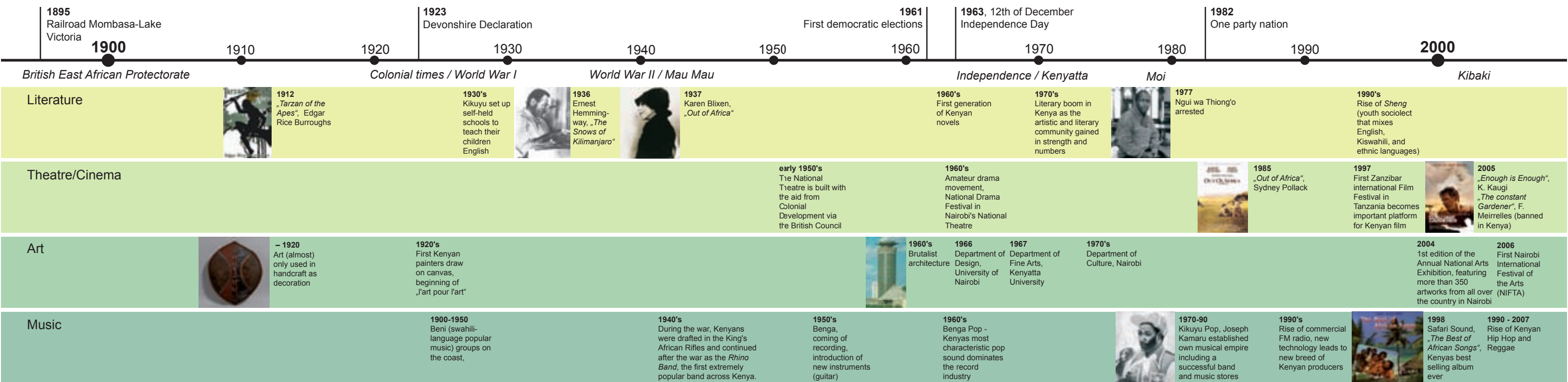


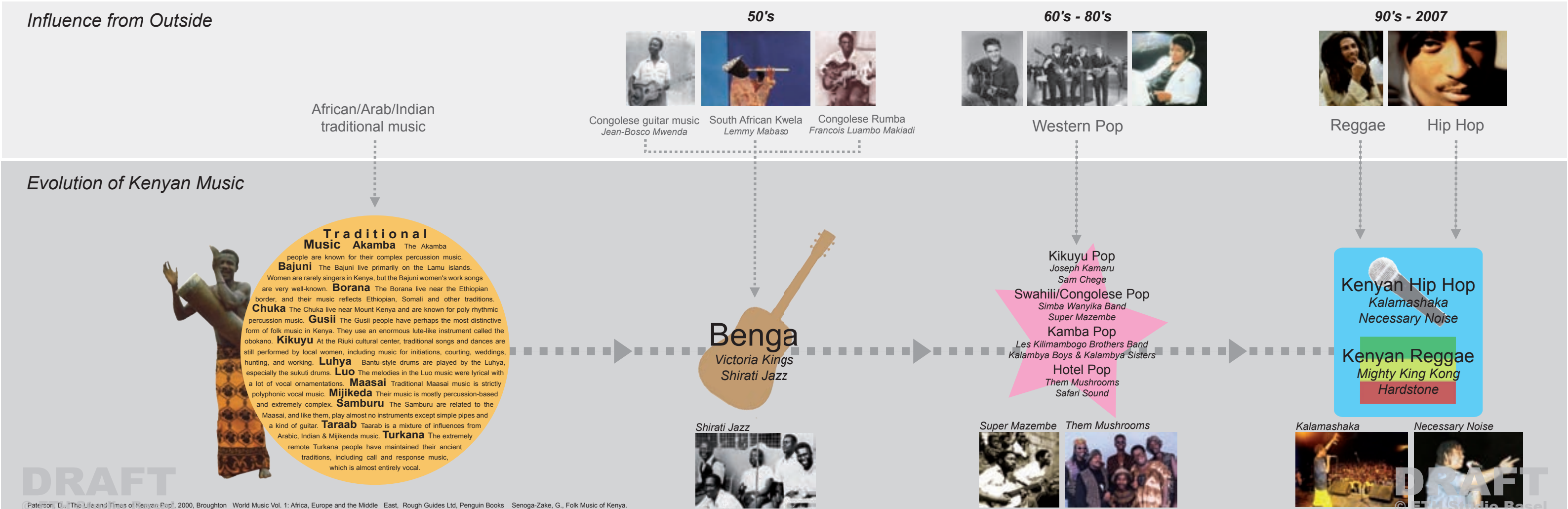
ART AND CULTURE

History of Modern Culture



Music of Kenia

Influence from Outside



ART AND CULTURE

Kenyan artists



Baroness Karen von Blixen-Finecke (1885 – 1962) Educated privately and at the Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, Dinesen married her cousin, Baron Bror Blixen-Finecke, in 1914 and went with him to Africa. There they owned and directed a coffee plantation in Kenya and became big-game hunters. After her divorce in 1921 she continued to operate the plantation for 10 years until mismanagement, drought, and the falling price of coffee forced her return to Denmark. Her years in Kenya are recorded in a nonfiction book, *Out of Africa* (1937; *Den afrikanske farm*). These highly regarded memoirs of her years in Kenya reveal an almost mystical love of Kenya and its people. The book is a poetic reminiscence of her triumphs and her sorrows on the loss of her farm, the death of her companion, the English hunter Denys Finch Hatton, and the disappearance of the simple African way of life she admired.

<http://www.karenblixen.com/blixikon> <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9030495/Isak-Dinesen>



Ngugi wa Thiong'o (*1938) Originally named James Thiong'o Ngugi, this politically active Kenyan writer changed his name in renouncement of Christianity because of the religion's colonial ties. He was born in 1938 and his education was a mix of Christianity and tradition. His family was involved in the Mau Mau resistance to the colonists, and this experience features prominently in a great deal of his writings. In 1963, Ngugi completed the Honors English program at Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda. He eventually became a professor at Nairobi University, having the intention of promoting interest in African writers. By 1977, he declared his intention of writing novels in Gikuyu (or Kikuyu), his native language, rather than in English as he had been doing. This was also the same year that he was arrested and detained for the following year because of the political message of his popular play *I Will Marry When I Want*. In 1980, he published the first modern novel written in Gikuyu, *Caĩtaani muthara-Ini* (Devil on the Cross). In 1982, Ngugi left his country to live in self-imposed exile in London. Important novels: *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977).

<http://bdaggar.colorado.edu/~bhongale/ngugi.html> <http://www.randomhouse.com/pantheon/catalog>



Meja Mwangi (*1948) Kenyan novelist who wrote prolifically on the social conditions and history of Kenya. Mwangi was stimulated to try his hand at writing after reading *Weep Not, Child* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Like his mentor, Mwangi concentrated initially on the Mau Mau rebellion. Both *Taste of Death* (his earliest narrative, not published until 1975) and *Carcase for Hounds* (1974) capture the spirit of the resistance movement in the Kikuyu highlands of colonial Kenya. Mwangi also manifested a lively interest in Kenya's contemporary social problems. In *Kill Me Quick* (1973) he focuses on the plight of young men who, though educated, are unable to find honest employment and in *The Cockroach Dance* (1979) he recounts the picaresque adventures of a meter reader coping with life in the squalor and violence of a slum. Among Mwangi's later works are the thriller *Bread of Sorrow* (1987), *Weapon of Hunger* (1989), *The Return of Shaka* (1989), and *Striving for the Wind* (1990). In these vivid naturalistic narratives Mwangi never loses his sense of humour; he offers the reader a mixture of protest and hilarity.

<http://www.mejamwangi.com/images> <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article9126181/Mwan>



Joseph Kamaru Little known outside of Africa, Joseph Kamaru has been influencing the music scene in his homeland of Kenya since 1967. While his earliest hits, including *"Celine," "Thina Wa Kamaru"* and *"Tugatigiti-hanio,"* were rhythmic dance tunes, recorded with his sister, Catherine Muthoni, and his performances were "x rated, adult only" spectacles, Kamaru completely revamped his approach after he became a born again Christian in 1993. Disbanding his group, Kamaru Supersounds, he formed a gospel music and began singing exclusively for the Lord. Performing highly-spiritual concerts and organizing festivals, Kamaru has helped to make gospel music one of the dominant sounds heard in Kenya today.

<http://members.aol.com/dpaterson/busines1.htm> <http://www.windowsmedia.com/Mediaguide>



Nazizi (*1981) born Nazizi Hirji is an MC from Kenya. She was first exposed to Kenyan audiences at 'Da Show' which was a talent show in which she battled several male MCs and came up tops. This led to her signing on with Samawati Studios. While at Samawati she appeared in Eric Wainaina's (an R&B/folk singer) song *"Nakuwaza"*. She eventually hooked up with Tedd Josiah of Audio Vault Studios in 1999, where she featured on the well-known track *"Sitalia"* by Nikki (an R&B singer). She got her moment when she had her own solo single *"Ni Sawa Tu"* (It's Fine) featured in the Audio Vault project *"Kenyan The 2nd Chapter"*. The song, which was a hit, tells of the tribulations of a daydreaming school girl who hopes to be famous like Tupac Shakur, and of course her parents don't want to hear any of it. Any resemblance to her life? Maybe. Nazizi has since appeared in GidiGidi MajiMaji's album *"Ismarwa"* dropping lyrics in the song *"Chunya Jamirima"*. Since then Nazizi has teamed up with singer/rapper Wyre and Bamzigi to form the group Necessary Noise.

<http://www.africanhiphop.com> <http://www.africanshome.com/members/125/fans.php>



Jimmy Ogonga (*1977) was born in Nairobi. He is a self-taught multi-media artist & writer, working with sculpture, video & new media. Ogonga started out drawing images inspired by scenes around him, like portraits of his family, inspirational figures like Bob Marley, Steve Biko, and selected political icons – from where he worked as a graphic artist. When he started sculpture in the early 1990's, he found himself drawn to themes with a strong political content, often airing an extremely convinced, individual and radical side of him – commenting mainly about what he calls "the African State of Affairs". In 2001, he founded the Nairobi Centre of Contemporary Art of East Africa – that works as a catalyst for the visual arts & the creation of significant art projects, which developed intercontinental networks with the Centre of Contemporary Art of Africa in Brussels. This partnership developed into the opportunity of developing dialogues and collaborating with other African Artists in Africa and in the Diaspora. He has exhibited widely and has worked in Brussels, Johannesburg and U.S.A.

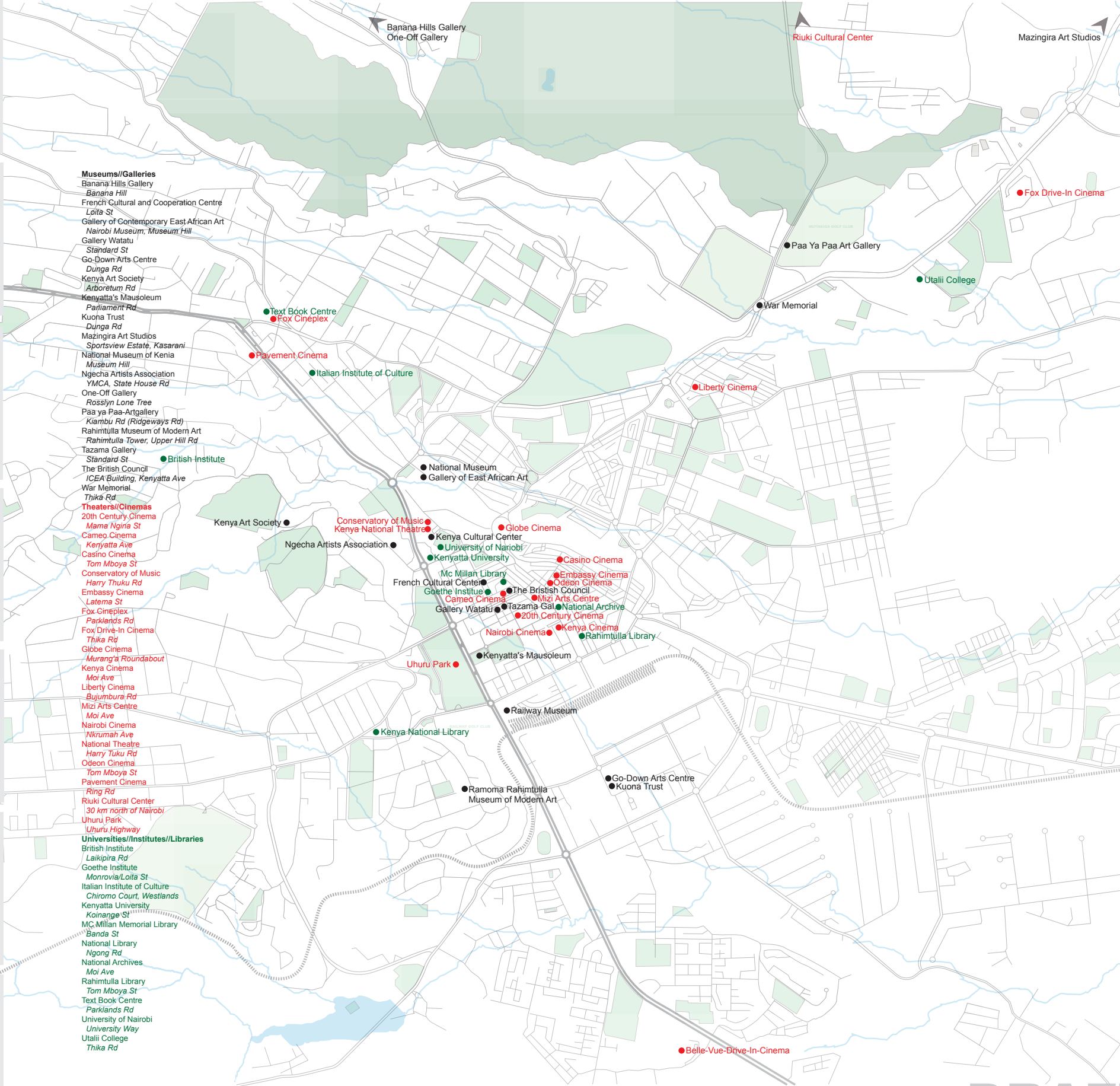
<http://www.jimmyogonga.com> <http://portal.unesco.org/culture>



Kibaara Kaugi Film maker Kibaara Kaugi of the Film Department of the Ministry of Information and Communications knows he has ventured into uncertain territory with Kenya's first home-grown movie about the Mau Mau, a divisive subject for Kenyans that still occupies an ambiguous place in their history. *„Enough is enough"* 2005 is the first film of its kind and is giving more insight into the war that liberated Kenya from colonial rule. Kaugi's film about the forest fighters who launched an uprising against white colonists in Kenya in the 1950s was shot on a shoestring budget of one million Kenyan shillings (\$12,290), with many of the cast and crew agreeing to work for nothing. The film was recognized internationally and won several film prizes. (The historic picture shows Mau Mau freedom fighters wearing animal skins and armed with long knives.)

<http://www.entertainmentnews.org/breaking/10501/mau-mau-film-spotlights-kenyas-forgotten-fighters> <http://www.ogiek.org/news>

Cultural sites in Nairobi



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