2.2 The Establishment of Formal Art Education
Margaret Trowell and the School of Fine Arts

> Sometimes I have visited a bush school and asked the teacher what crafts are being taught here, and he has proudly led me in to watch a drawing class at work. Rows of small black urchins [sic] sit huddled together on benches, each with his small slate and squeaking pencil; some with furrowed brow and tongue thrust hard against cheek strive desperately to copy from the board a queer conglomeration of lines labelled 'BOX'; others have obviously given up and have lost interest in this queer pastime. I have no interest in it either; I want to see carving, basketwork, or the rich patterns with which the African knows so well to decorate his shields and stools. But when I ask for these, I am told almost contemptuously that the children do not come to school to learn that; they come to learn the skill of the European. (Trowell, 1937: 2–3)

The quote above is from Margaret Trowell's book *African Arts and Crafts. Their Development in the School* from 1937. It was the same year in which she founded the School of Fine Arts in the Uganda Protectorate of the then British Empire. To me, it serves as a prime example of the ambivalence with which Trowell is regarded nowadays from a critical, postcolonial perspective by artists and scholars from Uganda and abroad alike (Kakande, 2006; Kyeyune, 2003; Littlefield Kasfir, 1999; Pinther and Weigand, 2018; Preston Blier, 2018; Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a). In *African Arts and Crafts* and subsequent publications on African and Ugandan crafts (e.g., 1936, 1957, 1960; Trowell and Wachsmann, 1953), Trowell stressed the aesthetic and artistic value of everyday objects and artefacts and sharply criticized the *common Englishman* (and, more generally, the common European at the time, I wish to add), who was not appreciative of forms of art outside the normative framework known to him or her. In 1937, his/her taste, according to Trowell, was dominated by three elements: "beauty of form, accuracy of observation, and the appeal of the picture to our inner feelings" (Trowell, 1937: 20). With other words, art was supposed to realistically represent its subject, and to be harmonic in its composition. She further remarks that the majority of art consumers at the time were unable "to understand and enjoy the works of art of another race [sic]" (ibid: 18), for it required an openness of the art consumer to traditions, ideals and worldviews other than his or her own. At a time when colonizers thought that their experiences in the world were the single true foundation of knowledge production, Trowell observed that

> we unconsciously bring all the likes and dislikes, all the associations and prejudices, which we have inherited and which are fashionable in the world around is unto our judgment of a picture. Consequently [sic] we have very little common ground in such judgment with people who have grown up in an entirely different tradition and environment. (Trowell, 1937: 18)

This quote indicates that Trowell recognized cultural and societal difference as a consequence of different living conditions and histories, and as such demanded to assess the quality and value of arts from Africa from its situatedness. She saw artistic beauty and a particular aesthetic language in local designs and decorations of objects and artefacts she acknowledged as art indigenous to the cultures of current-day Uganda, and felt a need to protect those techniques, forms and patterns she feared would get lost in the "rather unimaginative mechanical world" (ibid: 19) Europeans had created and exported into their colonies.

Based on her field research, archival work, and observations, she wanted to preserve this material heritage, and thus promoted the idea of establishing *authentic* African visual art (ibid) through formal art education. This very aim serves as a prime example of the ambivalence I indicated above. First, one might now wonder what makes African art *authentic*; is it materiality, form, shape, colors, themes, composition? Who decides this? Second, at what point is visual art from Africa authentically enough to be considered African? Beaded art for example, has a long and rich tradition in many African societies (Oberhofer, 2018). This did not remain unnoticed by Asian and European traders who began exporting glass beads to the African continent in exchange for ivory and other raw materials and slaves as early as the medieval ages, which marked the beginning of colonial trade (Oehrl, 2016).

By the beginning of the 19th century, beads and cowrie shells had become one type of currency. This is true for glass beads as well as beads made from corals and other raw materials, which were of high value albeit its dependency on ever changing fashion trends. One might thus assume that due to their significance, glass beads would have been considered as authentic African. However, by the 19th century, Michael Oehrl (2018) further informs, European ethnographers spurned beadwork for their collections, considering the art works for which European beads had been used as not authentically African.

The third important question – and linked to the previous two – to be addressed here asks *what* and *when* is art? In *Tribal Crafts of Uganda* (1953) for example, the crafts Margaret Trowell presents together with Klaus Wachsmann include objects and items as far as hunting gear, agricultural implements, transport and villages. Is it just to label villages and their structural arrangements as well as their inner setup as a *craft*, a categorization of art from Uganda frequently used by Trowell and – in the applied logic – therefore as artforms? What is the meaning associated with the term, then, and does village include only the architecture and the structural village design (Eglash, 1999), or also the interior of houses, the people, their habits, their whereabouts, and more?

Fourth, the teachers for whom *Arts and Crafts. Their development in the School* was written were missionaries and colonizers, predominantly white, foreign and convinced that *the African* (who appears in singular only) to be taught was of lesser intellect, as the following quote shows:

> Accuracy of observation is always to be encouraged but not to be forced to the extinction of all else. If our aim is the building up of an indigenous African art, there is very little to be said about perspective at this stage; in importance it is far below design and colour and vitality. […] An unsophisticated mind finds it difficult to think of his picture as a whole; he can't see the wood for the trees. (Trowell, 1937: 58)

What were the consequences of this mindset for the ways in which art students were taught, and how does it inform contemporary understandings of indigenous local art? And lastly, teaching arts and crafts, in some critical interpretations of the objectives of Trowell's work, also meant teaching the essence of labor and civilization to young African men who did not display discipline or an acceptable work ethic in the eyes of the colonizers (Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a). It is precisely this lack of self-reflection of the "primarily European faculty, particularly in regard to paternalistic attitudes, primitivist guidelines, and colonial power relations" (Pinther and Weigand, 2018: 27) that Kerstin Pinther and Alexandra Weigand, too, criticize. This brings to the forefront the ambivalence we see regarding the person Margaret Trowell and the roles she fulfilled. It marks her legacy and heritage.

What do these observations mean for art education, art and artistic handicraft in Uganda during colonial times as well as today? In order to reconstruct and understand the meanings and forms of engagement with art, its linkages with development and civil society, it is worthwhile to return to Margaret Trowell once more, and to the educational agenda she sought to implement from the 1930s onwards.

The Educational Agenda of Margaret Trowell

Trowell moved to Uganda in 1935 and in 1937 she began to teach art classes to local students – first on the front porch of her house, and later in a classroom format. By 1940, her art classes had been integrated into the curriculum of the higher certificate of Makerere College (Kyeyune, 2003). Her teachings included drawing lessons and craft. In spite of my earlier (and, for that matter, subsequent) criticism, I also must re-emphasize that Trowell's appreciation of the aesthetic and artistic value of woven textiles, wickerwork, ceramic vessels, barkcloth and others was indeed genuine. Genuine, too, was her concern that those artforms to vanish, possibly altogether, due to colonization and the changes its agendas promoted (Kakande, 2006; Kyeyune, 2003; Nakazibwe, 2005; Trowell, 1937).

As an artist, art teacher, and missionary she had been familiar with the ideas of the reform movement, which can be linked with her admiration of "the sophistication of what was then called **objects of daily use**" (Pinther and Weigand, 2018: 12, emphasis as in original). In this sense, Trowell's contributions to acknowledging, appreciating, archiving, and promoting artistic handicraft techniques and de-

signs, for example in *Tribal Crafts of Uganda (1953)* or *African Design (1960)*, are widely appreciated and of significance to many Ugandan art historians and scholars today (Kyeyune, 2003). Suzanne Preston Blier refers to Trowell as "one of the first to recognize its [African design's] aesthetic importance" (Preston Blier, 2018: 87), and it was she, too, who understood that particular oral traditions, including proverbs and allegories, "may inform a design's symbolic grounding" (ibid: 87).

However, teaching forms of local art was also part of her civilizing mission with which Ugandans were to learn discipline and the value of hard manual labour (Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a). In Trowell's opinion it was not appropriate for Ugandans to learn "the skill of the European" (Trowell, 1937: 2). Rather, she felt, "those [Europeans] who lead must seek to show him [the African] the door that is best fitted to his stage of development and not that which they have found most suited to their own psychology" (ibid: 9). Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa further points towards Trowell's observation that there were already too many young Ugandans who sought for "white collar jobs" (Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a: 2). White collar jobs can be understood as synonym for an office job in colonial administration. Those young men who strove for such "white collar jobs" had been educated at missionary schools belonged to an upcoming elite of the first generation of western-style educated men. By the late 1930s, Trowell feared, they wanted to live a life similar to the *European man*. She however, found this aspiration to be too far-fetched for their mental capacities and state of development (ibid). Like children, she was sure, they needed to learn that innovations are the consequence of hard labour and discipline first. Art education adapted to the local cultural conditions, she believed, would teach those young, ambitious men their place in society.

In her critical analysis of *African Arts and Crafts. Their Development in the School*, Wolukau-Wanambwa argues that Trowell had (Christian) God-obeying mediaeval Europe of the sixteenth century in mind when contemplating an appropriate curriculum for Ugandans at the beginning of the twentieth century (Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a). Indeed, in her writings Trowell does elaborate on medieval Europe, but apart from associating pre-industrialized European realities as appropriate for the state of mind of Africans in the 1930s, she also admired this period as superior to the *modern* European mindset. The medieval mindset was superior not in its technological achievements but in purity of heart in the form of Christianity, of admiration for the aesthetics of objects, and the simplicity of peasant life (Trowell, 1937).

An interconnectedness between evangelization, Christianity and the meanings and values of local forms of art is stressed not only by Trowell or Wolukau-Wanambwa. Other researchers such as Angelo Kakande (2006) or George Kyeyune (2003) and Ugandan art connoisseurs who shared some of their knowledge with me for the purposes of this research (in form of interviews, informal conversations and roundtable workshop discussions), too, stress this linkage; albeit in different ways.

Kakande (2006) and Kyeyune (2003) both argue that evangelization demonized local art as barbaric or satanic, and according to interviews with Kizito Maria Kasule and Philip Kwesiga (both 29/08/2018), pushed local art into hiding. However, Kwesiga also emphasized that ancestral worship and local belief systems were the major guarantor for the survival of local art handicraft production. Without ancestral worship, traditional beliefs and spiritual practices, he believes, Ugandans may have lost touch with their material cultural heritage.

Art in Missionary School Education

Within the first decennium of the twentieth century, missionary work in the sense of evangelization of Ugandans had altered the education system entirely; for teaching the bible also meant teaching how to read the Latin alphabet (Kyeyune, 2003). Kyeyune highlights the relation between evangelization and education, stating that "although none of the early missionaries were educationists, there had never been a time when missionary work was not educational" (Kyeyune, 2003: 47). Hence, evangelization led towards the foundation of educational institutions according to British educational concepts. In the process, the local pre-colonial education systems, in which children and youngsters had learned in their homesteads[1], in communities or – especially artists – in workshop formats (Littlefield Kasfir, 1999; Nakazibwe, 2005; private conversation with Kizito Maria Kasule from 25.08.2018) became considered inferior to the newly established missionary schools, also called *bush-schools*.

Angelo Kakande, George Kyeyune, and others agree that the formalization of the education system according to western concepts had a major impact on art indigenous to Ugandan cultures and its perceptions in the early twentieth century. Art classes remained absent from missionary curricula (Kyeyune, 2003). Kyeyune briefly contemplates reasons for this in human and financial resources, but quickly proceeds towards his main argument why art may have been omitted from curricula. "In Uganda as elsewhere in Africa", he writes,

> Art had always been an integral part of community life. The two were inseparable. Religion was bound up with a whole range of art practices, which included music, dance and drama, myths and legends, poetry and oral traditions. I argue that to introduce art in schools as a subject of cultural reflection at the time when conversion to Christianity was in its embryonic stage would have inflamed cultural tensions and contradictions between Christianity and local life […]. Since their primary duty was to evangelise, and to deliver the African from 'heathen' worship, it was imperative that missionaries watched with caution and regulated disciplines,

1 I use the word 'homestead' because it is the term most frequently used in the situation of inquiry.

> which would bring into focus traditional institutions and their attendant ideologies. (Kyeyune, 2003: 49).

In Kyeyune's argumentation, art is considered a powerful element that structured the public – and with it the religious, social, and cultural order of and within communities.

In the quote above, community life and religion are used almost interchangeably. Here, Kyeyune interlinks worship with traditional institutions, which become a site of power contestation during colonization. Kakande (2006) remains more differentiated and simultaneously more radical in his argumentation, stating that *bush-schools* led by missionaries went as far as *demonizing* traditional art forms – both oral and material forms – in Buganda. He differentiates their meanings as religious, aesthetic, practical (for everyday use), communicational, or as facilitators of power. He writes:

> Although some had magico-religious values, not all traditional African art forms were religious. Some were aesthetic […] others were functional on a day to day basis […] some were used to promote community cohesion and productiveness […], some legitimated and transmitted power […]. But notwithstanding their socio-political complexity, missionaries demonised, marginalised and excluded all traditional arts from missionary education in Buganda. (Kakande, 2006: 41)

Kakande purposefully separates African art objects and artefacts from associating them solely with religion. While some traditional objects were indeed related to worship, religion other than Christianity, and spiritual rituals, others were functional in their everyday roles, and some were "meant to be enjoyed for [their] own sake alone" (Trowell 1960: n.p., as cited in Preston Blier, 2018: 87), as Trowell, too, recognized. However, conceptually limited frameworks of art objects from Africa as linked to spirituality and practicality only, Kerstin Pinther concludes, continue to be widespread and confine both, the historical and the contemporary meanings of visual arts from Africa (2022).

What Kakande (2006) and Kyeyune's (2003) writings and the narrations they unfold have in common are their observations of the interconnectedness of developments that took place during the era of early British colonial rule in the then Ugandan Protectorate. They both reconstruct linkages between efforts to evangelize the local population of nowadays Uganda with establishment of the so-called *bush-schools* and the re-framing of local art. One important result of those developments was the demonization of visual arts and their performative elements. Subsequently, objects identified by missionaries as local art objects were banned and labeled as "objects of witchcraft and sorcery" (Kakande, 2006: 42), up to the point where con-

verts to Christianity were forced to burn the artefacts and art objects they possessed (ibid).

It is noteworthy that British colonial rulers could have interpreted art objects as powerful actants. At least powerful enough to demarcate their presence in public spaces. At times they were even banned[2] (Kyeyune, 2003). Neither Kyeyune nor Kakande or other art historians and anthropologists from Uganda and the diaspora whose works I read would disagree that the hegemonial meanings of those objects have not always already been a site of negotiation, contestation, and change (e.g., Kasfir and Förster, 2013; Kasozi, 2019; Nakazibwe, 2005; Preston Blier, 2002; Siegenthaler, 2019). They would further agree that the colonial rule – through its civilizing missions, evangelization, and the introduction of formal, British education – altered the perceptions of local art drastically. While colonialism in Uganda formally ended in 1962 the "particular dynamic that triggered the colonization of the non-European world […] could no longer simply be undone" (Rottenburg, 2009: 12). As such, the here cited scholars argue, coloniality continues to prevail well into the post-colonial era.

From Missionary Education to the School of Fine Arts at Makerere College

Given the particularities of the Ugandan conditions those developments cannot be understood, let alone reconstructed, without considering and carefully analyzing the work of Margaret Trowell and her contribution to the development of art education and the art scene in Uganda. As stated above, Margaret Trowell was the founder and the initial director of the School of Arts at Makerere College, which was the first art school of higher education in East Africa (Siegenthaler, 2018). And while today more universities and colleges in Uganda have established art degree programs – although mainly in and around Kampala – connoisseurs of the contemporary Ugandan art scene continue to speak of a *Makerere-centric* art (education), as its art school continues to be the epicenter for art education (Garrido Castellano, 2018).

Back in 1937, it was an article about a student exhibition held in London and curated by Kenneth Murray that had inspired Trowell to start teaching art in Kampala (Onuzulike, 2013; Trowell, 1957). Murray, who was an art educator in what is now Nigeria, had brought eighty-five artworks of wood-carvings, terracotta and watercolors of five of his art students to be displayed to be at display at the Zwemmer Gallery in London. While reading the article, she decided that whatever could be

2 Albeit for different reasons, this remained true during the late colonial period as well. Venny Nakazibwe (2005), for example, elaborates on the use and agency of bark cloth in anti-colonial movements of the Baganda, and how the suppression thereof resulted in the development of new forms, shapes, and functions of the textile.

done in Nigeria could be done in Uganda as well (Trowell, 1957). Shortly after, she received permission to teach art to Makerere College students on a voluntary basis on Wednesday afternoons. Initially she taught on the veranda of her own house (e.g. Kyeyune, 2003; Trowell, 1957), but soon was able to move her classes to the rooms of the newly established college, at which Ugandan students, usually the sons of local administrators of British rule in higher positions, came to study for a diploma (Kyeyune, 2003). She heavily criticized their striving for *white collar jobs*. She feared that Ugandans – and other Africans – would be unable to grasp the scope of innovation, endurance, costs and hardships in form of failures that had gone into European inventions and that had ultimately led towards the advanced standards of living of the *White man*:

> An extraordinary lack of imagination or wonder; an acceptance of the achievements of the white man as something obtained without struggle or perseverance by the superior race [sic]. An aeroplane is just the white man's bird which he has in all probability always possessed, cotton piece-goods may have grown in bales for all he knows and cares, and the solution of the problem of a rainproof roof will always be satisfactorily met by a sheet of corrugated iron. (Trowell 1936: 79, as cited in Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a: 3)

This conviction contradicts Trowell's acknowledgement of the imagination and wonder of African artists and their designs, whereby she attributes their designs to a "man's personal desire to create things of beauty" (Trowell, 1960: 13). She re-emphasizes this observed "urge to create things of beauty" (ibid: 15), which resonates with a sense for imagination and wonder rather than with the lack thereof.

And yet, Trowell does not contradict herself. While she promotes the acknowledgment of what she refers to as applied art as being rooted in the desire to create things of beauty, and renders those (Europeans) who hierarchize art and refuse to acknowledge the aesthetic aspirations of handicraft artists as shallow thinkers, she does not grant shallow thinking – or thinking at all for that matter – to Africans. Instead, she attests Africans indifference, and achievements of the *White man* as something he has probably always possessed. Africans, by common and very wrong understanding (Chilisa, 2012), could not understand the processuality of industrial and technological achievements. Consequently, the standards of living of the *White man* were deemed inappropriate for Africans. As much as Trowell acknowledged their imagination and skills for the creation of art objects, without hesitation she denied Africans these very attributes when it came to understanding the scope of European achievements.

Her art curriculum reflected this conviction. Although students did learn art techniques in her classes (Trowell, 1937), the quotation at the beginning of this chapter convincingly demonstrates that her main educational interest lay elsewhere:

namely in what she called the *tribal crafts* indigenous to Ugandan ethnic groups (Trowell and Wachsmann, 1953). For Wolukau-Wanambwa (2019a) this emphasis on local art forms is closely linked to the civilizing mission of the local population. Ugandans were taught craftmanship in order to learn the discipline, preciseness and working attitude of the colonial masters. And while Trowell, much like most colonizers at the time, was convinced that Europeans were further developed and had reached higher – meaning more sophisticated and civilized – standards of living, the analysis of her writings about Ugandan art and art education bring forward two additional notions I find pivotal to consider. One, Trowell was among the first and few foreigners who appreciated and acknowledged the aesthetic value of everyday objects and other art forms outside the frames of conceptualizing art at the time. As such, she worked intensively to understand arts from Africa in their own conditions and beyond normative conceptions of art. At the same time, she was equally concerned that colonization and developments might lead towards the loss of the diversity of local material culture she sought to prevent not only through teaching crafts, but also through collecting and archiving art objects, by exhibiting and by publishing her work (Trowell, 1960; Trowell and Wachsmann, 1953).

The interpretations of the role of Margaret Trowell will continue to remain controversial. However, most perspectives considered for this dissertation do reach consensus in their emphasis on Trowell's immense help with the preservation of local art knowledge that may possibly have been lost otherwise. This contribution is continuously acknowledged by the decision to keep her name as the official title of the art school at Makerere University. It is called Margaret Trowell School of Industrial and Fine Arts (MTSIFA) until this day.

The second aspect I want to emphasize is the fact that for Trowell herself the "achievements of the white man" (Trowell, 1936: 79) were not at all entirely glamourous and something to strive for. Europeans, she found, had created a "rather unimaginative mechanical world" (Trowell, 1937: 19) and "grown cold and blasé and lost the gift of entering into the world pictured before us" (ibid: 7–8). As a devoted Christian, she romanticized about medieval European life prior to industrialization and enlightenment (Wolukau-Wanambwa, 2019a). For her, a healthy peasant population living in synch with Christianity and dedicated to the Christian god seemed far better than the *mechanical beings* they had become during the era of industrialization. Europeans, she lamented, did not know how to stand in front of frescoes on walls and ceilings and "shiver at the anguish of the damned, [how to] wait breathlessly watching the scale of judgment in the hands of the angel […]" (Trowell, 1937: 7). In her opinion, Europeans, albeit in different ways, too had lost imagination and wonder, and Trowell's aim was to prevent this from happening in the Ugandan Protectorate of British colonial rule.

As part of her agenda, Trowell sought to establish indigenous forms of fine arts using western techniques. Ironically, it would be *her* assessment of art that would

determine the indigeneity of any local art piece (Littlefield Kasfir, 1999; Trowell, 1937). For the establishment of *indigenous visual arts*, she instructed other (British) art teachers in African colonies to consider that ritual, drama and craftmanship were, according to her understandings, almost always attached to spirituality; hence of religious significance (for a critical analysis of this assumption, see also: Kakande, 2006). Having this in mind she considered it worthwhile to compare the development of religious drama from early Greek times through the Middle Ages in Europe to understand "what is being done in many parts of Africa to-day [sic]" (ibid: 9). Under these conditions, teaching students arts and crafts was closely related to the evangelization of Africans. Its symbolic meanings could also be linked with Christianity. And teaching students to appreciate frescoes and religious art from Europe, in her opinion, could deepen students' relation with the Christian god. To her, art was necessary to religion and far more important in the education of children than reasoning for art appeals to people's subconsciousness that brings forward emotions, aiding the learning process (ibid). The development of Ugandan indigenous visual art, she believed, could embrace and facilitate such notions. Curiously, she did not encourage her students to appropriate any "abstract elements from the regional material cultures in [her students'] art making, most likely due to her fear that such attempts would ultimately lead to 'soulless' modernist experiments" (Sanyal and Kasule, 2006: 53), and, as Sunanda Sanyal[3] further notes, remained "entirely oblivious of her own mediating presence in this process" (ibid: 54), as she failed to reflect how her ideas, convictions and understandings shaped her educational curriculum.

The Commodification of Art Products

Thus far, I have elaborated on the linkages between art education and evangelization in Trowell's work. Furthermore, I have addressed her role in collection and archival work of local material heritage. Another important issue that helps to understand the conditions of contemporary artistic handicrafts is their history of commodification. Already in 1937, Trowell discussed the potentials of visual art for economic development (Trowell, 1937: 42–48) – years before philosophers Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno coined the term cultural industry (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002 [1944]), which I will get back to in chapter 3.5. In *Arts and Crafts* Trowell suggested to try and minimize the influence of western aesthetics by showing "them

3 Kizito Maria Kasule wrote a commentary about Sunanda Sanyal's paper titled Modernism and cultural politics on East Africa: Cecil Todd's drawings of the Uganda martyrs: [With commentary], which was originally published in the african arts journal. Sanyal and Kasule are thus both referred to as authors here, although the former wrote the paper while the later wrote the commentary only.

[Africans] the best we can of forms of art more nearly akin to their own, such as peasant pottery, good weaving, medieval carving, and so on" (29). She simultaneously surrendered to the logics of modernization by emphasizing the importance of acknowledging local art products by purchasing them. "[W]hat is even more important", she wrote, "by collecting and encouraging the best that we can find in their own art, [we] teach them to have a pride in it instead of despising it as a thing of the past, which is their [the artefacts'] chief danger to-day [sic]" (ibid: 29).

Here, Trowell's narrative contradicts the narrations of Kakande (2006) and Kyeyune (2003). They both find missionaries and evangelizers and their interpretations of local art objects as them being barbaric and sometimes even satanic one of the major threats to indigenous forms of artistic expression. Unlike Trowell, Kakande and Kyeyune perceive the newly established cultural hegemony by the British colonizers as the single major threat to the survival of indigenous art; not Ugandans favoring imported goods categorized as *modern*. Furthermore, neither of them write of local art forms as being perceived as *underdeveloped* by communities and their members at the time.

Today, well over a century and a half after the evangelization mission in contemporary Uganda began, and almost ninety years after the publication of *Arts and Crafts. Their Development in the School* it cannot be deciphered nor exactly reconstructed *how* local forms of artistic articulation were understood by whom at the time. It is likely that many different meanings and perceptions existed, some of them complementing one another, others full of contradictions. Unfortunately, the vast majority of written testimonies tell the perspectives of the colonizers since, especially in the colonized world, knowledge production and authorship was almost exclusively attributed to them. And other forms of knowing were subordinated as underdeveloped, tribal or primitive (Akena, 2012)[4].

Back in 1937, Margaret Trowell feared that exposure to the European way of life and especially the exposure to their material culture, innovations and inventions would lead towards the loss of local material culture. And since she held both, discursive and executive power, she transferred this fear into writings about the economic potential of arts and crafts, both to local and an international market, and

4 Current debates are much more diverse: For Wolukau-Wanambwa (2019a) for example, art education in the Ugandan Protectorate was first and foremost about civilizing Ugandans, and establishing a working ethics and moral similar to that of the colonizers. Kyeyune finds Trowell's work to be an exception to how foreigners treated Ugandan indigenous art and acknowledges her contribution to the collection and conservation of knowledge (2003). Littlefield Kasfir interprets the approach to art education taken by Trowell with the governing strategy of indirect rule which "adhered to the principle of least interferences with existing tradition" (Littlefield Kasfir, 1999: 141), and led towards her principle of "we start from it, study it, and honour it" (ibid: 141).

linked the sustainability of promoting artistic handicrafts and establishing indigenous art forms with their marketability. Approximately 70 years later, in 2005, the *UNESCO Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* was passed as a response to the fear of the loss of cultural diversity due to globalization (Neverdeen Pieterse, 1995; UNESCO, 2005). The narrative applied is strikingly similar, and the 2005 Convention has since established a discursive hegemony that currently shapes contemporary cultural policies, especially in countries of the Global South (De Beukelaer and Vlassis, 2020).

Furthermore, Trowell promoted the notion "that [a] sense of the importance of work well and properly done and loved for its own sake" (Trowell, 1937: 29) must be kept by those who support African art by buying it. Nowadays, a number of recent development initiatives[5] aim at improving the quality of local artistic handicraft products, which eventually, according to their rationales, increases the marketability of said objects. Alongside the improvement of the marketability, the creative industry and its artisan members then partake in sustainable economic development as they would become independent of foreign funds (e.g., UNESCO, 2015, 2017; UTA, 2019).

It is surprising only at first glance that in *Arts and Crafts,* Trowell further specifies her envisioned market for those *well-crafted objects* as an international, European market. While objects should certainly "be of service in the native village life" (Trowell, 1937: 34), the commercialization of crafts did not, in her opinion, cease them from being art objects. Quite the contrary – she argues that all art or "beautiful things" (ibid: 34) in past and present, anywhere in the world, were and continue to be made for wealthy people of the aristocracy. As indicated above, this understanding that art can and should be utilized for economic development is one of the dominant positions in current debates on the roles of art in Uganda, especially among international development actors, socially engaged artists, and some scholars.

In closing this chapter, we can conclude that art education, for Trowell, did not stop with teaching students in classrooms. Also, adults should turn towards artistic handicrafts, especially when considering the economic potential of a flourishing handicraft scene, as the following quote shows:

> In the preceding chapter we discussed craftsmanship from the point of view of the school pupil and decided that one of its chief aims should be to improve the

5 For example, a co-operative between the Uganda Tourism Association (UTA) and the German Society for international Cooperation (GIZ), the South Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and UNESCO Uganda for one project. Or the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) of Uganda in technical partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and funding partnership with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) in another development initiative I analyzed for the purposes of this study to name but a couple.

> local standard of living; now we should think out more fully its economic aspect in terms of the adult community. (Trowell, 1937: 42)

The intonations are clear: craftmanship, in Trowell's opinion, has the potential to improve the quality of life of the local population. Assessing the (then) current conditions, she concludes that most parts of Africa are unlikely to become industrialized in the near future for the simple lack of sufficient power sources. And yet, she assumes that fostering craftmanship on a large scale can only endure if it will be able to meet the increased (economic) needs of the local market. While the taste of well-off Africans and particularly of Europeans are to be considered – for they, too, she assesses, fancy "things with an African flavour" (ibid: 44) – focusing on the daily needs of community members, here, are favored. Trowell attests *useful* artistic handicraft products potentially to be the most promising outlook for art objects, as they might be able to meet the changing needs and demands of the local population. In addition, however, making art products for export would mean that objects would have to be of "valuable nature with the very definite characteristics that could not be obtained elsewhere" (ibid: 44).

We do not learn whether and to what extent those *definite characteristics*, in Trowell's opinion, existed. What to me becomes clear in this quotation, though, is that the sovereignty of interpretation of what is of "valuable nature" and "could not be obtained elsewhere" (ibid: 44) remains with foreigners in general and with Trowell in particular – and hence not with the Ugandan artist-artisans. Furthermore, given the frequency with which she emphasizes the need for *well-crafted* products and the fact that Europeans are to "slowly […] introduce better technique and new forms" (ibid: 38), one can conclude that in her eyes there was indeed much room for improvement of the quality of the products. An improvement only skilled Europeans, like herself, could promote.

2.3 The Nexus of Art, Politics, and the Public Sphere

2.3.1 Artistic Articulation and Politics in Post-Independence Uganda

With the end of World War II, the colonial period and with it the British rule overseas began to crumble. In 1947 India declared its independence. A few years later, in 1952 the Mau-Mau uprisings against British rule in nowadays Kenya begun. Although they officially ended in 1959, four years prior to Kenya's independence, the uprisings – also referred to as the Mau-Mau emergency – are commonly interpreted as having paved the path for independence (Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale, 2003; Ogot and Ochieng, 1995). Simultaneously, on the western border of the Kenyan colony, Ugandan anticolonial movements, too, had gained popularity and wider support.