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“Where ‘God is like a Longing’: Theater and Social Vulnerability in Mozambique.”

Tuesday, March 4
4:30 p.m.
Georgian Room, IMU

Abstract
This paper is the result of research on theater that I conducted in Maputo, Mozambique between February and December 2010. My original aim was to understand how the sustained and diverse performance culture that has thrived in Mozambique since the early 1980s entails a novel and effective mode of exercising citizenship. I wanted to gauge the extent to which, for both spectators and theatre workers, drama constituted a powerful form of political participation. Ultimately, I wished to propose that Mozambican theatre opened up spaces for the negotiation and re-articulation of ethnic, class and gender identifications both against and alongside dominant nationalist discourses. But in the course of my investigation I was compelled to rethink my hypotheses. In the paper I will be presenting I will try to explain why I needed to revise my original hypothesis and will then attempt to broach an interrogation of how (and indeed whether), in the course of Mozambique’s tumultuous recent history, theater has succeeded in catalyzing, or at least symbolizing, social change and political participation in rural and peri-urban zones.