

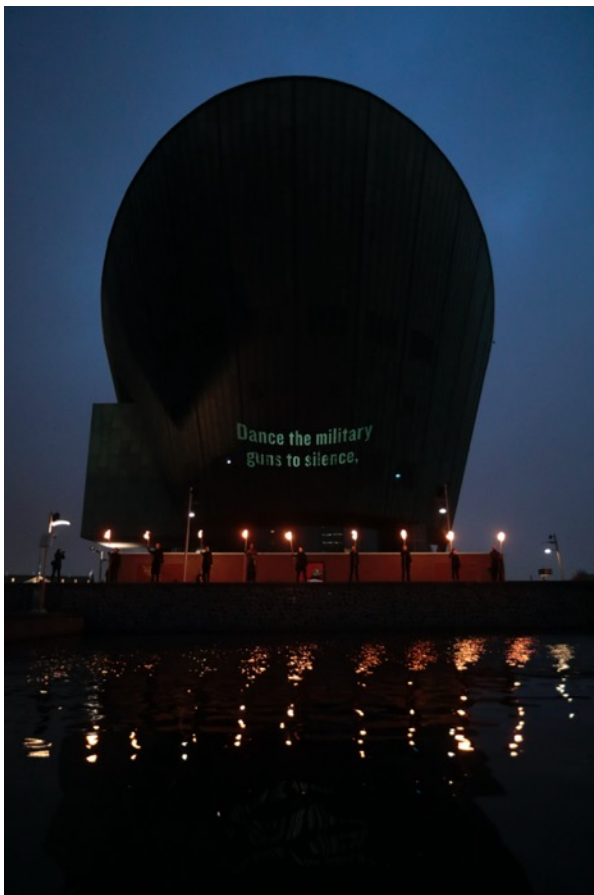
# FOSSIL FREE CULTURE

## PRESS RELEASE

### KEEP DANCING: OGONI NINE KILLING COMMEMORATED AT SHELL SPONSORED NEMO

**Amsterdam 10 November 2020 - Today, Fossil Free Culture NL (FFC-NL) orchestrated a performance at the NEMO Science Museum to commemorate the nine Nigerian activists – the Ogoni Nine - that were hanged in 1995 for their participation in the resistance against Shell in the Ogoni region in Nigeria. *Keep Dancing* is the fourteenth performance of FFC-NL and the first one at their new target NEMO.**

With this performance, the artist-activist collective honors and commemorates the Ogoni Nine and especially their kindred-spirit Ken Saro-Wiwa, by literally guarding the flame of their struggle. Frida Castro of FFC-NL: “The NEMO still offers violent climate denier Shell a podium to present itself as a company with a heart. Shell is as ruthless as it is heartless. As artists and activists, we subsume the struggle of our fellow artist Ken Saro-Wiwa.” The performance at the NEMO is part of a series of actions, initiated by the Shell Must Fall campaign, to remember the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the killing of the activists from Ogoniland.



The nine Ogoni men are represented by FFC-NL by nine flames, held by nine guardians at the NEMO. On the back of the NEMO a poem by Saro-Wiwa, ‘Dance’, is projected. FFC-NL honors Ken Saro-Wiwa in particular, who, as an artist and activist, undertook non-violent action against the destructive practices of Shell. Castro: “Like Ken Saro-Wiwa, we fight non-violently but passionately. We will take upon every cultural institution that affiliates with Shell. They killed strong voices, but the struggle is not silenced. This performance is inspired by Saro-Wiwa’s powerful poem *Dance*”.

After successfully campaigning to liberate the Museumplein from the toxic influence of the fossil fuel industry, the artist collective FFC-NL now focuses on NEMO. Castro: “Science and education are as much a part of culture as visual arts and music. We do not accept that a children’s museum has a partnership with a climate denier, destructor and human rights violator like Shell.” The performance was prepared and conducted in a way to minimize risks for catching covid19.

*Photo by Anisa Xhomaqi Ani Jo*



Photos by Laura Ponchel

## **25 years of abdicating responsibility for the death of the Ogoni Nine**

25 years ago, nine Ogoni men were tried by a special military tribunal and hanged in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Ken Saro-Wiwa, Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel en John Kpuine had to pay with their lives for their struggle to protect their environment and the Ogoni people. The *Ogoni Nine* were convicted in 1995 partly based on false testimonies, that were pressed for by Shell and the Nigerian government. Shell manipulated and influenced the court and witnesses, and thereby sacrificed the lives of these nine men. Until this day the Ogoni people, the Niger Delta and the surviving dependents of the nine Ogoni men wait for justice and reparations. But the accountability for the wreckage and destruction that was caused in their lives and environment is still being abdicated by Shell. Today the nine men are commemorated with nine different actions against Shell, in several cities throughout the Netherlands, under the *Shell Must Fall* campaign.

## **Cultural institutions should not facilitate Shell's greenwashing practices**

In Amsterdam, FFC- NL honors the *Ogoni Nine* with a clear message to the NEMO science museum: Break ties with Shell. NEMO facilitates the cleansing of Shells dirty image by giving them an influential place in their ambitious and broadly distributed educational program for primary schools, *Maakkunde*. Furthermore, Shell is financing and co-developing at NEMO the so called '*the art of making*' education program'; a method for 'hands-on science- and technology education on primary schools.' With Shell's *Generation Discover* program and the financial influence on the 'art of making' education program the goal is 'to target as many children and teachers' as it is stated on NEMO's website. Shell must never be allowed to buy itself a place in the brains of our future generations. FFC-NL will continue to target NEMO and other cultural institutions that accept money from the fossil fuel industry as long as necessary.