# Kapwani Kiwanga

# **Portfolio**

Born in 1978 in Hamilton, Ontario (CA). Lives and works in Paris (FR).

# Summary

**Biography,** p. 3 - 6

**Sculptures & Installations:** 

*Vivariums*, p. 8 - 12

*Glaze*, p. 13 - 15

*Keyhole*, p. 16 - 18

Elliptical Field, p. 19 - 20

*Residue*, p. 21 - 22

*Line*, p. 23 - 24

<u>Cloak</u>, p. 25 - 27

*Hour glass*, p. 28 - 30

*Potomitans*, p. 31 - 32

*The Marias*, p. 34 - 37

Flowers for Africa p. 38 - 47

*Nations*, p. 48 - 55

Counter Illumination, p. 56 - 59

*Glow*, p. 60 - 63

*Lambi*, p. 64 - 65

*Greenbook*, p.66 - 69

**Shades**, p. 70 - 72

Sobey Art Award: Simple Enclosure, p. 73 - 75

*Linear Paintings*, p. 76 - 78

*Fire & Fallow*, p. 79 - 80

*Jalousie*, p. 81 - 84

*Safe Spaces*, p. 85 - 88

*Soft Measures*, p. 89 - 93

*Desire Path*, p. 94 - 98

Subduction Study, p. 99 - 102

*A Primer*, p. 103 - 105

*Pink - Blue*, p. 106

*Sisal*, p. 107 - 112

*Koki Doré*, p. 113 - 115

**Video & Performances:** 

*The Sun Never Sets*, p. 117 - 118

*A Conservator's Tale*, p. 119 - 120

*The Secretary's Suite*, p. 121 - 122

A Spell To Bound The Limitless, p. 123 - 124

Binding Ties: Grand Palais, p. 125 - 126

*Maji Maji*, p. 127 - 129

*Vumbi*, p. 130 - 131

*Ifa Organ*, p. 132 - 133

Praxes of a dialectical dialect, p. 134 - 135

*Afrogalactica*, p. 136 - 138

*The Sun Ra Repatriation Project*, p. 139 - 140

**Inquiries**, p. 141



Kapwani Kiwanga is a French-Canadian artist who has emerged in recent years as a highly acknowledged figure within the international contemporary art scene.

After completing studies in Anthropology and Comparative Religion at McGill University (Canada), with a focus on medical anthropology and an idea of going into documentary filmmaking, Kiwanga turned to the visual arts and attended École normale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where she is now based. Drawing from her training in anthropology and the social sciences, Kiwanga's rigorously researched projects often take the form of installations that stage new spatial environments while exposing the ways in which bodies experience and inhabit structures of power.

Kapwani Kiwanga intentionally confuses truth and fiction in order to unsettle hegemonic narratives and create spaces in which marginal discourse can flourish. As a trained anthropologist and social scientist, she occupies the role of a researcher in her projects.

Kiwanga Kiwanga's work traces the pervasive impact of power asymmetries by placing historic narratives in dialogue with contemporary realities, the archive, and tomorrow's possibilities. Her work is research-driven, instigated by marginalised or forgotten histories, and articulated across a range of materials and mediums including sculpture, installation, photography, video, and performance.

Kiwanga co-opts the canon; she turns systems of power back on themselves, in art and in parsing broader histories. In this manner Kiwanga has developed an aesthetic vocabulary that she described as "exit strategies," works that invite one to see things from multiple perspectives so as to look differently at existing structures and find ways to navigate the future differently.

Kapwani Kiwanga will represent Canada at the next 60th Venice Biennale in 2024. She will have important solo shows in 2023, notably at the MOCA Museum in Toronto from February 22nd to May 7th, at the CAPC of Bordeaux from June 29th, 2023 to February 24th, 2024, at the Serralves Museum in Porto in September 2023, and at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg from October 2023 to January 2024.

Kapwani Kiwanga is represented by Galerie Poggi since 2015, which has devoted several solo exhibitions to her work and with whom she has carried out a dozen projects, in France and abroad.

She received the Zurich Art Prize (DE) in 2022, the Marcel Duchamp prize (FR) in 2020 and in 2018 the Frieze Artist Award (USA) as well as the Sobey Art Award (CA). Her film and video works have been nominated for two BAFTAs and have received awards at international film festivals.

Kapwani Kiwanga has benefited from many solo exhibitions in several institutions in France and abroad :

- at the MOCA, Toronto, Canada
- at the CAPC, Bordeaux, France
- at the Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal
- at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Deutschland
- at The New Museum, New York, USA
- at The Museum Haus Konstruktiv Zurich, Switzerland
- State of concept, Athens, Grece
- at The Moody Center For The Arts, Houston, USA
- at The Crédac Centre d'Art Contemporain d'Ivry, France
- at The FKA Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherland
- at The Haus der Kunst, Munich, Deutschland
- at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA
- at The Albertinum museum, Dresde, Deutschland
- at Artpace, San Antonio, USA
- at The Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada
- at Tramway, Glasgow, UK
- at The Fundazione Sandretto Re Rebauderngo, Turin, Italie
- at The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada
- at The Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago, USA
- at The South London Gallery, London
- at The Jeu de Paume, Paris

#### She has also participated in numerous group shows:

- At the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- At the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
- at The LUMA Foundation, Arles, France
- at The Joburg Contemporary Art Foundation, Johannesburg
- at the Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris
- at The High Line Fourth Plinth commission, New York
- at The Renaissance Society, Chicago, USA
- at MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain
- at The Whitechapel Gallery, Londres, UK
- at Austin Contemporary, Austin, USA
- at The Serpentine Galleries, Londres, UK
- at The Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China
- at The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- at The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA
- at CCA Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry, UK
- at The Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
- at The Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
- at The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA

# « KIWANGA'S PRACTICE IS SUCH THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHAT SHE WILL DO NEXT»

Jan Dalley, September 16th, 2020, Art Basel OVR : 2020 and the dawn of new platforms, Financial Times

# Sculptures & Installations

Selection

2014 — ongoing

GALERIE POGGI



### Vivariums, 2020 - 2023



While Kiwanga's vivariums evoke Edwardian glass showcases that were created to display and protect plant specimens, they are antithetical in design. Each of the bulbous forms appears to have grown in symbiosis with a plant in mind, and they are fragile in and of themselves, governed by their own condition of being reliant on the air they contain.

Rather than controlling an archived specimen for human consumption, these are forward or future looking projections of what a vivarium may one day become; one where the plant is surrounded by a protective environment that it has the possibility to use as a structure for growth and support, rather than being enclosed, captured and encased.

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition *Remediation* at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Vivarium : Apomixis, 2023

PVC transparent, steel, colour, MDF

Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022)

Photo: Laura Findlay



# Haus Der Kunst, Munich (DE), 2020

Exhibition view of *PLOT* (solo show)



The exhibition *Plot* at Haus der Kunst entitled *Plot* comprises a series of artistic interventions, staged in three acts. The first act consists of three large semi-transparent fabric panels suspended in the exhibition space from the ceiling to the floor, altering the perception of the volume of the space and encouraging visitors to discover new paths of circulation. With their gradations of colors in green and pastel tones, these suspended elements evoke the idyllic nature of the nearby English garden. This environment is complemented by three large inflatable sculptures, each containing living plants. Inspired by the transportable terrariums invented by 19th century botanist Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, these sculptures recall the botanical technologies used to transport and display exotic plants around the world. At the same time, these evocations of greenhouses also recall the prehistory of the Haus der Kunst, and in particular the design of the "Glass Palace" that was located in the former Munich Botanical Gardens between 1854 and 1931, and whose subsequent fire provided the impetus for the construction of the "Haus der deutsche Kunst. Overall, the laboratory character of the sculptures gives the ensemble a futuristic tone, and contrasts with the more pictorial aesthetic of the fabric panels.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Vivarium: Apomixis, 2020

PVC transparent, steel, colour, MDF

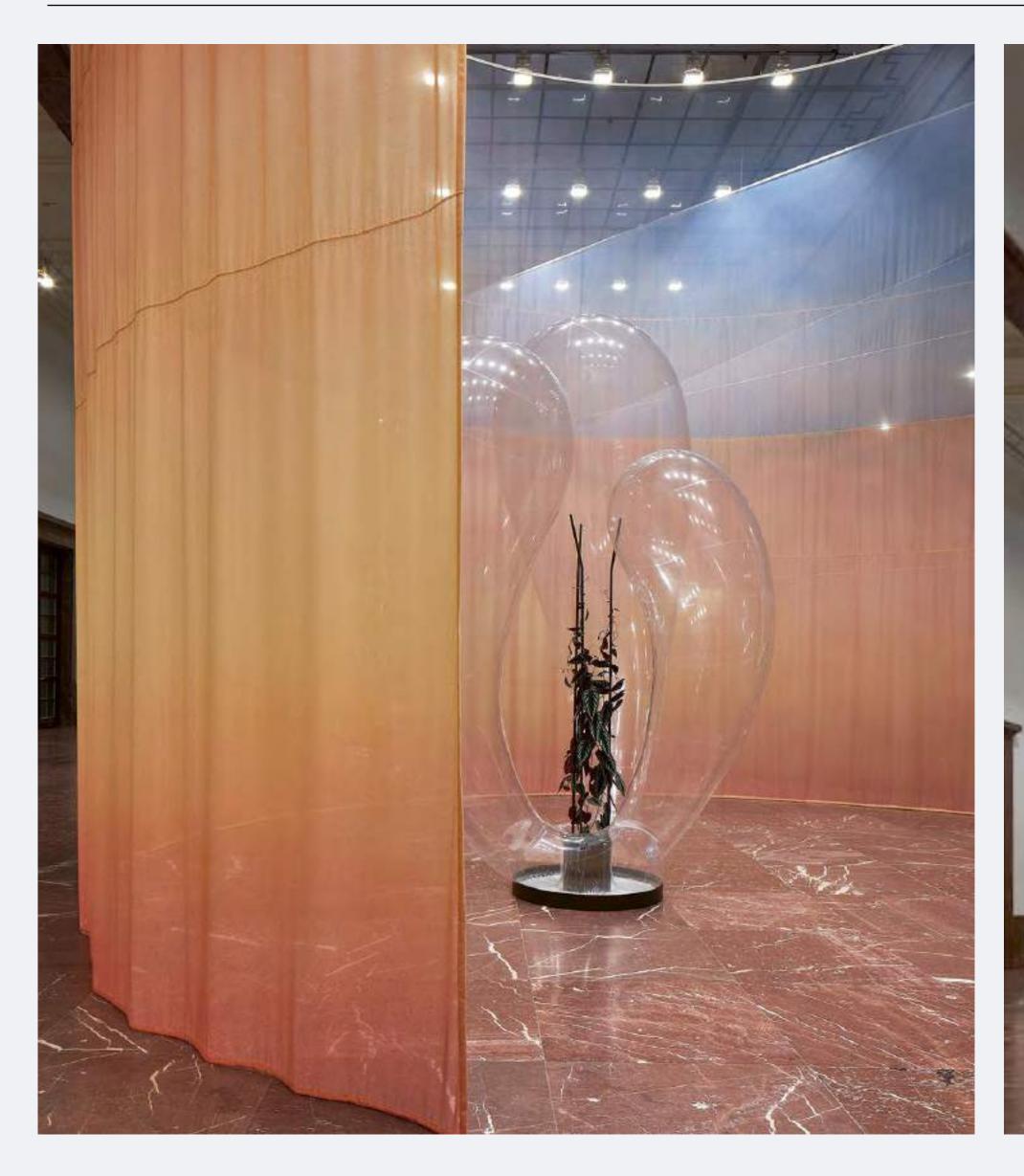
Installation View, Plot at Haus Der Kunst, Munich, 2020

Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape

Town, Johannesburg, and London

# Haus Der Kunst, Munich (DE), 2020

Exhibition view of *PLOT* (solo show)







# *Glaze*, 2023





Glaze (Yellow), 2023

Perspex, coloured transparent vinyl, cut drywall Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022)

Photo: Laura Findlay



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

*Glaze (Blue)*, 2023

Perspex, coloured transparent vinyl, cut drywall Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022)

Photo: Laura Findlay

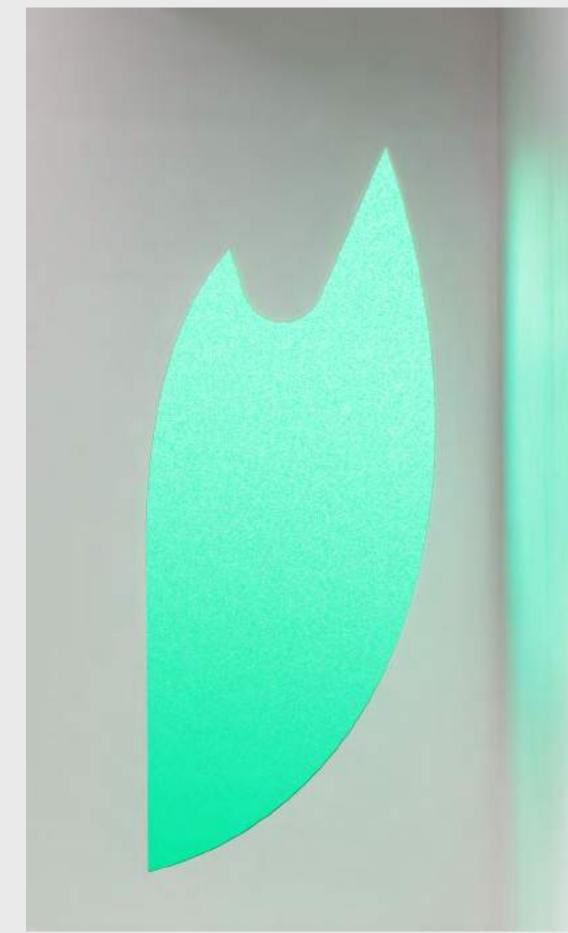


#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Glaze (Magenta), 2023

Perspex, coloured transparent vinyl, cut drywall Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022)

Photo : Laura Findlay



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

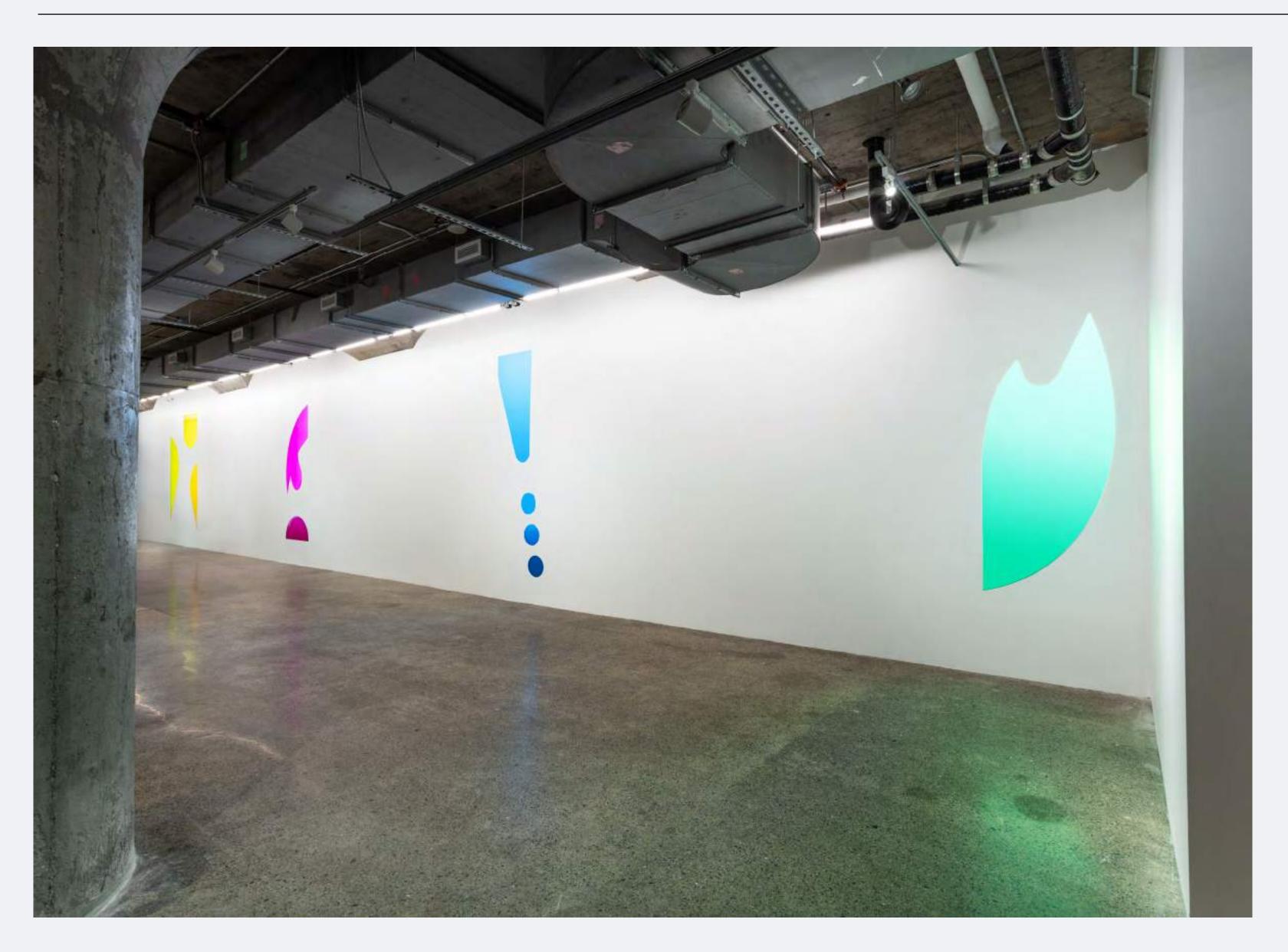
Glaze (Green), 2023

Perspex, coloured transparent vinyl, cut drywall Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022)

Photo: Laura Findlay

# MOCA, Toronto (CA), 2023

Exhibition view of *Remediation* (solo show)



This site-specific window treatment works as a filter to bathe the gallery space in shades of coloured light. The internally added plexi patterns additionally filter our perception of the cityscape outside, while also suggesting a containment and form of control of the exhibition space, as if we are captured within a vivarium. The cutout shapes allude to a morphing of the organic and geometric.

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition *Remediation* at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

*Glaze*, 2023

Perspex, coloured transparent vinyl, cut drywall Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022) Photo: Laura Findlay



# Keyhole, 2023



This work brings together plants that filter either air, earth or water. Each selected plant pulls out toxins and helps to purify the environment it lives in.

The shape of the pool is inspired by keyhole gardens, a type of permaculture (permanent agriculture) planting configuration that is based on a cycle of regeneration. Kiwanga's main inspiration are the recent keyhole gardens developed in Lesotho. In all these projects a path of access to the centre includes a compost area to feed the plants that encircle it.

Plants included in Keyhole: Typha latifolia (Broadleaf Cattail), Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower 'Queen Victoria'), Iris versicolor (Iris), Saururus cernuus (Lizard's Tail), Oenanthe ('Flamingo' Water Celery), Sagittaria latifolia (Common Arrowhead), Zantedeschia aethiopica (Calla Lily), Colocasia (Elephant Ear or Taro).

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition *Remediation* at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

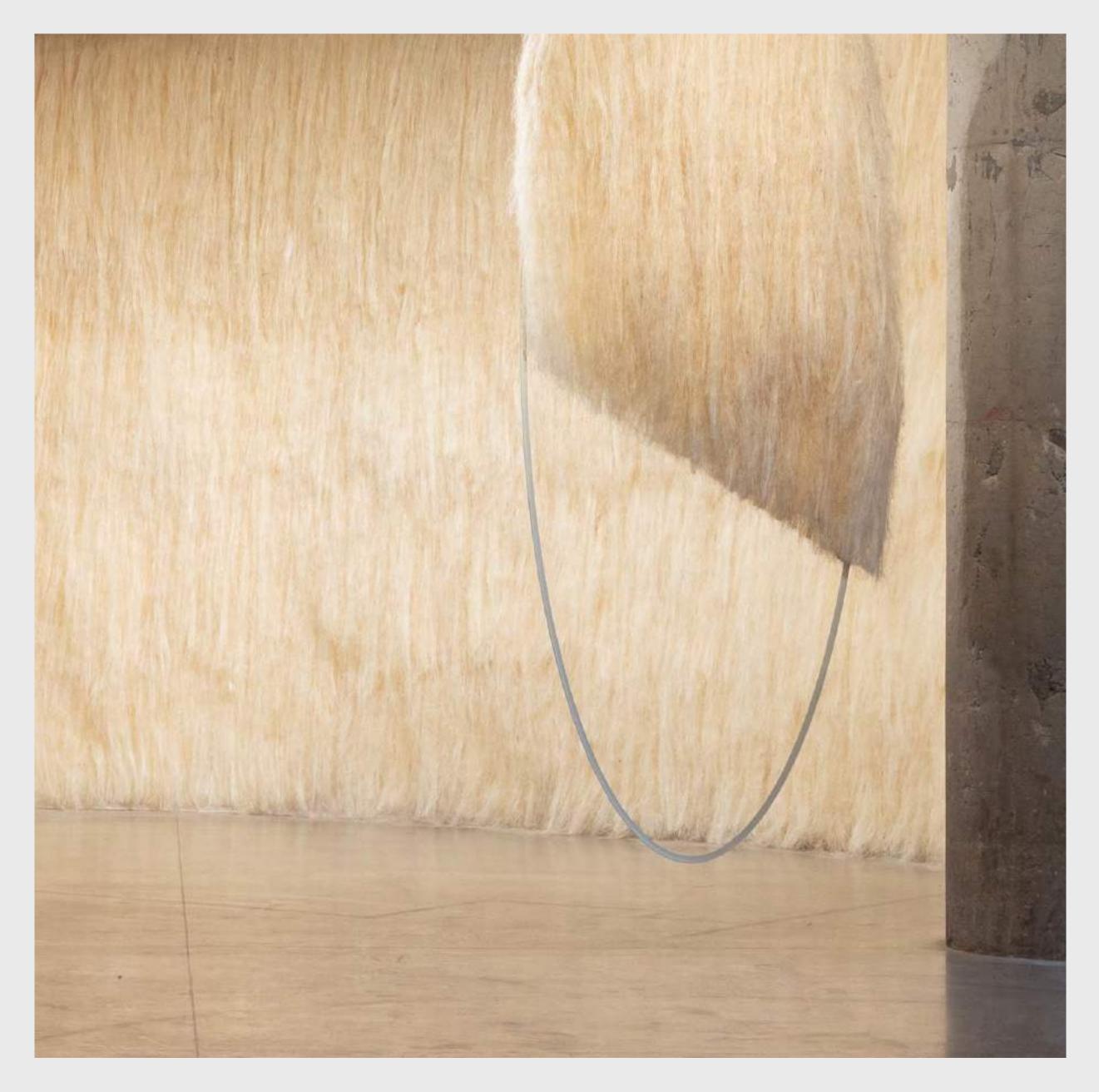
Keyhole, 2023

Steel structure, plants, water, soil, pea gravel, LED grow lights, air pump. Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022). Photo: Laura Findlay





# Elliptical Field, 2023



Kiwanga's interest in the historical and symbolic effect of materials is demonstrated through a sitespecific arrangement of steel compositions covered in sisal fibre. The golden fibre, harvested from the botanical plant Agave sisalana, is typically spun to make rope and twine. Kiwanga describes seeing large plantations of sisal in Tanzania, where her paternal family resides. Agave is not native to Africa and was first brought illegally to the continent by German plantation owners who began to develop the crop on a large scale. It has since become one of the major export economies and just last year the government of Tanzania declared a commitment to increasing sisal yield. Kiwanga's interest in the plant was piqued by research into how the introduction of this alien species to Africa traces political and economic movements across continents. She has made a number of sisal installations in various configurations since 2016. This particular iteration includes a wall of sisal and a series of oval cut outs set against a burnt umber background. The cascade of sisal mimics both an abstract painting and accentuates the rough nature of the sisal in a raw state, raising global economic questions around the harvesting of raw materials in one location and their refinement and industrial production in another. In Elliptical Field, and throughout the exhibition, Kiwanga uses patterns and forms that allow for those viewing the artworks to do so in an undefined space of reflection.

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition Remediation at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Elliptical Field, 2023

Installation with sisal fibre and steel. Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022). Photo: Laura Findlay



# Residue, 2023



Kiwanga often plays with ideas of absence and presence, and for this new installation she creates a tiled pattern of dried banana leaves that at moments expose aspects of the fixed architectural structure beneath.

The choice of banana leaves for this work comes from Kiwanga's research into chlordecone. This pesticide has been used to treat banana plants to disastrous effect in certain geographies, particularly in the Caribbean. In certain places it has completely contaminated the soil, which in turn has afflicted other plant life and caused a range of health issues for the local people. This is just one example of the extractive practices of industrial agriculture and for Kiwanga it speaks to how we view our power over the land and natural environment. The references in Residue arc back to Kiwanga's research into earlier histories of plantation mentality and economy, and a range of applications of toxicity to the land.

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition *Remediation* at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Residue, 2023

Drywall construction, dried banana leaves. Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022). Photo: Laura Findlay



# Line, 2023



Fabricated from industrial metal and an agricultural textile commonly referred to as "shade cloth", *Line* mirrors the coloured window cutouts with another reference to the filtering of light. Shade cloth is a fabric used to protect crops at varying degrees in commercial farming which, due to foreign investment, now covers swathes of landscape from North America to Africa. Its visual effect on the land is striking: a once-natural topography becomes a striped, colour-coded palette. Again, Kiwanga's choice of material is not simply aesthetic, but political.

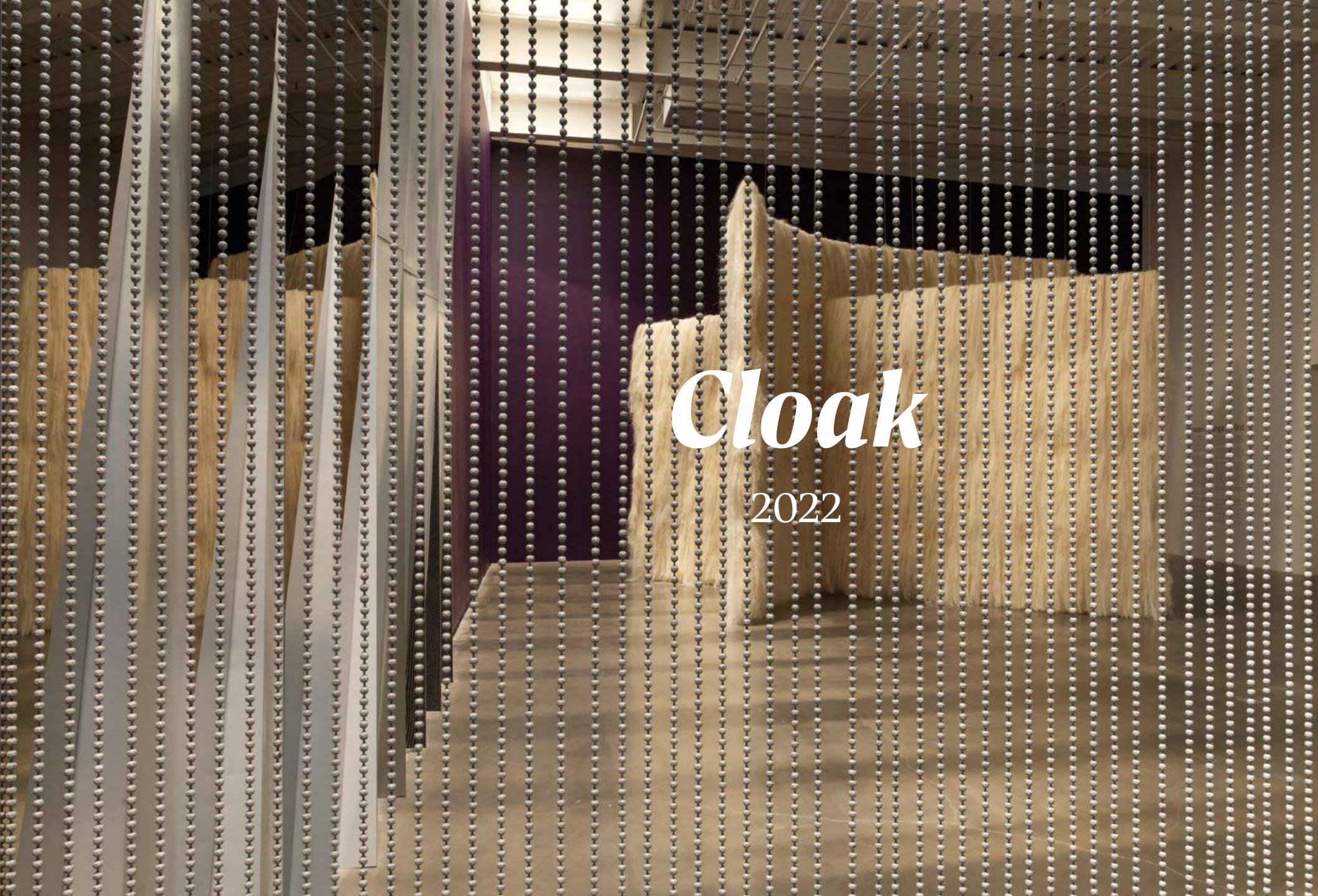
The intent here is to speak to the colonial appropriation of land taken from Indigenous communities, and the manipulation and control of the environment for economic gain.

Excerpt from the press release of the exhibition *Remediation* at MOCA Toronto, 2023

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Line, 2023

Steel structure, shade cloth. Installation View, *Remediation*, at MOCA Toronto. Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London. © ADAGP, Paris / SOCAN, Montreal (2022). Photo: Laura Findlay



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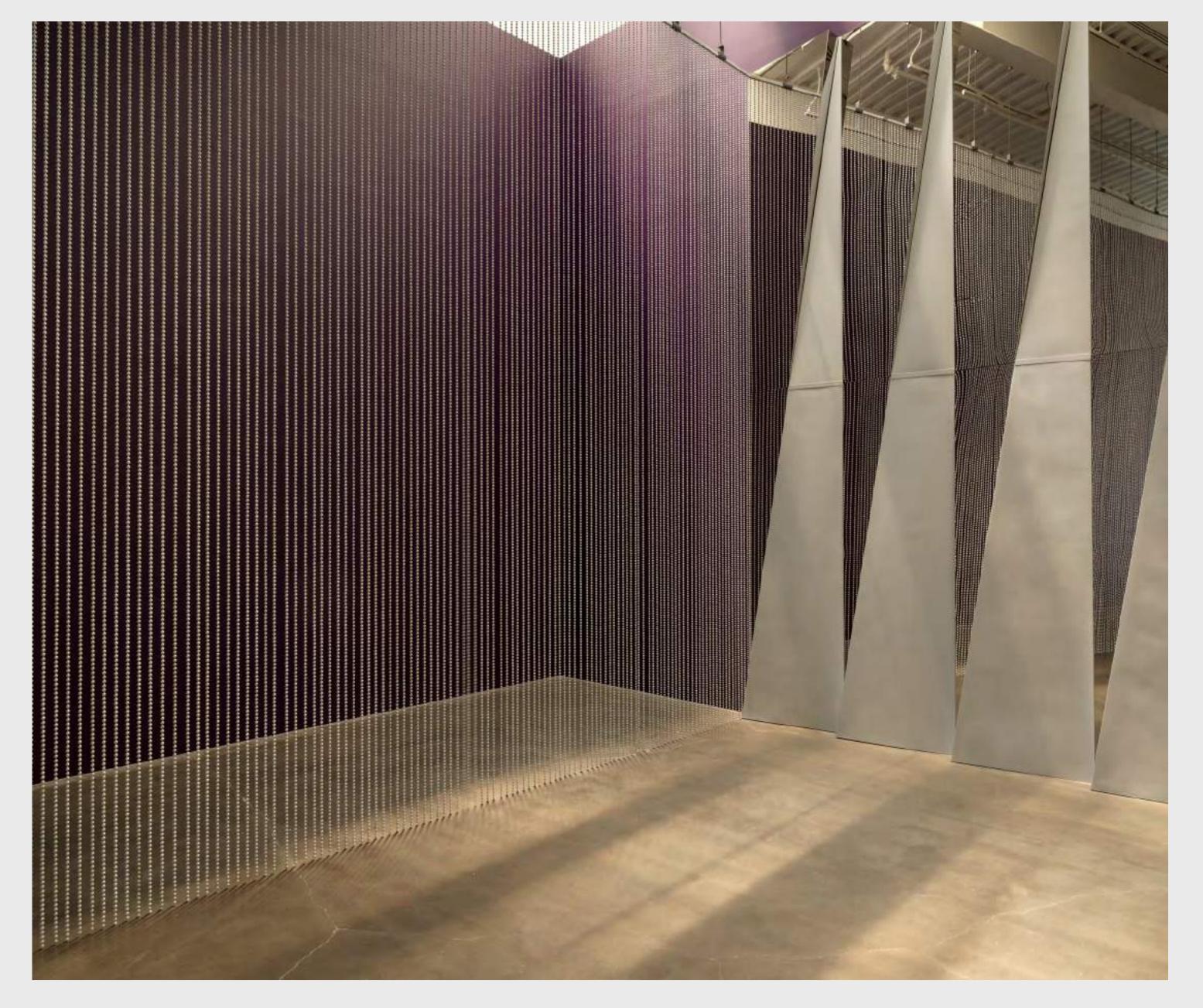
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# Cloak, 2022



Cloak is a metallic veil, which has been sprayed with pulverized aluminum obtained by melting down police floodlights. This scrim acts in conjunction with a large wall work nearby, which serve as both a screen and a reflective surface. Also sprayed with the remains of the floodlights, this piece synthesizes the artist's ongoing interest in revealing social and political contents hidden within materials.

Kiwanga's use of fiber, metal, and repurposed materials highlights complex histories of exchange and exploitation, and woven together, they convey a rich texture characterized by different layers of opacity and transparency. This tension between visibility and obscurity is amplified by the artist's decision to present the exhibition solely in natural light, subverting the use of artificial illumination as a means of social control. Amid the shifting patterns of sunlight throughout the day, the exhibition stages a type of speculative scenario, evoking both the sudden closure of cultural institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic and a not-so-distant future when museums and society may have to operate with limited access to power.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Cloak, 2022

Mirror-polished stainless steel, cold-rolled steel, nickel-plated steel ball chains, and melted aluminum halide floodlight reflectors (two parts)

Courtesy the artist; Galerie Poggi, Paris; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and London





# Hours glass, 2022

In Kiwanga's site-specific installation Plot (2020), three largescale, semitransparent paintings on fabric were hung throughout the Munich Haus der Kunst's central hall, evoking colours foundin the neighbouring Englischer Garten. The curtains also functioned as containers for hybrid metal sculptures, inflatablevolumes, and living plants. Referencing 19th-century glass containers used to import foreign plants to Europe, the sculptures point to architecture and nature's manipulation throughout history to serve human desires. Other works, like Dune (2021), incorporate organic ingredients of human exploitation: specifically, sand used for fracking – the extraction of oil and gas – in southern Texas. Terrarium, a new installation for The Milk of Dreams, fuses the concerns of these past projects. In it, Kiwanga creates an environment with a desert sunset palette, comprising large semitransparent paintings and a series of glass sculptures containing sand. Kiwanga imagines sand as a political material: a harmful product of the oil industry and a reminder of an increasingly arid planet.







**Kapwani Kiwanga** *Hour glass #3*, 2022

Glass, silica sand 180 x 55 x 30 cm Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof **Kapwani Kiwanga** *Hour glass #1*, 2022

Glass, silica sand  $165 \times 50 \times 40 \text{ cm}$  Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

**Kapwani Kiwanga** *Hour glass #2*, 2022

Glass, silica sand 200 x 60 x 50 cm Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

# Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (DEU), 2023

Exhibition view of *The Length of the Horizon* (solo show) Photo: Marek Kruszewski









# Potomitans, 2021





Potomitan is a series of long silver chains hung from the ceiling to the floor, with casts of leaves and flowers dangling from its links like charms. These replicate parts of plants that have been used as poison, including Phytolacca americana (Pokeweed), which appears in the trial of Delphy, an enslaved Virginia dairymaid accused of poisoning her mistress, and Mimosa Pudica, which appears in the diary of Swedish naturalist Daniel Rolander (written 1754-1756) during his time in Suriname. Rolander's diary details how the crushed leaves of the plant were used as a poison by slaves to harm their masters and gain their freedom. In Kiwanga's work, plants often act as agents in history, becoming witness or allies in the search for emancipation. The title, Potomitan, refers to an essential structural feature of the hounfour (temple) in Haitian vodou, a central column that connects the earth to the sky, metaphorically linking the spiritual and terrestrial realms.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Potomitans, detail, 2021

Compositions with handmade solid silver sculptures (1 'Phytolacca Americana' flower and 1 Phytolacca Americana' leaf)
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

'Feature' Sector, view of the installation *Potomitans* on Galerie Poggi's booth (solo show)

#### 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



# The Marias, 2020



Looking into the histoires of resistance though botany, it is important to bring to the flore stories from the most massive forced migration in human history. The botanical story of slavery and the plants that were brought to the « New World » by Africans and their captors, is one way to trace acts of resistance during the transatlantic slave trade. There occurs an enforced exchange of Old World and New World plants: such as red and black wild licorice, benne (sesame), yams, okra, black-eyed peas. Some of these cultivated foods served medicinal purposes. This enforced colonial exchange of plants across the Atlantic re-organized the pharmacopoeia in the Americas. Forms of resistance documented in the history of slavery were both collective and individual, such as: sabotage, fire, suicide, armed uprisings, escapes, and infanticide. Women were even more vulnerable than men, not only to abduction from their homeland, but also to rape and torture. As theorist Saidiya Hartman notes in her seminal book *Scenes of Subjection* - which examines the slow and fast violences of nineteenth century U.S. law-in cases of rape and sexual violence. Such proto-capitalise constellations ensured that humans were viewed as a form of commodity, as property. « The enslaved was either a will-less object or a chastened agent ». « The rape of black women existed as an unspoken but nominative condition, fully within the purview of everyday sexual practices.»

One way for enslaved women to break the chain of the means of production of such exploitation, that demanded the reproduction of free labour, was to refuse to reproduce. Many women resorted to abortifacient plants such as cotton root, known also as the peacock flower (Caesalpinia pulcherrima), building on medicinal knowledge of healers, lost over the centuries. Kiwanga commissionned local artisan Anouk Böhmer, to recreate the peacock flower plant, in two of its growing phases. The plant sits defiantly in the exhibition space outside of its natural environment, but also out of the enclosed glass cases that came to define the Western canon's display mechanisms of botanical and ethnographic museums of previous centuries. These mechanisms also direct the viewer to think such legacies of display and normalization anew, inherited by the contemporary museum.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

The Marias, 2020
Installation with wall painting, two paper plants on custom-made pedestals dimensions variable
Edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (DEU), 2023





### FKA Witte de With, Rotterdam (NL), 2020

Exhibition view of *New Work* (solo show)







#### Flowers for Africa, 2014 - 2021

Flowers For Africa is an ongoing research into unframing and re-framing major moments of decolonisation. First presented during a residency in Dakar, Senegal; Flowers For Africa seeks to understand how the material archive relates to remembered history. The project stems from the desire to understand and get a feeling of the state of public archives and the act of documenting in different contexts. This work builds on from previous projects namely: 'Rumours Maji was a lie...' or 'A Conservator's Tale', which grew out of similar preoccupations. The former questions how ethnographic collections were established while the later explores how various historical narratives grew out of those collections and the act of collecting.

This project is an opportunity to revisit moments in history running up to and following the creation of sovereign African nations in the 20th and 21st centuries. The research process determined which countries are presented, revealing an everemerging cartography. The aspiration is to eventually present a comprehensive installation with all African states. To date, the project has honed in on moments such as Benyoucef Benkhedda's return from exile, the head of the first Independent government (GPRA), to Algiers, Algeria in July 1962. Through focusing on decorations found on a stage placed in the centre of the national Stadium in Dar es Salaam during the independence ceremony in 1961. On this stage Tanganyika's first Prime Minister, Julius Nyerere received constitutional instruments from the Queen's representative, the Duke of Edinburgh. This marked the end of Tanganyika as a British protectorate.

The image sources, which are the basis of the Flowers For Africa project, are moving or still images that document the independence ceremonies, treaty signings and the official events that ritualise the transference of power. Kiwanga states: "The criteria I use to select an image is both elastic and specific. There must be an immediate relation to the changing of power but this manifests itself differently in each source. The original document is never shown in parallel to the work itself and never acts as a "stand in" for the physical flower arrangement.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa: Morocco, 2019 - 2020
Creation and presentation protocol based on an archive photograph to guide the reconstitution of a floral arrangement composed of cut flowers

Variable dimensions

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



#### Flowers for Africa, 2014 - 2021



The "original" document is used as an element in a protocol, which instructs how to execute the floral composition. It is ultimately about the act of creating a new document; the initial record still has its value but, in this case, I propose a new document. The hope is that it offers a new perspective, feeling, or insight on the event. Something quite evident arises in Flowers For Africa, that is the conviction that our documents must be more than image, text, or "species" suspended in conservation solutions or pressed between glass. We also need documents in flux, even if destined for decay."

Interpretation is central to this project, how artist and florist collaborate determines what is exposed. In revisiting these events, one reactivates historic moments in subjective and collective memory. The moment is fleeting, the flowers will in time wilt, and we are faced with the impermanence of consequential historic moments. This likewise questions the creation of monuments or static icons to alternatively venerate or criticise. The flowers that were present in the photos are witnesses to a moment, not just relics, whose stories of the events would be different than those stories that we have already heard. Kiwanga is interested in what we might have missed, the things left out from official discourses and counter discourses.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa: Uganda, 2014 - 2020 Variable dimensions Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Flowers for Africa, 2014 - 2021



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa: South Sudan, 2020 Variable dimensions Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa : Ghana, 2014 - 2020 Variable dimensions Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa: Ivory Coast, 2014 - 2020
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



# MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (CA), 2021

Exhibition view of *Flowers for Africa* (solo show)



# Fondation LUMA, Arles (FR), 2021

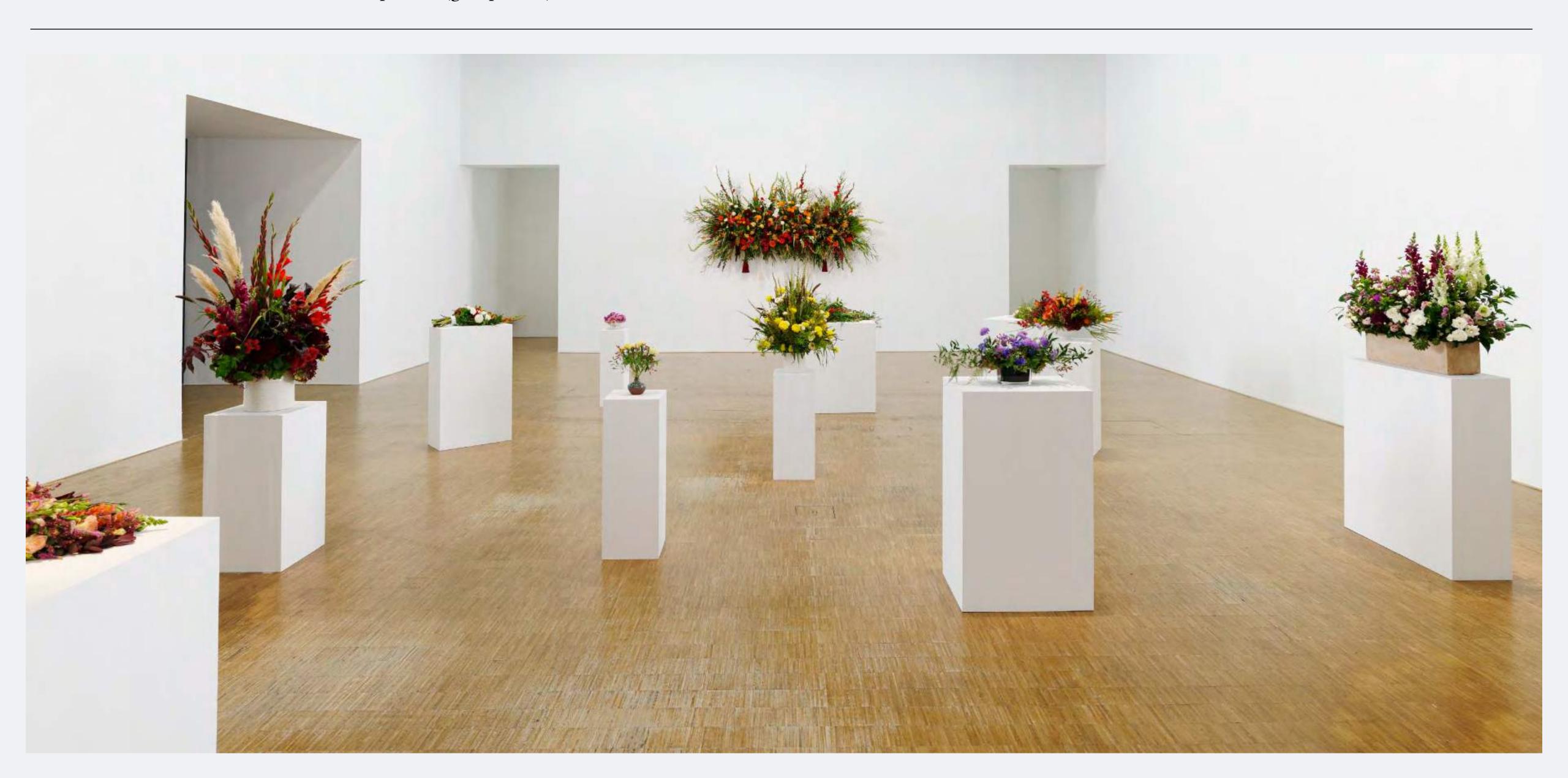
Exhibition view of *Prelude* (group show)





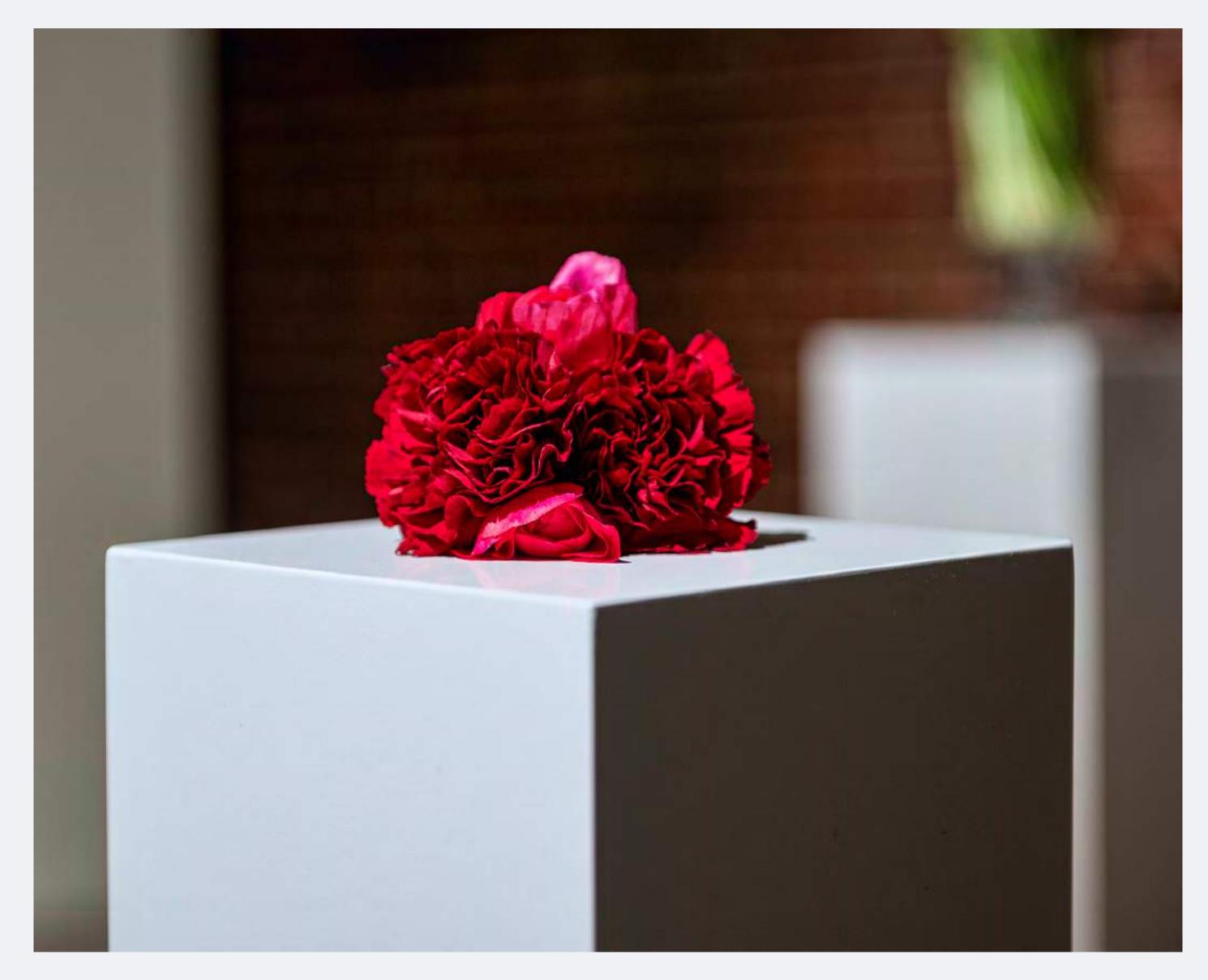
#### Centre Pompidou, Paris (FR), 2020

Exhibition view of the Prix Marcel Duchamp 2020 (group show)



### Joburg Contemporary Art Foundation, Johannesburg (ZAF), 2021

Exhibition view of *Liminal Identities in the Global South* (group show)





# MACBA-Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona (ES), 2019

Exhibition view of *Undefined Territories*. *Perspectives on Colonial Legacies* (group show)





# Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California (US), 2018

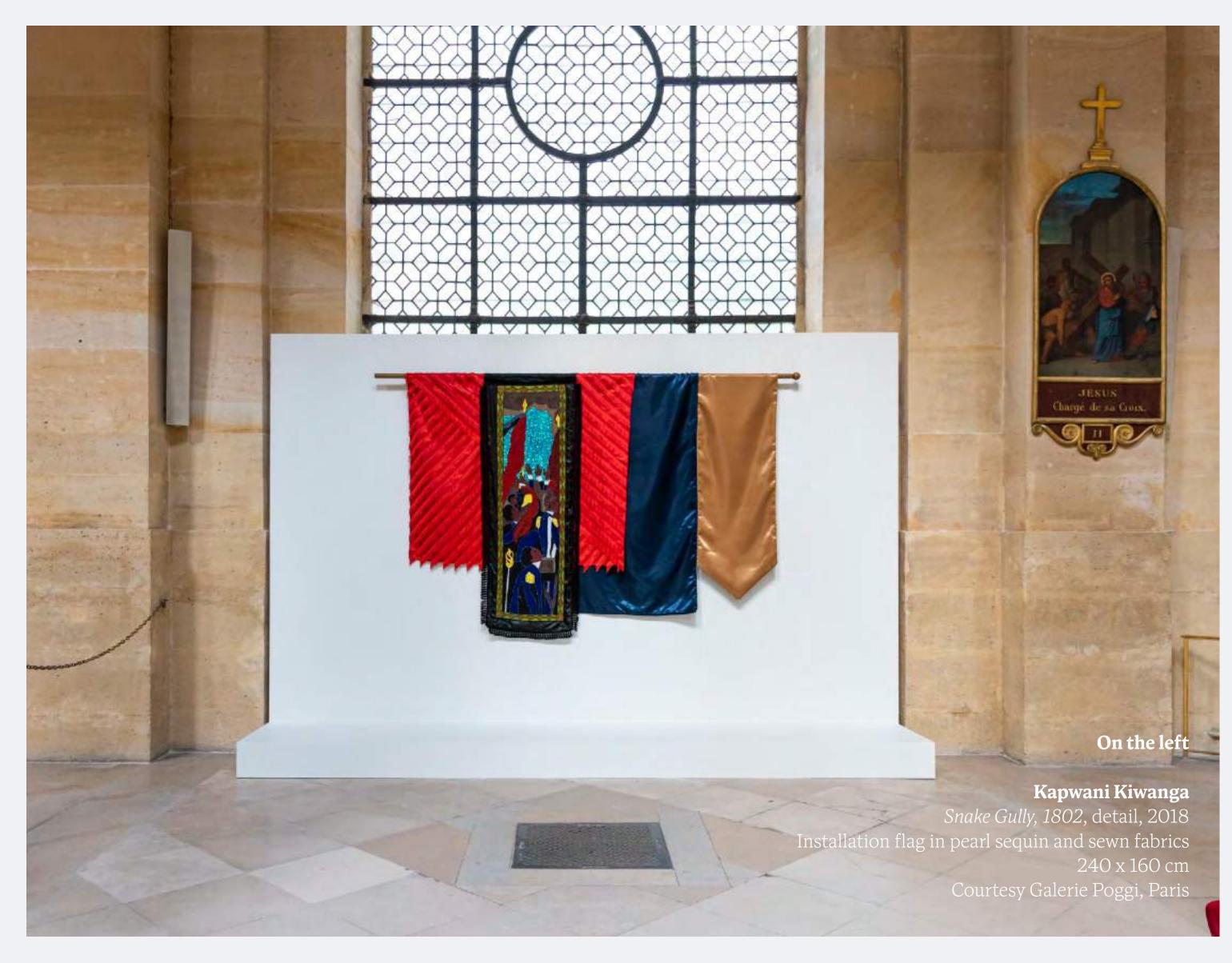
Exhibition view of Stories for Almost Everyone (group show)

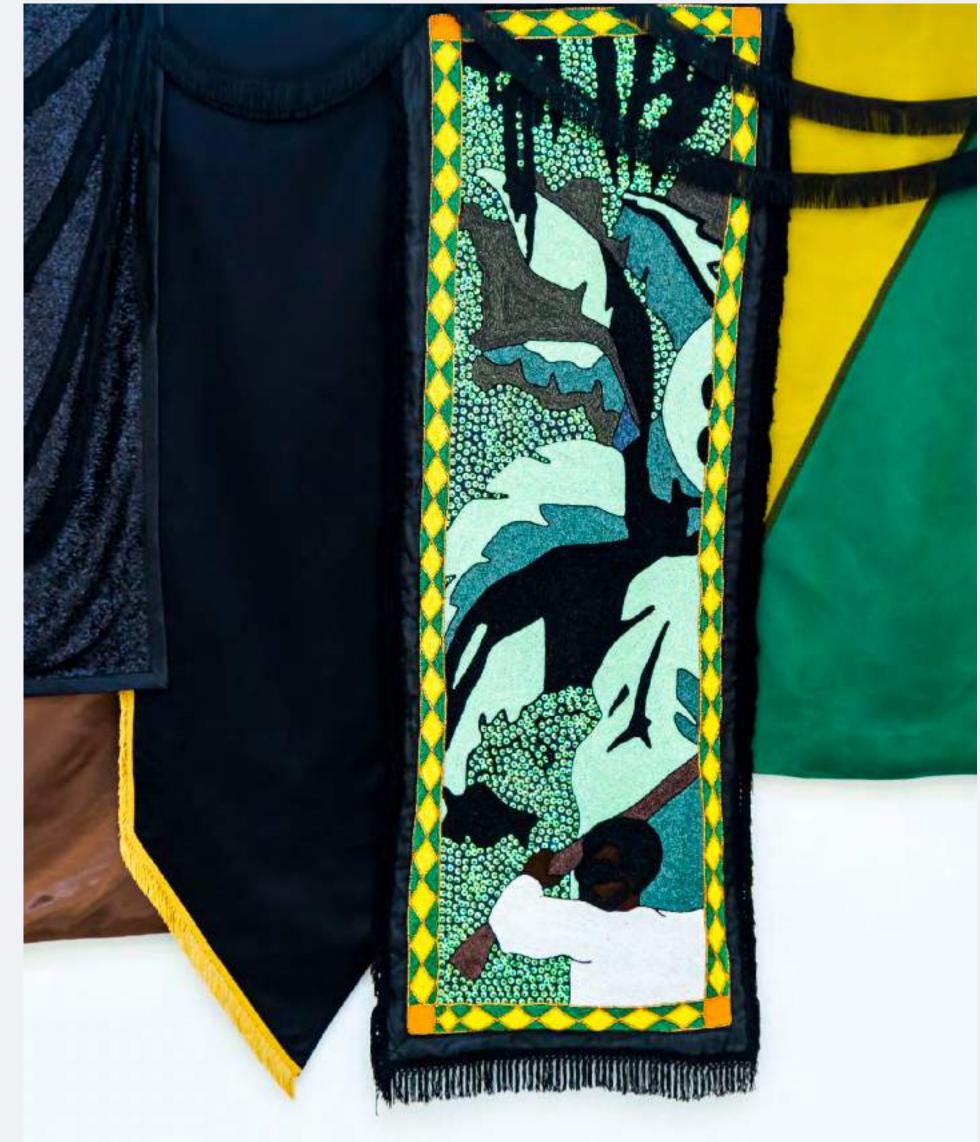




#### Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel National des Invalides, Paris (FR), 2020

Exhibition view of *Napoléon? Encore!* (group show)

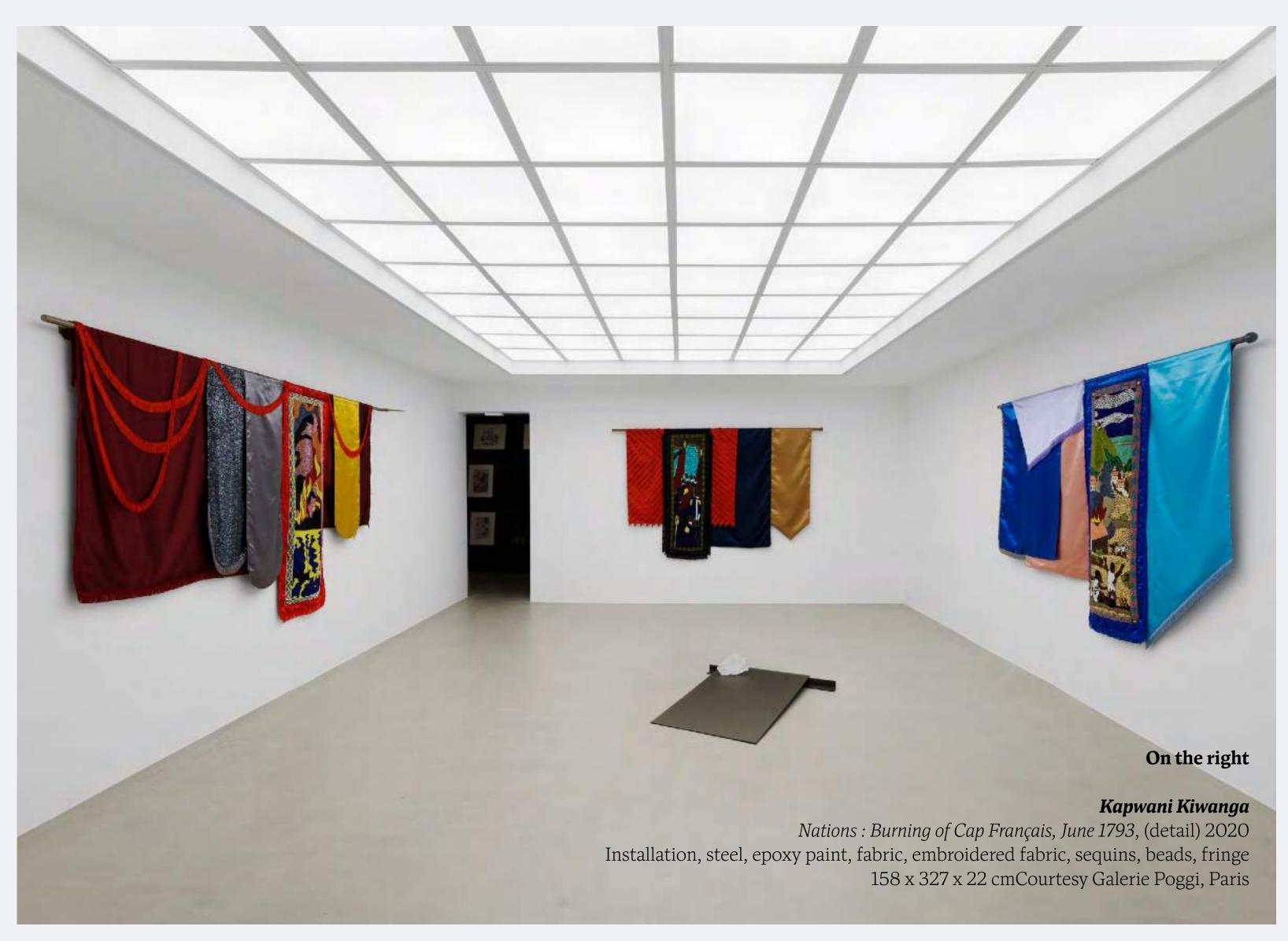


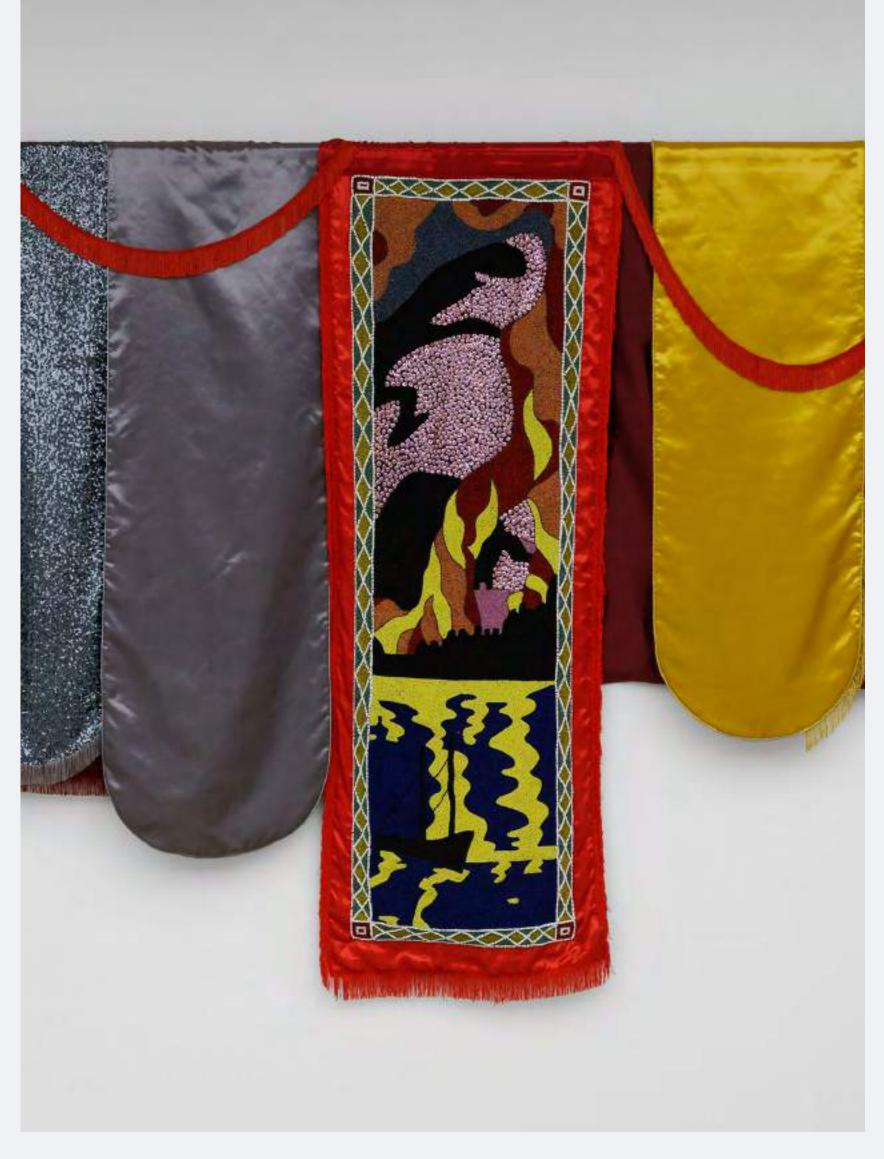




## Galerie Poggi, Paris (FR), 2020

Exhibition view of *Nations* (solo show)





#### *Nations*, 2018 - 2020



Nations grew out of an interest in the syncretism of Haitian Vodou after a research trip to the island. Contemporary Vodou practices are descended from, and closely related to, West African Vodun practiced by the Fon and the Ewe. Vodou incorporates elements from other African spiritual practices including Yoruba and Kongo. Furthermore indigenous Taíno beliefs and Roman Catholicism are also incorporated. Through this project, Kapwani Kiwanga extends previous explorations into the relationship between spiritual beliefs and politics as demonstrated in works such as Maji Maji (2014) or Kinjeketile Suite (2015). With Nations, Kiwanga creates sculptural assemblages collaboratively. Hand-sown, embroidered, beaded and sequin fabrics panes which formally resemble flags are hung from a metal rod reminisecent of a flagpole. Here the flag has a double meaning. On one hand it refers to nation states which use the flag as an emblem. On the other hand, flags hold a specific place in Vodou culture. This dual signification allows the artists to stress the crucial role Vodou played in the creation of the Haitian republic.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Nations: Ogé's Uprising, 1790, 2020 Installation, steel, epoxy paint, fabric, embroidered fabric, sequins, beads, fringe 154 x 347 x 18 cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Nations, 2018 - 2020

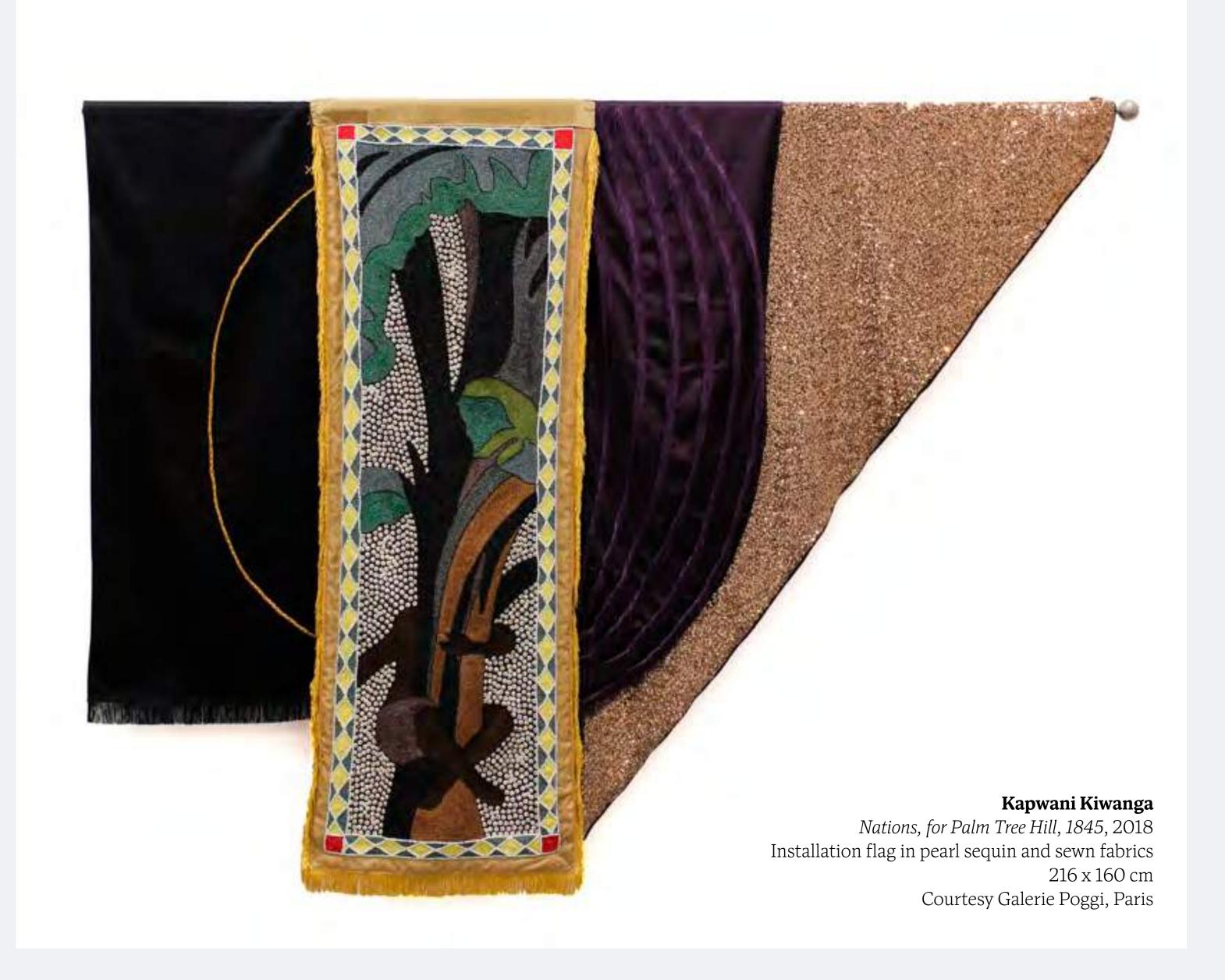
It is indeed the Vodou rites of the Bois-Caïman ceremony in August 1791 that are credited with starting the Haitian revolution; a revolution which led to the establishment of the first black republic. Kiwanga thus, explores the relationship between states and the emancipation of dominated people via the process of political independence. For Nations, Kiwanga extracted and redraws fragments of European paintings and prints, created between 1840 and 1976, which depicted the Haitian revolution. Kiwanga then sent these sketches to Jean-Baptiste Jean Joseph, an artist near Port-au-Prince who uses beadwork techniques to make embroidered flags inspired by traditional Vodou flags. The image selection is thus reinterpret in two instances before being incorporated into an assemblage of other fabric panels draped from a pole which has been twisted and bent to align with the work's syncretic purpose.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Nations: Beginnings, August 22, 1791, 2020
Installation, steel, epoxy paint, fabric, embroidered fabric, sequins, beads, fringe
165 x 302 x 8 cm
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



# Nations, 2018 - 2020





# Art Basel Miami, Miami(US) 2020

View of Galerie Poggi's booth (solo show)









#### Counter - Illumination, 2020



With the site-specific installation of Counter-Illumination (2020) for 2020 Capture Photography Festival, Kiwanga braids together relatively recent local histories in Vancouver with temporally and geographically distant narratives, and timely present concerns. Light and visibility are the locus points around which these stories intersect and to which Kiwanga brings depth and focus. Clarity can be experiential, metaphoric, or both. The ability to "see into" a structure suggests both visibility and systemic transparency. Conversely, the adage "what you see is what you get" has been spectacularly hollowed out by the praxes of digital life, where narratives of self-presentation are moulded to suit particular subjectivities. Kiwanga's Counter-Illumination steps into these confluences. For her commission, Kiwanga has created a two-story tall photographic image— the first unique photograph of its kind in her storied career. Shot in the artist's studio, a handful of elements—a globe light and lighted rod, sheets of two-way mirror glass, and a Venetian blind-coalesce in an elegant and dynamic composition which toggles effortlessly between abstraction and familiarity. Plays of reflection and shadow reveal the compressed depth of Kiwanga's photographic composition. The image and the building play a game of concealing and revealing. Kiwanga's image may function like a curtain, but it also acts like an Xray, coaxing us to peer inside.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Counter-Illumination #1, 2020
Inkjet print on Hahnemühle photo paper, diasec, oak frame 80 x 120 cm (framed)
Edition of 5 plus 2 AP
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Counter - Illumination, 2020

Deep looking can be thwarted or encouraged by the surfaces and systems we encounter. Mediation is a mitigating factor. Surveillance and sousveillance—acts in which participants record their activities via personal portable technologies— inspire Kiwanga. Counter-Illumination is a clear descendant of a recent series of the artist's sculptures in which she affixes lighting elements to geometricallysolid stone plinths. Kiwanga's sculptures—and Counter-Illumination by extension—come out of her research of lantern laws. Enacted in New York City in the eighteenth century, lantern laws demanded that enslaved black, mixed-race, and indigenous peoples were required to carry lit candles if they were moving through the city after dusk and were unaccompanied by a white person. "Lantern laws made the lit candle a supervisory device...that marked these people as security risks after dark."1 In lantern laws, visibility is a structure of monitoring and control exercised by invisible legal and civic power structures. Kapwani Kiwanga's work considers the phenomenology of vision. Also, and importantly, it considers the notion of vision within a broader frame: "What is invisible?" "What is made invisible?" "How can we avoid being seen?" Kiwanga shows us that transparency and perceptibility are intimately linked; they are contingent and subject to blockading. It is up to us, as Counter-Illumination suggests, to open the blinds as we assess what the future brings.

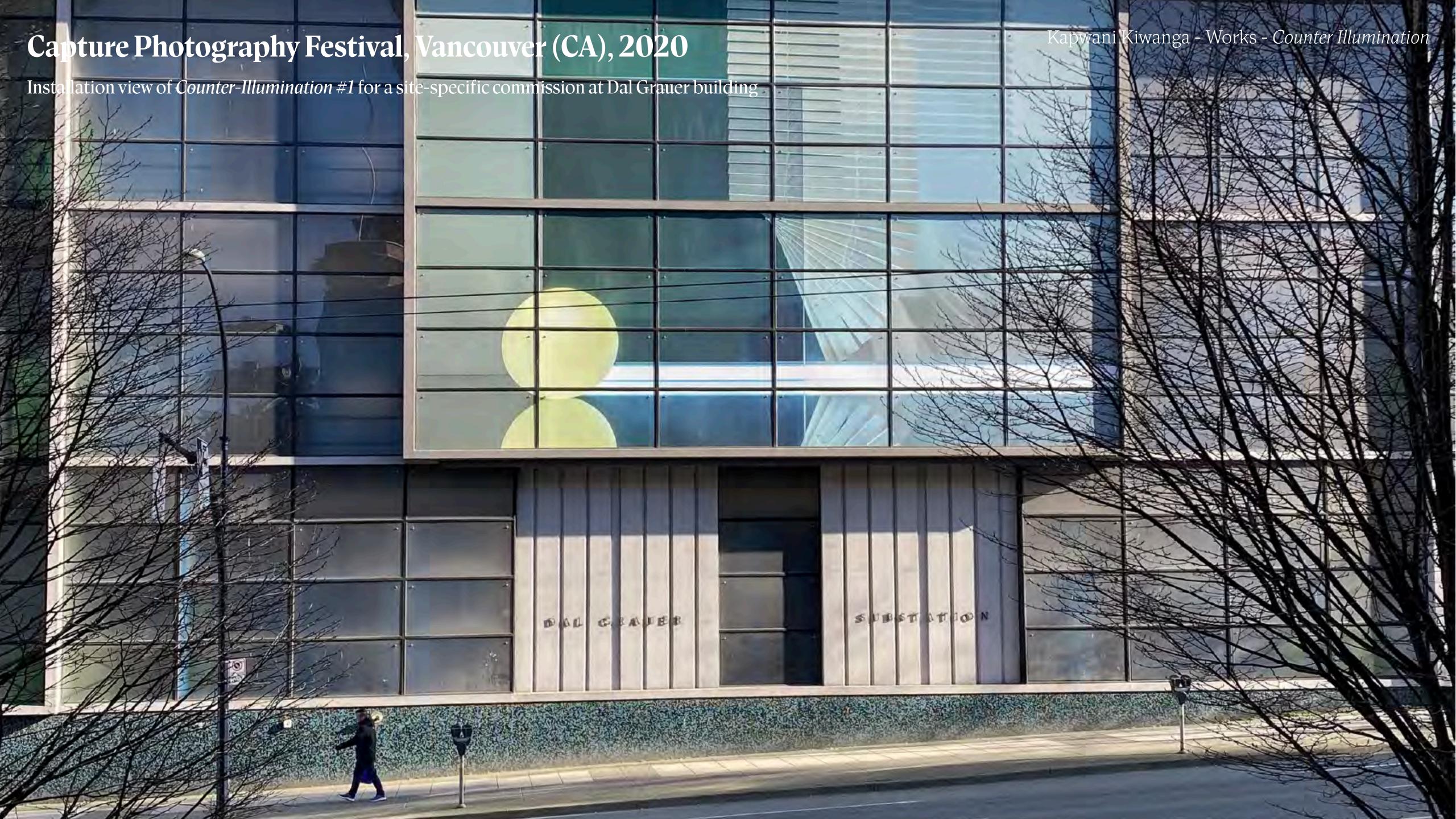
# Dean Daderko





#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Counter-Illumination #2, 2020 Inkjet print on Hahnemühle photo paper, diasec, oak, frame 80 x 120 cm (framed) Edition of 5 plus 2 AP Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris





#### Glow, 2019

This series « Glow » consists of black, human-size geometric monoliths, each with a single embedded LED light. The sculptures allude to eighteenth-century lantern laws, as described in Simone Brown's scholarly study Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness. These ordinances required enslaved people to carry lit candles with them by night, if they were not accompanied by a white person—a disturbing legal precedent for Jim Crow sundown laws and contemporary racial profiling. Kiwanga's forms recall commercial lighting fixtures, but their scale and silhouette make them something far less familiar. They could have glided right out of an Afrofuturist science fiction film.

Like her sculptures in shade cloth, the "Glow" pieces make reference to the unstable power dynamics of visibility. They could be read as stand-ins for Black bodies under scrutiny, but also as watchful Black sentinels occupying the gallery. Art history is called upon here: Michael Fried's well-known critique of Minimalist sculpture deemed it too anthropomorphic, just a literal, affectless presence in the viewer's space. Kiwanga unsettles that reading by infusing Minimal forms with embodied, psychological and historical implications. The sculptures are anti-monuments, witnesses to a tragic history: racialized individuals have rarely been able to consider their own "presence" in the neutral terms that Fried took for granted. »

Adamson, G. (2020, July 31). Kapwani Kiwanga Explores the Links Between Nature, Technology, and Racial Oppression. Retrieved January 29, 2021

# **Kapwani Kiwanga** *Glow 4*, 2019 Wood, stucco, steel, LED lights, acrylic

149 x 99 x 20 cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



# MIT, List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (US)

Exhibition view of *Safe passage* (solo show)







#### Fondation Entreprise Ricard, Paris (FR), 2019

Exhibition view of *Le Fil d'Alerte* (group show)

In Haiti, the conch (also called "lambi", the name of the mollusk) is used in rural areas as a trumpet to signal the beginning of a community meeting, as an alarm. This call through the shell as an instrument has a very strong symbol in Haiti, as it was used especially during the slave rebellion led by François Mackandal in 1791.

From a conch shell, originally from Haiti, Kapwani Kiwanga created a mold to cast glass obtained from the sand of Haiti. The process of fire to transform Haitian sand into a glass object is highly symbolic, and evokes through its violence the inherent difficulty in accessing freedom, particularly through the emblematic provenance of the material. Moreover, the tension present in the glass material, hard but fragile, echoes the notion of emancipation. Thus, the method of transformation and the characteristics of the materials are brought together in this work, suggesting a relationship of strength and fragility.



# **Kapwani Kiwanga** *Lambi*, 2019 Mixed media

Mixed media 110 x 120 x 25 cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



#### Greenbook, 2018 - 2019

For the Afro-American community, the individual mobility that comes from buying a car is offset by the segregation that existed in the southern states of America until 1965. The guide then maps hotels, restaurants and black-friendly gas stations. Kapwani Kiwanga simply removed some location and date information. While keeping the document's real poignant and bitter charge, her intervention suggests how the obstacles imposed on racialized bodies in the public space are still perpetuated today. But just like the striations of the blinds or the interstices of the fabric, the *Green Book* is at the same time the illustration of the repression at the same time as of its possible subversion. There is play in the mechanisms of control, and the paths of freedom know how to make themselves coils to make clearings there - then testifying to a patient erosion of the dominant frameworks.



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Greenbook: Mississippi~(1961), 2019 Pigment print on paper, wood frame, anti-reflective glass 26.5~x~35~x~3~cm~(framed) Edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs Cage Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

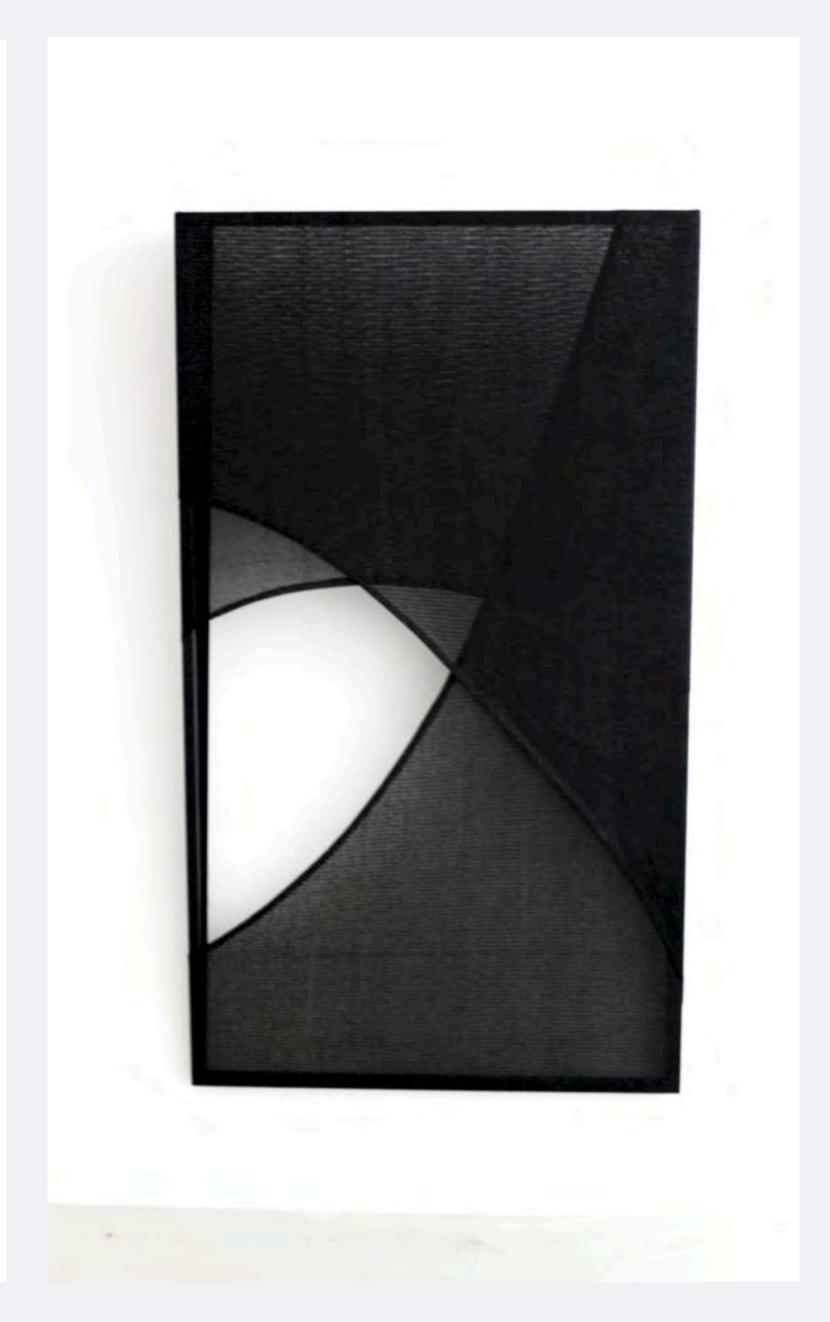
# **Shades**2018 - 2019

## Three Shades, 2018

These works use industrial metal and shade cloth: an agricultural fabric used to protect crops in commercial farming which covers swathes of landscape from North America to Africa. Its visual effect on the land is striking: a once-natural topography becomes a colour-coded palette. Kiwanga's choice is not simply aesthetic, but political. Kiwanga's use of shade cloth remind us that colonial seizure of land functions not only to extract local resources for commercial capitalist ends in the short term, but ultimately alters the rhythms and cycles of history. The intent here is to speak to the colonial appropriation of land from Indigenous communities, and the manipulation and control of the environment for economic gain. Her rigorous research and imaginative approach confront audiences with raw materials, as well as the elemental power structures that lie behind them. This work give space to the overlooked, asking poignant questions about our altered environments and narratives of domination. Shady's imposing structure both invites and obstructs movement. Punctuated by holes and passageways it implies entrapment but also potential routes of escape.







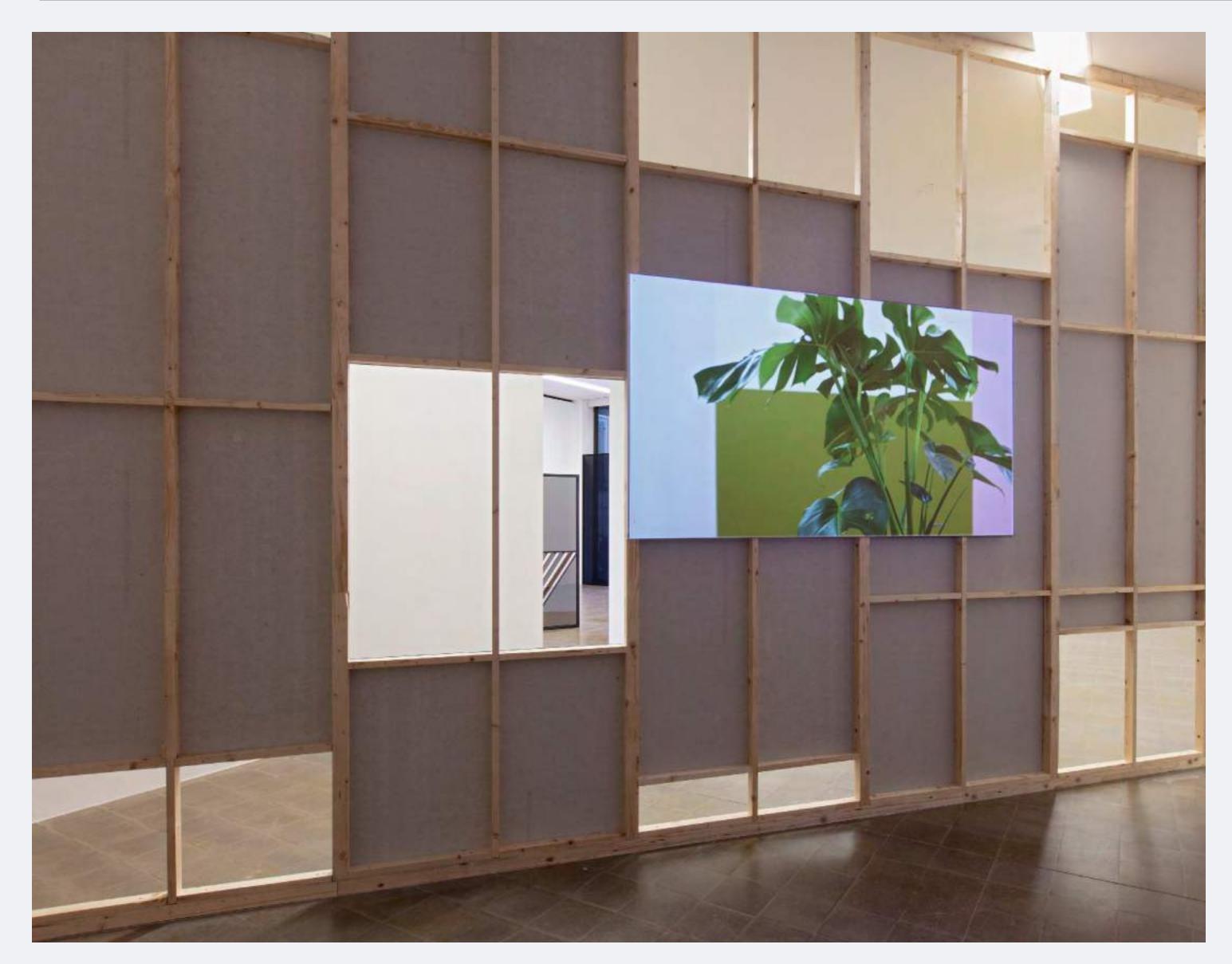






## Pasquart Kunsthaus Art Center, Biel/Bienne (CH), 2020

Exhibition view (solo show)



The silent film A Primer pans across a tripartite structure which has been painted in reference to a number of colour-based design innovations: spinach green and warm white, a reference to the introduction of green into hospital settings which physically improved surgical procedures and psychologically invoked nature's healing powers; white Ripolin, the first commercially available brand of enamel paint which figured prominently in architect Le Corbusier's argument against ornamentation; and Baker Miller pink, which was believed to calm aggressive prison inmates in the late 1970s. In 1914, at St. Luke's Hospital in San Francisco, Dr. Harry Sherman, finding traditional whites too jarringly bright and contrasting to properly see detail during surgery, had the lower portion of his operating room walls coloured spinach green, to allow him to focus on his surgical procedures. Green, being the complement of blood red, allowed his eyes to see the details and textures of wounds more precisely. In "The Decorative Art of Today", architect Le Corbusier outlined his argument against colour and superfluous ornamentation, advocating that these things be covered up or replaced with a coat of white Ripolin, an act of architectural hygiene for the modern age; that whiteness is equated with cleanliness, rationality, purity.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Patchwork, 2018
Drywall, paint, wood, glass, wall painting, audio, video
Variable dimensions

# Linear Paintings

2017 - 2021



## Esker Foundation, Calgary, 2018

Exhibition view of A wall is just a wall (and nothing more at all) (solo show)



## Kapwani Kiwanga

Left to Right:
Linear Painting #6, 2017
Linear Painting #9, 2018
Linear Painting #4, 2017
Linear Painting #10, 2018
Linear Painting #8, 2018
Linear Painting #7, 2018

Linear Painting #7, 2018
Linear Painting #2, 2017
Drywall, wood, paint



## Musée d'art de Joliette (CA), 2018

Exhibition view of *Sunlight by Fireside* (group show)

On June 2nd, from 5 to 9 p.m., a meeting was held around a fire pit in front of the Museum, where Kapwani Kiwanga invited participants to exchange viewpoints, opinions and knowledge on issues of decolonization and property in relation to environmental exploitation. The event emphasized the diversity of voices and the importance of orality in the transmission of knowledge; it was an opportunity to speak, to read aloud, and to view presentations. It was grounded in an attitude of active listening, openness and sharing, in an informal atmosphere where food and drink were served. While the artist has previously used the conference format in some of her performances, playing with the idea that, in her words, "the conference is an apparatus of authoritative knowledge production," here, as the sun set on the horizon, it is conversation that prevailed.

The memory of that exchange is imbued in the ceramic tiles, tools and pail handles, all made in Joliette with clay from Grand-Métis. The ceramic glaze that covers them was made with ashes from the fire around which the participants were gathered. The conversations were intentionally not recorded; they persist in the minds of those who were present, in the reflections they may continue to have, in the actions they will make perhaps differently in the future. By serving as the preliminary context for the gesture of restitution that visitors are invited to make, these words, inscribed in the objects visitors will manipulate, perpetu- ate themselves differently, symbolically infusing each action. Much like nature's cycle of renewal, where wood becomes ash that becomes soil that nourishes the ground, words are transmitted and transformed, influencing or conditioning the gestures and way of life adopted by each person throughout time.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Fire & Fallow, 2018 ceramic tiles with ash-based clay 255 x 110 x 7 cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## Jalousie, 2018

Jalousie reproduces the structure of a screen streaked with louvers. The striated shadow will remind some people of an indolent afternoon of holidays, while others will focus on the association with colonial architecture. To these first layers of reading is superimposed another one. For Kapwani Kiwanga, these blinds can also be seen as a prefiguration of contemporary surveillance technologies. By confronting his own field of research with some key reference works on the subject, notably Dark Matters. On the Surveillance of Blackness by Simone Brown, the artist applies the study of modern control devices to a very specific object of study: the black body, doubly hindered.

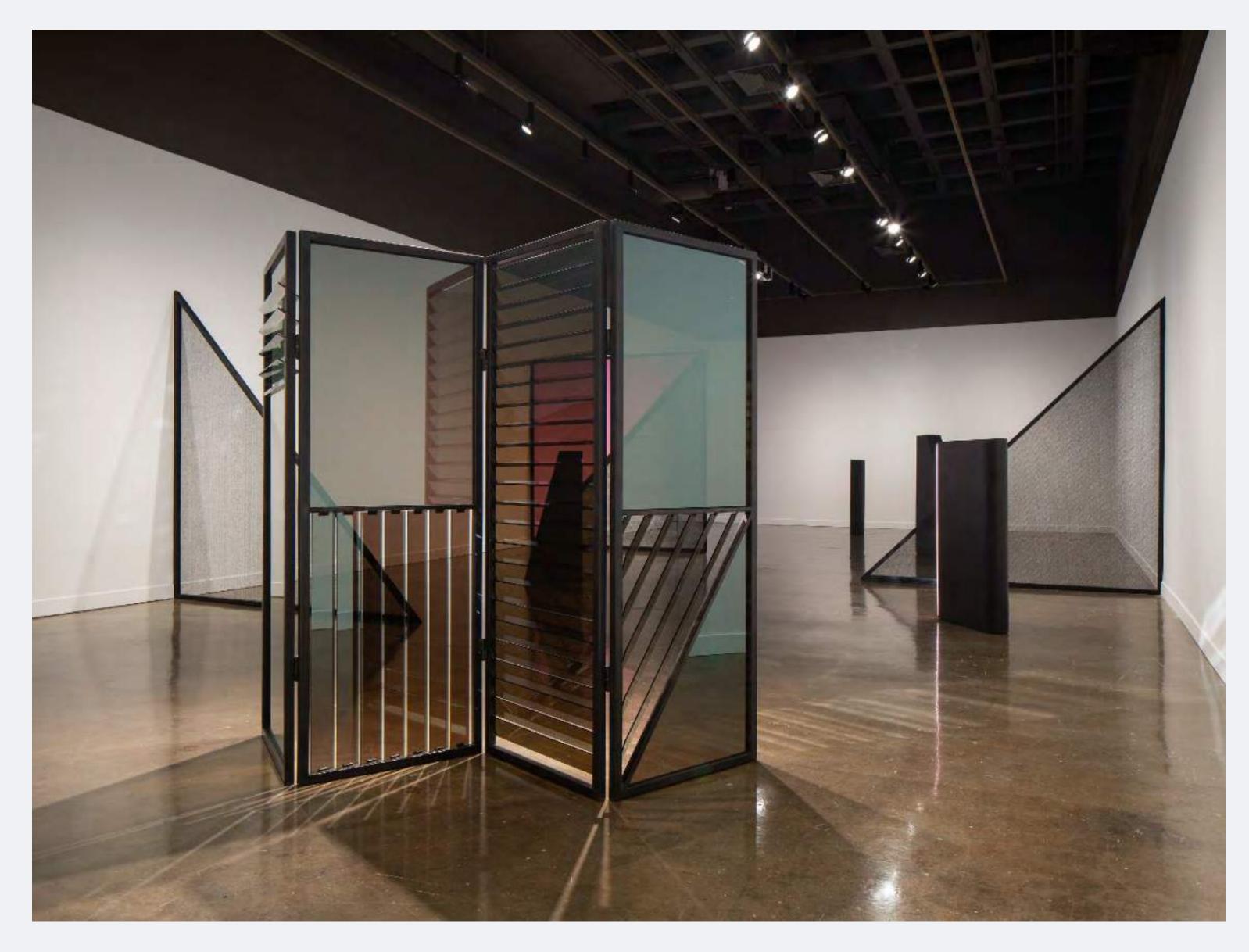


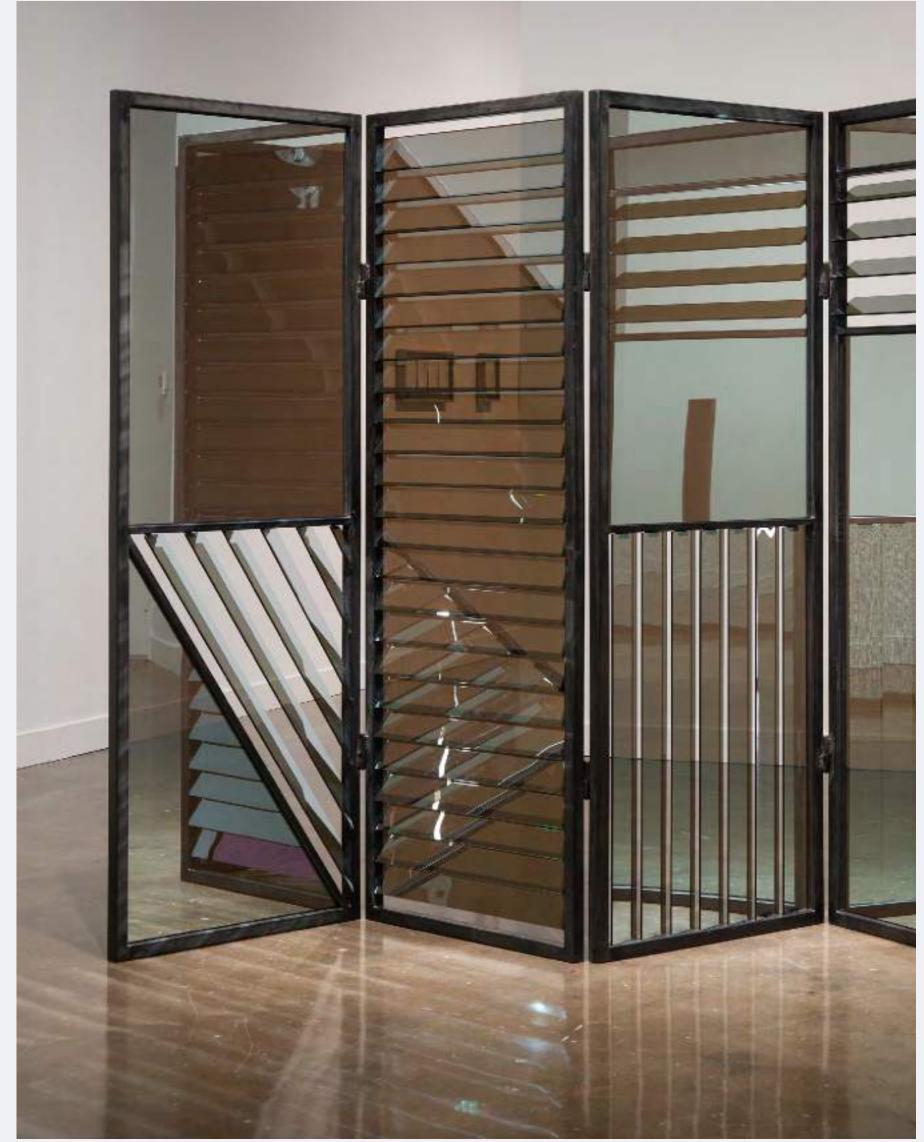
#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Jalousie, 2018 Steel, tempered glass, one-way mirror 220 x 320 x 100 cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## MIT, List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge (US), 2019

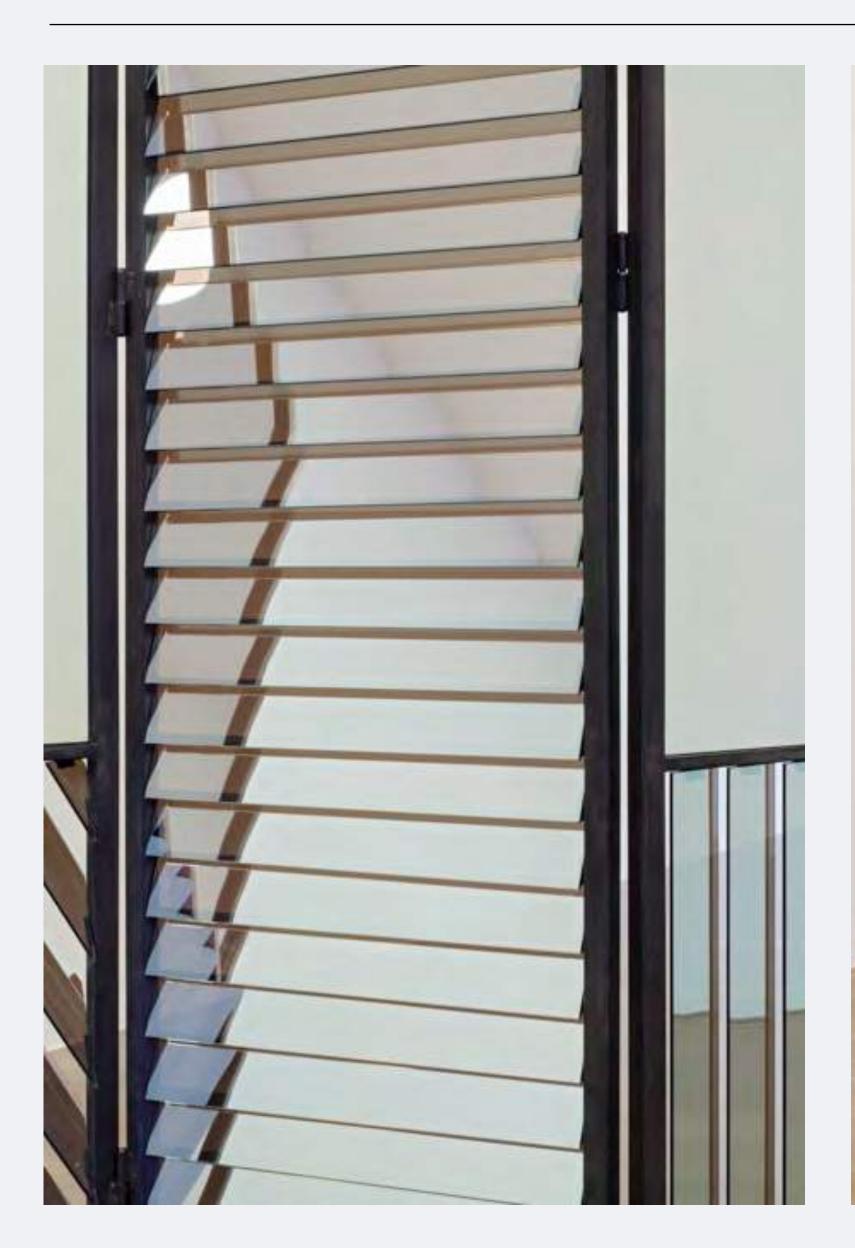
Exhibition view of *Safe passage* (solo show)





## Esker Foundation, Calgary (CA), 2018

Exhibition view of *A wall is just a wall (and nothing more at all)* (solo show)







## Safe Spaces, 2018

These works use industrial metal and shade cloth: an agricultural fabric used to protect crops in commercial farming which covers swathes of landscape from North America to Africa. Its visual effect on the land is striking: a once-natural topography becomes a colour-coded palette. Kiwanga's choice is not simply aesthetic, but political. Kiwanga's use of shade cloth remind us that colonial seizure of land functions not only to extract local resources for commercial capitalist ends in the short term, but ultimately alters the rhythms and cycles of history. The intent here is to speak to the colonial appropriation of land from Indigenous communities, and the manipulation and control of the environment for economic gain. Her rigorous research and imaginative approach confront audiences with raw materials, as well as the elemental power structures that lie behind them. This work give space to the overlooked, asking poignant questions about our altered environments and narratives of domination. Shady's imposing structure both invites and obstructs movement. Punctuated by holes and passageways it implies entrapment but also potential routes of escape.



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Safe Space 1, 2018 glazed ceramic from acacia ash, velvet base 75 x 34 x 37.3 cm

Dimensions of metal base : 63 (length) x 53 (width) x 70 Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## Fondation Entreprise Ricard, Paris (FR), 2019

Vue de l'exposition *Le Fil d'Alerte* (group show)





#### Kapwani Kiwanga

 $Safe \, Space \, 2, 2018$  glazed ceramic from acacia ash, velvet base  $134 \, x \, 60 \, x \, 80 \, cm$  Dimensions of metal base : 80,5 (length) x 60,5 (width) x 90 (height) cm Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## Le Parvis, Tarbes (FR), 2018

Exhibition view of *Enclosure* (solo show)







## Soft Measures, 2018

In Soft Measures, Kiwanga explores the slow redefinition of the geographic relationship between Africa and Europe. The continent of Europe is moving towards Africa at the rate of approximately 2cm per year - eventually it will slide underneath the former landmass entirely. The velocities of these two tectonic plates are repeated, in diagrammatic form throughout the installation as stripes printed on fabric and lines carved in stone. The placement of two curved curtains suggests the eventual meeting of the tectonic plates - independent but moving along one another; at some points pulling closer and at others pushing away.

The installation includes sculptures of mined rocks, suspended from striped fabrics, some of them dyed. Juxtaposing hard and soft, old and new, natural and constructed, Kiwanga entangles distinct materials and concepts into representations of balance. Kiwanga has completed the exhibition with an audio play in three acts. The sound piece suggests speculative fictions that stretch through a perspective of deep geological time. Soft Measures confronts us with the many strata of our human narrative: the causes that came before us, and the effects that will take over as the lead storyline in our aftermath.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Soft Measures : Lago Mare (left) and Soft Measures : Blue Camarinal (right), 2018

Carved granite and dyed painted cotton

271 x 108 x 8 cm and 207 x 100 x 10 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris





## Soft Measures, 2018







## Centre d'art Le Transpalette, Bourges (FR), 2018

Vue de l'exposition Soft Power (group show)







#### Desire Path, 2018

These prints on fabric are derived from aerial photographs that feature visible desire lines. Known by many names including donkey paths, social trails, or pirate paths; desire lines are informal pathways created where pedestrian traffic has repeatedly deviated from formal walkways, or where pedestrians have carved paths where no paved byway existed. These paths can be read as subtle acts of disobedience, or as signifiers of the flaws or oversights in a community's design. In this series the black desire lines serve as abstracted snapshots of different areas captured at various moments in history from Calgary, Canada and several locations in South Africa.

Among the prints referencing Calgary one is derived from a 1924 photograph of what is now known as Prince's Island Park, the print is documentation of when it was still the Eau Claire Lumber Mill. While another print captures the Alyth Rail Yard in 1952—which is still a working rail yard.

In the South African sources one finds paths drawn from apartheid-era aerial images of : Langa, Cape Flats, District 6 and Soweto townships.

Supporting the prints are sheets of steel mesh—material intended to reinforce concrete for usage in buildings, bridges, or other infrastructure. The fluid quality of the meandering black desire lines and the draped cotton is set in relief against the rigidity of the gridded mesh and its evocation of the Cartesian plane and grid-based city planning that has marked a significant amount of modern urban development. This juxtaposition can be read as a visual manifestation of the possibility of subversion of or resistance from circumscribed places and structures, and of the agency that we exercise in our everyday lives.

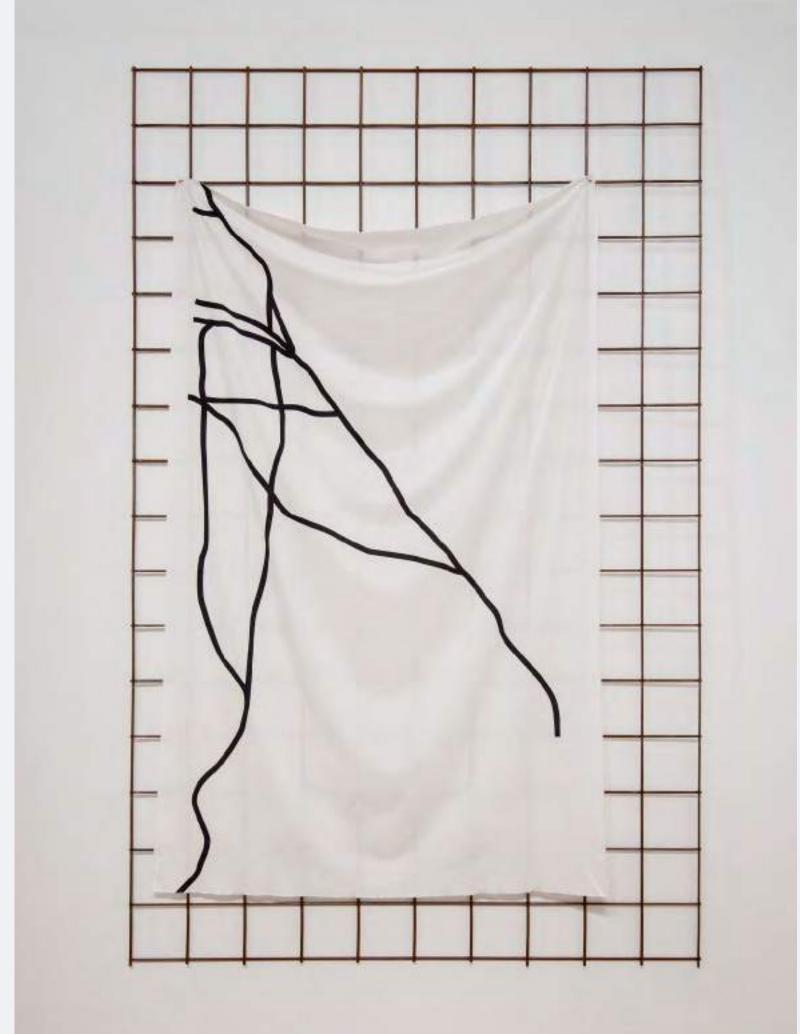
#### Kapwani Kiwanga

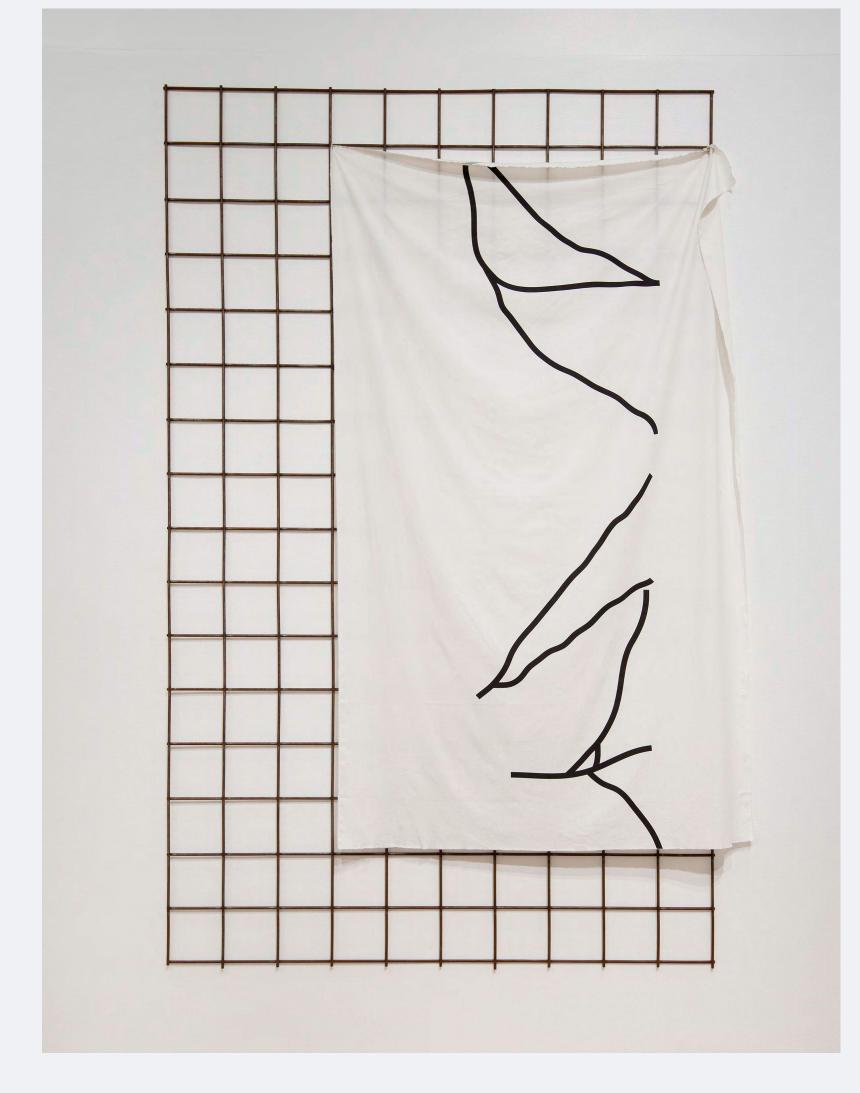
Desire Paths: Calgary Municipal Airport, 2018
Print on cotton and galvanized steel
240 x 150 x 5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## Desire Path, 2018







#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Desire Paths, Alyth Railyard, 2018
Printed cotton canvas and iron mesh
252 x 151.5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

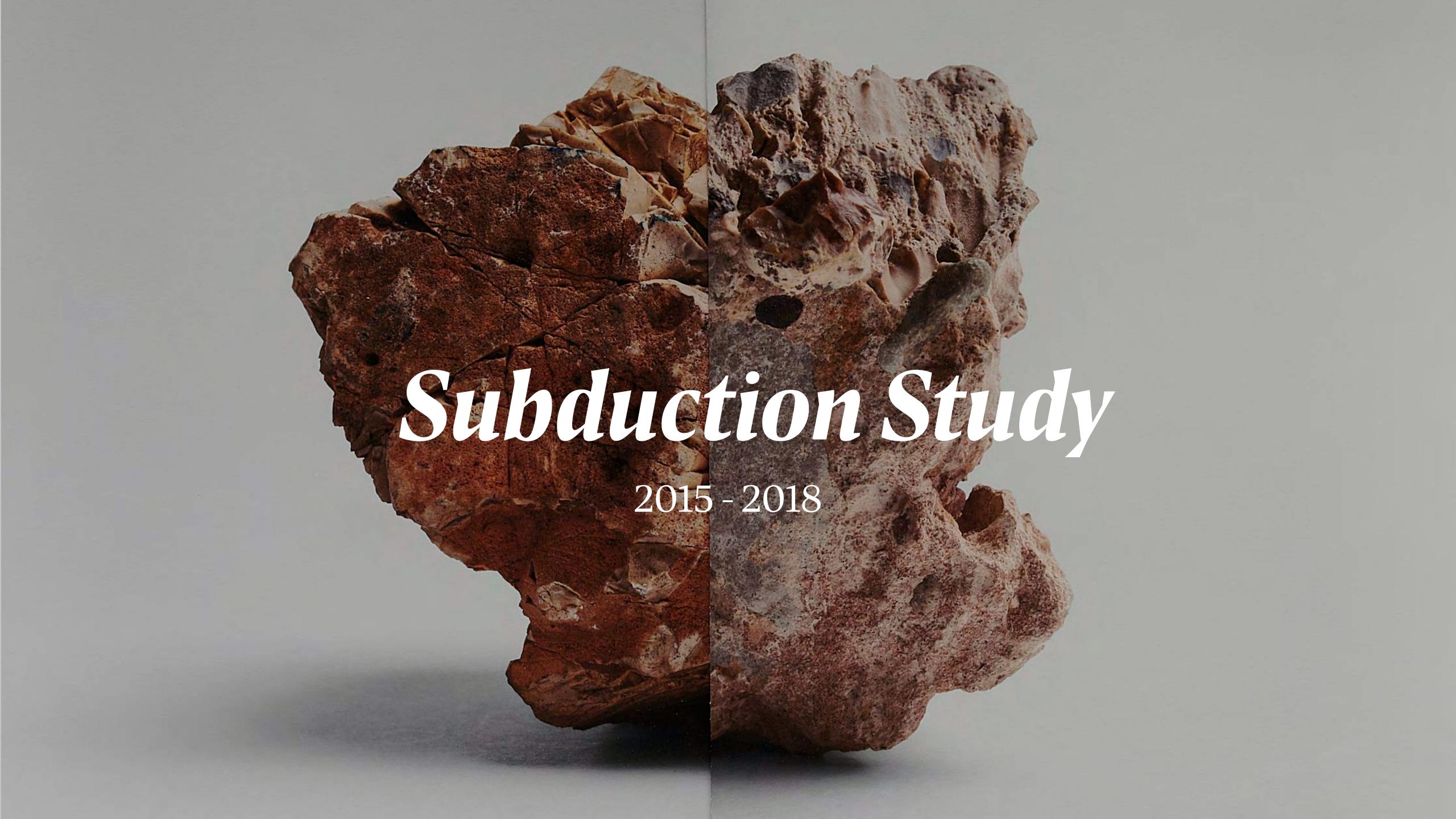
Desire path - Rosscarrock, 2018
Printed cotton canvas and iron mesh
252 x 151.5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Desire Paths: Eau Claire Lumber Mill, 2018
Printed on cotton and iron mesh
240 x 150 x 5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris







## Subduction Study, 2015 - 2018

This series of photographic assemblages refer to subduction zones; a geological term which defines the process in which one tectonic plate moves under another before sinking into the mantle as the plates converge. These zones have high rates of earthquakes, volcanism and mountain formations. In this series two photographs taken from rocks in the collection of Paris' Natural History Museum are placed in relation to one another.

One image depicts a rock from the European side of the strait of Gibraltar, while the other belongs to an African country on the Mediterranean shore. As such this project speaks of the probable future collision of the African and European continents at and around the Strait of Gibraltar. The work thus proposes a new continental configuration; a new territory.



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Desire Paths: Calgary Municipal Airport, 2018

Print on cotton and galvanized steel

240 x 150 x 5 cm

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## Subduction Study, 2015 - 2018







#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Subduction study #4, 2017
Folding, pigment printing
68,5 x 76 cm
Edition of 5
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

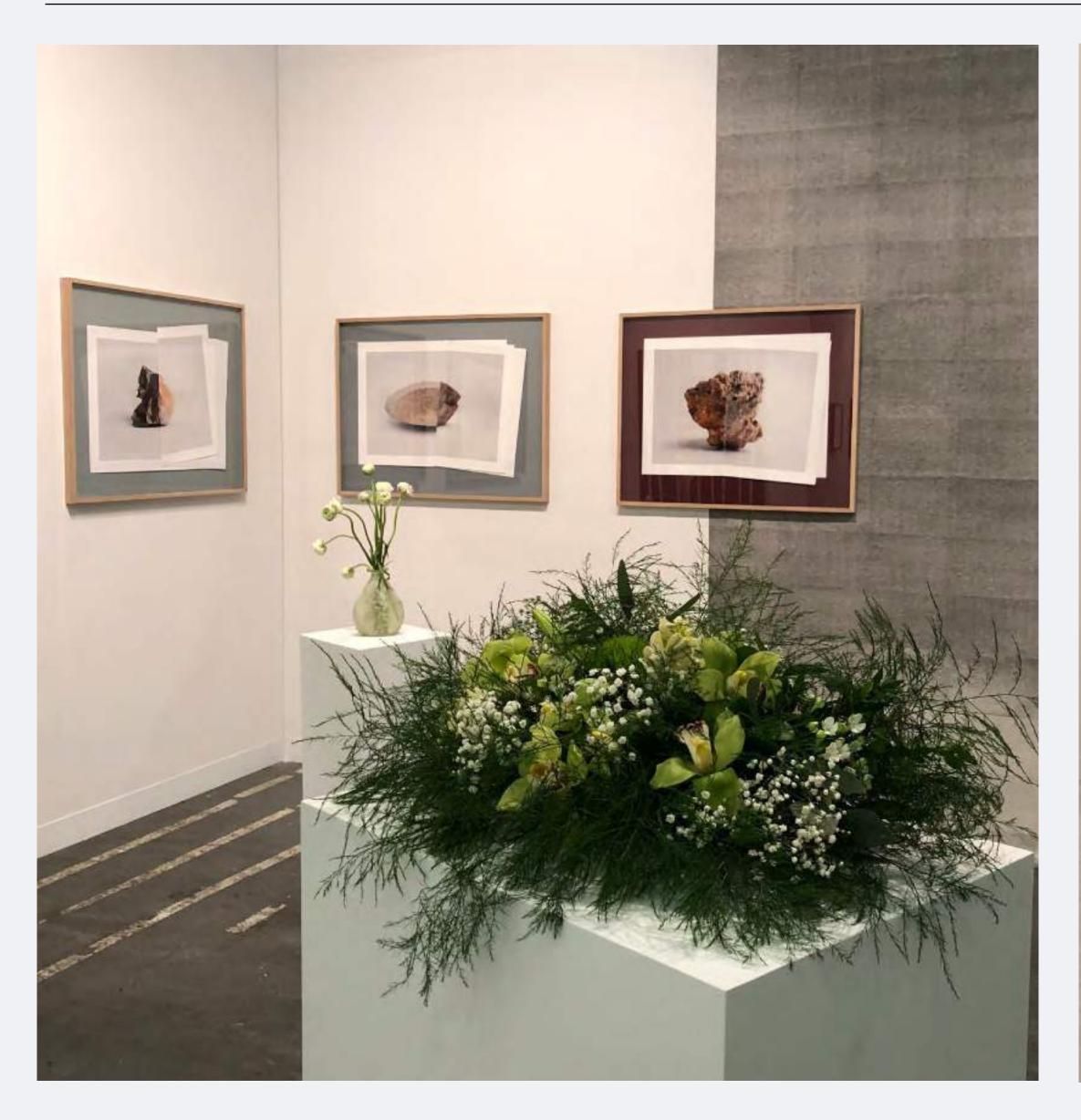
Subduction study #8,, 2017
Folding, pigment printing
53 x 77,5 cm
Edition of 5
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

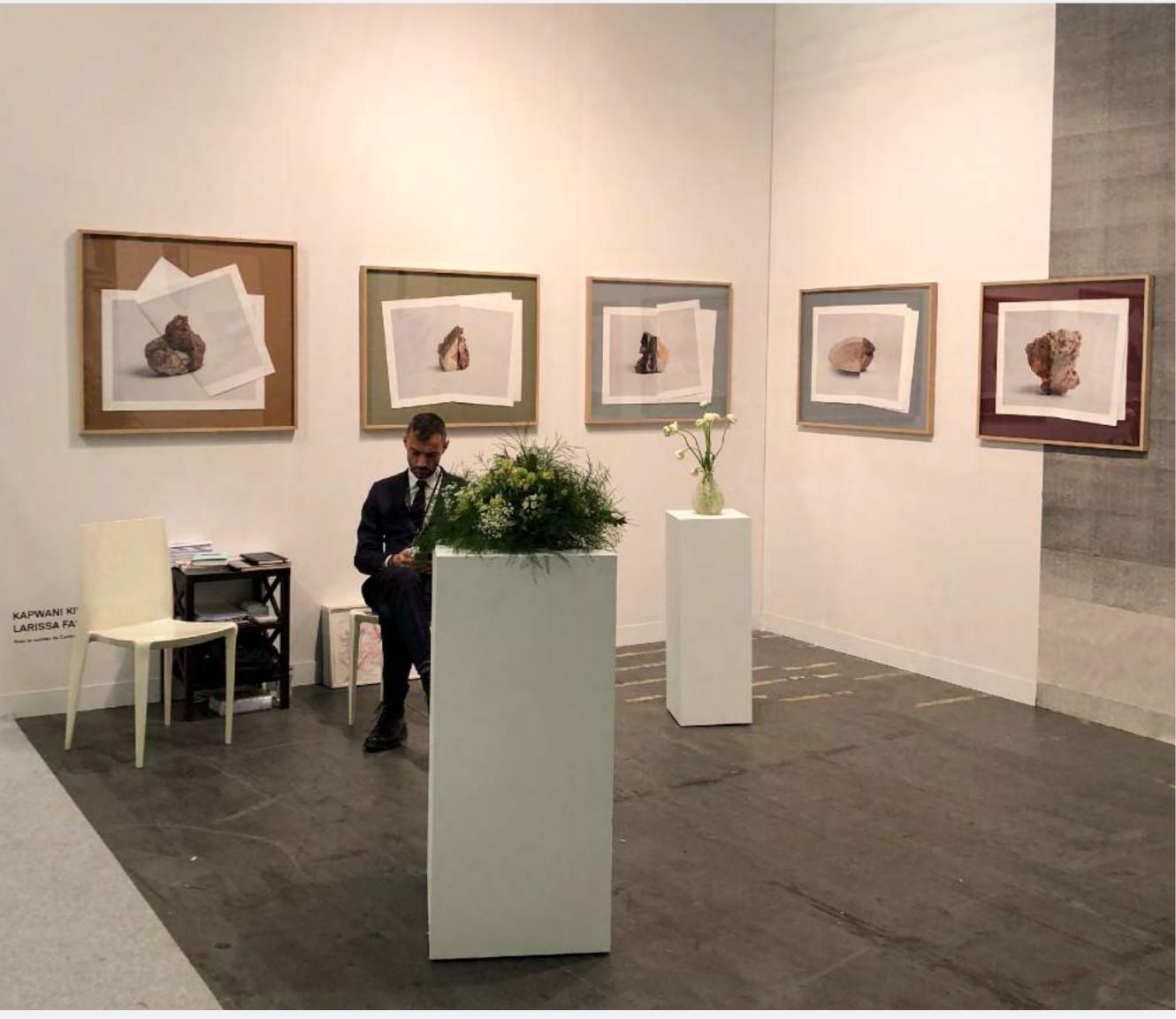
#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Subduction study #10, 2018
Folding, pigment printing
68,5 x 76 cm
Edition of 5
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## The Armory Show, New-York (US), 2018

Exhibition view of *Transatlantique* on Galerie Poggi's booth (group show)

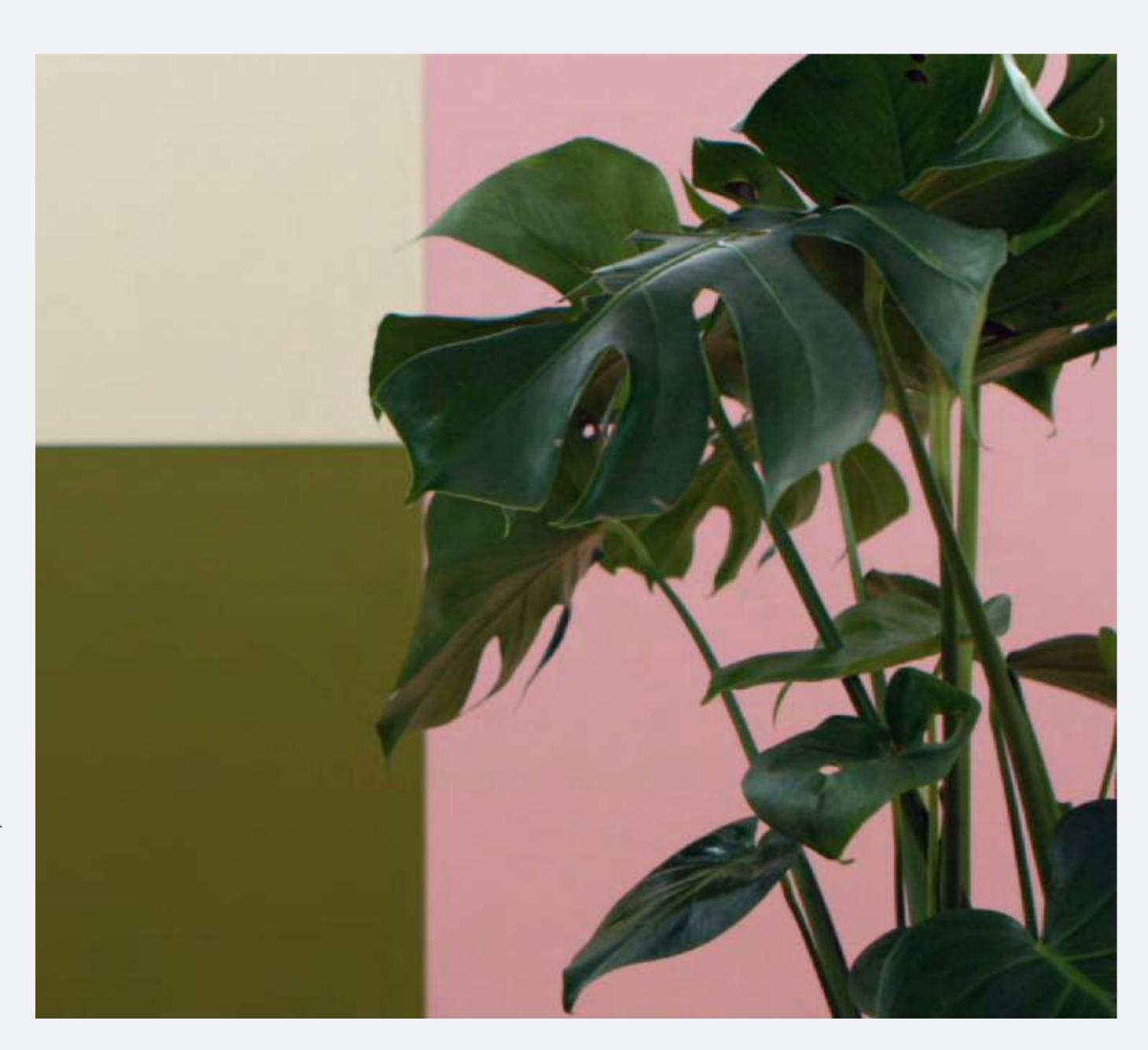






## *A Primer*, 2017

With that architectural hygiene follows a personal, social hygiene: "Then comes inner cleanliness, for the course adopted leads to refusal to allow anything which is not correct, authorised, intended, desired, thought-out: no action before thought." In addition to the partial wall structure, the film features several objects: a tropical houseplant, an oscillating fan, and a wooden blind. While each of these objects is reminiscent of commonplace corporate or institutional decoration, they are also evocative of a much darker history of racial and social hygiene and segregation. The fan and the tropical plant, for example, reference a Victorian-era obsession with cleanliness and air circulation, obsessions which were transferred to colonised settings and used to bolster the racialised narratives that informed the colonial project. A Primer compels gallery-goers to high-tune their senses and observe the structural conditions of their environment. Colour and design are never truly neutral.



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

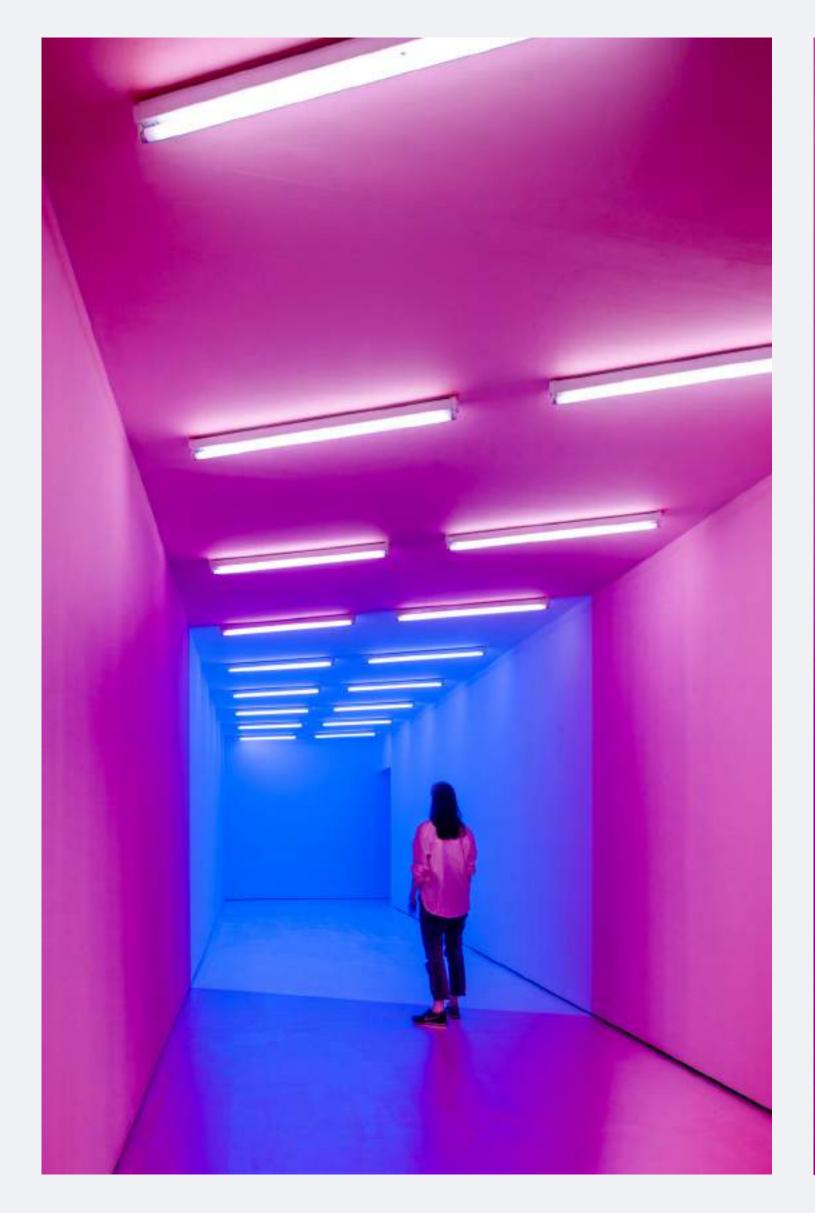
A Primer, 2017
HD video, color, soundlessness
7'43"
Edition of 5 plus 1 AP
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris





# Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (DEU), 2023

Exhibition view of *The Length of the Horizon* (solo show) Photo: Marek Kruszewski









## White Gold, Morogoro, 2016

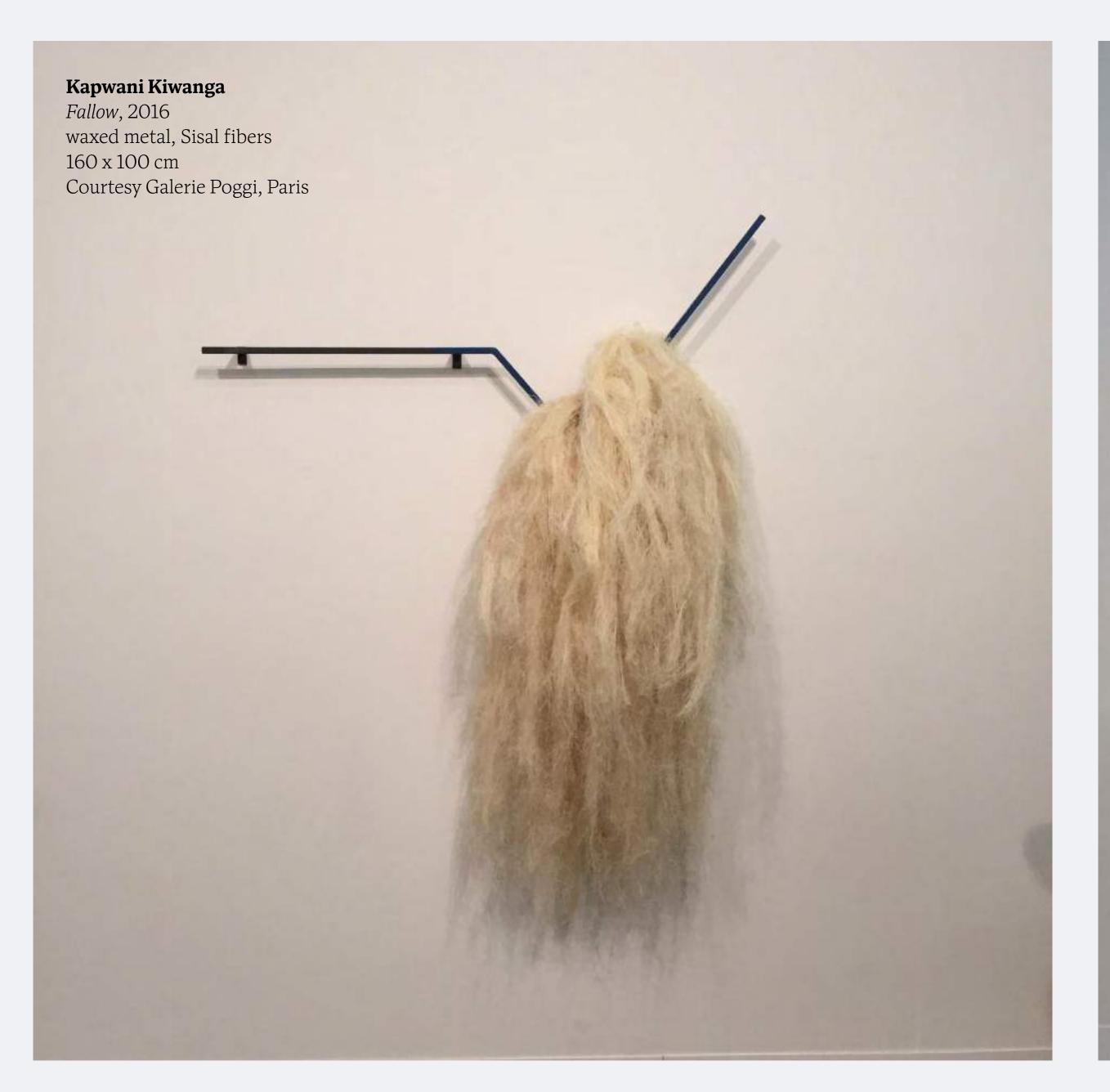


Two of Kiwanga's large-scale works, which allow the public to move through them and inhabit the space they create, stem from materials found during travels to Tanzania, where her paternal family resides. The source of her work *White Gold, Morogoro* (2016) is sisal, a plant cultivated for fibre production. Kiwanga describes seeing large plantations of sisal in Tanzania, which featured in the landscape as impressive aesthetic implants. Her interest was piqued by research into how the introduction of this alien species to Africa traces political and economic movements across continents.

### Kapwani Kiwanga

White gold: Morogoro, 2016
Sisal sculpture
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

# *Fallow*, 2016





# The Armory Show, commissioned artist, New-York (US) 2016

Installation view of the booth in the Armory Fair operated in tandem by Galerie Poggi (Paris) and Galerie Tanja Wagner (Berlin)



# La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel (FR), 2016

Exhibition view of *Ujamaa* (solo show)

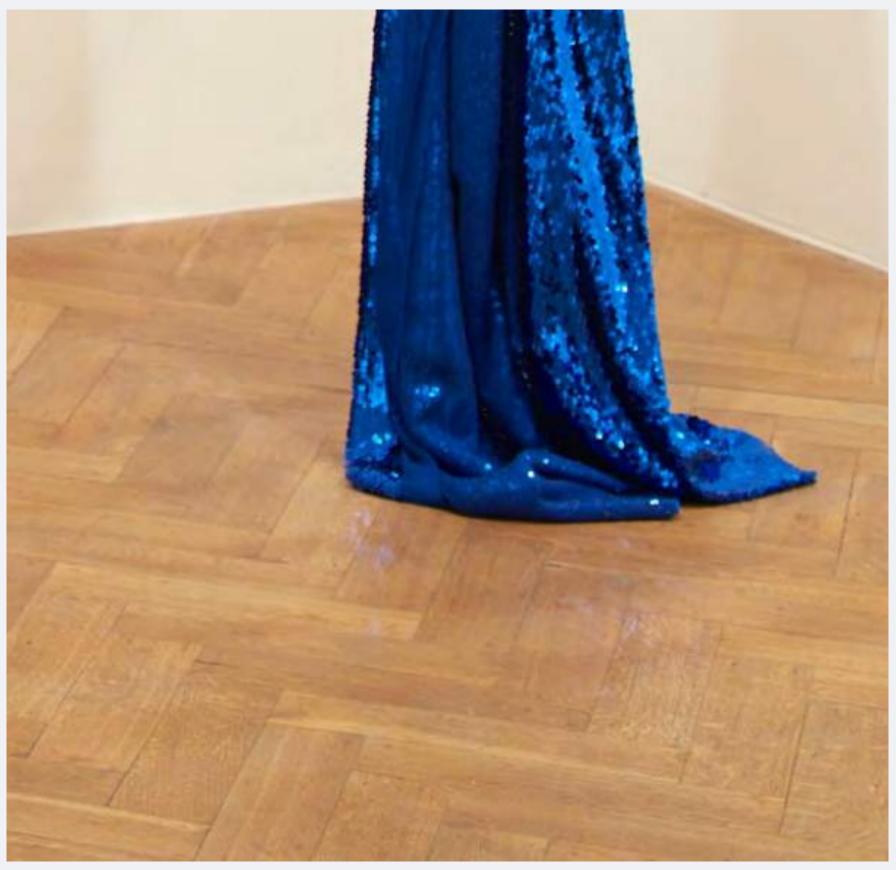


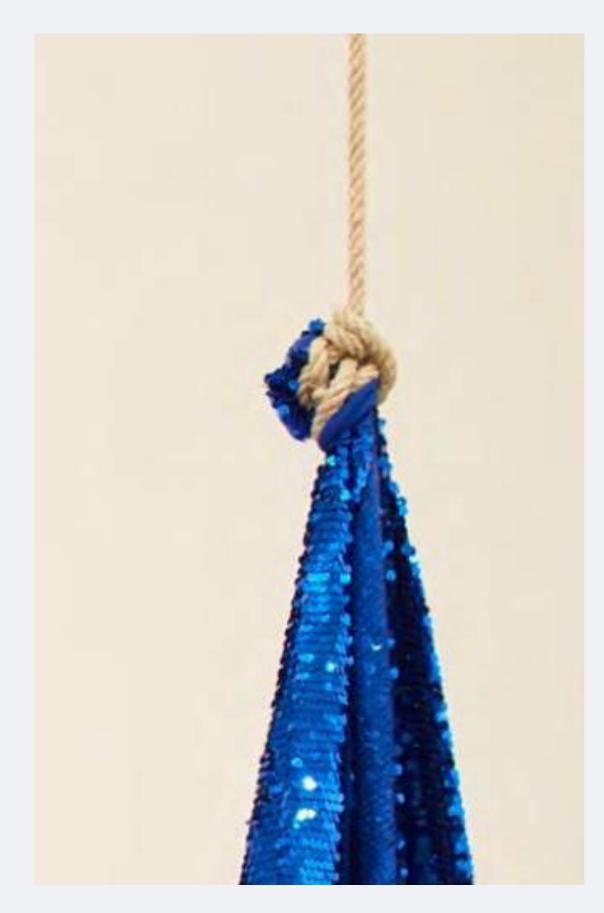




# Koki Doré, 2015







Koki Doré is a piece of ultramarine blue sequined fabric draped over itself tied to a hanging rope. A conch shell is nestled at eye level. Koki Doré presents itself to the imagination as a kind of shaman wrapped in a cloak or a hanging figure.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Koki Doré, 2015 Sequined fabric, salt, rope, conch shell Variable dimensions Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris. Photo : Sylvain Deleu



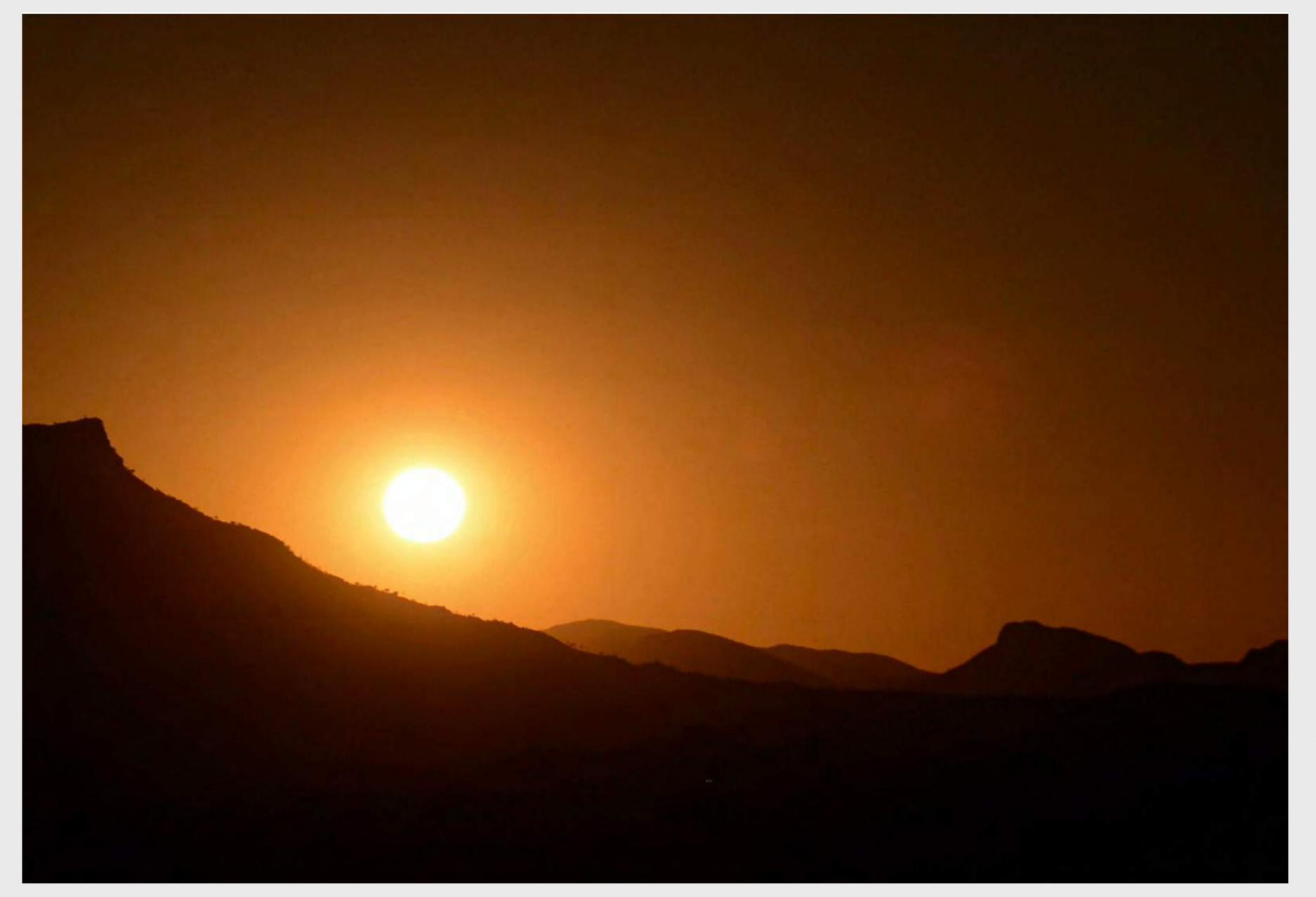
# Videos & Performances

Selection

GALERIE POGGI



## The Sun Never Sets, 2017



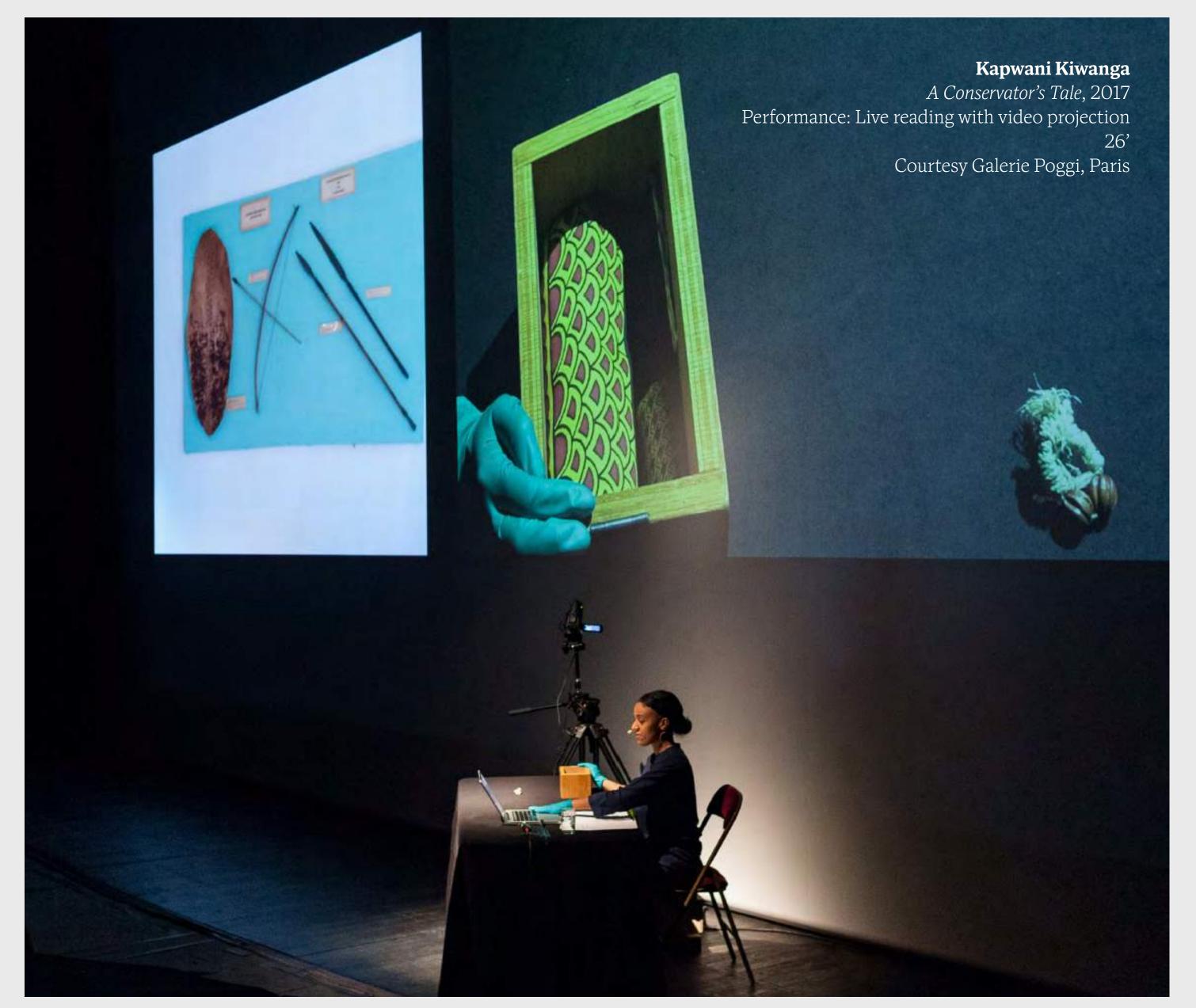
The film The Sun Never Sets is a montage of the sun setting in multiple locations. Videographers around the world filmed sunsets in the countries they live in. The foremost significance of the chosen locations is that they are in countries that were once, or are still, under British subjection, evoking the saying from which both the exhibition and the video draw their title: "The sun never sets on the British Empire". The work raises questions of colonialism's persistence as well as the natural world as witness to our fraught human history.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

The Sun Never Sets, 2017 HD video, silent, colour Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## A Conservator's Tale, 2017

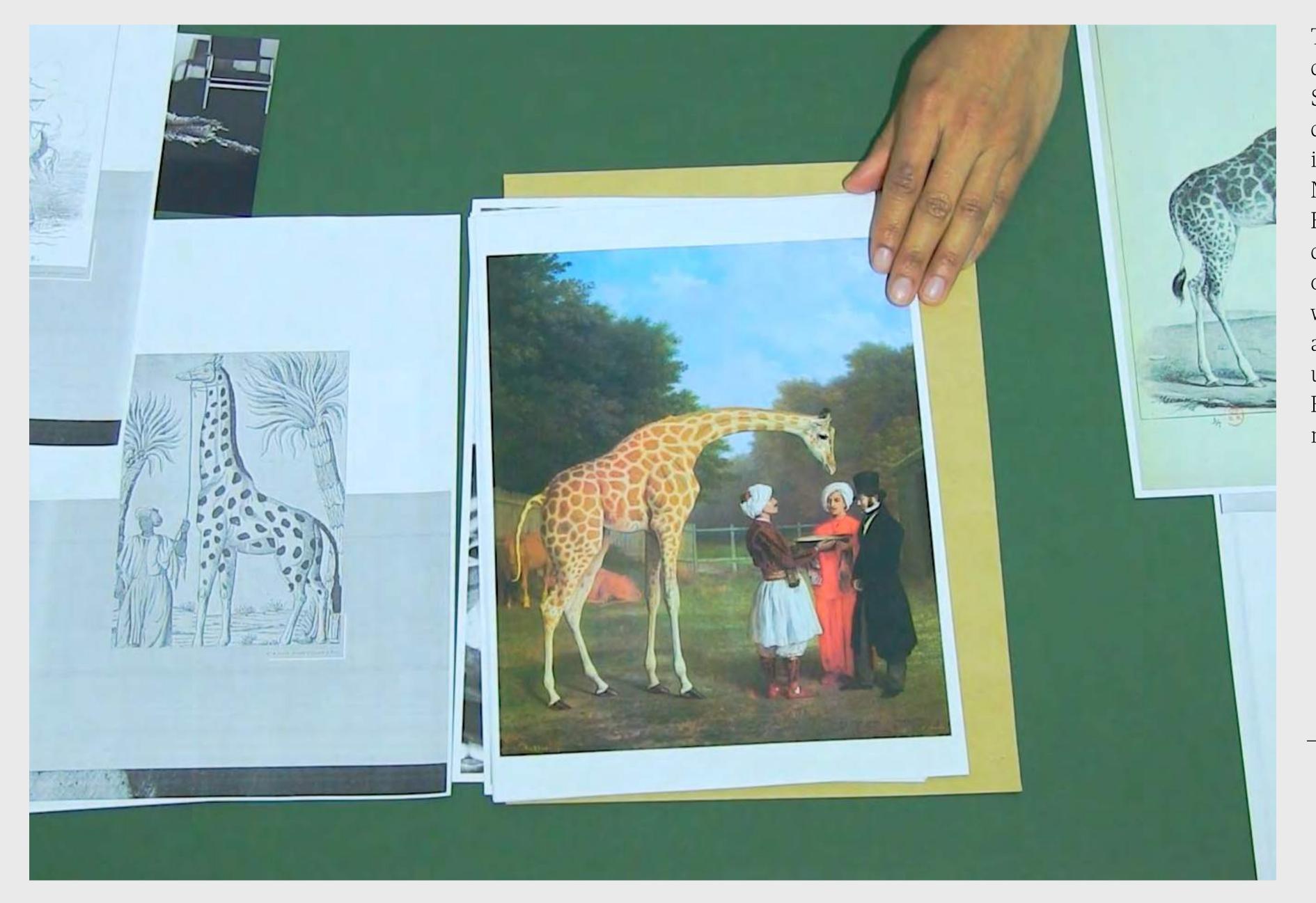




In *A Conservator's Tale*, the artist takes on the role of a conservator in charge of an archive. She gives voice to silent objects and tells fantastic stories. By combining readings, sound extracts and video, Kapwani Kiwanga explores the status of the document, but also the possibilities of oral transmission.



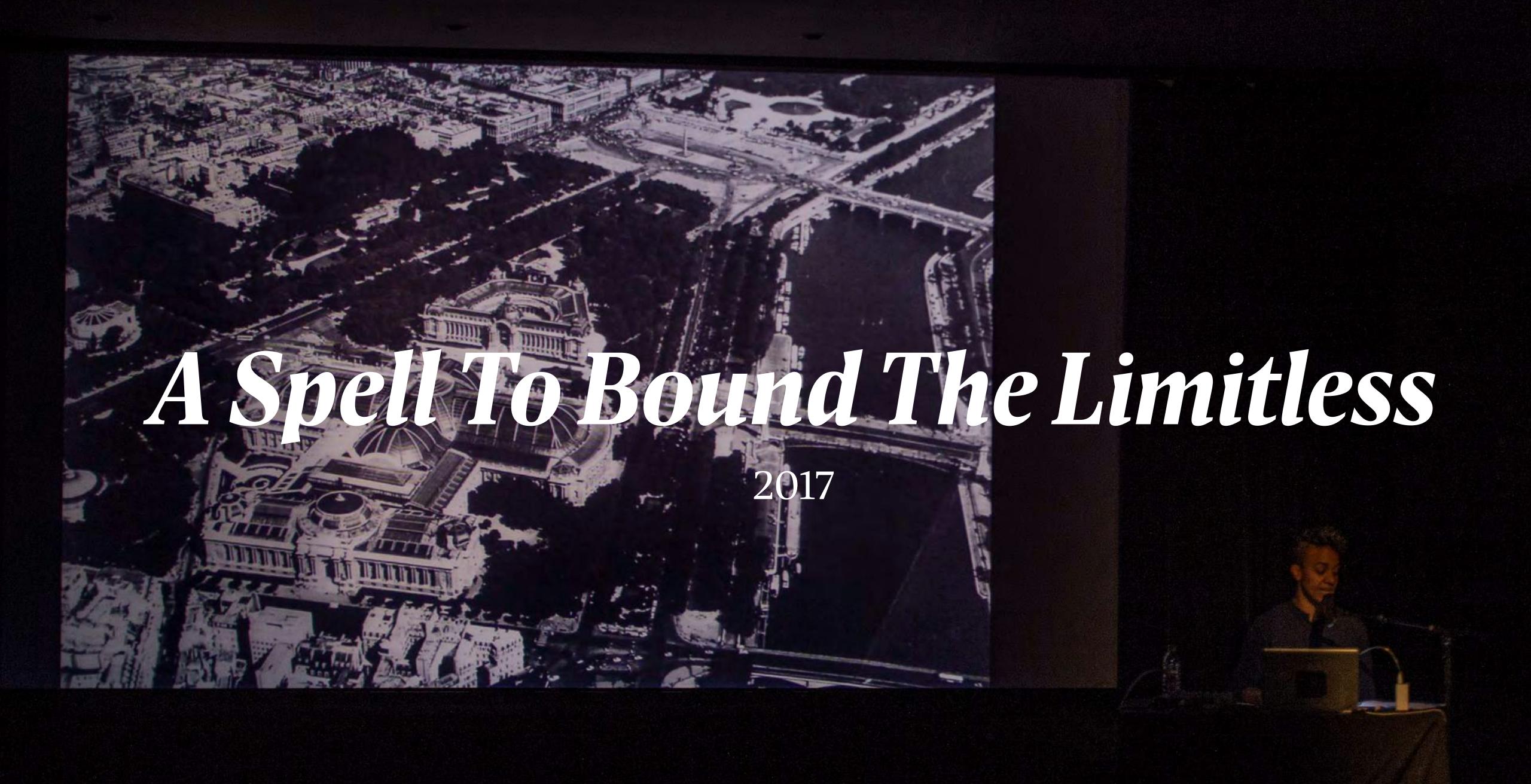
## The Secretary's Suite, 2017



This video installation investigates the complexities of gift economies. The Secretary's Suite is composed of a single-channel video and a viewing environment inspired by the 1961 office of the United Nations Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold. While manipulating images collected during research around the notion of the gift, Kiwanga narrates a story that weaves historical and political facts from antiquity to our present day on a quest to understand the untimely death of Hammarskjold on a trip to the Congo to negotiate a cease-fire.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

The Secretary's Suite, 2016
Mixed-media installation
23'
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## A Spell To Bound The Limitless, 2017



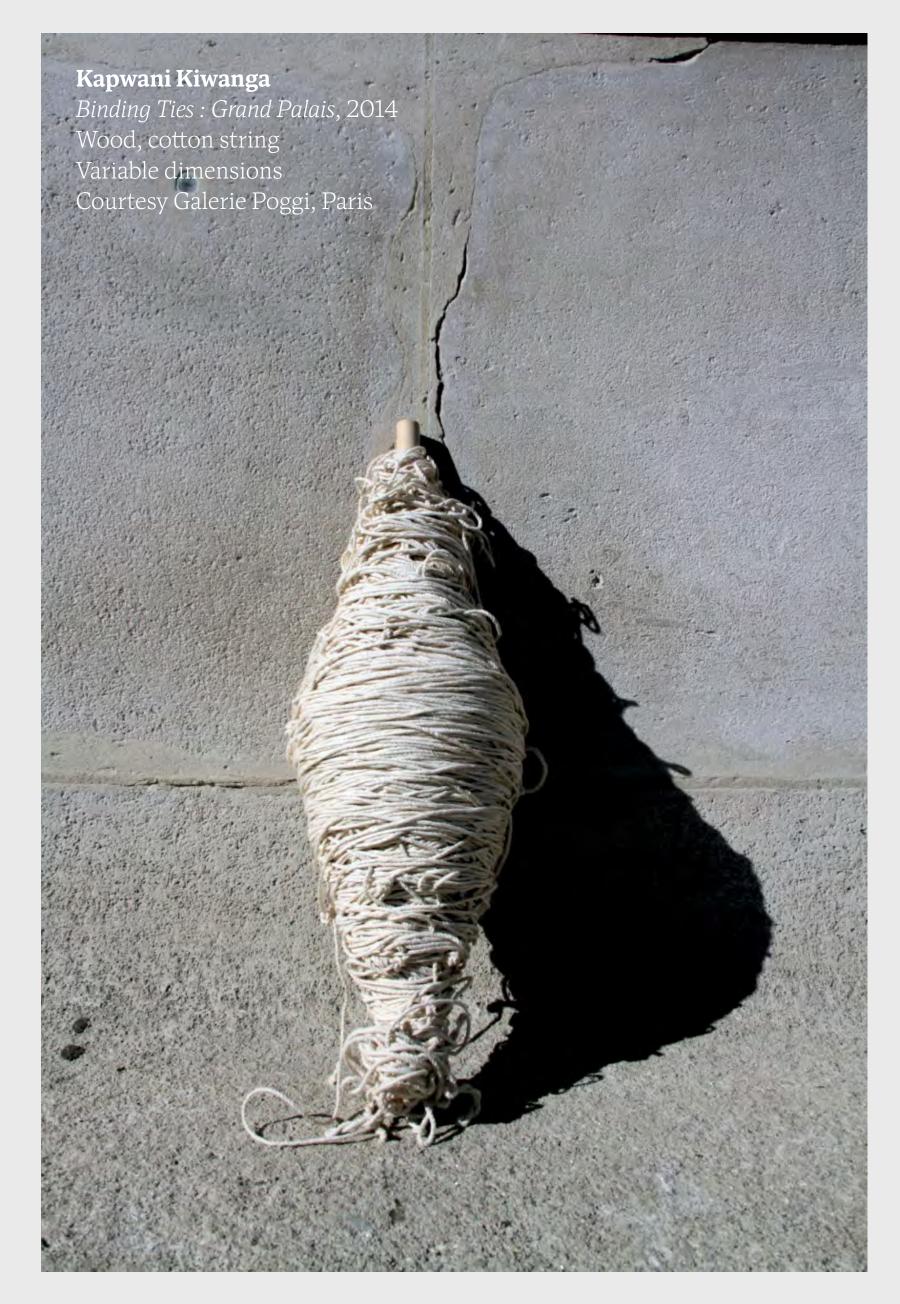
For this performance, Kapwani Kiwanga activates folk and pagan traditions by exploring sacred and secular rituals to conjure the supernatural. This performance is on the edge of anthropology and scientific experimentation, exploring notions of magic and belief through various documentary sources and fictional interpretations.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

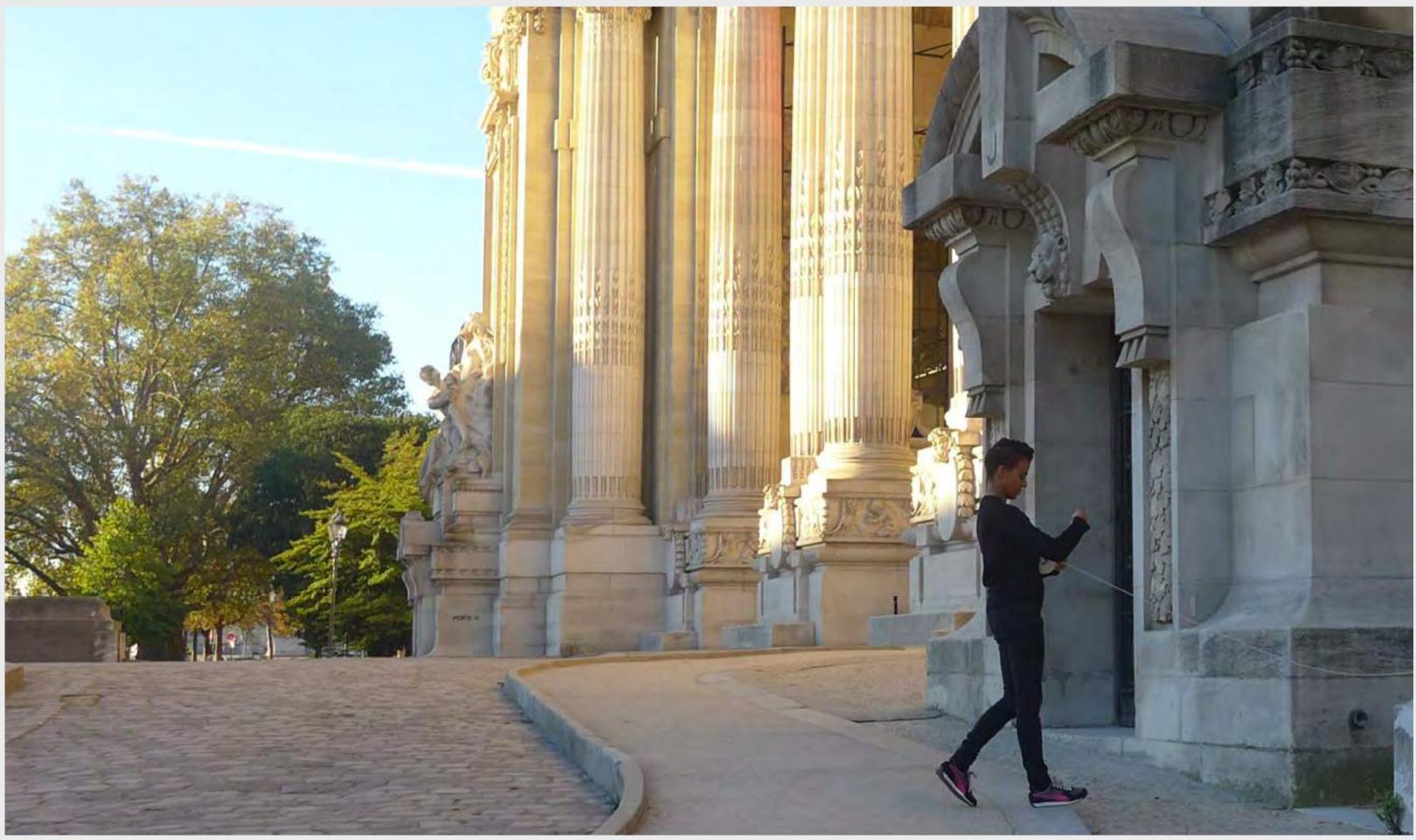
A Spell To Bound The Limitless, 2017
Performance: live reading, sound, video projection 30'
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## Binding Ties: Grand Palais, 2014



This pile of string knots is the result of a performance on October 14th, 2014. This day, Kapwani Kiwanga surrounded the Grand Palais with 1200 meters of cotton string. As she circled the building, she stopped periodically to tie the string. The act of tying a knot recalls an ancestral act of cross-cultural magic whose purpose is to contain energy or create a system of protection through the repetition of this gesture.











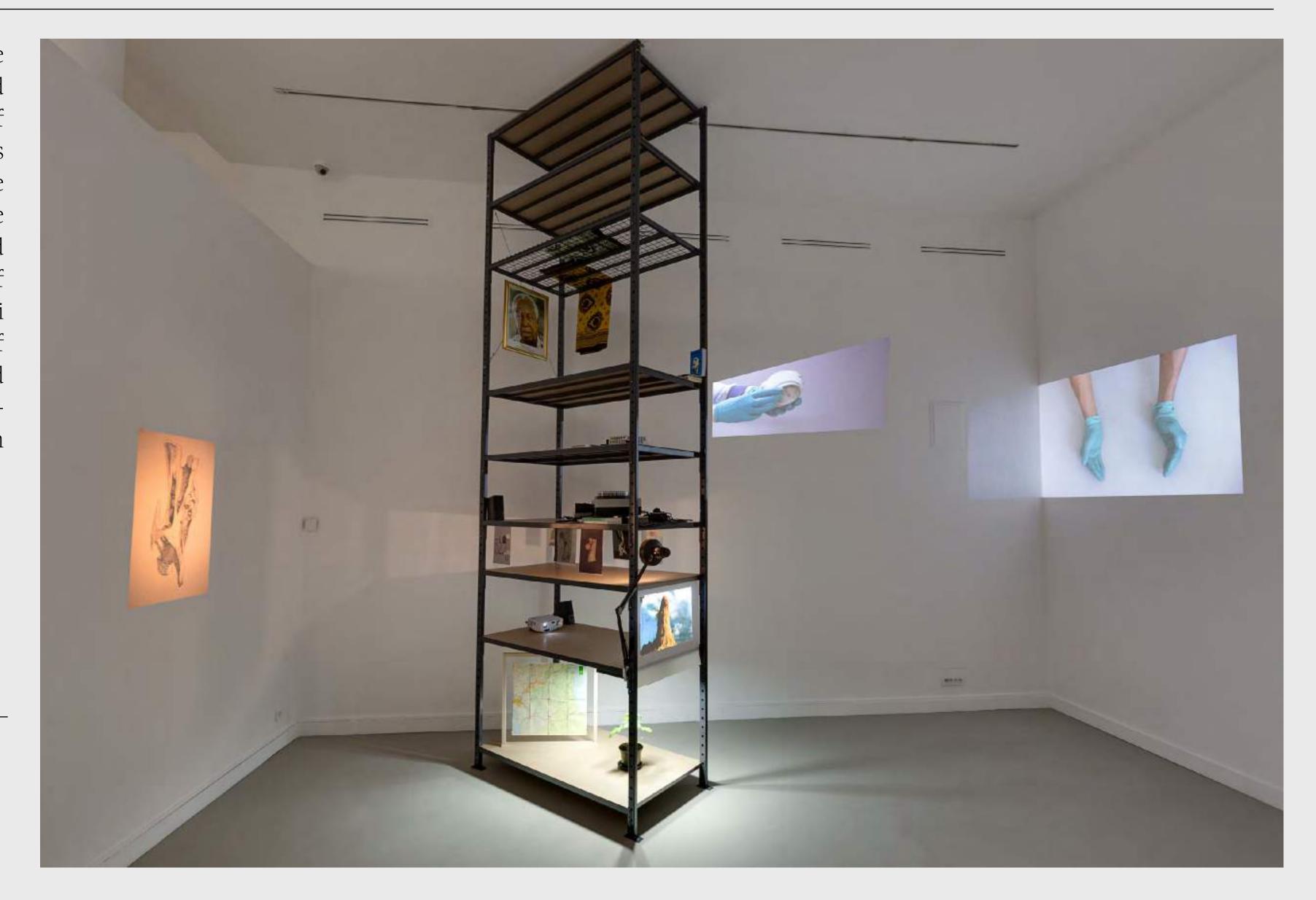




## Jeu de Paume, Paris (FR), 2014

Exhibition view of Maji Maji

Research in anthropology, literature and archives lie at the heart of Kapwani Kiwanga's work. Informed by anti-colonial struggle and its memory, belief systems, vernacular and popular culture, as well as different cultural ways of approaching the invisible — intangible aspects of the magical and the supernatural. In her films, installations and performances, which revolve around notions of belief and its relationship to "knowledge", Kapwani Kiwanga employs documentary modes of representation, various material sources, and testimonies of a subjective as well as a quasiscientific kind. Kiwanga is equally interested in different approaches to embodiment in art.



#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Rumours that Maji was a lie..., 2014
Mixed-media installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## Jeu de Paume, Paris (FR), 2014

Exhibition view of Maji Maji

Kapwani Kiwanga's exhibition Maji Maji draws on the historical account of the Maji Maji War, which took place between 1905 - 1907 and was one of the largest uprisings on the African continent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The revolt against German rule was initiated by a spiritual medium named Kinjeketile, also known by the name Bokero. After being possessed by the spirit Hongo, he attracted a large following, and distributed sacred water, or Maji, that was to protect them by transforming German bullets into water. Maji Maji fighters' belief in the supernatural was a means to galvanise the insurrection, which was fundamentally a belief in the possibility of creating another social order. However, the Maji did not safeguard them and many African lives were lost.







#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Rumours that Maji was a lie..., 2014
Mixed-media installation
Variable dimension
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



# The Secretary's Suite, 2017



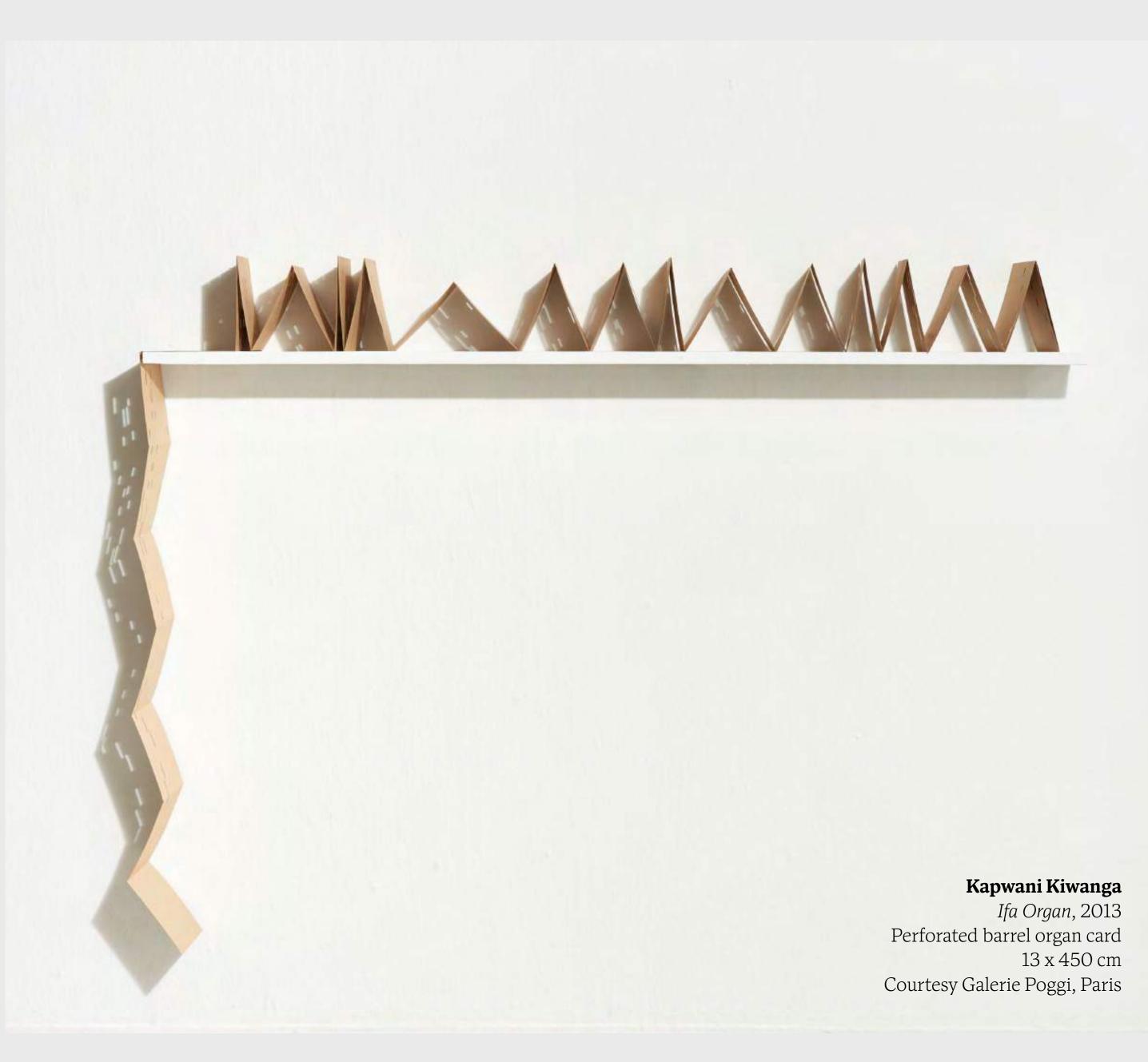
During the dry season, rural Tanzania is covered in red dust which produces a myriad of monochromatic landscapes. In the video Vumbi, dust in Kiswahili, Kiwanga cleans away dust from foliage and engages in an act of subtractive painting. The artist transposes a simple task from the domestic sphere into the natural environment and engages in an absurd action, for the foliage will quickly be buried under a new layer of dust.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

The Secretary's Suite, 2016
Mixed-media installation
23'
Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

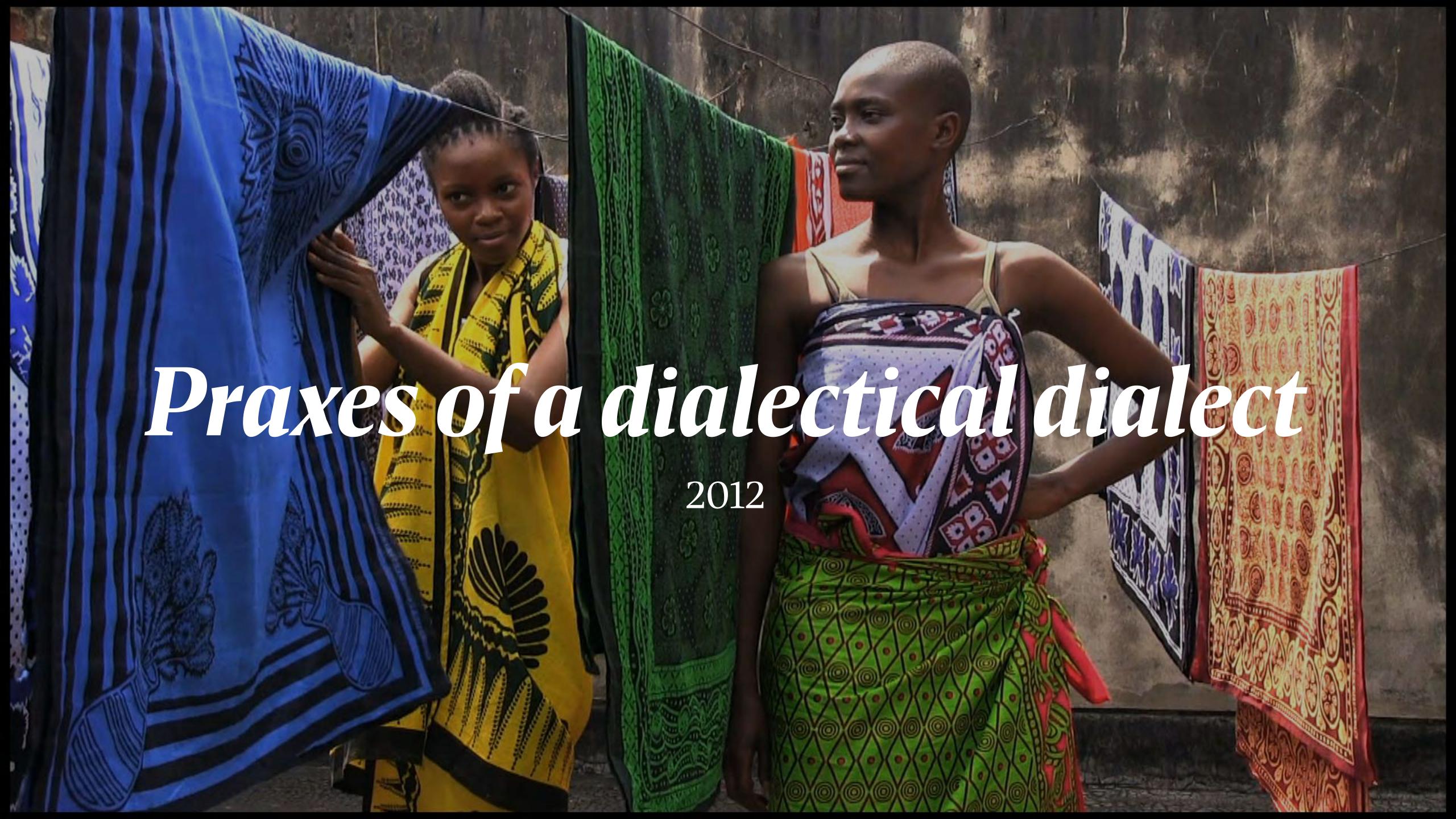


# Ifa Organ, 2013



Ifa-Organ associates Ifa; a binary divination system practiced principally in Nigeria, Benin, and their diasporas; and the barrel Organ originating in eastern and central Europe. An Ifa priest in Benin performed a remote consultation at the artist's request. The resulting divination produced a series of binary codes, which were subsequently transposed onto a barrel organ card, through a sequence of perforations. When played, the card produces a repetitive melody which broadcasts the Ifa oracle into the public space. The perforated card is both a sonic and visual object. When it is not played, the card is displayed in the exhibition space inviting the viewer to decipher the divination codes.





## Praxes of a dialectical dialect, 2012



Kangas are a sarong-like fabric worn in East Africa. In addition to a repetitive motif, each kanga consists of a written adage. In this video, two women engage in a silent duel, using kangas as a communicative device. The women are surrounded by suspended kangas. One women selects a kanga and wraps it around herself. A subtitle reproduces the kanga's caption on screen. The other person retorts by selecting another kanga and wearing it. Each offers her rebuttal by adding a new layer of fabric onto her body and becomes increasingly voluminous until the last kanga is taken. Wrapped in layers of fabric and utterance the two have become forms of a linguistic jostle.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Praxes of a dialectical dialect, 2012 Single channel video, colour, silent, Subtitles EN/FR 20' Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris



## Afrogalactica, 2011 - ongoing





#### Kapwani Kiwanga

Afrogalactica: A Brief History of the Future, 2011 - ongoing Performance: Live reading with video projection

43'

Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

For the Afrogalactica trilogy (2011–ongoing), Kiwanga has invented the character of an anthropologist from the future, a protagonist who takes us across vast fields of knowledge relating to Afrofuturism as a historical movement, hybrid genders and African astronomy. The performed lectures consist of a live reading accompanied by projected images, video, and sound extracts. The performance creates a space in which fiction and historical facts converge. Eclectic archives are drawn from specialist and popular sources. The fictional elements of the performance center on "The United States of Africa Space Agency", an imagined Pan African organisation established in the year 2058.

## Chapter 1: A Brief History of the Future

The first conference in the Afrogalactica series is an introduction to Afrofuturism and develops two main themes. The first is the idea of the black individual as alien. Reviewing the historical experience of African Americans, which is often characterised by a sense of alienation, the conference illustrates how Afrofuturism conveys this consciousness by appropriating the figure of an extraterrestrial. Secondly, the performance traces how the celestial chariot of the bible mutates in African American culture to become the cosmic spaceship as exemplified by the 1970s funk band Parliament.

## Chapter 2: The Black Star Chronicles

The second conference in the Afrogalactica series addresses the construction of gender and race. The conference touches on the work of important science-fiction authors, namely; Octavia Butler and Samuel R. Delany. Borrowing from these writer's female-centred, post-gender and queer narratives, this performance examines themes of reproduction, technological innovation, and miscegenation. Moreover, the figure of the cyborg as both a biological and metaphoric archetype is considered in relation to African and diasporic experiences.

### Chapter 3: The Deep Space Scrolls

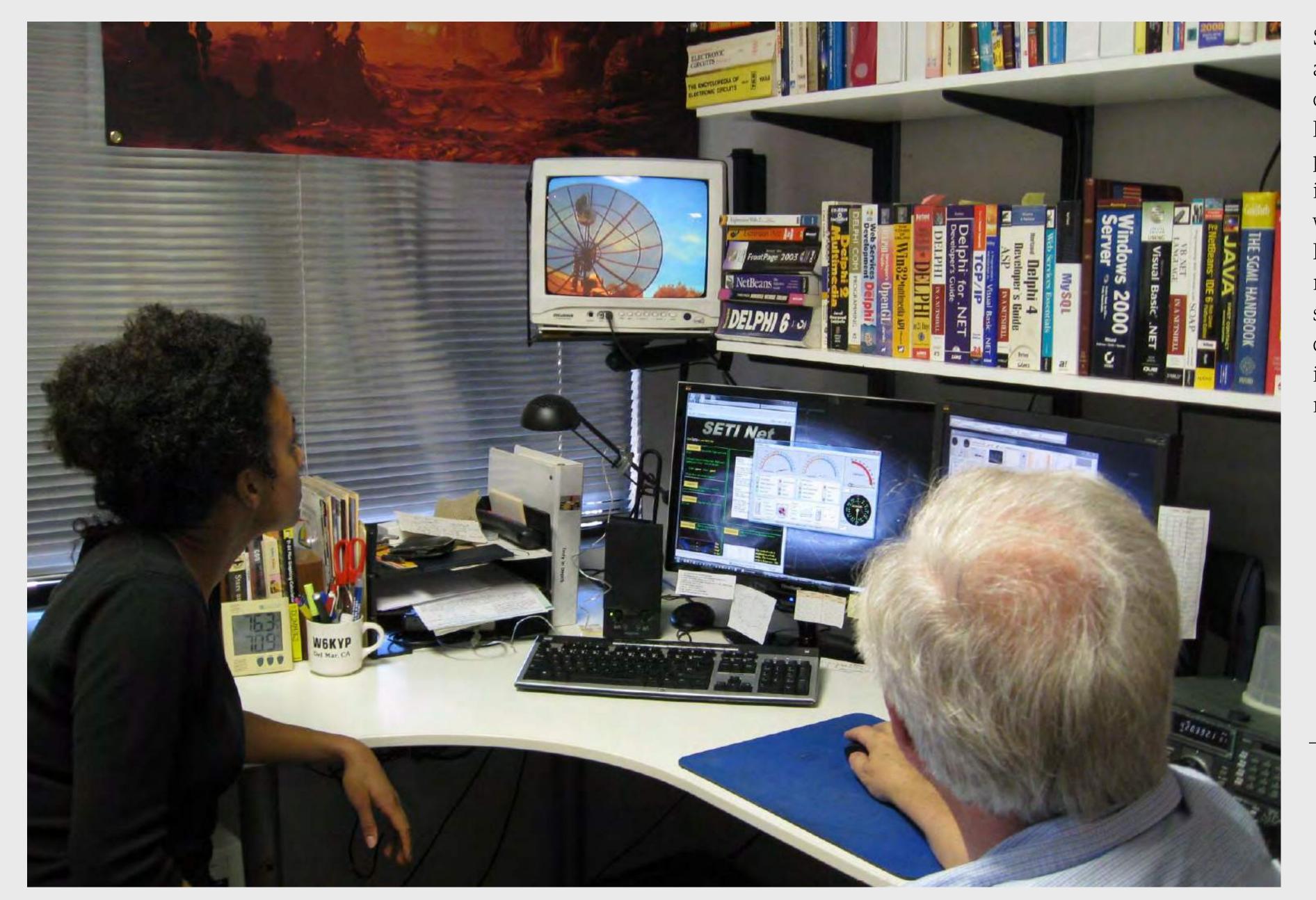
The third of the Afrogalactica performance series focuses on the astronomical heritage from the African continent. The lecture travels through time assessing ancient astronomical observatories in Egypt and Zimbabwe. Considering 20th and 21st century African Space initiatives, Medieval Timbuktu Manuscripts and Dogon cosmologies, the lecture is built around fictional models of "earth-star complexes". This simple device invites the audience to contemplate alternative approaches to intercultural relations and exchange.

Performance view, Afrogalactica





## The Sun Ra Repatriation Project, 2009



Sun Ra was an American musician, composer, and poet who affirmed his extra-terrestrial origin. On the 16 May 2009, The Sun Ra Repatriation Project sent a composite portrait of Sun Ra into deep space. This installation acts as an observation centre in which one awaits a cosmic message from Sun Ra. The sounds heard in the installation are a mix of three VLF (very low frequency) sources obtained from space in real-time. A dot matrix printer continuously records the incoming signals while a video in an adjoining room relates the project's prior stages.

#### Kapwani Kiwanga

The Sun Ra Repatriation Project, 2009 SD video, colour, sound 43' Courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

## **VIEWING ROOM**

www.galeriepoggi.com

## **INQUIRIES**

Contact
Camille Brechignac
c.brechignac@galeriepoggi.com

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