

CIRCUIT

Centre d'Art Contemporain
av. de Montchoisi 9 (accès quai Jurigoz)
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www.circuit.li

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Memory Biwa, Thulile Gamedze, Donna Kukama, Robert Machiri, Zen Marie, Nayasaku Mufwankolo, Henri-Michel Yéré, Shirin Yousefi

**Exhibition opens from the 4th of December 2020 until the 28th of February 2021
Thur, Fri, Sat, from 2pm to 6pm and by appointment.**

For more informations : www.circuit.li

2 is the second part of the project *Blank, With a bet, on a long-distance relationship, with time, slow thinking and deep conversation* presented at Circuit from 20th of June to the 15th of August 2020.

2 is an exhibition realized thanks, in particular, to support from the Leenaards Foundation.

After two episodes at Circuit, the project will have a third installment at the end of 2021 at the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This project brings together artists whose work questions cultural representations and their constructions. Inspired by archives, landscapes, true or dreamed stories and by questioning historical readings anchored in our societies, the artists propose other points of view and reflections.

Appearances, presences, speeches, silences, disappearances.

The haunting insinuates itself and envelops this exhibition from part to part. It favors the setting in perspective of what one sees, of what one doesn't see, of what one believes to know, of what we don't know and of what we don't want to know. A cacophony of voices emanates from a drove of speakers, mist interferes in invented landscapes, these cathodic assemblies slide almost imperceptibly. Between these dreams and tributes to life, other present and past realities much more intolerable and still unresolved hover in spectres.

Shirin Yousefi's works tend to seek an interaction between the spatial environment and the viewer. They address political, social or cultural issues without a mediator. At the crossroads of physical and political exercise, between the blade and the finger, *Red Hands*, pierces the first wall of the exhibition. This work by Shirin Yousefi is composed

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of a bundle of metal skewers whose gummed tips evoke hand grips. Resonating with the Persian expression: *To cook without burning the skewer nor the meat*, (an expression often used in Iran to talk about political issues), this work is meant to be a praise of moderation.

Memory Biwa and Robert Machiri have been collaborating for several years on a project called *Listening at Pungwe*, which is a remix of visual and audio archives. This long-term project aims to combine different audio and graphic archives from Southern Africa. From sounds recorded recordings in the first half of the twentieth century by European ethnologists, through Zimbabwean dancehall, colonial imagery, or traditional instruments such as thumb piano, these documents are assembled by collage in a desire to reread and restore a botched history.

At Circuit, Biwa and Machiri present *Listening at Pungwe. Dzepfunde: Another spectral figuration of an archive*. Eight hi-fi stations each broadcast a track composed of different songs from

southern africa and remixed by the two artists. The original tracks come from the archives of the International Library of African Music (ILAM) collection based in Cape Town, South

South Africa. Mainly collected during the colonial period, these voices represent for the artists an audience of a past time, brought back into the present. The ghosts and specters of lost cultures and

of lost oral traditions, silenced by force and depreciation. Dzepfunde, a Shona word, one of the languages spoken in Zimbabwe, is spoken to encourage the storyteller to their stories.

Thulile Gamedze is an artist and writer. She is also a member of the iQhiya collective, a network of young black women artists based between Cape Town and Johannesburg. Gamedze works on a process of decolonizing the imaginary that teaches us to see images and representations differently so that they can become **other**. Her approach tends, in this way, to question hegemonic discourses, by refusing the narratives, the practices, and the conditions which impose themselves as the only truth.

At Circuit she presents a plastic exploration in the form of drawings, collages and prints of the theoretical text *Visual perception* by Selby Mvusi, (South African painter, sculptor, poet and teacher, 1929-1967) displayed in full in the exhibition. This text on the visual perception of

forms in art and design is deconstructed by Gamedze who proposes an applied study through

manipulations and successive arrangements of the forms she invokes. She also presents personal notes as well as her reflections based on these writings.

Donna Kukama is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is informed by a performance-based research processes. Through performance, video, sound, texts, and non-monuments, her work questions the way in which histories are narrated, as well as how values systems are built, often resisting established “ways of doing”.

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On a voyagé au-delà des frontières du temps pour dévoiler l'instant où l'on n'avait pas encore donné naissance aux silences, is a video-performance filmed in August 2020 in front of a mural of the same title painted by Donna Kukama in Circuit in January 2020. Invisible in daylight because it was made with colorless phosphorescent and fluorescent paints, the mural was only revealed under black light.

Unable to return to Switzerland to document this work, Kukama collaborated with director Zamo Mkhwanazi and singer Rachel Nyangombe, both of whom are based in Switzerland, to make this video. The artist herself explains the creative process as follows:

« Both collaborators received an "open script" that had about five scenes which were only 'scripted' through images and actions (some based on memory, and others purely as a visual 'score') presented as a 'carte-blanche'. We spoke about the evocations of the work, and never about its background or my understanding of it. What I find beautiful about the video is that it was an "activation" and a collaborative performance that has a status of its own. It was not "overthought", and the collaborative process allowed for a work that was constructed across borders at a time when silences around the value of black lives could no longer be tolerated, globally. The haunting presence of footsteps, silhouettes, haloed frames, and the mantra "*On a voyagé au-delà des frontières du temps pour dévoiler l'instant où l'on n'a pas donné naissance aux silences*" repeated just months before the global resurgence of the #BLM movement, where people no longer wished to be rendered invisible, silent, or non-existent. »

Having studied in Switzerland some 15 years ago, Donna Kukama recalls a country obsessed with

time. Up-to-the-minute train schedules and Swiss Made watches are two examples.

She also remembers the country's neutrality, displayed and accepted in world affairs, which

easily erase its responsibility in historical violence, especially in its support of the South African apartheid regime, when freedom of trade took precedence over respect for Human Rights. The evidence and documentation of these exchanges remains difficult to access today as they are partly subject to state secrecy. With this title the artist reminds us that time remembers and that in general, nobody is born silent, one becomes it (or not).

For almost 4 years, **Zen Marie** has been developing a research that he calls *Fallen Paradise*. He undertakes to question the representations of landscape and space, in particular those linked to the ocean, islands, mountains and deserts of the African continent.

Zen Marie first films a space in order to encounter it. There is the space, himself and his camera. Then comes the editing from which a narrative can emerge, as in *Île aux Serpents*, a film shown at Circuit during the summer 2020, in which a child's dreams and desires of piracy are told over images of the ocean and a deserted island. In the current exhibition, he presents *Bookmarks of our History (After Donna Kukama)*, *Character Study 1-7*, a set of 7 videos filmed in the mountain range of Maluti uKhahlamba - Drakenberg on the border between South Africa and Lesotho.

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The narrative becomes abstract and conceptual. In the exhibition space, the videos are mounted and installed in rhizomes. Their title, suggested by Donna Kukama, indicates, in addition to the idea that a work serves as a bookmark, a pindrop, to (re)read History, that we are dealing with a character study. Each of the seven videos, treated as their own entities, have recorded and contain traces of the geological history, traces of the human intervention, of the successive societies which invested these filmed spaces.

Written contributions by Nayansaku Mufwankolo and Henri-Michel Yéré will complete the exhibition and this series of views in the course of January 2021.

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