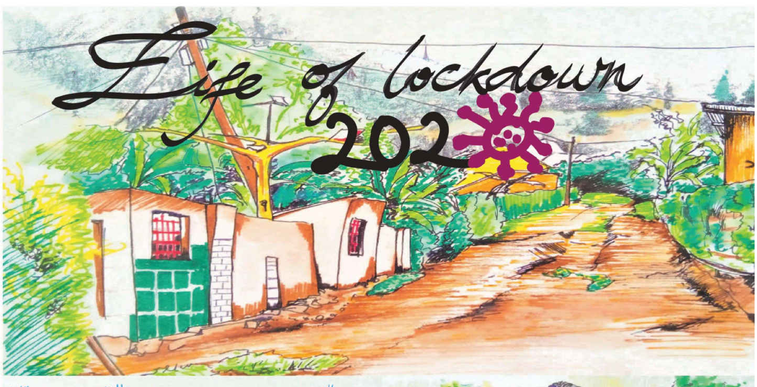
Joshua Arts Studio
"Rise like the Stars"

Africalia
CREATIVITY IS LIFE

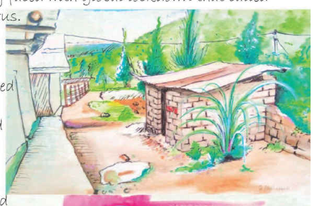
Belgium
partner in development

Life of lockdown 2020



After 75 days from happy new year party of 2020, my country faced with global lockdown that called " Guma-Murugo" in Kinyarwanda language caused by the virus.

Most of global activities were stopped and everyone on this planet supposed to stay at home for saving world lives.



Many people stayed in bed, others at gaming with kids. others starve at home and other huge number was pandemic victims until today.

This is a year of vision, the year of illusion where a rich cries like poor and all of them struggling only to escape CORONA virus.

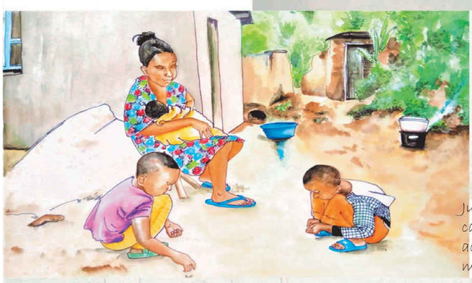
Corona Virus aka COVID-19 surprised each human being in a year of vision 2020.

This is Joshua Biseruka, a retired visual arts trainer, not caused by years, but caused by global pandemic called Corona.

Art is my passion, I create as job and as hobby at the same time That is why I spent all my lockdown days with inks and paper to record my days!

When lockdown started, our government recommended everyone to stay at home. We were not allowed to travel outside of our villages. I don't believe if this is real life or is an other kind of movie where earth is a big screen to be watched by every human being.

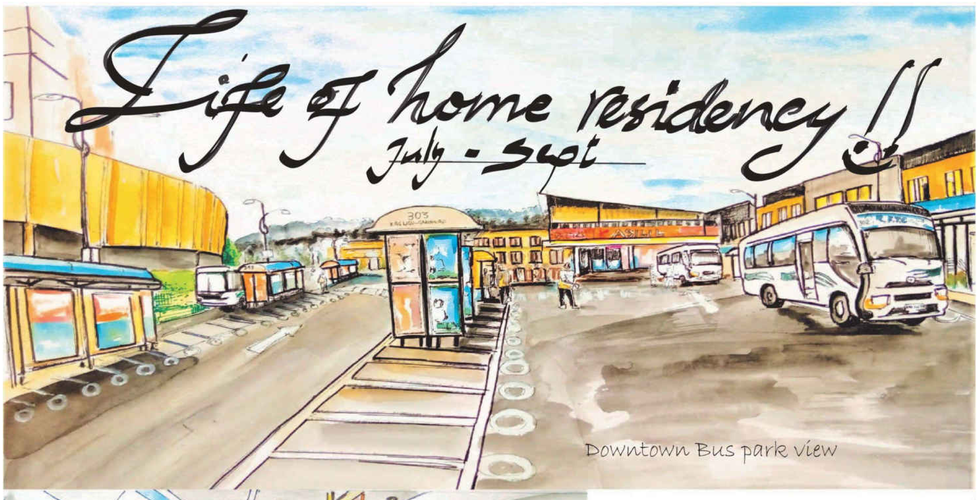
Therefore if they are dreams or reality of vision 2020, let me welcome you to take a tour with me through my sketchbooks. I'm humbled sharing with you how the situation is going in my motherland, Rwanda.



Just from the middist of March 2020, when first case found in Kigali, all schools and other activities were closed. I started sketching my daily in my village until the end of Ju

Ohhh my Gosh! I have been won for Creativity Is Life grant for home residency

Life of home residency!!
July - Sept

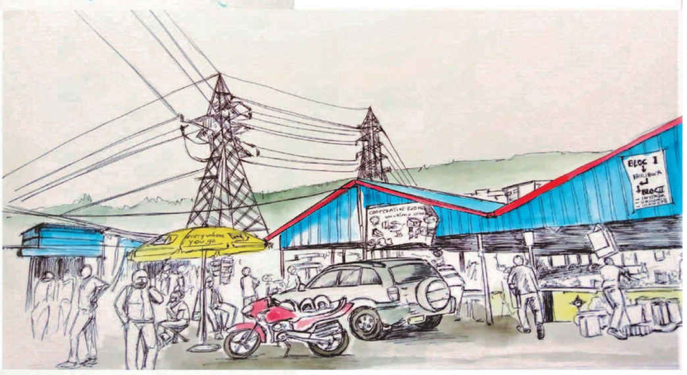


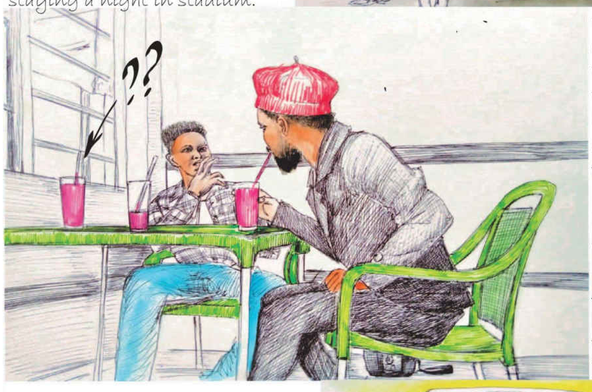
Downtown Bus park view

Mana weee!! shirumuteto noneho yabaye murekatete!

Public transports before lockdown was really hard, where passengers used to stand every where in bus and seat only oldmen, pregnant ladies and people with disablities.
Today is different! Everyone is pregnant!! None standing, and none to sit near of another just empty seat between passengers and wear well your facemask with your owner hand sanitizer if you don't like washing hands on public hand washing sites.

In order to fight spreading of virus in markets, only groceries sellers were allowed working on conditions bellow:
- don't sell anything to someone who doesn't wear well facemask.
- one meter between clients
- payment allowed is visa cards, mobile money or other ways of using technology.
- no movement allowed between 7PM to 5 AM without official authorization . Someone who breaks this rule is punished by staying a night in stadium.

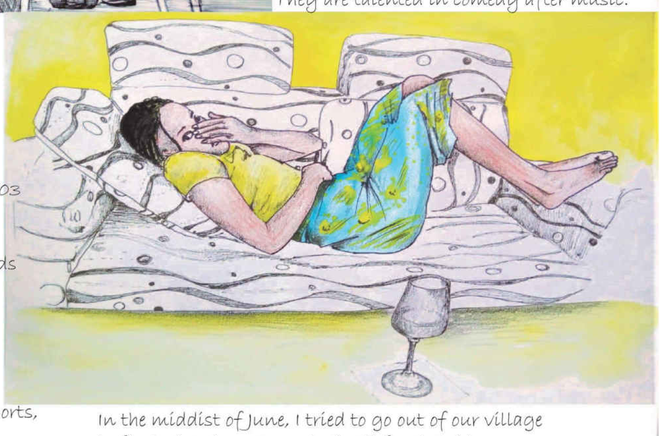




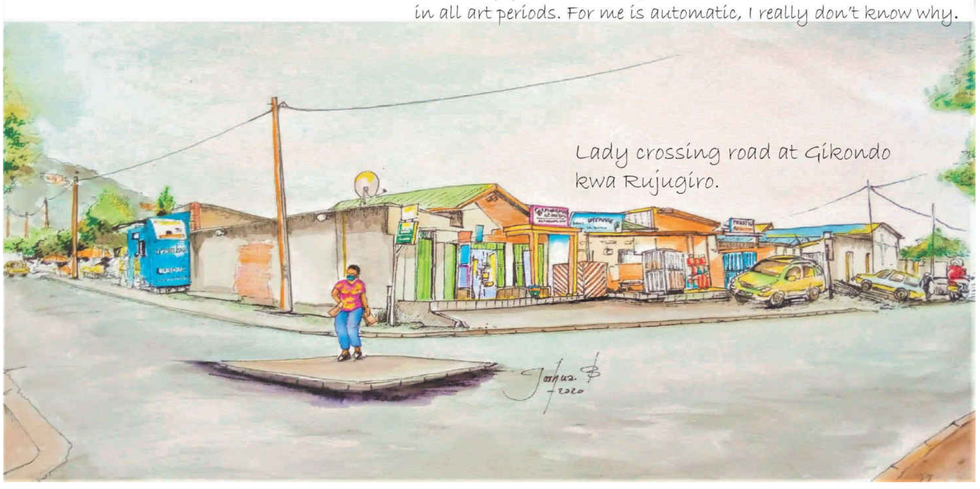
whose this third glass?
Clearly the third glass was mine! Here I was with my early schoolmates at Nyundo and workmates at AGAHOZO Shalom, before lockdown. Alex a trainer of piano, Methuselah a trainer of guitar and the third invisible guy who trains Visual art.
'' Man ako gatobe uhise ugakonoza aka kanya!'' (guy already finished your cocktail right now!) Methuselah exclaimed.
" reka icyuya wangu!"(don't panic dear!) Alex replied!
I really missed these guys. When they are together, there are like Tom and Jerry. They are talented in comedy after music.

Lady in sofa and my glass again!

lockdown was mess to all lovers who were planed to have wedding ceremonies in middle of March here. Mrs Elie Tubemaso and Coco (lady in sofa) have been married on 14th/03 and on 15 th government stopped everything. In morning of that monday all schools sent back all kids to their homes. Saturday, 19th all roads to provinces were closed.
This was starting the sorrow days to all rwandan's hearts until the end of May where some of essential activities reopened like public transports, constructions, and so on.



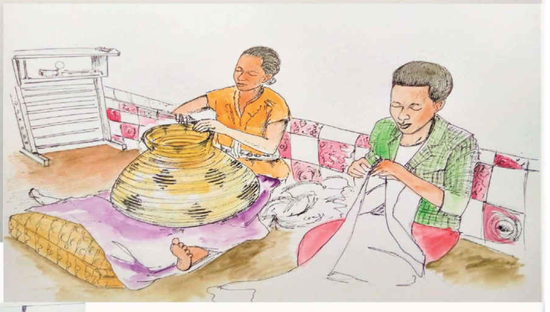
In the middist of June, I tried to go out of our village to find nice views around Kigali for sketching.
I mostly liked sketching ladies.
This is a popular desease of the most artists in all art periods. For me is automatic, I really don't know why.



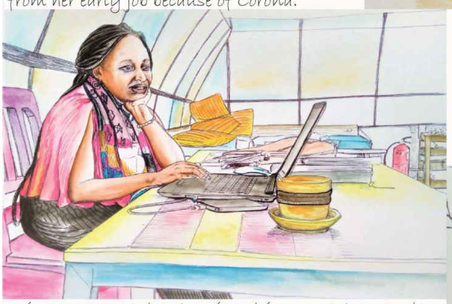
Lady crossing road at Gikondo kwa Rujugiro.

Downtown View

Miss Noella Karatamba at their new business of food nutrition after kicked out from her early job because of Corona.



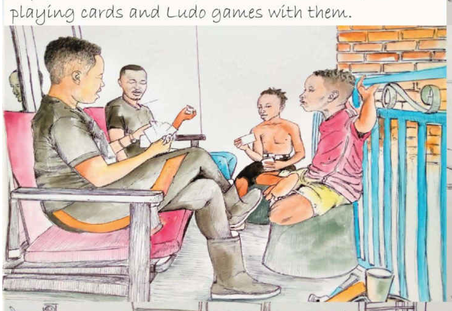
Aunt mama Dudu and her friend making crafts at SANKOFA.

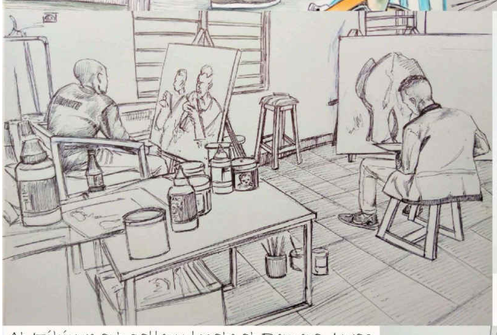


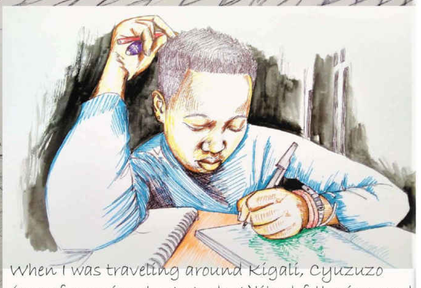
Miss Denyse Mukantwari working on Art-Rwanda Ubuhanzi project at Inzora Coffee shop.

Uwacu Martine, a teacher at GREEN HILLS is with her vacancy students.

Tonto Byeri (Uncle Beer, nickname given by his nephews because he liked beer so much!) Here, he is playing cards and Ludo games with them.





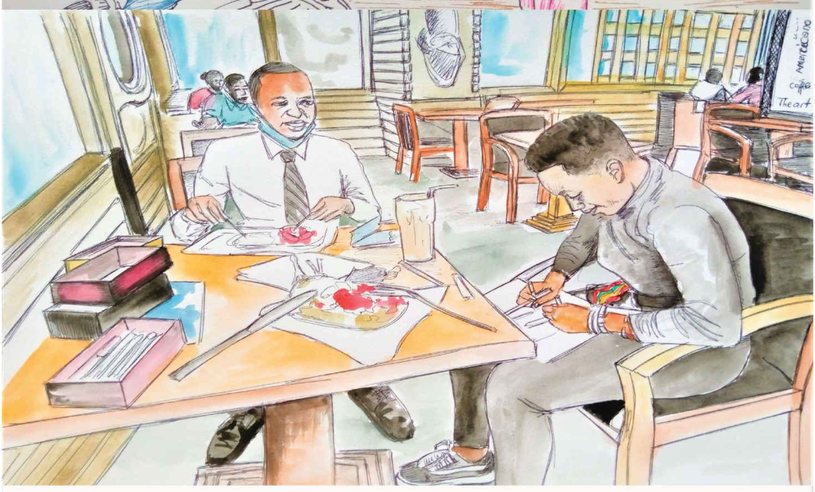


When I was traveling around Kigali, Cyuzuzo (one of my visual art student) liked following and sketching with me.

At Izihirwe art gallery locate at Remera, I was there to see these guys. Izere Antoine a founder of this place and his friend Bertin were busy on their artworks' creation. "Man painting is my bread, Corona can't stop me!" Antoine said.

Another day I visited a giant sculptor at Kimisagara, Hategekimana Laurent aka Magicien du boi (wood magician). Magician is his nickname because of his talent on Jacaranda. I used to sketch his sitting room rather than him because of his legacies hunged on all walls. " courage mon Joshua!" He always encourages me for working hard.

Nyabugogo bus park is a center reference roads of Rwanda. Means that, is the major area where corona could easily spread in all countrysides. Thus, in each corner there is a volunteer and washing hand sites, banners, facemasks and hand sanitizer sellers and so on.

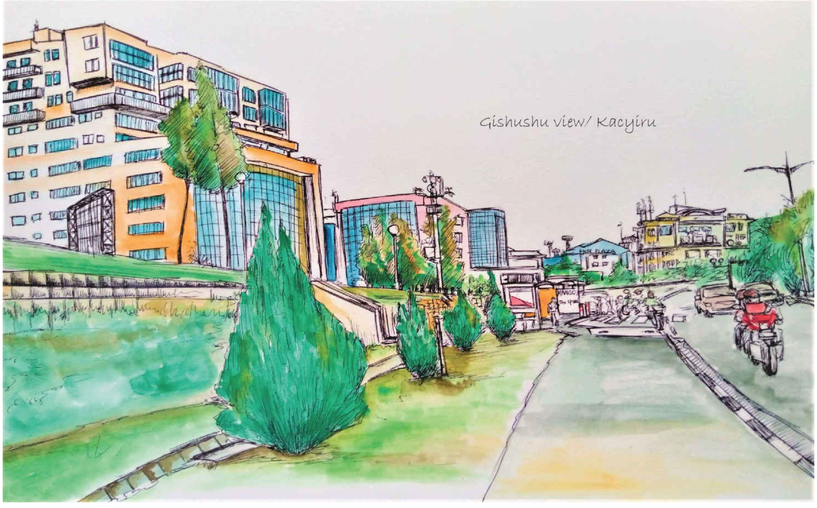


Carnet de voyageur is not cultural for rwandan, that is why it is surprising to many people here to see someone sketching in public. Here, Mwiseneza Sylver was shocked to see Cyuzuzo with her sketchbook. People liked to ask many questions about my sketches," what is the importance of this? why can't you take the pictures? Don't you have something to work, and you come here for spending your time?,... Only my answer to them was" Art is my drug and cure, that is why I'm here!"

Mediatrice, supervisor of art center at AGAHOZO Shalom (my former boss at school), " sha guma murugo nahinze inyanya n'imboga ubundi twirebera udu firime hamwe na cher!" [during lockdown we planted tomatoes and make kitchen garden. Then ,we watched movies with my husband!"

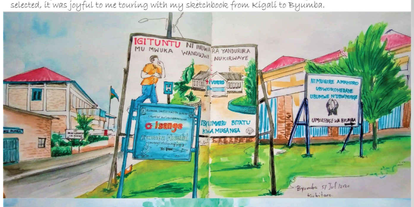
Njata Joseph, New Times's journalist who wanted to know more about me and my project with AFRICALIA,he was surprised seeing his face at the end!

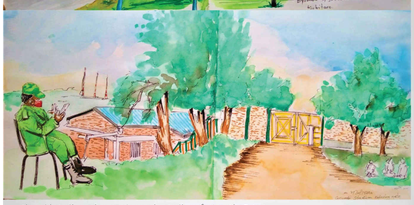
Giticyinyoni/ Kigali



Gishushu view/ Kacyiru

A t the end of June I received the good news from AFRICALIA, that I have been selected for "Creativity is Life Grant" I mean home residency. In the morning of that day, I realised that I was selected, it was joyful to me touring with my sketchbook from Kigali to Byumba.





Gicumbi stadium view. people were in stadium for hepatite B test.

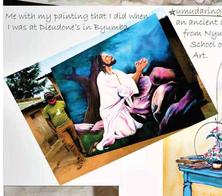
Here kemerwa Andre(umudaringi) help old women to properly wash hands before entering in the hall room.

Gicumbi Bus Park view. All public transports must park outside and passengers have to wash their hands after getting off cars and when getting in any other bus.

PEMBE factory already was closed temporary because of Corona.

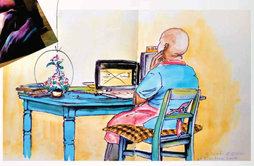
Kisaro center

Me with my painting that I did when I was at Dieudone's in Byumba



*umudaringi mean an ancient art student from Nyundo School of Art.

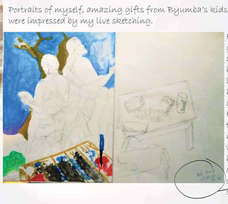
Umudaringi Dieudone in his evening office. Here he was working on animation project.



Disney, a 12 years young boy. He has courage of studying to draw.

He wanted to walk with me but his parent stoped him for home activities.

Portraits of myself, amazing gifts from Byumba's kids who were impressed by my live sketching.



Kizito, a cool guy who stayed at Byumba because of the lockdown at his home(Rubavu district).
He spent all night to surprise me in morning. "Just I wanted to start on hands as you did on that painting of Jesus" Kizito said.

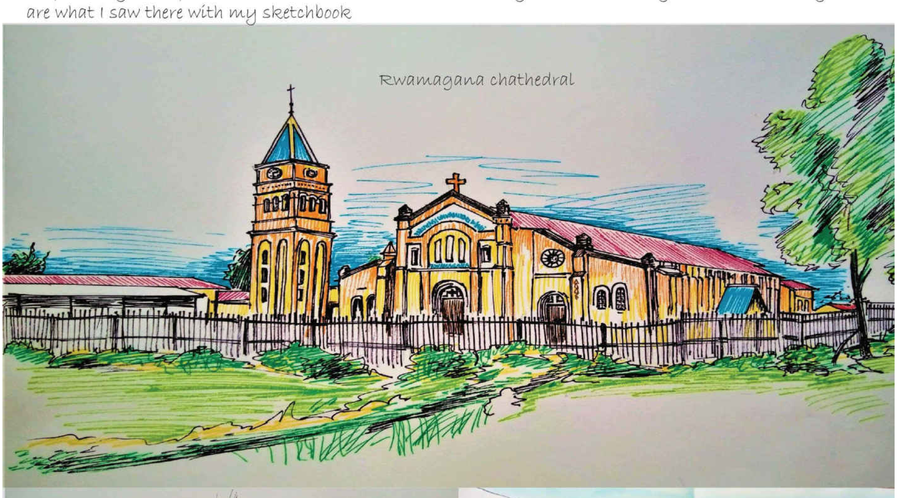
I met Umunugisha Marie Angel, my classmate at Nyundo Arts School, near from Kubitaro where their parents live."Ohh! You still draw like Jeroen Janssen? Me I don't remember where my old sketchbook is!" she exclaimed.

At umudaringi Kemerwa Andre. He is known on modeling of birds. About Corona on this family:" We didn't starve much because my wife is a doctor, she didn't stop her job" Kemerwa replied.

Byumba Cathedral none was there because all church activities were stopped because of the pandemic.

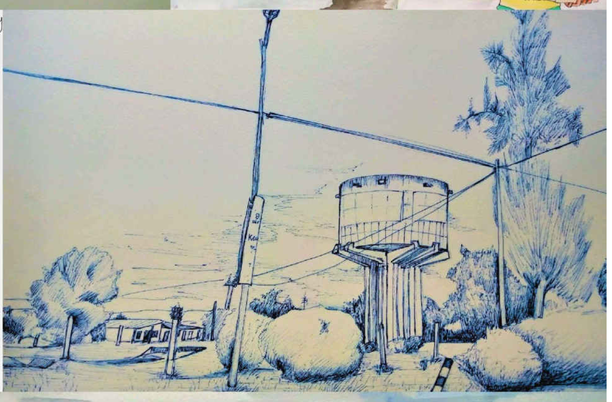
Byumba water station View

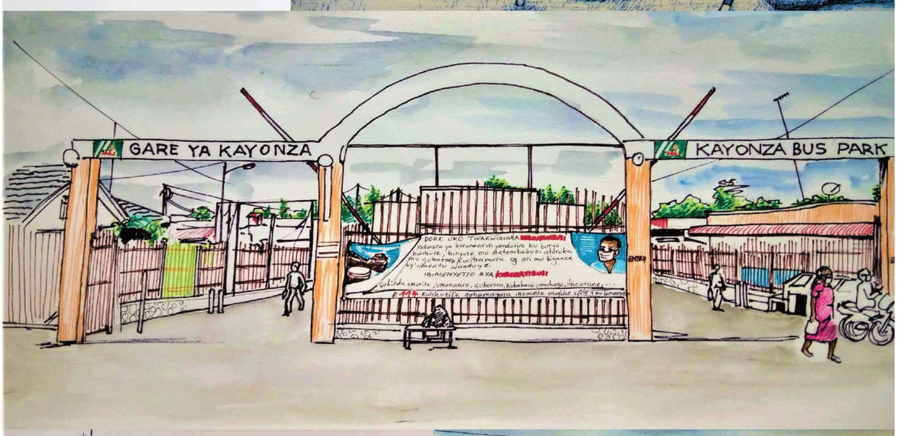
From Byumba, my next tour was in eastern province of my country. It was my first time to visit Nyagatare district. Actually, I wished to draw cattle and plain land. I had nice time there, but I was surprised by milk prices there than other territories where they don't have many cows. In summary bellow are what I saw there with my sketchbook

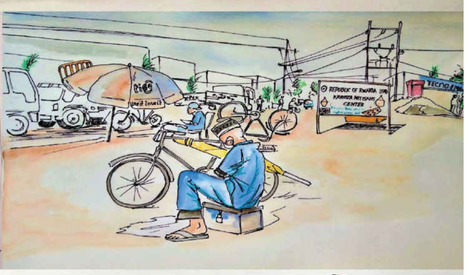


Before reaching at Nyagatare city you pass through Rwamagana, Kayonza and Gatsibo districts.

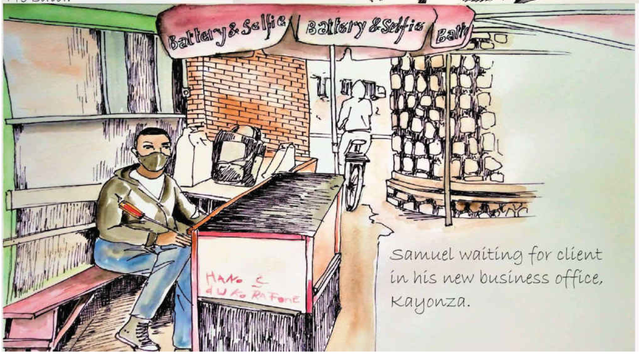
Generally Rwanda is a country of high mountains and thousand hills, even Kigali is built on hills. But only eastern province is where you can walk kilometers without climbing. Here is where we find Akagera National Park of animals with different species. I was not allowed to visit this national park because most of activities were ceased.







Samuel was married by surprise due to lockdown. The girl who became his wife was locked down at the first case of Corona in Rwanda. Because of that lockdown she missed the way to return her home in south province, then they decided to get married. " we had no choice dear.Now I'm no longer single,everyth has changed in my life because of COVID-19. Now I repair mobile phones to get something for my family" He said.



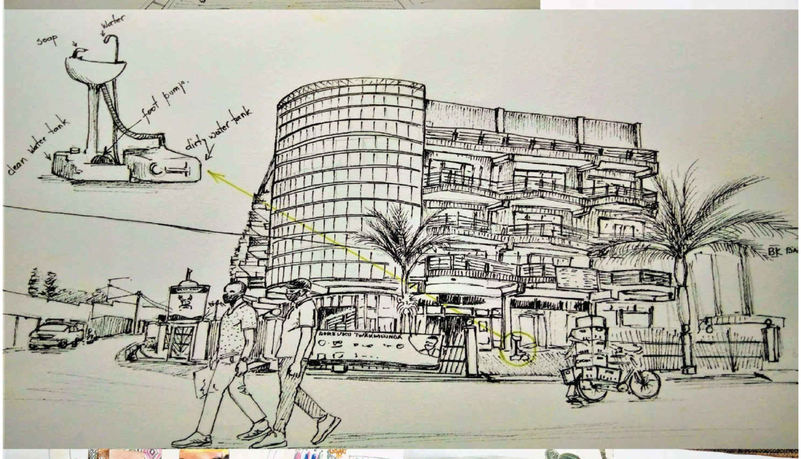
Samuel waiting for client in his new business office, Kayonza.

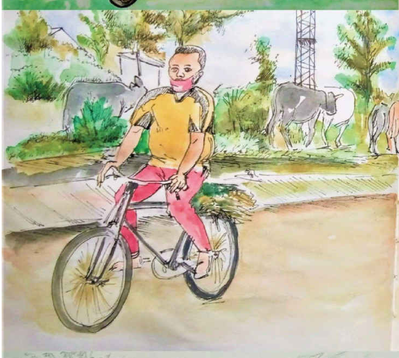
" No clients dear, salon services today is stressfully, nyiribyor aba yasarishije kandi nta bant bakiza gukoresha umusatsi. Abagabo barakennye mwana, abagore ntibakibona uko bagavura ngo baduhe ibyashar

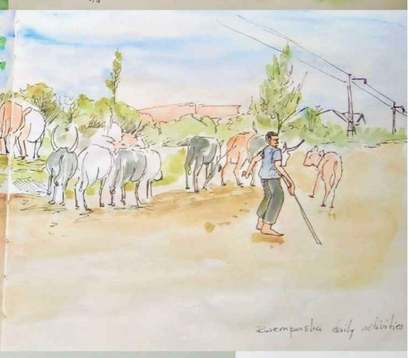
(The landlord is asking for re however we didn't work.) Kanez replied about the income about her business today.

Most of the images in eastern province are plains with people riding bicycles with bananas and kids looking after cattle.

Eastern districts are known on supplying bananas, sorghum, maises, beans and milk.



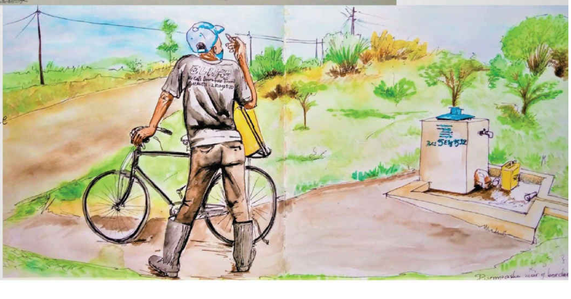




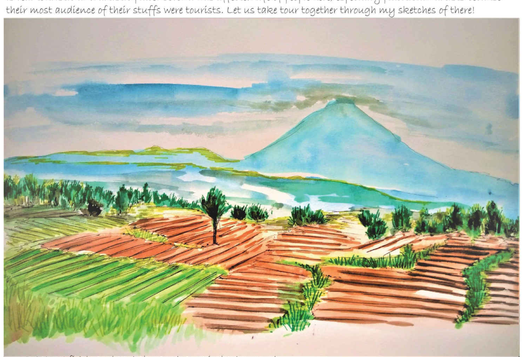
Rwempasha is one of Nyagatare sectors that touches the border separating Rwanda from Uganda.

Here most of the people don't like cultivating as they like grazing their cows.

" Ndeka wa musore we ibya Corona ni akumiro, ubu ntawakwishuka agana mu Nkole" (Guy none of us who could cross the border to Nkole). Old man narrates to me his story during lockdown when he came to fetch water. All his kids went to Kigali to find life that's why himself came to the tap.
Corona closed their relation with Ugandan people.



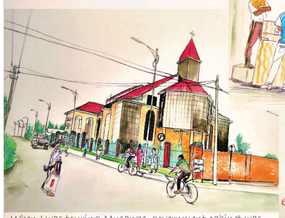
From the Bisate provided my here visit about the we the Forest of Kinigi. Musanze used the vanishing point to go especially Bisate place. High mountains' view, yards of potatoes and cold weather are general feelings you embrace in Northern province. There is where we find Volcanoes park, Mountains gorillas is real touristic and artistic place. Corona was affected life of people here, especially placitician artists because their most audience of their stuffs were tourists. Let us take tour together through my sketches of there!



Potatoes' fields and Muhabura volcanoe in background.

When you reach Musanze bus park, after washing hands, you must be tested body temp before going in other activities there. Here volunteers tore tests of each passenger.

One of the most strategy of fighting COVID-19 is washing hands, and properly wearing face mask . Here security guy supervised that every one is well washing with soap and reminding them to properly wear their facemasks and making sure that they leave a meter between each other.



When I was touring Musanze, government cabinet was allowing some activities of churches, but by conditions of organizing well themselves before for protecting their people from Covid-19.

Ngabo Frank one of lockdown Musanze's volunteers
" I decided being a volunteer because I hate staying at home for a long time. My friend , it is really terrible seeing people struggling without support. In April we had disasters of flood caused by heavy rain. Many properties of people have been destroyed. And the affected ones were brought in schools, because the students were at home, you know. some of them lost their family members and were buried in the absence of their friends."

Mama Frank was surprised with my sketch of his son.

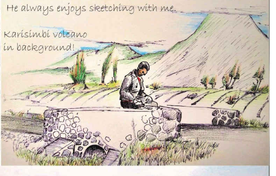
Kigombe river has source in center of Musanze city.

Musanze cathedral in reopening organization.

Bisate lodge builds designed in traditional rwandan huts!

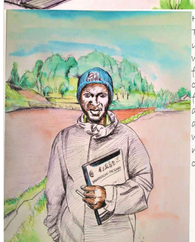
one of my student, Serge from AGAHOZO SHALOM school who lives in Musanze was with me at Bisate. He always enjoys sketching with me.

Karisimbi volcano in background.

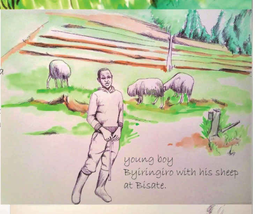


Top view of Bisate lodge.

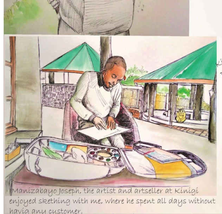
When I was there, they were in repairing activities because of the pandemic they had no clients. This place situates near volcanic park. The audience are tourists who would come to visit mountains gorillas.



Habanabakize Thomas, umujyanama w'ubuzima from Nyabigoma cell:" Here we're farmers, our activities weren't affected so much we only lost our markets of crops."



young boy Byiringiro with his sheep at Bisate.

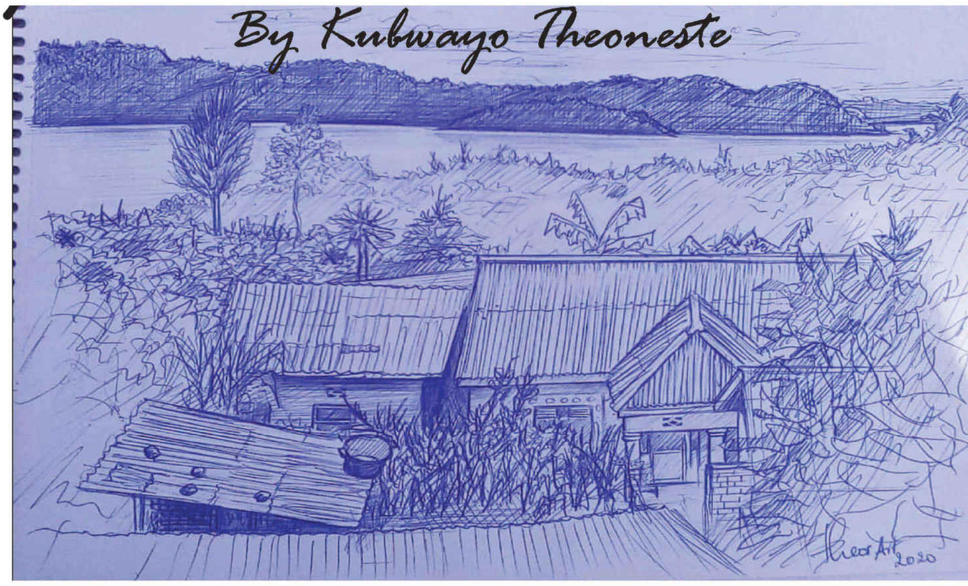


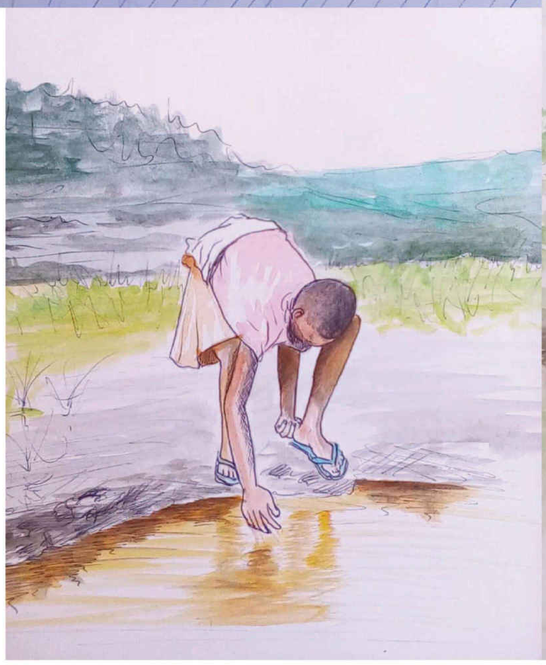
Kids playing with tennis in yard, while their parents were busy!

Mwizerabyo Joseph, the artist and artseller at Kinigi enjoyed sketching with me, where he spent all days without having any customer.

From Kinigi, I visited Inshuti Art Center in Musanze city to meet my classmates who work there. I was surprised to see them playing soccer in gallery garden.
" What could we do Jean? Let us play and die in joy man. our planet is nitiwo its end." Mask-Art joked.
"No materials left in stock, from beginning of this year no clients we received. This shit will continue until when airports will reopen. " Hoday explained how Corona affected their Art Center.

When I got back from Musanze, my next locations to visit were southern and western provinces. But because of high spreading of the pandemic in capital we were isolated again until today, none who can get outside of Kigali bounderies to any province. Because of this issue, my traveling to the southern and western provinces was postponed until when I will have right to cross the boundary. I am hoping to publish full story of all country next year. Bellow are some ofmy young brother's sketches when he was in Nyamasheke district during the time of the pandemic.





By the ending, I would like to thank each and everyone for your time to visit my community through this story. Hope you liked and enjoyed every moment captured here.
Much appreciations to AFRICALIA, BELIGIUM partiner in development and everyone who have been part of releasing this session of project from the beggining up today. Hoping to launch full story of my country next year hopefully that the pandemic could be getting to its end.