

Exhibition title: CRY ME A RIVER

Artists: manuel arturo abreu, James Bantone, Jason Hirata, Deborah-Joyce Holman, Flora Leite, Gabriela Mureb, davi de jesus do nascimento, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza, Maya Quilolo, Sung Tieu, Wisrah Villefort

Curated by: Wisrah Villefort

Duration: Aug 26 – Oct 15, 2023

Venue: Simian

Photography: GRAYSC

Images courtesy: the artists, Simian

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Exhibition text:

In the first part of *The Object Relation*, his fourth seminar, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan introduces the imagery, the function, and the semiotics of a “hydro-electric factory in the middle of the current of a large river” to elaborate on a handful of concepts—among them and of particular interest here: reality and abstraction. Invested in demonstrating a need for a greater understanding of the relations between the symbolic and what we grasp as the physical realm, with the text, the author opens a space for reconsidering the semantic perception of things.

A river can indeed be an object that affords countless allegories beyond its material composition and properties. It is a stream from which, although being a geographic feature, commonly enough instrumentality is offered for other-than-material narratives to be imagined. Yet, in the example given, Lacan focuses on how, on the contrary, the energy accumulated by the water flow through a power plant usually is defined by that solely.

In this debate, he intends to locate the point of analysis of an object such that it can touch a sort of abstract or, as he states, mythical notion of reality. A ground capable of trespassing signifiers like the station mentioned and, instead of ignoring them, negotiating with its emblems. Such symbolism, notably, does not coincide with fantasy. It (rather) acknowledges etymology, materiality, fiction, abstraction, and interpretation as components of reality. Within this territory, energy lies in capital, river, and work, as observed by Lacan, as much as in stillness, pause, silence, and laziness—like, for example, in the ontology introduced by Beyoncé in *ENERGY* (1).

CRY ME A RIVER brings to Simian a group of artists who, to address spirituality, violence, labor, and institutional critique, amplify the symbolism of objecthood with processes that invest in the sculptural potential of reinterpreting existing things. The exhibition includes works conceived in the last ten years by manuel arturo abreu, James Bantone, Jason Hirata, Deborah-Joyce Holman, Flora Leite, Gabriela Mureb, davi de jesus do nascimento, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza, Maya Quilolo, Sung Tieu, and Wisrah Villefort.

The title of the show is borrowed from the homonymous song that, although composed and recorded by others before and after (2), was initially written to be sung by Ella Fitzgerald in 1955.

Wisrah Villefort

(1) See *ENERGY* (2022) by Beyoncé. <https://genius.com/Beyonce-energy-lyrics>

(2) Secondhand Songs lists 647 official recorded versions of *Cry Me a River*. <https://secondhandsongs.com/work/2158/versions#nav-entity>

Biographies:

manuel arturo abreu (b. 1991 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) is a non-disciplinary artist who lives and works on unceded lands of Multnomah, Cowlitz, Clackamas, Chinook, Kalapuya, Confederated Grand Ronde people, and other Pacific Northwest First People. abreu works with what is at hand in a process of magical thinking with attention to ritual aspects of aesthetics. Since 2015, they have co-facilitated home school, a free pop-up art school in the Pacific Northwest with a multimedia genre-nonconforming edutainment curriculum, including residencies at Yale Union (2019) and Oregon Contemporary (2022-23). They also compose worship music as Tabor Dark. Recent projects at Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin (2022); Palazzo San Giuseppe, Polignano a Mare (2022), HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark, Graz (2021); Kunstraum Niederösterreich, Vienna (2021); Veronica, Seattle (2021), and Athens Biennial 7 (2021). They have written two poetry books—List of Consonants (Bottlecap Press, 2015), transtrender (Quimérica, 2016)—and one book of critical prose, Incalculable Loss (Institute for New Connotative Action, 2018).

James Bantone (b. 1992 in Geneva, Switzerland) graduated with a Bachelor of Art & Media – Video at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) in 2019 and completed the Work.Master Contemporary Artistic Practices at the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD) in 2021. His artistic practice is an ongoing exploration and unsettling look at identity obsession. Through installations that play with the poetics of anonymity, ulterior perspectives, and subjectivity, combining photography, sculpture, and video, Bantone questions contemporary markers of violence towards the racialized and queer body and the refusal of identification of his subjects and thus their exploitation. By appropriating the “tools of the fashion world” and, at times, perverting their application, Bantone approaches a new method of representation wrapped in layers of refusal. Accompanied by a strong interest in the horror genre, the artist is driven to reconfigure and design bodies, objects, and clothing by absurdly staging them to question certain tropes. He has had solo exhibitions at Karma International, Zurich (2021); Coalmine, Winterthur (2020), and participated in group exhibitions at Klemm’s Gallery, Berlin (2023); Centre d’Art Contemporain de Genève (2022); Cordova, Barcelona (2021); Swiss Institute, New York City (2020); Kunsthalle Fribourg (2020), and UV Estudios, Buenos Aires (2019).

Jason Hirata (b. 1986 in Seattle, Washington) lives and works in Highland Park, New Jersey. He holds a BFA in photography from the University of Washington. Hirata theorizes need as the essential precursor to production. His work seeks to put travel to need such that it can be thought of as circulatory. This process is undertaken in pursuit of the development of needs. What might happen if need were linked directly to production? The question presupposes that need and production are not directly linked, when most can say that they have experienced such a linkage in private and social spaces (such as the garden, the bedroom, the bar, the pantry or the street). At the same time, we know there are dependencies that go un-supported. Expanding the compossibility of support for need is a creative and radical endeavor. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include Billytown, The Hague (with Magnus Frederik Clausen, 2023); Ulrik, New York City (2022); Paid, Seattle (2022); Theta, New York City (with Tony Chrenka, 2021); Fanta-MLN, Milan (2021); 80WSE, NYU, New York City (2019); Svetlana, New York City (2019); Veronica Project Space, Seattle (2019), and Kunstverein Nuremberg (2019). His works have been presented in group exhibitions at Lars Friedrich, Berlin (2023); 4649, Tokyo (2022); The Wig, Berlin (2022); Ulrik, New York City (2022); Fanta-MLN, Milan (2022); Mostyn, Llandudno (2022); Bonner Kunstverein (2022); DREI, Monchengladbach (2021); Château Shatto, Los Angeles (2021); KevinSpace, Vienna (2020); Artists Space, New York City (2019), and FriArt, Fribourg (2018).

Deborah-Joyce Holman is a multidisciplinary artist based between London and Basel. Their work has recently been shown in solo exhibitions at Cordova, Barcelona (2022); Istituto Svizzero, Palermo (2022); schwarzescafé, Luma Westbau, Zurich (2022); Sentiment, Zurich (2022); Cherish, Geneva (with Yara Dulac Gisler, 2021); Mikro, Zurich (2019), as well as duo exhibitions at Material Art Fair, Mexico City (2020), and Alienze, Lausanne (with Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi, 2018). They have participated in group exhibitions at Oregon Contemporary (2023); Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2022); Paris Internationale (2022); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2022); Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2022); Kunstverein Last Tango, Zurich (2022); Unfinished Live, The Shed, New York City & House of Electronic Arts, Basel (2021); 7th Athens Biennial (2021); TransBona-Halle, Basel (2021); Damien & The Love Guru hosted by Conceptual Fine Arts Live, Milano (2021); Yaby, Madrid (2021); Centre d’Art Contemporain, Geneva (2021); La Quadriennale di Roma (2020); Fondation Entreprise Ricard, Paris (2019); Auto Italia, London (2019); Live In Your Head, Geneva (2018); OSLO10, Basel (2017), and Locale Due, Bologna (2016), among others. From 2020-2022, they worked at East London arts organization Auto Italia as Associate Director. They were the founding director of 1.1, a platform for early-career practitioners in arts, music and text-based practices, with an exhibition space in Basel, Switzerland, which ran 2015-2020. Holman has curated the 2018 and 2019 annual group exhibitions for the arts and music festival Les Urbaines, Lausanne, presenting newly commissioned works by over 15 international artists.

Flora Leite (b. 1988 in São Paulo, Brazil) is an artist and researcher. Leite holds a master’s degree from The University of São Paulo, where she is currently based. Her work moves through both independent and institutional spaces, where the artist proposes installations, texts, and debates. Leite develops strategies to investigate the world’s materiality within her work field. By asking what (hi)stories and fiction of objects and spaces carry, Leite produces subterfuges of observation and negotiation of meaning in art spaces and outside of them. The artist’s latest solo show, Crust, was held at GDA, São Paulo (2022). Her work can be found in the Brazilian public collections of MARP and CCSP and the Moraes-Barbosa collection.

Gabriela Mureb lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She holds a Ph.D. in Visual Arts from PPGAV / UFRJ and is a Professor in the Visual Arts–Sculpture department at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Through the construction of machines or appropriation of industrial parts, Mureb’s work addresses mutually forming relationships between body, technology and world, acknowledging these morphological processes as sculptural ones. Her practice takes shape in sculpture, installation, video, performance and sound work, and proposes us to listen to a machine as a way of listening to the path that produced it, continuously reenacted in its movements. She recently participated in the 13th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre (2022) and the 5th New Museum Triennial, New York City (2021). Solo exhibitions were presented at Central Galeria, São Paulo (2017), and A Gentil Carioca, Rio de Janeiro (2009). Recent group exhibitions include Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo (2023); Fortes d’Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo (2022); CIAJG, Guimarães (2022), and sound art festivals Novas Frequências, Rio de Janeiro (2021) and Multiplicidade, Rio de Janeiro (2017). Past prizes include Rumos Itaú Cultural Visual Arts Program and the 65th Salão de Abril. Her work is part of the public collection of Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro. She is represented by Central Galeria, São Paulo. Currently, Mureb is undertaking a residency at AIR-M Ebenböckhaus, Munich, a collaboration between Salta Art and the Department of Arts and Culture of the City of Munich.

davi de jesus do nascimento (b. 1997 in Pirapora, Brazil) lives and works in Pirapora. Solo shows have been presented at Instituto Çarê, São Paulo (2023); 32nd Exhibition Program of Centro Cultural São Paulo (2022); Memorial Minas Gerais Vale, Belo Horizonte (2019), and Galeria de Arte Sesiminas, Belo Horizonte (2019).

Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza (b. 1992 in Recanto das Emas, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo. Artist and travesti, she holds a BFA in Visual Arts from the University of Brasilia and an MFA in Contemporary Art from the Postgraduate Program in Visual Arts in the Methods and Processes in Contemporary Art department from the same institution. She works as an artist-nanny-curator-researcher and occupies the position of secretary at SEC- EIB (Secretariat for the Development of the First School of Indiscipline of Brazil). In 2020, the artist was shortlisted for the EDP Arts Award at Tomie Ohtake Institute. Olfenza is the producer of the Brazilian Culture Ballroom with the Grand Prize project and the mother of the Kiki House of Cyclone.

Maya Quilolo (b. 1994 in Brazil) is a Brazilian artist and researcher born in a quilombola community in Minas Gerais. A Ph.D. candidate at the Minas Gerais Federal University, Quilolo is interested in multidisciplinary investigations addressing the Black body's potentialities and the intersections between art, anthropology, and indigenous heritage. Their explorations of the quilombos and indigenous cosmologies are expressed in several mediums, such as video, photography, drawing, performance, literature, and sculpture. Quilolo has a background in audiovisual studies, communication, and anthropology. In 2022, the artist was awarded by the Prince Claus Fund as one of the Mentorship Awards recipients. For the performance *Ìpòrì* (Nigeria, 2019), she crossed the Atlantic carrying water from South American rivers to the Oşun River in the African continent to express the transatlantic relationships.

Sung Tieu (b. 1987 in Hai Duong, Vietnam) lives and works in Berlin. Current and upcoming solo exhibitions include *Amant*, New York City (2023); *Kunst Museum Winterthur* (2023); *The Intermission*, Athens (2023); *Ordet*, Milan (2023), and *Kunsthalle Nürnberg* (2024).

Wisrah Villefort (b. 1989 in Buritizeiro, Brazil) lives and works in Braunschweig. Through score, sculpture, text, photography, sound, and video, their work addresses the remaining structures of the transatlantic colonial project, focusing on institutional critique, private property, and the relationship between nature and capital. Institutional collections and commissions include Kadist; Museu Nacional da República; The One Minutes Foundation at Sandberg Instituut, and Instituto Moreira Salles. Past grants and prizes include the 3rd Reynaldo Roels Jr. (shortlisted), the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia Residency Grant (recipient), the British Council Residency Grant for Mid-Career Artists (recipient), and the Ducato Prize (finalist). In 2023, the Ministry of Science and Culture of Lower Saxony in Germany awarded the artist to further develop the intersection of their sociopolitical theoretical research with the abstraction approach to their artistic practice. In the same year, Villefort was announced as one of the finalists of the Ducato Prize, Italy, for their 2-channel soundwork *DOORS*.

Photos are named in numerical order according to list below:

1. Installation view

2. Wisrah Villefort

RENTAL/FATHER, 2023

One or more objects rented from the artist's father. Variable materials and dimensions.

Touching on movements such as conceptual art and institutional critique, yet questioning minimalism, Wisrah Villefort is deeply interested in investigating their agency and the lack of it within negotiations made with the agents that subsidize the existence of their work. While commenting on possession, property, and belongings, theory and practice are informed by the artist's biography and experiences.

3. Detail, Wisrah Villefort

RENTAL/FATHER, 2023

One or more objects rented from the artist's father. Variable materials and dimensions.

4. Installation view

5. Gabriela Mureb

Machine #3: belt, 2013-2021

0.75 hp electric motor, rubber belt, pulleys, inox clamps, galvanized steel shelving brackets. 40 × 140 × 30 cm.

Machine #3: belt (2013-2021) is composed of a 0.75 hp, 1730 rpm electric motor, a rubber belt, and two pulleys with parallel axes. The motor, attached to one of the pulleys, starts the machine. The first movement of the engine, the rotation of its shaft, is transmitted to the pulley, which then pulls the belt, making it run at a speed of approximately 52.17 km/h, then moving the second pulley. The belt keeps spinning continuously in a loop around the pulleys. Every minute, the pulleys rotate 1730 times. The entire assembly measures approximately 40 × 140 × 30 cm. The most recent version of the work, now shown at Simian, was commissioned by the 5th New Museum Triennial.

6. Gabriela Mureb

Machine #3: belt, 2013-2021

0.75 hp electric motor, rubber belt, pulleys, inox clamps, galvanized steel shelving brackets. 40 × 140 × 30 cm.

7. Installation view

8. James Bantone

Chronic Oversharer, 2021

I S E custom made leather boots by Jazil Santschi, polyester thread, wood, zippers, acrylic. 80 × 30 × 44 cm each.

You know what? I don't feel like being honest. And you know what's fun? Being honest. What are you even talking about? Seriously, I've never met anyone else who thinks their own life is so fascinating. It's exhausting. I mean, I wanted to fall asleep in my own vomit all day listening to you talk about how you bruise more easily than other people.

Are you for real? I am. Okay, well, people have been calling me self-centered since I was young, so it doesn't really upset me anymore. You've got to come up with something more creative if you want to hit a nerve. Yeah,

it's like it has no effect on you. And now it's your turn. So we're not avoiding our issues anymore? I actually wanted to do this at dinner.

Oh, my goodness. Can you just chill about dinner? That dish tasted terrible, and I want to erase it from my memory.

They have gone totally insane. Or maybe, just maybe, they've actually gone sane.

You all never listen to me. It's like I'm invisible or something. Seriously, you have entire conversations right in front of me, like I'm not even there. And sometimes I wonder if my social anxiety is what's holding me back from meeting people who would actually be right for me instead of a bunch of whiny nothings as friends.

Well, maybe they have a point. I mean, when was the last time we actually had any real fun together? It feels like it's been ages. That's not true. Name one fun thing. This trip, if we had actually done anything I planned.

Oh, my goodness!

Hey, you know what? You should process what you just said. Because happiness is about appreciating what you have. Really? Is that some self-help nonsense? They go through a brief rehab stint, and we have to listen to all the nonsense they come up with.

You're a cruel drunk, you know that? It's crazy. Not to mention, you're not even that intellectual.

Well, actually, they are. I'm going to stick up for them on this one. I've seen them read the newspaper on their phone. Then why, when I'm around them, do I feel like my brain is going to atrophy? I mean, seriously, they can be a little unstimulating.

"Unstimulating"? Are we in some period drama? Do I really want to be like you? Mentally unstable and miserable?

Whoa, whoa, whoa. When did we start with all of this name-calling? We didn't start with the name-calling. They started with the name-calling. Um, I did not start with the name-calling. I started with your ridiculous idea of honesty, miss tan legs. I've never talked to you that way.

You know what? You are tortured by self-doubt and fear, and it is not pleasant to be around.

That's really mean. It is mean. It's really mean, what you just said. I'm sorry my heart was broken after that breakup. Well, we would have no way of knowing that because the only issues you ever talk about are your issues with me.

Seriously, we've known each other for a long time. I've been on this planet for a while, and I'm not showing any signs of changing. Look, all you've ever done is talk about the fact that you are changing, that you want to change, self-improvement, all that stuff. So I get on board with it and what do you do? You disappoint me. That's all you've done for the past couple of years.

Well, then maybe you should lower your expectations. I can't lower them any further. Maybe you should try what I do. I don't expect anything from any of you.

I'm so sick of all of you.

9. Installation view

10. Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza *Uma construção (Ou faltam paredes na casa das pariceiras)*, 2017 Variable materials and dimensions.

(Pipe) <https://youtu.be/t5COc-wY1IE>

(Page one)
Found photography

(Page two)
Area (width × height)

(Page three)
Step 1 – Area Calculation: Use a measuring tape to find the width and height of the wall you will build. For a simple rectangular wall home, just multiply the height by the length. If there are doors and windows, deduct the area they will occupy. Finally, add up each of the walls to get the total area.

Method A – Bolsa Bahia: Find a large building. Give preference to construction sites for buildings or commercial points. Identify the pile of bricks. Take one brick and carry it like a bag with the help of a cord. It is also possible to bring it as a pillow.

(Page four)

Step 2 – Choose the type of brick you are going to use. After, check in this reference table how many bricks are needed to fill one square meter.

[Concrete brick / 9 × 19 × 39 cm or 14 × 19 × 39cm]

= 12.5 units per m²

[Baiano brick standing on a 10 cm wide wall]

= 23 units per m²

[Baiano brick lying on a 20 cm wide wall]

= 46 units per m²

[Common solid brick wall, 10 cm wide]

= 92 units per m²

[Common solid brick wall, 20 cm wide]

= 184 units per m²

(Page five)

Method B – Platform Jump: To carry two bricks from the construction site for the land you want to build your home, use a strip of synthetic leather or other fabric and tie two bricks to each foot. Take the path firmly, with patience and caution.

(Page six)

A civilian (from the Latin *civilis*, genitive of *civis*, “citizen”), as of under the International Humanitarian Law, is a person who does not belong to the armed forces of their country.

11. Detail, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza

Uma construção (Ou faltam paredes na casa das pariceiras), 2017

Variable materials and dimensions.

12. Detail, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza

Uma construção (Ou faltam paredes na casa das pariceiras), 2017

Variable materials and dimensions.

13. Detail, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza

Uma construção (Ou faltam paredes na casa das pariceiras), 2017

Variable materials and dimensions.

14. Detail, Yná Kabe Rodríguez Olfenza

Uma construção (Ou faltam paredes na casa das pariceiras), 2017

Variable materials and dimensions.

15. Installation view

16. davi de jesus do nascimento

colher de colher fumo e esgarçar piaba fresca ou cajado de caboclo d'água, 2023

Oar shovel, flood wood patching heron's neck. 86 × 29 × 4 cm.

From the “águas guardadas” series.

The work births from the stick of a heron with the remains of an oar. The objects from the series “guarded waters” destroy themselves by their gathering in ravines, riverbanks, or water backyards. Pieces of watercraft, wooden bones, piranha, and saruê fossils compose the attempt at a presépio: vestiges of old fruits, green nets, and canoe dogs.

When I was born, in 1997, in the blaze of the northern region of Minas Gerais, Brazil – they baptized me with my father’s name: Davi de Jesus do Nascimento. I’m a curimatá riverside artist, a supporter of agglomerations, and an on-the-cuff writer. Conceived at the margins of the São Francisco river—the waterway of my life—I work collecting affections from the riverside ancestry and realize “almost-rivers” in the arid. I was raised alongside carranqueiros fishermen and washerwomen. The weight of carrying the river on my back drinks from the source of the first suns I cried in my life. To hold on to the humpback, the carranca has made me feel the power of the wind of my bent taboca on the tracing of the loose kite that went down the gongo-like snail envelopment spiral to the right heel as a snake, bait, fish, and rock.

17. manuel arturo abreu

mamajuana, 2021

Sacred roots, rum, red wine, honey, glass, saran wrap. Variable dimensions.

One of the first distilled spirits in the Americas, mamajuana is a Dominican spiced alcoholic infusion of rum, red wine, and honey with tree bark and herbs. The taste is similar to port wine and the color is a deep red. Dominicans describe its effects as medicinal, aphrodisiac, and more. The indigenous Arawak-speaking tribe among the First Peoples of Ayiti originally prepared a tea from the specific herbs that make up mamajuana; post-Columbian mixed islanders added alcohol to the recipe. During the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, the sale of mamajuana was prohibited, except for those with a medical license.

Mamajuana was popularized as a local herbal medicine and aphrodisiac in the 1950s by Jesus Rodriguez, a native of San Juan de la Maguana. Materials for the brew differ regionally, but some common species include: Anamú (*Petiveria alliacea*), Anis estrellado (star anise, *Illicium verum*), Bohuco pega-palo (*Cissus verticillata*), Albahaca (basil, *Ocimum basilicum*), Canelilla

(Cinnamodendron ekmanii), Bojuco caro (princess vine), Marabeli (Securidaca virgata), Clavo dulce (whole clove), Maguey (Agave spp.), and Timacle (Chiococca alba).

18. Detail, manuel arturo abreu

mamajuana, 2021

Sacred roots, rum, red wine, honey, glass, saran wrap. Variable dimensions.

19. Detail, manuel arturo abreu

mamajuana, 2021

Sacred roots, rum, red wine, honey, glass, saran wrap. Variable dimensions.

20. Installation view

21. Installation view

22. Sung Tieu

What Do You Let Go?, 2021

Plastic flower, polished and unpolished stainless steel. 66 × 48 × 5 cm.

Tieu's work takes place at the intersection of her personal experiences, global history, and the cultural incursions of European art traditions. Her immersive installations result from her research of the dynamics of hegemonic globalized capitalism, working through and with spatial dislocation while paying heed to the cultural testimony of the Vietnamese diaspora communities in Germany. Through the personal lens of post-colonial identity and cultural membership, she upsets the status of objective narrative and of proof when science works at the service of sociopolitical agendas. While addressing social and cultural class divides in both contemporaneity and recent history, Tieu's work foregrounds the ways in which evidence is manipulated in imperialist violence both of physical and psychological nature.

23. Jason Hirata

Painted Square, 2021

Wall painting. Executed by Toke Flyvholm and Markus von Platen. Environmental dimensions.

Painted Square consists of a pictorial intervention which alters the proportions of a surface, bringing it to a square. The position and the color of the work are the result of a negotiation with its commissioner.

The piece was conceived at Fanta-MLN as a permanent installation on the floor that exceeded the temporary nature of the artist's exhibition From Now in Then (2021). Similarly to the other works in the show mentioned, the piece considers the space-time structures that constitute the experience of a work and an exhibition, trying to expand them through a reflection on the conditions that precede and follow their manifestation in a space.

24. Flora Leite

Reconciliation, 2014

Shell, water, basin and main components of sea water diluted in proportions equivalent to marine average (magnesium sulfate, potassium chloride, calcium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium chloride). 10 × 40 × 40 cm.

Reconciliation derives from a desire to accommodate nature within culture, commerce, and daily life. Through salts and other products bought in supermarkets and pharmacies, the work chemically mimes seawater, creating an allegedly ideal habitat for a seashell. The supposedly natural element of the work, the seashell, is dead—in fact, more a fossil than an animal, of which the missing mussel is its mold—and many of its kind are also available to be bought from souvenir shops in any country with a coastline. A type of do-it-yourself conchology is especially endeared by those whose kitschy taste can be traced back to the Victorian-Era aquarium mania of the 19th century, to the conchylomania of the 17th century, to curiosity cabinets of the Renaissance—which birthed museums themselves. Seashells also structure the indecipherable Sambaquis of the Brazilian Southern coastline; a peculiar array may decorate our grandmothers' homemade picture frames; some are even kept inside mason jars, usually collected on a trip full of walks on the beach. The seashell—or rather, its usage within stuff and amidst our things—reminds us that throughout the history of our objects, some part of nature has become kitsch in itself.

25. Deborah-Joyce Holman

Thicc and Slippery, 2020

Ink on human teeth, wire, aluminum, mirror. 7 × 7 × 7 cm.

With Thicc and Slippery, 2020, the artist explores biological matter as hard evidence while shedding light on the anachronism of DNA and other parameters it carries, such as the determination of gender assigned at birth or geographical origin of an individual, while reality in its unpredictability constantly trips them. By writing words in ink on teeth from their friends, Holman alludes to the dimension of teeth as a signifier, a linguistic code. They play on the ambivalence of this organic medium that can both communicate and conceal meaning, opening possible readings which are not limited to their genetic contents.

This reflection is nurtured by a long legacy of teeth being used as social signifiers in many cultures across the world for centuries: from the Mayans who replaced them with jade stones to the contemporary grillz. By intervening directly on teeth, the artist questions the way in which identity is read, in a poetic attempt at making sure our bones retain some of our agency once we have long passed away. With this work, Holman explores, in particular, the intersections of queerness (and its suggested mobility) and Blackness (and associated immobility) in the European context.

(Text by Caroline Honorien, 2021)

26. Installation view

27. Maya Quilolo

SORTE, 2023

One horseshoe used by an animal hung alongside each doorway. Variable materials and dimensions.

In a river bend, luck and bad luck cross the head passage. Those who cross the bridge used to know the secret of the river that flows both ways. Is the exhibition space a mandinga field?

28. Maya Quilolo

SORTE, 2023

One horseshoe used by an animal hung alongside each doorway. Variable materials and dimensions.

29. Maya Quilolo

SORTE, 2023

One horseshoe used by an animal hung alongside each doorway. Variable materials and dimensions.

30. Video. Gabriela Mureb

Machine #3: belt, 2013-2021. 0.75 hp electric motor, rubber belt, pulleys, inox clamps, galvanized steel shelving brackets. 40 × 140 × 30 cm.