



Kobby Adi
Cloisters & Instruments
May 1 – August 25, 2024

Swiss Institute is pleased to present *Cloisters & Instruments*, the first institutional solo exhibition in the US by London-based artist Kobby Adi. The exhibition brings together a focused selection of newly commissioned works in the expanded field of film and sculpture.

The exhibition is centered upon Adi's latest film, *Cloisters* (2023/24). The silent 16mm film depicts apples in various states of decay, shot on film stocks that are themselves in multiple states of deterioration. Viewers can encounter the film across three sites in New York in different media formats: as a projection in SI's lower-level gallery; as medical grade DVDs that can be borrowed from Tompkins Square Library and viewed at home; and, following the conclusion of the exhibition, as film prints that can be physically handled and loaned from the Reserve Film and Video Collection at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Additionally shown in the gallery are documents confirming Adi's gifting of the DVDs and film prints to the respective latter locations. Drawing on legacies of various experimental art movements, from structural film to conceptual art and institutional critique, Adi emphasizes the material conditions of filmic production as well as the entangled institutional networks that govern the terms of filmic reception, distribution, and storage.

Other works in the exhibition spatially articulate SI's building in ways that unsettle the hegemonic grammars of the aforementioned art movements through performative allusions to West African animist metaphysics. Dispersed across all floors, *A77 splashing and pouring* (2024) is marked by uniform wall labels that detail the work's title and specifications in SI's institutional formatting, placed near locations where water does, or could potentially, spill. A ritualistic embodiment of libation ceremonies, where liquids such as palm wine are poured on the ground to invoke the more-than-human presence of ancestral spirits and deities, the work – as an indefinite score and devotional refrain – challenges and exceeds the presumably physical dimensions of the given architectural space. Two works both titled *Instrument* (2024) feature polymeters (devices containing both a thermometer and hygrometer) that have been altered to have their measuring scales removed. Left blank with active dials, the sculptures remain mystically suggestive as to what or who is being measured and detected.

Through aesthetic strategies that are by turns critical and poetic as well as materialist and spiritual, Adi's works disrupt and expand the spatiotemporal conditions determining the relations between the artwork, the viewer, and the site of encounter.

This exhibition is organized by KJ Abudu, Assistant Curator, Public Programs and Residencies.

Kobby Adi was born, works, and lives in London.

About Swiss Institute

Founded in 1986, Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent non-profit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental art making through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, accessible, and environmentally conscious in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free-of-charge, Swiss Institute seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

SI Programming is made possible in part with public funds from Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council; the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Main sponsors include LUMA Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Friends of SI and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Exhibitions are made possible in part by the SI Artist Vision Fund with leadership support provided by the SI Board of Trustees, Ghislaine Brenninkmeijer, the Kevin Wendle Foundation, and the Freedman Family Foundation. SI gratefully acknowledges Swiss Re as SI ONSITE Partner, Vitra as Design Partner, Crozier Fine Arts as Preferred Shipping Art Logistics Partner, and SWISS as Travel Partner.

Critical operating support has been provided to SI in 2020-23 as part of a collective fundraising effort with a consortium of New York non-profit institutions. We thank the following supporters: Mellon Foundation, Teiger Foundation, The Willem de Kooning Foundation, The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Cy Twombly Foundation, The Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Destina Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, The Arison Arts Foundation, The Fox Aarons Foundation, The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, Sotheby's, Blavatnik Family Foundation, Robert Lehman Foundation, The Jill and Peter Kraus Foundation, Imperfect Family Foundation, The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Richard Pousette-Dart Foundation, and The Jay DeFeo Foundation.

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