



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Samson Kambalu's Antelope (Fourth Plinth)

30 June 2022

Reference: SPCB (2022) Paper 47

Executive Summary

1. The Scottish Malawi Partnership has contacted the Scottish Parliament to explore possibilities for display of a gallery version of the new Trafalgar Square Fourth Plinth sculpture in the Scottish Parliament. The sculpture, titled *Antelope*, is by Malawi-born and UK based artist Professor Samson Kambalu. It is a white marble 'ghost' maquette for the larger bronze sculpture, which will be displayed on the prestigious Fourth Plinth public art site in Trafalgar Square, London, from September 2022 to 2024.
2. The sculpture features two figures, the Pan-Africanist and preacher John Chilembwe (1871-1915) and his friend, European missionary John Chorley. The sculpture is inspired by a 1914 photograph of the two men taken by Chorley's wife, which captures a moment of significant protest by Chilembwe. Images are attached at **Annex A**.

Background

3. **The Fourth Plinth**, which launched in 1998, has become an internationally well-known public art site. Previous artists and sculptures have included – Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, which challenged preconceptions about beauty and disability (2005); Antony Gormley's *One & Other*, where 2,400 people participated by standing on or speaking from the Plinth (2009); Yinka Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, about British colonialism (2010); and Michael Rakowitz's *The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist*, about the impact of the war in Iraq on culture and identity (2018). The Fourth Plinth commissions are run by the Mayor of London's office. The launch date for *Antelope* on the Fourth Plinth will be September 2022.
4. There are no plans at the time of drafting for the marble *Antelope* sculpture to be exhibited elsewhere in Scotland in 2022.

Sculpture information

5. Chilembwe campaigned for the rights of Africans, especially in relation to the exploitation of Africans working on a Scottish-owned and managed land estate and the right to education.
6. The 1914 photograph captured a moment at the opening of Chilembwe's church when he wore a hat, a subversive action in defiance of a local rule that Africans could not wear hats in front of white people. They stand in front of a church in Nyasaland (Malawi) built by Chilembwe and demolished one year later by government forces.
7. In the bronze sculpture for the Fourth Plinth, the artist has made Chilembwe larger than life while Chorley is life-size. In doing so the artist wanted to elevate the story of Chilembwe's life and the hidden narratives of under-represented people in the history of the British Empire in Africa. This is replicated on a smaller scale in the marble sculpture.
8. The artist's work is influenced by the Nyau traditional culture of his home country Malawi, where dances are performed wearing masks, including of antelopes and other wild animals, to represent the spirits of the deceased. The Gule Wamkulu dance tradition of the Nyau is one of 90 UNESCO Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
9. John Chorley was an English-born missionary who lived in America and later headed up the Zambezi Industrial Mission. In 1915, he was questioned by an inquiry about his friendship with Chilembwe. In his response he highlighted Chilembwe's work on increasing access to a school education for girls.

Artist

10. Samson Kambalu is an internationally exhibited artist. Born in Malawi in 1975, where he met his Scottish wife, he is now based in Oxford. The Kambalus have an association with the Scotland Malawi Partnership. Kambalu has a BA in Fine Art and Ethnomusicology from the University of Malawi, an MA in Fine Art from Nottingham Trent University and a PhD from Chelsea College of Art and Design. He has been widely exhibited internationally including at the Dakar and Venice Biennales and Liverpool Biennial.
11. Kambalu has been influenced by the Nyau culture of Chewa communities in his home country Malawi, ideas about inquiry and dissent, and the Situationist art movement, which rejects the idea that art is separate from social and political concerns.

Issues and Options

12. It is proposed the display of *Antelope* is approved as a temporary exhibit as part of the Parliament's public events and exhibitions programme. If approved by the SPCB, we would propose that *Antelope* is displayed in a public area from mid-August to late-October to maximise public engagement with the artwork. This would allow the artwork to be seen by festivalgoers attending this year's Festival of Politics (Thursday 11 to Sunday 13 August) as well as international delegates attending the 2022 Edinburgh International Culture Summit (Friday 26 to Sunday 28 August). It would also allow Members and staff to view the artwork when the Parliament resumes after summer recess 2022 and provide a platform for some promotional work around Black History Month in October 2022.
13. Although the artwork would be outwith the scope for acquisitions and loans to the Scottish Parliament Art Collection, as the artist is not based in Scotland or Scottish, it explores themes relevant to Scottish audiences. It also supports the Collection's aims to 'seek opportunities to increase the diversity of artists represented in the Collection' and to 'display art in the Parliament for the benefit of the public, educational groups, Members, staff, event attendees and other building users'.
14. There is a commitment to increasing the diversity of artists displayed in the Parliament, whether through permanent acquisitions, temporary exhibitions or loans to the Art Collection, and to taking diversity and equality into account in our programming and subject matter. The display of the artwork *Antelope* would not only increase the diversity of artworks but would also allow us to highlight the artwork to a diverse audience on the back of the publicity that the artwork will receive when unveiled as the Fourth Plinth supporting the Parliament's Public Engagement Strategy.
15. Exhibiting this sculpture is an opportunity to explore subjects relevant to Scotland's diverse population and to Scotland's history in Africa, with a view to engaging with different audiences.

Communications

16. The Parliament's social media accounts (specifically, Instagram and the Visit Twitter account) will be used to promote the artwork. This will be done by sharing images of the sculpture on display in the Parliament, potentially by covering the installation, and ideally, a recorded interview with the artist and the Parliament's Art Curator. The Parliament's Official Photographer will capture images of the artwork. The World Press Photo exhibition will also be running at the start of the display period and there will be images there that explore similar themes to the artwork, and so some cross-promotion of both can be done. The communications will be kept under review and we will consider whether there are further promotional options that can be undertaken.

Resource implications

17. In addition to support by the Parliament's Exhibitions Manager/ Art Curator, some staff time would be needed from the Parliamentary Communications Office to raise awareness of the exhibit and opportunities for the public to view. Solicitor's Office advise on all new loan/exhibition agreements before they are signed by the Group Head.
18. Most of costs for return transport, handling and packing would be met by the organiser directly or through sponsorship, although as the host for the artwork we would also be expected to meet some of these costs. The likely costs to the SPCB would be about £1,500 which can be met from budgets already allocated to the Events and Exhibitions Team.

Publication Scheme

19. If approved, it is recommended the paper is published after public announcement of the sculpture's display in the Scottish Parliament.

Next steps

20. If the SPCB approve the display of the sculpture the Events and Exhibitions Team will take forward planning with the artist and his gallery and the Scotland Malawi Partnership.

Decision

21. The SPCB is asked to consider this paper and approve the display of the sculpture in a public area of the Parliament between mid-August and late-October 2022.

Events and Exhibitions Team

June 2022

Artwork – Samson Kambalu *Antelope*

