

HOSTS,

## AFRICA COLLOQUIUM

### **Topic: Communities of Perception: Play to Self-Observation — An Exploration of One-Person Theatre Shows**

This study examines self-observation as a central artistic and social practice within one-person shows staged in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2025. Framed through the concept of communities of perception, the paper explores how solo performance creates intimate theatrical spaces where personal narratives foster collective reflection. One-person theatre has increasingly become a platform through which artists interrogate identity, memory, gender politics, and urban lived experience through embodied storytelling. The research analyzes selected productions presented in independent theatre spaces across Nairobi, including *My Man My Choice* by Suki Wanza, *Foolish Forties* by Dr. Zippy Okoth, *Misunderstood* by Makena Kahuha, *It's Such a Good Time* by Francis 'Faiz' Ouma, and *Know Your Scent* by Martina Ayoro. These performances demonstrate a shift toward autobiographical dramaturgy, employing monologue, physical theatre, music, and minimal staging to position the performer's body as both subject and analytical site. Self-observation moves beyond introspection to become a participatory process that invites audiences into shared acts of witnessing, empathy, and meaning-making.

Drawing on performance studies and feminist theatre theory, the paper argues that one-person shows cultivate temporary communities grounded in affective exchange and shared interpretation. Using qualitative performance analysis, practitioner reflection, and audience reception observation, the study shows how these works address themes of mental health, womanhood, resilience, and social transformation. Ultimately, the paper positions Nairobi's solo performances as cultural activism that reimagines theatre as a collective space of reflection, dialogue, and social imagination.



### **Speaker**

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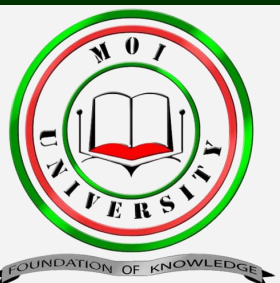
**Date:** May 26th 2026, 2PM, NAIROBI

**Zoom**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88350224053?  
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Meeting ID: 883 5022 4053

Passcode: 160770



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