UANI ANNUAL REPORT

1.0 Introduction

Soma's Uani curatorial project is an appreciative enquiry through curatorial practice and creative imagination leading to public discourse around the norms, value, and function of women's traditional spaces and their contemporary manifestation. It intends to both appreciate and interrogate their social and cultural basis and contribution knowledge, norms, and experiences of being women and men and what of their legacy needs to be purged or celebrated and upheld within contexts of women's action to break away from patriarchal norms.

Traditionally, Uani is an enclosed backyard, designated as women's space (of 'seclusion' and 'safety' from men's stay eyes). Soma wanted to experiment with a curatorial reclamation and amplify its positive history whereby some women used it to subvert the status quo; as well as 'rehabilitating' the patriarchal notion of Uani by 'calling out' and purging its retrogressive elements. Ultimately the aim was to invoke its predominant character of mutual interdependence of communal living, the value of sharing life intergenerationally; the spirit of togetherness; and the art of handing down (stories, histories, names, gifts, skills, recipes, clothes, mores, etc.) and healing practices.

The project was co curated with six multi skilled curators in residency from different backgrounds, who were brought onboard as residents for six weeks. The residents met three times a week, to learn, explore, research and reflects on feminist approaches, strategies, issues, and existing spaces, which have contributed to the growth of women in the society through brainstorming and other participatory and shared learning methods. The residency was facilitated by six Soma project staffs, and other external interlocutors. The residency involved two engagements with women residents of Tandale, one of the in the

inner-city residencies of Dar es salaam. Uani residents partook in the quotidian of the women including sharing in some rituals of beauty, rite of passage and culinary practices. It also convened two public events at Soma; and engaged with other publics through social media. The project engaged with more than 2388 people with different age group through social media and 250 through physical events.

2.0 Context

The Uani project is a feminist project attempting to interrogate the conceptualization of feminist spaces within the African context where patriarchal spaces curved for women are informing gender identities and relations; and are mimicked in contemporary spaces such as kitchen parties and the like. It takes cognizance that patriarchy intersects with other oppressive forms to rehabilitate itself and constantly recruit women to be its gatekeepers. That as African feminists it is not enough to seek 'to set our own table' rather than be coopted into 'patriarchal tables' if we don't start by interrogating 'tables' patriarchy traditionally set of women. Interrogating women's traditional spaces as knowledge powerhouses, which like women are used without receiving sufficient acknowledgement and/or valued by society the same as men's spaces such as 'barazani' and their contemporary equivalent 'vijiwe vya kahawa' is one way of demystifying patriarchal norms and reclaiming women's hestory, agency and power. We thus explored the experiences, knowledge, customs, and rules which were transmitted to women and men through the spaces matronised by women compared to those patronized by men seeking to learn: what were they, and what methodologies were used to share such information and for what purpose, what was open to both gender and what was restricted and why? What can be shared to the public etc.

To make this project a success, we had to integrated different generations (age

group) from different communities. The residents of the Uani project, all young female artists and/or event organizers, were taken through the process of conceptualization, ideation, planning, research and experimentation, curation and event organizing. Through brainstorming sessions, they made analyzed and operationalized the research methodologies and later translated lessons into actionable curated events where participate would experientially engage with the three Uani segment of their choice; i.e. Knowledge; Healing practices and Wellness. Soma has successfully build capacity of the residents in understanding the curation, feminist contextualization, existing gender dynamics and how to conduct feminist research. The meetings were coordinated by the CEO and the Programme Manager as the Curatorial and/or Artist Liaison during the Residency.

3.0 Conceptual framework

The curators were taken through the feminist conceptual framework and feminist research methodologies. These included power analysis, feminist norms and approaches including feminist storytelling and curating safe, inclusive, and nurturing spaces as important elements in feminist organizing, knowledge production creating empowering dynamics. The learning was interactive and reflective prompted by guided activities, brainstorming and conversational tools, and reference materials. The two days conceptual session challenged the residents engage with custodians of 'unrecorded' women's herstories in ways that evoke curiosity on the deeper meanings of what is encoded behind words, idioms, and performances 'ways of telling' other than what they are exposed to through western education and rituals associated with 'modernity'. The residents were to expose themselves to broad aspects of Uani while narrowing their interpretation to the segments of their choice.

The conversation on how to enter and create rapport with community 'knowers' and interlocutors, and how to formulate the questions that can

generate broader conversations and in depth reflections, sensitivity to customs and etiquette; unstructured and structured observation as a research method including observation and conversation around objects and processes deeply associated with women's quotidian was introduced as part of feminist principles. Through this process curators in residence further refined their concepts and presented what they were clear about the segments they selected, what they wanted to explore further through research study and conversation; the attributes they needed in a partner. Pairing was participatory in which coincidentally two pairs were formed by each selecting the other. One pair's selection was not completely mutual but were comfortable to be paired and blended well. Finally, they were given a brief explanation of the pre-research guide and shared the HANDOUTS prepared as references.

Feminism and Power Dynamics

The residents were taken through a dialogue session with actual experience to assess they ways of living. The aim of the session was to understand how power manifest itself in different context and its dynamics. It was observed that, most of the curators did not understand this at first and how power does reveals itself. This subject required more time to go through in-depth discussions. Examples and questions were asked; When was the first time you experienced power in your entire life? From the responses it was revealed that some experienced it as children as they observe and realize who holds the power in their families. Some had gone as far as to utilize/make use of the power or the individual who holds power. The facilitator clarified by asking the residents to express how they are portrayed in the society(family), what are their power and how did they realize their power and use the power within. The co-facilitator highlighted there are different ideologies in unfolding feminism, the resident's segments must touch the feminist issues on how they bring the gender stereotype, how the patriarchy system has taken over the

culture and as to what methods are to be used to overcome or solve the gender inequality that are found in these Uani as a spaces.

The residents should be acquainted with their power and recognize their positions. In recognizing and relating to the audience's position, they should always observe empathy at all time. The residents were given the chance to provide examples of a situation where one will observe empathy. It was further highlighted as the language used during the research survey must be understood by the audience, the vocabulary used must relate this will help the residents to get what they want from their audiences, the residents were urged to use a simple Swahili vocabulary to be understood.

4.0 Process and Approach

4.1 Pre-research preparation [in pairs]

The residents were taken through a session to review and analysis the handouts provided for them. They were taken through the key conceptual, methodological, and ethical considerations for doing feminist research as highlighted in HANDOUT 3.

1. Based on the need to raise questions on the prevailing dynamics of Uani as a centre for knowledge production; culinary skills and politics of food; and healing and wellness practices, each pair based on the segment they were addressing

a. Frame key questions of what they would like to know.

b. They reviewed the methodological approaches and proposed how they intended to get those answers—using a combination of no less than two of the 7 methods.

c. The residents also, shared their research design with the group in order to receive feedback.

2. The residents were supposed to conduct a research in the field to meet with

the communities. During the visit, after obtaining informed consent which the coordinator facilitated and introducing the purpose and approach—including what the residents had to do with the findings and how they should validate what they have learnt with them;

a. Each pair was given a chance to take the lead in facilitating the conversation with the hosting community seeking knowledge, information, insights, and experiences related to their Uani segment guided by i) feminist ethical considerations in HANDOUT 3; ii) the research methods they selected from the handouts and iii) the research questions they framed from the previous brainstorming sessions.

b. During the fields research, Soma team together with other curators were able to collaborate and co-construct with local interlocutors and observe, identify unanswered questions and chipped in with questions, and encouragements without affecting the need to make the conversation as natural, free flowing and lively as possible—the opposite of conventional interview or interrogation.

c. Each Residents were using their diary to take down notes of their observations, conversation of any curatorial thought idea that crop up during the conversation, while listening and/or tasting. Some had observed while tasting the nutmeg porridge that it has a rather menthols/mint taste and does make someone relaxed or rather high as and can be used as medicine for healing.

3. The coordinator in collaboration with the lead team was able to visit prior the community (area) and ensure a conducive environment was created, including contributing to the ambiance which included eating together, cooking together, sharing gifts and/or exploring typical artefacts, everyday objects and/or practices such as henna painting, khanga rituals, oud, dances

during the food preparation, Swahili singo massage etc.

4.2 Analysis and Ideation and Curation (Week....)

4.3 Events organising and audience mobilising

4.4. Appraisal and learning

Methodologies Selections Process:

The residents were organized into two pairs in three groups each pair was given a feminist methodological tool to analyze in relation with their segment and reflect if they will use the methodology and why do they think they should exercise such methods in their research techniques.

Ngollo and Editha: were given the life history interviews methodology; in relation to their healing segment. The methodology was able to support their segment in getting the biography of the people, common characteristics of that society, relating the present and past society, it is conducted through in-depth interview and semi structured interview. They state that, the method was good but cannot be done as it is; since there is limitation of time. However, they make use of it in order to curate their idea.

Haika and Getrude: were given oral histories methodology, in relation to their segment the pair agreed that the method is subjective can be very applicable for the research in relation to their knowledge segment due to storytelling and events or experience which are being told by outthought/perception/experiences, the supplemented using the words of diaries and another part of the story which is not outspoken.

Rhoda and Upendo: who were the third pair were given the qualitative and mixed methods in relation to the food/cooking segment the method can be used for paradigm of feminism, research and participant in construction, qualitative (observation trial and experience), and audio listening and analyze data, the group did not select this method as for the cooking segment requires much action, visual activity is being used to show the cooking.

During the brainstorming sessions, the residents and the artist liaison were able

to develop a timetable of events and dates of which the events will be held

accordingly,

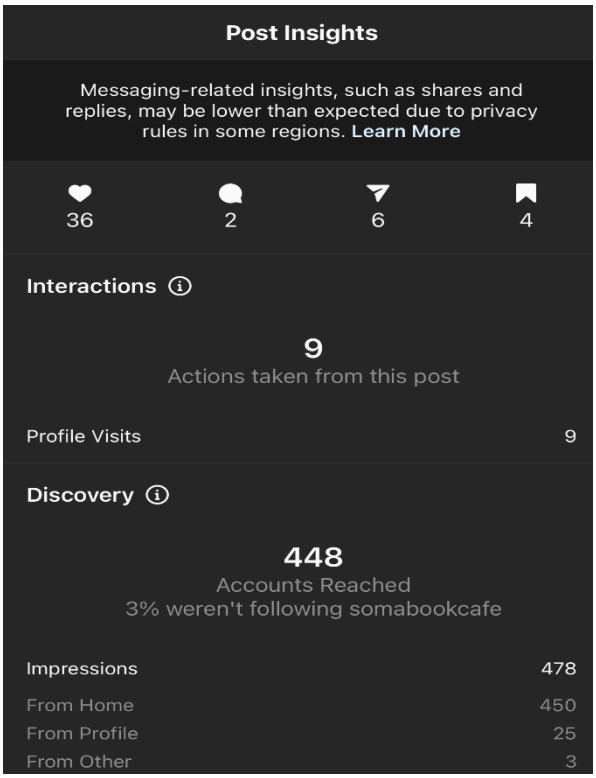
DATE	ACTIVITY
3rd Thursday	Visit the location- research (TANDALE, manzese)
4th Friday	Discussion and preparation of the event
5th Saturday	Action field research held at Tandale
12th June	1st event of Maarifa Uani held at Tandale
26th June	2nd and 3rd event (Healing and Culinary with the inclusion of the first event on Transmission of Knowledge)
29th June	Final evaluation day held at Soma

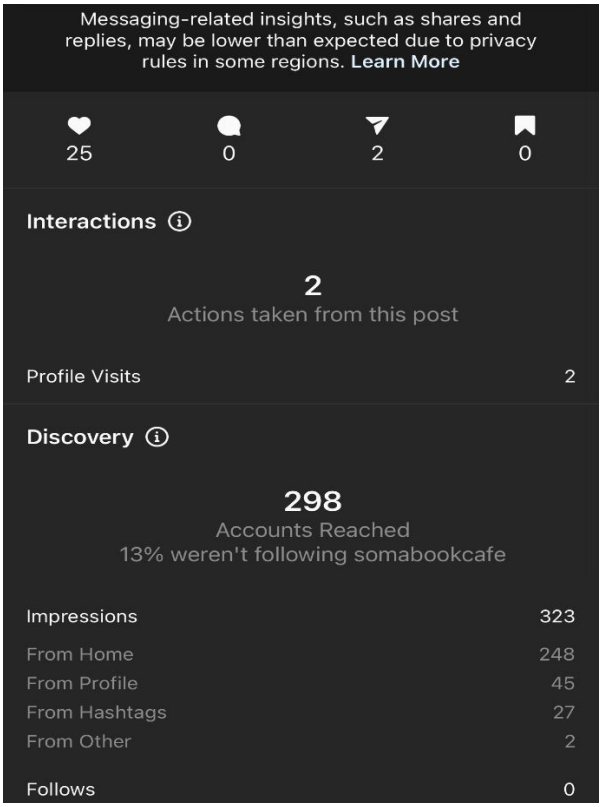
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

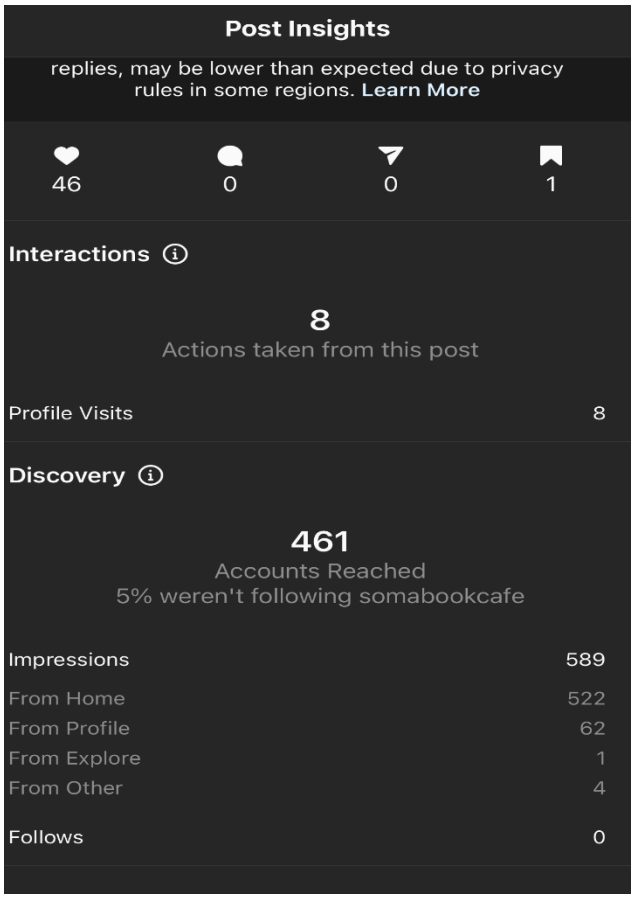
The Uani project was both a learning by doing process and with a touch of African culture interrogating feminist spaces as traditional and modern. The project was very successful and had joined in the exhibition at Nafasi Art space where the key message “Uani Kunani?” was popping up each time a guest visited our space.

1. The team (6 residents) have strengthened their confidence and identify their segments and were able to curate their segments. The first segments are about researching about knowledge transmission, 2nd Group-Healing and art, 3rd Group-Culinary practices.
2. Message development: The team was able to go through the process of developing messages, and each group had developed 5 creative and catch messages. Later the curators had to captcha only one message to represent their segments with the Key message. The Key message was " Uani Kunani?" meaning: "what is in Uani? this question was trying to interrogate the issues which are happening at uani as a space. The first 1. event #Maarifauani meaning Uani as a space of sharing knowledge; 2. Event #Utabibuuani meaning Uani as space of healing; 3. event #LadhaZaUani meaning Uani as space of culinary practices were they originated.
3. The residents were facilitated to develop their tools of the research and build insight on the set up (curation) of their upcoming events.
4. Intergenerational of the engagement men, women, youths (aged from 20-38), elders (aged from 40-70) from different societal backgrounds.
5. Inclusivity (men and women, gender, class and age)
6. Collaboration between curators and team
7. Edutainment
8. Program was self-curating forced us to think out of our beliefs.
9. The new methodologies of conducting a feminist research.

10. Uani has had a total of 149 likes,4 comments and 103 views on Instagram. The total number of the people reached on Instagram on the Uani project is 2297.
11. On Facebook Uani has reached 533 people and has had 38 likes.






Post Insights
replies, may be lower than expected due to privacy rules in some regions. Learn More
46
0
0
1
Interactions
8
Actions taken from this post
Profile Visits 8
Discovery
461
Accounts Reached
5% weren't following somabookcafe
Impressions 589
From Home 522
From Profile 62
From Explore 1
From Other 4
Follows 0

Annexes:

1. Link for Uani curators' profiles - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jlmup9yCGqM_zxuP-mpn8rAuoykQY2WZ
2. Link for the pictures and videos of Uani- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VANblYtF7XOsKcFb-55kIygvSGGHeXzf?usp=sharing
3. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QvLZ3BgNDB8ZfafElLTHKro8NLRz2B28?usp=sharing
4. Link of Day one; https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17-bKkdKol9h_EHthckknuk63vp7aMpCb?usp=sharing
5. Link for day two; https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/143_oFx-QBuUcNeXvAz6FLhTKgy0KTM3t?usp=sharing
6. Link of day three of the action research at Tandale; https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UKMzZHeO4MjW_o0wi1YORFNdxzGwHDU4?usp=sharing
7. Link of the day four of the first event at Tandale; https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17-bKkdKol9h_EHthckknuk63vp7aMpCb?usp=sharing
8. Link of the last events; https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17-bKkdKol9h_EHthckknuk63vp7aMpCb?usp=sharing