



JEANCLAUDEMAIER

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## PRESS RELEASE

Solo exhibition

*Arquivo Mestre* – Januário Jano

Location: Jean-Claude Maier Gallery / Münchener Straße 38 / 60329 Frankfurt am Main

Duration: 18.5. – 14.8.2021

Curator: Dr. Mahret Ifeoma Kupka

*Those who don't know their history  
wander blindly and obliviously through the present  
and stumble along their way to the future.*

- Maria-Gracia Latedjou

Januário Jano (\*1979 in Luanda, Angola) engages in his artistic work with processes of memory and cultural identity. Living between Lisbon, London and Luanda, the artist interweaves traditional Ambundu practices with pop cultural elements in his performances, large-scale textile works, photo and video installations.

*Arquivo Mestre* is his first solo exhibition in Germany, taking place at Jean-Claude Maier Gallery in Frankfurt from 18 May 2021. Specially produced for the exhibition, the works offer a stark aesthetic experience, while also inviting to a deeper exploration. Every look, every listening promises a new discovery, another clue to something previously hidden: the chirping of birds greets the visitors inside the exhibition. No living animals, but sound recordings of long-extinct species emanate from loudspeakers. For the sound installation *Dusky Dorky – Looking for Dodo*, Jano delved into the sound archive of the British Museum in London, known for its extensive collections of displaced colonial items. The warbling becomes a ghostly voice that tells of past times, a *Kazumbi*, a spirit from another world, as in the Ambundu's traditional belief system. In the museum, the birdcalls become archive material: documented, inventoried, forcibly removed from their natural environment.

*Kazumbi* is also the title of the exhibited video work. Jano moves on the screens to rhythmic breathing sounds, as if caught by a strange force. He wears a white dress, one that his grandmothers might have also worn back in colonial times. Not a traditional garment, but rather one in the fashion of the colonial rulers, reminiscent also of clerical garments. The clothing of the white man, of the white woman, was a first step in the process of cultural assimilation, a step away from one's own narrative, from collective memory, away from the *Mponda*, as the belt-like cotton bags are called, in which Ambundu women preserved their stories.

Jano's textile works appear to be an expansion of the space itself: lengths of fabric, pockets, bulges, patterns, printed shapes and photographs, colourful seams and threads form an inverted *Mponda*. No linear narrative, but rather memory as it functions: entangled, jumping, dragging, meandering, sudden, constantly shifting with the overlapping of other narratives.

With *Arquivo Mestre*, Jean-Claude Maier Gallery contributes to highly topical debates on memory, privilege of interpretation, multiperspectivity and cultural identity. How can the Global North live its responsibility in post-colonial times? To what extent does colonialism still affect global interactions today? How might a coexistence on eye-level become conceivable?

Jano's photographic works reveal traces of colonial violence. Christian crosses served the conquerors as markers of successful missionary work, i.e. also the displacement of indigenous cultural practices, traditions, and crafts. At *Praça De Escravos*, the 'Square of the Slaves', people were enslaved under the cross. *Not Stolen Goods* is an installation in six parts, consisting of transport crates and photographs showing objects from Angola which were looted during colonial times, and which find themselves today in European museums. Were they transported in such crates? Will they be returned in these same boxes, or does only their photographic documentation, their digital alias remain?

It is estimated that over 80% of Africa's cultural heritage is held in museums and private collections outside the continent. A young generation of Europeans, descendants of African origin, is increasingly raising questions, among others, about a shared cultural identity beyond alienation and *white* dominance culture. Through artistic works, myths and stories of their ancestors are reawakened and fused with contemporary daily life, creating new hybrid realities that can no longer be divided into a here and there.

## ARTIST

Januário Jano (\*1979 in Luanda, Angola) graduated in 2020 with a Master of Fine Arts from Goldsmith University in London. His multimedia artistic practice ranges from painting, textile art and performance to sound, video art and photography. In his work, pop cultural influences merge with traditional practices. The artist's own body is always central and perceived as a link between the present and the past. Jano lives and works in Luanda, London and Lisbon – [www.januariojano.com](http://www.januariojano.com)

## EXHIBITIONS (selection)

*Around the table*. No20 arts, London: 7.5. – 26.6.2021

*Redirecting*. Tree Art Museum, Beijing: 1. – 31.1.2021

*Africa Universe I*. Primo Marella Gallery, Milan: 24.9. – 31.1.2021

*Departure*. Jean-Claude Maier, Lisbon: 13.11. – 10.12.2020

*London Grads Now*. Saatchi Gallery, London: 3.09. – 11.10.2020

*Begin Again*. Guts Gallery, London: 13. – 27.08.2020

*Public Notice. An Exhibition*. Gallery 46 & Public Spaces, London: 20. – 30.8.2020

*Tomorrow: London*. White Cube Gallery, London: 10.7. – 13.8.2020

*Leap of Faith*. NO-NO Art Gallery, Lisbon: 5.5. – 7.8.2020

*Discourses of Decoloniality*. Tinawc Gallery, Lisbon: 2.6. – 1.7.2020

## PUBLICATIONS

*Atlantica: Contemporary Art from Angola and its Diaspora*, 2018, Hangar Books

*Protocollum 2017/2018: 'Global Perspectives on Visual Vocabulary'*, Dickersbach Kunstverlag

## CURATOR

Dr. Mahret Ifeoma Kupka is an art scholar, freelance writer and, since 2013, curator of fashion, body and the performative at the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. In her exhibitions, lectures, moderations, writings and interdisciplinary projects, she addresses the issue of racism, memory culture, representation, and the decolonisation of art and cultural practices in Europe and on the African continent. She studied Economics in Heidelberg as well as Aesthetics/Media Theory, Philosophy and Exhibition Design at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, where in 2015 she received her doctorate with a dissertation on 'Modeblogs und der Mythos der Revolutionierung der Mode'. In 2021 she was a jury member for the Cultural Foundation of Hesse and the KfW Stiftung. Her current project – *Talking Objects LAB* – focuses on knowledge and memory beyond European systems of knowledge, (post-)colonial thought patterns and the reflecting of Eurocentric perspectives.

[www.mahretkupka.de](http://www.mahretkupka.de)

[www.talkingobjectslab.org](http://www.talkingobjectslab.org)

## SIDE PROGRAMME

A film as well as an artist's edition will be released to accompany the exhibition.

For dates of artist talks and guided tours with the curator, please see the gallery's website or newsletter, which can be signed up for here: [mail@jeanclaudemaier.com](mailto:mail@jeanclaudemaier.com)

In accordance with the current Corona regulations, you can visit the exhibition in person (maximum two people) or via ZOOM. Please register here <https://calendly.com/jeanclaudemaier/januario-jano-arquivo-mestre?month=2021-05> for an appointment. When booking, please indicate your preference (ZOOM or in-person visit at the gallery).

# MESTRE

MAY/2021  
JULY/2021

SOLO EXHIBITION

# ARQUIVO

Januario Jano



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by NeuStart Kultur and  
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Curator /  
Mahret Ifeoma Kupka

Gallery /  
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Installation photos of the exhibition.



Photos: Ivan Murzin

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