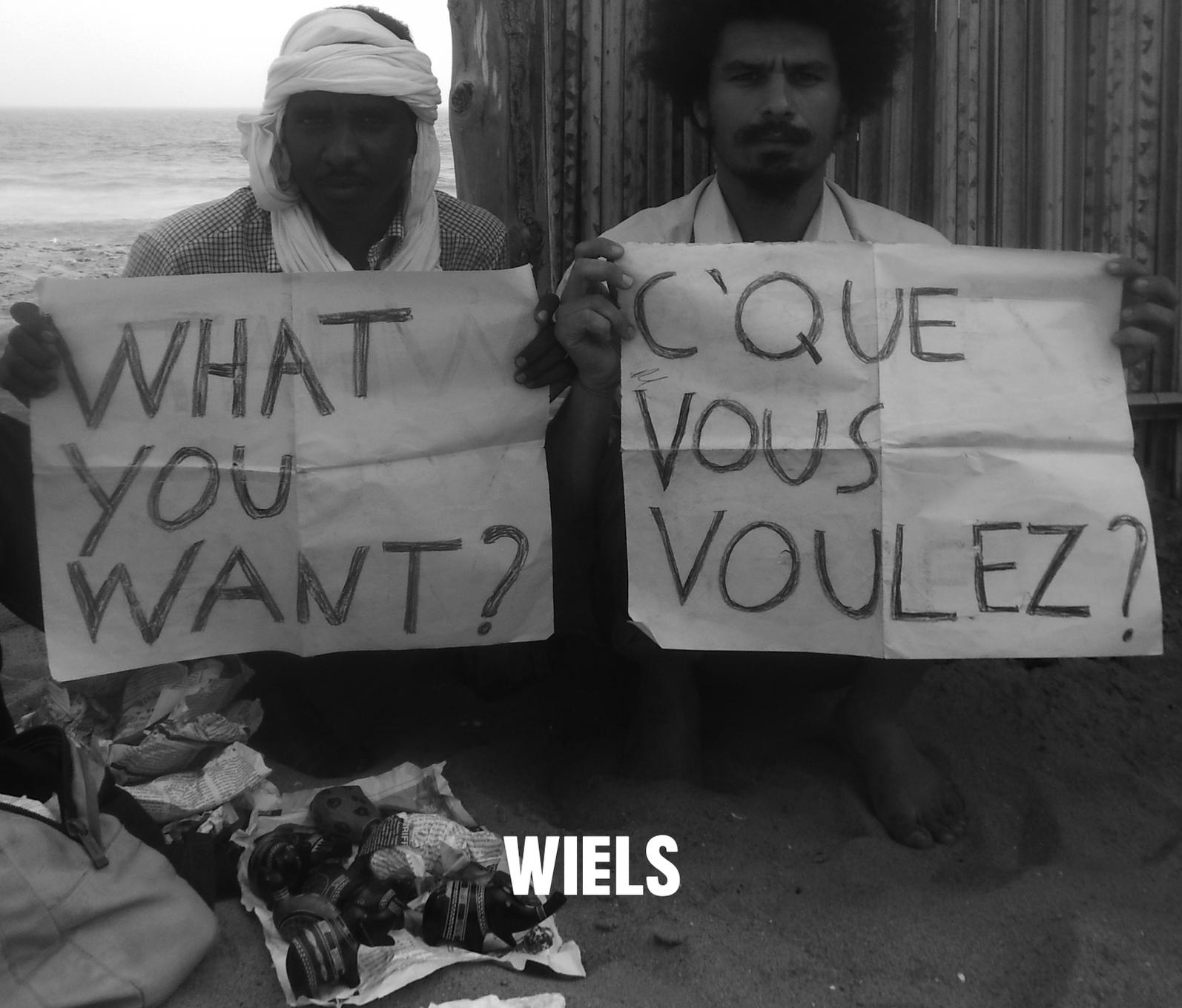


PRESS KIT

Paulo Nazareth

Patois/Patuá



WIELS

PRESS RELEASE

With Patois/Patuá, Paulo Nazareth presents a comprehensive retrospective at WIELS, highlighting more than two decades of artistic practice. Through two powerful symbols of survival and resilience, Nazareth explores the interplay of memory, language, and ritual in communities shaped by Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous, and anti-colonial struggles. The exhibition engages with Brussels—a city where language and identity are central to social and political life.

Paulo Nazareth is an artist who creates as he walks. With his self-proclaimed *Arte de Preceito* (precept art), his artistic practice is rooted in radical displacement and movement, such as crossing borders on foot. Through various media—from video and photography to found objects—he explores personal stories and routes that have been shaped by history, the impact of which is still felt today. Nazareth investigates how language and objects can serve as tools for survival, particularly for those displaced by colonial histories and global migration. By transforming movement into an act of resistance, he bears witness to the lives of the forgotten and the silenced.

The exhibition explores two powerful symbols of survival and resilience: patois, a non-standard dialect spoken by marginalised communities, and *patuá*, an Afro-Brazilian amulet symbolizing protection and remembrance. Each of Nazareth's works can be seen as a type of *patuá*; every object and image he creates carries the will to remember and resist, illuminating how cultural items become shields of identity in the direst circumstances.

Patois, emerging as the voice of the people, ignores the constraints to which formal language is subjected in the process of adaptation to colonial and national structures. This convergence of resistance finds particularly fertile ground in Brussels, a city officially divided between French and Dutch, where numerous other languages coexist in varying states of recognition or invisibility. Through the artworks presented at WIELS, Nazareth critically addresses Brussels' vanishing local dialect, its complex linguistic divides, and its fraught relationship with immigration.

As a significant act of resistance, Paulo Nazareth will not physically come to Brussels for this exhibition. He has made a personal commitment not to set foot in Europe until he has first visited all the countries in Africa, honoring the continent that has deeply influenced his work and identity. This refusal to enter Europe reflects Nazareth's critique of colonial histories and the power dynamics between the Global North and South. His presence manifests through Paulo Nazareth Ltda., a network of family and collaborators who activate the exhibition in his absence. Together, they transform the space into a living archive of stories passed across generations.

Curator: Fernanda Brenner

BIOGRAPHIES

Paulo Nazareth (old man born in the city of Borun Nak [Vale do Rio Doce] Minas Gerais) lives and works throughout the world.

His work is often the result of precise and simple gestures, which bring about broader ramifications, raising awareness to press issues of immigration, racialisation, globalisation, colonialism, and its effects in the production and consumption of art in his native Brazil and the Global South. While his work may manifest in video, photography, and found objects, his strongest medium may be cultivating relationships with people he encounters on the road — particularly those who must remain invisible due to their legal status or those who are repressed by governmental authorities. In certain aspects, Nazareth deliberately embodies the romantic ideal of the wandering artist in search of himself and universal truths, to unveil stereotyped assumptions about national identity, cultural history, and human value.

Recent exhibitions include *LUZIA*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico (2024); *Esconjuro*, Inhotim, Brumadinho (2024); *En la casa de mi hermano*, Proyectos Ultravioleta, Ciudad Guatemala (2023); *Paulo Nazareth, Archipelago*, Hudson Valley (2022); *BIRDMAN*, Stevenson, Amsterdam (2022); *Stroke*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2022); *Vuadora*, Pivô, São Paulo (2022) ; *Melee*, ICA Miami, Miami (2019) ; *Faca Cega*, Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte (2018); *The Journal*, Institute for Contemporary Arts, Londres (2014); *Premium Bananas*, MASP, São Paulo (2012); *News from Americas*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo.

Paulo Nazareth is represented by Mendes Wood DM.

Fernanda Brenner is the founding director of Pivô in São Paulo and Salvador and a Latin American art advisor for the Kadist Art Foundation. Based between São Paulo and Brussels, she initially trained as a filmmaker and production designer before becoming a contemporary art curator. She has been a contributing editor for Frieze Magazine since 2017.

Recent projects include *Paulo Nazareth: Luzia* at Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2024); *Body House: Dialogues Between Carolee Schneemann, Diego Bianchi, and Márcia Falcão* at Pivô, São Paulo (2024); *I see no difference between a handshake and a poem* at Mendes Wood DM, Paris (2023); *Do You Believe in Ghosts?* at the 24th Pernod Ricard Foundation Prize, Paris (2023); *Peace, or Never* at FHNW, Basel (2022) co-curated with Chus Martínez, Oriana, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz (2021/2023) at Pivô and Argos, Brussels; *Pol Taburet: Sweats for the Sweet* (2023), *Mariana Castillo Deball: Today project* (2023), *It's Night in America, Ana Vaz* (2022), *Vuadora, Paulo Nazareth* (2022) co-curated with Diane Lima, República, Luiz Roque (2020), and *Avalanche, Katinka Bock* (2019), all at Pivô.

Her writings have been featured in several publications, including Textwork by the Fondation d'Enterprise Pernod Ricard, Art Review, Artforum, Elephant magazine, Art Agenda, Terremoto, Mousse, and Cahiers d'Art. She has also contributed to national and international institutional catalogs and monographs, including MASP, KW, Centre Georges Pompidou, CAC Passerelle, Galeria Municipal do Porto, Culturgest, Fridericianum, and MOCA Detroit. Additionally, Brenner has been consistently involved in mentorship programs, juries, and selection committees for institutions such as HISK in Belgium, Malmo Art Academy, Stadelschule, Frankfurt, FHNW in Basel, and Visio in Florence.

Currently, she is co-directing a documentary on the artist Sonia Gomes and organizing solo exhibitions for Paulo Nazareth at WIELS in Brussels and Anna Maria Maiolino at the Musée Picasso.



TABLE DE MÃE - A conceptual, spiritual, ancestral, and mathematical act: asking my mother, Ana Gonçalves da Silva, to speak to the dead of Osso de Ishango, to pray for them—to recite the prayer and calculate the time. The Ishango bone is a mathematical calculating tool that was used for unknown, complex mathematical calculations. It predates the ancient abacus (the counting frame), which is considered an extension of counting with the fingers. Mathematics is a language for universal dialogue. *ANA MÃE (MOTHER)* creates a bridge between times, between worlds, and across temporal boundaries—a conversation with the dead, between souls, with ancestors, and those yet to come. Discovered in Ishango, in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Ishango bone is estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 years old and is now housed in the Museum of Natural Sciences in Brussels.

EVENTS

Nocturne

Every first Wednesday of the month, open until 9pm

Family Fundays

first and third Sunday of each month at 2pm

Guided tours

Tours for groups, classes or individual visitors can be booked via WIELS.org.

More info via WIELS.ORG

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