

# EL PAÍS CULTURA

## Art to illuminate Africa

The Kenyan Evans presents at the fair Wadongo PAD London his solar lamp design an installation that combines Fashion with engineering.



Installation with lamps designed by Evans Wadongo MwangBora.

Wadongo Evans (1986) walked six miles each day to attend school. And relates that he was lucky because his parents, both teachers, could afford to buy kerosene to light a lamp with which to study at night in his mud house without running water, located in a rural area west of Kenya. The engineer now has serious vision problems because of the smoke emanating from the device, which can also cause respiratory damage and even throat cancer and lung cancer, or fires in homes that are built of grass and wood. The more you study a kid, the greater the health risk.

Wadongo went to college and it was then decided to start saving on your student loan to make use of the African sun and light at night lead to households through a single lamp, made of 50% recyclable materials - scrap and -. Thus was born the MwangBora in 2004 than in Swahili means "good light" and that is solar powered.

Engineering has been creating mixed with fashion and art, Reed Krakoff New Yorker, in an installation of dozens of these lanterns in the fair PAD of art and design in London, which

"Art to Illuminate Africa," *El País Culture*. October 20, 2013.

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ends today. There each piece sells for \$ 250 (182 euros) to benefit the NGO Sustainable Development for All Kenya (sustainable development throughout Kenya, ATPS-Kenya) and the project Just one lamp ; outside the event cost is \$ 25 ( about 18 euros) and change the lives of people who have no access to electricity.

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## In Kenya only 18% of the population has access to electricity. The more you study a kid with a kerosene lamp, the greater the risk to your health

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"Many of my friends dropped out of school because they could not do their homework and were punished. The teachers did not understand ... "says Wadongo, which was named one of the heroes of the U.S. network CNN in 2010 for his initiative, with the rows of these lamps that have been dressed with colorful fabrics for your visit to London. The continent lives in darkness by 90%, he says, and this is a particularly serious problem in sub-Saharan Africa, in Kenya only 18% of the population has access to electricity, according to World Bank data.

But children in rural areas should tend cattle during the day and go to school at night, or school and after dark, after fulfilling other obligations that support the livelihood of their homes. Having light that gives life to the notes is a luxury for them. "Although there is a close network, the connection is very expensive. It costs 500 euros for people [more than 30 million in Kenya] they must support their families with one or two dollars a day," says Wadongo. Buy the dangerous kerosene to have him every day, he continues, makes them spend about 70% of that salary.

"Importantly, the design was simple, so you do not need a lot of technical expertise to build the Lamp". And that people could identify with a model made like kerosene lantern has been one of the premises of the establishment. The MwangaBora has a solar panel, an LED bulb and a battery that serves 3,000 loads.



Wadongo Evans, one of his lamps.

Sun exposure should be done for about four hours and last six. Needless to say that the intensity of the light it provides is 200 times brighter than the feeble flame of kerosene, according to its promoters. Also according to the data provided, the savings is 20.2 million pounds of CO2 (almost 24 million), an amount that is calculated after the distribution of 30,000 bulbs so far.

Get \$ 25 to buy a lamp was a barrier for many Kenyan families, so the next step taken Wadongo was thinking beyond the light in a revenue model that made it possible and increase their impact. Now there are workshops to train youth in very traditional technique of drawing the lamps. The Kenyan has launched a program for women's groups already formed in villages acquire "basic skills" to start businesses. Each A is given the first lamp MwangaBora.

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What about the art? Evans sees Wadongo linked to the manufacture of his invention. "When I designed it to do good, but also be a subject that people want to have," he says. Meanwhile, another 20,000 expected "good light" are pledged in 2014 for a child as he was able to get to college without losing your eyes or lungs.

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