

G A S W O R K S



Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien
Mémoires des corps

2 October –
14 December 2025

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Mémoires des corps

Working through textile, drawing, sculpture, video-performance and installation, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien's work explores how ideas of femininity and the cosmos intersect across cultures, generations and materials. Artworks become complex maps of plural identities, diverse ecosystems in which natural and man-made fabrics, shells, votives, metals and everyday objects appear side-by-side as symbolic recompositions.

For *Mémoires des corps* [translated as *Embodied memories*], her first solo exhibition in the UK, Marie-Claire reflects on how trauma and pain, though intimate, echo and endure across generations. The exhibition draws on her personal experiences in France, Guadeloupe and the Ivory Coast, as well as testimonies from people in other parts of the world. *Mémoires des corps* is imagined as an altar of healing and restoration, a place to recover and resist damaging taboos around female sexuality and reproduction.

A central tapestry hanging in the first gallery represents these themes. Embroidered into the luminous textile is a female reproductive tract with ovaries morphing into hands and berries. Sewn lunar cycles that have long been attributed to ovulation and conception are present throughout, alongside astrological symbols and astral planes. Other elements stitched on include ceramic female faces from Akan symbology, beads cast from body parts, and strings of carnelian, pink opal, moon stone and amber – all stones traditionally used to soothe and heal.

These stones reappear in talismans and beaded hangings elsewhere in the gallery. Hand-thrown ceramics containing dried flowers, grasses and medicinal herbs serve as votive offerings. Related to Marie-Claire's focus on community and fertility, smaller tapestries include illustrations of bees – traditionally regarded as messengers and here representing a connection between spiritual and physical realms, they take care of their home, their community and their kin.

Oscillating between different scales, registers, and materials, *Mémoires des corps* creates a space of reverie, calm and meditation. Its meanings slowly unfold as insects, human body parts and natural forms dance together. Marie-Claire's entangled patchwork of references and remembrances speak to the experience of being human today: messy, complicated, painful and beautiful.

The Lead Supporter for Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien's exhibition is Prue MacLeod, with additional support from Fluxus Art Projects. Gasworks' Exhibitions programme is supported by Catherine Petitgas, Gasworks Exhibitions Supporters and Arts Council England. Gasworks' 2025/26 programme is generously funded by Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a Donor Advised Fund held at The Prism Charitable Trust.

Events Programme

Mémoires des corps: Performances

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of intimate meditation-performances led by Marie-Claire. Dates to be announced – please check the Gasworks website for updates.

Curator's Tour

Saturday 8 November, 12:30 – 1:00pm

Eleni Zachariou, Assistant Curator at Gasworks, leads an introduction to *Mémoires des corps*.

Neighbourhood Breakfast & Exhibition Tour

Wednesday 26 November, 8:30 – 10:30am

Join us for coffee, tea and pastries from 8:30am, followed by a tour of Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien's exhibition *Mémoires des corps* at 9:30am with Gasworks' Curator Rosa Tyhurst.

About Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien

Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien (b. 1990, Paris) lives and works in Paris. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Existences multiples*, AKINCI, Amsterdam (2024); *L'être, l'autre et l'entre*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2023); *Ainsi dans le silence*, the French Institute, Berlin (2022); and *Weaving the Worlds*, Orangerie du Sénat, Paris (2021). Her work has also been presented in group exhibitions and biennials including: *Cartographies for after the end*, Centre Pompidou, Metz; *Beyond These Walls*, Amsterdam; *Nouveaux Printemps*, Toulouse, France (all 2025); *Spray and Stitch*, Utrecht; *Manifesta 15*, Barcelona; Ivory Coast Pavilion, 60th Venice Biennale; Dakar Biennale (2024); the 24th Biennial of Sydney (all 2024); the 14th Kaunas Biennale (2023); the 13th Rencontres de Bamako (2022); La Verrière Hermès, Belgium (2022); MO.CA., Brescia (2019); and the 38th EVA International, Ireland (2018). She is a laureate of the Prix 1% Marché de l'art and was nominated for the 2024 Future Generation Art Prize. Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien is currently a resident of the Villa Medici in Rome, 2025–2026.

Gasworks, 155 Vauxhall Street, London, SE11 5RH

+44 (0)207 587 5202

gasworks.org.uk

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