

Final Presentation Report



Machbuba's Living Memory – The Bench Memorial
BTU for Future – Summer Semester 2025

Group Member

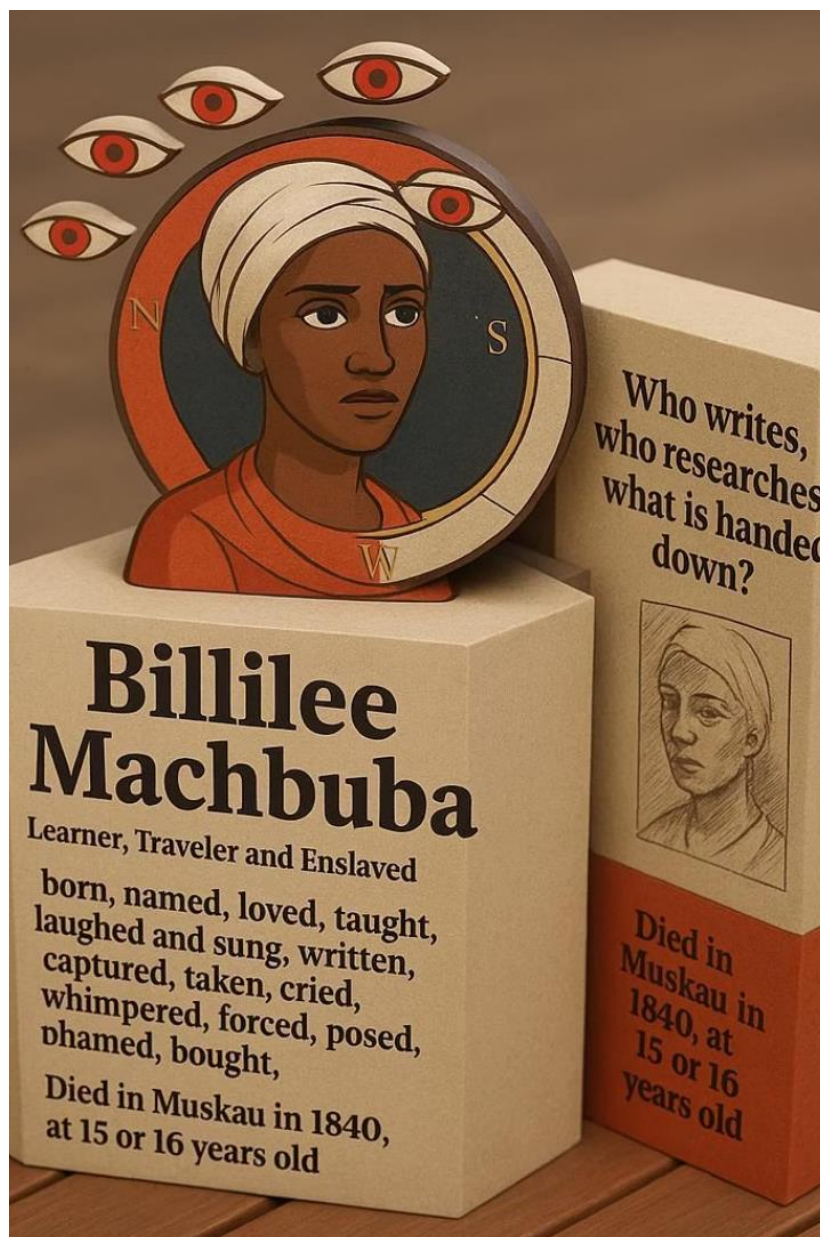
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Introduction

This project began with the question: How do we give voice and recognition to someone whose story was silenced by colonialism?

Through “Machbuba’s Living Memory,” I sought to honor Bilillee Ajjamé Machbuba, a young Ethiopian woman whose life was shaped by colonial violence and erasure. At the same time, the project aimed to create a space where today’s migrant and BIPoC students at BTU can feel seen, represented, and included.

While the initial design included several ideas such as a wall and a memory walk, due to financial and practical limitations, I chose to focus only on one core element: the bench. This decision allowed me to bring forward something simple, realistic, and impactful.



Process Through the Semester

April – Learning About Machbuba



I began with research and discussions on colonialism, remembrance, and silence. Machbuba's story revealed how women of color are often erased from history, and it motivated me to design a space that could symbolically give her a voice.

May – Concept Development



During brainstorming, I came up with the idea of Machbuba's Bench. A bench is simple, human-centered, and accessible. Unlike statues or large monuments, it invites people to sit, reflect, and share.

June – Design Focus



As it became clear that resources were limited, I committed fully to the bench concept. This way, instead of leaving ideas incomplete, I could create one meaningful memorial that truly worked.

July – Inauguration & Community Response



On July 9, 2025, the bench was inaugurated near the BTU International Office. The opening included an Ethiopian coffee ceremony and reflections from students and faculty. Many expressed that the bench gave them a sense of recognition and belonging.



Concept and Design

Machbuba's Bench

Constructed from reclaimed wood to keep costs low and sustainable.

Engraved with the words: "I was here. Remember me."

QR codes link to Machbuba's story and migrant student voices.

A notebook or space for visitors to share their own reflections.

This design shows that remembrance does not need to be monumental to be powerful—it can be intimate, human, and participatory.



Reflection

Sanoop: The bench was my idea, and seeing it realized was very meaningful. This project showed me that remembrance can be simple and still transformative. By focusing on one achievable element, I learned that even small interventions can create spaces of justice, belonging, and memory.

Collaborations & Support

Historical input from FrauenOrte Brandenburg.

Guidance and inspiration from guest lecturers and community members.

Support from classmates, staff, and volunteers during implementation.

What I Learned

Even with limited funds, creativity can bring memory to life.

A single, well-executed idea can be more impactful than several unfinished ones.

Remembrance is active—it is about listening, reflecting, and creating space for others.

Public spaces can carry emotional meaning when they invite participation and care.

Conclusion

“Machbuba’s Living Memory – The Bench” demonstrates that remembrance can be humble yet powerful. The bench offers a place to pause, reflect, and honor silenced voices—not only Machbuba’s, but also those of migrant students today.

I hope this bench continues to serve as a living memorial, reminding us that even small gestures can carry deep meaning.