to research and often looked over topic: contemporary African arts in international exhibitions.

After the end of the Venice art biennale participation, I conducted a survey at Mozambique National Pavilion to a sample of 500 visitors. I will analogize the data to write articles, using the results as source to identify the core aspects regarding the contemporary African arts exhibition practices in international shows.

I would like to realize the research as a part of my studies in a PhD program in the field of arts because I think that it cannot only give credibility for the research, but also it can be extremely valuable and important to help me frame, without losing its multidisciplinary topic.

My idea is to, as long as possible; try to complement the theoretical research with the active participation on exhibition making processes. Thus, I am planning to continue to collaborate, even in on a volunteer basis, with the Mozambique national pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Indeed, as I will argue later should not in fact this can be a fruitful strategy to collect data on the basis of participatory observation.

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After the end of the Venice art biennale participation, I conducted a survey at Mozambique National Pavilion to a sample of 500 visitors. I will analogize the data to write articles, using the results as source to identify the core aspects regarding the contemporary African arts exhibition practices in international shows.

I would like to realize the research as a part of my studies in a PhD program in the field of arts because I think that it cannot only give credibility for the research, but also it can be extremely valuable and important to help me frame, without losing its multidisciplinary topic.

My idea is to, as long as possible; try to complement the theoretical research with the active participation on exhibition making processes. Thus, I am planning to continue to collaborate, even in on a volunteer basis, with the Mozambique national pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Indeed, as I will argue later should not in fact this can be a fruitful strategy to collect data on the basis of participatory observation.

The pavilion exhibition entitled “Coexistence of Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Mozambique” had included 20 artists from different generations, mainly based in Mozambique have in common as the curator stated the fact their practices was “authentically Mozambican.

It is very interesting that the pavilion did not include only artworks that could be classified as visual but also for example books and music and other cultural artifacts, that is why

we can consider the curatorial strategy was the celebratory one, celebration of the Mozambicaness more than artistic one.

So there was a domination of a national narrative aligned with the government narrative of the conception of what does it mean to be Mozambican and how it could be translated

So all the artists and art work that could be associated or interpreted under the lens of contemporary or with a certain portion of transnationality had been exclude from the show.

Based on the imaginary of what Mozambique could mean and what a foreign audience could be interested to know about Mozambique and then maybe from the exhibition visitor became a country visitor as a tourist.

Maybe that approach was associated to the fact that both participations of Mozambique, at same year and country, at the Expo Milano and Venice Biennale, had being organized by same entity

All the artists that had been included on the pavilion are based in Mozambique.

The Mozambican pavilion was an important impulse and challenge to any research of African participation because in a very first analyse the prominent characteristic of the exhibition narrative was not the one that one could imagine.

Indeed, that narrative was not much about for example some postcolonial claims or decolonization as much of the art practices and exhibitions used to the interpreted.

So considering the fact that Mozambique had same governmental institution organizing both the Venice Biennale participation and the Expo Milano one.

For example by considering that institutional arrangement one thing that could be said is that for the Mozambique government, there was not a such a difference from participating at both international events.

If not why the participation was conducted by same institution?

So it is important to recognize the role that the Expo played on the participation of Mozambique for the first time.

So same governmental institution

I have to mention that regarding the Mozambique participation I had a privileged position that had enabled me to be able to get to know some internal features that are involved on the process of the organization of the countries participation.

I was some sort of the local Mozambique represent and a freedom to somehow influence on the exhibition content.

I said local because Mozambique had also one Venetian partner that was I charge for the technical issues. And even if this detailed discretionary and analyses of the relevance of the local partner

For example I was one of the representative of Mozambique during the organizational meetings.

So was by considering my experience with the Mozambican pavilion that I had started to wondering about what was the adequate perspective through which the Mozambique participation could be analyzed.

Indeed more that it's exhibition content and how it was received by the Venice Biennale visitors.

How the public had reacted the exhibition more than

I used to be often on the exhibition site and it's it rested to notice that for most the visitors the exhibition content was not so important because most of them are just happy because one country was present in Arsenale.

The Mozambique pavilion was located at the Arsenale, one of the options that is more expensive for the newcomers but in the other had is able to be available to most of the visitors that the Venice Biennale is able to attract.

Indeed, considered the fact that most national pavilions of the sub-Saharan countries a located outside the Venice main venues one of main issues is to be able to understand who visit those pavilions that a located outside the main venues even if the entrance is free. But about this issue we pretend to discuss in detail later on.

Mozambique one of the poorest countries of the world but at same time had undertaken all the efforts needed to be able to attend the Venice Biennale, why? And why in same year that Italy was also hosting the Milano Expo.

This could not be interpreted was this need in one hand the visitors attending the biennale wishing to access to some sort of the world picture in other had the countries of the world.

How my work during the first participation of Mozambique had been one of the source about who to conduct a research about the sub-Saharan African participation to the Venice Biennale.

It was by working and conducting research during the first participation of Mozambique at the Venice Biennale that I had the understanding that not all the perspectives that used to be applied to research at the Venice Biennale could be theoretically relevant.

Indeed, one of the main goals of the present dissertation is simultaneously improving the understanding of La Biennale.

Therefore, after the research on the Mozambique pavilion I started by trying to understand what was most theoretically relevant to undertake research.

So, in the present section I had presented the one that I consider as the prelaminary case study.

In the following lines I hope to be able to clearly demonstrate how the theoretical and methodological apparatus adopted in the presented dissertation was informed by it.

2.3 Framing the research: The method

What we find, or succeed in making, is heavily dependent on how and what we seek.¹⁰²

In this section we will describe how we had constructed the methodological apparatus, in terms of the concrete research methods adopted and why we had made certain choices and not others. We will also discuss about how we classify the method or methodological apparatus adopted to conducted the present research.

It is important to mention that there was not a concrete separation between the process of definition of the overall methodological apparatus and the decision regarding the research methods we finally had applied.

However, we present here in a separated section on to create and illustrate in a more detailed manner all the components of our research methodological apparatus, in which the methods are the central part.

One of our main concerns in terms of the methods to apply was conditioned not only to the need to fit on the practices, methods and theories accepted in art history, but also to point out some relevant analyses concerned the overall Venice Biennale phenomena.

¹⁰² Goodman 1978: 39

We had mentioned art history because it important to not forget the fact that the program in which the PhD thesis will be presented is exactly art history. Additionally to that we want to contribute for the better understanding to the phenomena under observation.

It is true that our specify research subject represents an actual gap concerning the analysis of the Venice Biennale, but at the same time we wish not only to fill the void but ???

The initial ideas that had characterized the present research project was the one in each the goal was to compare how the contemporary African arts was incorporated and displayed in three diverse types of international exhibitions in the western context: the Venice Biennale, in a museum and the last was an art fair.

The ideas was to try to see how different context and actors are dealing with the contemporary African arts and actually what they consider as such.

We had in kind that these different actors unable as to have a very significant picture regarding the actually stage and role of the contemporary art within the mainstream international exhibitions.

So the idea was to at the final stage of the research do a comparative case study to capture how the contexts are diverse form each other and in such what it could effect on the understanding of what is the contemporary African arts.

But as we started to collect the primary data we realized that with the context of the Venice Biennale all those actors are actually playing a significant role on the process of exhibition design.

So methodologically the analyses of the research subject was conducting from the general to specific perspective.

Starting from the discussion of the general features of the sub-Saharan African participation to the analyses of the specific national participations.

There countries participations that had been analyzed are the following:

The main criteria that had guided the selection of those countries was the linguistic one that can be connected to the former colonial countries.

The comparative case studies will enable us to capture the differences among the sub-Saharan participation.

Other result that the approach had enable was to acquire was related to the possibility to map the actors that involved on this process.

2.4 From the archival data to on site field work.

The perception of any pattern not fitting the structure of the search often takes great trouble¹⁰³.

In this section the goal is to explain and describe how we had proceeded regarding the data collection process and which type of data I have classified as relevant for the present research.

One of the methods that mainly used on art history community is the one that rallies on the archival sources to find evidences that will be used as the base of the argumentation and justify the eventual claims.

Therefore we consider the archival part of the present research as the one that is mostly fitting well on the research practices that are supposed to be done under the PhD program in which this thesis had to be presented.

But, as we had eventually mentioned previously on the last section, the way in which we approached the archive, consulted the files, selected and collected the evidences is one in which the innovative dimension of this work could be founded out.

The archival work was made simultaneous with the construction of the methodological apparatus.

¹⁰³ Goodman 1978: 40

One central aspect to the entire discipline of art history is the archival work.

The initial idea of the present research project was to compare three types of exhibition about contemporary African arts occurred within the international mainstream context. And then was due to the data founded in the archive the Venice Biennale that the initial research idea started to be reframed.

However, before proceeding with the argumentation could be useful to present here how were research questions from the initial project, meaning the one submitted to apply for the position.

What are the main reasons why an increasing number of African countries and individuals (artists) attending the international exhibitions: geopolitical positioning of the African country represented or art interest?

How do display techniques varies across the 3 different type of international art show: 1) Biennial Venice Art 2) Art fair (1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London) and 3) art museum exhibition (for example the itinerant exhibition Making Africa - A Continent of Contemporary Design). Is it more important follow the exhibition's narrative or does the artists' message matter?

One of the things that had changed was exactly the research questions, but before, it was the decision to focus only on the Venice Biennale.

The core source was the letters to the artistic director of each edition.

So I had tried to have a look the all letters to the curators since the beginning of the time frame considering on the present research, 1990 the edition of the Venice Biennale. But considering the fact that the editions a prepared at least one or two years before I started from the letter archived on the folder 1989.

Those letters to the curators are richer of information more than those related to each nation that are often are happen to be absent even when the country or artists had been part of the exhibition.

So my first impression was that it was not enough to go to the archive and only collect the data available on the countries folders because those are not enough to have the complete or theoretically significant picture about the dynamics that are characterizing the process of the exhibitions organization and the actors involved.

Other important source of data at the archive was the exhibitions catalogues, mainly to find out the curatorial statements of each national participation.

Through the curatorial statements it was also possible to find out the narratives that had been materialized through the exhibitions, but about this issues we will deepen the discussion in the following chapter more specifically on the ones regarding the institutional arrangements, chapter 3 and the more specifically on the one related exhibitions narratives.

The archival works as the overall research project was something that was recalibrated as long we had started to undertake it. And specifically for the archives the recalibration meant for example to find out most adapted modality to consult the archive and the identification of the data to collect

It was but consulting the archive for the first time that I started to realize that the research focus should be reframed and the research that we had to undertake should be the one in which one may just try apply some preconceived research perspectives.

The opportunity to be undertaking this research on a period in which some of the editions of the Venice Biennale had been realized as a great opportunity to us to do what by borrowing we can consider as field work. And for the present research the more relevant was the one carried out during the 57th in 2017 that also because it also the last year for the time frame considered in our research.

And somehow the field work had influenced the archival work, because by visiting the exhibitions and talk with some art practitioners we gain a sense or a sort of confirmation about what was the core categories on which the present research should be focused on.

During the period in which we carried out the present research, we had the possibility to visit one edition of the Venice Biennale, exactly the 57th in 2017.

More than visiting exhibitions we did some interviews with some of those we had considered as key respondents, mainly curators that had been attending the Venice Biennale for a while with different roles and projects. However by the end we decided to no use the interviews as a source of data for the present research.

Other thing that we did was to collect the catalogues and booklets to find out the exhibitions curatorial statements.

So concretely what we termed as field work was composed by three activities: visiting the exhibitions, talk and do some interviews with key respondents and collect the catalogues and booklets.

For the present research we had an opportunity to see two editions of the Venice Biennale, the 2017 and the 2019.

However, the time frame considered in the present research is until the 2017 edition.

Other very important issue that we had had a sort of confirmation during the field work was the role of the distinct actors that composed the institutional arrangements that which had composed the structure of the national pavilions or had been related to the artists that was attending in the main exhibition.

I did the first visit to the Venice Biennale archive on December 2016.

This first visit enabled me to understand how the archive was organized and which type of data was available.

One of the main results of this first hours and weeks of the visit to the archive was the fact that we had realized that actually the data related to the African pavilions or African participation to the Venice Biennale was actually very few.

Here is important to mention that the scarcity of the data was not only related to the time frame considered here but was something that could be faced to any time frame.

One of the many causes is connected to the fact that those countries had only attended the Venice Biennale very sporadically and had started in more recent years.

Therefore on the data recorded and catalogued on the historic fund the data, as we mention was very scarce.

Could be important to mention that data at the fund are organized through years or edition and the name of the countries.

This data is related to all the official correspondences between the biennale and the national institutions during the period before and after the respective edition. It was also included the act of the organizational meetings before any edition. In general two: one to confirm the participation around November of the precedent year and the second around February of the edition year to present the ideas of the artists director and had to discuss how the countries national pavilions will engage with it.

Though this data was possible not only to understand the key role that institutions play on the organization and structure of the Venice Biennale but also to identify who are those institutions, but about the institutional dimension of la biennale we will discuss more in detail later on the chapter

However, we can already mention that the institutional dimension of the Venice Biennale is the core of the present research.

But for each edition there was also the correspondence of or too the artistic director with several actors but those are more diverse that those who are included on the historical funds. Indeed on the folder related to those types of correspondence can be found letters from institutional and also non institutional actors and somehow are much more relevant when it comes to analyze the sub-Saharan African participation.

We hope that we had been able to make clear that some of the different research phases had been executed though a simultaneous approach or in parallel.

So, in this chapter we had discussed how we had identified and approached the two main data sites: the historical archive of the Venice Biennale and the field work during the 57th edition of the Venice Biennale that had happened on 2017.

Our effort was the one to be able to show not only how the data collected in one of the sites had be related and consequently influenced each other but also how the data since the first sessions of data collection had be able to inform as to make some changes on the overall research structure.

While consulting the documents and files on the biennale archive I started to look for the location of the all document related to the African participation within the period considered in the research.

I started the research by consulting the Venice Biennale archive guided by the following questions: What can make the research of African participation at the Venice Biennale interesting? Focus in which aspects?

On the first visit to the archives of the biennale we had the impression that those relating to the participation of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and organized in the boxes reserved for the countries were very small.

To conclude the present section I would like to say that the data that I have already collected was organized through tables that I gave the following titles:

- i. General Chronology of sub-Saharan Africa presence and participation at the Venice art biennale since 1990.
- ii. Chronology Sub-Saharan African Countries Participation since 1990;
- ii. Chronological participation of the case study countries;
- iv. Chronology of the Participations of Artists from sub-Saharan Africa at central exhibition (International Exhibition) of the Venice art biennale since 1990;
- v. Chronology of collective exhibitions in the context of Venice Art Biennale since 1990;
- vi. Chronology of Solo_ Personal exhibitions in the context of Venice Art Biennale since 1990.

On the present chapter I had presented the theoretical and methodological apparatus through which I had conducted the research.

To construct that apparatus I had understated a review about the approach through which schools use to conduct the research to the international large/scale exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale.

My propose was to find out the possibility to modestly, while focus on the sub-Saharan African arts at the Venice Biennale be able at same time to contribute for the better understanding of the overall Venice Biennale.

The other concern was to find a perspective that could be informed by the data collected and not a research approach predefined before the data collection process.

As a consequence the initial research project had totally changed once I had started the data collection process.

And regarding the data collection process, it is important to remind also here, that it was undertaken at the Venice biennale archive but also through a visit to the exhibitions during the 58 edition of the Venice biennale in 2017.

Other important thing that could be important to mention here is some of the inferences that I end up adopting I had started to think about them when I had conducted the preliminary case study that I had described in the chapter 1.

Therefore, I had decided to focus on the exhibitions structural arrangements because my work hypothesis was that it could have relevant influence to how, by the end, the exhibitions or the national participation end up look like.

And about that perspective, I had to mention that it is an extension or adaptation of how economist use to analyze the importance and the relation between institutions and the societies or countries performance.

Therefore, the theoretical and methodological apparatus of the present dissertation was constructed guided on the need to acquire and understanding the relation between the organizational structural arrangements and the exhibition.

And by considering that central points I had elaborated the research questions that I had addressed in the present research.

However, the research questions had been quite often recalibrate according to how was emerging during the data collection process.

And about that approach I hope that I had mentioned that it was strongly influence by the ground theory research methodology.

Therefore in the next chapters I will illustrate how the apparatus that I had adopted had enable me to understand, once again, not only the sub-Saharan Africa participation but also about the overall Venice arrangements and structural foundations of the Venice Biennale.

Maybe my pretension was too ambitious but it was guided my working hypotheses for which I speculate that was still visible though the analyses of the sub-Saharan African participation is something that is actually hidden when it comes to examine those countries that could be consider as all attendants.

Indeed, though a close look one can realize that the research question that had guided my research could be also relevant to address though an examination of the old attendants to the Venice Biennale.

So, guided by the theoretical and methodological apparatus that I had just discussed in the next chapters, in a broader sense, I will draw the chronological trajectory, describe different exhibitions formats of the African arts at the Venice Biennale, arguing about the exhibitions goals and then through some specific case studies acquire what could be consider as the pattern of the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

Consider the how the present dissertation is structure some of the aspect that I had consider in this chapter will be recalled.

III. Contextualize the presence and representation of Sub-Saharan Africa contemporary arts at the Venice art biennale from 1990 to 2017.

The main goal of this chapter is to describe the process through which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa had started to be displayed in a more consistent manner at the Venice Biennale and how it had involved until 2017.

As I have discussed in the chapter on this process was influenced by several factors that I had enumerated the most relevant there.

The main difference between what I had discussed in that occasion and what I will discuss here can be translated in the fact there in the chapter 1 I had discussed about the factors that had influences and here I will be describing actually how this process happened in a concrete manner, edition after edition of the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, the examination in this chapter will be focus on the practical dimension of the process meanly the turning point or how the process started in terms of exhibitions, how are the actors involved and how then the countries started to organize the pavilions by themselves.

Consider the structure of the present dissertation, in one had in the present chapter, as I had already mentioned, will take further some examination that I had started previously on the other some of the analyses that I will be start in this chapter will continue in the following chapter.

Regarding the present chapter one of the central points will be the analyses of the first two exhibitions that according to my analyses had marked the start of the presence of sub-Saharan African arts at the Venice biennale.

And on the process of the analyses of that exhibitions, that I will undertake based on the archival materials and the exhibitions catalogues one aspect that I will discuss is related to the exhibitions organizational structure.

And as by exhibition all organization structure I understand the several actors and institutions that had worked to set up the exhibitions, the examination of those actors, in the present dissertation will take different perspectives that will be conducted through several sections and chapters

However, concerning the practical aspect of that process, meaning who it was in terms of exhibitions, it will be discussed on in this chapter, as I have already mentioned at the beginning of this introduction.

So, the discussion in this chapter will start, in the first section, by discussing the turning point through which the quasi permanent presence of the arts from sub-Saharan Africa had started to be displayed at the International Art Exhibition, as it is also known as La biennale di Venezia.

The second section, will focus on the countries participation, in which through a chronological approach I will describe and discuss the countries participation within the time frame considered in the present dissertation.

About that examination I would like to mention some correlated aspects. One is related to the fact that I will undertake the analyses of the countries participation on the second section of this chapter was something that had appeared logical because it will emerge in the

discussion on the first section on which some of the main focus will be the two inaugural exhibitions that had been organized by a non-stated actors and only after the intervention of this actors, the state's institutions from the countries had started to also run the pavilions.

The second aspect is concerned to the fact that one of the methodological strategy that I had adopted to examine the African participation at the Venice Biennale was the one to undertake some detailed case studies. So in this section I will describe and discuss about the countries participation in a more generic way and for the case studies I will focus on participation of four countries that I will discuss in a more detailed manner.

The third section will represent an step further of the analyses on which I will focus on the individual actors that had been involved in this process.

And also for this examination here I must mention two explanatory things. One is the fact that when it come for the actors involved in the exhibitions organization I divide them in two groups: the individual actors and the institutional actors.

In this section I will focus on the individuals and about the institutional I will discuss on the section 4.2.

And by individual actors as I had included in the title of the section I understand mainly the artists and the curators.

The last section of the chapter, the fourth, I will discuss about the most recent trends regarding the exhibitions practices through which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa used to be displayed at the Venice Biennale. And this last branch of the chapter.

The main goal of this chapter is to describe the process through which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa had started to be displayed in a more consistent manner at the Venice Biennale and how it had involved until 2017.

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The last section of the chapter, the fourth, I will discuss about the most recent trends regarding the exhibitions practices through which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa used to be displayed at the Venice Biennale. And this last branch of the chapter will illustrated how the exhibitions had started from being mainly collective, meaning including several artists to become quite often monographically.

Here could be relevant to mention that until now the number of the artists included in the exhibition within the national pavilions is one of the aspects that marks the difference between the new countries participation as the case of the of those from sub-Saharan African and those that use to attend for a long time and own the pavilions at Giardini.

Indeed once again this analyses shows its relevance to understand not only regarding the countries but for the overall features of the overall features of the Venice Biennale.

3.1. How it happened: from representation to participation

The main goal of this section is to trace the trajectory of the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale since 1990.

Through a chronological approach I will cover and discuss the significant art shows and related transformation regarding the ways through which the arts works and artists from sub-Saharan Africa had been included in the editions of Venice Biennale.

The argumentation will be guided by the aim to illustrate how the types of exhibition and actors involved and changed on the process of incorporation of sub-Saharan African arts and artists.

Specifically, in this section I will focus on those exhibitions that I had classified as representational ones, meaning exhibitions not organized by an African governmental institution.

So, on the present section I will mainly focus more on the collective exhibition mean those exhibition that could not be classified as national pavilions.

As I had already discussed in the first chapter of the present dissertation the process of inclusion or incorporation of the sub-Saharan African at the Venice Biennale happened also as effects of some organizational structural changes that the Venice Biennale went to.

Therefore, in arguing about this process, in this section, I will reaffirm some of the Venice Biennale structural changes that had impacted on the process of incorporation of African arts.

For example the expansion of the official venues to Arsenale and then the acceptance and recognition as national pavilion even if the exhibitions are located outside the main venues.

As I already mention this process could be interpreted as a result of institutional changes, however, mainly the institutional perspective of this process, I will argue in the next chapter.

So, argumentation in this section will start by discussion how I understand and use some of the main concepts that I will apply in such as presentation, presentation and also incorporation.

On the second stage I will argue about the two inaugural exhibition in chronological order and how they had been related to the changes on the Venice Biennale organizational structure.

The third stage will be about the brief description of the some curatorial strategies adopted or proposed on those exhibitions.

On last stage of my argumentation in this section I will briefly anticipate the discussion that I will take further in the several upcoming sections, about the institutions behind the exhibitions and the new exhibitions formats through in recent years some exhibition had adopted.

Before start could be useful to define the way in which some key concepts will be applied not only in the present section but in overall dissertation.

In the title of the present section I have included the concepts of representation and participation.

Those concepts are very central on the argumentation that I had developed. So, by presentation I mean all the times the arts from the sub-Saharan African countries and artists are presented without an influence of the countries.

Therefore, presentation is characterized by an absence of agency of countries and artists. So, the ways in which the art works are used and the exhibition narratives are constructed makes those artists and artworks as subject of external actors. Mainly curators and others as I will discuss in chapter 3 of the present dissertation.

Here I understand that representation is an action in which the subject plays a passive role because the act of displays is done by some else and he or she does not have a control or is not that process.

By participation I mean a process in which the countries from sub-Saharan Africa had started to set up their own pavilions at the Venice Biennale. The concept of participation could be interchanged by the one of attendance.

So, after those definitions I may reformulate one of the overall main themes of the present dissertation as follows: describe how the process of display of African arts went on from representation to participation. Another two key concepts that I will apply interchangeably here are those of incorporation and inclusion.

Indeed, one of the questions that the present research aims to be able to find and answer is: why the art from sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists had started to be displayed at the Venice Biennale? However, I will define those concepts and address the above question later on in chapter 3 of the present dissertation.

The focus of this section will be more on the changes on the types of exhibitions through which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa used to be displayed in the Venice biennale.

The exhibition had started by those that I can classify as collective exhibitions, in other words those that had been not monographically exhibitions, meaning not exhibitions in which was displayed art works made by only artist, but those made by several artists.

And also another key features of those first exhibitions was the fact that they had not focused on a single country of born of the artists, indeed they used to be a sort of assemblage of many artists from several different countries from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Before start to briefly describe and discuss some of those first exhibitions could be relevant to mention the last feature that had characterized them and that was the fact that most of them had been organized by international art institutions and sponsored by international philanthropy institutions.

However in this section I will focus more on the exhibition format and content and about the organizational structure of the exhibitions I will discuss on the section 4.2.

Nevertheless I can mention here the fact that it is very interesting that notes that such a similar institutions had also played a significant role in the process of incorporations of arts of others parts of the world that, as the case of sub-Saharan Africa had been for a long time excluded from the Venice Biennale exhibitions.

Regarding the time frame of the presented dissertation as first exhibitions I consider two that had been organized in 1990 and 1993.

And as we will discuss forwards the 1993 exhibition was located beside the South African national pavilions, that in that editions had returned to attend the Venice Biennale

after the interdiction or boycott that the country had faced to force the end of the apartheid regime.

The significance of these two exhibitions relays on the fact that at that time all the exhibitions included on the program of the international art exhibitions should be located in the spaces provided by the biennale itself.

So due to the space available and other requirements the participation of the countries without their own pavilion was very restrictive.

Other aspect that make this two exhibition significant is the fact that after them some of the countries of the artists included in the show had started to attend the Venice Biennale with the own national pavilions. And it is by consider that trajectory that I describe this process of incorporation as a move from representation to presentation.

Consider what I had mentioned until now the readers could guess that some of the analysis that I will start to do in this section will deepen in some of the following sections such as regarding the role of the institutional and individual actors involved in the process.

Whenever it is mentioned that the aim of, in this case chapter, is to describe and discuss about how the countries from sub- Saharan Africa use to attend the Venice biennale some of the questions that quickly comes is << which country had attended for the first time? Or which countries from sub-Saharan Africa use to attend the Venice biennale?>>

Is true that those questions are important and urgent to be addressed by I had figured out that it is also useful to understand what had influenced or played a relevant role in the definition of the actual present.

That step back strategy, meaning analyses the factories that had influenced the present condition, is the most when it comes to analyze the participation of African countries to

the Venice biennale because it will be useful to how they had been absent and what had changed and which actors had played a determinate role on the process that produced that change.

Therefore, as I have already stated on the introduction of the present chapter and section, before addressing the above mentioned question I will discuss the factors or actions that had happened before the African countries started to join Venice in significant numbers.

It is true that I had somehow discussed that in the preceding chapters but here I will shift from the theoretical perspective to the empirical or pragmatic one.

Therefore I will start by describing and discussing the two exhibitions that I consider as the first that had displayed exhibitions about the contemporary arts from sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the effective ways to acquire a relevant image of this process is to have a close look at the exhibitions that had been pioneering on the display of contemporary arts from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, as I have already stated, in this section I will describe and discuss the two exhibitions that could be considered as the inaugural on the displaying of contemporary arts from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

Another thing that could be illustrated in this section is regarding the discussion about how and why the contemporary arts from this part of the world had arrived at the Venice Biennale.

And it is true that I had already started to argue about this issue, but though the description undertaken in the present section the examination will be taken further.

Indeed, one of the aspects that will emerge here is the role played by some international cultural institutions and of course some of those institutions will start to be identified.

And by saying that it could be relaxing to anticipate the fact that in section 4.2 I will undertake a detailed discussion about the relation between the exhibitions institutional arrangements and the exhibition narrative.

Another important premise is regarding the fact that I consider two exhibitions as the pioneers when it comes to consider the display of contemporary African arts at the Venice Biennale.

And those exhibitions are the follows:

- a) The African countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe at the 44th edition of the Venice Biennale in 1990; and
- b) The African countries: Senegal and Ivory Coast at the 45th edition of the Venice Biennale in 1993.

a. 1990. (May 27 - September 30, 1990).

Year: 1990- May 27 - September 30,1990 Edition: 44 th Curator: Giovanni Carandente Theme: Future dimension National participations: 37	Title: African Countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe Curators: Kinshasha Holman Conwill And Grace Stanislaus.	Countries	Artists
		Nigeria	El Anatsui, Bruce Onobrakpeya
		Zimbabwe	Tapfuma Gutsa, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi

Table 3.1 Inaugural Exhibition African Countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe 1990

The exhibition was organized by the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, in collaboration with the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe and The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Lagos, Nigeria and made possible by findings from the Rockefeller Foundation and with assistance of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

This exhibition had been a sort of criticism to what had happened or which artists and types of the artworks that had been displayed at the exhibition *Les Magiciens de La Terre*. Special mention prize to the African countries pavilion: Nigeria and Zimbabwe for the vivacity of their participation.

One salient aspect of those two exhibitions is the fact they had been organized by institutions based in the United States of America but both of them had been sponsored by the Rockefeller foundation.

One question that emerged after considering the Rockefeller had supported the exhibition is why the foundation had done so? But before, briefly speculate an answer to that question is important to mention that I will discuss this exhibition in other sections of the present dissertation.

I will do so, because, in my understanding this exhibition has played several roles and could be classified by diverse modes.

But one thing that is undoubtedly is the fact that it had inaugurated the display of contemporary arts from sub-Saharan Africa in the context of the Venice Biennale.

Returning to the question posed above the Rockefeller support to this exhibition how to make sense of it?

One part of the answer could be by considering the fact that the Rockefeller foundation is one of the significant collectors of arts from the continent as confirmed by LaGamma et al.,(2014) and Appiah (1991).

Indeed LaGamma at al.(2014), affirming the role, in this case of Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller, goes on by stating that “one of his greatest legacy may be his deeply felt advocacy for the arts of sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ LaGamma et al. 2014: 4

So, by considering the statement of the authors what emerged is the fact that the Rockefeller commitment was not exclusive to the sub-Saharan Africa arts.

b. **1993.** (June 14 – October 10, 1993)

Year: 1993- June 6 – October 10, 1993 Edition: 45 th Curator: Achille Bonito Oliva Theme: Cardinal Points of Art National participation: 42	Title: African Countries: Ivory Coast and Senegal Curators: Susan Vogel, Gerard Santoni Ousmane sow	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Countries</th> <th>Artists</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ivory Coast</td> <td>Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Senegal</td> <td>Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Countries	Artists	Ivory Coast	Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts	Senegal	Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.
		Countries	Artists						
		Ivory Coast	Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts						
Senegal	Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.								

Table 3.2 Inaugural Exhibition African Countries: Ivory Coast and Senegal 1993

About this exhibitions one the most significant fact is that the curator was Susan Vogel, an scholar that used to curate several shows about the so called primitive African Arts.

The 45th edition was supposed to happen in 1992 but due to the internal organizational arrangements it was postponed to 1993.

The changes on the dates was related to the celebrations of the 100 yeas of the venice biennale, so the 45th edition was realized in in 1993 that way the 46th could happened at same year that the venice biennale was celebrating its 100 years of its creation.

These two exhibitions played the role as the open door to the Venice biennale, and also served as an signature to imprint and recognize the status of contemporary art practices to the arts from sub-Saharan Africa.

And after having affirmed that it is important to clarify that I am not saying that before the two exhibitions in those countries the contemporary art practices didn't used to be practiced. What I am saying is that those exhibitions had confirmed and legitimized the

idea that also from sub-Saharan Africa the art practices used to be the expressions or reflection of its contemporary condition.

Another thing that those exhibitions had also made, consider the fact that most of the works that had been displayed had been from private collections or collectors was to confirm the value of that art as a commodity.

By examining the two exhibitions simultaneously what can emerge is first of all the role of the international art institutions in the process of organization and sponsoring.

It is very interesting that by international in this case I am referring to institutions from United States of America both as organizers, the location of curators and the main sponsor.

Somehow these two exhibitions had also had the aim to shift the perception of the African arts as only primitive to start to be considered also as contemporary art.

The second exhibition the one coordinated by Susan Vogel, the change was not only related to the countries that had been featured but also to the curatorial structure. Indeed in that case Vogel was the coordinator and she had worked with the two commissioners that had represented the two countries.

Ousmane Sow from Senegal and Gerard Santoni, for Ivory Coast.

It's very important to notice that this working structure was not totally new for Susan Vogel as a way of working. Indeed in the exhibition that I had mentioned as one of the predecessors of the *Le Magiciens De La Terre*, theshe had worked with....co-curators. Had as often those co-curators had been at same time part of the artists on display. This is a practice that was very commonly curated through an anthropological approach. Therefore, it is interesting that the first exhibitions had collaborated with local institutions and the second the collaboration had been created with commissioners.

Once again could be relevant to trace some of the causes that had influenced the fact that these two exhibitions to be organized at the Venice Biennale

That inquiry could be translated by the following question: Which global events had influenced the participation?

To answer that question I had two hypothetical answers, that unfortunately I will not totally address in the present dissertation.

The first hypothesis is situated in the realm of and sphere that I had already in the first chapter of the present dissertation when I had discussed some global events that had influenced the fact that the arts from sub-Saharan had started to be displayed at the Venice Biennale.

In that occasion I had mentioned that one of those events was the symbolic end of the Cold War that had been symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall. So, that event, to which I can add the emergency of the and the postmodern theory, had created the condition of occurrence of a struggle for hegemony, in Mouffe and Laclau sense.

And from that "absence of totality and for the diverse attempts to recomposition and rearticulations" diverse institutions that belonged from the western side had started to attract and accept other countries in the spheres that used to be exclusive for the western practitioners, the art field was one of those.

The second hypothetical answer is related to the fact that the Rockefeller foundation had a collection of African art works, so by promote the commodification of the African arts and the display is such a symbolic important art shows such as the Venice biennale could be an strategy to at same time increase the value of the own artworks.

However as I had mentioned above about these two speculative interpretations an detailed research should be conducted.

As I had discussed in chapter 1 these changes on the perception of the art from sub-Saharan African could not be disconnected to the hegemonic status that postmodern theory had acquired in the cultural studies in general and philosophy of arts specifically. Indeed, the notion of what is art and how it had to be interpreted had been challenged. And about that I had already stated to discuss in the previous chapters.

Indeed some of the actors, individual and institutional, that had been involved with them had become or played an important role when the country had started to attend with the own national pavilion.

Indeed, since the first participation the National Gallery of Zimbabwe is the one who organized the Zimbabwe national pavilion and Gerard Santoni had been present in all other posterior participation of Ivory Coast.

When it comes to consider the presence of art from sub-Saharan African at the Venice Biennale one important question that should be addressed is regard how the theoretical interpret this process.

And by interpretation here I mean how to classify the process that is diverse to for example the understanding of the theoretical context or theories that explain the occurrence.

Indeed apart from being a postmodern phenomenon how can the display be interpreted? Regarding this aspect one of my interpretations and also considering the actors that are involved in the process I could classify it as a sort of a commodification process, meaning a process that was strongly related to the politics of values of those art works, in a Appadurai sense.

The Biennale visual arts was supposed to have been held in 1992 but it was postponed to 1993.

More than to financial constraints that had emerged later on, the main idea behind the postponement was the desire to make the edition coincide with the imminent celebrations of the centenary in 1995.

So, by analyzing the two the two inaugural exhibitions one aspect that had emerged is the fact that the predilection exhibition format had been a group exhibitions, and the born countries of the artists had been considered relevant.

Therefore, even by introducing new art practices, meaning those from sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists the exhibitions had been in line with the way in which the exhibitions used to be organized at the Venice biennale, specifically regarding the centrality of the country of the artists.

And after this exhibitions other exhibitions had followed, and as I will discuss in the next sections some countries had started to organize their own pavilions and at the same time the practices of group exhibitions, as the format though which display the contemporary African arts had continued too carried on.

The analyzes of these two exhibitions could not only allow us to draw the initial pictures about the presence and representation of contemporary art within the context of the Venice Biennale, but also at same time enable us to understand what are the relevant aspects to take in consideration on this analysis.

In this section the main concern was to describe how the arts from sub-Saharan Africa had started to be displayed at in a quasi-permanent manner at the Venice Biennale.

That saying, before going further on this collusion could be important to clarify one again how I understand and use certain words and concepts used above.

So, by starting to display I am no saying that it was the first time that the arts from sub-Saharan African, by that time, had been displayed at the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, what I am affirming is that it was the first time, first of all, within the time frame considered in the present research and second by using that words I would like to emphasize that it was the first time in which contemporary art production from sub-Saharan African was displayed in the context of the Venice Biennale.

And by quasi- permanent I meant the fact that since this inaugural exhibitions on the almost all subsequent editions of the Venice Biennale by different formats and spaces contemporary arts from this part of the world had been present or represented.

So, in this section I had described how that process started.

The main focus had been the two exhibitions that I had considered as the groundbreaking of the process.

Indeed it was through the exhibitions happened in 1990 and 1993, and organized by international art institutions that the contemporary art production from sub-Saharan Africa had arrived to the walls of the Venice Biennale.

And as I had explained in the section, I had termed this institutions as international because there are not based on the continent.

Indeed, both institutions, in the strict sense, and the curators are based and from the United States of America. And both had as main sponsor the Rockefeller foundation.

Other clarification that could be useful to recall here is related to the fact that, for example, in 1993, the year and edition for the second exhibition, south-Africa, after a long absence had returned to the Venice biennale. But regarding the south-Africa participation I will discuss appropriately in the chapter 5, in which I will conduct the case studies analyses.

One other aspect that influenced me to consider this two exhibition as inaugural ones and as theoretical relevant, as I had already stated state elsewhere, was related to the fact they happened right after the groundbreaking exhibition *les magicien de la Terre*.

Les magiciens de la Terre, as I had mentioned in the first chapter of the present dissertation, is considered by many scholars as the first exhibition of the global arts.

Regarding les magiciens de la Terre, one of the Main criticism was related to the fact that the exhibitions, meanly is curatorial team had ignored the contemporary art production from the sub-Saharan Africa countries.

Therefore the curatorial team has been accused to perpetuate the idea of the sub-Saharan African arts as exclusively primitive.

Then some months later the first exhibitions of contemporary art production from sub-Saharan Africa was set-up at the Venice Biennale.

And before concluding I remind that the Magiciens de la Terre was on display from 18 may until 14 August 1989 and in 1990, the 44th .edition of the Venice biennale opened from 27 May until 30 September of same year.

And since then other exhibitions and other actors started to join the exhibition making process, such, from the case of sub-Saharan Africa countries the national governments and its related institutions.

Therefore to deepen the description of this process on the next section I will focus the analyses on the national pavilions that to mean the countries participation.

3.2. Outline the countries attendances

After had discussed the ways though which the African arts was incorporated to the Venice biennale other recurrent question that is posed ever since I mention the topic of my research is " which was the first country that had attend the biennale?"

In the present section, starting from 1990, chronologically I will describe and discuss the countries attendance to the Venice Biennale. And as defined by the research time frame I will end that this survey in 2017.

However, whenever necessary I will construct some links with the episodes or art shows that eventually had been realized out of limits of the research time frame.

The main goal of this exercise is not only the one to identify what was the country that had attended for the first time and count the times that country had attended, but mostly to identify a certain pattern of the country attendance.

However, about the countries pattern is important to mention in advance that I will undertake an case study analyses about some countries participation at the chapter 5.

The difference between what I will do in the present section and what I will do at chapter 5, is related to the fact that at the present section I will not analyse in deep an exhibition that those countries proposed in each edition.

Also in this section I will not focus only on some countries but the intent is to show, in a full perspective, which countries had attended and to which edition.

Therefore this section argument will be draw around the answer to the following question:

Which countries and which each frequency had attended to the Venice Biennale?

Other aspect that will be covered in this section are other relevant aspect concerned the attendance.

For example as long as I had conduct a significant archival data collection I will try to discuss some aspect related to the negotiations between the Biennale foundation and the countries representatives in order to set up the first country attendance.

However most of the data that I will use to construct the discussion in the present section are the one that I had collected on the main exhibitions catalogues.

Therefore, this section will start by presenting the countries that had attended to the 14 editions to the Venice Biennale, that are comprised on the time frame considering in the present dissertation.

The second stage of the section will be the one in which I will discuss about some organizational negotiations.

In the third stage I will discuss one specific aspects that had been associated to the sub-Saharan African countries, edition after edition. For example why some countries, end up not attending the La Biennale even if there are already included in the exhibition catalogue?

As a conclusion to the section I will try to undertake the first attempt to draw an pattern that characterizes those countries attendance. Again, as I had mention above the identification of the patterns of attendances will be complemented by the analyses that I will undertake on the chapter 5.

So I will start analysing edition after edition what had happened that was related to the participation of sub-Saharan African countries to the Venice Biennale.

My argumentation will start by presenting the data related to each edition and then will follow my analyses of the interpretation by focusing on my research subject.

I. 1990. (May 27 – September 30, 1990).

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
44th Official National Pavilions: 37 Duration: 4 months	Future dimension	Giovanni Carandente	Nigeria and Zimbabwe		

Table 3.3 Countries Participation in 1990

On the 44th edition of the Venice Biennale the main and the only fact related to the Sub-Saharan African participation was the Exhibition entitled "African countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

I had already discussed this exhibition in the precedent section, nevertheless here I will return to it to focus on its significance in terms of the country's participation in the Venice Biennale.

Indeed though this exhibition is possible to have an example that could make the difference between participation and representation become much more clear. According to my conception this exhibition was what I considered as representation rather than participation.

Indeed, the governments or institutions of the countries represented had played a minimal role in it. That is the reason why later on I will include it on the list of the collateral exhibitions.

However, this exhibition was not only important to the countries but also to La Biennale. In fact, La Biennale, having in its edition representation of two countries from sub-Saharan Africa, was convenient to be in line with the ongoing changes in the world. This convenience and full picture of the momentum of that exhibition was the fact it was critically received with positive comments. As a matter of fact it was distinguished with the special mention prize.

Here I can repeat that the exhibition at la biennale was not organized by the countries represented. It was organized by the Studio Museum in Harlem, an art institution based in New York, United State of America.

However, the role and significance of this exhibition when it comes to focus on the participation of the countries of sub-Sahara African can be assessed by some of the institutions that had collaborated in this exhibition, specifically the National Gallery Of Zimbabwe. In fact, some years later the National Gallery of Zimbabwe led the first attendance of Zimbabwe to the Venice Biennale, in 2011 at the 54th edition. In addition, as I will illustrate in a more detailed manner later some artists included in this exhibition had also managed to return to the wall of the Venice Biennale.

Another feature of this exhibition that could be relevant to mention here is the fact that it had the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation. Therefore this exhibition is not only an indispensable start point to map the transition of the sub-Sahara Africa countries from the position of a subject to meaning makers. It enlightened me to the fact that a significant issue to inquiry concert the understanding of the reason why those institutions had been interested in organizing and supporting this exhibition?

II. 1993. (June 6 – October 10, 1993).

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>45th Official National Pavilions: 42 Duration: 4 months</p>	<p>Cardinal Points of Art</p>	<p>Achille Bonito Oliva</p>	<p>Ivory Coast; Senegal and South Africa</p>	<p>The south African artist Bonnie Ntshalintshali was invited to be part of the exhibition "Aperto 93."</p>	

Table 3.4 Countries Participation in 1993

This year, the second attendance of countries from Sub-Saharan Africa occurred. It was characterized by two national pavilions, one collateral exhibition and one artist attended the main exhibition as an invited artist. One of those pavilion attendances was the context of the package of the inaugural exhibition and as I mentioned earlier this time the artists displayed were from Ivory Coast and Senegal. The Ivory Coast and Senegal exhibition was curated by Susan Vogel with the collaboration of two artists from both countries. And it was organized the Center of Africa Arts and institution that was based in New York, in USA.

It is very important to mention that a significant part of this exhibition was also displayed in New York.

In the text on the catalogue of the exhibition, the curator, Susan Vogel mentioned that fact that the exhibition “ marked the second occasion in the institution’s history on which African countries had represented themselves.”¹⁰⁵

One of the hopes of Vogel was that as a result of that exhibition the African art would be removed from “the realm of the ethnographic, and place it firmly within the framework of the transcultural aesthetic.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Vogel 1993:6

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem

But what had strongly characterized that edition concerning the participation of sub-Saharan Africa countries to the Venice Biennale was the return of South-Africa after the interdiction that the country was imposed due to the apartheid regime that was in effect in the country.

Here, it is important to remember that, until the presented edition, the country's participation, precisely for the countries without pavilions, was only possible only by invitation.

As I had already explained somewhere else one of the reasons why the invitation system used was related to the fact the Venice Biennale was supposed to provide spaces to host the exhibitions of attendants. As such to make sure that all the countries attendants would have a space was necessary to regulate it through invitation. Concerning the invitation system apart from its utility to manage the space constraints its critical point was about who are the countries that use to be invited.

Returning to the sub-Saharan Africa attendance to the present edition it is important to mention that the two exhibitions had been hosted in the Giardini Biennale. Indeed that was the only space on which the countries are supposed to exhibit.

So, for the return of South-Africa, one of the enthusiasts was the 45th edition curator, the art-critic Achille Bonito Oliva.

Indeed to invitation to south-Africa had been made by the Oliva himself because according to him the South-Africa participations was in line with his overall curatorial project.

For this edition the South-Africa participations had been divided in three parts: one the main exhibition at the central pavilion with two artists, the second was represented by the

one artist that attended to "Aperto"¹⁰⁷ and the third one was a collateral exhibition that was displayed the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin.

That exhibition was entitled "Incroci del Sud. Affinities- contemporary South African Art" and I will describe and examine it later on when I will argue about the collateral exhibitions. In the collateral exhibition 25 artists had been displayed.

So, South Africa for that attendance was composed by a significant number of artists "delegation" that was reflection the changes that was ongoing on the country at that time. Other important fact that about the South Africa attendance to the 45th edition of the Venice Biennale regards the fact that the commissioner of the exhibitions was the country ambassador in Italy, Glenn Babb.

That fact illustrates once again how is crucial to have an diplomatic representation in Italy to facilitate the process of attendance to La Biennale.

It is very significant that the main exhibition was curated by the Association of South Africa Arts, the one that use to be in charge of doing the work before the interdiction.

To conclude, let say that this edition in terms of national participation was attended by 3 countries, but as I will discuss later on not all those 3 pavilions could be consider as countries attendances. Therefore, I will return to so of these exhibitions when I will discuss about the collateral exhibitions later on.

¹⁰⁷ According to Ricci 2012 Aperto was an exhibition format that was created by Achille Bonito Oliva and Harald Szeemann. It was devoted to display young artists in the context of the Venice Biennale.

III. 1995. (June 11 – October 15, 1995).

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
46th Official National Pavilions: Duration: 4 months	Identity and Alterity	Jean Clair	(1) South Africa		Marlene Dumas, within the Dutch Pavilion

Table 3.5 Countries Participation 1995

To this edition South Africa attended to the second time after its return.

On the other hand, after attend to the present edition, once again South Africa had remained absence to the Venice Biennale for 16 year. I will discuss further this issue when I will analyse the participation of South Africa through case study analyses.

Other important issue that had emerged at this edition is that fact that after the inaugural exhibitions organized by art institutions based in USA the partners from sub-Saharan Africa have not being able to, right after, take over the commitment to present at the Venice Biennale.

However, in this edition had emerged for the first time, eventually within the time frame consider in this dissertation, the fact that some artists from the sub-Sahara Africa countries had started to attend La Biennale within a pavilion that was not the one of her or his born country.

And as it will emerge on the analyses the upcoming editions this practices become in a certain sense considered as normal.

But it rise an issue that could be relevant to be researched further, and could be summarised by the following questions: Why some countries are able to host artists that are not nationals of their countries and other not? What motivates a country to allow a

foreign artists to be displayed in the own pavilion? And who in each case could be analysed and classified the relation between the artists and the host country?

So, to this edition, Marlene Dumas was displayed within the Dutch pavilion.

However, the case of Marlene Dumas was justified by the fact, when it happened, she was living and working in Amsterdam.

Nevertheless, at same time the display of Marlene Dumas could be interpreted through the postcolonial lens, because in the past Holland used to be one of the former colonizers a consistent part of what then became part of South Africa.

Howsoever, the most significant aspect related to the Marlene Dumas, was the fact that it was the first time that she was displayed at the Venice Biennale. And as it will emerge in the following lines it was the first of many that come successively.

IV. 1997. (June 15 – November 11, 1997)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>47th Official National Pavilions: 48 Duration: 5 months</p>	<p>Present, Present, Past</p>	<p>Germano Celant</p>			<p>Exhibitions with patronage: Modernities & memories Recent works from the Islamic World</p>

Table 3.6 Countries participation 1997

After three consecutive editions in which Sub-Saharan Africa had been present on this edition it was once again absent.

Therefore what I had mentioned to the Sub-Saharan Africa countries regarding their inability to take over the process of the Venice Biennale attendance after the two inaugural exhibitions, was also true for the Venice Biennale curator.

So, the incorporation or the acceptance of the contemporary arts from Sub-Saharan Africa as a valuable commodity did not easily happen in the context of the Venice Biennale.

It is very interesting to notice that the 47th edition curator was the art critic and curator Germano Celant, who used to be a senior curator of the Guggenheim museum in New York. Also he is the one that has created the name of one of the most important art movements in Italy known as "Arte Povera."

The theme of the edition was "Future, Past and Present", so in a certain sense it was an art historical based exhibition.

That exhibition backbone had also emerged when Celant presented his curatorial concept during the first meeting with the attendant countries.

Therefore, in an eventual speculative point of view the exclusion of the countries and artists from sub-Sahara Africa could be explained though its perceived significance in the western centered art historical discourse. In fact most of the artists included on the main exhibitions were from western countries.

Another significant fact of that edition was the absence of South Africa after two consecutive attendances.

And concerning the South Africa case one question that automatically arises is : Why? In other words why South Africa did not attend this edition after two successive editions on which the country had done so? One very quick and speculative answer could be found on the fact that in 1995 the country had started to organize its own biennale. The Johannesburg Biennale.

So, remarkably the Venice Biennale had ,momentaneously, ceased to be a priority for the countries as it was focused on becoming itself an internationally important art scene.

I will return to that issue later on when I will analyse the South Africa attendance through the case study analyses.

However, the other approach to find the answer to the above question regarding the reasons for the South Africa absence is by trying to understand if the country has been invited or not to be one of the attendant countries of that edition?

Pose this question at this moment and on this edition is relevant at least for two reasons:

First until that edition the countries without pavilions are able to attend only if invited.

The second reason is related to the fact that for the archival research that I had found a document that showed that Ghana had asked to attend that edition, but unfortunately this request was not positively answered.

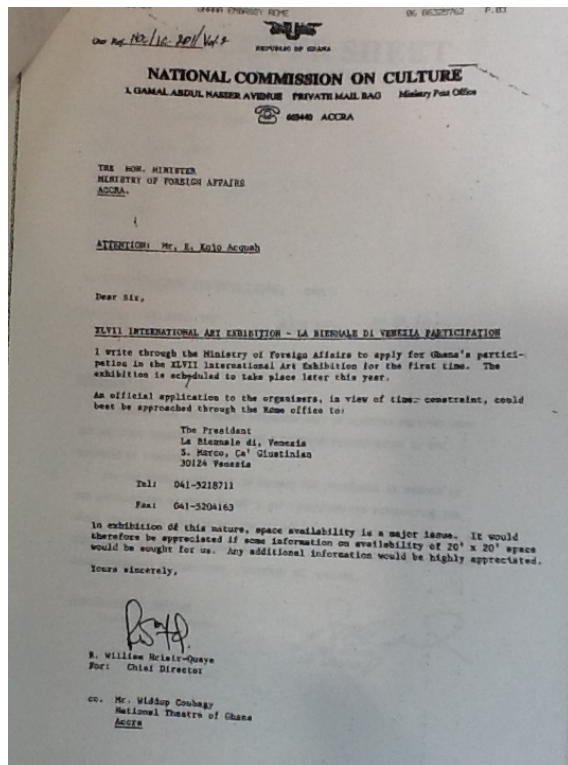


Figure 3.1 Letter from the Ghana government to *La Biennale* in 1997

That considering it seems that the absence of countries from sub-Sahara Africa could be explained by assuming that the Biennale and its editions curators had not been able not only to invite them but also to positively answer to their eventual request to join La Biennale bazar to use a description made by . But this fact more than to be used to

complain could be useful for research purposes. Indeed it could be relevant to be able to try to understand the reason why those countries and artists had successively been more present to the Venice Biennale. In certain sense this is one of the questions that is being addressed in this dissertation.

V. 1999. (June 12 – November 07, 1999)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>48th Official National Pavilions: 46 Duration: 5 months</p>	<p>overall/APERTO</p>	<p>Harald Szeemann</p>		<p>(1) William Kentridge (2) Georges Adéagbo</p>	<p><u>Menzione d'onore:</u> Georges Adéagbo <u>International Jury:</u> Okwui Enwezor- Nigeria/USA</p>

Table 3.7 Countries participation 1999

Before describing and discussing the participation of the sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists it is important to mention that in 1998 La Biennale changed its denomination.

In fact, by a ministerial decree the institution that was in charge to organize the Venice Biennale among other events changed its denomination for Ente Autonomo Biennale di Venezia a to Società di Cultura La Biennale di Venezia.

Therefore, this edition was the first organized by the Società di Cultura.

However, as the previous edition, the actual was also characterized by an absence of African countries and artists in terms national pavilions. De facto it seems that for these editions those that I had termed as the other channels of incorporation had started to be active.

By channels of incorporation I mean all the ways in which the countries, artists and art practitioners could attend the Venice Biennale. The main channels that I had identified are: national pavilion, invitation as an artist, invitation as a member of international jury and through supported collateral exhibitions.

Indeed, on this edition happened for the first time that an art practitioner, from the sub-Saharan Africa country was part of the international jury team.

And that member of the international jury as the scholar and curator Okwui Enwezor.

Here it is important to mention that the art practitioners or scholars that compose the international jury are suggested by the edition curator and then approved by the biennale board of directors. After that necessary approval the curator invites them.

So, as mentioned, it was the first time that an art practitioner or scholar from sub-Saharan Africa was a member of the international jury.

However, it is important to mention the fact that when it happened Okwui Enwezor was established, already, for a long time in the United States of America. In addition it seems that we had by that time acquired US citizenship.

So, he had acquired his status and legitimacy as an recognized curator and scholar in the diasporic context.

And through him once again reemerge the role of the United States of America as the context from which the steps further in the Venice Biennale, regarding the Contemporary arts from the Sub-Sahara Africa countries and artist had been originated from.

So as I mentioned earlier regarding the exhibitions sub-Sahara African had been present only though invited artists that had been displayed in the main exhibition.

It is important to remain that the artists are invited by the director of the visual arts sector within the structure of the Venice Biennale and also known as the curator edition. Then as with the members of the international jury those names and the overall curatorial project had to be approved by the La Biennale board of directors.

Even if one of the main features of the Venice Biennale structure are the national pavilions, the exhibitions curated by the director of the visual sector is considered as the main exhibition of the editions. Indeed some parts of it must be located at the Central pavilion at the Giardini.

So for the first time two artists from the sub-Saharan Africa country had been displayed at the main exhibition.

Those artists were: Georges Adéagbo and William Kentridge.

However, it is important to reiterate that William Kentridge had attended the Biennale in precedence. It was within the collateral exhibition "Incroci del Sud. Affinities. Contemporary South African Art" in 1993 for the 45th edition of the Venice Biennale. I will discuss later on about that exhibition when I will map the collateral exhibitions.

The other significant factor that edition, that was somehow related to the fact that Okwui Enwezor on the international jury team was the fact that for the first time an artist from a sub-Saharan country was awarded with a prize.

In fact in that edition George Adéagbo, was awarded with the special mention prize.

As a way to conclude the analysis of the 48th editions could be relevant to mention that one question that automatically come on my mind after had realized the eventual correlation between the prize and the composition of the international jury team as the follow: which role the presence of Okwui Enwezor as a member of the international jury team played on the attribution of the special mention prize to George Adéagbo?

VI. 2001. (June 11 – November 04, 2001)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
49th Official National Pavilions: 45 Duration: 5 months	Plateau of Humankind	Harald Szeemann		(1)Seni Awa Camara, (2)Jean- Baptiste Ngnetchopa, (3)Ousmane Ndiaye Dago; (4)Sunday Jack	<u>Menzione d'onore:</u> Yinka Shonibare <u>International Jury:</u> Ery Camara

Table 3.8 Countries participation 2001

This edition was also curated by Harold Szeemann, and as well as for the precedent the sub-Sahara Africa countries did not attend it.

However, the number of artists invited to be part of the main exhibition had increased from the two of the precedent edition to five.

As in the precedent edition, also at the present edition an art practitioner from the sub-Saharan country was one the members of the international jury team.

It was the Senegalese curator Ery Camara, who at that time was based in Mexico.

Another similarity with the precedent edition regards the fact also on the present that an artist originally from a sub-Saharan Africa country was awarded with a prize.

This time the prizewinner was Yinka Shonibare, who was awarded with a special mention prize.

It is very interesting to notice that both the member of the international jury Ery Camara and the artist Yinka Shonibare had acquired their legitimacy as art practitioners within a diasporic context. In Mexico and England respectively.

However, the other artists that had composed the Sub-Saharan Africa delegation within the main exhibition are at that time based in their born countries.

So, concerning the overall participation of the sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice Biennale it seems that from that edition the two incorporation channels, the international jury and

the invitation to artists started to be consolidated. Indeed the sub-Saharan Africa presence has been derived through these two channels.

And at this point of my argumentation the other point of view through which analysing the ongoing process could be by examining the background, the type of practices of the artists and the art works that had been displayed and presented as made by an artists from Sub-Saharan Africa?

As I will later on briefly describe and analyse the artistic career of some of the Artists that had attended this exhibition such as El Anatsui, George Adéagbo, Marlene Dumas and Willian Kentridge to conclude here i can briefly describe the artists career and the Yinka Shonibare work that was displayed at that edition.

Before proceeding, it is important to mention that Yinka Shonibare was displayed at that edition in the context of the collateral exhibition "Authentic/Ex-Centric" at the Venice Biennale African Conceptualism in Global Context" that was curated by Salah M. Hassan and Olu Oguibe.

The exhibitions had the same venue with the Incroci del Sud, the Palazzo Giustinian Lolin.

I will discuss both exhibitions in a more detailed manner when I will map the collateral exhibitions.

Yinka Shonibare is an British- Nigeria artist that is based in London.

He is well known for the fact that his artworks use to challenge and subvert the old narratives and myths about Sub-Saharan Africa. His subversion combines the source and the material that he used to produce his works.



Figure 3.2
Yinka
Shonibare
installation.
Entitled
“Vacation.”
Photo from
ASAC
archive.

VII. 2003. (June 15 – November 02, 2003)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>50th Official National Pavilions: 53 Duration: 5 months</p>	<p>Dreams and Conflicts, The Dictatorship of the Viewer</p>	<p>Francesco Bonami</p>	<p>(1) Kenya</p>	<p>(1) Marlene Dumas; (2) António Ole (3) Pitzo Chinzima; (4) Moshekwa Langa; (5) Chris Ledochowki; (6) Muyima Osifuye; (7) Carey Young and (8) Veliswa Gwintsa</p>	<p><u>International Jury:</u> Koyo Kouoh (African Association of Contemporary Culture, Dakar). Meschac Gaba, within the Dutch Pavilion</p>

Table 3.9 Countries Participation 2003

In this edition the trend regarding the incorporation of the artist and art practitioners from the sub-Saharan Countries had maintained the same trajectory.

As a matter of fact, as illustrated on the table above the number of the artists invited to be part of the main exhibition had continued to grow. And once again and consecutively, one member of the international jury team was from a sub-Saharan Africa country. This time as the curator Koyo.

The presence of Koyo on the international jury was very interesting because even if she is originally from Cameroon on her introduction of the communication materials and on the exhibition catalog she was presented as being based in Dakar, Senegal.

Once again Senegal was paired as a country present to the Venice biennale to the art practitioners that are from or based on the country. That finding is very significant because at that time the Dakar Biennale had been confirmed as the lead biennale in the sub-Sahara context.

That saying it seems that the Venice Biennale somehow was interested to establish a relation with the Dakar biennale, nevertheless its historical background and symbolic meaning.

Another relevant aspect that had characterized that edition was that the other artists from a Sub-Saharan Africa country were displayed within the pavilion of the Venice biennale old attendant.

This time was the artist Meschac Gaba from Benin and coincidentally the pavilion was the same that did it for the first time, to mean the Dutch pavilion.

As I had discussed earlier, the first that that happened was the case of Marlene Dumas. And both Gaba and Dumas were living and working in Amsterdam. And as well as when I discussed the case of Marlene Dumas, the Meschac Gaba case enables me to return to the following question: why some pavilions, in this case the Dutch pavilion, were able to display artists from a foreign country? And here with a Foucauldian perspective to that

question I could add the need to understand the genealogy of that practice in the context of the Venice Biennale and beyond.

I hope to have a future occasion in which I could be able to address that research topic.

In terms of the focus on this section, to mean mapping the participation of the countries from the sub-Saharan Africa, the key aspect of the present edition was the first participation in the Venice Biennale.

As Kenya is one the countries that I will analyse though the case study approach here I will limit my analyse to this participation as much as possible.

To conclude the analysis of this edition, returning to the artists participation another to notice that the numbers had continued to grow.

And Meschac Gaba and its Ginger Bar within the Dutch pavilion exhibition had once again set up a sub-Saharan Africa contribution to the global art discourse.



Figure 3.3
Meschac Gaba
installation
entitled
“**Ginger Bar.**”
Dutch pavilion
3. Photo from
ASAC archive.

VIII. 2005. (June 12 – November 06, 2005)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
51th Official National Pavilions: 58 Duration: 5 months	The Experience of Art Always a little further	Maria de Corral and Rosa Martinez	(1)Seychelles	(1) Candice Breitz; (2) William Kentridge; (3) Zwelethu Mthethwa; (4) Pascale Marthine Tayou; (5)Robin Rhode and (6)Berni Searle.	<u>International Jury:</u> Ousseynou Wade (General Secretary of Dakar Biennial)

Table 3.10 Countries Participation 2005

Besides the exhibition one important feature that has characterized that edition was the fact that in 2004 the legal status of the biennale had shifted from to be denominated as Society of Culture to Foundation. As a Foundation, La Biennale was supposed and opened to the private sector financial contributions.

Therefore the 51th edition was the first of the Venice Biennale realized as a foundation. Another novelty act that had characterized that edition was the fact that that edition was curated by two curators.

Namely Maria de Corral and Rosa Martinez.

Within the first time considered in this dissertation was the first time that the main exhibition of La Biennale was curated by a woman.

Concerning the Sub-Saharan Africa participation the examination of this edition should start by mentioning the fact that Kenya did manage to return to the subsequent editions after his first participation.

On the other hand in regard to the other incorporation channels, such that of the artists invited and the presences of the art practitioners on the team of the international jury team the trend had remained permanent.

Indeed the number of artists invited from the sub-Saharan Africa countries had remained on average. In addition to that stability the other relevant condition regard the artists participation was the fact that some of them had started to be displayed at the Venice Biennale more than one time.

Considering that evidence one question that could automatically emerge was aiming to understand why some artists had been able to be invited or in general being displayed at the Venice Biennale more than one time? And to expand that reflection and additional question could be how to term or classify that phenomena in which some artists are able to be invited for more than one time and others don't?

I will return to this issue when I will describe and discuss about the trajectory of some artists from sub-Saharan Africa countries that had attended to La Biennale for more than one time.

The second aspect of the trend on this edition regards the international jury, this time that art practitioner that had been part of it was Ousseynou Wade.

It is very compelling that at that time Ousseynou Wade was presented as the General Secretary of the Dakar Biennial.

Once again this was an commitment by the Venice Biennale in order to create an relation with the Dakar Biennale.

That saying I am interested to understand if that diplomatic openness was able to produce something?

To conclude, is important to mention that at this edition Seychelles had attended for the first time.

IX. 2007. (June 10 – November 21, 2007)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
52th Official National Pavilions: 64 Duration: 5 months	Think with the Senses/Feel with the Mind	Robert Storr	(1)Seychelles	(1) El Anatsui, (2)Chéri Samba, (3)Marlene Dumas, (4)Eyoum Nganguè, (5)Malick Sidibé, (5)Faustin Titi. (6) Oladélé Bangboyé and (7)Odili Donald Odita.	Malick Sidibé, won the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement International Curators Forum-Symposium

Table 3.11 Countries Participation 2007

This edition was also significantly important regarding the Sub-Saharan contemporary arts in the context of the Venice Biennale.

However, also to this edition the countries are still absent. The only expectation was Seychelles, that for the second edition was consecutively attending the Venice Biennale.

It is important to mention that Seychelles, since its first attendance, used to host artists that are not exclusively from the island and its pavilion was located outside the Venice Biennale main venues.

As I will argue in a more detailed manner when I will undertake the case study, analysing the number of artists included on the exhibitions and the options to include artists from other countries is one of the strategies that will be adopted by many newcomers to the Venice Biennale. The speculative explanation to that practice is that through that strategy the countries are able to sustain the expenses related to their attendance. Concerning that

practice as I had illustrated when I was analysing the previous editions this practice is also applied by the ones that I had termed as the old attendants to the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, could theoretically relevant be able to identify the meanings of that practice when it is applied by the two different types of countries attendants to the Venice Biennale? The above mentioned types of countries attendants are the one that I had termed as the newcomers and the oldcomers or old attendants.

The former are those that do not own pavilions, and the latter are those that have their own pavilions and therefore with the exception of Italy, are located at Giardini Biennale. Apart from the country's participation the other channels of incorporation had performed well.

In fact as on the previous editions the number of invited artists had remained on average. On top of that once again some artists had managed to be displayed for the second or more times to the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, to take further the reflection that I had stated elsewhere I can state that the sort of the stars of the contemporary arts from the sub-Saharan countries had started to establish themselves.

One of the confirmation that this was happening is the fact that more and more the work of these artists was being recognized.

Indeed in this edition for the first time, not only within the time frame considered in this dissertation but also on the overall history of the Venice Biennale an artist from sub-Saharan Africa country was awarded with the golden lion for the lifetime achievement prize.

The awarded artist was Malick Sidibé, a photographer from Mali.

Until that edition it was the highest recognition that an artist from sub-Saharan Africa had received in the context of the Venice Biennale.

Malick Sidibé is considered as one of the old masters of the African photography and through that recognition also from the world.

With his photos Malick Sidibé had been able to capture conditions of postcolonial Mali. He had, with his pictures, been able to challenge and demystify certain old metaphors about sub-Saharan Africa and its people.

By capturing people smiling in their daily life, dancing, organizing parties and doing what another person of the same age could have done elsewhere in the world he had with his picture confirmed the Jose Marti verse, that actually "*patria es l'umanita*."¹⁰⁸



Figure 3.4
Malick Sidibé
photos displayed
at
Corderie/Arsenale
in **2007**. At that
edition, 52th, he
was awarded with
the **Golden Lion
for lifetime
achievement**
prize. Photo from
ASAC archive.

¹⁰⁸ Is the title of one of Jose Marti's poems published in his book entitled Versos Sencillos.

Here a picture of the Malick Sidibé pictures displayed at the Venice Biennale. The picture was made during the exhibition installation.

X. 2009. (June 07 – November 22, 2009).

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
53 th Official National Pavilions: 69 Duration: 5 months	Making Worlds	Daniel Birnbaum	(1) Gabon	(1) Georges Adéagbo; (2) Moshekwa Langa and (3) Pascale Marthine Tayou.	

Table 3.12 Countries Participation 2009

In this edition the overall numbers of the countries that had attended had increased.

It is very important to mention that aspect during my research I realized that sometimes the number of the announced countries does not correspond to the number of national pavilions.

Indeed, in some cases, as in the case of the inaugural exhibitions that I had discussed above the number of countries could be two or more but they are located in the same pavilion. Therefore the more adequate manner to measure the adherence to the Venice Biennale is not through the countries but through the number of pavilions. In fact it could happen that the number of countries could increase but the number of pavilions remain the same.

Returning to the edition examination, concerning the African participation to this edition only one country had attended. The country was Gabon.

I can anticipate that within the time frame considered in this dissertation this was the only time in which Gabon had managed to attend the Venice Biennale.

Another thing that I may anticipate here is the fact that the attendance pattern is frequent to many so-called newcomers to the Venice Biennale. Eventually here is necessary to clarify the term newcomer is not exclusive for the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

That said, one consequent question could be the one that aims to understand why countries used to attend or desire to attend the Venice Biennale even if they will be able to manage and maintain that attendance in a long term perspective?

It is very interesting that this question is strictly related to one of the questions that are driving the present dissertation.

To expand that question could it be relevant to understand how the ownership of the pavilions facilities and give an advantage to the old attendants?

Returning to the present edition and continuing the reflection started above, one of the key features of this edition is the fact that Seychelles did not manage to return after having attended two consecutive editions.

One of my speculative explanations is that the pavilion structural arrangements are able to strongly influence the pattern of attendance. But is this true also for the countries that own their pavilions?

Regarding the artists attendance the numbers had remained on average.

And considering the fact that this is the tenth edition of the time frame considered in this dissertation with certain legitimacy I can state the artists had been one of the main factors that had driven the country's attendance.

So maybe this individualistic and artistic driven perspective could be useful to understand some of the reasons why until now the countries from sub-Saharan Africa did start to attend in significant numbers and in a more consistent manner.

But on the other hand, at the moment this reflection is being undertaken is important to remember what happened with Ghana in 1997. Indeed the country sent a request manifesting its interest to attend the Venice biennale, but as I mentioned above, the Venice biennale answer was negative.

Therefore, maybe one of the other explanations for the absence of the sub-Saharan Africa countries could be the La Biennale negative answers.

But one way to conclude could be by trying to find out why the answer of the biennale was negative? Maybe it was due to the time constraints. So maybe the Ghana authorities sent the latter too late.

Unfortunately on the copy of the document that I had collected the dates are not visible. Another constraint could be the space.

Indeed in the present edition the Gabon pavilion was not located within the two main venues of the Venice Biennale.

So it could be that on the edition in which Ghana asked to join the process that I termed as deregulations of La Biennale had not started yet.

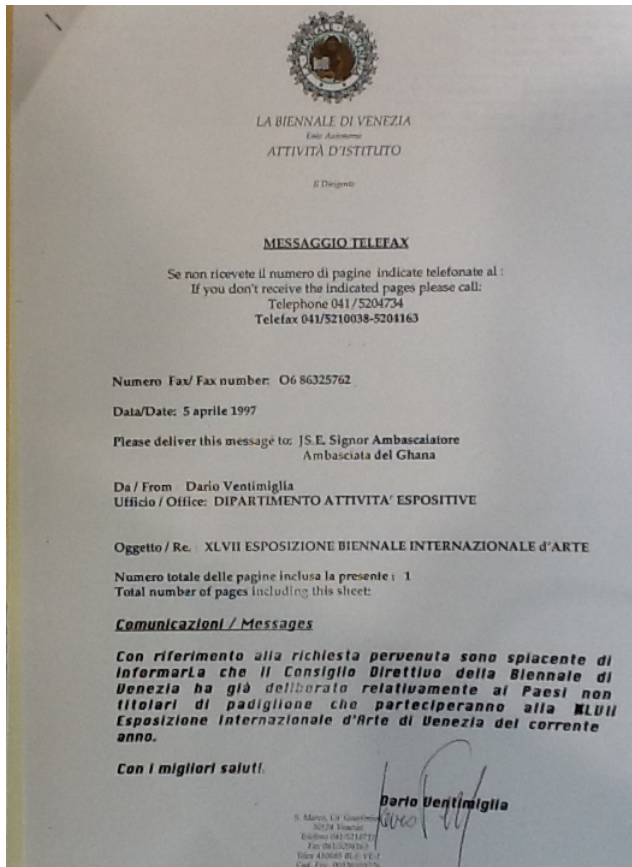


Figure 3.5 Letter from *La Biennale* to the Ghana embassy in Italy. Photo of a document from ASAC archive.

Here the copy of the Biennale answer to the Ghana request to attend the 47th edition of the Venice Biennale.

XI. 2011. (June 04 – November 27, 2011).

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
54 th Official National Pavilions: 86 Duration: 5 months	ILLUMInations	Bice Curiger	(1) Congo; (2)Zimbabwe; (3)South- Africa	(1) David Goldblatt and (2) Nicholas Hlobo	

Table 3.13 Countries Participation 2011

This edition happened what I can consider as a step further concerning the participation of the Sub-Saharan Africa countries at the Venice Biennale.

Indeed in this edition three countries had returned to attend the Venice Biennale.

The countries were Congo, South Africa, Zimbabwe.

It is important to reiterate that Congo was not attending for the first. However its first attendance was not within the time frame considered in this dissertation.

From that edition I can state that the strategy to focus on artists and art practitioners was finally producing some results.

So having three countries attending an edition of the Venice Biennale was a significant shift and had happened for the first time in the history of La Biennale.

It is important to emphasize that this edition participation was different from the participations that happened in 1993, because this time all the countries' attendants had been organized by the country's institutions.

From this edition beside the ephemeral participation, that was the case of Congo, some cases of a consistent participation had started to happen as South Africa and Zimbabwe had managed to do since they had attended to this edition.

Analysing each case of these countries' attendances emerges that Zimbabwe had for the first time his autonomous pavilion and South Africa was returning for the second time

after 16 years of absence. But as mentioned earlier on in a certain sense the absence of South Africa was somehow compensated for by the participation of artists from the countries.

In fact, the present edition was not an exception, indeed the two artists from a sub-Saharan Africa that had been invited to attend that edition are from South Africa.

XII. 2013. (June 11 – November 07, 2013)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>55th Official National Pavilions: 80 Duration: 5 months</p>	<p>Encyclopedic Palace</p>	<p>Massimiliano Gioni</p>	<p>(1)Angola; (2)Kenya, (3) Ivory Coast; (4)Zimbabwe; (5)South Africa.</p>	<p>(1)Frédéric Bruly Bouabré; (2) J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere and (3) Papa Ibra Tall.</p>	<p>Angola won the Golden Lion for the best national participation. Santu Mofokeng was part of the Germany pavilion exhibition <u>International Jury:</u> Bisi Silva</p>

Table 3.14 Countries Participation 2013

So, this had also confirmed the trend regarding the process of incorporation of the sub-Saharan Africa countries, artists and art practitioners to the Venice Biennale.

As I will illustrate in a moment, what really happened during this edition was not only the confirmation of a trend but also a step further.

However, let's start with the critical aspect that had emerged in this edition.

Kenya had managed to return, but the modalities had been strongly criticized, indeed I can anticipate that one of the causes for the cancellation of its attendances was exactly that modality.

What had happened was that exactly from this edition the organizers of the Kenya pavilion started to display within it national pavilion exhibition significant numbers of artists from China. The fact was that the number of artists from China was bigger than those from Kenya. And as I will return to the Kenya case in the upcoming sections I will leave it here for now.

To this edition the other returned as the Ivory Coast, a country that had been part of the two inaugural exhibitions, specifically the one of 1993.

And as happened with Zimbabwe, in the precedent edition, the Ivory Coast in this edition was returning with its autonomous pavilion.

The features that at this edition was becoming consistent was the case of the patterns of participation of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Indeed these two successive attendances, as I have illustrated previously, was something that was unexpected from a country from Sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition regarding the successive attendance of these two countries, it was also characterized by a sort of identification of a quasi-permanent venue for their pavilion. Even if two opposite directions. Indeed, South Africa in this second consecutive attendance was located within Arsenale, the building which is considered as the second main venue of the Venice Biennale. Zimbabwe instead was located outside the two main venues, in a building that is located in the way between the Arsenale and Giardini. The other thing that was very unusual was the fact that the Zimbabwe location since then had remained the same. Therefore even if located outside the country had managed to create a sort of permanent pavilion to which the visitor at each edition knows already where they can find the Zimbabwe pavilion.

However, of this edition the key episode was the fact that Angola, a country that was attending for the first time to the Venice Biennale won the prize as the best national pavilion of the edition.

In addition, another thing that gave more significance to that episode was the fact its pavilion was located outside the Venice Biennale main venues. I will return to this Angola participation later on.

To conclude it is important to reiterate that Bisi Silva, a curator from Nigeria, was one of the members of the international jury team.

XIII. 2015. (May 09 – November 22, 2015)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
<p>56th Official National Pavilions: 86 Duration: 6 months</p>	<p>All the worlds future</p>	<p>Okwui Enwezor</p>	<p>(1)Angola; (2)Kenya, (3) Nigeria; (5)Mauritius; (6)Mozambique; (7)Seychelles;(8)South-Africa; (9)Zimbabwe.</p>	<p>(1)Kay Hassan; (2)Joachim Schonfeldt; (3)Marlene Dumas; (4)Mikhael Subotsky; (5)Barthélémy Togo; (5)Fatou Kandé Senghor; (6)Emeka Ogboh; (7)Cheikh Ndiaye; (8)Wangechi Mutu; (9)Abu Bakarr Mansaray; (10)Ibrahim Mahama; (11) Gonçalo Mabunda; (12) Samnson Kambalu; (13) John Akomfrah and (14)Karo Akpokiere.</p>	<p>El Anatsui, won Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. Sammy Baloji within Belgium National Pavilion</p>

Table 3.14 Countries Participation 2015

Within the time frame considered in this dissertation the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale had represented a groundbreaking regarding the sub-Saharan Africa participation.

Indeed, concerning the channels of incorporation for this edition they not only had maintained the trend but had also achieved a step further.

Indeed, the number of the sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists that had attended was the highest ever.

In addition the director of the Venice Biennale visual arts sector, also known as the edition curator of edition was Okwui Enwezor, a scholar and curator born in Nigeria and with United States of American citizenship.



Figure 3.6 Okwui Enwezor portrait made during the installation of the 56th edition of *La Biennale* in 2015. Photo from ASAC archive. AU. Alessandra Chemollo.

So, as well as to the edition in which Okwui was one of the members of the international jury, this time as the edition curator another artist from a sub-Saharan country was distinguished with a prize.

This time the artist was El Anatsui that was awarded with the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement.

Here is important to remind that El Anatsui was one of the artists that was displayed on the first of the two inaugural exhibitions, obviously the one that happened in 1990. The other remarkable episode regarding the artists' attendances to this edition, was the fact that the number of those invited to the main exhibition was the highest ever. In addition three artists had been displayed within pavilions of other countries.

Those were the case of Sammy Baloji, William Kentridge and Mario Macilau. That had been displayed respectively in the Belgium, Italian and Vatican pavilions.



Figure 3.7 Mario Macilau photographic project/installation at Vatican pavilion during the 56th edition of *La Biennale* in 2015. Photo from ASAC archive. AU. Alessandra Chemollo.

It is important to remind that for this edition the duration of the exhibition was extended from five months to six. The last time that the extension of the duration of the exhibition was made was in 1997.

One of the motivations behind the 2015 extension, according to La Biennale organizers, was related to the fact that in that year Italy, particularly the city of Milano had hosted the Expo. So the justification for the extension of the duration of the Biennale was explained as the need to make the Biennales open in the same week as the expo to offer the expo visitors the possibility to visit both events. It is very interesting that since then that duration, six months, has remained the same.

I am interested in that change because it allows me to observe in action one of the sources that influences the changes within the Venice Biennale organizational structure and how those innovations are then accepted and internalized by all the stakeholders or members of the art world.

On the other hand it seems that it was also influenced by the Expo Milano 2015 that on that edition the number of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa had been the highest ever. The precedent edition was attended by five countries and this edition the countries attendants become nine.

Other two speculative explanations to make sense of the increment of the attendant countries was related to the fact that in the precedent edition Angola won the prize as the best national pavilion of the edition.

To conclude the analysis of the present edition I will focus on some critical points that had emerged during it.

Those had concerned the fact that pavilions for two countries get canceled at the last minute. This was the case of Kenya and Nigeria.

The case of Kenya I had already started to discuss when I was describing its precedent attendance, this edition due to the protest made by some artists the pavilion was canceled.

The cancellation of the Nigeria pavilion was due to financial reasons.

XIV. 2017. (May 05 – November 26, 2017)

Edition	Edition theme	Artistic Director (Curator)	Countries	Artists in the main exhibition (artists invited)	Other relevant data
57th Official National Pavilions: 95 Duration: 6 months	Viva art viva	Christine Macel	(1) Angola; (2) Kenya; (3) Ivory Coast; (4) Mauritius; (5) Nigeria; (6) Seychelles; (7) South Africa; and (8)Zimbabwe	(1)Jelili Atiku; (2)Abdoulaye Konaté and (3)John Lathan.	<u>International Jury:</u> Ntone Edjabe-Cameroon; Georges Adéagbo, monograph exhibition at la sera del Giardini

Table 3.15 Countries Participation 2017

This is the last edition included on the time frame considered in this dissertation. As is possible to see on the table above in this edition there was a sort of what I can characterize as the new average regarding the number of the attendant countries from the Sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice Biennale.

On the other hand, the other channels of incorporation such as artists attending as invited artists and art practitioners attending as members of the international jury had continued active.

However, it is important to mention that some countries that had attended the precedent edition did not manage to return as attendants to the present.

On the other side some countries that had some organizational problems in the precedent edition such as Kenya and Nigeria had managed to attend this edition.

Artists such Jelili Atiku, a performer from Nigeria, had had a certain visibility on the overall Venice Biennale. Apart from his performance during the opening days he was one the artists included on the conversation series format that the curator Christine Macel had included on that edition.



Figure 3.7
Jelili Atiku
performance
during the
opening
ceremony of
the 57th
edition of *La*
Biennale in
2017. Photo
from ASAC
archive. AU.
Andrea
Avezzù.

About Jelili Atiku is important to mention that he was attending as invited artists and not within that Nigeria pavilion.

Furthermore regarding the artists attendance to that edition another highlight point was the George Adéagbo solo exhibition at *la sera dei Giardini*.

His exhibition was not part of the Venice Biennale program but it represented an symbolically important achievement, because it means that he had achieved a point in his career that is able to set up an exhibition in the context of the Venice Biennale. Returning to the country's attendance, some, such as Angola, Ivory Coast, South Africa and Zimbabwe had managed to return.

As I will cover some of those countries in the case study analysis here I can briefly take further the discussion about the case of Zimbabwe that I had already mentioned on my examination of the precedent edition.

This edition had represented the four consecutive editions that Zimbabwe was able to attend to the Venice Biennale. That fact could be considered a significant achievement for a newcomer country that has its pavilion located outside the Venice Biennale main venues.

With the reference of the location of the Zimbabwe pavilion, as I mentioned before, it had remained the same since the country had returned in 2011.

To conclude is important to mention that sub-Saharan Africa was once again represented on the international jury team. This edition the its was represented by Ntone Edjabe, an art practitioner from Cameroon.

However, is important to clarify that when I mention that an artists or art practitioner had represented the sub-Saharan Africa context does not mean that he or she does not have is own ideas and may his or her perception of self is beyond is belonging to or had born in a country from sub-Saharan Africa.

This hipóteses is very plausible also because most of those practitioners at certain points of her life had experienced the diasporic condition.

Is not possible to discuss the country's participation, at least by starting from 1990 without considering the role that the two exhibitions described and discussed at the previous section had played.

Indeed, as will emerge in this section the countries that end up by being able to attend in a more permanent manner are some of those that had been featured through the two exhibitions.

Consider the fact that the countries that had been represented though the two exhibitions had after while started to attend the Venice biennale with their own national pavilion could be said that the two exhibitions had played a role in the introduction of the contemporary art from sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice biennale.

But one question that could be made about the participation of those countries is why is so relevant the fact that the sub-Saharan African are setting up their own pavilions at the Venice Biennale?

Is true that I had already discussed that issue in the first chapter of the present dissertation and also here could be relevant to recall it again in this section where the focus was on the attendance of those countries.

So, other recurrent question that is made when I introduce my research topic is << what was the first country from sub-Saharan Africa that had attended the Venice Biennale?>>

And by conducting the research I had realized that to answer this question by presenting a chronological list of the countries is not the better way to answer that question.

Indeed, before presenting an eventual list of the countries it is useful to present some aspects that have had an impact on that list. and the most important of those factors is the one related to fact from 1990 the participation to the Venice Biennale was outsourced.

and by outsourced I mean the fact that the space and the organization of the exhibitions had started to totally undertake the control of the countries. And the location of the

pavilion had started to be something that countries could freely decide by the countries themselves.

I had referred to this aspect because since then La Biennale was not supposed to provide space for the countries.

One important thing that emerges when it comes to analysing the countries attendance and is true for all the countries is the crucial role that the diplomatic representations of the countries play in the process of the organization of the participation.

Indeed, often the communication between the institution in the country that is in charge of the organization and the La Fondazione Biennale is made by the intermediation of the diplomatic representations in Italy.

That is not only true only when it comes to consider the representation of the sub-Saharan Africa countries in Italy is also true regarding the representation of Italy in the countries because often La Biennale Foundation uses the diplomatic representation to present each edition of the Biennale.

Regarding this issue we can mention the role of the Italian cultural institute that used to play a relevant role.

More than present an chronological list of the countries that had attended La Biennale could be relevant to discuss and describe the several aspects that had influenced and characterized the countries participation.

It is true that in this section it will not be possible to cover all this aspect therefore some of them I will be discussing when I will conduct the case study analyses.

Indeed, as I had affirmed elsewhere one of the other theoretical approaches that could translate the significance of the attendance of the sub-Saharan Africa countries is the postcolonial theory approach.

Often the first attendance of the countries are influenced by events that are happening outside the art context.

Those events can be local ones or international one as I had illustrated when I I had discussed Mozambique as the preliminary case study, the role played by the Expo Milano 2015.

And as well as for the overall presence of the African arts at the Venice biennale it is also important to be able to capture some specific aspects that had influenced each country to attend the Venice Biennale.

But unfortunately here I cannot do it for all the countries from sub-Saharan Africa that had attended the Venice Biennale. However I hope to address, in part, that issue of chapter 5 when I will conduct the case study analysis.

Another important aspect to consider when it comes to map the countries participation is to try to understand which non artistic factors had influenced the decision to attend the Venice biennale for the first time.

Connected to the discussion that I had made above could be the one related to how that decision to attend the Venice biennale could be interpreted.

Is true that earlier on I had discussed how postmodern theory had affected the interpretation and commodity value of contemporary art from sub-Saharan African countries.

However, one thing is that change of perception of value, the other is the decision to attend the biennale. So, once again why those countries attend the Venice biennale and how it could be interpreted.

As I had mentioned elsewhere I will try to find the answer to that question by analyzing the exhibitions narratives.

But here I can anticipate some theoretical constructs that are useful to interpret that decision.

Here I can recall the fact that I have considered the Venice biennale as the global arena of the art world.

There are some aspect that unfortunately related to the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice biennale that I was not able to address in the present dissertation.

One of those aspects are the reasons that are behind the changes of the patterns of attendance.

Indeed, most of the countries from the sub-Saharan African often change the institutional structure arrangements that characterize the pavilion's participation. Therefore, it could be relevant to acquire the reason why that change happens.

Another important issue to analyze when it comes to analyze the participation of sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice biennale is how much that participations are related to the local art scenes.

That examination is relevant if, as I will discuss in the next chapter, one of the speculations regarding the narratives is that they are addressing or having in mind the local audience.

And here it is important to remind that by the local audience I mean the audience from the country represented within the national pavilion.

There are countries that are able to attend in a more permanent manner since they started. That is the case of South Africa and Zimbabwe. That means since the first attendance with their own national pavilion those countries had attended all the successive editions. Of these two countries South Africa went further, and as well as other newcomers countries had rented a permanent space at the Arsenale. So every year the location of the South Africa national pavilion is certain. But I will discuss more about this issue when I will discuss the case studies, in chapter 5.

Regarding the patterns of attendance the countries could be divided in two types: the ones that had attended in a permanent manner, to mean those countries that had attended all the successive editions after the first attendance.

The second type of countries, actually the majors of the countries are those that are attending in a more ephemeral manner, to mean they are not able to maintain a certain continuity.

Other countries that could be relevant to mention here are those countries that had contacted the Venice biennale to attend it, but for several reasons they could not.

Indeed, one aspect that is important to remember here, is the fact that the attendance of those countries is strongly related to the organization transformations that the Venice biennale did, namely the one related to the venues or location of the national pavilions exhibitions.

Before the liberalization of the location of the national pavilions, the participation of the countries was also conditioned by the availability of the space on which the exhibitions could be set up.

Therefore, on the list of the countries that had attended I can also add those countries that had communicated to the Venice biennale in order to set up a pavilion.

Before concluding, as I had already affirmed, those exhibitions from sub-Saharan African arts could not increase in numbers without the changes in the rules of attendance to the Venice Biennale.

Mainly the one related to the location of the exhibitions.

However, this liberalization of the location of the pavilions and collateral exhibitions had also meant a sort of disengagement of the Venice Biennale as the main responsible of all the exhibitions organized for each edition.

So, the country's institutions and other actors had started to be the most responsible to set up the exhibition and to run it for all the duration of each edition.

One useful mode to start the present section, the first of this chapter in which the focus will be on the exhibitions, could be to discuss and describe what had happened regarding the sub-Saharan African arts at the Venice biennale before the time frame considered in the present dissertation.

African arts or art made by artists born in sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice biennale before 1990 used to be absent from the Venice biennale walls.

It is important to remember that no one country from that socially constructed geographical region has a permanent pavilion, for example at the Giardini Biennale, the first and the most prestigious venue of the Venice biennale.

One question that automatically could follow after such observation is why?

As I have discussed about this issue also in the first chapter of the dissertation, here, as an answer for this question I will briefly discuss two main causes.

The first is regarding the fact that most of those countries had been under colonial occupation when the build process of the Venice biennale had started .

The second reason is related to the fact that for a long period of time the art and the artists from those parts of the world had been seen as primitive and excluded from the canonical definition of art.

As a consequence this arts practice had had a very low symbolic and monetary value. In other words it was not considered to have any commodity value.

That saying is important to remind that the Venice biennale from the beginning and for many years since then was a place to see, sell and buy vanguard art works. Therefore, as the arts from sub-Saharan African was not considered as having any commercial value it was not included on the shows.

And it is true that some exceptions had happened and those had been within the pavilions of the colonial countries or when the exhibitions were constructed through an anthropological or ethnographic approach.

So let's say that art and artists from those parts of the world had been excluded for historical- structural reasons and from canonical definition of what was art and what was not.

As I mentioned for a long time those countries that did not have a pavilion at the Giardini biennale had been called as countries without pavilion.

Since the 90's due to the Venice biennale structural transformation and acceptance to locate the country's pavilion in any place around Venice it was not possible to call those countries as such.

However, until now there are countries that used to attend only once to the Venice biennale with a national pavilion but the artists from those countries are regular attendants to the main exhibitions.

Indeed, several artists from those countries used to attend the Venice biennale, invited by the edition curator.

So, to emphasis that phenomenon of the significance of those artists and art practitioners, as long as one of the main features of La Biennale is its nationalistic structure I termed those countries as the new countries without pavilions.

And from sub-Saharan Africa those countries are: Nigeria, Senegal and Congo.

Nigeria Senegal Congo

So, by having as one of the aims the one to taking further the discussion that I had started in the previous section, on the present that I am due to conclude I had described and discussed about the countries participations or attendance for each edition of the Venice Biennale after 1990.

The section was guided by the following questions:

Which countries from sub-Saharan Africa had attended the Venice biennale since 1909?

And most importantly with which frequency.

I had and considered the frequency as the most importance issues to cover because in my understanding what is more relevant, at least in historical perspective is not to attend or not but how many times and again with which frequency the country had attended.

And could be important to remind that I will discuss, in more detailed manner, about the frequency of some countries on the chapter 5, where I will conduct a case study analyses.

Other clarification that could be important to recall here is the fact that on this section I did not discussed about the exhibitions that those countries had proposed whet they had attended, because as a mentioned above the aim here as to understand what I term as which and how those countries had attended.

Therefore, returning to the section conclusion, for the examination that I had undertaken had emerged, as somehow predicted that the countries followed different traitors regaling the frequency of attendees.

Indeed, some countries, very few, are able to continuing or maintaining the attendance after their had made it for the first time. To make some examples that are the cases of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The other countries use to attend with an ephemeral frequency. Of those countries that had followed this pattern could be divided in two groups.

One those countries that had attend only one edition and then did not returned for the successive editions.

The second, actually most of the countries, had attended in a with a alternate frequency. So, after the first time, they may return for the successive editions and the not be able to

be present for the third edition or attend the first and then not to the successive but then by missing one edition return again. For example this was the case of Mozambique that I had discussed in the chapter 1 as the preliminary case study.

So, after I had uncovered that pattern one of the. Subsequent question was the one though which I aimed to understand why that happens and can be expressed as follows: why some countries are able to maintain the frequency of attendee and the other are not?

However, answer this question was not the aim of this section, nevertheless I can anticipate that I will discuss about that issue on the section 4.2 of the present dissertation. Indeed, as an anticipation I can mention that one of my speculation to understand the difference of the frequency of attendance was the one to undertake a close analyses of the pavilion institutional structural arrangements.

So it seems that different structure are associated to different frequency of a tendency.

Other task on this section was the one in which I aimed to identify some factors that could explain why an country had started to attend in certain edition and not in others. Meanly those factors that I had looked for are ones related to other spheres rather than the artists one.

Regarding that inquiry, some interesting observation had emerged.

Taking by example the case of South Africa, also because I had already mentioned in the previous section. So, South Africa had returned to attend the Venice Biennale in 1993, at theedition of La Biennale after a long interdiction due to the apartheid regiment though which the country was ruled.

So, in 1992, the political situation in South Africa started to change and one of the indicators was the liberation of Nelson Mandela after 27 years in prison. Successively the country had started a process of political and social transformation which the arts had played a relevant role, as I will discuss in deep in the chapter 5.

Same to other countries, like for example the case of Zimbabwe and the land reforms that had put the country on the international spotlight.

And by linking the first attendee to some local or some relevant events for the country, a step further could be the one on which a close analyze of the exhibition could be relevant to find out how effective are that link between the first place participation and the events.

Indeed, on the chapter 4 in which I will closely analyze the exhibitions proposed I will try to also examine that links..

3.3. The actors behind the exhibitions: curators, artists and other agents.

In this section I will focus the analysis on the individual actors that are behind the exhibitions.

It is important to focus on the individual actors because they are the most visible component of the exhibition structural arrangements.

Indeed, often the exhibition are analysed by consider the individual figures such artists included in the show the curators.

As long as one of the main working hypotheses of the present dissertation is related to the impact of the institutional structures to the exhibitions, I consider the artists as the individual components of the institutional structure.

Indeed, often they present institutions or institutional interests or are presented by institutions. For example artists that are often represented by galleries or the institutions that collects their works.

Other aspect that makes the analyses of individual actors as theoretically relevant to analyse is the fact that the participation of curators and artists can happen through several formats and not exclusively through National Pavilions context.

That is the reason why in the present dissertation to fully capture the full picture of the individual actors I had also included those that use to be part of the international jury. However, it is important to mention those that are often invited to be part of the international jury are curators.

Therefore, such an analyses allows not only to identify those artists and curators but also to draw an profile and trajectory.

So, in this section, I will discuss about some of the following questions: what is happen after the first participation of some artists? How they are able to return? How are those

that are able to return? And related to the curators what is happened after the first curatorial intervention or involvement?

Consider the fact that there art world is dominated by few figures that are consider as the stars, to mean those that included on the most international large exhibitions, including biennales. So, one of my very specific goal in this section is the one to be able to find out if there are also some artists and curators from sub-Saharan Africa that could be consider as part of that restrict group.

Starting for an chronological inventory of the participation of such figures the propose is find out how those figures and be involved and which role the use to play within exhibition and how they may be able to influence the exhibition content.

So, the analyses here will included different formats of exhibitions also because was I had discussed in the first section of this chapter the first exhibition of sub-Saharan African arts in the time frame consider in the present dissertation had been those that I had classified as collective exhibitions.

As an example of what that exercise will allows to identify are the cases such of those artists and curators that use to be present at the Venice Biennale so several times.

One of those could be Antonio Ole, an artist and curator from Angola that had attended from the first time as an artist at the main exhibition at the 50th edition in 2003. After that he returned , as one of the artist and curator of Angola pavilion at the 56th edition in 2015. Successively, again within the Angola National Pavilion as curator the only artist for the 57th edition.

The argumentation in the present section is structured in two parts the first in which, by following a chorological approach I will describe and discuss about the profile of some of those most representatives individual figures from the sub-Saharan Africa in the context of Venice Biennale.

And at the second that is also the conclusion of section in I will discuss some of the most significant intervention of those actors.

However, before start, it relevant to remind that this section is connected to the one in which I will argue about the institutional actors. Indeed, between the individual and institutional there is an mutual commitments. So sometimes are institutions that play a certain role one make possible that certain artists and curators could be involved but often the individual actors do same.

The artist and curators are one of the most visible elements of the exhibition structural arrangements.

This actors, artists and curators are the visible part of the exhibitions and often the they anticipate the countries participation to the Venice Biennale.

Also could be relevant to acquire at each level on their career the practitioners are able to attend the Venice Biennale.

Be displayed or do an intervention at the Venice Biennale for this art practitioners could mean achieve one of the highest points of their career and could mean that they could have opportunities to be displayed in other international large-scale exhibitions.

One important perspective through which analyses that process is by analyzing the institutional individual actors that are involved in this process.

So the individual actors consider here are those that operated and had be able to attend the Venice Biennale outside the national pavilion context. Indeed, often they use to operate in and with other mainstream western mainstream art institutions and often most of them live in diaspora.

I describe those actors as institutional actors even if there are individuals because often they operate, represent or are represented by an institution.

For the case artists often are represent by galleries or the art works are made available to be displayed by an collectors

That was for example the case of the artists Mor Faye, from Senegal and that was part of the African Countries exhibition coordinated by Susan Vogel in which his works had been made available by the Bara Diokhane and Spike Lee collection.

For the case of curators, always they operate within an institutional context, even when they consider themselves as independents. In additions often they collaborate with collectors, museums and works with some artists.

Analyses the individual actors is also theoretically relevant because often are those actors that are able to 'open' the doors for the country participations. So, after they are representation they are able to mobilize the necessary resources, mainly information that enable the countries to attend the Venice Biennale.

3.3.1 **The Artists:**

“ The seamless inclusion of artists of African descent in the international exhibition is a little victory met with the seeming detachment of a casual event.”¹⁰⁹

One of the most salient aspect that those actors, in this case artists, is the fact that they are somehow well inserted in the art market then are not at the beginning at the their career.

Therefore, those artists are not the ones that could be classified as the ones that are practices a typical the art that could be classified as the local art.

Indeed before started to describe those artists could be useful to add another way through which the practices of those clarify once again the profile of those artists could be distinguished from the others.

¹⁰⁹ Eyene 2014: 1

I will do that by apply the Ivan Gaskell(2012)¹¹⁰ distention specifically when he mentioned that there are “four connected kinds of art [...] modernist, traditional and avantgarde, which are artworld art, and mass commercial, which is not.”¹¹¹

So, more than by having been displayed in the Venice Biennale for several times, these artists can also be distinguished by the fact that there are not doing commercial art.

However, as mentioned by Gaskell that does mean to “their own local traditions.”¹¹² And the last distention factor that these artists possess is the they had been not only displayed at the Venice Biennale not exclusively though the National Pavilion.

Indeed, is exactly that aspect that differentiate the practitioners that will be the focus of my analyses in the sections with the ones that are displayed within the National pavilions exhibitions.

Other aspect that could be relevant to analyze regards the art practices that used to be included when it comes to set up an exhibitions about the contemporary African arts at the Venice Biennale.

Also by analyzing the African participation to the Venice Biennale by having the institutional individual actors as point of view could also allow to mention the debate related to the authenticity of some art practices within both the lens of some national context and the overall imaginary about what could be consider as an African art work.

Indeed this debate about the authenticity is related also to who those art practitioners end up deciding, how they would like to positioning themselves with the international art market.

¹¹⁰ See Gaskell, I. (2012). Spilt Ink: Aesthetic Globalization and Contemporary Chinese Art. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 52, 1–16.

¹¹¹ Gaskell 2012: 1

¹¹² Ibidem

However, it is important to mention that often those practitioners are not able to freely decide what and how they would like to define their art practices, mainly because for them it is so easy to escape from the label of their born country.

It is important to take in consideration that the Venice biennale since its beginning use to be an space in which the art works are displayed by considering its value.

And it also by considering that aspect that other relevant aspect could be to understand what is what is happen to this artists after their art works had been displayed at the Venice biennale. Some of them are able return to the Venice Biennale in other exhibitions and about that I will briefly discuss later on.

As well as for the countries the representation of this artist is important for the Venice Biennale for the discourse related to the position of the Venice biennale as an global art arena.

Indeed how the La Biennale could offer "the picture of the world" without engaging and display artists from the different styles parts of the world in the main exhibition?

The African stars of the art world:

The stars of the world from sub-Saharan African countries

These artists that are enlisted in the following lines had been identified by trying to answer the following question: What happens to the artistic career after he or she had been displayed to the Venice Biennale for the first time?

I had conceived that question because during my archival research, specifically when I was creating the database about the artists from sub-Saharan Africa who had attended the Venice Biennale within the time frame considered in this dissertation.

Then I realized that one way to eventually find an answer to that question was by observing who her the artists that had managed to return to the Venice Biennale. In other words: who are the artists that had been, for example, displayed on more than one edition? Then I realized that there are some few artists from sub-Saharan Africa countries that had been displayed or had attended several to the Venice Biennale.

So here I will briefly describe the career of some of those artists.

Unfortunately here due to the time and space constraints I will focus on those that had returned more than others or had been awarded with some prizes.

So, by following in alphabetical order of their names I will briefly describe and discuss their trajectory in the context of the Venice Biennale.

1. António Ole

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
António Ole	Angola, 1951	(1) 2003; (2) 2015; (3) 2017	

Table 3.3.1 António Ole brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

António Ole is one of the few artists from a country from a sub-Saharan Africa that have Portuguese as official language that has been displayed within the main exhibition. To mean he was invented by the edition curator. This was on his first participation in 1999 at the edition curated by

Then he returned though the Angola pavilion as an artist and also as a curator.

Therefore, his trajectory had started from an abroad perspective, the main exhibition, to the national borders within the national pavilion.

2. El Anatsui

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
El Anatsui	Ghana, 1944	(1) 1990; (2) 2007; (3) 2015.	Golden Lion for lifetime achievement 2015.

Table 3.3.2 El Anatsui brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

El Anatsui was displayed for the first time in 1990 at the 44th edition of the Venice Biennale.

It was on the first exhibition of the contemporary from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

Since then he has been able to return several times and be displayed within diverse types of exhibitions.

In 2015, the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale, he was awarded with the golden lion for the lifetime achievement. It is important to remind that the curator of that edition was Okwui Enwezor.

One of the other things that makes the career or trajectory of El Anatsui being exciting is the fact that for him was not necessary to be based in an western country in order to achieve high level in his overall artistic career. Indeed he is still based in Nigeria.

3. Georges Adéagbo

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
Georges Adéagbo	Benin, 1942	(1) 1999; (2) 2009 (3) 2017	Special Mention in the 48 th edition

Table 3.3.3 Georges Adéagbo brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Georges Adéagbo, was the first artists from the sub-Saharan Africa that was awarded with a prize in the context of the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, in 1999, the 45th edition of the Venice Biennale he was awarded with the special mention prize. It is important to mention that when he was awarded Okwui Enwezor was one of the members of the international jury team.

As illustrated on the table above George Adeagbo had managed to return other times to the Venice Biennale.

In 2017 he had a solo exhibition, in venice that had opened during the open week of the venice biennale.

That exhibition was organized by the gallery that works with him and the exhibition was displayed at la serra dei Giardini, an private space located between the two main venues of the Venice Biennale.

4. Marlene Dumas

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
Marlene Dumas	South Africa, 1953	(1) 1995 (2) 2003; (3) 2007; (4) 2015.	1995 within the Dutch Pavilion

Table 3.3.4 Marlene Dumas brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

It is very interesting that the first that Marlene Dumas had attended to the Venice Biennale, in 1995 at the 45th edition, was within the Dutch pavilion.

However, here it is important to remind the fact that South Africa, after an interdiction to attend La Biennale had only managed to return in 1993. And when she was included on the Dutch pavilion exhibition she was she was living and working in Amsterdam.

Since then she had returned several times, one of which was within a collateral exhibition in 2007. One important thing that comes out of analysing her trajectory at the Venice Biennale is the fact that until now she had not been displayed within the south Africa pavilion.

5. Malick Sidibé

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
Malick Sidibé	Mali, 1936-2016	(1) 2007	Golden Lion for lifetime achievement

Table 3.3.5 Malick Sidibé brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

The only attendance of Malick Sidibé happened exactly on the edition in which he was awarded with the golden lion for lifetime achievement prize.

However, even if he had attended only once he was and was considered one of leading figures on photography not only in the sub-Saharan Africa context.

6. William Kentridge

Name	Country and year of birth	Attendances to the Venice Biennale	Other Relevant Data
William Kentridge	South Africa, 1955	(1) 1993 (2) 1999; (3) 2005; (4) 2015.	2015 Italian pavilion

Table 3.3.6 William Kentridge brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

William Kentridge is one of the artists from a sub-Saharan Africa countries that had returned several times to the Venice Biennale.

His first attendance at least within the time frame considered in this dissertation happened in 1993. It was within a collateral exhibition sponsored by the Venice Biennale entitled "Incroci del Sud. Affinities. Contemporary South African Arts. Since then, he had returned several times.

One of his most emblematic return, happened in 2015, at the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale when his was displayed within the Italian national pavilion.

It is very interesting that until now he was not been displayed in an exhibition within the South Africa national pavilion.

3.3.2 The Curators

“ Specific discourse structures, such as topics, arguments, metaphor, lexical choice, and rhetorical figures, among many other structures to be dealt with below, may influence the contents and the structures of mental models in ways preferred by the speakers,[the exhibitions audiences]”¹¹³

As well as the curators here I will focus on those that I use to operated outside the national pavilions context.

The fact that the exhibition about African arts had started to be curated by African curators was an important shift.

Indeed one of the many criticisms that used to be made to non-African curators that used to curate the exhibitions in which African arts was included was the fact that they “had never done fieldwork¹¹⁴” on the continent.

Therefore the emergency of a group of curators that had been born in the continent was important.

¹¹³ Leeuwen 2015: 472

¹¹⁴ Berns, 2003: 1

Because it seems that those curators that are operate within the national pavilions, and that is one of the peculiarities of countries, use to be selected not based exclusively in artists criterions.

And those that are operate within other spaces and exhibitions types are more connected to the so called the global art world.

And those curators that are operate within the national pavilions, seem to have less freedom compare to those that operate outside, in other spaces.

That perception arises when it is consider the fact that one of the main aims of the countries participation is to create and diffuse a certain narratives. So how much the curator is free to implement the curatorial project? Or how much is able to influence the goal of the countries aims and propose alternatives approaches?

In addition, it seems that often on those exhibition that happen outside the national pavilion it seems that the curators are the exclusive responsible for the exhibition narratives and curatorial strategies adopted.

Curators work in an institutional context and often the curatorial project that they draw had to be in line with the policy of the institutions where they will be implemented.

In the context of the Venice Biennale the curators are the ones who are the responsible for the overall discourse making. Then after the curatorial statement the narratives should then be translated though the display strategies and artworks selected to be part of the show.

In addition as described by Bruce Ferguson “ museum curators often act as unpaid advisors to collector/board members, they perpetuate, unconsciously and consciously, the interests of dealers whom they consider.”¹¹⁵

In the following lines I will enlist the names of the curators from Sub-Saharan countries that had had an intervention at the Venice Biennale.

By analysing their trajectory and their intervention beyond the borders of the Venice Biennale those curators could be divided in three schools: the USA oriented School- The European oriented school and the governmental oriented school.

Indeed, most of them are Based on had studied in the western countries and then somehow had returned to the home countries or other in the continent.

However, the fact that the exhibition about African arts had started to be curated by African curators was an important shift.

Indeed one of the many criticisms that use to be made to non-African curators that used to curated the exhibitions in which African arts was included was the fact that they “had never done fieldwork”¹¹⁶ on the continent.

So this curators are:

A) Bisi Silva

Founder and director of the Center for contemporary Art in Lagos Nigeria

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Bisi Silva	Nigeria, 1962-2019	(1) 2013- Member of International Jury

Table 3.a. **Bisi Silva** brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Bisi Silva, was a Nigerian scholar and curator.

¹¹⁵ Ferguson 1996: 181

¹¹⁶ Berns 2003: 1

Her intervention at the Venice Biennale happened in 2013 at the 55th edition as a member of the international jury team.

It is important to remind that it was when she was on the international jury team that Angola own the prize as the best national pavilion.

The other things that is important to notice in are trajectory is the fact that she was based in Lagos, Nigeria. I mention that fact because as I had discussed elsewhere, is not easy to be based in a Sub-Saharan Africa country and be able to make some intervention in the mainstream western art institutions such as the Venice Biennale

B) Koyo Kouoh

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Koyo Kouoh	Cameroon, 1967	(1) 2003- Member of International Jury; (2) 2017- Curator of the collateral event of the Suisse pavilion. Series of events entitled "Ataraxia."

Table 3.b. **Koyo Kouoh** brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Koyo Kouoh is a curator born in Cameroon, based in Dakar and Cape Town.

Her first intervention at the Venice Biennale happened in 2005 as a member of the international jury. in 2017 her intervention was one a collateral event associated with the Suisse pavilion. She was the curator of the series of events entitled Ataraxia.

It is important to mention that when she was part of the jury team she was presented as director of the African Association of Contemporary Culture, and institution based in Dakar, Senegal.

C) Okwui Enwezor

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Okwui Enwezor	Nigeria, 1936-2019	(1) 1999- Member of international jury (2) 2015- Curator of the 56 th edition of the Venice Biennale.

Table 3.c. Okwui Enwezor brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Okwui Enwezor, was a scholar and curator, born in Nigeria and then became a citizen of the United States of America.

Until now he was the curator from a sub-Saharan African country that had the most high and prestigious intervention in the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, in 2015, He was the director of the Venice Biennale visual sector, also known as the curator at 56th edition, entitled "All the worlds future."

His first intervention at the Venice Biennale happened in 1999 as a member of the international jury team.

Most of his interventions at La Biennale have been reputable by the fact that on each of them an artist from a sub-Saharan Africa country was awarded with a prize. In fact, in 1999 George Adéagbo, an artist from Benin, was awarded with the special mention prize. In 2015 El Anatsui, an artist from Ghana based for a long time in Nigeria, was awarded with the golden lion for lifetime achievement prize. Unfortunately he passed away in 2019.

D) Olu Oguibe

He is also artists and art critic

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Olu Oguibe	Nigeria, 1964	(1) 2001- Co-Curator of the collateral exhibition "Authentic/Ex-Centric: African of Africa."

Table 3.d. **Olu Oguibe** brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Olu Oguibe, is a scholar, artists and curator. He was one of the founder of the Forum of Africa arts, and institution based in New York.

His first intervention happened in 2001 as a co-curator of the collateral exhibition "Authentic /Ex-centric: African in and out of Africa."

In 2007 he was one of the artists that had been displayed within the collateral exhibition " Check List- Luanda Pop African Pavilion."

E) Salah Hassan

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Salah Hassan	Sudan, 1964	(1) 2001- Co-Curator of the collateral exhibition "Authentic/Ex-Centric: African of Africa." (2) 2007- He was part of the curatorial team of the exhibition " Modernities & Memories: recent works from the Islamic World."

Table 3.e **Salah Hassan** brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Salah Hassan, is a scholar and curator and was one of the founders of the Forum of Africa Arts, that in 2001 and 2003 had organized two collateral exhibitions related to contemporary art from Africa.

However, his first intervention at the Venice at the Venice Biennale happened in 1997 as a member of the curatorial team of the collateral exhibition "Modernities & Memories recent works from the Islamic World."

F) Simon Njami

Name	Country and year of birth	Intervention on La Biennale
Simon Njami	Born in Switzerland, with Cameroonian background, 1962.	(1) 2007- Co-Curator of the collateral exhibition "Check-List Luanda Pop". (2) 2017- Project Adviser of the Kenya national pavilion

Table 3.f **Simon Njami** brief biography and interventions at *La Biennale*.

Simon Njami, is a scholar, writer and curator.

He has a family background from Cameroon but he was born in Switzerland.

In the context of the Venice Biennale, until now, he never had intervention directly related to La Biennale, as for example as a member of the international jury or curator.

Until now all his intervention was within exhibitions organized in the context of the Venice Biennale.

His first intervention happened in 2007, as co-curator of the exhibition "Check List Luanda Pop." The last was as an advisor of the Kenya national pavilion in 2017. It is important to mention that the Kenya pavilion to which he had collaborated as adviser was the one organized by the artists and curators who had led the protest that ended with the cancellation of the Kenya pavilion in 2015.

Reading the curators as I mention above that important channels of their intervention was though the participation in the International jury team.

So in the table below is possible to see when an art practitioner from a country from sub-Saharan Africa had been part of the Jury.

Year and edition	Name	Other relevant data
Year: 1999- June 12 – November 07, Edition: 48 th Curator: Harald Szeemann Theme: overall/APERTO	Okwui Enwezor , Nigeria/USA	Georges Adéagbo Won a special mention prize
Year: 2001- June 11 – November 04 Edition: 49 th Curator: Harald Szeemann Theme: Plateau of Humankind	Ery Càmera , Senegal	Yinka Shonibare won a special mention prize
Year: 2003- June 15– November 02 Edition: 50 th Curator: Francesco Bonami Theme: Dreams and Conflicts, The Dictatorshin of the Viewer	Koyo Kouoh (African Association of Contemporary Culture, Dakar)	
Year: 2005- June 12 – November 06 Edition: 51 th Curator: Maria de Corral and Rosa Martinez Theme: The Experience of Art Always a little further	Ousseynou Wade (Segretario Generale Biennale des Arts di Dakar)	
Year: 2013- June 11 – November 07 Edition: 55 th Curator: Massimiliano Gioni Theme: Encyclopedic Palace	Bisi Silva , Nigeria (Center for Contemporary Art, CCA)	Angola won the prize as best national pavilion
Year: 2015- May 09 – November 22 Edition: 56 th Curator: Okwui Enwezor Theme: All the worlds future		El Anatsui won the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement
Year: 2017- May 05 – November 26 Edition: 57 th Curator: Christine Macel Theme: Viva art viva	Ntone Edjabe - Cameroon	

Table 3.g. Art practitioners and participation at the international jury team at *La Biennale*.

In this section I had focused the analyses on the individual actors that are behind the exhibitions, to mean those individual that even if in limited manner are able to influence the exhibition content and perhaps also the overall exhibition narrative.

Indeed I had focused the analyses of this section on the artists and curators.

And as I said above, I'm aware of the fact the behind the exhibitions there are other individual actors that play a relevant role. But considers the time available to undertake the research, the accessibility and the fact the of those the artists and curators are the most visible of those that operate behind. Therefore, even if it could significant do a sort of mapping the art world of the sub-Saharan African, in the Harold Becker sense, unfortunately here I was not able to consider all those other individual actors on my analyses.

So, on this section I had started the analyses by discussing about one of the main common denominator that characterize the profile of the artists and curators from sub-Saharan Africa that are present in the context of the of the Venice Biennale: The diaspora conviction.

In fact, most of this art practitioners are based in the diaspora, to mean outside the African continent.

And here I can anticipate that in the next section I will take further the examination of the role of those artists on diaspora, but also about the diaspora as the condition sine qua non, for those practitioners, to be able to play a relevant role in the art world.

And here I use the art world how it was defined by.....

So one of the fact that had emerged in the discussion of this section is the fact that those artists and curators are based in diaspora and in contracts of those that are often included in the national pavilions.

Indeed, another criteria that I had used to identify those individual actors of whom I had included in this section and briefly discussed was the fact that they used to be displayed or work outside of the national pavilion context.

And consider this last criteria, in a certain sense, I could say that the focus of the present section was on those that I can classify as the stars of the contemporary African arts.

So in this section I had identified their profile and argue about their relevance in the context of the Venice Biennale.

Regarding the curators I took same approach and I had not only included those that had done significant curatorial intervention but also those that had been invited or selected for example as members of the international jury.

Indeed, for each edition art practitioners are invited to be part of the international jury.

And I had consider as relevant to included also those practitioners from sub-Saharan African that had been members of the jury, because I consider that invitation as another action that could be interpreted within the overall process of incorporation of arts from sub-Saharan Africa in the context of the Venice Biennale and beyond.

The last aspect related to the profile and role of the practitioners, that I had covered in this section, was the one related the role played by the language that is officially spoken in their born countries.

The focus of the brief examination that I had undertaken here as guided by the need to understand how the languages of the born country is one of the factors that determine or at least strongly influences their career paths.

And this point was a sort of anticipation because I will return to this language issue on the chapter 5. Indeed, the linguistic perspective was one of the criteria that had guided me on the identification of the countries which I had included on the case study analyses.

Therefore, as well as when I will cover the exhibitions narratives, the linguistic perspective unable me to always the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan African to the Venice Biennale also through the postcolonial leans.

3.4 Chronology of the group exhibition about art from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale since 1990

“The group exhibitions runs counter to the canonical model of the monographic presentation.¹¹⁷”

After the two inaugural exhibitions that I had described and discussed in the first section of the present chapter, successively other group exhibition had been organized.

In this section I will focus on the other group exhibitions that had happened within the time frame consider in the present dissertation, so, from 1990 to 2017.

Examine those exhibitions could be significant because, as well as the two inaugural exhibitions, that I had described in the section 3.1 of the present chapter, they had operated as a sort of other space, in a Foucault's sense, to mean the space in which the African arts and its practitioners to occupied in order present at the t Venice biennale.

One significant difference between the two inaugural exhibitions and those exhibitions that I will discuss here is the fact is that on them artists and art works had been displayed without having as aim the one to represent any country. And to emphasize that difference, those exhibitions are described as collateral exhibitions or parallel events.

¹¹⁷ O'Neil 2010: 242

So, consider that distinction regarding the exhibitions function, in this section, could be relevant to find out how the exhibition narratives produced within those pavilions are related compare to those produced within the national pavilions.

Other aspect that could make that comparison relevant is that fact that often those exhibitions use to apply an curatorial strategy con structure around subjects or themes.

Often those exhibitions are described as collateral exhibitions or parallel events.

Other feature of those exhibitions that could be relevant to mention in this introduction, is the fact that though the years the actors involved in the exhibition organization had changed.

Indeed, at begging those the organizers of those exhibitions used to be mainly international institutions and then in through the years recent African actors from sub-Saharan countries, artist and curators stated to be in the frontline of those exhibition project.

So, could be relevant to analyze why that shift happened and if these change could not be interpreted as well as one of the ways on which the African arts had been incorporated to the Venice biennale environment?

It also important to remind that the parallel events or collateral exhibitions was something that had been introduced after the 1990.

Before those exhibitions use to be termed as sponsored exhibitions.

The difference between both as the involvement of la biennale on the organization process somehow.

For the sponsored exhibition La biennale used to be part of the organization, often by provide the exhibition space.

But when the La Biennale started to decentralize its structure and reduced its involvement in the exhibition organization those type of exhibition then started to be termed as collateral exhibitions or parallel events.

So, those exhibitions use to be included in the edition exhibition catalogues, indeed one of the marks or way to recognize if they could be consider as an official exhibition is the fact that they had been included or not in the catalogue.

Therefore the material that on which I will base my argumentation here are from the exhibition catalogue, and those collected on the Venice biennale archive. And as I had already mention in the previous section other important source of data was the fieldwork visits that I did I to the exhibitions and interviews that I did to some key informants. Specifically about the collateral exhibition I interviewed Simon Njami that was curators of one the exhibition included in this section.

To open the discussion I will describe, by following the chronological order, the exhibitions. However, on that description I will not only mention when they happened but also by identify the main actors that had be part of them. It is important to emphasize that from this examination one thing that may emerge is the fact that often the curators and artists use to be involved interchangeable between the diverse types of exhibitions that are available in the context of the Venice biennale.

Before going further, to make my above statement clear, it is important to mention that the exhibitions that I will examine here, in the biennale jargon use to the named as collateral exhibitions or parallel events.

The other types or formats of exhibitions in the Venice biennale are the national pavilions and the main exhibition, to mean the one in which the artists displayed are selected by the edition curator.

Successively, as the second step of my examination, I will identify the exhibitions narratives that had been produced through these narratives. And here the automatic task will be the one to try to analyze how those narratives are related to the actors that had been part of the structural arrangements of the institution that had organized the exhibition.

The third step will be one to analyze how the exhibitions narratives had been related to curatorial strategies.

The last step will be to relate the features of those collateral exhibitions to the ones of the national pavilions exhibitions.

Therefore one of the main goals of the present section is not the one to describe the collateral exhibitions of the African arts but the one to be able to understand how those exhibitions are diverse from the national pavilions.

So let's start

By analysing these exhibitions the main goals are to examine their role as one of the channels through which the countries and artists from the sub-Saharan Africa had been incorporated to the Venice Biennale.

On the other hand, understand what are the differences between these exhibitions and the ones that had been presented through the National Pavilions.

However, regarding the last goal, I can anticipate that one of the main differences between the two types of exhibitions in the context of the Venice Biennale lies in the sponsorship concerns.

Indeed, there is a significant difference that has as one of the main sources of explanation the historical genealogy of the parallel exhibitions.

In fact, the parallel exhibitions had started as being exhibitions that could be realized only through sponsorship. One of the indispensable sponsors was exactly the Venice Biennale that was supposed to provide the space to host the exhibition.

And as these exhibitions often proposed by private institutions usually cover the cost of the exhibitions, institutions are invited to join the enterprise as partner or sponsor and often their names are visible on the exhibition communication materials. In case of the national pavilions the sponsors or the eventual partners are hidden.

That saying let's start the analysis of those exhibition.

a. 1990. African Countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition		
<p>Duration: June 06 – October 10</p> <p>Edition: 44th</p> <p>Curator: Giovanni Carandente</p> <p>Theme: Future Dimension</p>	<p>Curator(s)</p> <p>Kinshasha Holman Conwill and Grace Stanislaus.</p>	<p>Artists</p> <p>(1) El Anatsui; (2) Bruce Onobrakpeya; (3) Tapfuma Gutsa; (4) Nicholas Mukomberanwa and (5) Henry Munyaradzi.</p>	<p>Other relevant data</p> <p>Under the auspices of the Studio Museum in Harlem and sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, and local partnership with the venetian branch of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation/Museum.</p>

Table 3.4.1 Collateral Exhibition: African Countries Nigeria and Zimbabwe 1990

The exhibition was organized by the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, in collaboration with The National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe and The National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Lagos, Nigeria and made possible by funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and with assistance from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

In the preceding sections I had already started to discuss these exhibitions.

However here i will take further the examination by examine it as a collateral exhibition as the fact it was the case.

It is important to mention that I consider it as the fact collateral exhibition, even if it had been presented as a national pavilion by La Biennale and the lead institutions that had organized it.

Indeed, it is specifically by the fact that the exhibition was not organized that a governmental institution that i consider it as a collateral exhibition.

The leadership role of the organizational structure behind this exhibition was played by the Studio Museum in Harlem, an art institution based in New York, United States of America.

In addition, what had been displayed in Venice Biennale actually as some components of the exhibition that had been on display in the Studio Museum in Harlem “from January 21 to May 6 in 1990.”¹¹⁸

And in certain sense the Venetian display as somehow considered as equal as the other locations on which the exhibitions as displayed before and after the Venice Biennale phase.

¹¹⁸ Ezra 1990: 79

According to Ezra (1990) the original exhibition project was described as follows: “seventy-six paintings and sculptures by nine artists from six sub-Saharan countries.”¹¹⁹

However, once again it is important to reaffirm its role as the one that had introduced the contemporary arts from the sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists.

In addition it is important to reiterate that this exhibition had introduced artists that since then had been displayed successively at La Biennale through different formats of exhibitions and obviously editions. One of those artists, El Anatsui, a Ghanaian artist based in Nigeria, that 25 years after that exhibition was awarded with the Golden Lion for the Lifetime achievement prize.

In addition the fact that the exhibition was supported by other important art and philanthropic institutions had allowed the curator and the overall exhibition organizers to be able to have the necessary resources to make an exhibition that had more than average of the Venice Biennale exhibition standards.

Indeed, as I will discuss in depth later on, often the exhibitions within the national pavilion from Sub-Saharan Africa are not able to have the stars that are expected to be exhibited at the Venice Biennale. But not by the luck of the artworks but as a result of the display strategies and other related curatorial strategies adopted due to the lack of resources.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem

b. 1993. African countries Senegal and Ivory Coast

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition							
<p>Duration: June 06 – October 10 Edition: 45th Curator: Achille Bonito Oliva Theme: Cardinal Points of Art</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Curator(s)</th> <th>Artists</th> <th>Other relevant data</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>Susan Vogel, Gerard Santoni and Ousmane Sow.</p> </td> <td> <p>(1)Tamsir Dia; (2) Gerard Santoni; (3) Outtara Watts; (4)Moustapha Dime; (5)Mor Faye, and (6)Ousmane Sow</p> </td> <td> <p>Organized by the Center for African Art, with sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, and local partnership with the venetian branch of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation .</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data	<p>Susan Vogel, Gerard Santoni and Ousmane Sow.</p>	<p>(1)Tamsir Dia; (2) Gerard Santoni; (3) Outtara Watts; (4)Moustapha Dime; (5)Mor Faye, and (6)Ousmane Sow</p>	<p>Organized by the Center for African Art, with sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, and local partnership with the venetian branch of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation .</p>	
Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data						
<p>Susan Vogel, Gerard Santoni and Ousmane Sow.</p>	<p>(1)Tamsir Dia; (2) Gerard Santoni; (3) Outtara Watts; (4)Moustapha Dime; (5)Mor Faye, and (6)Ousmane Sow</p>	<p>Organized by the Center for African Art, with sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, and local partnership with the venetian branch of the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation .</p>						

Table 3.4.2 Collateral Exhibition: African Countries Ivory Coast and Senegal 1993

As well as to the previous exhibition this is also classified as collateral exhibitions almost for the same reasons.

However, it is important to mention that unlike the previous exhibition, the present had two artists from the countries represented as part of the curatorial team. But the lead role was played by Susan Vogel and the organizer was the Center of African Arts, an art institution based in New York.

Regarding the curatorial team it is interesting to notice that the fact that two artists had been part of it was a strategy that the scholar and curator Susan Vogel used to apply also on her precedent exhibition projects.

Indeed that was an approach that was on the trend to the anthropological or ethnographic exhibition practices.

Examine the Vogel approach Olu Oguibe(1993 describes her work approach as follows: “ sense of fascination that defines her choice of title, and eventually her choice of artists, material and co-interpreters.”¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Oguibe 1993: 18

And along with the precedent exhibition also the present was somehow a part of a precedent exhibition projects that had been displayed before at the Museum of African Arts, an institution that was recently created in New York.

Another fact that emerged as a result of chronological analysis of the exhibition, was related to the artist's trajectory included on it.

Indeed, most of the artists that were displayed did manage to return to the Venice Biennale. And when the return happened was exclusively within the national pavilion frame.

Before proceeding on the analysis it is important to remind that the other difference between the previous exhibition and the present was the official language.

Indeed, the two countries that had been represented in the first exhibition have English as one of the official languages. And this presented within this have French.

So, returning to the analyses. The artists from the French speaker countries had not been able to return as invited artists and then be displayed within the main exhibition.

So, an automatic question could be why the English speaker artists had been able to return as invited and the French not? It was also considering the fact that I had chosen the linguistic approach as one of the criteria through which to identify the countries to focus on the case study analyses.

However, it is important to mention that other artists from Senegal and Ivory coast had had the occasion to attend the Venice Biennale, but until not those included in the 1993 exhibition.

In addition as I had illustrated when I was analysing the countries participation, a significant number of art practitioners from or based in Senegal had been invited to join the international jury team.

c. 1993. Incroci del Sud/ Affinities, Contemporary South African Art

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition		
<p>Year: 1993- June 6 – October 10, 1993</p> <p>Edition: 45th</p> <p>Curator: Achille Bonito Oliva</p> <p>Theme: Cardinal Points of Art</p>	<p>Curator(s)</p> <p>Sally Arnold and Mary Angela Schroth.</p>	<p>Artists</p> <p>(1)Willie Bester, (2)Andries Bothes, (3)Norman Catherine, (4)Keith Dietrich, (5) Kendell Geers, (6)Philippa Hobbs, (7)Sfiso Ka Mkame, (8)William Kentridge, (9)David Koloane, (10)Jackson Hlugwane, (11) Noria Mabasa, (12)Trevor Makhoba, (13) Johannes Maswanganyi, (14)Tommy Motswai, (15)Karel Nell, (16)Tony Nkotsi, (17) Malcom Payne, (18) Joachim Schonfeldt, (19)Helen Sebidi, (20)Mashego Segogele, (21) Penny Siopis, (22) Pippa Skotnes, (23)Willem Strydom, (24)Sue Williamson, and (25)Tito Zungu.</p>	<p>Other relevant data</p> <p>Collaboration: South African Association of Arts, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Rome, and Consulate General of the Republic of South Africa Milan.</p>

Table 3.4.3 Collateral Exhibition: Incroci del Sud/ Affinities, Contemporary South African Art 1993

I had included this exhibition in the list of the collateral exhibitions because it was presented as a sponsored exhibition and not as a national pavilion.

And as a sponsored exhibition made available the space in which the exhibition was then displayed. It is important to remember that the exhibition was organized by the South African government through its embassy in Rome and general consulate in Milan.

Therefore to be or not organized by a government institution is not the only criterium that makes an exhibition to be considered as a national pavilion or not. Indeed for the present exhibition it was the direct intervention of the biennale that made it to be considered as collateral at that time sponsored exhibition.

On that edition when this exhibition happened, South Africa was returning to the Venice Biennale after some years that the country was interdicted to attend due to the apartheid regime in power in the country.

For that edition South Africa had been present in three fronts, the national pavilion located at the central pavilion, at the "Aperto" and then this exhibition.

The exhibition displayed 25 artists, on top of that some artworks of the one of the co-curators, Sally Arnold, had also been included on the show.

The exhibition narrative and also the curatorial strategy adopted was a reflection of the environment that was at the moment characterizing South Africa.

An transition from an apartheid country to a democratic country. Indeed the country had for so many years been dominated by the apartheid regime and when the exhibition happened the country was experiencing a post-apartheid context.

The reconciliatory approach was one of the reasons why some many artists had been included on the show because one of its main ideas was to show what was going on in the country.

Another important aspect that had characterized this exhibition organizational structure was the fact that the lead figure was a South Africa ambassador. At that time was Glenn Babb.

And from the South African government this exhibition had been conceived as an itinerant exhibition. As a matter of fact after being displayed at the Venice Biennale the exhibition had then been displayed in Rome and finally in Amsterdam at the Stedelijk Museum.

This exhibition had played a significant role as the introductory platform to some of the South Africa artists that then had been able to return to the Venice Biennale.

d. 1997. Modernities & Memories recent works from the Islamic World

Year: 1997- June 15- November 09 Edition: 47th Curator: Germano Celant Theme: Future, Present, Past	Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data
	Salah M. Hassan was part of the curatorial team. Executive curators: Michael Carapetian and Stella Ohanian	Among others: Abdoulaye Konaté (Mali) and Hassan Musa(Sudan).	Rockefeller Foundation support

Table 3.4.4 Collateral Exhibition: Modernities & Memories recent works from the Islamic World- 1997

I had included this exhibition on the chronological list of collateral exhibitions focused in the sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists in the context of the Venice Biennale for several reasons.

The first one is related to the fact that one of the members of the curatorial team was the scholar and curator Salah Hassan.

Salah Hassan was one of the founders of the Forum of Africa Arts, an institution that, as I will discuss in next lines, had organized two exhibitions focused in the African contemporary arts in the context of the Venice Biennale.

Another reason, the second one, was related to the fact that two African artists had been included on this exhibition. And one of those was from a country from sub-Saharan Africa.

That artist was Abdoulaye Konaté, from Mali and its very significant that he had managed to return as invited artists. This happened at the 57th edition of the Venice Biennale in 2017.

The third reason regards the fact that as well as the two inaugural exhibitions that I had discussed in different sections of this dissertation, also the present had as main sponsor the Rockefeller foundation.

Therefore, in my concern that fact reinforced the relevance of a future inquiry aimed to understand the role played by the Rockefeller foundation on the promotion of the contemporary arts of the so called newcomer countries to the Venice Biennale.

Part of the eventual research could aim to understand when the process of sponsorship started to for example see if it coincides with the end of the cold war.

Unfortunately, within this dissertation I was not able to collect enough evidence that could allow me to be able address that research topic. I hope that it could happen in the near future.

e. **2001.** Authentic /Ex-centric: African in and out of Africa

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition		
<p>Duration: June 10 – November 04</p> <p>Edition: 50th</p> <p>Curator: Francesco Bonami</p> <p>Theme: Dreams and Conflicts- Dictatorship of the Viewer.</p>	<p>Curator(s)</p> <p>Salah M. Hassan and Olu Oguibe.</p>	<p>Artists</p> <p>(1) Willem Boshoff; (2) Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons; (3) Godfried Donkor; (4) Rachid Koraïchi; (5) Berni Searle; (6) Zineb Sedira; (7) Yinka Shonibare.</p>	<p>Other relevant data</p> <p>Organized by the Forum of African Arts.</p>

Table 3.4.5 Collateral Exhibition: Authentic /Ex-centric: African in and out of Africa 2001

This was the first exhibition organized by the forum of Africa Arts.

This exhibition was curated by Salah Hassan and Olu Oguibe.

The scholarship approach was dominant was the one that the curators used to construct the exhibition narrative that had characterized this exhibition.

By scholarship approach I mean that the exhibition content was in line with an scholarship idea.

Indeed it seems that one of the main goals of this exhibition was to show the African perspective or contribution to the construction of the modern art canon.

It is important to mention that Hassan and Oguibe are also scholars that are based in the United states of America.

They had been part of the group that founded the forum of the African arts which the main goals was to be able to contribute through exhibition curating and scholarship to the emergence of new narratives about the African arts.

Therefore the exhibition was strongly informed by the debate about the other modernities.

They had selected artists from different parts of Africa and some of them were at that time as well as the curators living in the diaspora.

One of those artists was Yinka Shonibare, a British-Nigerian artist. As I had already mentioned elsewhere, Shonibare was born in Nigeria and then as a child went to England where he is still based until now.

Through his works, Shonibare is able to play and subvert the old metaphors and narratives about sub-Saharan Africa and its people.

It is important to mention the fact that the exhibition was critically well received. Indeed was one that attended the Venice Biennale in which Shonibare was awarded with the special mention prize.

This exhibition had took further the challenge of the definition of what was considered what was the contemporary art indeed it had displayed some works of the artists that at that moment were based abroad.

In fact in article published some months after the exhibition the curators had described the exhibitions in the following words “ this exhibition featured the work of seven prominent contemporary African and African Diaspora artists.”¹²¹”

Therefore, undoubtedly one of the aims of the exhibition was the one to challenge that notions and conceptions. Indeed, on the overmentioned article the exhibition curators went further by mention the fact the artists and the works had been chosen because “their works speak directly to issues “of representation, memory, diaspora, expatriation and other aspects of the African experience.”¹²²

f. **2003.** Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition		
<p>Duration: June 15 – November 02</p> <p>Edition: 50th</p> <p>Curator: Francesco Bonami</p> <p>Theme: Dreams and Conflicts- Dictatorship of the Viewer.</p>	<p>Curator(s)</p> <p>Gilane Tawadros</p>	<p>Artists</p> <p>(1) Laylah Ali; (2) Kader Attia; (3) Samta Benyahia; (4) Zarina Bhimji; (5) Frank Bowling; (6) Clifford Charles; (7) Pitso Chinzima; (8) Rotimi Fani-Kayode; (9) Hassan Fathy; (10) Veliswa Gwintsa; (11) Moshekwa Langa; (12) Salem Mekuria; (13) Sabah Naim; (14) Moataz Nasr; and (15) Wael Shawky</p>	<p>Other relevant data</p> <p>Organized by the Forum of African Arts.</p>

Table 3.4.6 Collateral Exhibition: Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes 2003

¹²¹ Hassan and Oguibe 2001: 65

¹²² Ibidem

This was the second exhibition organized by the Forum of African Arts¹²³, an institution created by scholars and curators from Africa and its diaspora that was based in New York. One of the aims of the exhibitions organized by the forums was to challenge the old metaphors and narratives associated with the Africa arts.

The exhibition was curated by Gilane Tawadros.¹²⁴

It is important to mention that Gilane Tawadros was “independently selected to curate the exhibition.¹²⁵” And the exhibition was previously selected by the curator of the edition, Francesco Bonami to be displayed in the Arsenale among other seven projects.

g. 2007. Check List- Luanda Pop African Pavilion

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition		
<p>Duration: June 10 – November 04</p> <p>Edition: 52th</p> <p>Curator: Robert Storr</p> <p>Theme: Think with the Sense-Feel with the mind.</p>	Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data
	<p>Simon Njami and Fernando Alvim.</p>	<p>(1)Ghada Amer; (2)Oladélé Bamgboyé (3)Miquel Barceló (4)Jean Michel Basquiat (5)Mario Benjamin (6)Bili Bidjocka (7)Zoulikha Bouabdellah (8)Loulou Chérinet (9)Dj Spooky (10)Marlene Dumas (11)Mounir Fatmi (12)Kendell Geers (14)Ihosvanny (15)Alfredo Jaar (16)Paulo Kapela (17)Amal Kenawy (18)Kiluanji Kia Henda (19)Santu Mofokeng (20)Nástio Mosquito (21)Ndilo Mutima (22)Ingrid Mwangi (23)Chris Ofili (24)Olu Oguibe (25)Tracey Rose (26)Ruth Sacks (27)Yinka Shonibare (28)Minnette Vári (29)Viteix (30)Andy Warhol (31)Yonamine (32)Chéri Samba</p>	<p>Com. Meskerem Assegued- Ekow Eshun Organized by the Sindika Dokolo African Collection of Contemporary art.</p>

Table 3.4.6 Collateral Exhibition: Check List- Luanda Pop African Pavilion 2007

¹²³ The first exhibition organized by the forum was “Authentic/Ex-Centric” in 2001.

¹²⁴ Gilane Tawadros, born in Egypt, she is London based art historian and critic. At the times she curated the exhibition she was the director of the Institute of International Visual Arts(inIVA), an institution located in London, England.

¹²⁵ Berns 2003: 1

This exhibition had very ambitious aspirations. one of its pretensions was to be considered equal as an African pavilion.

At this point of this dissertation, it is more than clear that this idea or pretension did not work out well. Something that this exhibition had managed to be was the pioneering as an exhibition that was totally organized by an institution that was based in a sub-Saharan Africa country. Indeed, the exhibition was organized by the Sindika Dokolo foundation and institutions that at that time was based in Luanda, the capital city of Angola. It was also the first that was co-curated by a curator that was based in his home country. Here I am talking about Fernando Alvin.

The other co-curator was Simon Njami. It is important to remember that this exhibition happened in the same edition in which Malick Sidibé was awarded with the Golden Lion for the lifetime achievement prize. Malick Sidibé was the first artist to have that recognition.

The exhibition was constructed by applying mostly artworks owned by the Sindika Dokolo foundation collection.

Some of the artists included on it had been previously displayed at the Venice Biennale. That was the case of Yinka Shonibare, Marlen Dumas and Cheri Samba.

On the exhibitions was also displayed some works made by international artists such Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol and Alfredo Jaar.

Therefore, by considering that fact one consequent question was the following: what was the main goal of this exhibition?

Some hypothetical answers and expansion to that question were: be an African pavilion? or, the second be an occasion to display the Sindika Dokolo foundation collection in the

context of the Venice Biennale? Unfortunately here I am not able to provide an answer to those questions.

However, for sure the exhibitions had other hidden goals that I will be able to identify here as those are more akin to the reason why I am examining the collateral exhibitions in this section.

One of those goals was to display Angolan artists and promote Luanda, the Angola capital city as a really pop to mean cool and interesting art scene.

That had been articulated from the title of the exhibition to the number of Angolan artists included on the exhibition.

That said, here it is important to remember that the headquarters of Sindika Dokolo foundation was located in Luanda. Another hidden goal of "Check-List Luanda Pop" was anticipated and promoted the idea of the establishment of an African pavilion in which Sindika Dokolo could play a relevant role.

Apart from those critical and hidden goals the exhibition had been a useful start point for the establishment of the Angolan national pavilion fact that happened some year after. In addition it had been a good platform to Angolan contemporary artists indeed since that attendance had managed to return to the Venice Biennale. To the Angola art scene the promotional and anticipatory role played by this exhibition had been very useful. Indeed the stakeholders and partners involved in this exhibition had then returned as the sponsors of the Angola pavilion. Lastly, it is important to remember that in its first attendance Angola won the prize as the best national pavilion of the edition. How much the lessons lent front this exhibition had influenced that achievement?

h. 2017. Diaspora Pavilion

Information about La Biennale Edition	Collateral/Parallel Exhibition							
<p>Duration: May 13 – November 04 Edition: 57th Curator: Christine Macel Theme: Viva Arte Viva</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Curator(s)</th> <th>Artists</th> <th>Other relevant data</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>David Bailey and Jessica Taylor.</p> </td> <td> <p>(1) Larry Achiampong; (2)Barby Asante; (3) Sokari Douglas Camp; (4)Libita Clayton; (5) Kimathi Donkor; (6) Michael Forbes; (7) Ellen Gallagher; (8) Nicola Green; (9)Joy Gregory; (10) Isaac Julien; (11) Dave Lewis; (12) Hew Locke; (13) Susan pui san lok; (14) Paul Maheke; (15)Khadija Saye; (16) Yinka Shonibare MBE; (17) Erika Tan; (18) Barbara Walker and(19) Abbas Zahedi.</p> </td> <td> <p>International Curators Forum(ICF); University of the Arts London(UAL); Art Council England; Bloomberg Philanthropies.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data	<p>David Bailey and Jessica Taylor.</p>	<p>(1) Larry Achiampong; (2)Barby Asante; (3) Sokari Douglas Camp; (4)Libita Clayton; (5) Kimathi Donkor; (6) Michael Forbes; (7) Ellen Gallagher; (8) Nicola Green; (9)Joy Gregory; (10) Isaac Julien; (11) Dave Lewis; (12) Hew Locke; (13) Susan pui san lok; (14) Paul Maheke; (15)Khadija Saye; (16) Yinka Shonibare MBE; (17) Erika Tan; (18) Barbara Walker and(19) Abbas Zahedi.</p>	<p>International Curators Forum(ICF); University of the Arts London(UAL); Art Council England; Bloomberg Philanthropies.</p>	
Curator(s)	Artists	Other relevant data						
<p>David Bailey and Jessica Taylor.</p>	<p>(1) Larry Achiampong; (2)Barby Asante; (3) Sokari Douglas Camp; (4)Libita Clayton; (5) Kimathi Donkor; (6) Michael Forbes; (7) Ellen Gallagher; (8) Nicola Green; (9)Joy Gregory; (10) Isaac Julien; (11) Dave Lewis; (12) Hew Locke; (13) Susan pui san lok; (14) Paul Maheke; (15)Khadija Saye; (16) Yinka Shonibare MBE; (17) Erika Tan; (18) Barbara Walker and(19) Abbas Zahedi.</p>	<p>International Curators Forum(ICF); University of the Arts London(UAL); Art Council England; Bloomberg Philanthropies.</p>						

Table 3.4.7 Collateral Exhibition: Diaspora Pavilion 2017

The diaspora pavilion was an exhibition project created by art practitioners and artists based in London, England.

Those practitioners had an African background or even some of them had been born in some sub-Saharan African countries and at that time were based, as I already said in London.

Another main feature of that exhibition was to be a platform to promote mentorship relations. Indeed each young artist displayed had one experienced artist or art practitioner as mentor.

One of the mentors was the Nigerian born and British citizen Yinka Shonibare.

As I had already illustrated, Shonibare had attended several editions of the Venice Biennale and in one of those attendees he won the special mention prize.

The narrative of that exhibition was constructed around the reflection of diasporic condition.

After had described and examined those exhibitions that are described as collateral exhibitions to take a step further I may try to find out how those exhibitions are similar or different to the exhibitions that are proposed within national pavilions of sub-Saharan Africa countries at the Venice Biennale.

One the main differences between the collateral exhibitions and the national exhibitions are related to the lead role of the exhibition.

In other words who proposes the exhibitions? The curatorial project proposed was collateral exhibitions doesn't have to have an authorization by a national government. And maybe is due to that freedom to propose their project that often the collateral exhibitions use to be more conceptual and experimental than the exhibition proposed within the national pavilions.

In fact the collateral exhibition should be more free to propose a discourse or narrative. The other main issue regards the fact that the collateral exhibitions are able to challenge the notions of African identity while the national pavilions with different degrees pretend to create a narrative that reinforce that identity.

In the above lines I had described and discussed how the practices of group exhibitions of African Art at the Venice biennale had went further through the editions since the first two discussed in the first section of the present chapter.

Those exhibitions had started to be organized by La Biennale itself and then they used to be called as sponsored exhibitions and then after changes within the structure of the show, those exhibitions started to be considered as collateral exhibitions or events.

One these exhibitions used to feature mainly artworks from those countries that do not have a pavilion at the *Giardini Biennale*¹²⁶, as was the case for those countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

Regarding, those exhibitions focused on art from sub-Saharan Africa and artists one of the aspects that had strongly emerged, one the examination that I had conducted, is the fact that at the beginning, the actors, mainly those in the organization, used to be international. By international I mean not based in a country from sub-Saharan Africa and for the case of curators not to be born in any of those countries.

Indeed, recalling the discussion of the first section of this chapter, the international dimension and agency of those exhibitions was possible to be by from its most visible components such as curators and organizes to its hidden components such as its sponsors, Rockefeller foundation and the actors that had been involved in the space negotiation, Guggenheim foundation.

However, in the successive editions a shift happened and actors from sub-Saharan Africa, this time not exclusively the artists, started to use this format as an strategy to be able to be present at the Venice Biennale.

Regarding that shift, one of the highest points, as I had mentioned earlier on happened when the foundation Sindika Dokolo, organized one of those exhibitions at the edition 52th in 2007, entitled "Check List- Luanda Pop African pavilion."

¹²⁶ Giardini di Castello, also known was Giardini Biennale was the official exhibition site when the Venice Biennale was established in 1895. Actually thirty national pavilions are located there.

And here could be an important reminder that the Sindika Dokolo is a foundation created by a collection from which it gains the name and is based in Luanda, the capital city of Angola.

Also other issues related to that exhibition that is important to emphasize is the fact it happened before the first participation of Angola within the national pavilion context, that happened some years after in 2013.

Therefore, also by consider the fact that the Dokolo foundation was involved when the Angola attended for the first time, the question that could automatically arise is how much the Sindika Dokolo foundation exhibition had influenced the Angolan government to take the decision to attend La Biennale for the first time?

I will return to that question in chapter 5 where I will undertake a detailed analysis of four countries, though the case study, of which Angola is one of those.

Going back to the group exhibitions, another significant shift happened in 2017 the 57th edition of the Venice biennale, when a group of art practitioners had organized the Diaspora Pavilion. As I had described it was a pavilion organized by artists and art practitioners from sub-Saharan countries based in diaspora, mainly in the UK. And as I had discussed earlier, apart from an artist's project this exhibition could also be interpreted as a sort of transnational engagement.

So, consider how those exhibitions had evolved and the shifts that had happened, only in this format of exhibition, could be significant to be able to follow how it will look like in the upcoming editions of La Biennale.

Fortunately, some sort of anticipations of what that longitudinal perspective could capture, in the next section I will examine some of unexpected transmutation that had

happened so far regarding the overall attendance of countries and artists from sub-Saharan Africa to La Biennale.

In this chapter I had described and discussed about the process through which the arts from Sub-Saharan Africa countries started to be displayed in the Venice Biennale in a consistent manner.

The focus was on the national pavilions, however the artists had also be consider as long as they also had started to be invited to attend the shows as selected artists by the curators of each edition.

The examination was not only about how that process had evolved but also it was concentrated on how the actors that had been in involved in that process.

And by actors the main focus on this chapters was on those that in the present dissertation had be classified as individual actors whereas the institutional ones will the central point of view the next chapter.

However I had made some brief references to some institutional actors. Indeed the process, that I had clarified as an incorporation one, had started by being a case in which the exhibitions had been organized by international actors. And then, only after those two collective exhibitions, more and more national institutions started to participate and take over the process and organizing the exhibitions by themselves.

In parallel of those groundbreaking exhibitions, on the other hand the Venice Biennale, LA the Venice biennale foundation, as I had, at same time, started, as I had to illustrate in details in the first chapter of this dissertation, a process changes on some structural

arrangements, of the exhibition. And the one that had significant impact on the African participation was the one related to the location of the national pavilions.

Indeed, firstly the official venues had extended to the arsenal and then latter on it started to be allowed to the countries to find and setup their own pavilions in any place around Venice, include some island, which was the case of the Angola pavilion, that is significant because it was at the time when it won the golden lion.

Another topic that I had covered in this chapter was the one related to the new trends or practices though which the arts from sub-Saharan Africa use to be display in the Venice Biennale.

Regarding this aspect it is important to mention that the one that I had categorized as new practices are an results of an involvement of new actors on the process, mainly those that I had classified as institutional one and as already said will be discussed on the next chapter.

However it had confirmed the need to and how I had classified this process that had resulted in the permanent display of arts from sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists at the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, a part from the description of the process and its actors one of the questions that I had tried to address was the one related to how to characterize the process?

And consider how it happened and the nature and meaning of the Venice Biennale within the international art world I had classified that process as an incorporation.

And as I had discussed, that incorporation had happened as a result of pressure of several factors such as geopolitical ones, theoretical and organizational.

And as I had already affirmed , most of the aspects that I had discussed in this chapter will be also covered in the upcoming chapter.

One of those topics for example is related to the actors behind the exhibition, meaning those individuals and institutions that a part of the organizational structure that organize the national pavilions exhibitions.

And as I have showed in this chapter the first two exhibitions had been organized by a non-state organization even if the one of the main features of the Venice Biennale is the fact that the exhibitions are organized through the national pavilions.

And for those pavilions, a part from the main exhibitions for which the participants artists are chosen by the curator or artistic director of the edition, the countries governments have the last words in most of the cases in order to had them accepted a official participation, but in some as I will illustrate in the next chapter also on the definition of the exhibition narrative.

It seems that the chapter was more focused on how the countries and artists are attending or at least had started to attending the Venice Biennale so the next will be mostly focused on why the countries are attending the show.

IV. Behind the display: The institutions and The Exhibitions

The present chapter will be focused on what is being produced and diffused in the exhibitions.

And before going further I can explain that for me that analyses is relevant because it could help to make sense of the reason why so many countries from sub-Saharan countries are attending in increasing number to the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, one of my working hypotheses regarding that aspect is that those countries are mainly attending the Venice Biennale because there are able to create and reproduce the voices that can be heard within the exhibitions.

And if that is true, attending the Venice Biennale for those countries could be not only an action to try to insert their arts and artists in the international art market but also, and here I can recall the understand of the Venice biennale as a global arena, an occasion to spread their narratives to an transnational audience.

Therefore examine the narratives represents a relevant perspective through which analyze the sub-Saharan Africa participation to the Venice Biennale.

And as the title of the chapter suggest in this chapter I will focus the analyses exclusively on the national pavilions exhibitions.

And regarding other chapter this chapter will be diverse because it will focus exclusively on the narratives in a broader sense.

To undertake that examination I will start by apply the exhibition narratives or " rhetoric" in the Bruce Ferguson sense and then to identify and decode them I will apply some tools and approaches for the discourse analyses practices.

The discussion in this chapter will structure as follows:

On the first section I will identify the recurrent exhibitions narratives that are create within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

On the second section I will examine the aspect that are able to influence the exhibition narratives.

Regarding that aspect my working hypothesis is that, if as emerged in the chapter 3 the countries are attending in increasing number also because they are able to create and reproduce the exhibitions narratives then it follows that the organizational structure of the pavilions influences the exhibitions narratives.

And this analysis of the of the exhibitions structure arrangements it will be the one that will focus on those actors that are behind the exhibition and that I had characterized as the institutional actors.

The successive branch, the third section, will try to identify the sources of the of those narratives.

Regarding that issue one aspect that could be considered as one of the main sources are the themes of each edition of the Venice Biennale. So how the themes of the exhibitions are used as a source of narratives? And if that is the case related to theme La Biennale edition what the countries exhibitions use to do subvert it or try to create a sort of dialogue with it?

And to conclude the section I will examine how them those sources are used to constructed the narratives. Undertake that task is will mainly try to identify how by the end the narratives are then translated in terms of the exhibition content.

Finally on the fourth section I will address the issue related to the aims of the exhibitions narratives, in other words who are the audiences of those exhibitions? And even without

had the pretension to conduct an fully reception analyses I will conclude the section and the chapter by analyzing how those narratives are received by the international mainstream art journals. And why I will focus on the journals is related not only for the accessibility of the data but also by consider the fact that those journals play a significant role regarding what is perceived as valuable and relevant art works or exhibitions and by doing that are able to create a sort of international art hierarchies.

4.1 The voice(s) within the African Pavilions Exhibitions

In this section I will focus on the exhibition narratives that are created, reproduced and diffused within the National Pavilion of countries sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

The main goal in this section will be the one to identify those narratives.

It is important to mention that what I understand as narratives could be also termed as discourse or voice as it was defined by Bruce Ferguson.

Indeed, one of the main theoretical frameworks around which the argumentation in this section will build on is the one that focus on the rhetorics of exhibitions proposed by Ferguson.

The argumentation in this section was constructed by examining the exhibitions discursive elements and some archival material.

One of my working hypotheses was the fact that though the identification of the exhibitions main voices could be possible to find out an answer to one of the research questions. The why question.

Indeed, according to Ferguson, within the exhibitions spaces is possible to hear voices of those who are behind the exhibitions.

Therefore, what if one of the drives to the sub-Saharan African attendance to the Venice biennale could be exactly the possibility to create and diffuse those “invented” narratives?

So, by identify the narratives one could also have some material that could be used to speculate around the reasons for the attendance.

Other methodological tools that will be applied in the present section are those from discourse analyses and cultural studies.

The first task in the present section will be the one to identify those narratives but after I will undertake a brief discuss about what I understand as discourse or narratives.

In the second part of the section I will identify the narratives. Here I can mention that practically the narratives will be identified and grouped though categories.

The third step will be focused on the identification some recurrent features of the exhibition narratives.

The section I be conclude by the exploring the relation between the narratives that could be heard within the sub-Saharan African countries National Pavilions and those proposed by the themes of each edition of the Venice Biennale.

As I mentioned above, the main goal of this section is to identify the narratives that are being produced within the national pavilions of countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

In the field of analyse the exhibition narratives there are two approaches that could be adopted.

One that aims to identify the voices or meanings within the exhibition and another to examine “how is this particular voice filtered and mediated by its connections to other people, other institutions, other kinships and networks of influence?”¹²⁷

Therefore, in this section I will focus the analyses on the first approach.

In other words simply identifying the meaning that is being created within the exhibitions.

This procedure that I’m going to undertake here was well defined by Bruce Ferguson as the process to identifies “ who speaks to and for whom and under what conditions as well as where, and when.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Ferguson 1996: 184

¹²⁸ Ibidem: 183

So, I will focus specifically on the meanings and not how these meanings are produced that will be the focus of the next section.

But before going further there are other clarifications that are crucial to be done.

However, before identifying what could be heard perhaps is relevant to discuss and define what I understand as the voices of the exhibitions in this dissertation.

As I had mentioned above, one of the first aspects that I will examine about the exhibitions that are proposed within the national pavilions are their narratives or discourse.

Here I will interchange the words, voice with the same meaning as the words narrative or discourse. discourse and by discourse I mean “structures and practices that are used to construct meaning.”¹²⁹

So what could be heard within the exhibitions proposed within the pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa?

It is important to reiterate that I had chosen to start the analyses of the exhibitions that are proposed within the national pavilions of sub-Saharan country at the Venice biennale by analyzing the exhibition narratives because as I mentioned in the methodological chapter, one of my speculations is that it is exactly to produce and defuse that narratives in the context of the Venice Biennale that the countries are attending the show.

What I am going to say in the upcoming lines may seem a sort of a repetition, but it is crucial to understand the exercise that I will do by the end of this section.

It is important to emphasize that here the narratives are able to play roles in the context of the Venice Biennale or on the overall exhibition practices. One, specifically for the case of Venice Biennale attendance, I had mentioned that one of my speculation to

¹²⁹ Herrera and Braumoeller 2004: 16

interpret the increased number of the countries that are attending is the need to articulate their narratives in the context of Venice Biennale.

So, the countries are attending La Biennale to hypothetically present their narratives. Therefore the narratives are important. The other fact that makes the narratives become central to understanding the attendance is the fact that the narratives are able to determine how the exhibition will then be received by the Venice Biennale overall audience.

So, the exhibition narratives are able to play a significant role on how the exhibitions will be received.

And how the exhibitions are received I understand as the exhibition performance that practically will be translated by how it will be reviewed and the number of the visitors that the show will have.

However, for the case of Venice Biennale or any other case it is important to be aware that there are other aspects beyond the exhibition narrative that could influence the exhibition performance.

However, considering the fact that I am expanding the application of the concept of exhibition performance from the economic field, another analytical notion that I can also expand is the one of *ceteris paribus*.

So, the concept of *ceteris paribus* will enable us to consider all the other factors and then hypothetically consider that they don't play the same role as the narratives when it comes to evaluate the exhibition performance.

Here it is important to remember that later on I will describe the other aspects that may influence the exhibition performance and then examine them in a more detailed manner.

Returning to the exhibition narratives.

So, the main task here is to identify what are the narratives that could head within the national pavilion of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

Therefore the successive step is to understand how I may undertake that task. In other words But the question that may follow is < how I will first identify the exhibition narratives and then how I will analyze them?>>

Considering the time and space available for present research, to identify those narratives, I will focalize the analyses on the exhibitions titles or themes.

But why focus on the exhibition titles and not for example in the artworks displayed within the exhibition?

I did that methodological choice because I conceive that the exhibition titles are the most visible component of the exhibition narratives. And Often it has the role to encode the overall exhibition narrative in a very synthetic form.

Therefore in the following figure I had decoded the titles of the exhibitions by identifying their key words.



Figure 4.1
Exhibition topics 2015: Elaboration from the titles of the exhibitions within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

Another thing that make the exhibition titles more significant is the fact that though them often narratives could be heard even without necessarily actually visiting the exhibition space.

So in the figure above it is possible to see some of voices that could be heard within the exhibitions during the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale in 2015.

However, it is important to have in mind that those narratives are not the exclusive narratives that could be heard within the pavilions.

Indeed often the exhibition narratives are composed of several layers and some layers are dominant more than others that are also present and then could be heard within the exhibition.

Regarding the title and the key ideas or words encoded on those titles another significant aspect regarding the exhibition themes and the overall exhibitions narratives is the fact that in the case of the Venice Biennale, even if is not mandatory the exhibition within the national pavilions use to pretend to create a sort of dialogue with the main theme of the edition.

Therefore in the following lines and images I had tried to accomplish that exercise.

First see how the titles of the exhibitions proposed within the national pavilion of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa are related to the theme of the 57th Venice Biennale edition.

Theme of the Venice Biennale Edition	National Pavilion exhibition titles	
Viva l'arte viva	Angola	Magnetic Memory / Historical Resonance
	Kenya	Another Country
	Ivory Coast	The Juices of Time
	Mauritius	Speeded up Nature
	Nigeria	How about now?
	Seychelles	Slowly Quietly
	South Africa	Candice Breitz, Mohau Modisakeng
	Zimbabwe	Deconstructing Boundaries: Exploring Ideas of Belonging

Table 4.1. Theme of *La Biennale* and themes of the national pavilions of in 2017



Figure 4.2 Exhibition topics 2017: Elaboration from the titles of the exhibitions within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

Arrived at this point what comes out is that what we had just discussed in this section is related to what we had argued on the chapter 4.

Indeed, we made clear that there is a strong correlation between the institutional arrangements of the pavilion and the exhibition narratives.

And for the case of the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa, as they had different structure it is possible to see it reflected on the exhibition narratives.

4.2 The Narratives and the institutional structure of the exhibition's

"We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another."¹³⁰

As in the previous section I had discussed about the narratives that I used to be articulated within the sub-Saharan African national pavilions in the present section I will take further the argument by investigating how those narratives are related to the exhibition structural arrangements.

Before start I would like to remind that in the present dissertation i conceive exhibition structural arrangements as the assemblage of the actors that are involved on the process of exhibition organization.

Therefore, the aim of this section is to find out how the narratives are related to the exhibition structural arrangements. In order words in this section I will address the following question: how the discusses that that can be heard within exhibitions are actors that had been involved in the process of the exhibition organization?

Indeed, after had discussed about the type narratives in my understanding the successive step was the one intended to understand what factors are able to influence the exhibitions narratives.

¹³⁰ Foucault 1986: 23

To undertake that analysis I had been inspired by a theory used in the innovation and economical history studies according to which “institutions are able to play a significant role in the performance of economies.

So, in the case of the phenomenon under my observation how the institutional and individual actors are able to influence the exhibition performance that by the end is translated and accessed by its content?

So I will continue to focus on the exhibitions narratives that as discussed in the precedent section I had accessed it through the themes, the curatorial statements and the artworks included in the exhibitions.

Other aspect that is important to mention when it comes to do the type of analyses that I pretend to do here is the fact that the institutional components of the exhibition structural arrangements are those that we can term as the hidden ones.

Indeed, they identification is only possible through a very a curate analyses of the exhibition communication material such as catalogues leaflet and other similar materials. They could be also identified on the labels of some works mostly if they are the owners or the gallery that represents the artists.

To illustrate my argumentation I will present some examples and as I consider this section as a sort of subsequent of the previous one I will use same examples that I had already mention there.

However, in the present section I will argue about them through the lens of the relation and connections between narratives and national pavilion structural arrangements.

So, the discussion will start by describing the main institutional actors that use to be part of the organizational structure of the pavilions and present some examples concerned the pavilions from the sub-Saharan Africa countries.

The further stage will be the one in which I will discuss about how certain structural arrangements of the pavilions and specific types of narratives and why that happens.

So, the following discussion will be about how those narratives or voices within the exhibition proposed by the countries from sub-Saharan African are influenced by the pavilions' structural arrangements.

That examination is a step further on the analysis of the validity of my speculation of the fact that the exhibition narratives are one of the main factors that could explain the increasing numbers of countries from sub-Saharan Africa that are attending the Venice Biennale.

Therefore, after having identified the narratives in the previous section, in the following lines I will try to identify the eventual relation between the actors that are part of the pavilion structural arrangements and the narratives.

In the previous section I had discussed the narratives and in the present section I will take the argumentation further by first identifying who are the creators of the narratives and how is the relation between the makers and the narratives.

By the creators of the narratives I mean mostly the institution's ones.

Yes, is true that curators are the main creators or producers of the exhibitions narratives.

However, as in this section only on the pavilions my hypotheses is that those institutions that are part of the exhibitions structural arrangements are willing to be part of it mainly because they can propose some narratives in the context of the Venice Biennale.

As I mention by institutional actors I mean all the institutions that used to be part of the exhibitions structural arrangements.

Those could be the government institutions that were representing the government and are in charge of organizing the attendance, such as the ministers of arts and culture and the embassies of the countries in Italy.

But also the sponsors, the collectors, galleries that represent the artists that will be displayed and the Venetian partners, such as the owners of the exhibition spaces and the those who install it.

However, regarding the exhibition content those that are more relevant when it comes to analyze the relation between the exhibition narratives and the institutional arrangements are those that are involved since the process of the conception of the exhibitions and then are eventually able to influence it.

So, those are the government institutions, the sponsors, galleries and collectors and often are hidden so when it comes to analyze the exhibition are not considered. But how most those institutions are able to influence the exhibition narrative.

It is important to remember that one of the main questions that I aim to address through this research regards the identification of the drives that may explain the crescent numbers of countries and also artists that are attending the Venice biennale.

Indeed, though the analysis of the exhibition narratives is possible to address the two main questions that I aim to ask in the present research.

By structural arrangements of the exhibitions I mean the organizational composition of the exhibitions.

I divide the components or actors that are part of the structural arrangements in two: the institutional actors and the individual actors.

In the present section I will focus on the institutional ones and in the next section I will describe and examine the individual actors.

However, it is important to mention that the narrative is something indispensable in both exhibition making and reception.

However it is important to clarify that here I am not saying that those narratives are always interpreted exactly according to the goals or narratives that are present and diffused within the exhibition.

Indeed, any exhibition as a discourse act is composed of two processes: the encoding and the decoding process.

And specifically in the exhibition context, the encoding corresponds to the process of exhibition making and the decoding of the exhibition reception.

As I had stated elsewhere, analyzing the presentation and representation of arts from sub-Saharan African at the Venice biennale is also useful to understand the participation of countries of the world, even the so-called old attendants.

Because still some of the aspects that are actually hidden in the old attendants are still visible by considering the sub-Saharan countries as a point of view to analyzing the Venice Biennale.

One of these aspects is regarding the institutional composition of the national pavilions that often is not even considered as relevant.

The attendance to the Venice Biennale is an activity that needs a significant amount of money to be possible.

Therefore, in order to materialize it different stakeholders come together to make it possible.

Government Institutions		Private Institutions	
Angola	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of culture and tourism 2. The embassy in Italy 	Kenya	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collective of curators and artists; 2. Organized by Zuecca projects space
South Africa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General consulate in Milan 		
Zimbabwe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Gallery of Zimbabwe 2. Ministry of youth and culture 3. Zimbabwe Tourism Authority 	Nigeria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collective of curators and artists; 2. Sponsors;

In the table above is possible to see the lead institutions behind the pavilions from sub-Saharan African countries that had attended the Venice Biennale at the 57th.

Then returning to the question that guides this section: how are these structural arrangements are able to influence the exhibitions narrative?

Before going further, to find the answer to that question I can recall the table that I had elaborated and published in the last section.

Indeed, from this table is possible to see again the exhibition titles of the exhibitions proposed with the pavilions.

Returning to the first table, or better connecting the data of the table related to the arrangements and the one related to the titles this is the result:

Government Institutions		Private Institutions	
Angola	Magnetic memory/Historical Resonance	Kenya	Another country?
South Africa	Candice Breitz and Mohau Modisakeng	Nigeria	How about now?
Zimbabwe	Deconstructing Boundaries: Exploring ideas of Belonging	Mauritius	Speeded in Nature
		Seychelles	Slowly Quietly
Ivory Coast		The Juice of Time	

The focus on this section was the relation between the exhibitions narratives and the national pavilions institutional structure arrangements.

I had considered as relate it to conduct that analyses as an strategy to try to understand the reasons why the exhibitions narratives created and presented within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Sahara Africa are diverse.

Indeed, as I had described in the section 3.1, four types of exhibitions narratives had emerged. Therefore, it was crucial to understand what that happened?

And, one of my working hypotheses to explain that difference was the one for which I should analyze the relation between the exhibition narratives and the pavilions structural arrangements.

As I had done above in this section, also here could be important to remind that actually the decision to undertake this analyses was inspired or had two theoretical foundations.

The first was the one formulated by Bruce Ferguson, for whom within the exhibitions space could be heard different voices or narratives, mostly from those institutions that had setup the exhibition.

And here, before going further and present the second source of inspiration could be important to recall what I had discussed on the section 3.3 of the present dissertation. So, when I mention institutions I am also including for example the curators as institutional actors.

Therefore they are also included on the institutional matrix that exist behind the exhibitions structure.

Going back to the concluding remarks, the second source of inspiration actually from economic studies and its applied on the analyses of the relation between society and innovation.

According to that perspective the innovation or the adoption of an innovation by an society is strongly influenced by its institutional structural arrangements.

So, by combining this two sources I get the intuition to try to find the explanation of the different exhibitions narratives perspectives presented within the national pavilion of the countries from sub-Sahara Africa at the Venice Biennale.

So, concretely I had analyses the institutional structural arrangements of the pavilions not only by looking for its composition but also by trying to identify who or which institution had played the lead role. And by lead role I meant the one who had the initiative to set up the pavilion.

And, before present the sum up of the results could be relevant to recall the types of institutional structural arrangements that use to characterize the pavilions from sub-Saharan Africa countries at the Venice Biennale.

First are pavilions in which the lead institution are the national government, second the national pavilions that had been setup by western galleries that use to work with the artists

of the countries that is represented. And as mention those pavilions have to have the approval or authorization from the national governments to attend the Venice biennale as an official national pavilion. As third the pavilions in which the commercial representations of the countries play the leadership role. And the last type, the fourth are the one in which the artists and curators from the country had the initiative to setup the pavilion.

And without surprise I had found out that those diverse institutional arrangements often tend to correspond also a different types of the exhibition narratives perspective.

And to summarize the results I can recall the types of the exhibition narratives that I had identified in the section 3. 1.

In the next section I will take further the analyses of the exhibitions narratives by trying to identify what are the sources of those narratives. In other words how those narratives are constructed?

4.3 How the exhibitions narrative are constructed and presented?

The focus of the present section will be the discussion about how the narratives or discourses within the sub-Saharan African countries National Pavilions are constructed.

Specifically about the sources that are used to create those narratives.

This section will be necessarily related to what I had previously discussed on the section 4.1.

However, the present section will be diverse from the first section of this chapter, because the aim here will not be the one to identify the narratives but the one to understand what are the sources that had been used to create those narratives.

In other words, what I had done is try to find out how the exhibitions narratives or discourse had been translated in terms of the exhibition content.

Therefore, the examination that I had undertaken in this section could be framed under the politics of exhibition analyses.

Politics of exhibition because my analyses here will also try to find out why certain sources of narratives and consequently exhibition content had been chosen rather than others. And by exhibition content I mean the artworks included and also the display strategies applied in the exhibitions.

Some of the questions that had guided me are the follow : which art works are include in the exhibitions? How the art works are displayed? Which artists are included in the show? How certain works and artists had been included and other not?

The section is divided into four main parts

First I will discuss about the process of the identification of the sources of the exhibitions narratives.

In the second part I will identify the sources of narratives.

The third part I will reflect on how those sources are translated within the exhibitions.

Finally, the last the fourth part will provide a brief discussion about the reason why certain sources are used rather than others. And this last part of the section will be related to what I had discussed in the section 4.2.

As well as for the other sections the on my argumentation I will consider the overall participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa.

In this section I would like to identify the sources of the narratives

The identification of the sources of the narratives could mean undertaking genealogical analyses of the sources that I used to construct the narratives.

The main task in this section will be the one to try to understand which ideas, concepts, myths, traditions had been used to construct these narratives.

In one hand Identify this sources, will mean going beyond the categories of narratives that eventually are more diverse from, for example the old attendants countries, in the other one of the facts that could emerge is that actually considering the sources that had been used the process of construction of those narratives are in line with the historical origins of the Venice Biennale.

And to identify those sources of narratives I will proceed mainly through a genealogical approach in the Foucault's sense.

The genealogical process will focus on the categories of narratives that I have identified in the last section.

But before that exercise could be useful, here to go beyond the categories of narratives that are regrouping the narratives that are presented with the pavilions of sub-Saharan countries at the Venice biennale.

And that could be undertaken by consider the overall history of the exhibition complex and here I cannot undertake that examination.

To identify the sources of those narratives I will start from the categories of narratives identified in the precedent section and then briefly undertake a genealogical analyses of those categories to trace and to eventually.

After having discussed the source of the narratives another crucial task is to identify how then those categories had been translated within the exhibition space.

And to undertake that I will analyze the relation between the narratives and the curatorial strategies that had been applied to translate them.

Unfortunately here I will circumscribe the examination on the display techniques adopted.

As I had mentioned, to undertake the process of the genealogical analyses of the narratives in order to indent their sources will start by the categories that I had identified in the previous section.

Other relevant point of analyses is try to figure out whom have the power to define which source to follow or use to construct the exhibition narrative.

In the curatorial studies perspectives the exhibition narratives are defined by the curators. But other perspective that may offer other insights is by examining the power relations within the process of decision making are able to influence that process.

And without presenting more details here I can just say that that capacity of influence the curators process may happen through explicit or more not so explicit actions.

For example, an explicit influence may happen through a negotiation with the curator and the budget issues may be used as a less explicit strategy.

The genealogical analyses of the categories is also useful to identify how the narratives had been constructed.

I could had used the discourse analyses to analyze and identify the exhibitions narratives but in my opinion the rhetorical analysis is not able to constitute an epistemological repeatable process as it is strongly embedded and influenced by the researcher

background so in order to avoid a certain ambiguity I had choose to proceed though the categories.

Other approach that I could had used to analyze the narratives could be the discourse analyses.

And the process that I had used here, inspired by grounded theory vocabulary I termed it as the saturation of the categories approach.

And is other aspect that could be very important to mention here and somehow also remind the readers is the fact that even the individuation of the relevant research questions to address was somehow influenced by the grounded theory approach.

As I mentioned early I will start the analyses of the exhibition narratives through the exhibition themes.

I justify that choice by my understanding of the themes of the exhibitions as a summary of what fully is the exhibition narrative.

In addition the title is one of the most visible parts of the discursive dimension of the exhibitions.

In my interpretation one of the main factors that influences the exhibition narratives are the goals of the actors that are part of the exhibition or national pavilions structural arrangements , in the case of the present dissertation.

Another important issue that is important to address is how those exhibition narratives are dealing with the old narratives about the African arts and Africa as a continent in general.

Some of those metaphors are the one of primitivism as a counterpoint on modernity. And even if the postmodern conduction caused the end of grand narratives such as the modernity,

How do those pavilions or exhibitions address that issue? Are the presence of those pavilions able to advance the end of the effectiveness of the primitivism as metaphor through which the African Art production is interpreted? How?

As I had discussed in the last section one my hypotheses is that the exhibition narratives are influenced by the exhibition structural arrangements.

By understanding how those narratives are constructed it is also possible to understand who the what are the audiences of the exhibitions. And about the audiences I will discuss in the next section.

This section had as aim the one to identify the sources of the exhibitions narratives that had been presented within the national pavilions of the sub-Saharan countries at the Venice Biennale.

In other words what was used to construct the narratives and discourses presented though the exhibitions?

And to take further the investigation, once I had identified the sources I had tried to understand how then this sources had been translated and presented with the exhibitions in order to create the narratives.

To conduct that investigation one practical example though which I had addressed the questions question presented above was to try to identify the display techniques that had been adopted and which art works had been included in the exhibitions.

And as I did in the previous analyses I had focus not in all but in some of the exhibitions that had been organized.

And for practical reasons what I did was to consider the examples that I used in the previews sections, in term of exhibitions, and then in this section expand the analyses, this time by trying to find out the sources of the narratives.

And consider that I had previously identified and discussed about the types of narratives that used to be proposed within those pavilions, specifically what I had done was to try to trace back from them until the source or sources that had been used.

Somehow this exercise was a sort of an archeological analyses of the narratives in a Foucault sense.

Regarding the sources, as I had mentioned in the previous sections one important sources of those narratives, at least in part is the themes of the editions proposed by the artistic director, mainly known as the curator.

Indeed, as I had mentioned somewhere in the present dissertation, some national pavilions use to create their exhibition theme by constructing a sort of dialogue with the edition theme.

Therefore, one of the facts that had emerged from my examination was the fact that, in this case a confirmation that the edition is one of the most frequent source of the narratives. However, often the narratives are constructed or created by applying multiple sources, so the edition theme is used to be one of those.

For example for the identity based narratives often the sources are combined between the Venice edition theme and some myths or ideologies that had been or are still being used on the process of national building.

That saying,

That saying, not only confirms the fact that the ideas and discourse that could be classified under the postcolonial perspective are often used as source of the narratives, but at same time the adequacy of the conception of the Venice Biennale as a global arena is which discourses are searching for attention.

Deducing from the types of narratives that I had previously discussed and combine with the themes of the exhibitions others sources of the narratives are the international trends

in the art world. The artistic trends are used to be applied mainly on those pavilions on which the lead institutions are the private galleries.

Another significant source, even that also those could be classified as identity based narratives, those in which the sources are some art practices that are considered as being original of the country that propose them. Or where it is applied in a significant manner. Considered the diversity and sometimes the specificity of the sources that use to be applied to construct the exhibitions narratives, as well as I had indicated regarding the narratives could be relevant to examine the sources in relation to the Venice biennale audiences.

Therefore, in the next section I will discuss about how those exhibitions are received by the Venice biennale audiences. But before I will try to identify first who are the audience of those exhibitions.

4.4 What are the impact of these narratives? African arts exhibitions narratives for whom: local or international narratives

In the last section of this chapter I will be discussing about the audience of the National Pavilions exhibitions, in a broad sense.

And as well as for other sections the discussion here will be guided by some specific questions that are presented below: who are the audiences of those pavilions? The local one, mean those from the country or the transnational one, to use the term suggested by Okwui Enwezor? And if the local and the transnational one are considered as audiences how the need to address both audiences are managed?

And most importantly how those exhibitions are received, reviewed and interpreted by the authoritative art critical journals?

By authoritative journals I mean those journals that had acquire a certain reputation and are able to legitimize certain discourse and art practices

Specifically related to the reception of the exhibitions are those from the National Pavilions of countries from sub-Saharan Africa get reviewed by the authoritative art journals? How there are reviewed? Or if that is the case why there are not reviewed?

Connected to that issue the step further could be the discussion about the relevance of the Venice Biennale attendance regarding the eventual goal to be incorporated in the international art circuit. So an additional question could be: is it enough to be displayed in the Venice Biennale to be incorporated in the international art market?

However, before I start it is important to clarify that in examination I will not be using an approach that could be linked to the reception theory.

Indeed, my analyses here will be mainly focus on how certain narratives and art works are translated within the exhibition and how then there are interpreted.

In this exercise will apply some tools from art criticism and phenomenological analyses of exhibitions.

The first step in this section will be the one related to the identification of the audiences of those exhibitions. And this effort will have as a start point the narratives that I had discussed in the section 4.1.

It will follow the second part in which I will discuss about how the authoritative art journal cover the African participation at the Venice Biennale.

After had discussed how the mainstream art journals cover those countries national pavilions the third step, will be to examine the factors that play a significant role on this process of exhibition reception and media coverage.

The last part of this section, the fourth, will in one hand take further the discussion that I had started at the section 4.2 and in the other anticipate what will be one of the main goals of the chapter 5. Indeed, to conclude this chapter I will briefly illustrate how the countries are adopting diverse strategies when it comes to the definition of the audiences of their exhibitions within the national pavilions.

So, what influences the way through which the exhibitions with the national pavilions from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale are received.

Therefore, considering the exhibition narratives, the present section I will discuss how those exhibitions are received by the Venice biennale audiences.

The approach that I will use here to understand how those exhibitions have been received will be by analyzing the exhibitions reviews.

Here I will specifically focus on those reviews that are published by the mainstream art journals during the open week.

Focus on these exhibitions is relevant because often the aim of those reviews is to produce an overall understanding of the La Biennale edition.

As I mentioned in the introduction of this section, and by connecting with the previous sections, at this point of my argumentation one crucial question is to try to understand

how those narratives that are processed in the national pavilions of countries from sub-Saharan Africa are received.

This question could be acquired also by asking the following question: what are the impacts of those narratives?

However, regarding the audience's reception is important to have in mind that there are at least two types of audiences for most of the international art shows like the Venice biennale.

The expert audience, mainly composed by the Art practitioners and other components of the art world and the not experts audiences the ones that are attending the biennale mostly not during the open days.

But the crucial thing is not only recognize that difference but also beware that often the experts' audiences are able to influence on the ways how the not expert audiences will experience the exhibition mainly on what they will see, meaning which pavilion they will visit.

But on the other hand the newcomer countries, such as those from sub-Saharan Africa and not only continue to follow somehow the foundational paradigm of the Venice biennale.

One way to measure the impact of the exhibitions could be by finding out how those exhibitions had been reviewed by the mainstream art journals.

In most of the cases, as I have already mentioned elsewhere, often the exhibitions or the national participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa are not covered by those journals.

To identify the journals I had consulted the Venice archive to identify which journals used to be collected in the box related to press articles.

From the articles and journals collected in the archive I choose the journals to see their must see list for the editions that I consider on the time frame the present research.

However, as the trend is almost similar for most of the editions here's will consider some editions where I consider that some exceptions happened.

Also I have to mention that I am aware of the fact that there are some public relation agencies that are contracted by the pavilions in order to have some articles or media coverage made about their participation in the Venice Biennale. Fortunately that type of coverage happens and is published after the open week and pavilions are covered exclusively in one article.

As I had started to discuss the exhibition does not get reviewed mainly because the reviews made by the mainstream journals mostly are focused on the pavilions that are located within the Venice biennale main venues.

So, those National Pavilions that are located outside the main are not covered.

Another very important aspect that could be added for that absence from the newspapers pages is the fact that the exhibitions that are located outside the Venice Biennale main venues often get less visitors if compared from those that are going to the main venues. Considering these two aspects could be crucial to ask if it is relevant for those pavilions that are located outside the main venues?

Here could be relevant to emphasize the fact that those pavilions are not only from the countries from sub-Saharan Africa, but from only the countries that in this dissertation I had considered as the Newcomers.

And again, just to avoid misunderstandings, as newcomers I termed all those countries that had started to attend the Venice biennials since 1990.

For the case of the exhibitions at the Venice Biennale, could be said the goal of exhibitions are related to the narratives that could be heard within the exhibition space. However, as I have already stated the goals are not exclusively those materialized through the exhibitions narratives.

Consider the fact that the visitors, even the art practitioners, as the case of the art critics, have a limited time to visit all the national pavilions and parallel exhibitions that are part of each edition.

And this is becoming more relevant considering the fact that each edition the number of national pavilions are increasing.

What had emerged from my analysis is an absence or an invisibility of the sub-Saharan African countries participation.

Considering how the exhibitions narratives are constructed, another relevant issue to discuss is regarding how the expectations of the local and the transnational audiences are negotiated.

One important aspect that may play a certain role on how those exhibitions are received are the expectation that the audiences have in regards to the exhibitions at the Venice Biennale.

For the Art practitioners exhibitions in which the narratives that are proposed are openly nationalistic or identity based are often not well received also because the idea of nation-state was one of those that the postmodern theory had challenged. And as I have discussed previously, the incorporation of the sub-Saharan Africa arts to the Venice Biennale was influenced by the hegemonic status that the theory gained in the arts and cultural field.

Another aspect that may influence the way how the exhibitions are received is the location of the pavilions and the fact that the countries are not attending the Venice Biennale on a regular basis.

In an art history perspective what is the purpose of the exhibitions?

How can I access the meaning of exhibitions from an art history perspective?

Why is it important to examine those exhibitions by having in consideration the meaning of exhibitions in an art historian perspective?

Indeed, to conclude this chapter I will briefly illustrate how the countries are adopting diverse strategies when it comes to the definition of the audiences of their exhibitions within the national pavilions.

More than analyzing how those exhibitions are critically reviewed here my task will be to find out if those national participation are even mentioned in the overall edition exhibition review.

The review that is often that is often entitle as the "must see pavilions of the edition"

because I think that those exhibitions are not only a judgment about how the exhibitions are considered by an expert visitor and therefore are able to influence how and to which pavilions the non-expert audience will visit first. This is more effective to the pavilions that are located outside the Venice Biennale main venues. And that is the case of most of the pavilions from sub-Saharan African countries.

On the last section I had taken further the examination of the exhibitions proposed on the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice biennale.

Considering the fact that some of those exhibitions use to be constructed by applying identity based narratives, it was relevant to interrogate about who are the audiences of those exhibitions.

Therefore, the main focus of these section had been the discussion about the audiences of those exhibitions.

Has I was not able to go beyond theoretical speculation about the issue I had therefore strategically carefully analyzed how those exhibitions used to be reviewed by the authoritative art journals.

From the analyses that I had conducted had emerged the fact that there is a potential tension between the topics and practices that are indicated to the local audiences and those that are familiar to the transnational audiences.

It is important to clarify once again here the fact that by local audiences I mean the ones from the country that is represented through the National pavilion.

However, taking further the analyses of those exhibitions, here I referring exclusively of those that present identity based narratives, other relevant aspect that could be found out by analyzing those exhibitions is the fact that often they could be classified as being more a sort of country branding than an art exhibition.

Often that is the case of the exhibitions presenting on the first attendance, one of the example of that practices was the case of the first national pavilion of Mozambique that I had briefly described and discussed on the chapter 1.

Other important fact that had emerged from the examination that I had conducted is the fact that often, mainly the identity based exhibitions, end up adopting some practices and discourses that had been originated on the ethnographic and anthropological museums.

And it's important to remind that those practices, used on those types of museums, had been criticized by blame them to essentialize the identity of the people and cultures that used to the represented. But how those practices could be interpreted when there are used for those who have criticized it?

However, on the other hand those exhibition practice and narratives could be also framed as an intention to regain the agency and right to create and control the narratives that are produced about the own country.

Therefore, those narratives and the overall exhibitions approach could be also interpreted under the postcolonial lens.

Had arrived to this point, consider that fact that there other types of exhibitions narratives, entry on the main issue under investigation I had adopted the following questions: who are the audience(s) of the Venice Biennale? How those audience(s) could related to the identity based narratives and other that use to be presented though the exhibitions within the national pavilions of sub-Saharan African countries? And lastly how those exhibitions are interpreted or reviewed?

And, as I mentioned before, as I was not able to conduct interviews to a significant sample of the Venice biennale visitors, to acquire the answer the question presented above, used as a point of entry the reviews that are written by some of the authoritative and mainstream art journals.

On View

The 10 Absolute Best National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale

From Ghana's star-studded debut to Lithuania's delightful and chilling opera about climate change, here's what you won't want to miss.

Artnet News, May 10, 2019

The focus of this chapter was the exhibitions narratives within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

It is important to remind that I had decided to focus on the exhibition narratives because one of my working hypotheses was the one in which I affirm that the reason why an increasing number of countries from sub-Saharan Africa are attending the Venice Biennale is exactly related to the possibility to be able to create and reproduce narratives that interests the countries.

Therefore, I had first identified the type of the exhibitions narratives that are created and reproduced within the national pavilions from the countries from sub-Saharan Africa. This was a process of decoding and identification of meaning of the narratives.

From that examination one of the main facts that had emerged from that examination is the induction that the dominant "voice" that could be heard within the pavilions is the one related to identity issues. And is very interesting that this narratives could be perceived as the country self-branding.

But going further, I had also realized that this practices had a long historical reasons and foundations that could be traced back on the process of emancipation of those countries and the fact that until now there are fight to create new identities and to eliminate colonial

narratives about them. Therefore one of the main sources that are used to create and invent those narratives are the historical ones. However, it could be relevant to investigate the fact that how somehow, also those new brands or narratives are also capable to be as well what I called as narratives of exclusion.

And this capacity of these narratives to produce, unexpected or undesirable effects, as form of exclusion in the local contexts, had influenced me to discuss about who are the audience of exhibitions within the national pavilions of the sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale. The local, meaning those who in the country or the transnational one, how the audiences of the international large-scale exhibitions was defined by Okwui Enwezor?

From the analyses that I did had emerged that both the local and the transnational audiences are often the audiences, mainly within those pavilions in which the artists included are based in their home country.

And from this tension between the local and the transnational audiences I had went further and then I had analyses how those exhibitions are covered by the some of the mainstream authoritative art journals.

From that analyses what had emerged was the fact that those pavilions are often not considered by those journals.

That indications is easily observable on the common practices that those journals have to indicate or create a list of the pavilions that the visitors much see of each editions. Often the pavilions from sub-Saharan African countries are not included in that list. From that observation one future research question could be the follow: is it enough to attend the Venice Biennale to be incorporated in the international art market or discourse?

But going back to the present chapter, as it had happened with the previous chapters, some topics that I had started to cover in the presented will be expanded in the next chapter.

Indeed, the issue related to the pavilions structural arrangements and the exhibitions narratives will be examined on the next chapter, in a more detailed manner.

In that occasion it will possible to realize how the different national pavilions structural arrangements leads to a different exhibition narrative.

And by structural arrangements, is important to emphasize once again, I understand here not only all the actors that are compositing it but also the lead institution or lead figure in case of curators.

So, as I had discussed in the present chapter, also in the next chapter I will try to illustrate how lead institution of the pavilion is able to determine the " national pavilion performance."

V. The patterns of the African National Pavilions (Case studies)

“Because exhibitions function across multiple dimensions, linking individuals and object that play diverse roles within many complex networks, the attempt to formulate a rigorous system of comparison seems futile.”¹³¹

The chapter that beginnings here will be important to answer one of the main question of the present dissertation meanly the one that aim to understand <<How the countries from the sub-Saharan Africa are attending the Venice Biennale?>>

In intended to answer that question my awareness was to try find out the better way to address it in a manner that I could not only present an answer that but at simultaneously be able to acquire the significant features of the phenomenon under observation.

Therefore, I decided to conduct some case studies.

As I had explained elsewhere on the chapter 2, the one in which I have discussed about the methodological apparatus of the present dissertation, I choose to focus on those countries primarily due to the official language adopted by them, what is consequently connected to their the colonial past. Indeed, my hypotheses is that, though linguistic and post-colonial networks does countries have different source of where their can get knowledge and support to materialize their participation to the Venice Biennale.

So, the languages considered are: Portuguese, France, English that are respectively linked to the former colonizers Portugal, France and United Kingdom.

¹³¹ Altshuler 2010/11:12

Then follow that main criteria, other aspect that was relevant on the process of choosing the countries to focus on was the one related to the countries had to be attended to the Venice Biennale, at least two times.

So I end up by deciding to focus on the national participation of Angola, Kenya, Ivory Coast and South Africa. As you can realize I had included two English speaker countries also because the a those that attending in a more numbers.

The last criterium on those selection process was the one related to the theoretical relevance of the countries attendance. So for Angola the fact the country own at its first participation was determinant, the Kenya its exhibition format and the fact that it was cancelled at the 56 edition of the Venice Biennale, the Ivory Coast way not it is not visible, at least among the African participates and the last South Africa, how a country show its self after the apartheid regime? How its related to the existence of Johannesburg Biennale?

However, it important to clarify that the comparative case study that I had undertalented was not guided by a classificatory perspective, meaning to identify which pavilion perform better than other, but to better understand why the pavilions have different performance and how it may related to the structural arrangements that supports the pavilions existence. And by identifying those different features my hypotheses is that somehow I will be describing the patterns that characterize the sub-Saharan African participation to the Venice Biennale.

Countries

One thing that could be important to reaffirm, at this point, is that the comparative perspective had been, since the first draft of the of the research proposal, consider as a methodological strategy to adopt because I believe that by conducting an comparative

case study is possible is possible to have a significant picture of the phenomenon under observation. So, I started by propose e comparison between different types of exhibitions of African arts in some western mainstream institutions to end up by focusing on different pavilions at the Venice Biennale.

The National Pavilions was the last comparative formats because on the research process I realized that all the actors that are involved in an type of exhibition, in different venues and format are by the end also involved, with different degrees, on the exhibitions that are presented through national pavilions.

So, this chapter is organized in four sections each devoted to one of the four countries selected.

On the first section I will be discussing the participation of Angola, that as all the countries considered is a singular case, but on the case of Angola the drive aim is to try to understand why on its first participation at the Venice Biennale Angola it wined the Golden Lion for the best national pavilion?

The second section I will be discussing the Kenya National pavilion, and again an particular one because one of the main initiators and patrons of the pavilion was an Italian artists and business man that use to be based in Kenya for main years. And for the first two attendance is had directed the pavilion and one of the salient features was the one that saw some Chinese artists included on the show. But with same structure in 2015 the pavilion was cancelled due to the protest of Kenyan artists and curators that had tried to setup the pavilion in 2017. So why that happened?

And it interested to noticed that how Italian actors in the countries that end up attending the venice biennale use to play a very significant role. Why not remember that for example the San Paolo biennale was created by an Italian migrant based in brazil. Why that connection is necessary?

The third case will be the Ivory Coast, similarly to the Kenya pavilion, one of the pavilion main initiators is an Italian national, this case the consul of ivory coast in Italy so it also have an a Italian connection. In addition each participation within the exhibition one non-national artists is included in the show. So why the inclusion of non-national artists was a problem for the Kenya pavilion and not in the Ivory Coast one?

The last case described and discussed will be the south-African national pavilion. This is one of few African countries that use to attend the venice biennale even before the 1990. It was under the apartheid regime and at certain point due to the international boycott the country was not allowed to setup the pavilion. Then right after the begging of the post-apartheid south Africa the country returned to the venice biennale with a permanent present at the Arsenale. So, how was to South African being back to La Biennale after the abolition of apartheid and stat of a new project of national building?

So, those four case studies will be described and discussed in order to acquire a better understanding of the Sub-Saharan African participation to the Venice Biennale.

I would like to remind that my main aim through this chapter is to be able to highlight the several factors and actors that influences the national pavilion exhibitions and to and discuss about how the structural arrangements affects the country attendance.

So let's start.

5.1 The Angola national pavilion: the miracle of oil

5.2 The Kenya National Pavilion: The international stage as a mirror?

5.3 The Ivory Coast National Pavilion: in a silence way.

5.4 The South Africa National Pavilion: how art can play a role in post-apartheid country?

The language issue was also visible for example by looking for the first two exhibitions that had been organized as the strategy to incorporate the arts from the sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, those exhibitions had been focus first on two English speak countries, Zimbabwe and Nigeria, at the 44th edition in 1990 and the successive two France speak countries, meanly Ivory Coast and Senegal, in 45th edition in 1993.

5.1 The Angola national pavilion: the miracle of oil

In this first section of the present chapter I will focus the analyses on the Angola National Pavilion.

As well as to the successive case studies, the Angolan pavilion was chosen because it had satisfied the criterions that had guided the selection of the countries to focus on.

As I have already discussed one of those criterions was the linguistic one, specifically the country official language, therefore, Angola represents the sub-Saharan African country in which the Portuguese is the official language. So, Angola is a former Portuguese colony.

However, in the case of Angola, in addition to the main the general elements, another aspect that had influence its inclusion, maybe the most theoretically relevant, was related to the fact that, in its first attendance, in 2013 for the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale. Indeed, in that occasion, Angola won the golden lion for the best country participation. Therefore, consider that fact one of the questions that I will discuss in the present section aims to understand how it was possible? And to make that question become more complex in order to capture the full picture of that event, it can be expressed in other words as follows: How a country from sub-Saharan Africa in its first participation was able to win the golden lion?

And to that restatement of the question, another significant fact could be add. Here I am referring to the location of the pavilion.

Indeed, the Angola pavilion on that edition, as well as in its all successive participations, was located outside the Venice Biennale official venues. So, how a pavilion that is located outside the main venues could on the Golden lion for the best country participation?

And to better understand the inquiry, other questions could be added, such as: It was at its first time that one pavilion located outside the official venues won the golden lion? And what was the mean to the Venice biennale the fact that a country from sub-Saharan Africa located outside the main venues won the golden lion for the best country participation of the edition?

So, in this section I will seek address those and other crucial question in order to identify the main aspects that had been characterized the Angola attendance to the Venice biennale. From its first participation, that was in 2013 until 2017.

Before start the argumentation I can anticipate that another theoretically significant feature that increases the relevance of the to the Angola as a case study, is the fact that the pavilions is managed directly by the national government.

Regarding the data, as well as for the most analyses undertaken in the present dissertation, the data though which I will base my argumentation about the Angolan participation had been acquired though archival research and exhibition catalogues.

However, related to the data is important to mention that as countries like Angola had started to attend the biennale only recently, if I compare with the old attendants therefore there not so much data available about those countries.

Fortunately, I was able to use other sources of data such some international mainstream art newspapers and also the locals newspapers. And for local newspapers I mean newspapers published in Angola.

Also, even if I will not use here is important to mention that I had conducted some interviews with some key informants and one of those was Antonio Ole.

However, due to the time constrains I was not able to use that material for the present dissertation. I hope that I may do it in near future.

So going back to the introduction to the section.

The discussion here will structure as follows:

On the first part of this section I will describe the chronological trajectory of the Angola participation to the Venice Biennale.

On the second parts I will focus on the analyses of some aspects that had characterized the participation of this country in terms of the structural arrangements of the pavilion.

However related to this aspect I can anticipate the fact that Angola pavilion is organized directly by the government, though the ministry of culture mediated by the Angola embassy in Italy. So, what are the implication?

Successively, on the third step of examination of the Angola participation I will describe and analyze the exhibition narratives that used to be proposed edition after edition. And here I may seek to understand how the voices within the exhibitions are related to the pavilion structural arrangements.

The last part of the argumentation in this section will address some other relevant issues that are crucial to understanding the Angola participation.

One of those aspects will be the curatorial strategies adopted, specifically in terms of artists and art works displayed.

I will start the case study analysis of the Angola participation by presenting its chronology of attendance to the Venice Biennale.

On the table below the data related to the Angola attendance within the time frame considered in this dissertation, from 1990 to 2017. Once again it is important to remember that Angola won the Golden Lion for the Best National pavilion on its first participation.

Year	Title	Commissaire(s)	Curators	Artists	Location
2013	Angola - Luanda, Encyclopedic City	Ministero della Cultura della Repubblica dell'Angola	Paula Nascimento, Stefano Rabolli Pansera, Jorge Gumbe.	(1) Edson Chagas	Palazzo Cini, Dorsoduro 864, San Vio
2015	On ways of travelling	Ministero della Cultura della Repubblica dell'Angola	Antonio Ole and Antonia Gaeta	(1) Binelde Hyrcan; (2) Délio Jasse; (3) António Ole; (4) Nelo Teixeira; (5) Francisco Vidal.	Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello - Palazzo Pisani, San Marco 2810
2017	Magnetic Memory/Historical Resonance	Carolina Cerqueira	Silvia Antonio Ole, Maria da Silva de Oliveira and Paulo Kussy Correia Fernades	(1) António Ole	Fondamenta degli incurabile, Dorsoduro 557(Zattere)

Table 5.1. Chronology of **Angola** attendance to La Biennale from 1990 to 2017

The Angola pavilion used to propose an exhibition narrative that somehow is in line with the hegemonic discourses and practices that characterizes the a dominate the global art world hegemonic discourses and practices.

It seems that the curators and artists with this attitude pretend to fit in certain senses to the international art scene.

This claim can be seen by analysing the some of the exhibitions proposed with this pavilion Considering that in its first participation the pavilion was awarded with the best pavilion prize it is plausible that I focus the analyses on this exhibition.

It is important to remember that the first Angolan attendance to the Venice Biennale happened in 2013, the 55th edition of the Venice Biennale.

Title of the exhibition with the Angola pavilions was....and the theme of the La Biennale edition was The Encyclopedic Palace and the curator was Massimiliano Gioni. Angola is the only Portuguese speaking country from the sub-Saharan Africa that

The pavilion was established and is organized by the Angolan government through the ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Indeed, the minister is the pavilion commissioner.

However, the Angolan pavilion in Rome plays an important role as the intermediary between the Angolan government and La Biennale.

Behind the Angola participations, besides the ministry and the embassy in Rome there are Angolan enterprises that supported the pavilion with the financial resources.

Those enterprises such as the Angolan petroleum company, Sonagol and some banks.

The most interesting thing is that those enterprises are used to support the commitments related to the Angola contemporary arts at the Venice Biennale.

Actually those enterprises had started to evolved at La Biennale and to support the Angolan contemporary arts, since the Exhibition Check-List Luanda Pop.

The exhibition narrative that

It is not possible to talk about a unique or singular exhibition narrative that use to be presented within the Angolan pavilion edition after edition the art practitioners involved on the exhibitions change.

Indeed, for each edition new curators and artists are involved in the process.

however there is a sort of trend regarding the exhibitions narratives.

Another important aspect that characterize the Angolan pavilion is the fact that



Figure 5.1
Installation
within the
**Angolan
pavilion** at the
54th edition of
La Biennale.
Photo from
ASAC archive.
AU. Italo
Rondinella.

Through the analyses that I had conducted above it was possible to examine how the Angolan government by its minister of culture had used the national pavilion at the Venice biennale.

Indeed, as I had shown above, the national pavilion and its exhibitions had been a sort of tool to promote the narrative about the country's ongoing process of reconstruction and modernization.

Once again, it is important to mention the fact that when Angola started to attend the biennale it was in a period in which the country was experiencing consistent economic growth. That growth was derived by the increased demand of the country's natural resources, specifically oil.

This growth of the Angola economy had produced and enriched a local elite and had improved the country's global reputation.

And was eventually that local elite that had played a significant role in influencing the government to set up the national pavilion at the Venice biennale.

Indeed, it important to mention, as I had recalled above, in 2007, the collector and philanthropist Sindika Dokolo had organized a collateral exhibition on which his collection was displayed.

The exhibition was entitled "Check-List Luanda Po" on which many artworks made by Angolan contemporary artists had been displayed for the first time at the Venice biennale.

That exhibition had the Angola government as one of the main sponsors. The first Angola pavilion at the Venice biennale was established in 2013. Supresily, on its first participation Angola became the first country from sub-Saharan Africa that was ward-winning as the best country national participation of the 45th edition of the Venice biennale.

At that exhibition and also on the successive ones Angola had promoted a narrative that was mainly focused on the process of the reconstruction of the country under the modernization lens.

About the Angola participation the other aspect that could be relevant to mention here is the role played by Antonio Ole first as an artist and as curator.

5.2 The Kenya national pavilion: The international stage as a mirror?

The second case study that will be analysed is the Kenya National Pavilion.

A part from the fact that the country had satisfied the selection criterion that had guided me on the process of selection of the countries to focus on the case study analyses, other factors had also influenced that choice.

Indeed, I choose to focus on the Kenya national pavilion as one of the case studies also because in its third participation in 2015, its participation was cancelled by the national government.

So, my hypothesis is that, though that episode could possibly have to have a significant picture about the pavilion's structural arrangements and how the actors that are part of it are working together.

Indeed, as I have discussed in section 3.2, one of the crucial aspects related to the pavilion's structural arrangements is related to <<who, (institution or individual) have the ultimate word>> that could be translated also as how the power relation operates within that structure.

In this introduction, I can anticipate the cancellation happened due to protest to the fact that more than half part of the artists that was supposed to be displayed in the exhibition was not Kenyan national.

So, one of the discussions that I would like to undertake in this section aims to understand why it was a problem? And even if for sure I will not have enough time to address it, why not think about that fact as a transposition of the actual composition of the local Kenyan economy?

That is why on the title of this section I had used the idea of the Venice participation as the mirror of the actual country structure.

To mean that the participation not only reflects the countries relevant discourses, though the exhibition narratives, but also other important dimensions such as the economic one, though the pavilions the curatorial strategies, to not mention the structural the actors behind the exhibition.

In line of what I had just mention, it is important to mention that another most significant aspect that characterizes the Kenya participation is related to how the pavilion is organized and managed.

Indeed, since its first participation in 2003, it was organized by Armando Tanzini, an Italia national based in Kenya. So, related to that aspect here I can anticipate that it was set up as a result of a private initiative.

And consider what I have just mentioned one question that automatically arises is: why the Kenya national pavilion had been an private initiative and not the governmental one? As long the oboe question is related the pavilion structural arrangements, another question that I will address is why the government, in the 2015 had cancelled its recognition of the official legitimacy of the pavilion?

Going back to the criterion that guided the countries inclusion on the case study analyses it is important to remind that Kenya have as one of the official languages English, what means that the country was a British colony. And actually as some other former colonies is part of the commonwealth countries.

And since its first participation, in 2003, it's had attended sporadically to the successive editions of the Venice Biennale.

As to the other section, I will based my argumentation of the data collected though the research on the Venice biennale archive and exhibition catalogue.

And related to the 2015 edition I had consulted also some international mainstream art journals where I had the statement of the actors that had made pressure to the government in order to cancel the participation.

As for the case of Angola, also for Kenya I did some interviews of some key informants

In addition for the Kenya pavilion, in 2015 and 2017, I had visited the exhibition and for the 2017 I had attended the opening ceremony of the pavilion.

Before going further another think that I have to clarify is the fact despite the cancellation as an official pavilion the exhibition that was supposed to be of the Kenya national pavilion had been displayed for the all duration of the Venice biennale.

By knowledge that maybe an question that can quickly emerge is : how and why that happened? I hope the be able to address that question in the follow lines

So, the examination of the Kenya National pavilion will be organized as follows:

On the first phase of this section I will describe and discuss about the chronological trajectory of the Kenya participation to the Venice Biennale.

On the second phase of my argumentation I will examine the pavilion structural arrangements and other related issues such as for example why even the pavilion was cancelled as an official pavilion the exhibition went further?

Successively on the third phase I will analyze the exhibitions narratives that use to be proposed within the Kenya national pavilion. And consider the fact that in 2017 the pavilion had changed the structural arrangements could be relevant to analyses what had changed, in anything, compare to the previous participations.

To conclude, on the fourth phase, I will discuss about some other relevant aspects related to the curatorial strategies that had been adopted within the pavilion edition after edition.

I will start the case study analysis of the Kenya participation by presenting the chronology of the countries attendance to the Venice Biennale.

I had included on the table the 2015 attendance that was cancelled because one of the main points which examine the Kenya case is by trying to understand why that cancellation happened.

Year	Title	Commissaire(s)	Curators	Artists	Location
2003		Ugo Simonetti	Armando Tanzini	(1)Richard Onyango and Armando Tanzini	Arsenale, ex Mensa
2011	Reflective Nature # a new primary enchanting sensitivity	Paola Poponi	Sandro Orlandi and Paola Poponi	(1)Wenling Chen; (2) Fan Bo, (3)Zhengjie Feng; (4)He Weiming; (5)Li Wei ; Liu Ke; (6)Lu Peng; (7)Luo Ling; (8)Kivuthi Mbuno; (9)César Augusto Meneghetti; (10)Armando Tanzini; (11)Chrispus Wangombe Wachira	Caserma Cornoldi, Castello 4142 e Isola di San Servolo
2015		Participation was canceled before the exhibition started			
2017	Another Country	Kiprop Lagat	Jimmy Ogonga	(1)Peterson Kamwathi; (2)Richard Kimathi, (3)Mwangi Hutter; (4) Paul Onditi; (5) Arlene Wandera.	Ex. Scuola Palladio, Giudecca 373

Table 5.2. Chronology of **Kenya** attendance to La Biennale from 1990 to 2017

From the situation created on the third Kenya attendance two dimensions of the Venice Biennale had been confirmed, namely the Venice Biennale as a public arena and as a space in which "desire and demand, reciprocal sacrifice and power interact to create economic value, to use (Appadurai, 1986,4).

Indeed, as I have discussed elsewhere many artists desire to be displayed in the Venice Biennale in order to increase the value of their art works.

by being displayed at the Venice Biennale is an biographical episode that is able to have an effect on the trajectory of the artists career.

Attending the Biennale is in the interests of private actors and art practitioners.

The Kenya government directly is not interested to attend the Venice Biennale but the private actors and art practitioners, to mean curators and artists are.

Indeed, when an artist mentions that he or she was displayed at La Biennale, no one asks how? and where? because it could make a difference.

This practice of not asking where and how the work was displayed could be interpreted as "commodity fetishism" as it was well defined by Karl Marx.

So, what matters is only to mention that one was displayed in the Venice Biennale to hope that though an automatic transference the symbolic meaning and historical significance powers the biographical dimension of the art work or to the artists trajectory.

The Kenya case shows that not all governments are interested in attending the Venice Biennale. So in acquiring that fact to better understand it the question that could be posed is the following: Why are some countries' governments interested in attending La Biennale and others do not?

Maybe that was the reason why the Kenya curators for the 57th edition attendance and proposed an exhibition which the titled was "Another Country"



Figure 5.2 Paul Onditi
Painting within the
Kenya pavilion at the
57th edition of *La*
Biennale. Photo from the
pavilion website.



Figure 5.3 Display of some paintings made by **Paul Onditi Painting** within the Kenya pavilion at the 57th edition of *La Biennale*. Photo from the pavilion website.

Since its first attendance the Kenya national pavilion was characterized as being an initiative guided by the Italian entrepreneur and also art that was based in the country for so many years.

His name was Armando Tanzini. It is important to remember that, in 2003, the Kenya first attendance to the Venice Biennale, Tanzini had been the exhibition curator and one of the artists displayed.

At that time the title of the exhibition was....

As I had discussed above Kenya since its first participation had struggled to have a consistent and coherent exhibition narrative

Indeed, due to the Tanzini's influence it was characterized by an effort to use the artworks and the exhibition narratives to show what was supposed to be the true Kenyan art.

This orientation as i already mentioned was influenced by the Tanzini western centered ideas about what Kenian art work was supposed to be.

In addition to the discourses around the authenticity, the pavilion was organized as a sort of Tanzini private initiative.

As well-known from 1995 edition countries without their own pavilion at the Giardini biennale are supposed or had the autonomy to choose their venue of the pavilion around Venice.

So, consider the amount necessary to rent the space and also to cover other organizational and logistical needs associated with the La Biennale attendance.....

So, as practices in other pavilions as to other pavilions Italian art practitioners use to have the initiative to organize the countries participation as an business oriented initiative

Therefore, to reduce the cost and make the "Grand Empresa" that the attendance to the Venice Biennale means, often they decide to include some foreign artist who will pay to be part of the show.

There are speculations that those artists pay that amount because in exchange they will have the opportunity to have a new significant voce to include in their curriculum.

It seems that after an eventual attendance to the Venice biennale is able to increase the price of the art works made by those artists.

So once again the role of Venice Biennale as a commodification place returns once again.

Indeed, as I have discussed above it seems that it is also that commodification nature of La biennale that is one of the factors that may explain the increased number of artists and countries that desire to attend the Venice Biennale.

5.3 The Ivory Coast National Pavilion: in a silence way.

The third country participation that will be object of the case study analysis will the Ivory Coast national pavilion.

I choose to examine though the case study analyses Ivory Coast participation first, because it is one of the few countries from sub-Sahara Africa that have French as official language that use to attend the Venice biennale, more than one time.

The other aspect that had drove my choice was the fact that in a certain sense I can be said that the Ivory Coast was been introduced to the Venice Biennale though the one of the two inaugural exhibitions. Indeed, as I had discussed in the chapter 3 it was one of the two countries that was featured on the exhibition in 1993.

And putting together the language issue and who the country had started to attend the Venice Biennale, one question that can emerge is why Ivory Coast had managed to return to the Venice and for example Senegal not?

That question becomes relevant by considering the fact that Senegal host one of the most important art biennale not only for the countries from the Sub-Sahara African but to the overall art world in the Harold Becker sense.

One brief answer to that question, that hope to expand in the follow lines could be found in the fact that since the first participation the actors that are involved in the pavilions management are almost the same.

Therefore, the crucial role of the pavilion structural arrangements emerges once again.

Another aspect that contra distinguish the Ivory pavilion is the fact that for each edition one artists that is not Ivorian national use to be included in the show. So, why the inclusion of not national artists was a problem for the Kenya pavilion, that I have discussed previously and for the Ivory Coast, not at all?

It is that only related to the number of artists or there are other factors that influence it?

In addition, as for the Kenya pavilion, also for the Ivory Coast, not state actors play a significant role, however, for the Ivory Coast the national government institution, mainly the embassy in Italy is strongly present.

So, the Ivory Coast pavilion could be classified as a sort of public and private partnership.

For the case of Ivory Coast, in addition to the main questions that are been consider as the core of the case study, I will also examine the role of countries embassies and similar institutions play in the participation to the Venice biennale.

But on what I will base my argumentation?

Once again, as for all other countries in the case study analyses and on the overran dissertation, the data though which I will construct my argumentation was collected though the archival research and the exhibition catalogue.

And for the case of Ivory Coast is important to mention that the Ivory Coast is one of the few pavilions from sub-Saharan Africa in which on its participation use to produce its own exhibition catalogue.

The fact that the Ivory Coast produces an exhibition catalogue, even a simple one, may illustrate a certain seriousness and commitment of those who organize the attendance.

The other relevant source of data will be the field work visits that I did to the pavilion during the 57 edition of the Venice biennale, in 2017.

And related to the field work visits is important to mention that I did them several times also because as a parallel project of my research I used to organize guided visits to the pavilions from sub-Sahara countries present on each edition.

So, the discussion here will be structured by mainly by following the predetermined structure of the case study analyses that I am undertaken in this chapter.

Therefore, I will start by describing the chronological trajectory of the participation Ivory Coast to the Venice Biennale.

Here more than just referencing the editions of attendance, as the country did attended to all edition successively, I will try to understand why it had attended to in some specific editions and not in others.

As a second stage of the section I will expand the examination of the pavilion structural arrangements and how it is determinant for the country attendance. And as I had mentioned above regarding that for the case of Ivory Coast I will try acquire the role played by the embassy in Italy.

As the third stage I will focus on examination of the exhibition narratives that use to be proposed within the Ivory Coast national pavilion exhibitions.

Finally to conclude the section, the fourth stage I will discuss about some curatorial strategies that used to be adopted within the pavilion.

Regarding this aspect end it is important to mention that the Ivory Coast use to be located in different venues around Venice, therefore one relevant question that could be posted

considering that fact, is how the venues had been influenced on the overall curatorial strategies adopted.

To start the case study analysis of the Ivory Coast participation by presenting its chronology of attendance to the Venice Biennale.

Before proceeding, it is important to remember that Ivory Coast was one of the countries that had been featured on the exhibition curated by Susan Vogel in 1993. I had included that exhibition on the table even if I had already discussed, considering that exhibition as a national participation is problematic.

So here is the Ivory Coast chronology of attendance:

Year	Title	Commissaire(s)	Curators	Artists	Location
1993	African Countries	Gerard Santoni	Susan Vogel and Gerard Santoni	(1) Gerard Santoni; (2) Ouattara Watts and (3) Tamsir Dia	Giardini Central Pavilion
2013	Traces and signs	Paolo De Grandis	Yacouba Konaté	(1) Frédéric Bruly Bouabré; (2) Tamsir Dia; (3) Franck Fanny and (4) Jems Robert Koko Bi.	Spiazzi, Arsenale, Castello 3865
2017	The Juice of Time	Yacouba Konaté	Massimo Scaringella	(1) Ouattara Watts,(2) Jems Bi, (3)Robert Koko Bi, (4) Joana Choumali, (5) Raimondo Galeano; (5) Kagnedjatou Joachim Silué	Palazzo Dolfin-Gabrielli

Table 5.3. Chronology of the Ivory Coast attendance to La Biennale from 1990 to 2017

This pavilion that I had entitled the case study analyses as in "Silence way" is doing significant things in the context of the Venice Biennale.

It is important to remember that the Ivory Coast pavilion is one of a French speaking country from Sub-Saharan Africa that since 2013 manage to attend successively to the editions of the Venice Biennale.

The pavilion is somehow a result of a partnership between government institutions, specifically the embassy in Italy and the private institutions.

Somehow the core of the structure of the pavilion was built during the 1993 attendance.

Indeed, not only the artists and curators that had attended the first exhibition had returned to other editions of La Biennale on which the country had attended.

The Ivory Coast embassy in Italy plays a role of the intermediary in this process. It operates as the coordinator of the several honorary consulates that are operating in Italy.

It seems that the economic viability of this participation is facilitated by the consulates that managed to find some enterprises that end up being the sponsors of the pavilion.



Figure 5.4 Diaspora sculptures/installation made by **Jems Robert Koko Bi** within the Ivory Coast pavilion at the 57th edition of *La Biennale*. Photo from ASAC archive.

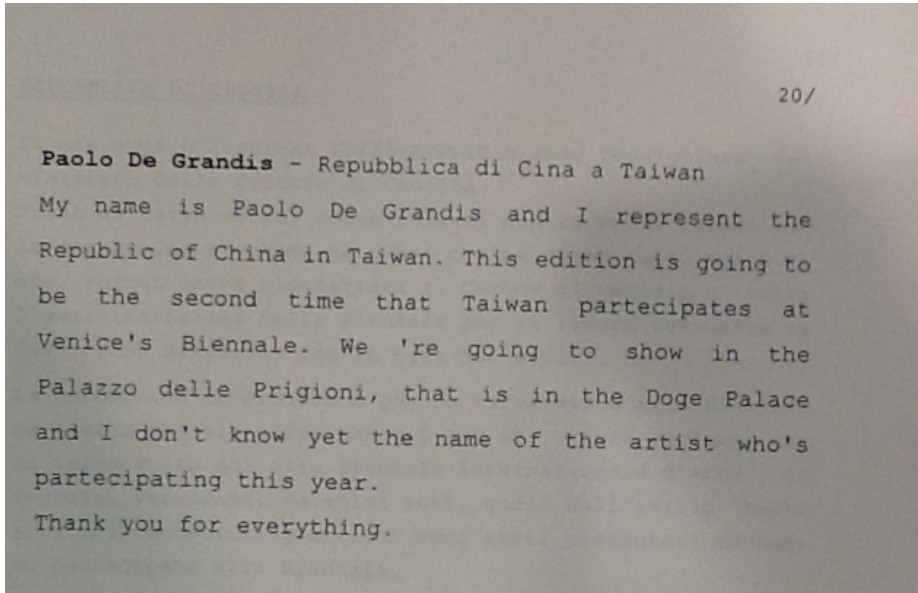


Figure 5.5 Photo of report of preparatory meeting 1997.

Ivory Coast was the only one country that had been part of the two inaugural exhibitions of contemporary art from sub-Saharan African artists and countries at the Venice Biennale.

The first attendance was organized by an international art institution, namely the Harlem museum and was sponsored by the Rockefeller foundation.

In addition, most of the works displayed at that exhibition had already been displayed at the Harlem museum.

However, 20 years after the first participation the country returned, this time as an initiative guided by the Ivory Coast diplomatic representation in Italy. Namely the Ivory Coast embassy in Italy and the consulate in Venice.

But somehow it had benefited from the experience from the first attendance. Indeed, one of the key figures of that second attendance in 2013 was Gerald Santoni, who had been one of the commissioners and artists displayed at the first participation.

5.4 The South Africa National Pavilion: how art can play a role in post-apartheid country?

“Historically South Africa managed to use Venice as platform to promote the ordinary struggles of people back at home.¹³²”

The last country participation that will be examined through the case study analyse will be the South Africa.

Read mentioned elsewhere, it important to remind that South Africa used to attend the Venice biennale before the 1990.

What had happened is that the country was at certain point interdicted to attend due to the apartheid regime and then when it ended in 1992, the country was readmitted.

Therefore, the 1993 exhibition had marked the return of the country this time as a democratic country.

So, some of the question that I will explore in this section are: why the South Africa government returned to the Venice biennale right after the end of the apartheid regime? How and for what the exhibitions at the Venice biennale had been used for?

Here is important to mention that the South African pavilion is organized by the government though the national gallery.

And when it comes to consider the overall aspects that had guided me to choose South Africa National Pavilion as one of the case studies to focus, the another that I can mention

¹³² Garnsey 2019: 132

is the fact that it is one of the country from sub-Saharan Africa that attends the Venice biennale in a more constants manner. That means since 1993 South Africa had attended to all successive edition.

And that saying is important to clarify that even if it is not part of the main aspects that guides the selection of the countries, the permanent attendance gives a theoretical significance to the South Africa participation mainly because as I have discussed earlier on, most of the countries from sub-Sahara are attending in very ephemeral mode.

In addition after the first participation the country not only had managed to attend all the successive edition but at certain point, rented a permanent space in the Arsenale, at sale d'armi.

This permanent space guaranties the country the same location for each edition, that facilitates not only to plan the logistics efforts for the successive editions, but also allows the visitors to have an idea of where thy will find the pavilion.

In addition the space is used by the country, as like the pavilions at Giardini biennale, for both art and architecture biennale.

Going back to the main selections criteria it is important to remind that English is one the official of South Africa.

The other reasons to include the country on the case study analyses are related to the exhibitions narratives that had been created within the national pavilion.

And as will expand in the follow lines this emphasis on the exhibitions narratives for the case of South Africa is relate to the question that I had mention above in this introduction: why the country returned to the Venice biennale right after the end of the apartheid

regime? For what the visual arts had been used for in the context of the post-apartheid South Africa?

The inquiry about the role of arts increase its significance if I consider the fact that though it could be possible some other analyses such as:

Consider the fact that at same time it was instituted the Johannesburg biennale, in 1995, how the participation to La Biennale was related to that Johannesburg one and once again to the role the visual arts had played or are still play in the country?

And if the exhibitions was supposed to address themes that are relevant also to the local context or audiences, the examination of the South Africa pavilion will allow me to explore the tension between the local and international discourses. That could be translated by the follow question: how the local discourses are received in the context where the audience is transnational?

Address that question could be appropriate not because it will be an expansion of the discussion that I had conducted in chapter 4 but also to acquire which role the arts had played in the post-apartheid condition of the country.

As well as for the other countries the examination of the South Africa national pavilion will be constructed by applying the data collected in the Venice biennale archive and the exhibition catalogues.

Related to that is important to mention that South Africa is one of the country's from Sub-Saharan Africa that possesses a significant amount of data, that could be related to the fact that is among them the one that had attended more edition.

Related to the data, as I not yet sure how it could emerge on the follow lines is important to mention one important facts that I found was the pivotal role played by the South Africa embassy in Italy.

Before start the examination, yet with regard to the data is also important to mention here the fact that for South Africa I had visited the exhibition of the edition happened in 2015 and 2017.

So, the discussion in this section will be structured in the following steps:

On the opening phase, the first one, I will describe the chronology of attendee of the country, of course by starting in its first exhibition in 1993.

On the second step I will examine how the pavilions is structure and who are the actors composing that structural pavilion structural arrangement.

As the third step of the discussion I will focus the analyze on the exhibitions narratives that had been proposed.

As well as to the previous cases study considered in the present dissertation the aim is to find out what are the main topics of that narratives and how they are constructed.

To conclude my argumentation, the fourth step, I will examine the curatorial strategies and other closely related issues that had been adopted within the South Africa national pavilion at the Venice biennale.

I will start the case study analysis of the South Africa participation by presenting its chronology of attendance to the Venice Biennale.

On the table below I had systematically organized the data related to the South Africa attendance within the time frame considered on the present research.

As I had already mentioned somewhere else in this dissertation, it is important to reiterate that South Africa "had been exhibiting at the Biennale since 1950."¹³³

It was then interdicted to attend until the end of the apartheid regime.

¹³³ Gamsey 2019: 134

Year	Title	Commissaire(s)	Curators	Artists	Location
1993	Olivas Incroci Del Su "Affinities: Contemporary South African Art	Glenn Babb	The South African Association of Arts (SAAA) Louis Jansen van Vuuren	(1) Jackson Hlungwani and (2) Sandra Kriel	Italian Pavilion/ Central Pavilion (2) Palazzo Giustinian Lolin
1995		Glenn Babb	Malcolm Payne	(1) Malcom Payne, (2) Rudolph Hartzenberg and (3) Brett Murray	Giardini, Esterno (vicino al Bar Paradiso)
2011	Desire: Ideal Narratives in Contemporary South African Art	Lethole Mokoena	Theminkosi Gonwe	(1) Siemon Allen, (2) Lyndi Sales and (3) Mary Sibande	Torre di Porta Nuova, Arsenale Nuovissimo
2013	Imaginary Fact: Contemporary South Africa Art and the Archive	Saul Molobi	Brenton Maart	(1) Andrew Putter, (2) Athi-Patra Ruga, (3) Cameron Platter, (4) David Koloane, (5) Donna Kukama, (6) Gerhard Marx, (7) James Webb, (8) Joanne Bloch, (9) Johannes Phukela, (10) Kemang wa Lehulere, (11) Kay Hassan, (12) Maja Marx and Philip Miller, (13) Penny Siopis, (14) Sam Nhlengethwa, (15) Sue Williamson, (16) Wim Botha and (17) Zanele Muboli.	Arsenale: Sala D'armi, Arsenale
2015	What remains is tomorrow	Saul Molobi	Christopher Till and Jeremy Rose	(1) Angus Gibson, (2) Brett Murray, (3) Diane Victor, (4) Jeremy Wafer, (5) Gerald Machona, (6) Haroon Gunn-Salie, (7) Jo Ractliffe, (8) Mark Lewis, (9) Mohau Modisakeng, (10) Nandipha Mntambo, (11) Robin Rhode, (12) Warrick Sony, (13) Willem Boshoff and (13) Serge Alain Nitegeka	Arsenale: Sala D'armi, Arsenale
2017	Candice Breitz, Mohau Modisakeng	Titi Nxumalo	Lucy MacGarry and Musha Neluheni (assistant curator)	(1) Mohau Modisakeng and (2) Candice Breitz	Arsenale: Sala D'armi, Arsenale

Table 5.4. Chronology of the South Africa attendance to La Biennale from 1990 to 2017

South Africa is the country from sub-Saharan Africa that is able to have a more constant pattern of attendance.

Indeed, since its return in 2011 the country had managed to attend all successive editions of the Venice Biennale. In addition from 2013 the South African pavilion is located in the same place within the Arsenale.

The fact that the South African pavilion is permanently located at Sale d'armi at Arsenale offers the country an opportunity to create a similar effect of those pavilions that are located in Giardini, the first venue of the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, each year the audience knows in advance where the pavilion is located and for sure its increase the number of visitors who end up by visiting the country pavilion.

The structure that is behind the South Africa pavilion enables the country to be able to be present edition after edition.

However, it is important to reiterate that somehow that structure an government commitment was driven since its attendance before the interdiction.

Indeed, the first attendance after the interdiction due to the apartheid regime, in 1993 one of the curators of the participation was the South Africa Association of Art, same institutions that used to organize the attendance before.

Eventually that commitment and constancy of attendance is also been influenced by the fact the Johannesburg biennale had failed to establish itself as an relevant event within the international art circuit.

Therefore, for the South Africa Government, consider the Venice Biennale as an important public arena where the country must be present and articulate certain discourses through the exhibitions narratives.

In a certain sense, the fact in one hand the South African government is interested to be at the Venice Biennale and then provides resources to enable that to happen justifies the fact that since its return the exhibition narratives within the South African pavilion are embedded local issues. That influence by the local issues, enables an interpretation of the south Africa pavilion as a sort of state ideological apparatus.

Indeed, according to Althusser the " ideological state apparatuses[are] certain number of realities which represent themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct of specializes institution."¹³⁴

He goes on by adding the fact that "larger part on the ideological state apparatuses are part of the private domain."¹³⁵

Regarding that fact it is important to mention the south African pavilions is, actually, organized by the South Africa national gallery.

¹³⁴ Althusser 2006: 79

¹³⁵ Ibidem: 80



Figure 5.6. Photo of the entrance of the **South African** Pavilion at the 56th edition of *La Biennale*. Photo from ASAC archive.

South Africa returned to the Venice biennale, in 1993, invited by the curator of the 4th edition, Achille Bonito Oliva.

Indeed, it is important to remember that at that occasion the South African pavilion was presented as a sponsored exhibition.

Another relevant aspect, related to that return was the fact that at that time was still in effect the rule under which only invited countries were supposed to attend the edition of La Biennale.

So, after the end of the apartheid regime the country was readmitted to the Venice Biennale.

Indeed, after the liberation of Nelson Mandela in 1990 the country started a process of national reconciliation among the difference that for so long time had been living separated within the country.

Therefore, since the beginning of that process the South African government had used all the means available in order to promote the national reconciliation.

Contemporary visual arts was not left a part of that process.

So at the Venice biennale the South Africa national pavilion was seen as an international stage where the reconciliatory discourses could also be produced.

Indeed, as I had discussed above the exhibition space and contemporary art as a sort of tool to make visible that narrative.

Therefore, since the 1993 attendance the exhibition narratives within the South Africa pavilion had been framed and influenced by what was the priority of the national government agenda, specifically the national reconciliation. Indeed, from the analyses that I had conducted of all the South African attendances, it seems that one of the main purposes of the exhibitions was to show how that process of construction of the rainbow country was going on.

As I had mentioned above one of the visible ways to observe that intent is the theme of the exhibitions, from which one perfect example is " what remains is tomorrow" that was the title of the exhibition in 2015.

However, it's important to mention the interference reconciliation agenda within the exhibition spaces had some positive aspects such as the one that for the first time artists from the different groups of the country had displayed together.

In its return South Africa had attended two editions of the Venice biennial , respectively in 1993 and in 1995. After that the country had been absent for 10 years.

Indeed, from 1995 the country returned again in 2005. It is important to remember that in 1995, the South African government had started to organize the Johannesburg biennale. Unfortunately that biennale had only two editions.

I had mentioned this fact here, because that event was one of the hypotheses to try to understand the interaction of the Venice biennale attendance. And then not only establish an interconnection of the two events but also at same time better understanding the essence of the South Africa participation at the Venice biennale.

That commitment was guided by trying to answer the following question: how the interruption of the attendance to the Venice biennale was related to the creation of the Johannesburg biennale?

One of my working hypotheses was the fact the government had decided to allocate the resources that were supposed to be used for the Venice biennale attendance to create its own biennale.

That hypothesis could be plausible considering the fact that Johannesburg had tried to have as much as possible and relevant position and significance in the global art world.

That was also influenced by the myth that all the most succeeded art biennials in the world had been established in the places, mainly cities, after tragic events, such as the case of the apartheid.

Indeed, apart from the international artists that had been invited to the first edition of the Johannesburg biennale, its second edition, in 1997, was curated by Okwui Enwezor.

At that time Okwui Enwezor was already being considered one of the most important African born curators.

Unfortunately, here I will end here at the discretion of Johannesburg biennales historical trajectory.

So, returning to the aim here, how then the two events are related and how it could be useful to understand the South Africa attendance to the Venice biennale?

So, on one hand, as I mentioned earlier on the attendance to the Venice biennale, the exhibitions narratives within the South African national pavilion had been focused on the ongoing national reconciliation process. On the other hand the Johannesburg since its creation had tried to bring to the country the dominant art discourses. So Venice attendance was a stage for local issues and Johannesburg, for the international ones.

As I mentioned above the Johannesburg biennale had only two editions and after an interruption the South Africa pavilion returned to the Venice biennale in 2005.

Since its return the exhibitions narratives had shown significant difficulties to go beyond the ongoing local dominant discourses.

Indeed, it had been anchored on the ongoing national rebuilding process.

It is important to mention that the exhibition's narrative frames and also the interpretation that I am making of them here are not an automatic judgement regarding the quality of the art works included in the shows.

Regarding the artworks and artists that had been included on the shows, it is important to mention that some of those, before or after, had also been displayed in the Venice biennale main exhibitions. A part of other international mainstream art venues.

So beside the artworks and artists included on those shows within the south African national pavilion at the Venice biennale what could be devoted to a critical examination are the exhibition narratives.

Is true that often the art works, as there are at same time a certain type of discourse, are also political statements, but why not try to be less anchored to the local arena?

The South African sphere is a significant and indispensable portion of the global discursive agenda, both political and artistic.

Maybe that is the reason why the South African national pavilion until now was never warded with a prize at the Venice biennale, even if there are one of the consistent attended and have art practitioners very well prepared.

5.5 The patterns of attendance of sub-Saharan African countries to the Venice Biennale since 1990

Consider the fact that in the previous lines I had made some examination about the presence and participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice biennale, every reader may have formed an idea.

That last idea may be could be a new one about how ones interpret the participation of artists and countries to one of the most important art shows of the world.

However, as I aware of the fact that those countries of this part of the world and their practices use to be mainly interpreted through lens of essentialize and Africanize them here I will undertake an successive effort to change that idea.

In this section more that put together or expand the eventual conclusion of the case study analyses, what I would like to do is to first identify the patterns that are characterizing the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice biennale, and second discuss them in a more detailed manner. And third interpret the meaning and significance of the participation of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa to La Biennale.

In other words, in the present section I will try to draw and overall analyze of the way on which those countries are attending and positioning themselves within the overall structure of the Venice biennale.

The argumentation in this section will be guided by the follow questions:

So how the African countries use to attend the Venice biennale?

How they are positioning themselves in the overall context of the Venice biennale?

The presence of African countries at the Venice biennale is functional for whom?

I will undertake that task in two steps on the first one I will play the Bruce Althusser model of the analyze of canonical exhibitions. In the second step will be characterized by an expansion of the Robert Merton matrix that he had applied to the analyses of the individual behavior in the society.

The material though which I will construct my argumentation in this section will mainly derived from the previous analyses that I had done in precedent chapters.

However, as I mention before I will re-elaborate them by using them though new theoretical analyses.

Therefore, it will happened that I will use some examples that I had used somewhere else, but here they will be interpreted though new lens.

By doing that one of my goal is to be able to make the previous explanation or interpretations that I made become more complex by adding another layer to them.

My argumentation here will be structured in four steps and on open step, the first one, I will discuss about the sub-Saharan Africa countries overall pattern of attendance to the Venice biennale.

I hope that by saying that is clear enough that the that pattern will only apply for the countries and not for the single artists.

As the second step by having the exhibition narratives as start point in order to enrich the pattern picture I will examine though the Robert Merton matrix hour how those countries positioning themselves in the overall context of the Venice biennale.

Successively, as the third step, I will take further the examination by try to identify how I may classify some of the exhibitions that had been proposed with the national pavilions in terms of their canonicity.

And here, to do so I will use as tool the Althusser categories for the analyses and classification of canonical exhibitions.

To conclude my argumentation I will try to find the answer

The presence of African countries at the Venice biennale is functional for whom?

And of course to address that question I will recall some of the analyses that had made in the previously in this section .

So, why are the sub-Saharan Africa countries attending the Venice Biennale?

I hope that I have been able to present and plenty of discussions about the answer of the above question.

However, this was not discussed in the present section.

Indeed, the aim of the present section was to in one hand make sense of the overall countries participation and on the other relate that participation to the overall structure and exhibitions practices that characterize the Venice Biennale.

As the reader can notice I had decided to conduct that examination here, the last section of the present dissertation.

However, it is important to mention that what I had discussed was more than chronologically describing or discussing the country's participation. Indeed, I had done that in section 3.2 of the present dissertation.

It was also beyond an elementary summary of the case study analyses that was the core of the present chapter.

Likewise, in the present section I had tried to take further the analyses of the countries participation by identifying how the countries are attending La Biennale.

Indeed, the argumentation in this section had started by identifying some of the main features that are characterizing the comprehensive participation of those countries.

Those main features I had termed as the patterns that are characterizing the attendance of those countries.

Though those countries, for example, it was possible to find confirmation of the relevance of the criteria and categories that had guided the process of selection of the countries that I had thought of through case study analysis.

Those patterns had also confirmed their relevance of the categories that had emerged regarding the types of exhibition narratives that those countries use to present though the exhibitions.

But in other had both the categories that had guided the process of selection of case study countries and that of the types of the exhibitions narratives had been useful on the process of identification of the pattern that are characterizing the attendance of those countries.

And here, as I had discussed above, it is important to reaffirm that actually is much more adequate to use or classify the as patterns, to emphasize the fact that it is composed by several modes through which the countries used to attend La Biennale.

And to identify the patterns of the attendance I had expanded the use of the Robert Merton matrix though which the author used to analyze the social behavior of the individuals in societies.

For that analysis Robert Merton had identified five categories: conformity, ritualism, rebellion innovation and retreatism.

So, in the case of the present dissertation that classification has been also constructed as the answer for the following question: how the countries are positioning themselves in the context of the overall structure and discourse that are characterizing La Biennale?

So in the analyse that I had conducted

To conclude that analysis, considering the fact that it was sociologically orientated, to intersect some art historical analytical practices had examined some exhibitions that I had considered as somehow canonical ones.

Once again it is important to mention that the canonical categories had been the ones that Bruce Ferguson had identified in his foundational and outstanding analyses.

The aim of the present chapter was to describe and examine deeply some national participation, through a case study methodological approach, in order to identify what could be consider as the pattern of the sub-Saharan Africa countries participation to the Venice Biennale.

As pattern of participation I understand the modalities through which the countries from sub-Saharan Africa use to attend the Venice Biennale.

The main focus was on the structural arrangements of the pavilions.

The countries on which I had focused the analyses as cases are, Angola, Ivory Coast, Kenya and South Africa.

One of the main criteria that had guided the choice of those countries was the linguistic one, because one of my work hypotheses was the fact that the language and the resources

that it can mobilize are determinant not only to attend or not but also through which structural arrangements the countries end up attending the Venice Biennale.

So, what had emerged is the fact that the national pavilions are structurally arranged in different forms and it seems that those different structural arrangements not only had impact on the exhibitions narratives but also on what could be considered as the country's main goal for attendance.

But before briefly presenting the results of the examination that I had conducted could be adequate to firstly present what are the patterns of the participation of countries from sub-Saharan Africa could be.

So, there are countries in which the lead institutions are those from or created by the national governments and its institutions.

The other formats are those countries in which the pavilion is an initiative of private art galleries that get the approval or endorsement by local governments; as the third way could be a mix of diplomatic mainly the commercial branch and the private partners; and then the last format, the fourth is the one in which artists and curators use their networks sources in order to set up a pavilion in which they are the protagonists.

It is important to mention that those pavilions initiated or ruined by artists are more project based therefore they just attend once and had difficulties and do it more than one time.

So, all those pavilions' structural arrangements, that I termed as institutional arrangements, have impact on the national pavilions' performance.

And one of the criteria to measure the performance could be for example the exhibition narrative.

And about the exhibition narratives, as I had also cover it in the previous chapter, what I did here was obviously an expansion of what had been discussed in the previous there.

For example the chapter 4 I had examined the relation between the exhibitions narrative and the national pavilions structural arrangements. In the present chapter, I had added to that analyses is the fact that the institutional structural arrangements have an impact on the frequency of attendances. So, the question was could the institutional arrangements had impact on capacity of the country to return to attend the next edition of the Venice Biennale?

So, the private initiatives tend to be project base so one or two editions and then there are not able to continue the effort.

The more permanent participation are associated to those in which the national governments institutions, such as the ministry of culture, are associated to some private entities.

Other important issue discussed in this chapter was the one related to the exhibition format, specifically regarding the number of the artists that are included in the exhibitions within the national pavilion of countries from sub-Sahara Africa.

Indeed, it seems that the extensive number of the artists, more than two, is the one feature that is present in the all of the pavilions of those countries.

In fact, the exhibition within the national pavilions from the sub-Saharan countries often are those that could be classified as collective ones, meaning exhibitions in which several artists.

However, it was not possible to me too find out the exactly answer of the reason why that happens even on the few interviews that I did with some curators and artists.

Nevertheless, I can speculate that those features characterize many exhibitions from sub-Saharan Africa countries because in one hand there are trying to reduce the cost of attendance and in the other hand gain as much as possible by displaying several artists.

But unfortunately due to the time available I was not able to address all the issues concerned the countries participation. One of those issues was to be able to observe how or which of those several ways is more sustainable and if they change over time.

And of course the change referred is not only related to the national pavilions structural arrangements but also if there for example will at certain point the narrative and the exhibition format, mainly the number of the artists included, changes.

So, will the national pavilions from sub-Saharan Africa countries at the Venice Biennale shift from collective exhibitions to monographically exhibition that also tend to be more project based and then less focus on countries narratives?

And also about the artists included in the shows, will those artists be more present in the international art shows? For example specifically for the case of Venice Biennale, are those artists that had been displayed for the first time within the national pavilions, then invited to the show to be part of the exhibitions curated by the edition curators?

CONCLUSION

IS THE VENICE BIENNALE JUST AN ART SHOW: lessons to the future

One of the aims of the present dissertation was to examine the participation of the sub-Saharan Africa countries and artist to the Venice Art Biennale.

Related to that goal was the need to conduct the research considering the analyses sub-Saharan Africa as a start point in order to better understanding the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

To address that commitment I had started by describe and discuss the reasons why I had decided to undertake the research and also why though it was possible, at same time, to improving the understanding of the overall structure of the Venice Biennale.

Successively, I had illustrated and discussed about how I had constructor the methodological apparatus through which I had conducted the research.

On that process what had emerged was the fact that the institutional dimension of the exhibitions was the dimension trough both the sub-Saharan Africa participation and the overall Venice Biennale could be discussed.

However, before discussing the relevance of the institutional structure on the exhibition performance I had described how the process of the quasi permanent participation of countries and artists from sub-Saharan countries had started.

Beginning by the analyses of the two inaugural exhibitions and had continued and analysed also the countries national pavilions.

The focus of this chapter was the exhibitions narratives within the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale.

Since the analyses of this process of incorporation and commodification to the exhibitions contents and structure the role of institutional arrangements had emerged as determinant. Taking into account that fact, regarding the exhibitions content though the analyses that I had conducted had emerged the existence of significant correlation between the exhibition narratives and the structural arrangements of the pavilions.

And to illustrated the significant role of the institutions and to try to acquire a significant picture regarding the participation of African countries to the Venice Biennale on the last chapter of this dissertation I had conduct an case study analyses

The aim of the case study was to examine acutely some national participation, in order to identify what could be consider as the pattern of the sub-Saharan Africa countries participation to the Venice Biennale.

However, in parallel to the understanding that I had acquired had emerged the necessity to take further some of the analyses of research subject, that was not possible to undertake, in the present dissertation, due to the time constrains.

Some of further issues that could covered in an future inquire could the ones that I will briefly describe in the follow lines.

The chronological description of the process through the process though the arts from sub-Saharan Africa countries and artists had started to be displayed in a quasi-permanent manner had covered the first two inaugural exhibitions to the National Pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa. On that description one of the elements that had emerged meaningfully was the fact that most exhibitions within those pavilions used to be characterized by being group exhibition. Therefore in one hand could be relevant to precisely understand why and in other be able to observe if those exhibition format will change through time and how.

Another topic for a future research, that is somehow related to the how briefly described above, is regard the exhibitions narratives: how the exhibitions narratives will be

constructed and how they are related to the exhibitions format? So, if eventually the exhibitions format change also the exhibitions narratives will change.

The last topic for a future research that I could mention here regards the need to discuss and try better understand who are the audiences of the exhibitions proposed with the national pavilions of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa at the Venice Biennale. And connected to that question there is the need to address the relevance of the attendance to the Venice Biennale in order to be incorporated in the global art world.

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APENDIX

Appendix A:

Artists Attendances from 1990 to 2017

	Name	Country	Born Year	Live in	Edition attended	Gender	
1	Abdoulaye Konaté	Mali	1953		2017		
2	Abu Bakarr Mansaray	Sierra Leone	1970		2015	M	
3	Angus Gibson	South Africa			2015		
4	Andrew Putter	South Africa	1965		2013	M	
5	António Ole	Angola	1951		2003 2015 2017		
6	Athi-Patra Ruga	South Africa	1984		2013		
7	Armando Tanzini	Italy	1943		2003		Kenya pavilion
8	Barthélémy Toguo	Cameroon	1967		2015		
9	Binelde Hyrcan	Angola	1983		2015		
10	Berry Bickle	Zimbabwe	1959		2011		
11	Bonnie Ntshalintshali 1967-1999	South Africa	1967		1993 Aperto exhibition		
12	Brett Murray	South Africa	1961		1993 2015		
13	Bruce Paul Onobrakpeya	Great Britain	1932		1993	M	
14	Calvin Dondo	Zimbabwe	1963		2011		
15	Cameron Platter	South Africa	1978		2013		
16	Candice Breitz	South Africa	1972		2005 2017	F	
17	Cheikh Ndiaye	Senegal	1970		2015		
18	Chéri Samba	Congo	1956		2007		
19	Chikonzero Chazunguza	Zimbabwe	1967		2015		
20	Chris Ofili	Great Britain	1968		2003 2015		
21	David Nthubu Koloane	South Africa	1938		2013		
22	Délio Jasse	Angola	1980		2015		
23	Diane Victor	South Africa	1964			F	
24	Donna Kukama	South Africa	1981		2013	F	
25	Edson Chagas	Angola	1977		2013	M	
26	El Anatsui,	Ghana	1944		1990 2007		Golden Lion for lifetime achievement 2015.

27	Eyoun Nanguè	Cameroon			2007		
28	Emeka Ogboh	Nigeria	1977		2015		
29	Fatou Kandé Senghor	Senegal	1971		2015	F	
30	Faustin Titi						
31	Francisco Vidal	Portugal	1978		2015		Angola
32	Gareth Nyandoro	Zimbabwe	1982		2015		
33	Georges Adéagbo	Benin	1942		1999 2009 2017		Special Mention in the 48 th edition
34	Gerard Santoni	Ivory Coast	1943		1993		
35	Gerald Machona	South Africa			2015		
35	Gerhard Marx	South Africa	1976		2013		
36	Gonçalo Mabunda	Mozambique	1977		2015		
37	Haroon Gunn-Salie	South Africa	1989		2015		
38	Henry Munyaradzi	Zimbabwe	1931		1990		
39	Ibrahim Mahama	Ghana	1987		2015		
40	Jackson Hlungwani				1993		
41	<u>James Beckett</u>	Zimbabwe			2015		Belgium Pavilion
42	Jelili Atiku	Nigeria	1968		2017		
43	<u>Joachim Schönfeldt</u>	South Africa	1958		<u>2015</u>		
44	James Webb	South Africa	1975		2013		
45	Jean-Baptiste Ngnetchopa	Cameroon	1953		2001		
46	Jeremy Wafer	South Africa	1953		2015		
47	Johannes Phukela	South Africa	1966		2013		
48	Joanne Bloch	South Africa	1961		2013		
49	John Akomfrah	Ghana	1957		2015 2019		
50	Jo Ractliffe	South Africa	1961		2015		
51	Kay Hassan	South Africa	1956		2013 <u>2015</u>		
52	Kemang wa Lehulere	South Africa	1984		2013		
53	Lyndi Sales	South Africa	1973		2011		
54	Nelisiwe Xaba	South Africa	1970		2011 2013		
55	Nelo Teixeira	Angola	1975		2015		
56	Nicholas Mukomberanwa 1940-12/11/2002	Great Britain	1940		1990		
57	Malcom Payne	South Africa	1946		1993		
58	Malick Sidibé 1936-2016	Mali	1936		2007	M	Golden Lion for lifetime achievement
59	Marlene Dumas	South Africa	1953		2003	F	

					2007 2015		
60	Maja Marx	South Africa	1977		<u>2013</u>		
61	Masimba Hwati	Zimbabwe	1982		2015		
62	Mario Macilau	Mozambique	1984		<u>2015</u>		
63	Mark Lewis	South Africa	1958		<u>2015</u>		
64	Mary Sibande	South Africa	1982		<u>2011</u>		
65	Mikhael Subotzky	South Africa	1981		<u>2015</u>		
66	Meschac Gaba	Benin	1961		<u>2003</u>		Netherlands
67	Michele Mathison	South Africa	1977		<u>2013</u>		Zimbabwe
68	Misheck Masamvu	Zimbabwe	1980		<u>2011</u>		
69	Mohau Modisakeng	South Africa	1986		2015 2017		
70	Moshekwa Langa	South Africa	1975		2009		
71	Moustapha Dime	Senegal	1952		1993		
72	Mor Faye	Senegal	1947		1993		
73	Nandipha Mntambo	Swaziland	1982		2015		South Africa
74	Nelo Teixeira	Angola	1975		2015		
75	Oladélé Bamgboyé	Nigeria	1963		2007		
76	Olu Oguibe				2007		
77	Ouattara Watts	Ivory Coast	1957		1993		
78	Ousmane Ndiaye Dago	Senegal	1951		2001 2003		
79	Ousmane Sow	Senegal	1935		1993		
80	Owanto	France	1953		2009		Gabon
81	Pascale Marthine Tayou	Cameroon	1967		2005		
82	Philip Miller	Great Britain	1964		2013		
83	Penny Siopis	South Africa	1953		2013		
84	Portia Zvavahera	South Africa	1985		2013		
85	Randolph Hartzenberg	South Africa					
86	Rashid Jogee	Zimbabwe	1951		2013		
87	Richard Onyango	Kenya	1960		2013		
88	Robin Rhode	South Africa	1976		2015		
89	Sam Nhlengethwa	South Africa	1955		2013		
90	Samson Kambalu	Malawi	1975		2015		
91	Sammy Baloji	Congo	1978		2015		
92	Sandra Kriel	South Africa	1952		1993		
93	Santu Mofokeng	South Africa	1956		2013		
94	Seni Awa Camara	Senegal	1945		2001		
95	Serge Alain Nitegeka	South Africa	1983		2015		
96	Siemon Allen	South Africa	1971		2011		
97	Soweto Nelisiwe Xaba.	South Africa	1970		2011 2013		

98	Sue Williamson	Great Britain	1941		2013		South Africa
99	Sunday Jack	Nigeria	1940		2014		
100	Tapfuma Gutsa	Zimbabwe	1956		1990 2011		
101	Tamsir Dia	Mali	1950		1993		Ivory Coast
102	Virginia Chihota	Zimbabwe	1983		2013	F	
103	Voti Thebe	Zimbabwe	1953		2013		
104	Wangechi Mutu	Kenya	1972		2015		
105	Warrick Sony	South Africa	1958		2015		
106	Wim Botha	South Africa	1974		2013		
107	William Kentridge	South Africa	1955		1999 2005 2015	M	2015 Italian pavilion
108	Willem Boshoff	South Africa	1951		2015		
109	Yinka Shonibare	Great Britain	1962		2007		
110	Zanele Muholi	South Africa	1972		2011 2013	F	
111	Zwelethu Mthethwa	South Africa	1960		2005		

Appendix B:

Chronology of the Countries attendance to La Biennale from 1990 to 2017

Year								
<p>1990</p>	<p>Title: African Countries: Nigeria and Zimbabwe</p> <p>Curators: Kinshasha Holman Conwill Grace Stanislaus</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Countries</th> <th>Artists</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Nigeria</td> <td>El Anatsui, Bruce Onobrakpeya</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zimbabwe</td> <td>Tapfuma Gutsa, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Countries	Artists	Nigeria	El Anatsui, Bruce Onobrakpeya	Zimbabwe	Tapfuma Gutsa, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi
Countries	Artists							
Nigeria	El Anatsui, Bruce Onobrakpeya							
Zimbabwe	Tapfuma Gutsa, Nicholas Mukomberanwa, Henry Munyaradzi							
<p>1993</p>	<p>African Countries</p> <p>Susan Vogel Gerard Santoni Padiglione Centrale</p>	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ivory Coast</td> <td>Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Senegal</td> <td>Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>South Africa Jackson Hlungwani and Sandra Kriel</p>	Ivory Coast	Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts	Senegal	Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.		
Ivory Coast	Tamsir Dia Gerard Santoni Outtara Watts							
Senegal	Moustapha Dime, Mor Faye, and Ousmane Sow.							
<p>1995 100th anniversary of the Biennale</p>	<p>South Africa Curated by Malcom Payne</p>	<p>Malcom Payne, Rudolph Hartzenberg and Brett Murray</p>						
<p>1997</p>								
<p>1999</p>								
<p>2001</p>								
<p>2003</p>	<p>Kenya Curated by</p>	<p>Richard Onyango and Armando Tanzini.</p>						
<p>2005</p>								
<p>2007</p>	<p>Seychelles</p>							

<p>2009</p>	<p>Gabon Curated by Fernando Francés</p>	<p>Owanto</p>
<p>2011</p>	<p>Congo L'Art et la Femme dans le nouveau Congo</p>	<p>Participation was canceled before the exhibition started Barly Baruti Ange Bofenda Huguette Diwampovesa Dieudonné Kumindike Ilanga Moli Fifi Panzu</p>
	<p>Zimbabwe Curated by Raphael Chikukwa Seeing ourselves: questioning our geographical landscape and the space we occupy from yesterday, today and tomorrow</p>	<p>Berry Bickle; Calvin Dondo; Tapfuma Gutsa and Misheck Masamvu</p>
	<p>South Africa Curated by Thembinkosi Goniwe</p>	<p>Siemon Allen, Lyndi Sales and Mary Sibande.</p>
<p>2013</p>	<p>Kenya Curated by Reflective Nature # a new primary enchanting sensitivity</p>	<p>Wenling Chen, Bo Fan, Zhengjie Feng, Weiming He, Wei Li, Ke Liu, Peng Lu, Ling Luo, Kivuthi Mbuno, César Augusto Meneghetti, Armando Tanzini and Chrispus Wangombe Wachira.</p>
	<p>Ivory Coast Curated by Yacouba Konaté Traces and signs</p>	<p>Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Tamsir Dia Franck Fanny, Jems Robert Koko Bi</p>
	<p>Zimbabwe</p>	<p>Virginia Chihota, Rashid Jogee, Michele Mathison, Voti Thebe and</p>

	<p>Curated by Raphael Chikukwa Dudziro</p>	<p>Portia Zvavahera.</p>																
	<p>South Africa Curated by Imaginary Fact: Contemporary South African Art and the Archive</p>	<p>Joanne Bloch, Wim Botha, David Koloane, Donna Kukama, Gerhard Marx, Maja Marx, Philip (IV) Miller, Zanele Muholi, Sam Nhlengethwa, Johannes Phokela, Cameron Platter, Andrew Putter, Athi-Patra Ruga, Penny Siopis, Kemang Wa Lehulere, James Webb, Sue Williamson, Soweto Nelisiwe Xaba.</p>																
<p>2015</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>Angola Curated by</p> </td> <td> <p>Binelde Hyrcan, Délio Jasse, António Ole, Nelo Teixeira and Francisco Vidal.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Kenya</p> </td> <td> <p>Participation was canceled before the exhibition started</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Nigeria</p> </td> <td> <p>Participation was canceled before the exhibition started</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Mauritius From One Citizen You Gather an Idea</p> </td> <td> <p>Olga Jürgenson, Sultana Haukim, Nirmal Hurry, Alix Le Juge, Helge Leiberg, Krishna Luchoomun, Neermala Luckeenarain, Kavinash Thomoo, Laure Prouvost, Vitaly Pushnitsky, Tania Antoshina, and Djuneid Dulloo</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Mozambique</p> </td> <td> <p>Joel Matias Libombo Deputy Commissioner Gilberto Paulino Cossa Gonçalo Mabunda</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Seychelles Slowly Quietly Curated by</p> </td> <td> <p>George Camille and Léon Wilma Lois Radegonde</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Zimbabwe Curated by Raphael Chikukwa and Tafadzwa Gwetai</p> </td> <td> <p>Chikonzero Chazunguza Gareth Nyandoro and Masimba Hwati</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>South Africa What remains is tomorrow</p> </td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<p>Angola Curated by</p>	<p>Binelde Hyrcan, Délio Jasse, António Ole, Nelo Teixeira and Francisco Vidal.</p>	<p>Kenya</p>	<p>Participation was canceled before the exhibition started</p>	<p>Nigeria</p>	<p>Participation was canceled before the exhibition started</p>	<p>Mauritius From One Citizen You Gather an Idea</p>	<p>Olga Jürgenson, Sultana Haukim, Nirmal Hurry, Alix Le Juge, Helge Leiberg, Krishna Luchoomun, Neermala Luckeenarain, Kavinash Thomoo, Laure Prouvost, Vitaly Pushnitsky, Tania Antoshina, and Djuneid Dulloo</p>	<p>Mozambique</p>	<p>Joel Matias Libombo Deputy Commissioner Gilberto Paulino Cossa Gonçalo Mabunda</p>	<p>Seychelles Slowly Quietly Curated by</p>	<p>George Camille and Léon Wilma Lois Radegonde</p>	<p>Zimbabwe Curated by Raphael Chikukwa and Tafadzwa Gwetai</p>	<p>Chikonzero Chazunguza Gareth Nyandoro and Masimba Hwati</p>	<p>South Africa What remains is tomorrow</p>		
<p>Angola Curated by</p>	<p>Binelde Hyrcan, Délio Jasse, António Ole, Nelo Teixeira and Francisco Vidal.</p>																	
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<p>Zimbabwe Curated by Raphael Chikukwa and Tafadzwa Gwetai</p>	<p>Chikonzero Chazunguza Gareth Nyandoro and Masimba Hwati</p>																	
<p>South Africa What remains is tomorrow</p>																		

<p>2017</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>Angola Angola - Magnetic Memory / Historical Resonance Curated by Silvia Antonio Ole, Maria da Silva de Oliveira and Paulo Kussy Correia Fernades</p> </td> <td> <p>Antonio Ole</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Kenya Another Country Curated by Jimmy Ogonga</p> </td> <td> <p>Arlene Wandera, Peterson Kamwathi, Paul Onditi, Richard Kimathi</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Ivory Coast The Juices of Time Curated by Massimo Scaringella</p> </td> <td> <p>Quattara Watts, Jems Robert Koko Bi, Joana Choumali, Raimondo Galeano, Kagnedjatou Joachim Silué</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Mauritius Speeded up Nature Curated by Olga Jürgenson</p> </td> <td> <p>Robert Rauschenberg, SEO, Jacques Desiré Wong So, Michael Lalljee</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Nigeria How about now? Curated by Adenrele Sonariwo</p> </td> <td> <p>(*)Victor Ehikhamenor, Peju Alatise, and Qudus Onikeku</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Seychelles – 'Slowly Quietly' Curated by Martin Kennedy</p> </td> <td> <p>Alyssa Adams, Tristan Adams, George Camille, Christine Chetty-Payet, Zoe Chong-Seng, Daniel Dodin, Charles Dodo, Allen Ernesta, Group Sez, Christine Harter, Nigel Henri, Alcide Libanotis, Marc Luc, Egbert Marday, Colbert Nourrice, Lèon Wilma Lois Radegonde and Danny Sopha.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>South Africa Candice Breitz, Mohau Modisakeng Curated by Lucy MacGarry and Musha Neluheni</p> </td> <td> <p>(*)Mohau Modisakeng and Candice Breitz</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Zimbabwe Deconstructing Boundaries: Exploring Ideas of Belonging Curated by Raphael Chikukwa</p> </td> <td> <p>Admire Kamudzengerere, Charles Bhebe, Dana Whabira, and Sylvester Mubayi. Istituto della Pietà</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Angola Angola - Magnetic Memory / Historical Resonance Curated by Silvia Antonio Ole, Maria da Silva de Oliveira and Paulo Kussy Correia Fernades</p>	<p>Antonio Ole</p>	<p>Kenya Another Country Curated by Jimmy Ogonga</p>	<p>Arlene Wandera, Peterson Kamwathi, Paul Onditi, Richard Kimathi</p>	<p>Ivory Coast The Juices of Time Curated by Massimo Scaringella</p>	<p>Quattara Watts, Jems Robert Koko Bi, Joana Choumali, Raimondo Galeano, Kagnedjatou Joachim Silué</p>	<p>Mauritius Speeded up Nature Curated by Olga Jürgenson</p>	<p>Robert Rauschenberg, SEO, Jacques Desiré Wong So, Michael Lalljee</p>	<p>Nigeria How about now? Curated by Adenrele Sonariwo</p>	<p>(*)Victor Ehikhamenor, Peju Alatise, and Qudus Onikeku</p>	<p>Seychelles – 'Slowly Quietly' Curated by Martin Kennedy</p>	<p>Alyssa Adams, Tristan Adams, George Camille, Christine Chetty-Payet, Zoe Chong-Seng, Daniel Dodin, Charles Dodo, Allen Ernesta, Group Sez, Christine Harter, Nigel Henri, Alcide Libanotis, Marc Luc, Egbert Marday, Colbert Nourrice, Lèon Wilma Lois Radegonde and Danny Sopha.</p>	<p>South Africa Candice Breitz, Mohau Modisakeng Curated by Lucy MacGarry and Musha Neluheni</p>	<p>(*)Mohau Modisakeng and Candice Breitz</p>	<p>Zimbabwe Deconstructing Boundaries: Exploring Ideas of Belonging Curated by Raphael Chikukwa</p>	<p>Admire Kamudzengerere, Charles Bhebe, Dana Whabira, and Sylvester Mubayi. Istituto della Pietà</p>
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Appendix C:

As a parallel project of the PhD Research project in 2017 I had created the **Online Archive of the Contemporary African Arts at Venice Art Biennale.**(Facebook page and blog).

The idea:

I had created the archive because I was interested in giving a practical dimension to my dissertation and not only a theoretical one.

Goal(s):The main goal of the archive is the one to improve the participation of the countries from sub-Saharan Africa to the Venice Biennale.

Make the biennale accessible to the art practitioners that are based on the continent.

Activities:

I. Collect all communicative materials related to the exhibitions;

II. Do photos and videos of the all exhibitions and then publish them on internet(facebook page and website)

III. Interview the art practitioners that used to attend La Biennale;

IV. During the exhibitions organize tours to the African pavilions.

The tours aim to increase the number of visitors to the African pavilions.

Since its creation I have organized 6 tours in two editions of La Biennale.

The map below is an example of a material that I had produced to promote the tours.

