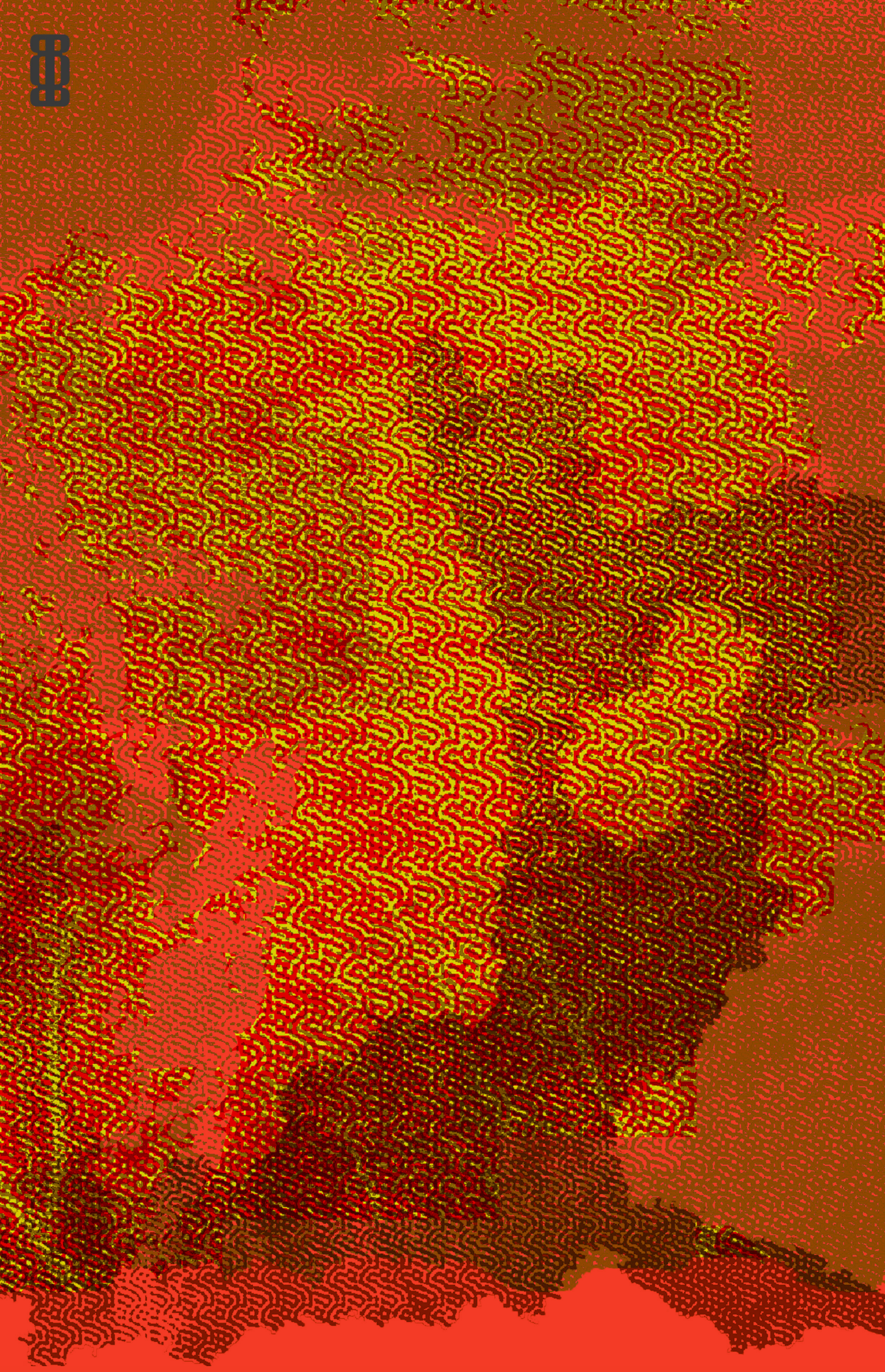

PAN-AFRICAN BIENNALE INVITATION

PAN AFRICAN BIENNALE

Dear Mokhethi Rampeta,

We are honored to invite you to participate in the inaugural **Pan-African Biennale,** which will take place in Nairobi in 2026. You have been selected as the main exhibiting practitioner from **Lesotho,** forming part of a core group shaping the intellectual and cultural foundation of the Biennale.

This is the first Biennale of its kind on the African continent – a gathering of architects, designers, artists, scholars, and cultural producers drawn from across Africa and from within the diaspora.

The Pan-African Biennale marks a defining moment: Africa articulating its architectural and cultural future on its own terms. This landmark event aims to provide a space to define authentic narratives of the diverse African architectural landscape.

Rather than reacting to external narratives, this Biennale will serve as a reference point from which others will, in the future, orient themselves.

This edition's curatorial theme: Shifting the center, from Fragility to Resilience

This Biennale recognizes the historical pressures that have shaped African built environments, while affirming the continuity of knowledge, adaptation, and creativity that has sustained African communities across generations.

It foregrounds resilience not as recovery, but as a practice of agency, memory, and imagination. Your work stands within this discourse, reflecting not just creative resilience but also a deep authenticity and respect for the terrain upon which your structures and designs are centered.

Next Steps

At this stage, we request formal confirmation of your participation.

Upon confirmation, you will receive:
- Programme structure and timeline
- Exhibition and collaboration frameworks
- Key dates and phases

I hope that this is an event in which you would like to participate.

Please confirm your participation within 10 days upon receipt of this letter.

We also request that this invitation remain strictly confidential until your formal acceptance and the official public communication from the Biennale.

I look forward to your positive response.

Warm regards,

Omar Degan

Founder and Curator
Pan-African Biennale

PAN AFRICAN BIENNALE

Shifting the Center – from Fragility to Resilience,

The Pan-African Biennale marks a turning point: a reclaiming of Africa's architectural narrative and a repositioning of the continent at the center of global discourse.
For centuries, Africa's built environment has been interpreted through external, often colonial, frameworks that ignored the continent's own spatial intelligence. This Biennale reverses that gaze. It affirms Africa as a generator of knowledge, resilience, and future-making in architecture.

Central to this vision is fragility not as weakness, but as a historical and spatial condition from which extraordinary resilience has emerged. African cities, shaped by displacement, extraction, and environmental precarity, continue to reinvent themselves through vernacular ingenuity, cultural continuity, and community-led innovation. The Biennale asks how architecture can transform fragility into a source of insight, strength, and resilience.

Decolonization is the foundation of this edition. It demands moving beyond imported standards and restoring the authority of Indigenous and diasporic knowledge systems. African architecture rooted in land, climate, memory, and collective life offers models of sustainability and ecological intelligence urgently needed worldwide.
The shift from fragility to resilience becomes a dialogue between memory and innovation, repair and possibility.

This inaugural edition gathers all African nations to articulate a unified vision for the continent's architectural futures. From Nairobi to Dakar, Mogadishu to Kinshasa, Kigali to Cape Town, African cities are not merely rebuilding, they are redefining what architecture can be. Local communities and the global African diaspora are leading transformations grounded in cultural expression and self-determination.

Hosting the first edition in Nairobi is intentional. Kenya's capital embodies the layered realities of the contemporary African city, informality and regulation, colonial inheritance, future vision, and local adaptation. It is a place that asks the core questions of the Biennale: Who designs? Whose histories shape our cities? How do we build futures rooted in African identity and resilience?

This Biennale rejects the Western lens that celebrates African architecture only when it resembles a safari lodge. It provides a platform for every African nation to present its architectural intelligence from ancestral vernacular systems to cutting-edge responses to climate change. Africa's solutions, creativity, and values stand at the center of the global conversation.

Africa has always been the center culturally, intellectually, and spiritually.
This Biennale asserts that truth with clarity and purpose. Africa's fragility has forged its resilience, and its cities, histories, and people hold knowledge essential for the world's future. This Biennale is not an event; it is a movement. A return to the center on Africa's terms, for Africa's future, and for the world to learn from.

Read the full curatorial statement on our website:
https://www.panafricanbiennale.org/curatorial-statement