

Model Court: The Bazaramba Trial

Model Court is a research project involving the artists Sidsel Meineche Hansen, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Lorenzo Pezzani and Oliver Rees. It uses the structure and technologies of the courtroom to interrogate the signifying and controlling role architecture plays in contemporary art and society.

During this two-week residency at Ptarmigan, the *Model Court* group focused on the ongoing trial against Francois Bazaramba, a Rwandese national that came to reside in the small town of Porvoo, who is being tried by the Finnish state for his suspected role in the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. The premise upon which this trial is pursued relies on the idea of 'Universal Jurisdiction', according to which any state can try anybody, anywhere for crimes against humanity, regardless of national constraints.

The Bazaramba trial deals with past events that occurred thousands of kilometers away from Porvoo. This inspired the courts temporary relocations to Rwanda and Tanzania. These unique cultural and spatial complications allowed us to engage with the courtroom as a space where legal 'truths' are produced and disseminated via specific protocols and technologies. Here the various sites of mediation and translation produce the way in which the trial is received by a wider audience. In this work the dramatic/anti-dramatic elements of the court in Porvoo sit alongside work from our archive, using the courtroom drama as a means for concentrating on how ideas of justice are disseminated, personified and consumed.

This exhibition is comprised of two video works based on material gathered during meetings with the legal and technical professionals implicated in the Bazaramba trial. This footage intersects with extracts from the *Model Court* archive, which is a catalyst for current and future articulation of the group's research that includes texts, films and artworks.