

Kapwani KIWANGA

Potomitans

Sept 21st — 26th 2021

Art | Basel
Basel



Booth T8

FEATURE SECTOR

PRIVATE DAYS : Sept. 21st, 22nd, 23rd 2021

PUBLIC DAYS : Sept. 24th, 25th, 26th 2021



Kapwani Kiwanga

Potomitans (global installation), 2021

39 chains, varying diameters,
25 handmade solid silver sculptures ('Mimosa
Pudica' flowers and leaves, 'Phytolacca
Americana' flowers and leaves)

Variable dimensions

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

Kapwani Kiwanga

Potomitans

After having participated in Art Basel Miami, Art Basel Unlimited, and several Art Basel OVRs, Galerie Poggi is proud to announce **its first participation in Art Basel, Basel in September 2021**. As part of the **‘Feature’ sector**, the gallery and **Kapwani Kiwanga** have worked on an **entirely new project specially conceived for the fair**.

Winner of the 2020 Prix Marcel Duchamp, 2018 Sobey Award, and 2018 Frieze Award, Kapwani Kiwanga is one of the leading artists of her generation. Recent exhibitions include the Centre Pompidou (Paris, 2020) Haus der Kunst (Munich, 2020), Kunstinstituut Melly (former Witte-de-With, Rotterdam 2020). Upcoming solo shows include the Moody Art Center (Houston, 2021), and group shows : ICA Portland (Portland, 2021) and Palais de Tokyo (Paris 2022).

Entitled ***Potomitans***, the project furthers Kiwanga’s research around botanics and how examining their history can help us interrogate what constitutes an archive. For this work she looked into plants that were historically used as poisons by people who were in subordinate positions to wield agency and fight for their freedom. Two plants in particular were chosen for the project : the ***Mimosa Pudica*** and the ***Phytolacca Americana***.

Mimosa Pudica was cited in the journal of Daniel Rolander, a Swedish biologist who spent time in Suriname studying insects and how plants were used by people living in the condition of slavery to kill their masters or rivals. His notes from 1755 indicate that the crushed leaves of the *Mimosa Pudica* in particular were used with this intent.





Phytolacca Americana, commonly known as *Pokeroot* or *Pokeweed* was mentioned in the trial of Delphy, a woman living in slavery in Virginia, United States of America. Delphy was sentenced to death on the 10th of June 1816 for preparing and administering poison, supposedly pokeweed, with the intent to kill her mistress Mrs. Isabella Mitchell.

The title *Potomitans* comes from a Haitian voodoo notion of the *access mundi* or a pillar, which joins the spiritual and terrestrial realms. Formally, the work functions in a similar way drawing a line between the ceiling and ground. Another reference, this time from England, equally informs this work. *Potomitans* recalls the witch's ladder, an object found in Somerset England in the late 1800s and currently in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Hypotheses claimed this object was used to induce death or to allow said-witches to escape to other worlds by. The witch's ladder combines feathers, sticks, and small objects tied into a cord at ascending intervals, hence the term "ladder".



Working with goldsmith **Margaux Cormier**, the flowers and leaves of each of Kiwanga's chosen plants were crafted in sterling silver. The pieces recall charms or amulets, much like the objects of the witch's ladder. The silver objects are hung on silver chains. The 39 chains on display are suspended from the ceiling and rest on the floor. This simple composition may recall the history of minimalism for some. However, Kiwanga's gesture, rather than a citation, questions our accepted artistic canons. This subtle unsettling of established aesthetics has operated in Kiwanga's practice for several years.

Each jewel has a guarantee hallmark as a proof that it is made in sterling silver, entirely by hand.





PRIVATE DAYS

Tuesday, Sept. 21st 2021

Wednesday, Sept. 22nd 2021

Thursday, Sept. 23rd 2021

PUBLIC DAYS

Friday, Sept. 24th 2021

Saturday, Sept. 25th 2021

Sunday, Sept. 26th 2021

Entrance will require a COVID-19 certificate

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