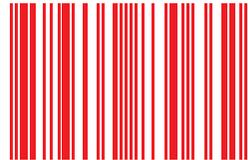


DIY / This is how you make news:

Take your camera and leave your house. While walking, photograph whatever attracts your attention. Select two photos per day for five days. Give each photo a title and a short caption describing what caught your attention. After a week, you recognise the news in what you found. Compare this with the world news you read in the papers.

ISBN 978-9460830662



THE  
MAKING  
OF PAPA

—  
Partici-  
pating  
Artists  
Press  
Agency

—  
Lino  
Hellings

THE MAKING OF PAPA

THE MAKING OF

PAPA

PAPA

post  
editions  
/  
Drik

post editions, Rotterdam / Drik, Dhaka

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Simple instructions that enable photographers and artists to collaborate in order to produce coherent work even though they are thousands of miles apart.

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A series of photo essays by a variety of photographers shows how people bluff their way through life.

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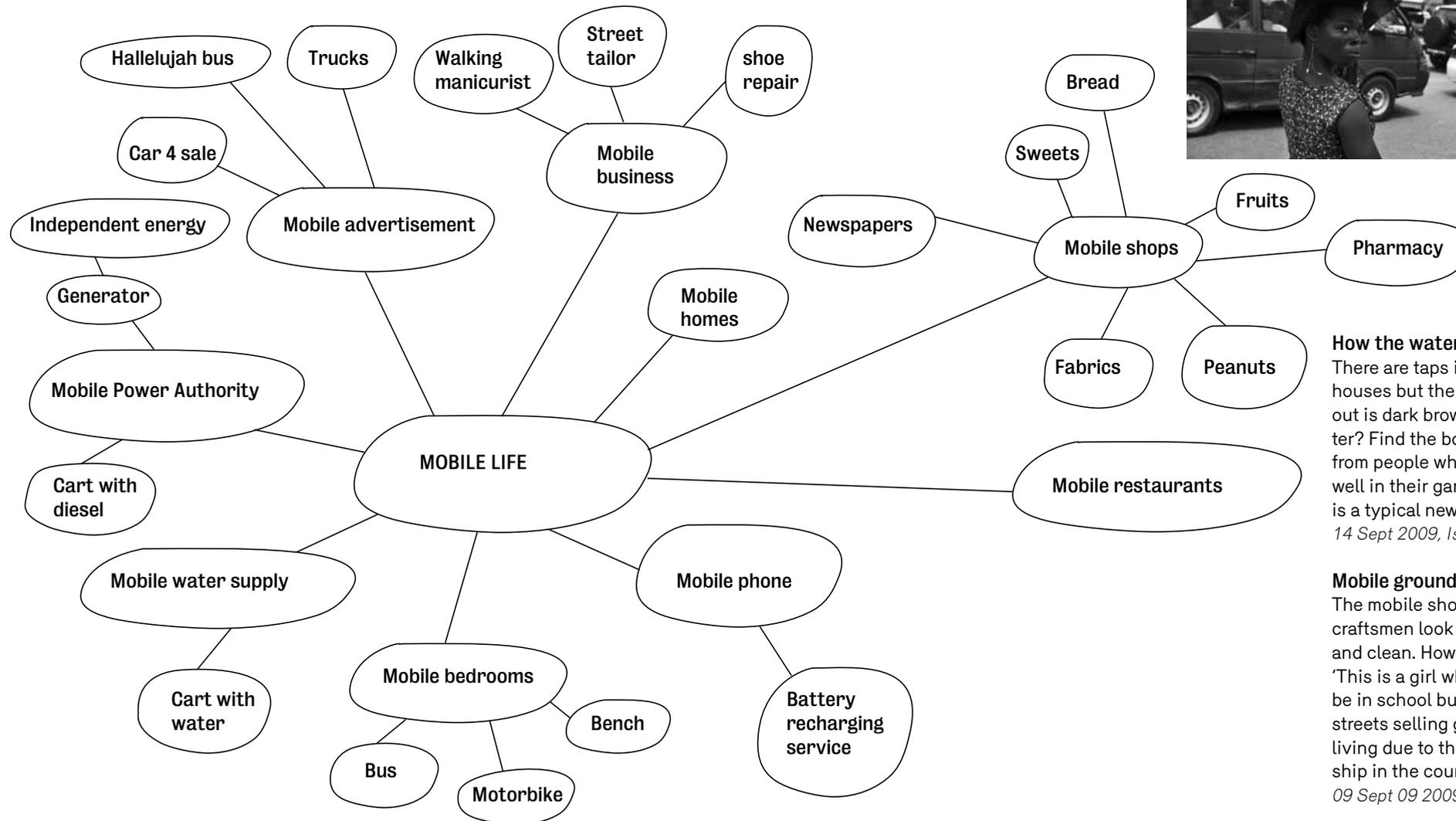
# LAGOS, THE UNPLANNED CITY

## MOBILE LIFE

Everything that doesn't work in Lagos – and that is a lot – is made operative by the people themselves. The shopkeepers and craftsmen are mobile: if you want to buy bread, have your trousers repaired or need a haircut, you just walk outside and the vendors and craftsmen circle around you. As the electricity works only ten or

twenty per cent of the time and brown water pours from the taps, the electricity and the water supply are made mobile too. If you want to work on one of your blogs, you go out into the street to find a cart with jerry cans filled with diesel. You start your generator, get your computer running and off you go. If you want to wash

yourself, get the boy from the streets to fill up the water container in your house. Take a bucket of water from the container to your bathroom and indulge yourself in throwing the fresh water over your body with a saucepan.



### How the water system works

There are taps in some of the houses but the water that comes out is dark brown. 'In need of water? Find the boy who bought it from people who have drilled a well in their garden'. Water seller is a typical newcomers' job. 14 Sept 2009, Israel Ophori

### Mobile groundnuts

The mobile shopkeepers and craftsmen look so well-dressed and clean. How do they do that? 'This is a girl who is supposed to be in school but is out on the streets selling groundnuts for a living due to the economic hardship in the country'. 09 Sept 09 2009, Tuoyo Omagba

### Independent energy

The barber uses two small generators to ensure his business goes uninterrupted by power failures. Generators are one of Nigeria's main exports. Despite the government's failure to assure electricity, users of generators seem to enjoy their 'energy independence'. 09 Nov 2010, Andrew Esiebo

### Walking manicurist

Receive the service in the street or invite the craftsman into your home. 'Northern Nigerians doing pedicures and manicures without knowing the danger of distributing the HIV virus as a result of using unsterilised equipment'. Unpublished 2011, Israel Ophori

# ROTTERDAM, THE REGULATED CITY

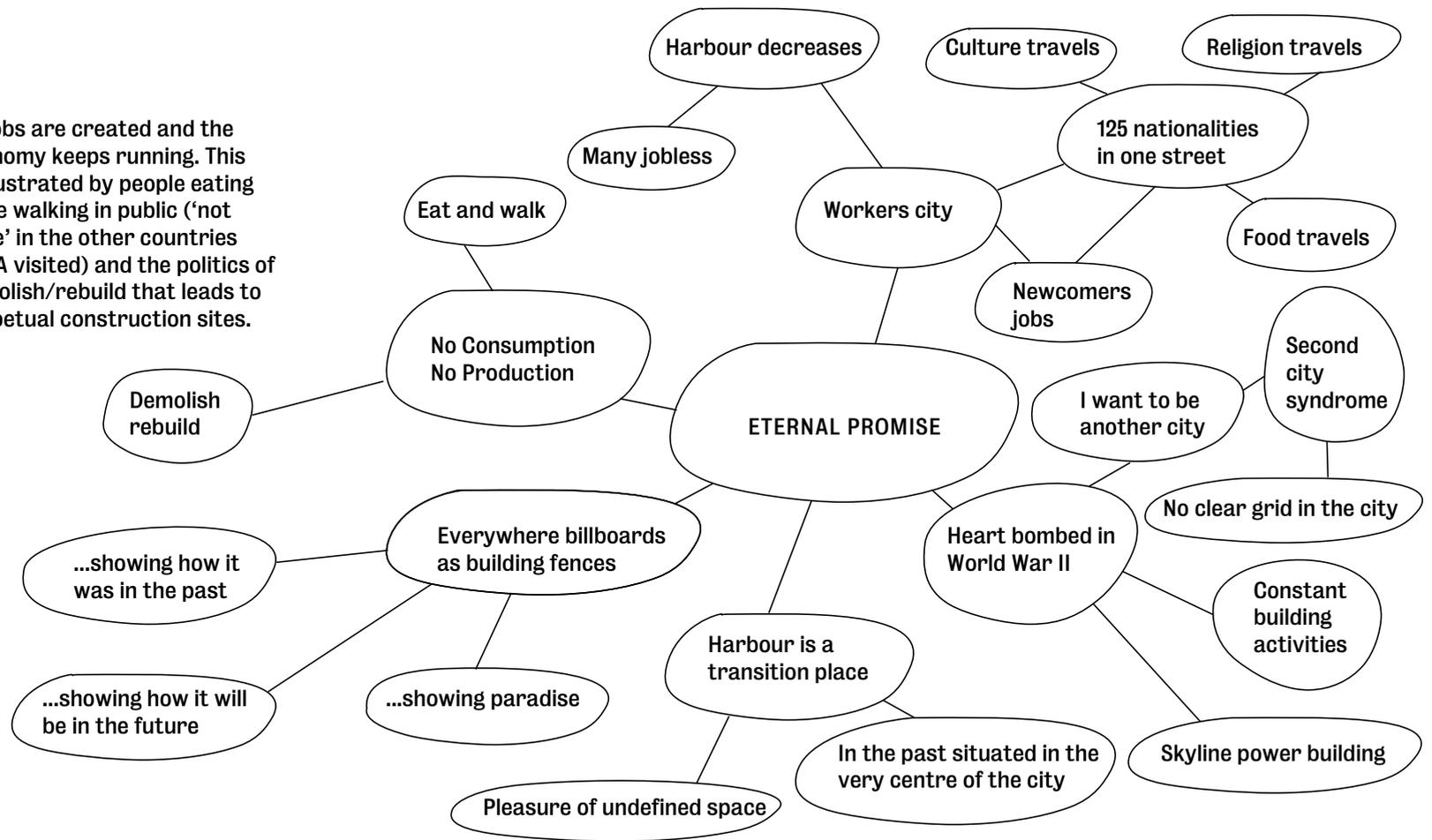
## ETERNAL PROMISE

Rotterdam has been a transit city and a city in transition for decades. Rotterdam once had the largest harbour in the world. In the port goods are reloaded for the whole of Europe and beyond. As the heart of Rotterdam was devastated by bombing during the Second World War, the city has been trying again and again to reconstruct its city centre. The 'eternal promise' of Rotterdam makes the city alive. It has a freshness that is the envy of other cities. All the building sites are surrounded by fences with large-scale photos showing either what it looked like a century ago or what it will look like in the (near?) future. On every fence you can read: 'Listen, the new heart of Rotterdam is pounding here'.

Rotterdam has many poor neighbourhoods, some with jobless former dockworkers and some with 90 per cent immigrants, mostly unemployed. It makes the political situation in Rotterdam the sharpest in the whole country. The advantage of being a city in transition is that Rotterdam has a lot of undefined empty space. That keeps the promise intact and attracts artists, designers and architects to live and work here.

The promise also refers to the attitude of 'No Consumption/No Production', the reverse of what we found in Lagos. There the acronym is 'No Contribution, No Consumption' (National Council for Nigeria and The Camerouns). In the Netherlands people have to consume,

so jobs are created and the economy keeps running. This is illustrated by people eating while walking in public ('not done' in the other countries PAPA visited) and the politics of demolish/rebuild that leads to perpetual construction sites.



### Power building

Right next to the mess of the railway station building site, the first brand new skyscrapers welcome you to the city. Offices for insurance companies, banks and a hotel are what I see.  
09 March 2010, Lino Hellings



### Artist's impression

Standing with my back to the City Hall. Looking at a picture of the City Hall. A blossoming cherry tree, a 50-foot woman and a gigantic bird. Artist's impression it says. And that it is.  
06 Apr 2010, Maurice Bogaert



### Chips with mayonnaise

It is very Dutch to eat chips with mayonnaise on the street. On the market square there is a stall: 'most healthy chips of the Netherlands'. The multicultural society is supposed to be a failure in our country. Dutch families enjoy Turkish kebabs just as much.  
06 Apr 2010, Lino Hellings



### The old harbour

A man transports scrap metal with his ship from one harbour to another. He says his hands are resistant to poison and acid.  
01 Nov 2010, Nies Medema



## LOW OVERHEADS

### Walking manicurist

(LAGOS, NIGERIA) Northern Nigerians performing pedicures and manicures without knowing the danger of distributing the HIV virus as a result of using unsterilised equipment.



## LOW OVERHEADS

78/79

### Working the hassle

(DETROIT, USA) A man has set up a yard sale in front of his house in Detroit's Near East Side. He's trying to sell the contents of a neighbouring house. Three chairs, a couple pairs of shoes

and a random painting. He wants three dollars for the painting, about the price of a hit of heroin in this neighbourhood. I am not sure this man is an addict, but the truth is that there are no supermarkets, schools or medical centres left in this part of

town. What is left are pawnshops, liquor stores and drug dealers.



## LOW OVERHEADS

### Scales on bus stop

(BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN) This pensioner is trying to earn some extra money. The main street is packed with beauty salons. There must be some women who want to know how much they weigh.



## AT THE BARBER'S

### Mongolian saloon

(DHAKA, BANGLADESH) As children we used to talk about Italian Saloons ('It' is a brick in Bangla, so these were saloons where you sat on roadside bricks). We also had Mongolian Saloons, which

were under mango trees. Don't see enough of the tree to tell which country this saloon would be from, but it's certainly a spacious barbershop!

KAPSALON  ADEM



**AT THE BARBER'S**

**Barbershop Adem**

(ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS) This barbershop is called Adem, which means 'breath' in Dutch. The barbershop is filled with men and boys at the end of the afternoon. It looks like a tea house. The barber-

shop is just for men. To have your hair cut is only ten euros (my barber charges €40). You do not have to make an appointment.



## AT THE BARBER'S

### The Barbers

(LAGOS, NIGERIA) A barbershop at the Iddo Terminus. Barbering is a job common among newcomers to the city. They can set up a business with little investment and even less skill.



## LOOKING GOOD

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### Bridal shop

(ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS) This shop sells outfits for Hindu weddings. The bride, groom and guests can buy their dresses, jewellery, shoes and handbags in this colourful shop. There is a

wide variety of shops in this street, including an Indian birthday cake shop, two pawnshops and a Surinamese Indian beauty salon, which 'helps enlarge eyelashes and prevents you from losing your hair', which, it reads in the window, is 'subsi-

dised by health insurance'. They do wedding make-up, too. Thus you can find everything for your Hindu wedding in this street.



## LOOKING GOOD

### Buying cosmetics

(DHAKA, BANGLADESH) A woman haggles over the price of lipstick and other cosmetics. She is prepared to pay 15 taka for the lot, which equals around 15 euro cents, but the seller wants 25 taka.

Neighbours join in, to help her bring the price down.



**LOOKING GOOD**

**Day off**

(SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL) If it's your day off, it's time to go shopping, or if you prefer you can go to a museum or a gallery. You can also just walk the dog, or your child as well.



## OBEY NATURE'S CALL

**In a chaos of sounds and smells**  
**(LAGOS, NIGERIA)** Many of the people running the public transport system work all night. They take naps in the midst of a vast chaos of sounds and smells.



## OBEDY NATURE'S CALL

**Sleeping like sand**  
(DHAKA BANGLADESH) 'Kadar moton ghumai' literally translates as 'sleeping like sand'. It is generally used for small children, who drape themselves around their mother, sleeping as if the world didn't

exist. These children work long hours, often carrying heavy loads. Sleeping on a concrete floor under the open sky might not be luxury, but when the body screams for rest, sleep comes easily.



**OBEY NATURE'S CALL**

**After dinner nap**  
(SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL) Lina Bo Bardi's SESC Pompéia, a community centre for sports and culture, facilitates a good sleeping place with its robust yet soft armchairs. An after dinner nap for all classes.



**DEMOLISH/REBUILD**

**Rooftop**

**(DHAKA, BANGLADESH)** With the upper floors of the bazaar demolished, light and rain come through the plastic sheets of the impromptu rooftop. Nice colours and space enough for birds to fly through.



## DEMOLISH/REBUILD

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### Bright future

(BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN) This is a poster of one of the political parties ('Republic' in Russian). Behind it is a building that has been under construction already for a few years (a future mall – one of the

trends in our country), surrounded by barbed wire. This poster and building have a related story. The government promises 'a bright future', but parties come and go. So things usually don't change.



## DEMOLISH/REBUILD

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### Resistance

(SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL) There is a fight in central São Paulo for the right to remain living there. The big companies want to 'revitalise', in other words, buy the buildings for ridiculously low

prices to build new, profitable projects. The inhabitants resist.



## MIGRATION CIRCLE

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### Polski Sklep

(ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS) The Polish supermarket is a huge success, since the Polish came in large numbers to find work in the city in recent years. Yugoslavian Zeko moved to Rotterdam nine-

teen years ago. He started off as a greengrocer. That didn't pay. Long hours of work, and then the Dutch 'who have the guts to just buy one potato at a time'. Since he started the Polski Sklep he has even been able to expand his businesses.



## MIGRATION CIRCLE

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### Polish shop

(DETROIT, USA) An abandoned building on Chene Street in Detroit has been turned into an urban canvas by an artist. The painting presents cartoon characters engaged in violence and drug use. It was

created on boards covering windows of a store that used to be owned by a Polish-American businessman, Zarembki (his name is still visible above the windows). Together with the other Polish people, he left town after the collapse of the car industries.



**MIGRATION CIRCLE**

**Real Brazilian hair**

(ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS) It is hard to tell in which country this picture was taken. This is the shopping street in the Old (Wild) West of Rotterdam where over 90 nationalities share daily life. Only

three Dutch shops survive: a butcher, a florist and a chemist. This shop sells wigs and hair extensions made of real Brazilian hair!



**MIGRATION CIRCLE**

**Brazilian bum**

(SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL) When I was taking this picture, a man passing by said to me, 'Her body does not look Chinese anymore. Look at her ass!'



ON THE ROAD

**Extreme sports**

**(BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN)** Many people engage in extreme sports. Every day and everywhere. This way you sport for free. Break the rules by crossing the street and you will have adrenalin for the whole day.

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## ON THE ROAD

310/311

### Roads

**(DETROIT, USA)** It's 10 a.m. and Michigan Avenue, one of the main streets in Detroit, is almost empty. It was built to accommodate several lanes of two-way traffic, a grand construction typical in the city

that was home to the American automotive industry and fiercely proud of it. Now that the city has lost more than half its residents, Michigan Avenue is one of Detroit's many almost empty, pothole-ridden roads. There's talk of narrowing the avenue and add-

ing more pavement and bike paths to make it more pedestrian and human friendly.



## ON THE ROAD

### Trading time and place

(LAGOS, NIGERIA) A sea of street hawkers and vehicles, every hawker trying to sell their goods ranging from books to toys, etc. Sometimes people leave their homes with money in anticipation of buying

goods in the traffic, since they hardly have the time to do real shopping due to their busy working schedule.

In which Lino Hellings works as an intern at the Drik photo agency in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and tests the viability of a new human right: errorism.

### The Errorist

The idea for a press agency fresh in my mind, I stumble upon the Bangladeshi photo agency Drik, at the exhibition Another Asia, this year's edition of the Noorderlicht Photofestival in Groningen. Drik (Sanskrit for vision) is a multimedia organisation established in 1994 with the aim of breaking the hegemony of Western press and photo agencies. Why, with every successive disaster, is it necessary to fly in an American photojournalist when a Bangladeshi photographer can do the job just as well, if not better?

What I read on Drik's website appealed to me: how the organisation began as a stock photography agency and has grown into a multimedia organisation, which makes use of the newest technological developments. I can learn a lot from them, and put my idea to the test. I send an e-mail to Drik's director, Shahidul Alam, asking if I can be an 'artist in residence' within his organisation. Two days later I have my answer. I am more than welcome.

If I want to establish a network of artists, it seems like a good plan to see if there are people interested in my idea in a country such as Bangladesh. Is art an irrelevant luxury in a country with a failing economy, or does this make the need for art all the greater?

In order to find out, I plan to go to Bangladesh to introduce a new human right: errorism – the right to make mistakes. I will tell the people I meet that I have come to set up an errorist network. Will people in Bangladesh recognise both its seriousness and levity? Will we understand each other? How many mistakes, misunderstandings and misinterpretations can we bear? From ourselves?

And from others? How much mischief do we need to survive?

If people do not perceive errorism as an ironic Western idea, my plan has a chance to succeed. I purchase the domain [www.errorist.net](http://www.errorist.net) to report my own mistakes and those of others. I shall test the effect they have on me. A friend of mine builds me a simple blog and I'm ready to travel.



'Third World is Majority World'; Drik at Noorderlicht Photofestival 2006

### The story of Drik

Upon arrival at Drik's offices, I am given a workstation in the stock photography department. My laptop is connected to the Internet and I can start to work. I begin by immediately posting my first impressions on the errorist website; the staff of Drik read it over my shoulder.

Every morning when I arrive and every afternoon as I depart, I have a short chat with the director. I ask questions about things I don't understand and give him short presentations about things that might interest him. I spend time with each department and am invited to participate in team meetings. When there are visitors from abroad (and that is very often), I am asked to join in. During my time at Drik there is a German film crew who want to make a documentary about Bangladesh, a French broadcasting company who want to know more about how Drik works, an Englishman from an advertising agency who wants to collaborate, and a Dutch journalist from a Bangladeshi family who has come to help set up Drik TV. Arnob Chakrabarty, a prominent TV journalist in the Netherlands, and Shahidul invite me to accompany them on their visits to several broadcasting companies. Thanks to the endless traffic jams, we have hours to talk. The best conversations take place in the car on the way to various destinations. We talk about religion. Shahidul explains that he is not an observant Muslim, but that he respects the social aspects of the religion. He takes part on religious feasts with his family, just as I, as a 'social' Christian who never goes to church, cele-

brate Christmas. He also proudly wears the outward signs of Muslim culture, a beard and the traditional clothing, which is so well suited to this climate.

I soon have a good sense of the organisation, which is even more exciting than I initially imagined. It began in 1994 when Shahidul Alam, Rahnuma Ahmed and others at Drik started teaching photography to a group of working-class children. They also paid for their schooling. Since some of the children had to continue working because the family could not do without their income, they hired a teacher to give them private lessons at home at eleven o'clock at night.

Now three of them run the audio-visual department. Rabeya and Shetu show me a documentary they made about Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, the inventor of micro-credit. At night they return to their neighbourhood, where they live with their parents.

All the children from the group are doing well. Half of these young adults now work for Drik as photographers, documentary makers, administrators or image processors. The remainder are freelance photojournalists or editors. One is studying to be a lawyer.

Drik is an activist organisation. Everything it does begins with the question: how does it contribute to society? Next comes the question: does it pay? Whether or not it is a creative challenge – for me the most important question – comes last for Drik. This stance means that Drik is frequently at loggerheads with 'the system', the government, police and military. One way of dealing with this situation is to employ the latest technolo-

gies. Drik introduced the Internet in Bangladesh and, ironically enough, the government ministers' first e-mail accounts were on Drik's server. Now that it is so difficult to gain admission to the state-controlled broadcasting system, Drik TV streams video on the Internet. This strategy has enabled Drik to develop rapidly from a stock photo agency to an organisation with its own studio, a graphic design and print department, an audio-visual department and a multimedia department. In addition Drik has two large galleries that exhibit photography and art that deal with social issues such as tolerance of homosexuality, or the injustice of executions carried out by the Rapid Action Battalion, a political unit established to counter terrorism.

## Art & photography

The director of Drik and I visit Dhaka's art school, a beautiful building situated in a park-like environment. Entrance examinations are in progress. Like at the Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, where I have taught for many years, there is a flood of applicants. A few hundred young people are sitting on the grass with a piece of brown hardboard and a sheet of paper on their laps. They have been asked to draw a piece of yellow ceramic pipe. Lecturers walk among them and judge the results on the spot. If you are not immediately rejected you may proceed to the next assignment, for which a vase of flowers is at the ready. If you also pass this test, a half-nude man is seated ten metres away, waiting to be drawn.

I engage in conversation with a student who, like me, is watching the entrance examinations. When I ask him what his dream is, he sighs that he would love to be someone like Damien Hirst, the British artist who plays with the zeitgeist like a pop star, who has managed to create a market for his conceptual works such



Abir Abdullah, lecturer at the Pathshala South Asian Institute of Photography, selecting photographs taken by students.

as a shark in formaldehyde or a diamond-encrusted human skull. This dream seems extremely remote when I see the students' charming paintings and respectable etchings in the studios.

'The study of nature is the central aspect of our artistic vision', one of the lecturers tells me.

Only once you have internalised nature may you proceed to abstraction and only once you have this anchored in your intuition may you make conceptual work. This strikes me as a thorough education but photography and new media do not get a look-in.

Although it had been my plan to establish a press agency with artists, following my visit to the art school I decide to work initially with photographers. Photography is a medium that is well suited to a press agency devoted to artistic research. Photographs taken as documentation of a process can be used at a later stage as a finished product. Even more important in making this decision is my impression that art has different connotations in different cultures.

Third round and final assignment to gain admission to art school.

## The errorist birthday cake

'There's a phone call for you', says the man in the white shirt at the guesthouse where I'm staying in Dhaka. An unknown man asks me if I will be there later that afternoon. He wants to bring me something. Fine by me. I'm intrigued. He arrives an hour later and introduces himself as Masud Chowdhury. He has brought his neighbour with him. They carefully place a square box on a table in the garden. I open the box to discover a birthday cake with 'Errorist network global' written in chocolate icing, with the R reversed, as on my website.

Masud is a lecturer in the Media and Communications department at the Independent University. He had been surfing the web for interesting blogs to show his

students. When he found nothing of interest, out of frustration he googled the word 'error' and found my website. Masud saw that I was living just around the corner from him in Dhaka. My proposal to spread 'errorism' as a new human right inspired him to make this wonderful cake.

For me this is the encouraging proof that my test may be considered a success: 'errorism' has struck a chord across a great cultural divide. I notice it, too, in other situations I find myself in. It appeals to almost everyone I speak with, from lecturers at the Independent University and the people of Drik to the men in white shirts at my guesthouse. For example, the manager of my guesthouse tells me that he only helps people who take a risk, who take the initial step to climb higher up the social ladder. The

female English teacher of the Independent University challenges her students to break through the 'error barrier': you learn from your mistakes, whereas the road around the error barrier is much longer.

Waseem, a theatre director from Pakistan I encounter at Drik, has just shown photos of burned-out Christian churches, targeted in the same way that mosques can be in the West. He recognises in errorism the need to recognise our own and others' misconceptions and to forgive if we wish to get closer to each other.





A six-week exhibition projected on the windows of a cultural centre in Rotterdam, designed for PAPA by design lab 'notDef'.

Esiebo from Lagos introduces the term 'low overheads' for a photo he took from inside his car of a man washing his windscreen. In all the cities we covered we found similar examples of typical jobs done by newcomers. Jobs with minimal investment, so you can start earning straight away, such as this windscreen washer, who needs only a bucket and a sponge.

We also detect differences. It is clear that migration is a global and timeless phenomenon, but each city takes up its own position within the story. In Lagos and Dhaka there is the pull from the countryside towards the city. In São Paulo and Rotterdam there is an international onrush of newcomers, while Detroit, by contrast, is losing the majority of its inhabitants.

The project teaches us that the question, 'where do you come from?', is a loaded question in Rotterdam. The question makes third-generation immigrants feel that they are still not accepted as Dutch people. The fear of being

discriminated against and the anxiety about being racist stand in the way of a discussion about people's origins. In Detroit and Dhaka there is less angst surrounding this question. There the question can have a positive effect. It can create connections; you can discover shared histories in terms of where you went to university or where your grandmother was born.

From the first week the photos and captions were projected on the windows of the cultural centre at the entrance to the neighbourhood in Rotterdam. The same happens in other cities. In this way the inhabitants of the various newcomers' neighbourhoods not only get a fresh perspective on their own lives but they also get to see how newcomers in other cities live.

## Participants and dates

**THE ERRORIST IN BANGLADESH**  
A residency at Drik multimedia organisation in Dhaka (Shahidul Alam, director) that took place from 8 to 28 November 2008. With the support of the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture.

**PAPA LAB LAGOS** took place from 7 to 28 September 2009 and was hosted by the African Artists' Foundation. A final exhibition entitled *Initial Patterns* was held on 25 September 2009 at the African Artists' Foundation. With the support of the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Abuja, Nigeria.

PAPA worked with a mixed group of ten artists and photo-journalists from Lagos, including: Godswill Ayemoba, Babasola Bamiro, Andrew Esiebo, Toye Gbade, Eremina Jumbo, Zemaye Okediji, Tuoyo Omagba, Adolphus Opara, Israel Ophori and Folarin Shasanya.

**PAPA LAB SÃO PAULO** took place from 7 to 29 November 2009 and was hosted by freeDimensional New York. The correspondents were members of the Fotomix group: Zé Barretta, Luciana 'Luh' Camargo, Ines Correa, Felipe Denuzzo, Marcelo Ferrelli, Giovana 'Jó' Pasquini, Flávio Sampaio and Sylvia Sanchez. With the support of the Netherlands Foundation for Visual arts, Design and Architecture.

**PAPA LAB ROTTERDAM** took place from 5 to 24 April 2010. Participating artists: Erika Blikman, Maurice Bogaert, Robin van 't Haar, Nies Medema and Martijn Nieuwenhuis. With the

support of the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture.

**PAPA LAB BISHKEK** took place from 3 to 17 April 2011, hosted by ArtEast. The exhibition, *Creating the Context*, was held at the UMD University of Management and Design in Bishkek from 3 to 28 February 2012. Participants: Elena Chigibaeva, Nargiz Chynalieva, Nellya Dzhamanbaeva, Samat Mambetshaev, Tatyana Mihnevich, Angelina Mokh, Meka Muratova, Raisat Musaeva, Anastasia Slastnikova, Sapargul Turdubekova, Tatyana Zelenskaja. With the support of Artscollaboratory.

**FLYOVERPAPA** took place from June to September 2010 and was commissioned by the Department of Urban Development of the city of The Hague, the Netherlands. Participating photographers: Rob van Maanen and Lino Hellings in The Hague, Shahidul Alam in Dhaka, and Toye Gbade in Lagos.

**MIGRATIONPAPA** took place from 1 to 31 November 2010 and was initiated by PAPA. Exhibition in Rotterdam from 29 November 2010 to 15 January 2011. Exhibitions in other cities will follow.

Participating photographers: Shahidul Alam in Dhaka, Andrew Esiebo in Lagos, Marcin Szczepanski in Detroit, Ines Correa in São Paulo, and Nies Medema and Lino Hellings in Rotterdam. A PAPA project for Kosmopolis Rotterdam. With the support of the Hivos Culture Fund.

**DETROIT, USA**  
Marcin Szczepanski, reporter and photojournalist for the

*Detroit Free Press*, joined the PAPA network in October 2010. As part of Migrationpapa, Detroit was included as a shrinking city from the Global North.

Editors: Hans Aarsman, Nienke Terpsma, Lino Hellings

Photos and captions:

**BANGLADESH/DHAKA:** Shahidul Alam

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Zemaye Okediji, Tuoyo Omagba, Adolphus Opara, Israel Ophori,  
Folarin Shasanya

**USA/DETROIT:** Marcin Szczepanski

**IN ALL CITIES:** Lino Hellings

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