

CONDO London 2025 | Union Pacific hosting blank projects & Gypsum Gallery
Dineo Seshee Bopape, Nada Elkalaawy, Velma Rosai-Makhandia & Zayn Qahtani
18 January – 15 February 2025

For Condo London 2025, Union Pacific hosts blank projects (Cape Town, South Africa), and Gypsum Gallery (Cairo, Egypt), presenting works by Zayn Qahtani, Velma Rosai-Makhandia, Dineo Seshee Bopape, and Nada Elkalaawy. Each of these artists uses memory (whether truth or fiction) as a vessel to explore questions of loss, connection to place, and femininity. Together, their practices tread the line between the real and the remembered; the mundane and the magical; life and afterlife.

Qahtani's work is laden with personal mythologies and universal narratives; her wall installation— *Entering Soma (Drinking From The Starpool)* (2023-25)— forms an altar, embodying the thin veil between physical exterior and inner self. A 'soma' is a mysterious fruit used in ancient mythologies to give those who consumed it the ability to exist between time and space; for Qahtani it represents the interconnectivity of past, present, experience, and memory.

Rosai-Makhandia's practice draws on memory as contained in familial archives, personal narratives and African folklore, to create the otherworldly scenes which populate her large canvases. Her recent work is occupied with the role of griots and other traditional storytellers in disseminating mythological narratives, as well as the ways in which these narratives alter our relationship with nature and our environment. In this way, her work explores the mystical threads which link us

to our earthly terrain, and beyond.

Bopape's bronze installation work, *we need the memories of all our members* (2024), also speaks to the reparative potential of remembering and recalling; the ability of memory to move past fragmentation and restore *wholeness*. It is presented alongside a video work by the artist, *a love supreme* (2006), which depicts Bopape licking chocolate from a pane of glass to the soundtrack of John Coltrane's seminal 1964 recording of 'A Love Supreme'. Through this process, the artist replaces her confectionary foreground with her own image, consciously countering the erasure of the lives and work of Black women throughout history.

Elkalaawy is also concerned with histories and memory, particularly their implications on personal narratives. Her recent work takes as a starting point European porcelain, the kind often displayed in Middle Eastern homes, as well as objects belonging to the artist's own family, which she has collected or photographed. In the presentation of these items as containers occupied by other presences *beyond* materiality (for example, sentimentality and emotionality), Elkalaawy extracts meaning from domesticity.

Together, all four of these artists elucidate the stories which remain, or emerge, beyond the physical constraints of earthly presence.