



somewhere near Mombasa \_ 2010

Captain Hassan walked off to a grove near Mombasa, Kenya's most important seaport. With an expert eye he evaluated the thick trunks of mango trees and chose the one he thought best suited for building a boat. For centuries, fishermen from Mombasa had relied on the forest as the primary provider for their occupations at sea, and the ability to form a hull (which they in their language called a "onetree") by hollowing out a single tree trunk had always garnered the highest respect. Mankind had mastered this art even as early as the Mesolithic age (6,000 years ago).

Mango trunks have been sculpted by hand on the Mombasa beaches for ages and still are today in 2011 by craftsmen like Captain Hassan. With an awareness of hydronautics passed down from generation to generation, Kenyan fishermen and boat builders connect the "onetree" (central hull) with a supportive outrigger hull on each side. The result is what we know as a trimaran.

This double-cantilever form provides the sailboat with a highly reliable balancing system, and because there is no need for a ballast, the trimaran reaches remarkable speed on water. The boat can travel just as easily in shallow waters as in deep, because the hull's bottom is only as low as the mango's trunk is wide. For these reasons, European nautical engineers find inspiration in the trimaran's archaic construction technique and still use its structure as a model for their sporting and recreational boat designs.



Rainer Junghanns watched the boat builders on the Mombasa beaches. As a sculptor he was fascinated by the builders' ability to form a hull from a single tree trunk with such precision and artistry. From a craftsman's perspective, the required procedure is similar to the one ancient sculptors used when they chiseled steles from wooden or stone slabs. These steles were inscribed with sacred or mystical texts and placed along heavily treaded pilgrimage routes, even as late as in Christian times.



Junghanns asked to buy the eight-meter-long Onetree from Captain Hassan, who agreed. However, the terms of transportation to Hamburg were complicated: Junghanns would need a forty-foot container to hold the indivisible hull in one piece. The journey from the eastern coast of Africa to Germany became an important conceptual element in Junghanns' "Process Sculpture." Only upon arriving at home in Düsseldorf did the artist make three precise cuts, separating the hull into four parts.





In exhibitions, the four segments get reassembled on location. Junghann's decision to divide the structure into four parts happened for artistic reasons more than practical ones; redefining one body as four allowed for the establishment of an interface.

The word 'Interface,' known generally as the part of a system responsible for communication, has a deeper complexity in connotation that was essential to Junghanns in this project. In technology, 'interface' defines the interaction that makes two computer hardware components compatible. We see this, for example, in the relationship between the USB stick and its designated socket. In the field of freight transportation, an ISO shipping container might be referred to as an interface in its role both as a physical gateway between transportation forms and as a link between dispatcher and receiver.



Port of Hamburg \_ 2010







VOL\_I LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn \_

2011

The aesthetic and conceptual elements of Junghanns' project are deepened by the contrast between archaic (Onetree) and contemporary (ISO container). In further efforts to create an active interface between the four separate hull parts, Junghanns joined traditional craftsmanship (the hollowing of a tree trunk) and modern technology in both practical and symbolic ways. He applied stainless-steel sheets to the sawed ends of each section and wove tension cord throughout the disjointed units. The cords act as tendons, making it possible to reunite the parts, whereas the stainless-steel sheets reflect and accentuate the visual aspect of the interface. After these adjustments were made, the body of the boat would, in principal, have been once again navigable. Instead, it floats atop 1.9-meter-high posts in exhibition halls as a "Body-Sculpture."

The process in which an object is stripped of its intended practical purpose might be referred to as 'defunctionalization.' Junghanns employs similar tactics in a second 'Process Sculpture,' namely the "GMT Container" (2007 - 2010). The idea that defunctionalization and transformation into art are processes that travel hand-in-hand relates to Marcel Duchamp's principle of the 'ready-made.' However, unlike Duchamp and other Dada and Fluxus artists interested in bringing the banal to the museum sphere, Junghanns does not limit his sculptures to a single declamatory gesture. Although he may not manipulate the object physically, he investigates its underlying artistic potential more thoroughly. This approach lies somewhere between Duchamp and both classical sculpture, in which form is slowly revealed by the removal of material, and plastic arts, in which matter such as plaster, wax, clay, or bronze is always added in the molding process.

One possible formal variation in the Onetree's presentation as a "Body Sculpture" (LVR\_LandesMuseum Bonn, March 2011) would be the installation of a 13-meter-high sail. This sail would serve as a projection screen for a film documenting the history of the Onetree and the story of its voyage from Mumbasa to Hamburg and exhibition destinations (Kunstverein Ulm, June 2011).

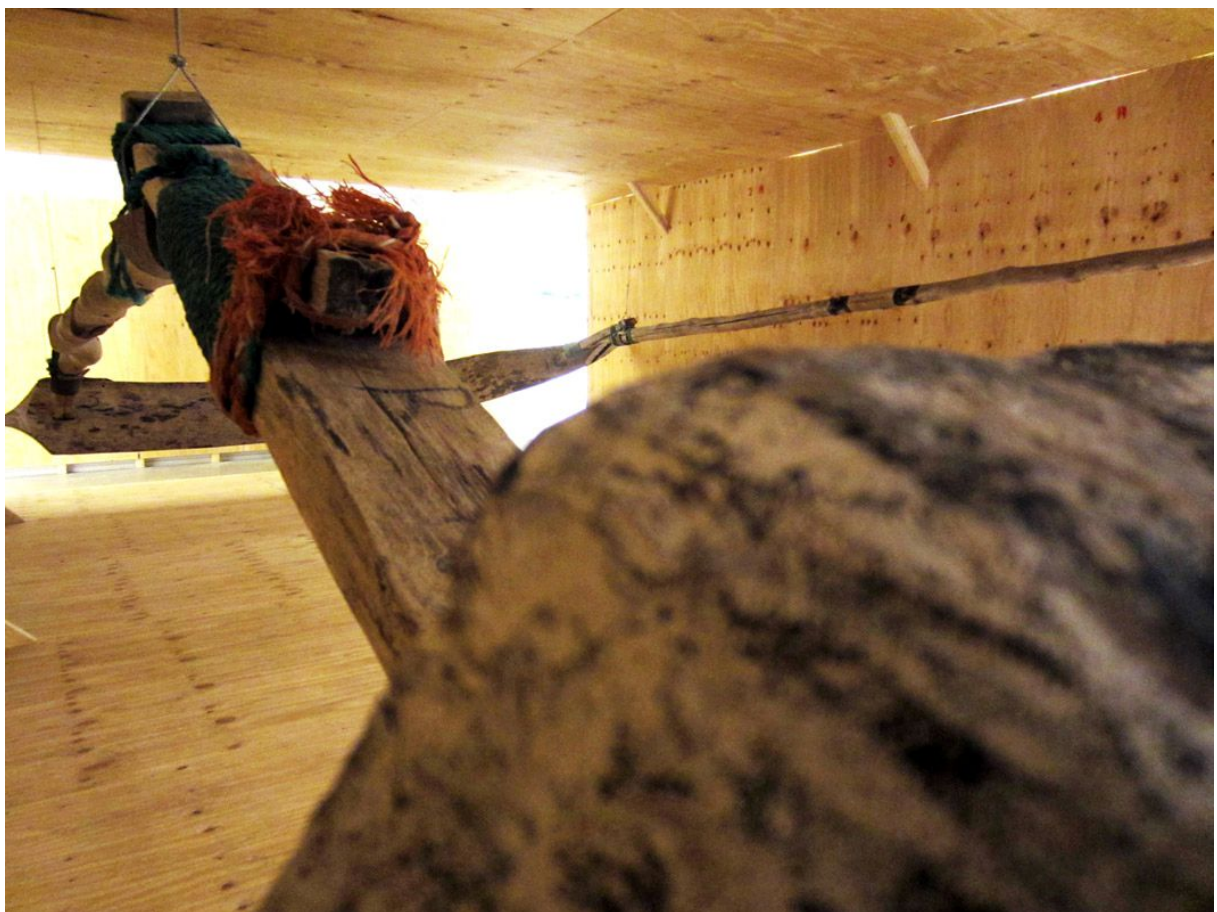






VOL\_II (projection of the story on the sail of TOJA, ship's name - Night of the Museums) **Kunstverein Ulm** \_ 2011

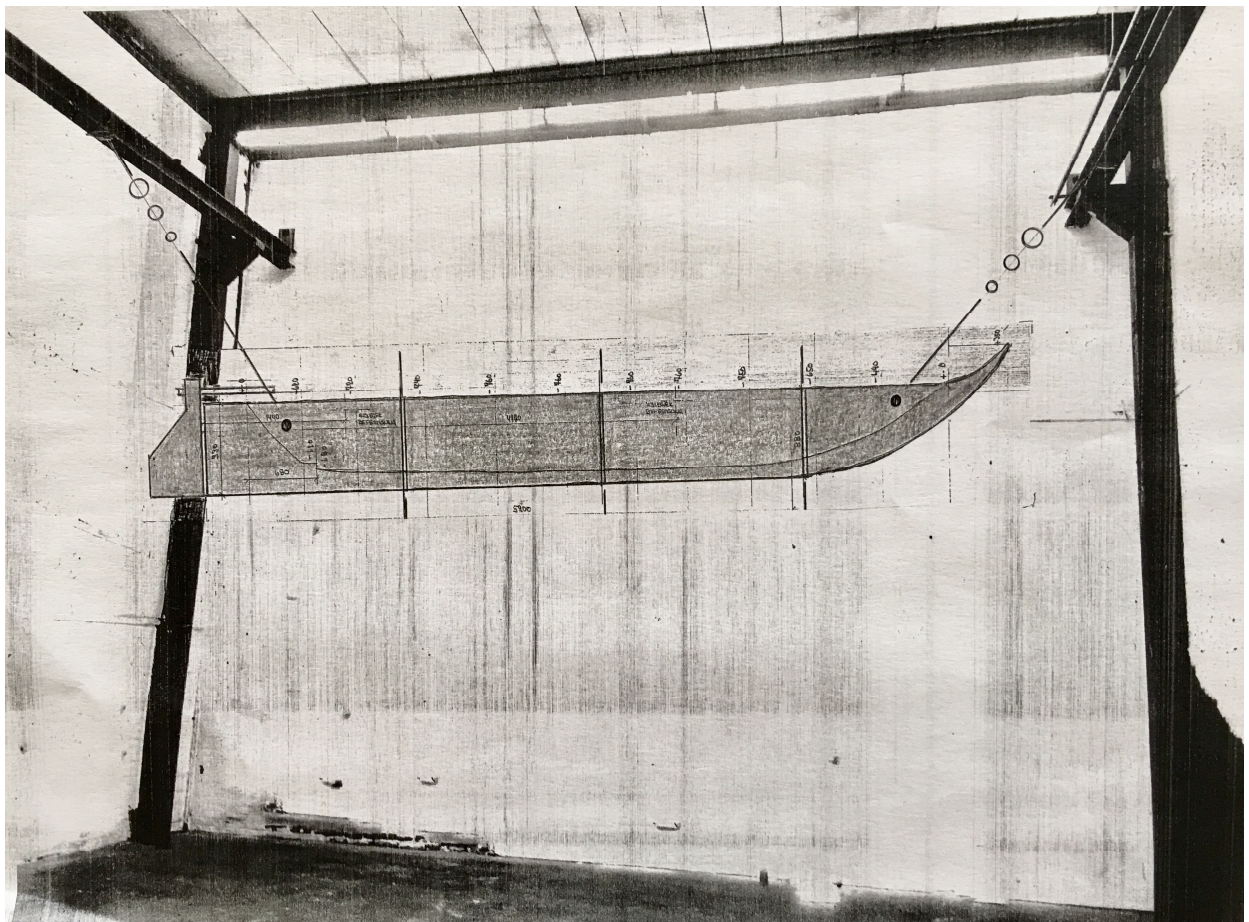
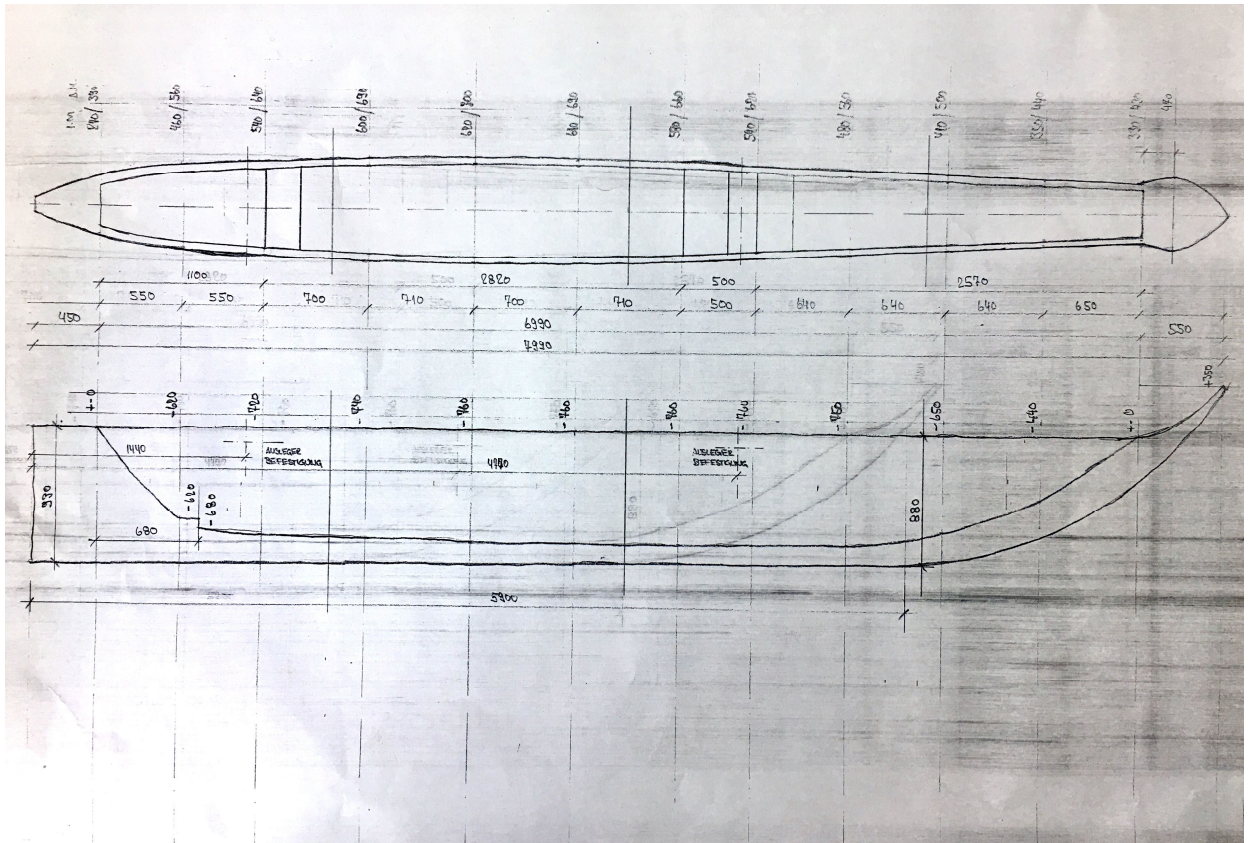






VOL\_IV Kulturforum in Herz Jesu, Köln \_2014





VOL\_V KranHalle, Oberhausen \_2019

**VISION:** after 9 configurations Toja (ship's name) will return to „somewhere near Mombasa“ ©Rainer Junghanns