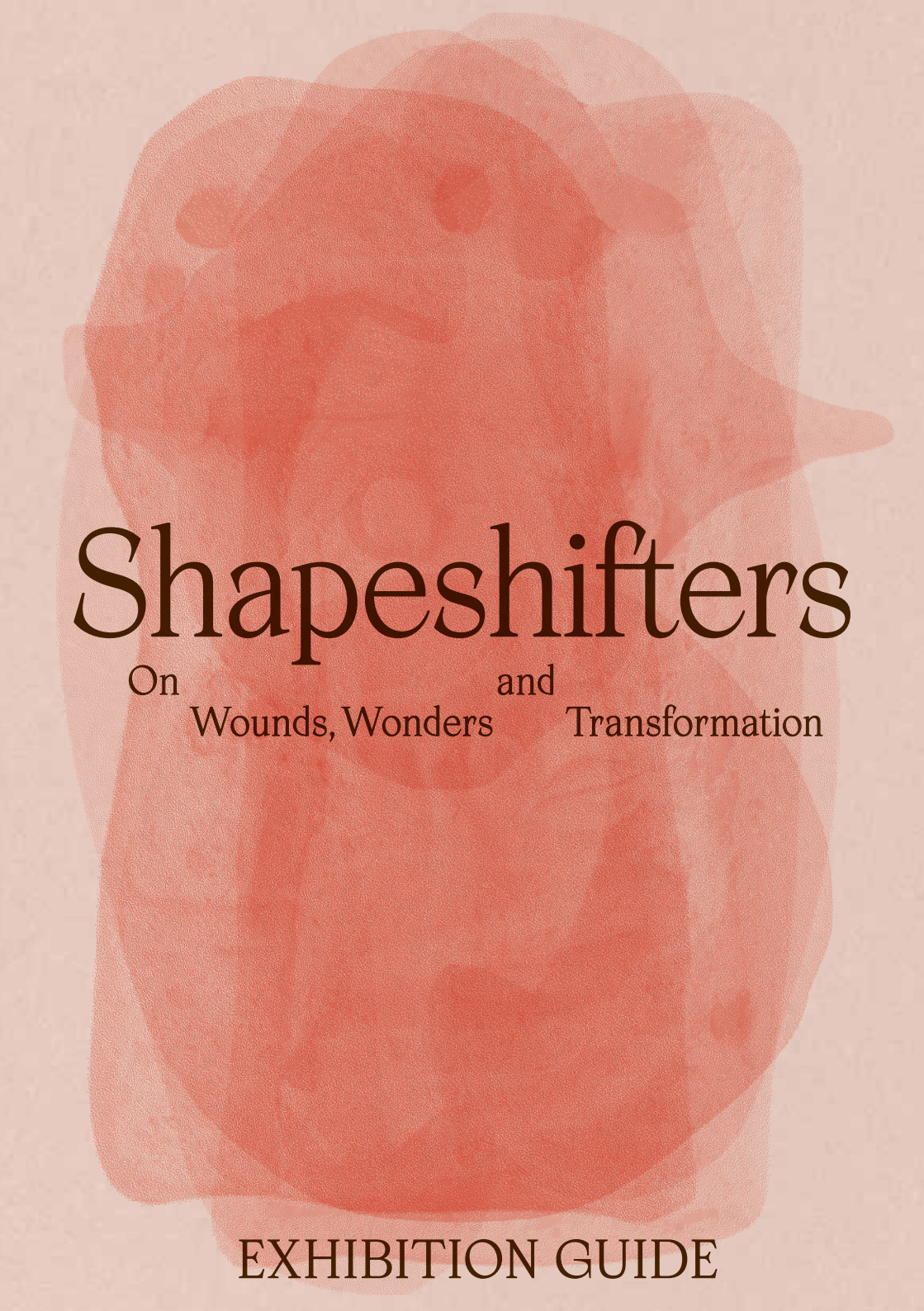




Shapeshifters

On and
Wounds, Wonders Transformation

EXHIBITION GUIDE

FRAMER EBAWED

An abstract, textured splash of red watercolor paint, starting from the top right and flowing downwards and to the left, creating a sense of movement and depth. The color varies from a deep red to a lighter, more translucent pinkish-red at the edges.

EXHIBITION DATES

15 OCT –
11 JAN '26

OPENING EVENT

15 OCT '25

ARTISTS

al-yené
Kader Attia
Sammy Baloji & Cécile Fromont
Antonio Jose Guzman & Iva Jankovic
Kosisochukwu Nnebe
Georges Senga
Anna Safiatou Touré
Mirelle van Tulder
Pei-Hsuan Wang
Leah Zhang

SPATIAL DESIGN

Bureau LADA

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Chen Jhen



INTRODUCTION

BY JOSIEN PIETERSE AND EMILY SHIN-JIE LEE

In recent years debates around the restitution of looted colonial artefacts and the call to decolonise museums have gained momentum. These discussions did not emerge out of nowhere, but are part of a longer, ongoing process involving researchers, activists and other stakeholders who worked to put this issue on the agenda. The exhibition *Shapeshifters: On Wounds, Wonders and Transformation* can be viewed within this trajectory and presents diverse perspectives on the subject. In line with Rolando Vázquez's notion of decolonial aesthetics, the works on display remind us of the importance of disrupting structures of power by foregrounding relationality, plurality and care. As Vázquez writes in *Aesthetic Restitution for the Joy of Life*, 'the question of restitution is a question of justice and dignity'. Instead of seeing restitution as a question of property rights, restitution itself must be understood as a practice of joy, relation and re-worlding.

Framer Framed was founded in 2009 at a moment when curators and researchers in Dutch ethnographic museums were increasingly confronted with questions about their practices – many of which remained shaped by 19th century institutional frameworks that had long gone virtually unchallenged. With an editorial board of curators, scholars and cultural workers, we developed a traveling programme critically examining museum exhibitions. Recurring questions were: Who speaks? Whose stories are being told, and how are they represented? These questions particularly resonated with ethnographic – or nowadays 'world culture' – museums whose histories are rooted in colonialism and whose narratives often reinforce domination while silencing other cultures. The lessons of those early years have informed our exhibition-making practice since 2014, when Framer Framed established its own space.

More recently, these questions around representation, among others, have been explored within the four-year research project *Pressing Matters: Ownership, Value and the Question of Colonial Heritage in Museums (2021-2025)*, in which Framer Framed is a societal partner. Initiated by the National Museum of World Cultures (NMVW) and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU), the project brings together communities and organisations from around the world to reflect on concepts of value and ownership as they relate to collections acquired during the colonial period. In addition to academic publications, the project included residencies wherein artists conducted research within the collection of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam. The outcomes of which are presented in the ongoing exhibition

Unfinished Pasts, which reimagines return, repair and reconciliation beyond legal frameworks of restitution.

In the same spirit, *Shapeshifters* gathers contemporary artists who examine how colonialism has shaped our understanding of museums, archives and other institutions of knowledge. However, these artists undertook their research independently, outside the institutional framework of the museum, and the exhibition has been composed by the Framer Framed team, without a curator. It includes artists with whom we have collaborated closely in the past, combined with new perspectives and insights. Together they form a constellation that resonates with Framer Framed's critical practice and offers a plurality of methods; approaches to unsettling dominant narratives that open spaces for re-articulation and reimagination grounded in care and curiosity. The works explore how artistic research – whether poetic, material or political – can propose alternative ways of engaging with or breaking through structures of power. By remediating colonial archives and introducing new forms of agency, they invite viewers to move beyond standard History and to inhabit diverse, shifting perspectives.

The artists in their own way embody what researcher Nuraini Juliastuti would call a 'commons museum' approach: to consider storytelling as a form of archival technology and re-creation as a tool for preservation and transmission.¹ The exhibition's scenography embodies this approach in both its concept and its construction, layering visibility and opacity through textile pathways that invite wandering. At its centre, an elevated longitudinal stage creates dynamic sightlines and becomes a site for communal gathering.

The notion of 'shapeshifters' – inspired by the novels of Octavia E. Butler – serves as a conceptual tool for weaving together the artworks of the exhibition. In Butler's storytelling, shapeshifters embody not only the power to transform but also an imaginative technology of resistance to colonial oppression. Similarly, the exhibited works reject homogenising and universalising ideas of identity and history. Instead, they emphasise hybridity, vitality and the unfinished processes of decolonisation.

Shapeshifters acknowledges the colonial wounds while affirming the possibility of movement, transformation and healing. Rather than providing immediate solutions, it lingers with unresolved dilemmas and embraces ongoing questioning: How can we resist dominant paradigms while imagining new forms of ownership, value and repair? The accompanying public programme expands on these questions in dialogue with the Pressing Matters network and beyond – through a symposium on decolonial reparation, institutional responsibility, community and care;

a repair lab on data rights and freedoms in the face of cultural capitalism and racial discrimination; and further workshops and collective practices.

Shapeshifters is undoubtedly indebted to the many researchers and artists whose work preceded it. Inheriting these legacies, we imagine the exhibition as belonging as much to the future as to the past. We hope it encourages a deepening – if not a resolution – of complex questions so that they may continue to be explored elsewhere and in other ways, toward the possibility of shapeshifting into a transformed world.

¹ The exhibition subtitle 'On Wounds, Wonders and Transformation' is inspired by Juliastuti's publication project *Stories of Wounds and Wonder*, a two-year research commissioned by Amsterdam-based organisation If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution.



Aesthetic Restitution for the Joy of Life¹

BY ROLANDO VÁZQUEZ

I want to start with a gesture. I want to invite you to look at the rings in your fingerprints. And now I want to invite you to look at the rings in the wooden floor pictured; this is the floor of the Akademie der Künste on Hanseatenweg in Berlin, where this talk was given. It is a gesture to acknowledge that we are always somewhere and that we come from somewhere. We have been standing on these floors, on these rings, rings that we also carry without acknowledging the living relations that sustain us.

I would like to address the question of repair in relation to the trajectory of decolonial thinking. That is where I come from as a plural voice: decolonial thinking and decolonial aesthesis that come from Latin America or what we call Abya Yala. The issue of repair goes beyond the question of giving back. The question of giving back is without a doubt crucial, but we want to ask further who repairs and for whom? We also want to ask if 'repair' is the most adequate term when we are speaking from a different position and from a different location of knowledge that is not the one of the Global North. So maybe we need to speak about recalling back, bringing back home, where those that are recalling, reclaiming, and bringing back are those that are active in the process of healing.

These thoughts are structured in two moments. The first moment is looking at how repair summons the colonial wound. Because when we are speaking of repair – in decoloniality it resonates with healing – we are talking about the colonial wound. When we are speaking of decolonial thinking and decolonial praxis, we are referring to the colonial wound. Something I often clarify in my talks in Western Europe, is that decolonizing is not the same as deconstructing. Of course we can use deconstruction as a tool, but decolonizing is not the same as deconstructing. Furthermore, not every critique is decolonial. A Marxist critique is not decolonial, a Foucaultian critique is not decolonial, a Derridian critique is not decolonial. Of course we can use their valuable methods and insights for decoloniality, but

¹ This text was first published in *Errant Journal* No. 5 'Learning from Ancestors: Epistemic Restitution and Rematriation' (2023) with the title 'Aesthetic and Epistemic Restitution for the Joy of Life. Re-calling Earth, Overcoming the Contemporary, Knowing Otherwise'. It is an adaptation of a keynote lecture held within the framework of the conference FROM RESTITUTION TO REPAIR of the 12th Berlin Biennale on 10 September 2022.



The floor of the Akademie der Künste on Hanseatenweg in Berlin. Photo: Rolando Vázquez

they were not themselves concerned with the colonial wound. For things to be decolonial, they need to engage with the colonial wound. At least this is our position, coming from the decolonial tradition of Abya Yala. They are wonderful authors, but they were not concerned with the colonial wound. Today we see decoloniality circulating everywhere as a term, but it is not everywhere addressing the colonial wound. It is just used as a synonym of deconstructing, criticising, and even worse, sometimes it is used fashionably to uphold the status quo.

Then, the first moment of our reflections is concerned with the question of repair and the colonial wound. The second moment is an invitation to see the question of repair as a question that challenges the function of Western art as a whole. Here repair is addressed not just as a question for the Global South, but as a question that challenges the whole edifice of Western aesthetics.

Let us start the first moment with what we mean by the colonial wound and the colonial difference. In the conceptual thinking of Abya Yala, we have an important moment in which the term coloniality emerges. Coloniality is not a synonym of colonialism. Colonialism is, of course, part of coloniality, but coloniality continues beyond and after colonialism. Crucially, coloniality is a term that does not come from Western epistemology. It is not a term that comes from Western theory. Coloniality is a term that is coined by Aníbal Quijano and that already signals an epistemic turn. It is thought that emerged and was conceived from a positionality of the Global South. It is a strong concept, that allows us to say that there is no modernity without coloniality. Modernity, a key philosophical and historical notion of the West, cannot be thought without coloniality, that is; without the thought and experience of the Global South. In this way, the history of Western modernity – that following the thesis of Enrique Dussel we locate starting in 1492 – starts with the colonial expansion of Europe. Only through the colonial expansion, as Walter Mignolo shows, Europe could begin conceiving of itself geographically as the center of the world, and historically as being in the present of history. Without 1492 there is no Europe with the universal pretention of Eurocentrism, there is no Europe claiming for itself the present of history, and relegating all other people to the past. There is no Europe being in the center of geography and relegating all other geographies to the margins. 1492, the conquest of Abya Yala, is what enables Europe to become Eurocentric and to have a claim of universality over the world.

When we say there is no modernity without coloniality, we say, for example, that there is no development of global capital without slavery, without the plantation, without the dispensability of human life and the dispensability of the life of the Earth. Conceptually we write it: modernity/coloniality. The slash is very important, because it indicates the colonial difference, the colonial wound. There is a separation between modernity and coloniality that is imposed; where modernity controls presence, controls the order of history, the order of geography, coloniality excludes from the historical present the other earth-worlds. Modernity is about the control of presence, of what gets affirmed as historical presence, whereas coloniality is about the eviction from history, the eviction from becoming world-

historical reality. More directly it has meant the eviction from reality of communal histories and earth-histories. That is why we speak about worldlessness and earthlessness. The project of Western modernity is bringing the loss of Earth and the loss of the plurality of worlds, the loss of earth-worlds. The slash that separates modernity and coloniality might trigger the poststructurally-minded to say, 'well, you are creating a dichotomy'. But it is not us creating a dichotomy, empire creates this world-historical dichotomy. We need to name the dominant dichotomies if we are going to see oppression. If we want to see race, if we want to see patriarchy, if we want to see exploitation and extraction, we need dichotomies. Dichotomies structure domination and help us understand how domination works. The disregard of all dichotomies has become complicit with making forms of oppression invisible. Of course, the decolonial project does not look towards a dichotomous world; it looks towards pluriversality, but it needs dichotomies to criticize power, to analyse what is wrong in the world.

The colonial wound produces what I call 'disjointed temporalities'. The temporality of modernity, that we are forced to live in in the modern consumer world, is disjointed from the temporality of those who are suffering under oppression, under exploitation and from the temporality of devastation of and extraction from Earth. On the one hand, when we go to the supermarket here in the Global North, or in the Norths in the South, we have the ephemeral temporalities of pleasure, of desire, of consumption, the 'empty now' that Walter Benjamin understood with a lot of clarity. On the other hand, on the other side of this superficiality, we find the coloniality of those pleasures, the coloniality of those desires, namely an enduring wound, a suffering that is not superficial nor ephemeral, that is not just in the now, in the empty now. I think that when Kader Attia speaks about trauma, for example, he speaks of a temporality that perdures, that endures and that is disjointed from the temporality of capitalism, it cannot be reduced to a superficial now.

This is why we call for the end of contemporaneity. Contemporaneity is a normative category that praises the time of the now as the time that is real and that is valuable. It does not allow us to relate to the deep time of the colonial wound in the way it is called for in the question of repair and healing. The temporality of the colonial wound exceeds the chronology of modernity. The colonial wound precedes, it is in the mode of precedence.

With this analysis we come to the fundamental question of the (im)possibility of living an ethical life. Can we live an ethical life in a world in which our wellbeing and sense of Self is made dependent on the suffering of others and on the destruction of Earth? Can we live an ethical life when our clothes, when our food, when our energy, when our museums, when our culture are implicated and made dependent on the suffering of others and the destruction of Earth? This is a clear and open question, it questions us and our ways of living. It has no easy answer. It is something we have to live with. We have to go beyond the false innocence of living a life pretending that we are not implicated, that we are not implicated

in the colonial wound. From First Nations/Indigenous and Black thinkers and movements, we have learned that the modern colonial system is a system that leads to the consumption of life. It is based on the consumption of life: the life of Earth and the life of others. What does it mean to speak of restitution with this panorama? Speaking maybe of the return in temporal terms. What would it mean to return, not in a conservative way, but in a radical way? What would it mean to give back to Earth all what we have taken from it in our lifetime? I think these are the questions we need to face as denizens of the consumer world.

Restitution is often just put in terms of property: who owns the objects? And as long as we remain in the question of property, we remain inside the epistemology of the West, we remain in the terms of the economy of equivalence. Restitution should lead us towards justice and dignity, should it not? Deeply inside, the question of restitution is a question of justice and dignity.

Following the thoughts of Arturo Escobar, I would like to say that without epistemic and aesthetic justice we cannot achieve decolonial justice. We cannot reach decolonial justice just through property, because the logic of property is the logic of oppression. We need to achieve justice also through epistemic and aesthetic justice. And here I want to recall the words of the Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa who is one of the founding grounds of decolonial thinking. She helps us understand what epistemic justice might mean, what aesthetic justice might mean. She says:

'I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue – my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence.'²

Epistemic justice is about overcoming the tradition of silence. It is about the coming to voice of all those whose voices cannot be spoken in the grammar of Western epistemology. In a memorable conversation that professor María Lugones and professor Gloria Wekker had in the Decolonial Summer School, they shared their biography. Both being highly trained in US universities, one in philosophy the other in anthropology, neither of them could have a voice through the established grammars of those disciplines. They could not speak about their experiences. They were muted, silenced. In order to be heard they had to speak in language foreign to their experiences, they had to speak in the normative language. So when we speak of epistemic struggle, of epistemic and aesthetic restitution, we are speaking about that possibility of coming to voice.

What is at stake in decolonial aesthetics? We use the term aesthetics in contrast with aesthetics. Aesthetics designates the regime of the West that seeks to regulate perception and experience. What is at stake in decolonial aesthetics is the struggle over our world historical reality, it is the struggle first over how we

² Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012: p. 81.

perceive and how we experience the world, and of course, fundamentally over the worlding of the world.

We may ask: with whose eyes have we been made to see, with whose body have we been made to live, with whose voice are we speaking? And I think, in the tradition of decolonial feminisms, feminisms of color, Indigenous feminisms, and Black feminisms, we see very clearly the critique against this being made to live in a body that is not our body, being made to speak with a voice that is not our voice, being made to see with eyes that are not our eyes. Decolonial aesthetics is oriented towards healing the colonial wound in this way, in the way of the coming to voice, in the way of overcoming an aesthetic regime (beyond the arts) that has been controlling our forms and possibilities of perception and experience, through the media, through the supermarket, through the ways we eat, through the ways we dress, through how we learn to see, how we learn to sense, how we learn to be together or how we learn to be in separation, through how and what we dream about. Contemporaneity that is so praised in the arts – contemporary art, contemporaneity – is for us an expression of modern/colonial aesthetics. The modern/colonial aesthetic order regulates experience and perception, and in doing so it also regulates our dwelling on Earth and our forms of world-making. Contemporaneity is one of its expressions, it is one of its forms that very clearly states the temporality of modernity as a normative principle, as a principle of validity.

In the aesthetic struggle, the recovery of joy is fundamental. It is something that is central to the lectures of professor Jean Casimir at the Decolonial Summer School in the Netherlands.³ The recovery of joy is like the recovery of the voice, it is about recovering aesthetics of life that has been oppressed. Here I want to quote María Lugones, one of our elders. I have read this quote many years ago during the first or second gathering of Black Europe Body Politics in Berlin, that was created by, also another one of our elders that has passed away, Alanna Lockward. I read this quote in that moment when BE.BOP. was starting and I read it again ten years later, also in Berlin. In it María Lugones is speaking about joy and playfulness, she says:

‘I am also scared of ending up a serious human being, someone with no multi-dimensionality, with no fun in life, someone who is just someone who has had the fun constructed out of her. I am seriously scared of getting stuck in a world that constructs me that way. A world that I have no escape from and in which I cannot be playful.’⁴

María Lugones stresses the importance of safeguarding playfulness and the possibility of joy in the face of oppression, she speaks to us of playfulness as resistance and shows us the importance of the aesthetic struggle for the joy of life.

The recovery of the voice and the recovery of joy, the joy of life that does not come through the consumption of the lives of others and the consumption of Earth, but a joy that is only possible with others, in community, in relation, that is relational.

The temporality of contemporaneity is at odds with the temporality of Earth. The contemporary or contemporaneity praises novelty. It is the praise of novelty. One of the requirements to be validated as contemporary is novelty, it is to affirm that something has never been done before for example. It is a form of normativity that is bound to radical immanence, to the space of representation, that assumes presence and the superficial present as the site of reality and truth, this empty present. In contrast, the time of Earth is an ancestral time. It is not the time of the contemporary. The Earth is ancestral, it precedes us much like the wooden floor and its rings. The temporality of Earth is that of precedence; it cannot be limited to the time of immanence. None of us would be here without the Earth before us. Whereas the contemporary praises novelty, Earth is ancestral and precedential. The other characteristic of the temporality of contemporaneity is how it projects itself as an endless futurity, as an infinite chronology. The contemporary is also the affirmation that every time there will be something new. We are always in a sort of futurism of the now, a time that is always to come and that pretends to extend itself endlessly as an infinite chronology. This endless futural projection, is unthinkable for thinkers with Earth, for First Nations and Indigenous philosophies. It is unthinkable for the Earth, because the Earth is finite and not endless, and the Earth is ancestral and not limited to the superficial present.

The Earth has mortality; the Earth can die, is living and can die. The movement of life is the movement of that which can die. Whereas the logic of endless infinite chronology is a deathless logic, is a logic without death. I heard once Cecilia Vicuña speak about the problem of plastic, and she said: the problem of plastic is not that it is death, but that it cannot die. This observation points to one of the big problems of contemporaneity, namely the assumption of this infinite futural chronology on an Earth that is finite, which is living and can die. Are we becoming orphans of the Earth? In a similar way, there is the violent imposition of modern temporality when ethnographic objects are collected and become desacralized, become fixed, frozen, displayed, put in an atemporal vitrine, in the pretended eternity of ownership. These objects have been uprooted, placed in separation, which has suffered the violence of the destruction of its relationality. In the movement of appropriation, classification and display, their temporality has been overturned, from a rooted ancestrality, a relational precedence towards the superficial now of property and representation. Whereas the object in relational ontologies and other ways of thinking is an ancestral object because it has relations in time. It is not ancestral because it is mythical, or because it is transcendental or metaphysical, it is ancestral because it relates back in time, like the rings of the wooden floor to the lived forest.

3 Casimir, Jean. *The Haitians: A Decolonial History*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

4 Lugones, María. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003: p. 93.

The logic of separation, the logic of property and ownership, and with it preservation as eternity, that is so entrenched in the collections and the presentations of ethnographic museums, is at odds with the temporality of precedence, the weave of relations that these ancestral objects carry. The design object tends to be an object of reason. It is an anthropocentric object that a human designed and for which it needed to consume matter to create that form, whereas the relational object is not an anthropocentric object. It is an object that has come to form in relation and where human hands are part of that relation and at the service of the forming of that relational object. The objects that are uprooted, *déraciné*, highlight the importance of epistemic and aesthetic restitution. They allow us to see how ignorant we have become of relational forms of living. Relations that sustain us nonetheless, but that we do not consider, that we have become ignorant of.

The question of reparation is a question of the transformation of the way we understand the arts, and aesthesis in general.

Just as the object that is in separation has been uprooted, it is the same with the Self and the production of personhood and the individual. In order to become individuals, we have been separated from Earth, we become earthless. We have been separated from the communal and have become worldless. We do not remember where we come from, whereas most First Nations and Indigenous cultures know where they come from. We, the modern subjects that own History, actually are the ones without history, without the memory of our precedence. We have become amnesic. How can we overcome the impoverished life of a Self that has become earthless, wordless and amnesic? Can we envisage a transformation towards forms of earthhood, of communalhood, of ancestralhood, where personhood, being a single Self, has no more meaning?

Restitution (that we might call recalling, remembering, reclaiming, reconstituting, especially when we ask who restitutes and who recalls?) brings us to the task of transforming the function of art. It questions for us the parameters of exhibition, the vitrine, the hygiene, the conservation, the preservation, the ownership, the non-place of the museum, the artifice of no time. No place, no time seem to be the conditions for the order of exhibition in modern or contemporary museums. Epistemic and aesthetic restitutions/re-constitutions question the desacralization of objects, the violent uprooting, and not in praise of a metaphysical sacrality in the way the West understands it, but in praise of the weave of relations that is still contained in those objects and that we might indeed call 'sacred', in the sense that they cannot be reduced to the materiality of ownership and display. Restitution brings about a powerful question against the order of representation and the function of art today.

Thinking of restitution as recalling, as connecting to the heritage of Earth, as recalling Earth, should bring to question the whole edifice of Western aesthetics, its regime of appropriation, the system of representation, its control over

temporality, the forceful reduction of telluric, communal, ancestral, relational temporalities, to the now of ownership, display and contemporaneity. It should help us address the colonial wound as something that needs to be healed, but not forgotten. In this movement, we see a movement from the logic of representation that has been dominant in the history of Western aesthetics, to the logic of reception. What would it mean if our museums, if our art schools begin training not in how to become sovereign-self, authors, curators, enunciator, somebody that controls and holds the power of representation, but instead, to become somebody that receives, who is capable of receiving the plurality of Earth and the plurality of worlds, capable of receiving the pluriversality of others and of earth-worlds. Could we move from an age of annunciation to an age of listening? Putting emphasis in listening as a political, communal Earth activity? Can we move from the logic of owning to the logic of owing, from property to gratitude, from indifference to compassion? Beyond the question of the return of the objects, epistemic restitution and aesthetic restitution should bring about the value of relational epistemologies and aesthesis, in order to transform and to overcome the aesthetic and epistemological regimes of the West that are complicit in the destruction of Earth, the destruction of the plurality of worlds and the erasure of our earth-histories.

ARTISTS / ARTWORKS



al-yené, *tæn:y*: (2025). Courtesy of the artist

AL-YENÉ

tæn:y: (2025)

Video and textile installation

20'

The project began as an inquiry into the cultural memory and official archives of the Sakha people, where stories are carried in fragments, absences, and silences. Gathering video material, audio recordings, interviews, and stories in close relation with her family, al-yené reimagines these materials – blending personal and collective stories that linger on erasures. Rather than filling these gaps, the work embraces (im)permanence, (in)stability, and (in)completeness. Kaleidoscopic fragments reveal the weight of silence, inviting connections with memories that refuse to be resolved or forgotten.

Narrated memories, archival and documentary footage, and computer-generated imagery fold into one

another, creating a dialogue about history, identity, and cultural memory. *tæn:y*: emerges from the slow rebuilding of relations with land and with relatives. What it holds is not the fullness of those connections, but the trace of their unfolding.

tæn:y: is made in collaboration with Cara Farnan and Tatyjaas Filippova and supported by the Cousin Collective.

al-yené is a visual artist from the Sakha Republic, with ancestral ties to both the Kolyma region and the central part of the republic. She was raised in Zyryanka and Yakutsk. Her practice engages themes of continuity, displacement, gaps, and absences within the cultural memory of the Sakha people and related northern communities. Drawing on personal and family histories alongside state archives and media, she reflects on how Indigenous identities and memories are shaped, silenced and reclaimed.

KADER ATTIA

Untitled (2025)

Series of five collages

Cardboard, prints, photocopies

73 x 93 cm and 60 x 80 cm

Attia's collages continue the artist's critique of modernity, beginning with modern architecture and its inspiration from traditional styles, building forms, and urban planning developed in non-Western cultures. Le Corbusier's modernism, for instance, drew significant inspiration from the city of Ghardaia in the Algerian Sahara. As they poetically reveal these blind spots and erasures of history, the collages' imagery serves as a reminder that modern art could not have undergone its revolution without turning to distant cultures at some point. And that as the avant-garde looked at other cultures, even when they supported them, they did so from a colonialist position.

Attia is interested in adding questioning to poetry, to open a dialogue that is sufficiently ambivalent to allow space for encounters and conversations between two forms of art: an ancient, pre-modern art from Africa and a modern avant-garde art. In doing so, the works go beyond creating a Dadaist or Surrealist incongruity to raise questions and tell a story that needs to be told again and again.

Kader Attia (1970, France) is a multidisciplinary artist who draws upon the lived experiences of two disparate cultural identities: Algerian and French. From this place of cultural intermediacy, Attia's practice interrogates sociopolitical complexities rooted in histories of colonialism and

cultural obfuscation. In his practice, Attia employs poetic installations and sculptural assemblages to investigate the far-reaching emotional implications of Western cultural hegemony and colonial systems of power for non-Western subjectivities, focusing particularly on collective trauma and notions of repair.

SAMMY BALOJI & CÉCILE FROMONT

Rethreaded Indies (2025)

Wool, cotton, linen

4.6 x 3.4 m

The tapestry *Rethreaded Indies* by Sammy Baloji and Cécile Fromont draws from the visual language of textile arts in early modern Europe and Kongo, as well as archival documentation of the role and standing of the Central African kingdom in the Atlantic world. It is a spirited response to the colonial ideologies of the 17-18th century French *Old Indies* series produced in the Gobelins Manufactory. Featuring historical images that centre Africa and Africans, the tapestry engages an eloquent formal mix of Kongo and European designs. Produced using a technologically recreated Gobelins technique, *Rethreaded Indies* powerfully reclaims a history previously presented from a strongly biased perspective in the *Old Indies*.

Rethreaded Indies is commissioned by Framer Framed with additional support from the Mondrian Initiative. The work was produced in the TextielLab (Tilburg, NL) in collaboration with designer Silvana de Bari.



Kader Attia, *Untitled* (2025). Courtesy of the artist



Kosisochukwu Nnebe, *A Palimpsest for the Tongue* (2025). Courtesy of the artist

Sammy Baloji (1978, DRC) is a photographer, visual artist and filmmaker living between Lubumbashi and Brussels. His work explores the history and memory of the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly the cultural and industrial heritage of Katanga and the effects of Belgian colonisation. Using archives in his work enables him to manipulate time and space – comparing colonial narratives with contemporary economic imperialism.

Cécile Fromont is an art historian specialising in the visual, material, and religious cultures of Africa, Latin America, and Europe in the early modern period (1500-1800). Her scholarship sheds light on the cross-cultural ebbs and flows that unfolded during this period across and around the Atlantic Ocean. Her research and

writing focus on African expressive, spiritual, and material cultures and their ramifications in Latin America and Europe, demonstrating how the often violent but vital connections between the three continents gave contours to the early modern world and continue to shape our own times.

ANTONIO JOSE GUZMAN & IVA JANKOVIC (MESSENGERS OF THE SUN)

Orbital Mechanics – Electric Dub Station (2024)

Site specific wood installation

Ajrakh hand block printed indigo-dyed fabrics
4.4 x 4.4 x 4 m

Music

Transillumination #1 / One Dub – EDS Mash Up Vol. 1 – Selectør Jade Flux a.k.a. A.J.

Guzman and Iva Jankovic

Transillumination #1 – A.J. Guzman & Alejandro Matamala
18-20'

In their artistic collaboration, Guzman and Jankovic incorporate indigo textiles, soundscapes, and performances to address how our world has been shaped by colonialism and migration. Guzman and Jankovic reinterpret the history of sacred indigo textiles, which are deeply connected with colonial histories and the trade of enslaved Africans who carried the expertise of cultivating indigo with them to the Americas. The textiles in the installation feature an abstract pattern of intercultural DNA sequences, embodying a global connection between the Black Atlantic.

The textiles are printed at the Ajrakh workshop of Sufiyan Khatri in Ajrakhpur, India. Ajrakh is a 4,000-year-old practice orally passed down through generations that uses traditional manual dyeing methods. The accompanying soundscape alludes to ideas of belonging and exclusion through an exploration of diasporic sounds that combine electronic music, dub, punk, and Senegalese drums.

Antonio Jose Guzman & Iva Jankovic (Messengers of the Sun) are a multidisciplinary artist duo whose collaborative practice investigates the legacies of colonialism, migration, and cultural hybridity through the intersection of textile, sound, and performance. Working together since 2016, their installations create immersive environments where sacred materials, ancestral knowledge, and advanced technologies converge.

Their collaborations span textile artisans, sound engineers, dancers, coders, and community researchers across the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. Together, Guzman and Jankovic propose a decolonial artistic language grounded in material history, technological experimentation, and diasporic imagination. Through their practice, they not only preserve but activate cultural knowledge, transforming spaces into communal universes for gathering and re-encoding the past toward speculative futures.

KOSISOCHUKWU NNEBE

A Palimpsest for the Tongue (2025)

Chlorophyll prints on banana leaves, steel, acrylic, soil, seedlings
Variable dimensions

A Palimpsest for the Tongue is an ongoing project using the process of chlorophyll printing to transform banana leaves into living, material archives. It draws focus to the history and migration of the banana plant and its revelations on Blackness and racial capitalism. The archival documents demonstrate how the banana, in the words of Françoise Vergès, 'takes



Antonio Jose Guzman & Iva Jankovic (Messengers of the Sun), *Orbital Mechanics – Electric Dub Station* (2024).
Installation view at the 60th Venice Biennale, courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia. Photo: Marco Zorzanello

us to colonial slavery, capitalism, military coup, racial environmental politics, gender, sexuality, freedom, multinationals and the fabrication of poverty, precarious and fragile lives in the 21st century.'

With the images only discernible from underneath a canopy of leaves, *A Palimpsest for the Tongue* recreates Nnebe's own memories of time spent in banana groves in Jamaica and Nigeria – foregrounding an intimate, embodied and subversive knowledge of the plant that people of African descent have cultivated for centuries.

Kosisochukwu Nnebe (1993, Nigeria) is a Nigerian-Canadian conceptual artist and researcher working across installation, sculpture, lens- and time-based media. Her work challenges dominant narratives by transforming the vernacular and commonplace – from native languages and foodstuffs such as cassava to physical spaces such as nail salons – into counter-archives of colonial histories. She excavates and reclaims gendered histories of resistance, offering transgressive representations and understandings of Blackness rooted in anti-imperial relationality. At its core, Nnebe's practice is invested in anti-imperial worldbuilding through the troubling of colonial logics and speculative reimaginings of otherwise pasts, presents and futures.

GEORGES SENG

Makuto Njo Dunia (Money Make the World, 2024)

Series of 13 paintings

Oil on canvas

100 x 100 cm

The title of this project is inspired by the Dutch expression 'Geld regeert de wereld' and the Congolese Swahili expression 'Makuta njo dunia'; with different nuances, the two expressions affirm that profit builds the world and the way societies live in and with it. Drawing on archival photos and descriptions of objects from collections such as the National Museum of World Cultures and the Rijksmuseum, Senga imagines the everyday use of these objects in conversation with artificial intelligence – creating models of the visually undocumented Dutch colonial presence in the Kingdom of Kongo between 1641 and 1648.

Combining artificial intelligence and collage techniques with image processing software, Senga worked with painters from Dafen Village in Shenzhen, China – renowned for producing copies of masterworks – to render his digital models as a series of oil paintings. The result is a new identity that navigates between the existing aesthetics of Dutch 'Golden Age' painting, the errors of technology, and the appropriation of the works by human expertise.

Makuto Njo Dunia (Money Make the World) by Georges Senga is made in collaboration with Custom Art Gallery Int LTD, Shenzhen, and supported by the Mondriaan Fund.



Georges Senga, *Makuto Njo Dunia (Money Make the World, 2024)*. Courtesy of the artist



Anna Safiatou Touré, *The Faces Collection* (2025). Installation view Art au Centre, Liège, courtesy of the artist

Georges Senga (1983, DRC) is a photographer based in Rotterdam. He develops his photographic work around history and the narratives revealed by memory, identity and heritage – illuminating our actions and the present. His projects explore the resonances that people, their facts and their objects leave behind, and the resilience of memory in his country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Senga is part of Atelier Picha in Lubumbashi, DRC, as well as the project space Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is a member of On-Trade-Off, a transnational artist collective and long-term research project investigating the mining culture of Manono, DRC.

ANNA SAFIATOU TOURÉ

The Faces Collection (2025)
Series of 800 sculptures
Terracotta
190 x 250 cm

The Faces Collection is an installation comprised of a collection of clay imprints of miniature masks originating from Congo. Through these imprints, Touré offers a critical perspective on the place of these cultural and spiritual objects within European societies and their institutions. The work also addresses the fetishisation of masks and the sacralising museum displays that often accompany them. *The Faces Collection* oscillates between satire



Mirelle van Tulder, *Being Part European* (2024). Courtesy of the artist

and homage; the loss of information linked to the journey of these objects is conveyed through the imprint – only a trace of their existence remains. The installation also evokes the presence of hundreds of thousands of Congolese objects scattered across Belgium and Europe.

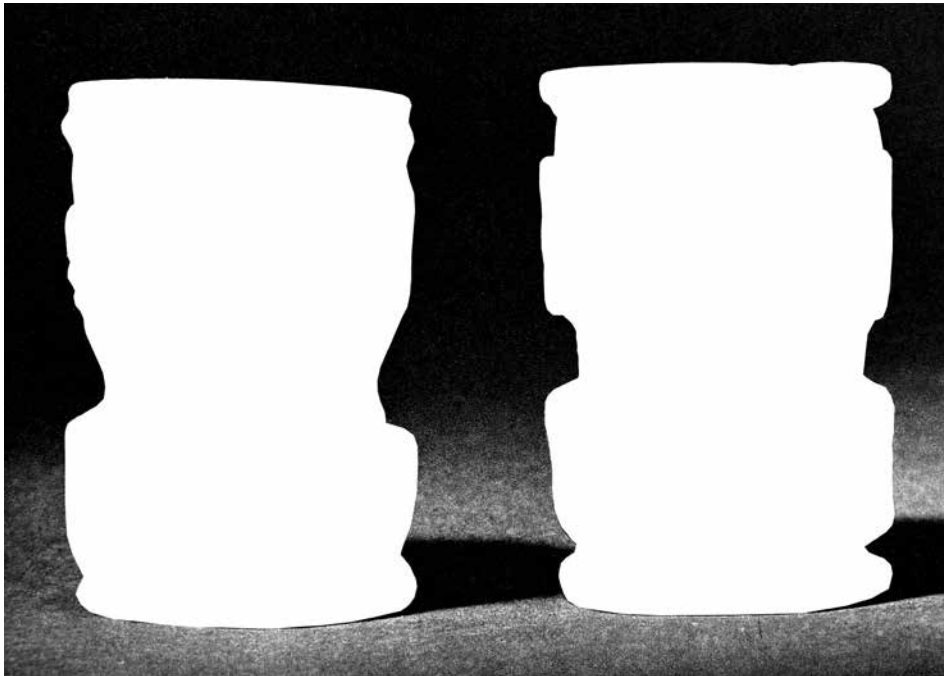
Anna Safiatou Touré (1996, Mali) is a French-Malian multidisciplinary artist based in Brussels. Born in Bamako, Touré left Mali for France at an age too young to retain vivid memories of her homeland. This absence has fuelled her desire to understand migration, the relationship between two lands, two cultures, and those between the colonised and the colonisers, past and present. The path through this personal, historical, and cultural blend fills, for her, empty or unanswered spaces. On her own scale, she gives form to this absence by creating her own evidence to make stories heard. Her practice

questions whether the world can be told in reverse, like a stencil – from the edge.

MIRELLE VAN TULDER

Being Part European (2024)
Video installation
13'

Across Europe, there are numerous hidden depots, closed to the public, holding hundreds of thousands of objects, stolen from former colonised lands and peoples. *Being Part European* opens the doors to the largest depot of the Dutch National Museum of World Cultures, which holds over 450.000 ancestral objects, unable to be honoured, ritualised and commemorated by the descendants of those to whom these objects once belonged. Guided by the words of the Fijian poet Sam Simpson, written in



Mirelle van Tulder, *Tiki for Hair Ornament* (2025). Courtesy of the artist

1974, the film guides us through the corridors and shelves of the depot, where a vast collection of colonial objects awaits not only their return to ancestral lands but also their revelation and aliveness.

Being Part European is made in collaboration with Studio Airport and supported by the Mondriaan Fund.

Catalogue of Stolen Objects, Courtesy of (2025)

Artist book
210 x 280 mm, 64 pages

Catalogue of Stolen Objects, Courtesy of is an artist book that departs from the confrontation with photographed artefacts found in ethnographic catalogues. It compiles associations on the presence of objects, their reiteration as images of fetish and subsequent mass circulation. Van Tulder's work emphasises the status of ethnological artefacts as dislodged cultural fragments, heightening their condition as diasporic objects in a dual state of being present somewhere and absent elsewhere.

Catalogue of Stolen Objects, Courtesy of is supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL.

Emptying the Shelves (2025)

Artist book
135 x 190 mm, 528 pages

Emptying the Shelves is an artist book that speaks through a plurality of voices from objects relegated to museum shelves, glass cases, and archives.

The subjects and themes of the exhibitions featured in this collection of photographs exist in a colonial paradigm of 'self' in opposition to the 'other'. From these documents, we witness a transformation of curatorial aesthetics and attempts of undoing the colonial difference.

Emptying the Shelves is published by Roots to Fruits, co-published by Framer Framed and supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL. It is the result of Van Tulder's Atelier KITLV-Framer Framed residency 2024/2025.

Mirelle van Tulder is an artist, researcher, and designer. The core of her work is the search for stories that foster dialogue around the power structures that shape graphic design and art history. Her practice delves into the colonial archive, seeing its complexity not only as an incredibly vast collection of objects and documents, but also understanding its position concerning personal history. It explores objects that carry meanings of identity and togetherness, while also revealing stories of uprooting and resistance that are interwoven in material culture.

In 2022, Van Tulder founded the magazine and publishing house Roots to Fruits, that explores the intersections between music, archives and resistance.

PEI-HSUAN WANG

Origin Myth (2025)

Mixed media installation

Variable dimensions

Origin Myth is a mixed-media installation featuring a toy train, objects from the collections of the Princessehof and the Fries Museum, alongside a pair of ceramic statues in sancai style. The installation adapts Wang's automated work *Train*, first presented in the solo project *Ghost Eat Mud* (Kunsthall Gent, 2022), which explored the entanglement of family histories with Western intervention in the artist's birthplace Taiwan and adopted home Belgium.

Origin Myth reframes these concerns through a new constellation of objects. The sancai-style statues incorporate Asia-Pacific motifs and lores. They were sculpted as prototypes for a pair of bronze guardians for the Belgian coastal village De Haan, overlooking the North sea; the statues stand watch while evoking bodies of water that connect continents. The sancai style's ties to the Tang dynasty of China (618-907 CE) allude to a Golden Age of Han identity, cosmopolitan exchange and imperial expansion. Shown reclining on pillows, the prototypes recall the artist's encounter with a clay figure from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) – stored in a Belgian archive depot: an absurd resting place for a displaced origin.

The museum loans form a 12-animal bestiary of the Chinese cycle, with the zodiac signs of the artist and her family (Rabbit, Dragon, Mouse, Dog) occupying the upper tiers of the vitrine.

Together, these elements conjure a theatre of memory and wonder. The installation stages cyclical time alongside speed and momentum, its rhythmic movement unhindered by the notion of linear progression as it meets the timelessness of the ceramic material. *Origin Myth* contemplates roots as multiple, meandering, and transnational, shaped by the layered cultural and imperial histories of Wang's experience.

Train (2022)

Hedgehog plushie, electric motor and wiring, wood, steel

Variable dimensions

Statue of Asking: Ode to the Belgian Coast I & II (2024)

Stoneware, glaze

40 x 70 x 40 cm and 40 x 74 x 40 cm

Menagerie Imperium (various time periods)

Collection of ceramic objects on loan from the Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics and the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden

Variable dimensions

Sculpture in the Form of a Mouse

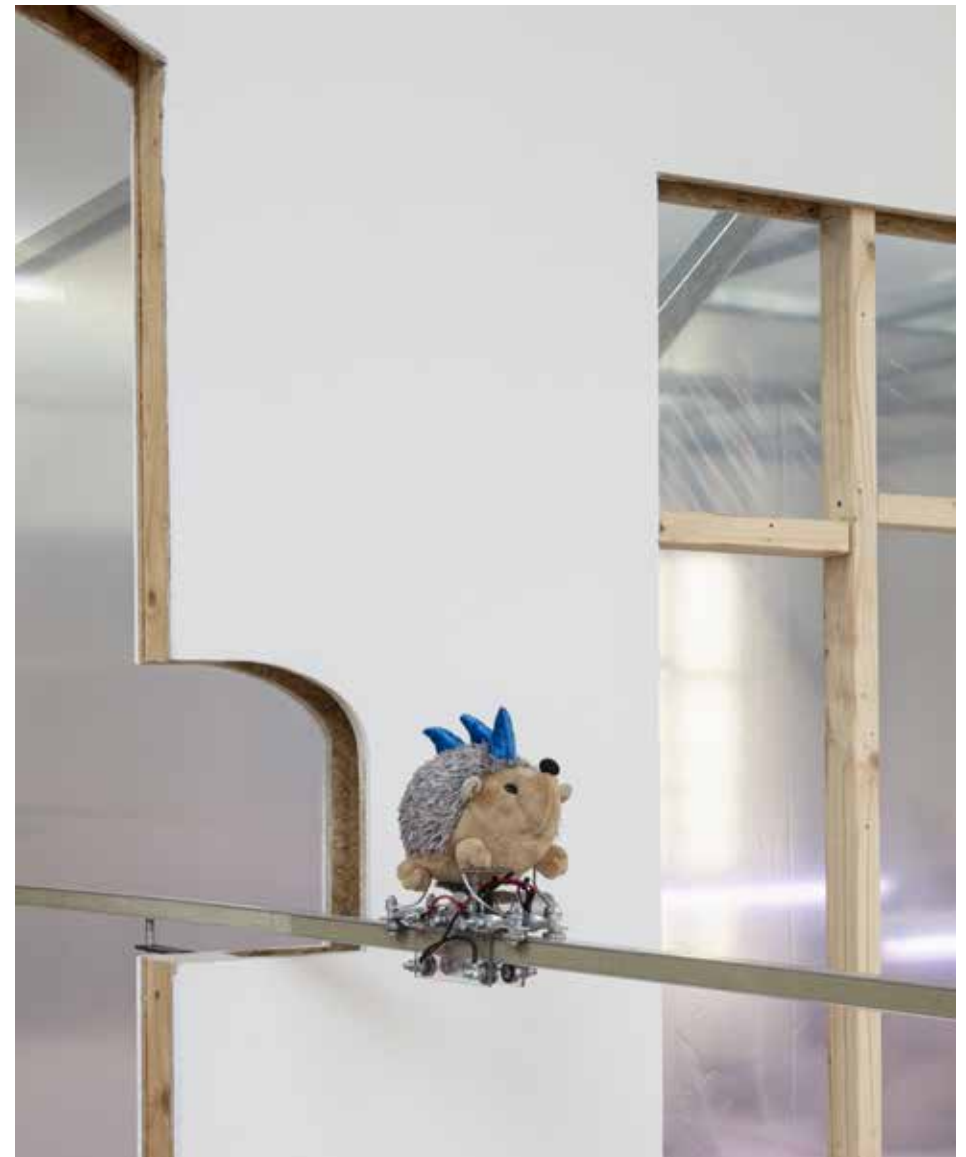
Earthenware, c. 1900-1990, Princessehof Museum; long-term loan of the Ottema-Kingma Foundation

Saucer Decorated with Landscape, Figure and Cow

Porcelain, c. 1680-1700, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân – bequest Mr. A. Looxma Ypeij

Bowl with Wavy Rim and Tiger

Porcelain, c. 1710, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân



Pei-Hsuan Wang, *Train* (2022). Installation view at Kunsthall Gent, courtesy of the artist



Pei-Hsuan Wang, *Statue of Asking: Ode to the Belgian Coast I* (2024). Courtesy of the artist

Lidded Soup Tureen with Rabbit
Earthenware, date unknown, Fries Museum

Architectural Fragment in the Form of a Dragon
Earthenware, c. 1000-1900, Princessehof Museum; long-term loan of the Ottema-Kingma Foundation

Vase with Snake Motifs in Blue Underglaze
Porcelain, c. 1662-1722, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân – bequest Mr. A. Looxma Ypeij

Sculpture of a Horse
Stoneware, c. 1100s, Princessehof Museum; long-term loan of the Koninklijke Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst – donation by Koos de Jong

Tile Depicting a Shepherd and Sheep
Earthenware, 1963, Fries Museum

Fragment of Monkey Figurine in Red Clay: 'See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil'
Earthenware, c. 1200, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân

Saucer with Rooster Among Flowering Plants in Famille Rose Style
Porcelain, c. 1735-1750, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân – bequest Mr. A. Looxma Ypeij

Polychrome Sculpture of a Buddhist Lion with a Cub
Earthenware, c. 1800-1900, Princessehof Museum; long-term loan of the Bruikleen Gemeente Leeuwarden

Sculpture of a Wild Boar or Pig
Earthenware, c. 1700-1799, Fries Museum; long-term loan of Provincie Fryslân – donation by Kate Bisschop-Swift

Pei-Hsuan Wang's practice traces kinship shaped by migration, memory, and the interplay between personal and canonised histories. Weaving together bio(mytho)graphical narratives, folklore, and cultural artifacts born of Asia-Pacific geopolitics, her work reflects on how meaning is carried and reconstructed across generations. Through sculpture, installation, video, drawing, and public intervention, Wang navigates migratory restlessness, incorporating materials ranging from sancai ceramics and museum objects to motorised mechanisms.

LEAH ZHANG

BEELD (2024)
Video installation
35'

After a mummy was discovered inside the Chinese Buddhist statue Zhanggong, a journey began into European hospitals, museums and a Dutch collector's repository. A few years later in Tampa, Florida, people gathered in front of a finance building, praying to an image of the Virgin Mary that appeared on its steamy window. How does an image become an icon?

Imagining Zhanggong's migration through the Netherlands, *BEELD* presents reenacted scenarios of different involved actors: excited doctors, a meditating curator, a hesitant collector and a museum security guard frightened by the presence of biological remains in the art museum. The film reflects on modern European history's fascination with the body. It casts Zhanggong's invisible figure in the same way the statue casts his



Leah Zhang, *BEELD* (2024). Courtesy of the artist

body. *BEELD*, a Dutch word meaning both 'statue' and 'image', discusses the slips of iconography ('造像') behind Zhanggong's complicated identities and value: between commodity and Buddha, human remains and art object, signifier and signified.

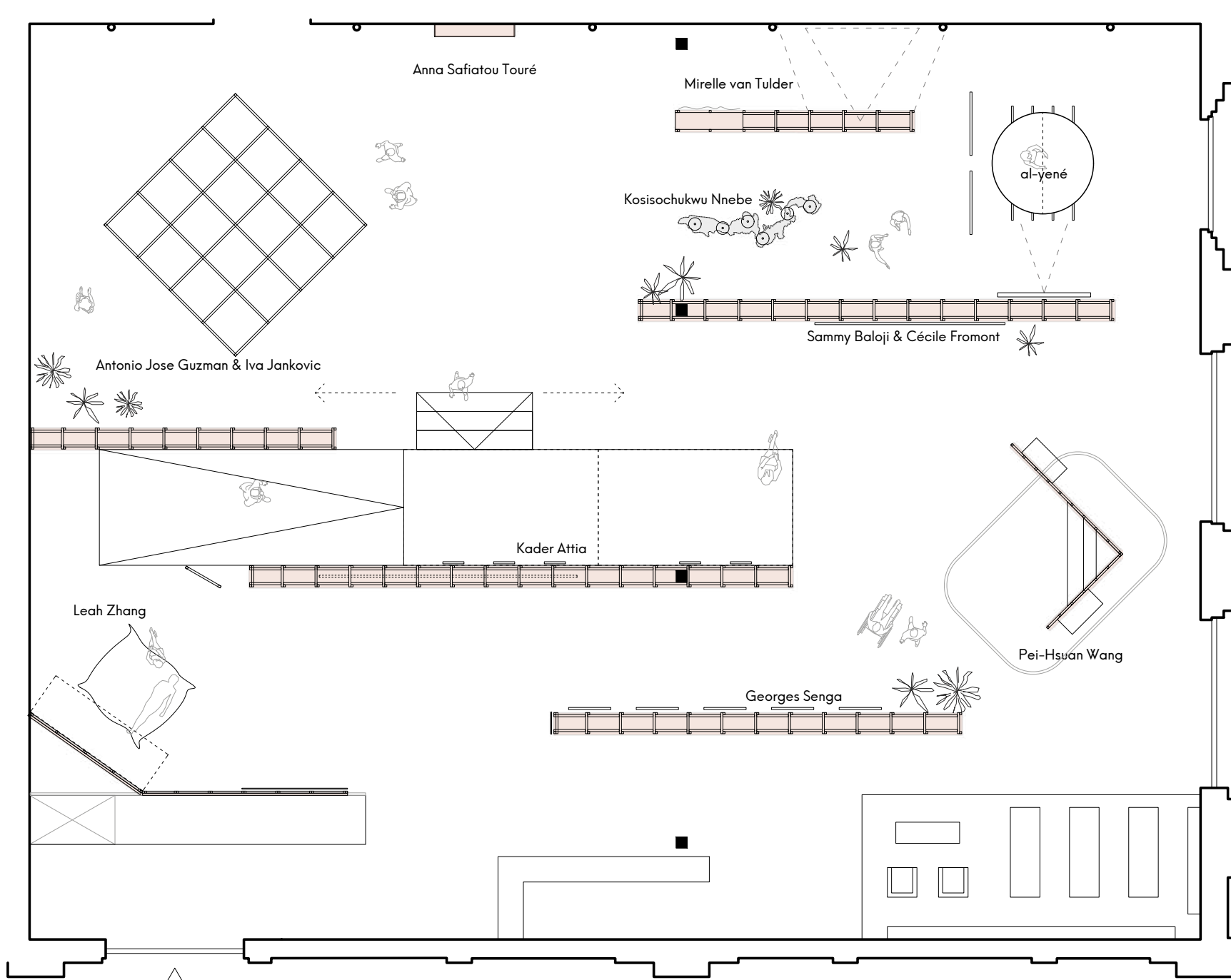
Tampa (2025)

Glass, wood, vinyl
78 x 157 cm

Drawn from the found newsreel that closes Zhang's film *BEELD*, *Tampa* presents the liminal form of Mary and a seated Buddha, manifested on a window modelled from those of Framer Framed. It provides a viewpoint as a metaphor, recalling religious gestures of belief, and informs the spatial and spiritual relationships between prayer

and God, which are often mediated and fulfilled by the religious icon.

Leah Zhang works with moving image, installation, sound, and photography. Shaped by her memories of growing up in a mining town in China, Zhang's practice incorporates an inward-looking perspective, just like mining, which digs deeper and deeper into the ground. Zhang's interest, inspired by alchemy in mining, rests in transformation and its ability to shift value and ontology. She is drawn to the unstable passages between forms of being and body, where the cinematic, the poetic, the magical, the chemical, the social, and the personal overlap – rendering moments when representations fail.



SPATIAL DESIGN

BUREAU LADA

Upon entering, visitors encounter opaque textile walls with the exhibition title shimmering through: *Shapeshifters*. Moving through the space, artworks gradually become visible, filtered and revealed through translucency and motion. Playing with (in)visibility and presence, the walls' textile cladding lifts off the floor – rendering visitors' bodies opaque as it reveals only the legs. A central part of the scenography holds a raised longitudinal stage, offering dynamic sightlines across the space while serving as a platform for the exhibition's discursive programme and performative acts.

The floorplan references censorship bars found in various 'classified' texts, reinterpreting them as the foundation for the spatial layout. Rather than concealing, this spatial articulation resists by embracing 'the right to opacity', formulated by Édouard Glissant, as it foregrounds artistic practices that confront legacies of colonial heritage and their enduring presence. The scenography holds critical space for reimagining possible forms of return, repair and reconciliation.

Lada Hršak is an architect, researcher and founder of Bureau LADA (Landscape, Architecture, Design, Action), a cross-disciplinary studio working between Amsterdam, Zagreb, Cairo and Tangier. Framing itself as a feminine spatial practice, the studio engages with spatial justice, social ecology and inclusive design through projects in architecture, research and education. Hršak's work explores shallow-water territories, Mediterranean spatial practices and urban glossaries, published in the award-winning *Shallow Waters* and *Tangier Glossary*. She co-founded the Spatial Justice for Palestine Network NL, advises on cultural and spatial initiatives and teaches at the Design Academy Eindhoven, the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK) and the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam.

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