ARCHITECTURAL ECHOTONES. A POETICS OF THE SURROUNDS

Vilanismo

CONSPIRING WITH SAVVY CONTEMPORARY

T A K E O V E R , E X H I B I T I O N , P U B L I C P R O G R A M M E
W I T H Vilanismo and Helcio Barros [honorary member of the brotherhood]

E X H I B T I O N
O N S H O W 11.09.–22.11.2026 Thursday-Sunday 14:00-19:00

T E A M
C O N C E P T & C U R A T I O N Billy Fowo
P R O J E C T M A N A G E M E N T Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock Anna Fasolato
G E N E R A L M A N A G E M E N T Lema Sikod
C O M M U N I C A T I O N & T R A N S L A T I O N Anna Jäger
P R O D U C T I O N T E A M Matthew Hansen Kimani Joseph Rafał Łazar Cau Silva
L I G H T Sanja Gergorić
V I D E O Bert Günther
A C C O U N T I N G Matthias Rademacher
H A N D O U T D E S I G N Matthew Hansen
I N T E R N S H I P Keren Aganyi

C O L L A B O R A T I O N This project is part of Fundação Bienal de São Paulo's travelling exhibitions programme, held since 2011. In its 36th edition, this movement reaches fifteen new territories across Brazil and internationally. The Berlin Edition of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo will be on view at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) from 12.11. to 06.12.2026 – with the exhibition *Not All Travellers Walk Roads – Of Humanity as Practice*.

S U P P O R T The project is supported by the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, the Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt, the Brazilian Embassy in Berlin, SAVVY friends e.V., Zielinsky Gallery, Galerie Barbara Thumm and private donors.

The opening of the exhibition takes place as part of Berlin Art Week.

bienal são paulo

BERLIN ART WEEK 9—13 SEP 2026

This exhibition is dedicated to the loving memory of two dear friends and companions who both left this realm during the mounting of this exhibition:

Franck-Hermann Ekra [1974–2026], a dear friend, companion, deep listener, thinker, adviser, and supporter of Trans-African cultural expressions. Franck, we will be forever grateful for every hour we had with you.

Pretícia Jerônimo da Silva [1983–2026], a photographer, educator, and person of immense generosity. The Vilanismo brotherhood had the joy of being welcomed into one of her final photo shoots. A precious encounter that we will carry with us.

We ask the ancestors to guide your paths as you both journey to the beyond.

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ACTIVATIONS

11.09. 15:00–16:00 SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES
In English With the curator Billy Fowo
At SAVVY

12.09. 15:00–16:00 CONVERSATION
With Vilanismo & Akinbode Akinbiyi, moderated by Billy Fowo
At Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin

13.09. 16:00–17:30 SAVVY TOURS IN SAVVY TONGUES
In Portuguese With Vilanismo
At SAVVY

13.09. 17:30–18:00 *Disslocamento [Dissplacement]*
PERFORMANCE With Rafa Black
At SAVVY

13.09. 18:00–19:00 *Blue Selecta #1: Tudo Fica Blues in Schwarz Weiß*
INSTALLATION ACTIVATION With Diego Crux
At SAVVY

13.09. 19:30 *Our History Books Were Records*
LISTENING SESSION With Ramo
At SAVVY

15.09. 15:00–18:00 *ILÊ – What is home for you?*
WORKSHOP With Ayòkàndé
At SAVVY

ARCHITECTURAL ECHOTONES. A POETICS OF THE SURROUNDS

Concept by Billy Fowo

echo, [ek-oh], noun
a sound heard again near its source after being reflected.
a sympathetic or identical response, as to sentiments expressed.
a lingering trace or effect.

ecotone, [ek-uh-tohn], noun
the zone between two major ecological communities.

ARCHITECTURAL ECHOTONES. A POETICS OF THE SURROUNDS is a project conceived by SAVVY Contemporary in the framework of the 36th São Paulo Biennale's travelling exhibition in Berlin and invites the Brazilian collective Vilanismo to take over the Wedding art space. Conceived as a parallel presentation of the biennial, this project joins a chorus of voices, engaging with diverse audiences across Berlin, and provides a platform to reflect further on a central question posed by the biennial, notably, how can we rethink humanity as a verb and as a living practice that can renegotiate and dismantle prevailing asymmetries?

Taking this cue as a departure point, Architectural Echotones invites the collective Vilanismo, which took part in the São Paulo iteration, to present their works for the first time in Berlin. Founded in 2021 in São Paulo, Vilanismo, a brotherhood composed of ten Black artists all inhabiting several peripheries of the city, emerged not only as an artistic collective but also as a counter-movement. One that seeks, in a climate of exclusion and abusive extraction, to challenge historical stereotypes imposed on black bodies, and create spaces of resistance and gathering rooted within Afro-indigenous knowledge systems.

Leaning into SAVVY Contemporary's subtitle as a Laboratory of Form-Ideas and both institutions' shared interests around spatial strategies, the project is conceived not as a mere exhibition that displays (art) works as finished products, but rather as a laboratory that invites Vilanismo to take over the Berlin premises and inhabit it as a site of experimentation, and as a site subject to transformation, formed to the measure of the people. As a result, our Wedding artspace becomes a living space, a working studio, a gallery, … an echo chamber that pulsates to the rhythm of Vilanismo's social, political, and artistic practices back home in São Paulo, such that the audience, upon entering the space in Berlin, finds themself immersed in a resonant gesture echoing between both cities.

THE SURROUNDS

The notion of echoing, or being in relation, forms a core pillar of Architectural Echotones. Approached from an urbanistic point of view, both Vilanismo – which primarily operates from the outskirts – and SAVVY Contemporary in Wedding – a peripheral neighbourhood – share commonalities based on their geographical locations in São Paulo and Berlin, respectively. Be it in the peripheries, Banlieus, Barrio marginal, or Favelas, as called in other countries, the populations inhabiting these large settlements, often created during Post-war Europe and in more recent times, in certain parts of the Global South, as a means to resolve the alarming housing crisis or demographic booms, have increasingly suffered from stigmatization in various societies. The slow infiltration of new terms such as Brennpunktviertel in Germany or Achterstandswijk in the Netherlands has further consolidated these stigmas within public opinion, such that upward social mobility for the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods often sounds unimaginable.

SAVVY Contemporary, in conversation with Vilanismo, strives for this shared peripheral and situated perspective by reclaiming the "margins" as political centres. We acknowledge the fact that our commonalities find roots in the words of the

philosopher and urbanist AbdouMaliq Simone, who argues in his book *The Surrounds: Urban Life within and beyond Capture*, that the peripheries (or Surrounds as he terms them) are urban spaces beyond control and capture that exist as a locus of rebellion and invention. As such, we draw parallels between the past and the present, the working-class resistance from the then Roter Wedding, and the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto in São Paulo, and pose the fundamental question: what does it mean to inhabit and make cultural work from the Surrounds?

EXHIBITION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Bringing together a constellation of practices spanning installations, paintings, drawings, video works, and on-site performances, Architectural Echotones calls for collective action and reflection. Aligned with S A V V Y's commitment to engage with local audiences – from various age groups, social backgrounds and trajectories – as well as international audiences, the project articulates itself across an exhibition, a public programme that also incorporates the various pillars of S A V V Y , such as the library and the radio station, workshops on Vilanismo's curatorial approach called "curadoTRETA", and online interventions.

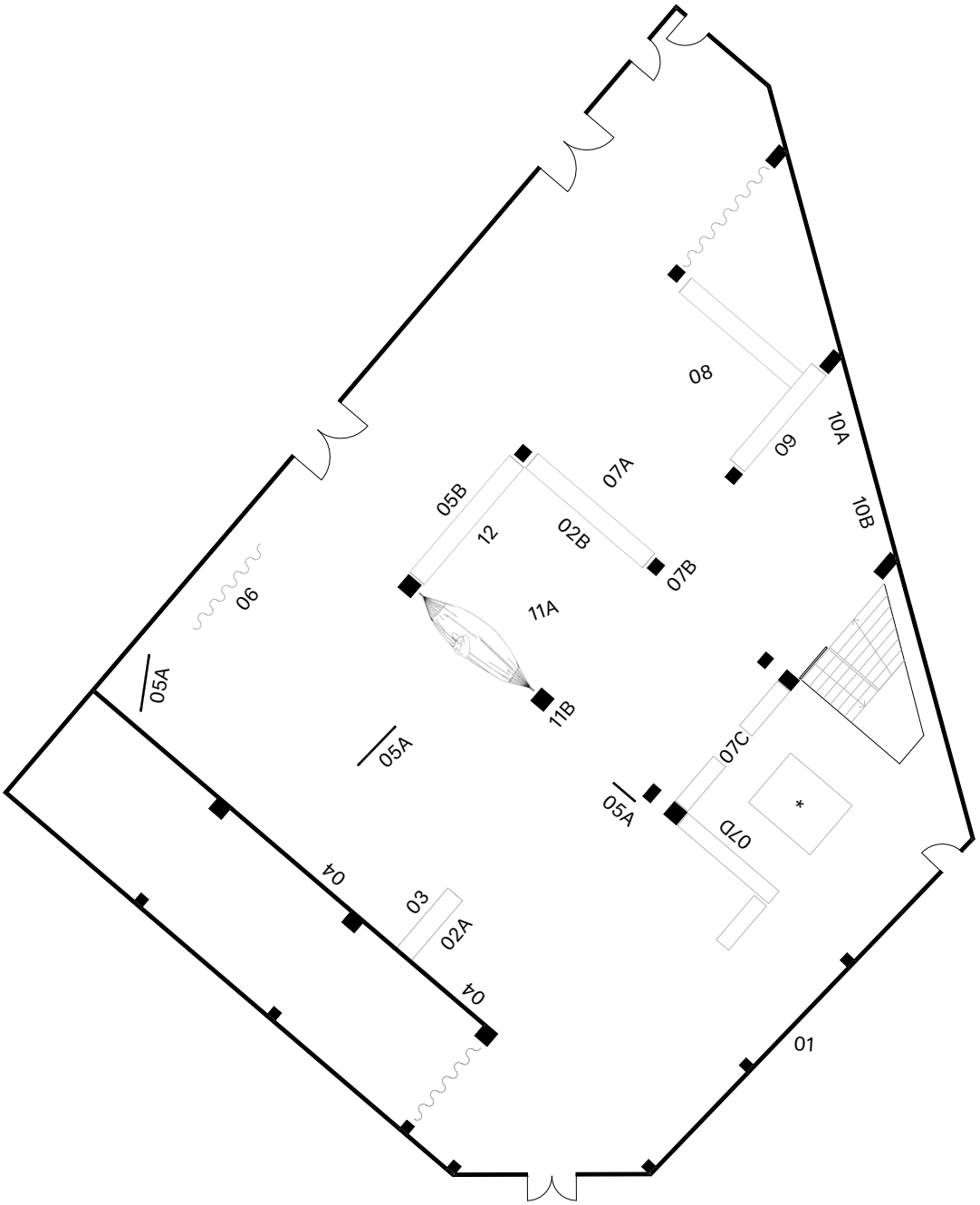
ABOUT VILANISMO

Vilanismo is a brotherhood of 10 Black artists formed in late 2021, whose collective practice addresses issues of race, gender, and class through artistic and curatorial actions. By symbolically reclaiming the term “vilão” (“villain”), the group mobilizes references to peripheral culture, Black masculinities, ancestral knowledge, and Afro-Indigenous experiences to construct an aesthetic and political practice centered on resistance, autonomy, and collective affirmation. Currently, the collective is composed of Ayòkàndé, Carinhoso, Denis Moreira, Diego Crux, Guto Oca, Rafa Black, Ramo, Renan Teles, Robson Marques and Rodrigo Zaim.

In 2025, they took part in the 36th São Paulo Biennial, and this year they were invited as a special project for the 1-54 New York Contemporary African Art Fair.

For this iteration, Vilanismo is joined by honorable villains: Helcio Barros, Douglas Paiva and the Terça Collective – Andreza Delgado, Maria Trindade, Janaína Maria, Luan Cruz, Caroline Sou Cor and Julia Beatriz.

FLOORPLAN



01 V I L A N I S M O
Eu Sou Um Homem [I Am A Man]
2026, screenprint on paper, polyptych, 66 x 48 cm each

02 A Y Ọ̀ K À N D É
02A *ILÊ – What is home to you?*
2026, installation, neon LED, wood and paint, 167 × 159 cm
From the series Palavra-Escultura

02B *Oxê Branco & Oxê Vermelho*
2026, Screen printing on paper, 48 × 66 cm

02C *Tridente de Exu*
2026, site–specific installation, neon LED, wood and paint, 75 × 128 cm
From the series *Ferramentas de poder*

03 D O U G L A S P A I V A
Desobediência Próspera [Prosperous Disobedience]
2026, painting, acrylic, fabric and stitching on canvas, 150 x 70 cm

Untitled
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm
From the series *ILEBA*

Untitled
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 25 x 25 cm
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2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm
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2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 67 x 62 cm

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2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 77 x 55 cm

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2016–2025, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 9,5 x 6 cm

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Alephonte
2022, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 9 x 9 cm

Superalephonte 40
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 84 x 48 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm

05 RENAN TELES
05A All works from the series *Esmeraldas não é Cohab porque tem elevador* [We are not poor, we have elevators]

Gabi Canuto e Iúna
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 180 x 150 cm

Jordan, bloco 11
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 150 x 150 cm

Mari na cozinha-sala
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 150 x 140 cm

05B *Waterfall*
2026, painting, oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm
From the series *I searched for "Africa" on a porn site*

06 VILANISMO
Family albums
2022–ongoing, three albums with one hundred pictures, 10 x 15 cm each

Terça a gente vê [Tuesday we'll see]
2026, book with 116 pages, 25 x 25 cm

07 ROBSON MARQUES
07A from left to right
Carta dos Yishma'elitas a Nabucodonosor. Permaneceremos no jardim
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 100 × 80 cm

Selo na tua mão
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, set consisting of two 40 × 40 cm canvases and a diptych formed by two 40 × 80 cm canvases, with a total dimension of 80 × 80 cm

07B *De todos os santos da Silva Souza*
2026, installation, fabric: Bahia football jersey, metal, assorted beads, 40 × 70 cm

07C *Penuel – Contemplado / Glück gehabt!*
2026, sign, acrylic on wood, 30 × 20 cm

07D *Aqui, a terra não se venderá em perpetuidade*
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 40 × 60 cm

08 D I E G O C R U X
[From left to right to ceiling]
Untitled (Calado 1 Poeta)
2023, self-portrait, fine art print on cotton paper, 20 x 30 cm

La trahison des imaginaires
2026, diptych, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 60 cm (each)

Untitled from the "Muscular Dreams" series
2026, chalk and lime on Fabriano Disegno Nero paper, 30 × 42 cm

Tudo fica blue [Everything Turns Blue]
2020, interactive digital piece on screen

May Mário Mãos [May Mário Hands]
2026, two poem excerpts and acrylic on tracing paper

*Esse corpo de ***** que tu vê, é apenas a imagem do que sou*
*[That ***** body you see is just the image of who I am]*
2019, print on fabric, 120 x 80 cm

09 D E N I S M O R E I R A
Identity and Revelation Series
2026, lenticular prints on acrylic glass, variable dimensions, and video on ipad, 28 sec (looped)

10 G U T O O C A
10A *Tecido Social* [Social Fabric]
2026, multi media work, oil, hair, slippers, coal, soil and cachaça in fabric, 100 x 160 cm

10B *Augosto*
2026, installation, Fabric, hair, and wood, 300 x 50 cm

10C *Daltonismo Racial (Cor que não vejo)*
2026, painting, Oil and charcoal on fabric, je 30 x 30 cm

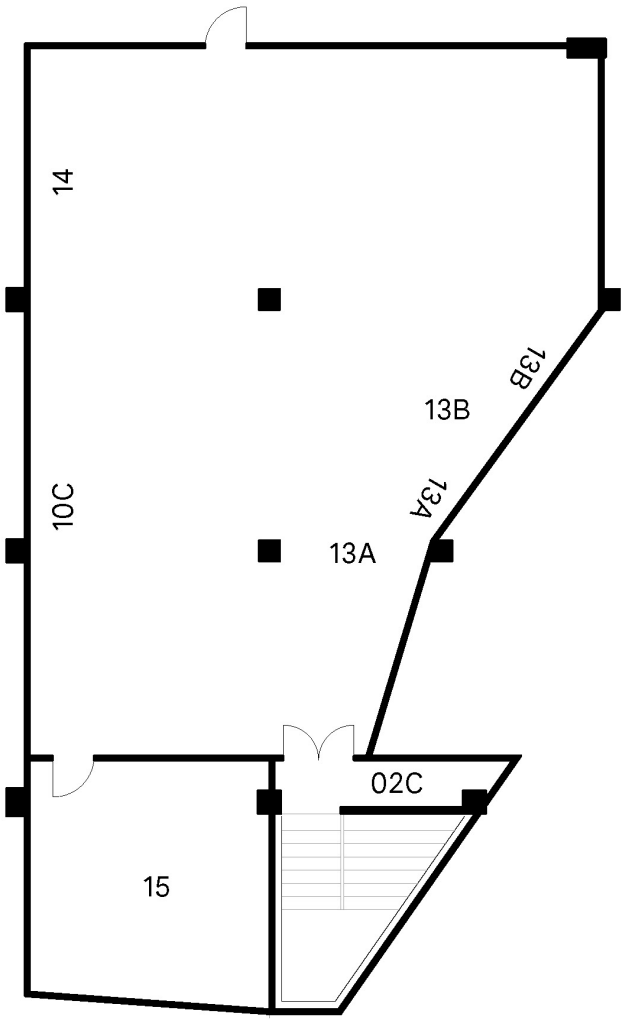
11 R A M O
11A *Acadêmicos do Vilanismo – Pedagogingas 01#*
2026, Installation (comprising 21 vinyl records from the artist's collection, decorative shelving, rugs, the sculpture Estação A Mestre Mimo carved in carranca relief, a shelf with a polychrome wood image of São Benedito, and books from the artist's collection), variable dimensions, from the artist's collection

11B *Rosary and Good Death. A tribute to Black brotherhoods*
2026, diptych, polychrome wooden cylinder, cement, chess pieces, folded iron sheet, 162 x 23 cm
From the series *Economic Essays*

12 B L A C K R A M O
Untitled
2025/2026, paintings, acrylic and pastel on paper, 20 x 30 cm

* S A V V Y . D O C
Display of selected books

FLOORPLAN



13 RODRIGO ZAIM
13A *Rebote*
2026, painting, acrylic paint, oil stick, pastel and monotype using Gardenal blister packs on canvas, 80 × 60 cm

Rebote
2025/2026, paintings, acrylic paint, pastel and monotype using Gardenal blister packs on assorted papers, variable dimensions

13 B *Cachorro Loko – Invisível Social Super Exposto*
2026, digital photographs printed on glossy paper, 20 × 15 cm

Cachorro Loko
2026, video, color, 5:34 min

Cachorro Loko
2026, installation, delivery bags, variable dimensions

14 RAFA BLACK
From left to right
Huey, ALN, Quiksilver
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 70 x 50 cm
From the *Distraction and Retaliation* series

Lélia, Mizuno, Tiger
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 70 x 50 cm

Oakley-Ashanti
2026, Screen printing, 48 × 66 cm

BOSS-Benin head
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 47 x 33 cm

Oakley-Ashanti
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 47 x 33 cm

Se armando
2024, vídeo of a performance, 3:23 min

Mizuno
2026, installation, sneaker and soil, variable dimensions
From the *Pisantes de 1000* series

15 V I L A N I S M O
500 Braças
2026, video of a performance, 3:13 min

Juras Fraternas (Fraternal Oaths)
2025, video, 10:07 min

Vilanismo (CNTR Manifesto)
2022, video, Carandiru, São Paulo, 2:12 min

Black men from the hood cleaning the headquarters of the National Arts Foundation (FUNARTE)
2023, video, 2:21 min

Cortejo Negro (Edição IMS) [Black Procession (IMS Edition)]
2024, video, 2:44 min

WORK DESCRIPTION AND BIOS

01 VILANISMO
Eu Sou Um Homem [I Am A Man]
2026, screenprint on paper, polyptych, 66 x 48 cm each

I Am a Man consists of placards bearing striking phrases that also function as a fragmented manifesto. They reframe the iconography of civil rights struggles – inspired by the historic "I Am a Man" placard from Memphis, 1968 – through the perspective of Black men from the outskirts of Brazilian cities.

02 AYỌKÀNDÉ
02A *ILÊ – What is home to you?*
2026, installation, neon LED, wood and paint,
167 × 159 cm
From the series *Palavra-Escultura*

In the Yoruba language, "Ilé" means house or home. In traditional terreiro communities in Brazil, the term is often used to name the various axé houses, physical spaces where religious practices and other political, social and cultural practices of Black and Indigenous resistance take place. At SAVVY Contemporary, the work was constructed with the wood already present in the space. Holes were not covered, nor cracks and marks left by the previous uses of these materials, which now carry a new meaning.

"During the installation of the exhibition, one of the members of the mounting team, Rafal, told me that, in his native language, Polish, the word 'ile' means 'how much' and is used to formulate questions. 'How much does this house cost?', he asked me. I kept thinking: anywhere on the planet, who can actually buy or build a house? As a Black Brazilian man, I never imagined that I would feel at home in Europe. But here in Berlin, living alongside accents, flavors, smells and people from all corners of the world, I understood that home is the place we build with love and collectivity. What is home to you?"

About the series *Palavra-Escultura: Since Exu é amor* (2024), the first work in this series, the artist has been discussing how form, sound, content and meaning can merge into a single sculpture. One of the main premises of his artistic practice is the concept of updating and renewal as forms of continuity. For this, he uses contemporary materials such as neon LED lights to tell stories and share ancestral knowledge.

02B *Oxê Branco & Oxê Vermelho*
2026, screen printing on paper, 48 × 66 cm

These works were created during the artistic residency carried out by the Vilanismo brotherhood at the invitation of Instituto Confluir and CEAS. Made in the city of Curitiba in July 2026, the work shows a representation of the Oxê, a tool used by the orixás Xangô and Airá, both of whom are connected to justice and governance. In Afro-Brazilian religious practices, both are represented by the colors red (or brown) and white. Formally, the works reflect on these sister forms and the way in which solids and voids can construct forms, lines and blocks of color.

02C *Tridente de Exu*
2026, site–specific installation, neon LED, wood and paint,
75 × 128 cm
From the series *Ferramentas de poder*

Exu is the mouth that eats everything, the orixá of paths and crossroads. In many Afro-Brazilian traditions, some of the best-known representations of Exu are the trident and a phallus with gourds. Thus, Exu is often, in a racist manner, associated with the devil, a figure that exists only for Christians. In this piece, the artist uses the form usually sculpted in metal to create a sculpture of wood and light. Exu is not the devil.

About *Ferramentas de poder*: In this series, Ayọ̀kàndé uses the concept of sampling, derived from Afro-diasporic musicality, which occurs when a part of a song is used to create another one. In the same way, he appropriates the traditional tools of the orixás and uses them as samples to construct sculptures that employ contemporary materials to remake these weapons, objects and ancestral tools present in Black-Brazilian traditional communities.

AYỌKÀNDÉ is a visual artist, poet and cultural manager as well as Ìyàwó at Ilé Àṣẹ Ẹ̀fọ̀n Oloroke Omi Ọba Inà (Oloroke Omibainà). In diaspora, his artistic practice constructs a terreiro poetics that intersects the knowledge of traditional terreiro communities with the languages of contemporary art. With the Vilanismo brotherhood, he participated in the 36th São Paulo Biennial, as well as exhibitions and residencies at Funarte, Museu Paranaense, Galeria Zielinsky, among other projects and occupations. Individually, he has participated in exhibitions at Centro Cultural São Paulo, Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto and Museu Afro Brasil Emanoel Araujo, where he has a work in the permanent collection. He holds a Master's degree in Social Anthropology and is currently a PhD candidate in Arts at Unesp and a member of the Egungun research

group. He is a researcher at the Research and Training Center of Sesc-SP. He was published in volume 45 of Cadernos Negros and in other literary anthologies.

03 DOUGLAS PAIVA
Desobediência Próspera [Prosperous Disobedience]
2026, painting, acrylic, fabric and stitching on canvas, 150 x 70 cm

Untitled
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm
From the series *ILEBA*

Untitled
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 25 x 25 cm
From the series *ILEBA*

Untitled
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm
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2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 25 x 25 com
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The work *Desobediência Próspera* is part of the concept of Baile Visual (Visual Baile) developed by Douglas Paiva, in which conflict, redemption, and faith are articulated through the body and its attire. The relationship between these elements is constructed through the use of textiles, understood as a gesture of disobedience toward the expectations and narratives imposed upon certain bodies and territories.

The fabric used in the work evokes garments widely worn at bailes funks in São Paulo – community-centered funk dance parties and cultural gatherings – often associated with stigmatized and marginalized representations. By displacing these elements into the field of art, the artist proposes new possibilities of interpretation, in which body, attire, and territory operate together, understanding clothing as an expression of a subversive cultural identity.

Together, the five works form the landscape series entitled *ILEBA*, an imagined territory conceived to consecrate the invisibilized body in its wholeness and integrity. The series is constructed around the mystery that permeates spaces of celebration within Brazilian cultural manifestations and the convergences of the sacred. It reflects upon the visualities produced by sacredness while questioning to whom sacredness belongs within the social subconscious.

DOUGLAS PAIVA was born and raised in Jardim Peri, a peripheral neighborhood in the northern zone of São Paulo. He is a visual artist whose research constructs a visual language that explores conflict, redemption, and faith. His work seeks to re-signify peripheral experiences and spaces historically denied to these bodies, developing new possibilities of representation for the contemporary periphery in dialogue with ancestral traditions. His practice unfolds through painting, installation, materiality, and textile practices, in which marginalized garments are elevated to the status of sacred vestments. Through these languages, he proposes new social readings of peripheral subjects and their territories.

04 HELCIO BARROS
Superalephonte 51
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 67 x 62 cm

Superalephonte 24
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 70 x 70 cm

Superalephonte 50
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 77 x 55 cm

Superalephonte 53
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 72 x 55 cm

Superalephonte 34
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 70 x 70 cm

Alephonte 46
2016–2025, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 9,5 x 6 cm

Alephonte 43
2016, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 12,2 x 7,5 cm

Superalephonte 39
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 84 x 60 cm

Superalephonte 27
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 87 x 48 cm

Alephonte 39
2023, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 14,5 x 11 cm

Alephonte 84
2016–2025, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 8 x 15,5 cm

Superalephonte 44
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 53 x 44 cm

Alephonte
2016, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 15 x 11,5 cm

Superalephonte 48
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 87 x 48 cm

Alephonte
2022, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 9 x 9 cm

Superalephonte 40
2023–25, painting, acrylic and oil stick on cardboard cutout, 84 x 48 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm

The history of 1980s art continues to attract attention because it remains unresolved. Rather than representing a single movement or style, the decade condensed multiple artistic responses to a rapidly changing world. While Europe and North America often frame the period through debates surrounding painting and postmodernism, Brazil experienced these transformations in the context of political democratization, cultural renewal, and the emergence of new artistic freedoms. It is from this context that the work of Helcio Barros emerges.

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1956 and now based in São Paulo, Barros began his artistic practice in the early 1980s while working as a Bank employee and studying film. At his desk, between professional duties, he drew whenever possible. Using graphite and oil pastel on pieces of cardboard, he developed a universe populated by abstract beings, hybrid creatures, birds, and enigmatic forms that continue to inhabit his work today.

When looking back at those early drawings, one has the impression that they already contained the foundations of everything that would follow. The image that best describes this trajectory is perhaps the Aleph, borrowed from Jorge Luis Borges: a crystal sphere in the history that contains all other points simultaneously, making visible every place, every moment, and every possibility at once.

From those modest drawings of the 1980s, one can almost glimpse the artist's future: the years spent living in the Dominican Republic; the fluency in German; the construction of a highly distinctive visual language; the studies at Parque Lage, the move to São Paulo; the collaborations with the Vilanismo collective; the exhibitions and recognitions that would arrive decades later. Seen through the lens of the Aleph, Barros's artistic journey appears less as a sequence of events than as a continuous unfolding of possibilities that were already present from the beginning.

Yet another concept helps illuminate this trajectory: Sankofa, the Akan principle that teaches the importance of returning to recover what has been forgotten. If the Aleph represents total vision, Sankofa represents historical memory. Together they offer a way of understanding both Barros's work and the renewed attention it receives today.

Showing these paintings and drawings in Berlin is therefore more than an act of international circulation. It creates a dialogue between different histories of the 1980s. At a moment when the decade is being reassessed globally, Barros's work reveals a perspective formed in Brazil during a period of profound political and cultural transformation. His paintings remind us that the history of contemporary art was never singular; it developed simultaneously across multiple geographies, each with its own urgencies, imaginaries, and forms of experimentation.

There is also a particular resonance in presenting these works in Berlin. Like Brazil, Germany experienced the 1980s as a period of transition, uncertainty, and historical reconfiguration. Seen from Berlin today, Barros's paintings offer an encounter with another history of that decade – one shaped by different conditions yet animated by similar questions about freedom, imagination, and the possibilities of artistic expression.

Between Aleph and Sankofa, between vision and memory, lies the work of Helcio Barros: a poetic universe that has remained remarkably consistent across four decades. His paintings do not simply revisit the spirit of the 1980s; they reveal how that spirit continues to generate new meanings in the present, opening itself once again to a multitude of birds, alephontes, and super-alephontes.
– Text by André Pitol

H E L C I O B A R R O S is a visual artist and writer born in Rio de Janeiro and currently living in São Paulo. His artistic trajectory began in the early 1980s, a moment marked by the democratization of Brazil as well as the international paradigm of painting as an expressive medium. In that field, the former civil servant engaged in drawing and studied film at the university. His path for the arts was continuous, even when not perceived by the artistic scene, he began producing small drawings in between work and has participated in solo and group exhibitions.

Four decades separates that moment from the year of 2026, when in the context of the 36th Bienal de São Paulo, his work was part of a tribute proposed by the collective Vilanismo, who paid homage to his mastery and dedication as an act of historical repair to an artist who inspires them.

05 R E N A N T E L E S
05A *Gabi Canuto e Iúna*
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 180 x 150 cm

Jordan, bloco 11
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 150 x 150 cm

Mari na cozinha-sala
2026, photography, inkjet on paper, 150 x 140 cm

All works from the series *Esmeraldas não é Cohab porque tem elevador* [We are not poor, we have elevators]

We are not poor, we have elevators is an ongoing project started in 2018 at the Esmeraldas Housing Complex (Conjunto Habitacional das Esmeraldas), where Renan Teles has lived since childhood – a condominium built by the state government in the mid-1980s, with eleven twelve-storey towers and more than 500 apartments in Itaquera, a peripheral neighborhood of São Paulo city.

The desire to work with his own housing complex stemmed from a mixed feeling of inability to leave his parents' house at thirty years old, the shame that this carries, and the privilege of having grown up with security despite the neighborhood's violence, and with the areas for leisure that a gated community offers, in contrast to the lack of squares and parks in its surrounding.

The photographs portrait young adults who, like the artist when he started the project, still live with their parents. Starting first with portraits of these friends and neighbors in their homes, Renan Teles moved on to create encounters where fictional scenes could be created. The works became micro-short stories that grow toward poetry.

"I realized that with my lack of money I should work with what I had the greatest access to. Maybe that way I could dedicate myself more than other projects I had in mind that demanded greater financial stability. Since then, I have been welcomed into dozens of apartments by the Esmeraldas neighbors. The idea was always to photograph them at home and, as people became interested in the project, I would start gathering them for more complex photographs throughout the condominium, creating expansive narrative scenes and moving step by step away from documentary photography."

05B *Waterfall*
2026, painting, oil on canvas, 200 x 150 cm
From the series *I searched for "Africa" on a porn site*

I searched for "Africa" on a porn site is an ongoing series started in 2020, featuring oil paintings of various sizes, created from a video found when searching the term "Africa" on a porn site. In the continuous investigation of these scenes, the artist deepens and expands the original narrative, looking for ways to deal with both immense beauty and multiple contradictions at the same time.

In this work, the artist addresses historical and current issues, bringing autobiographical references and themes such as racism, masculinity, and the diaspora itself. Thinking of Brazil as a colonized country that has maintained an evident project of attempting to whiten the population, Renan Teles approaches these issues from the point of view of a Black man whose partner is a white woman. Growing up in a predominantly Black and Afro-Indigenous outskirts of São Paulo, he knows how ingrained the perception is, that it is better to have a white partner as a means (or result) of social mobility for oneself or one's offspring. On the other hand, on a less social and more personal level, problematizing the relationship of a mature couple is a great contradiction in itself.
The narrative of this series exposes the fetishization of the Black man as an animalistic, virile, hypersexual being while demonstrating the idealization of the white woman as the pinnacle of beauty and innocence. It also reveals the romanticism of an Africa stagnated in a pre-colonization past. Contradictorily, these issues are also absorbed by Black people of the diaspora, and now passed along to younger generations through pornography. At last, all of this becomes a theme for landscape oil paintings that talk about desire and power dynamics, on what we could call "Fanonian landscapes".

R E N A N T E L E S is a Brazilian visual artist whose practice spans photography and painting. His visual research investigates storytelling, community building, and the tensions between documentary and fiction. His work is also deeply informed by literary references, particularly authors such as Octavia Butler, Dany Laferrière, and Frantz Fanon.

Renan Teles is a member of Vilanismo, a brotherhood of Black artists that bridges political action with the codes of contemporary art. His works propose an affective listening to territories and histories that resist erasure. In 2025, he participated in the 36th Bienal de São Paulo alongside Vilanismo.

06 V I L A N I S M O
Family albums
2022–ongoing, three albums with one hundred pictures, 10 x 15 cm each

Since the beginning of Vilanismo in 2022, we felt that something very special and even historical was happening. Although we always worked with photography in our practice, for the first time we really wanted to use photography in order to document what was happening, instead of creating art works through photography. We then started by using a folder where we could all store the images we created during every encounter or action we had that week, so it would be organized online and we could access it in the future.

And more and more, as the months went by and the spaces we occupied carried new stories, and our

community grew, we wanted to have a way to share those stories in a meaningful way. Then for the first time, for the São Paulo Biennial, we compiled these family albums, with one hundred pictures each. There, we shared four of these albums, then two at 1-54 New York, three at Museu Paranaense, and now three different ones for our exhibition here at S A V V Y Contemporary.

Terça a gente vê [Tuesday we'll see]
2026, books with 116 pages, 25 x 25 cm

Tuesday we'll see was born out of the initiative and mobilization of a group of Black women – Andreza Delgado, Caroline Sou Cor, Jana Maria, Julia Beatriz, and Maria Trindade – alongside Luan Cruz, Renan Teles and Rodrigo Zaim. Their proposal was to create a horizontal study group within Vilanismo's routine and physical space, deepening perspectives and exchanges around a shared interest: photography, happening every Tuesday. The collective emerged right after an initial series of eight sessions, meeting weekly wherever Vilanismo would be installed at the time, and is already heading into its 18th month of activity.

The book presented here was conceptualized and produced by all the members of the collective within Vilanismo invitation to show at S A V V Y Contemporary. We at Vilanismo created Acadêmicos do Vilanismo/ Villains Academia to bring together our educational potential and the collective, mutual-aid logic of mutirão. We continue building this practice to establish an intuitive, formative, and truly welcoming space for Black, Afro-Indigenous, and peripheral bodies.

07 R O B S O N M A R Q U E S
07A from left to right:
Carta dos Yishma'elitas a Nabucodonosor. Permaneceremos no jardim
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 100 × 80 cm

Selo na tua mão
2026, paintings, acrylic on canvas, set consisting of two 40 × 40 cm canvases and a diptych formed by two 40 × 80 cm canvases, with a total dimension of 80 × 80 cm

1. *Anel / Infância / Dom Pedro II [Ring / Childhood / Dom Pedro II]*
A ring can be a toy, a promise, belonging, or power. Even before knowing the weight it carries, a child can place it on a finger and play being someone else. In the Bible, when the son returns home after leaving, the father orders the best clothes, sandals for his feet, and a ring for his hand. The ring gives the son a place again. After all, he still belongs.

In other hands, the same small circle comes to signify authority, name, brotherhood, and knowledge. History also placed such rings in the hands of kings. Dom Pedro II's hand, molded when he was fifteen, preserves the mark of an authority entrusted to him while he was still a boy. A child of the Crown, he was prepared to govern before he could choose what to do with that responsibility. Childhood does not disappear; it is covered by power.

There are other hands that also learn too early. Hands that hold money before toys, that care for siblings, that work, that learn how to return home, that discover in the street what no one should have to learn at such a young age. The hands of children who begin to carry responsibilities they did not choose.

On one of these hands, a child's ring. Small, plastic, almost a toy. Yet it contains other worlds: the Five Percent, its mathematics and alphabets, its codes of knowledge and belonging; the rings and insignia of Black communities, forms of recognition among those who share a history.

Some children receive a crown and others receive responsibilities. Between the two remains the same hand: too small for the weight entrusted to it.

2. *Anel De Chiclete / 5% / Alfabetização Simbólica [Bubble-Gum Ring / 5% / Symbolic Literacy]*
It comes inside the bubble gum. The child opens the wrapper, finds a small plastic ring, and puts it on a finger. A fake stone, any color, a cheap shine. For a few minutes, it can be a jewel, a crown, an object of power. Then the gum is gone, the ring may be lost, but the image remains.

The child learns early that some things carry meanings. A letter can represent an idea. A number can hold knowledge. An image can identify a person or a group. Before literacy in words, there is a literacy of signs, also built through play.

On this small ring we see the 5, the V, and the X – symbols associated with the language of the Nation of Gods and Earths, also known as the Five Percent Nation. In Supreme Mathematics, 5 represents Power and Refinement. In the Supreme Alphabet, V is Victory and X is the Unknown. Three simple signs condense ideas that can be learned, shared, and recognized by those who know this code.

When these symbols occupy a child's ring, a language of knowledge meets an object created for fantasy. The number and letters leave the page and move onto the finger. They can be worn, displayed, exchanged, and recognized. The child plays with the object while the symbol carries a history much larger than the child.

The bubble-gum ring becomes a small insignia. It has no gold, no material value, and grants no authority. Even so, it teaches one of the oldest functions of symbols: to mark an identity, create recognition, and say that there is a place to which one belongs.

The candy disappears. The ring remains on the finger for a little longer.

And it is in this interval between play and meaning that a form of literacy begins: learning that what we carry can also say who we are.

3. *Anel / Irmandade / Vilanismo [Ring / Brotherhood / Vilanismo]*
Long before a ring carried the name of a fraternity, Black communities were already creating their own forms of recognition, protection, and belonging.

In slaveholding Brazil, the Brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men and other Black confraternities created their own spaces for sociability, devotion, mutual aid, and organization. There, Black people built forms of recognition and belonging within a society that denied them such places. Festivals, rituals, clothing, and insignia made the community visible and affirmed a collective existence.

In other territories of the Black diaspora, this language took other forms. In the Nation of Islam, signet rings, logos, and other objects participated in a visual culture of identification. In Black Greek-Letter Organizations, letters, colors, emblems, and insignia came to mark Black fraternities and sororities. Nine of these organizations would form the National Pan-Hellenic Council, known as the Divine Nine.

The object changes. The need for recognition remains.

A letter can carry a history. An emblem can reveal an affiliation. A ring can make visible a relationship that does not need to be announced. Its value is not necessarily in the metal, but in what can be recognized by those who know the symbol.

This ring draws from that history without belonging to any of those traditions. It comes close to them through one shared idea: brotherhood.

In Vilanismo, this word takes on another form. Eleven Black artists recognize one another as a community and build their own codes, their own language, and their own name. The phrase ”O risco nos une” (the line/ the risk unites us) taken from the Vilanismo Counter-Manifesto, marks the finger as a signal of commitment.

The line crosses each trajectory in a different way. When several lines meet, they cease to be isolated marks and begin to form a figure.

The ring is this closed figure.

A line that returns to its starting point. A mark that what each person carries can also form a we.

07B *De todos os santos da Silva Souza [Of all the Saints of Silva Souza]*
2026, installation, Bahia football jersey, metal, assorted beads, 40 × 70 cm

Bahia was once called “Bahia of All Saints” – an old name, almost forgotten in everyday use, but one that still echoes in nicknames and expressions. The title of the work begins with this historical and popular layer of the name in order to reflect on the relationship between territory, family, faith, and belonging.

A football jersey can also carry a name – and sometimes more than one: the name of a saint, a state, a family, a team. In the installation, the jersey no longer dresses a figure; it occupies the space on its own, suspended from a hanger. The body remains absent, but its presence is summoned by the shape of the clothing and by what it carries.

For many boys, a football team is also a place of welcome – sometimes the first, alongside one’s own family, where belonging is felt before it can even be understood. The jersey preserves this affective dimension, but shifts it from the individual body toward a kind of collective figure: it can be worn by many, remembered by many, and recognized by those who share an origin, a team, or a history.

The beads and necklaces sit in the place of the neck and chest, coming close to the body without fully reconstructing it. The installation is also made of presence and absence: some objects are there, others are not; the ensemble is reorganized from what could be gathered. This difference does not undo the work. On the contrary, it makes visible that belonging, protection, and memory do not depend on a perfect totality.

The beads carry the dimensions of faith, protection, and connection with the sacred. On the jersey, they meet the signs of football and the phrase “Of all the Saints of Silva Souza” which can be read simultaneously as origin, surname, allegiance, or invocation. The objects do not resolve these possibilities; they keep them open and in circulation.

The installation does not simply represent someone wearing the jersey. It presents the jersey itself as a possible body – an absent body, yet still recognizable; a body constructed through language, objects, and the names that pass through it.

The installation sets a question into circulation: What can a name gather when it appears on a jersey and among objects of faith? Perhaps the answer lies precisely in this overlap – in the possibility that a state, a family, a team, a saint, and a person can occupy the same place without ceasing to be different.

Within its absence the jersey continues to say: there is a place, there is a history, there is a faith, and there are many possible names for belonging.

07C *Penuel – Contemplado / Glück gehabt!*
2026, sign, acrylic on wood, 30 × 20 cm

Once, someone almost fell but did not. Almost lost but did not. Almost failed to arrive but arrived.

Later, telling the story to others, this person did not say they had won. They only said: Glück gehabt – they got lucky. Not the luck of someone who wins a prize, but the luck of someone who comes out alive from danger, looking back without quite knowing how.

And when they finally stopped – truly stopped, without rushing – they simply stayed there looking. At the path they had traveled, at the place where they had arrived, at the people around them.

Contemplado, then, became both things at once: the one who was chosen, and the one who stops in order to look.

Rarely because of luck, often in spite of it.

07D *Aqui, a terra não se venderá em perpetuidade*
2026, painting, acrylic on canvas, 40 × 60 cm

TIME magazine's red border, created in 1927, became one of the magazine's most recognizable marks and also a form of framing: whatever sits inside it is presented as an event, as something worth seeing and recording.

In this work, that space is occupied only by brown. Brown is a color that runs through my practice and carries relationships with the land, the skin, memory, and the place I come from. But I also think of it through the idea of non-place: places and people who are often perceived through lack, distance, or what they supposedly do not possess in order to be recognized as a legitimate place.

Feira de Santana, the interior of Bahia, peripheral spaces, and so many other places people like me come from can be treated as an interval between places – a place of passage, of origin, but not necessarily as a destination or a center.

What interests me is reversing that logic.

What is called a non-place is, for those who live there, a place. It is where memory happens, where relationships are built, where life begins, and where a history is produced.

By occupying the structure of a TIME cover only with brown colour, I am not trying to turn this place into news. I am trying to question the very framing that determines what can be seen as an event, as territory, and as part of our time.

Here, brown does not represent a place.
It is the place.

R O B S O N M A R Q U E S is a visual artist working in painting and sculpture. Born in Feira de Santana, Bahia, he is now based in São Paulo. His path included years of work in construction before he trained in graphic design, product design, and advertising – an experience that runs through his artistic practice, both in his interest in ornament and materiality and in his reflection on who builds Brazilian cities.

His research begins with the popular traditions of Brazil's Northeast – religious imagery and street culture – and with the experience of a migrant in major urban centers. In his paintings, these layers sometimes merge: traditions that persist and are reconfigured in other territories, and distinct traditions that meet and generate something new. Both movements coexist, depending on the work. This repertoire is complemented by a dialogue with scholarly references, proposing symbolic shifts between the "high" and the popular.

08 D I E G O C R U X
from left to right to ceiling:
Untitled (Calado 1 Poeta)
2023, self-portrait, fine art print on cotton paper, 20 x 30 cm

Addressing Pelé, Romário said that the "Athlete of the Century, when silent, is a poet," in response to Pelé's suggestion that he should retire. This phrase becomes a starting point to think about silence both as a poetic expression and as an absence of political and social positioning – and the structures that produce such silences.

A counterpoint emerges in Reinaldo's gesture of celebrating his goals with a raised fist in reference to the Black Panthers. During the military dictatorship, a silent gesture could say a great deal and also provoke repression.

The numeral "1" refers to the goalkeeper's position, historically marked by expectations of trust and little room for error for Black players, such as Barbosa, or also Aranha, whose denunciation of a racist incident ultimately marked his public trajectory more than his achievements as a player.

La trahison des imaginaires
2026, diptych, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 60 cm (each)

The work operates as a radicalization of René Magritte's gesture in "La trahison des images". While maintaining the formal rigor, proportions, and graphic layout of the 1929 canvases, the diptych replaces figuration with a non-image: two rectangles crossed out by an edge-to-edge "X." In place of a body for visual consumption, a gap opens

up – one to be filled by the viewer's own projections and biases.

The piece confronts the immediate apprehension of otherness through two negative inscriptions: the theoretical solemnity of the French "Ceci n'est pas moi" and the urgent, colloquial, and profane tone of the Portuguese "Ça'porra num sou eu" [That fucking thing isn't me]. By shifting the discussion to "imaginaries" in the plural, Crux challenges the frameworks, stereotypes, and preconceived readings imposed upon Black and racialized bodies.

The work establishes itself as a direct extension of the research begun in "esse corpo de ***** que tu vê, é apenas a imagem do que sou" (2019). If in the previous work the artist created tension around naming and capture through a faceless self-portrait and a fragmentary title, in 2026 he radicalizes this refusal: he removes the body entirely and erects the "X" – another gap, yet one now inhabited and beyond the illusion of representations and the expectations of others.

Untitled
2026, chalk and lime on Fabriano Disegno Nero paper, 30 × 42 cm
From the *Muscular Dreams* series

This series draws on Frantz Fanon's notion of "muscular dreams": "The dreams of the colonial subject are muscular dreams, dreams of action, aggressive dreams. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, and climbing. I dream I burst out laughing (...). During colonization the colonized subject frees himself night after night between nine in the evening and six in the morning." (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.15)

The series takes the artist's own body as matrix and stamp: it is through his presence, pressure, and exertion that the images are produced on paper.

In this process, the body is simultaneously subject and tool, surface and imprint. The works articulate desire, repulsion, exertion, labor, and freedom. Thinking of the dream as flight – as a space for action and the cultivation of fugitive gestures that, during waking hours, are contained, disciplined, or interrupted. What remains on the page is the trace of this encounter between body, matter, and action.

Tudo fica blue [Everything Turns Blue]
2020, interactive digital piece on screen

The songs "Black Man's World" and "Black Man's Pride" by Alton Ellis serve as catalysts for the work *Tudo fica blue*. Their nearly identical lyrics differ only in the chorus: "I was born a loser because I am a Black man" versus "I was born a winner because I am a Black man."

Building on this, and through a layering of music and images that visitors can shift and overlap, Crux proposes an exercise to reflect on the concepts of victory and defeat beyond the static positions suggested by a binary reading. Drawing from a tangle of images and symbols that shape his own experience as a Black man, he also seeks to highlight conflicts and add complexity to notions of identity and representation – as well as their contradictions, arbitrary nature, and traps.

The singer Belo appears as a recurring figure in images from various stages of his career, and the 1999 song "Tudo fica Blue" by the group Soweto serves as another entry point for the work. The film *Moonlight* plays a similar role, particularly the scene where the character Juan says, "in moonlight, black boys look blue."

For this conspiration with S A V V Y Contemporary, Crux has introduced new elements – drawing on figures and narratives from the local context – to create tension around the issues the work addresses, alongside an activation event for the opening weekend.

May Mário Mãos [May Mário Hands]
2026, two poem excerpts and acrylic on tracing paper

May Mario Mãos brings together two poem excerpts: "Afrekete" by May Ayim and "Reconhecimento de Nêmesis" by Mário de Andrade – both based on the identification and recognition of their Black hands. Each, in its own way – across different eras, languages, and contexts – inscribes the hand as a site of recognition and relation. Through this Afro-diasporic connection, the artist does not seek to provide answers, establish equivalencies, or produce a singular reading, but rather to create possibilities for encounter and connection between these two texts, their differences, their respective times, and their contexts.

*Esse corpo de ***** que tu vê, é apenas a imagem do que sou [That ***** body you see is just the image of who I am]*
2019, print on fabric, 120 x 80 cm

Faceless self-portrait; a flawed selfie of a black-and-white body "disguised" by its own color, making it difficult to pin down within established categories. The five asterisks in the work's title might suggest terms such as: *negro* (Black), *pardo* (mixed-race), *quase* (almost), *macho* (male/macho), *sonho* (dream), *culpa* (guilt), *foder* (fuck), *falso* (false), etc. The blank space is an unknown, inviting reflection – based on bilateral negations and negotiations between the namer and the named – on which terms might be ascribed and which represent impossibilities of being.

D I E G O C R U X is a quasi-artist born and raised on the outskirts of Parada de Taipas, he now lives in the city center of São Paulo. He works with art among others in various places. Grandson of Rosa (Rose) and Esmeraldo (Emerald), he is the color that evokes memory. He researches intimate and personal callings, collective

experiences, representation, and disputes over the meanings of victory and defeat beyond fixed positions. He uses varied media in his processes, such as appropriation, photography, video, design, visual samples, word, etc.

Crux participated in the 36th Bienal de São Paulo (Fundação Bienal, 2025), Ecos Malês (CHS, 2024), Dos Brasis (SESC, 2023–2024), Edição #35 aarea (aarea.co, 2021), If A Tree Falls In A Forest (Les Rencontres d'Arles, France, 2021), CHALE WOTE (Accra, Ghana, 2019), residency and research programs at Pro Helvetia (2026), Goethe-Institut Bahia (2023), MAM Rio (2021) and Pivô Pesquisa (2020), and has texts published by *Contemporary &*, *Revista Rosa* and *MAM Rio*.

09 D E N I S M O R E I R A
Identity and Revelation Series
2026, lenticular prints on acrylic glass, variable dimensions, and video on ipad, 28 sec (looped)

The creative process for this series began with research into historical figures of Afro-German, Afro-Spanish, and Afro-Brazilian heritage, drawing on texts and images from books and online sources. The project centers on creating a display that highlights Black figures from the arts, culture, and politics who made significant historical contributions to their communities. The core idea is to transform the viewer's experience as they move through the exhibition space, establishing a connection between the depicted figures and masks from the Bamoun people of Cameroon and the Luluwa people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The use of lenticular technology in this series creates an illusion of depth and movement – a manifestation of the diasporic experiences found in Germany, Spain, and Brazil. This visual shift sparks curiosity and suggests new ways of recognizing the subjects.

The lenticular technique visually unites mask and figure, symbolizing a fusion of identity and ritual, time and geography. This interplay – both visual and conceptual – reflects on the relationship between mask and persona, prompting contemplation regarding identity, memory, and fiction. The work invites viewers to reinterpret the subjects, exploring the connections between the individual, the mask, and the historical and cultural contexts that shaped them. In doing so, it allows for a reading of the present moment while also envisioning what might lie ahead.

D E N I S M O R E I R A is a visual artist born in São Paulo, Brazil. He earned a degree in Visual Arts from Faculdade Metropolitanas Unidas (FMU) in 2011 and is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the University of São Paulo (USP). A researcher of African and Afro-Brazilian cultures since 2007, he has also worked as a teacher in the São Paulo municipal school system since 2014. He has held solo exhibitions as part of the *Temporada de Projetos* (Project Season) at Paço das Artes in São Paulo (2023) and at the *Salão Angelim* temporary visual arts exhibition in Blumenau (2021). He has participated in significant group exhibitions, including the 36th São Paulo Biennial – *Nem Todo Viajante Anda Estradas: Da Humanidade como Prática* (Not Every Traveler Walks Roads: On Humanity as Practice), São Paulo (2025/26); *Figura e Paisagem, Palavra e Imagem* (Figure and Landscape, Word and Image) at Pinacoteca do Ceará, Fortaleza (2025); *Outros Navios, uma Coleção Afro-Atlântica* (Other Ships: An Afro-Atlantic Collection) at Centro Cultural Fiesp, São Paulo (2024); *Dos Brasis* (Of the Brazils) at Sesc Belenzinho, São Paulo (2023); and *Mãos: 35 Anos da Mão Afro-Brasileira* (Hands: 35 Years of the Afro-Brazilian Hand), held at the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM-SP) and the Museu Afro Brasil Emanoel Araújo (MAB), São Paulo (2023).

10 G U T O O C A
10A *Tecido Social* [Social Fabric]
2026, multi media work, oil, hair, slippers, coal, soil and cachaça in fabric, 100 x 160 cm

In *Tecido Social*, Guto Oca associates layers of fabric, stitching, and elements of identity with the social layers that shape and represent Black presence in Brazil, where the legacy of the exploitation of the Black population continues to resonate across multiple layers of society. To this end, Guto incorporates elements such as the face, dreadlocks, the presence of feet in flip-flops, and earth as a composition oriented toward walking, pathways, and fragments of Black presence as forms of cultural and ancestral resistance.

10B *Augosto*
2026, installation, Fabric, hair, and wood, 300 x 50 cm

In Augusto, Guto Oca presents, through materials such as a shirt donated by his father and synthetic hair, symbols that evoke paternal presence and the representation of identity. Augusto, his given name at birth, evokes a heightened sense of how we carry our paternal presence within us and highlights the importance of speaking about affection and care.

10C *Daltonismo Racial (Cor que não vejo)*
2026, painting, Oil and charcoal on fabric, je 30 x 30 cm

In this work, Guto Oca explores his altered visual perception through the shifts in color caused by his color blindness and, consequently, the colors that are transformed or rendered imperceptible to the artist. This experience is placed in tension with the concept of "Racial Color Blindness," which problematizes the whitening of Black skin, the historical dynamics of miscegenation, and the ways in which color can become invisible or be socially altered.

Within this context, the paintings on fabric depicting the faces of Black people confront notions of conformity and stigmatized perceptions of facial identity.

G U T O O C A was born in São Paulo and has lived and worked in João Pessoa since 2011, where he completed his academic training: a degree in Pedagogy and a Master's degree in Visual Arts from the Federal University of Paraíba.

His artistic narratives are deeply rooted in his paternal heritage, in the territories and movements that have marked his journey, as well as in his experience of Black-Brazilian fatherhood. Amid the encounters and disencounters of everyday affective and ethno-racial relationships, he chooses – together with his family – love as a tool for bricolage, the earth as a form of embrace, hair as memory, and affection as the thread that guides his reflections on Black presence in Paraíba and Brazil.

11 R A M O

11A *Acadêmicos do Vilanismo – Pedagogingas 01#*
2026, Installation (comprising 21 vinyl records from the artist's collection, decorative shelving, rugs, the sculpture *Estação A Mestre Mimo* carved in carranca relief, a shelf with a polychrome wood image of São Benedito, and books from the artist's collection), variable dimensions, from the artist's collection

Acadêmicos do Vilanismo [Academics of Vilanismo] is a nomadic, artistic-pedagogical school that stretches, cobbles together, and samples ancestral communal knowledges – non-white epistemologies – in confrontation with Western academic knowledge. By reappropriating the term "academy", the project fosters autonomy, the collective construction of knowledge, and an opening toward new ethical, aesthetic, labor, and technological futures.

This series opens with *Acadêmicos do Vilanismo – Pedagogingas 01#*, which proposes a way of looking at the encounter between the educators Natasha Kelly, Allan da Rosa, and Paulo Freire, and their respective approaches to the idea of *oralitura* [orality-as-literature]. From this perspective, records themselves take on the status of books – more present, and far more accessible to Brazil's peripheral communities, both in processes of pedagogical formation and in the recording of the historical memory of Afro-Brazilian communities.

LISTEN HERE TO THE PLAYLIST

11B *Rosary and Good Death. A Tribute to Black brotherhoods*
2026, diptych, polychrome wooden cylinder, cement, chess pieces, folded iron sheet, 162 x 23 cm
From the series *Economic Essays*

This artwork interrogates a foundational episteme of Brazilianness: Ginga,* rooted in the tactics of guerrilla warfare and rebellion of Angolan peoples, whose title honors their queen and general, Nzinga Mbande. *Rosary and Good Death* synthesizes this strategic movement. often mapped onto the geometric play of Western chess, with the metallurgy of iron. In this economic critique, the shovel directly confronts the machinery of the colonial project: systematic co-optation of African technologies, highly specialized, unfree labor, and scaled industrialization of dehumanization. These two ideas overlap: Ginga as an anticipation of moves for communal prosperity, tied to the Earth, humanity's primary economic asset. Invoking two foundational Brotherhoods,** this diptych charts new collectives drawing strength from their brightest lineage.

* Ginga: More than just a characteristic swing in constant, evasive movements, Ginga in this context is a philosophical concept (episteme) and a physical manifestation of adaptability and strategic avoidance derived from Central African martial knowledge. It is a fundamental element of Capoeira and other African-diasporic expressions in Brazil, representing resilience and cunning.

** Foundational Brotherhood: The artwork's title directly references the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos (Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of Black Men) and the Irmandade de Nossa Senhora da Boa Morte (Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Good Death). These were Afro-Catholic lay organizations in colonial Brazil that served critical roles for mutual aid, buying freedom for enslaved people, religious syncretism, and organized resistance.

R A M O is a visual artist, researcher, cultural economist, curator, and educator, investigating the unfolding meanings of the verb "to build" across its dimensions of collective creation, sacralization, and the restoration of radically Black spaces. He is currently a Master's candidate in Economics at the Graduate Program in Economics of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (PPGE/UFRGS).

Ramo is the founder of Irmandade Vilanismo (2021) and has taken part in residency programs and awards in Brazil and abroad, including at S A V V Y Contemporary (Berlin, Germany, 2026), Pemba: Arte e Ancestralidade [Pemba: Art and Ancestry] (SESC Nacional [Virtual], São Paulo, 2020), and the Alex Vallauri Prize (Funarte, São Paulo, 2017). He most recently took part as an invited artist in the 36th São Paulo Biennial, 2025.

12 B L A C K R A M O
Untitled
2025/2026, paintings, acrylic and pastel on paper, 20 x 30 cm

The series of works by artists Rafa Black and Ramo presents a reinterpretation and homage to the work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow* of His Former Self (1980) by Kerry James Marshall. By adding contemporary elements, the paintings revisit the idea of invisibility in present times, where Black people can access goods and prominent spaces while still facing discrimination.

For the artists' bios see entries 11 and 14.

13 R O D R I G O Z A I M
13A *Rebote*
2026, painting, acrylic paint, oil stick, pastel and monotype using Gardenal blister packs on canvas, 80 × 60 cm

Rebote
2025/2026, paintings, acrylic paint, pastel and monotype using Gardenal blister packs on assorted papers, variable dimensions

Rebote developed out of the impact between the body, control, and excess – from use, restraint, and collapse.

Each painting is the result of a specific state – physical, chemical, and emotional – that is impossible to replicate. Monotype emerges as an inevitable language: a singular gesture, an irreversible impression, an image that never returns to its point of origin.

The rebound is not merely a reaction to what has been ingested, imposed, or endured. It is the moment when the body responds on its own, without negotiation.

Depending on the rebound, I do not return.

I am reborn.

These works do not represent past states; they are the state itself, frozen in time as evidence of passage and survival.

13B *Cachorro Loko – Invisível Social Super Exposto*
[Cachorro Loko – An Invisible, Yet Highly Visible Social Figure]
2026, digital photographs printed on glossy paper, 20 × 15 cm

Cachorro Loko
2026, video, color, 5:34 mins

Cachorro Loko
2026, installation, delivery bags, variable dimensions

This photo essay captures the places where we, the delivery drivers wait, pick up orders, and move about – almost always far from the restaurants' main dining areas. These photos were taken while simultaneously delivering food in São Paulo.

These places reveal an old logic of Brazilian architecture. For decades, maids' quarters existed in upper-class homes: spaces necessary for the household to function, yet separated from the social life of its residents. Today, these spaces have changed. Hallways, garages, the back areas of restaurants, and side doors form a new architecture of service.

Between the maid's room and the space designated for the delivery person lies a historical distance, but also a continuity: the separation between those who serve and those who are served.

Cachorro Loko is what we're called.

We're the ones who keep the city moving, while the city itself tries to keep us in the places where it would rather not see us.

Raaandandandandandaaaanntatatata.

R O D R I G O Z A I M is a photographer, visual artist, and curator with a 17-year career dedicated to contemporary art and the visual expressions of urban peripheries. His work spans photography, street posters, installations, and performative actions, exploring themes such as memory, spirituality, affection, and daily life in working-class neighborhoods. Through a practice rooted in active listening and collective engagement, Zaim creates images that challenge the hegemonic view of the city, shifting the periphery to the center of visual narratives. His work spans the documentary and the symbolic, transforming lived experiences into poetic and political language. As founder of the R.U.A. Foto Coletivo, he has collaborated with major media outlets, expanding the visibility of his projects and his dialogue with the public. As curator of the Festival de Imagens Periféricas (F.I.P.) and a member of the Irmandade Vilanismo, he works to bring together Black and peripheral artists, fostering networks of creation and critical thinking about art, the body, and territory. He has participated in exhibitions in Brazil and abroad, including the 36th São Paulo Biennial, the Afro Brazil Museum, Zielinsky Gallery, Luiz Maluf Gallery, Matilha Cultural, Casa das Rosas, Something Else (Egypt), and the Museum of the Favelas.

14 R A F A B L A C K
From left to right

Huey, ALN, Quiksilver
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 70 x 50 cm
From the *Distraction and Retaliation* series

Lélia, Mizuno, Tiger
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 70 x 50 cm

In this series, the artist blends elements of consumption and power – associated with the social mobility of Black people and favela residents in Brazil – with prominent political figures from the global Black movement.

Oakley-Ashanti
2026, screen printing, 48 × 66 cm
From the *Reappropriation and Retaliation* series

In addition to utilizing objects cherished within the global Afro-diasporic heritage, the artist incorporates major clothing brands widely worn in Brazil – such as Oakley, which has become a cultural symbol among Black youth and residents of favelas. The brand acts as a device to capture the viewer's attention, functioning almost like an advertising trap. In this context, if consumption and power define the subjectivity of Black people, these ancestral objects emerge as a counterpoint and a form of pushback against colonial symbols.

BOSS-Benin head
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 47 x 33 cm

Oakley-Ashanti
2026, painting, acrylic, pastel, colored pencils and ballpoint pen, 47 x 33 cm
From the *Reappropriation and Retaliation* series

In this series, the artist investigates colonial collections in major European museums by reappropriating objects looted from countries linked to the Black Brazilian ancestral heritage – such as Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, the Congo, and Angola. By presenting these objects as images created outside the museum context, the artist seizes the opportunity to denounce the theft of these treasures and sacred items by Europeans, while also fostering ancestral connections with the Afro-diasporic public.

Se armando
2024, video of a performance, 3:23 min

In *Se armando*, Rafa Black performs an act of self-care by combing his own hair. The title itself suggests a double meaning: “se armar” can refer to the Black Power Afro hairstyle or to “arming oneself” by carrying a fork-shaped comb, which, during the years of the dictatorship, could be used as a bladed weapon in a street conflict – according to stories by the artist’s father, who also sported a Black Power hairstyle in the 1980s. This family reference becomes a central theme in the work and serves as a backdrop when he films himself from the rooftop of his parents’ house in Jardim Comercial, Capão Redondo, revealing the sounds, noises, and persistently everyday settings of his history.

As his hair becomes more voluminous, the artist sports the “kit” – a T-shirt and Oakley Juliet sunglasses, elements cherished by contemporary peripheral culture that have become symbols of individual upward mobility for young people in the favelas. By wearing all these symbols, the artist attempts to juxtapose the political, ancestral, and cultural conditions of the Black favela experience.

Mizuno
2026, installation, sneaker and soil, variable dimensions
From the *Pisantes de 1000* series

After the 2000s, driven by public policies of social inclusion, young Black people from the favelas reappropriated fashion symbols as elements of cultural identity. This contradiction between consumer ascension and lagging social policies appears in the work *Mizuno*, in which a brand-new white sneaker is stained by dirt due to long commutes across the city of São Paulo, where stark divides exist between rich and poor. The artist presents a sneaker soiled with dirt from the garden of his grandmother, who had to relocate from Alagoas, a state in the Northeast, to São Paulo, in the country's Southeast, in search of better life opportunities. The installation reaffirms the condition of displacement as a global political gesture from a colonized country to a colonial territory.

R A F A B L A C K is a multidisciplinary artist born in Capão Redondo, a large outskirt in São Paulo. His practice explores the relationship between fashion, politics, favela cultural identity, mental health, and belonging. Through pastel hued paintings, he creates narratives that highlight the tension between the rise of consumerism and a radical Black imaginary, investigating capitalist symbols forged as a colonial heritage and their impacts on Afro-Brazilian and favelized subjectivity. Black juxtaposes these signs with icons and movements of Afro-diasporic resistance, rendering compositions that evoke memories and desires of a global retake. Black is a member of Vilanismo.

Black participated in the 36th São Paulo Biennial and the 14th International Architecture Biennial (2025). Other group shows include “Zona de Convergência” at the Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP); “21O Programa de Exposições” (2024), at MARP; “Ser Feliz é a Nossa Revolução” (2024), at the Museu AfroBrasil; Chora Agora (2023), at Funarte-SP; “Quando eles chegam em casa eu fico feliz” (2023), Luis Maluf Gallery; “Romance Familiar” (2023), at Espaço 8 Cultural; “Afeto” (2023), at Diáspora Galeria; “Visões Negras” (2022), at the Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP); in addition to the exhibitions at the 11º

Salão Nacional Victor Meirelles (2022), in Florianópolis; and the 30ª Mostra de Arte da Juventude (MAJ), at Sesc Consolação in Sesc Ribeirão Preto. He also participated in the artistic residencies "DOZE", at Diáspora Galeria, (2023); and "Apaziá", in Terra Afefé, (2020–2021). His works are part of the collection of the Santa Catarina Museum of Art (MASC), Florianópolis.

15 V I L A N I S M O
500 Braças
2026, video of a performance, 3:13 min

Os meninos não sei que juras fraternas fizeram (The boys, I know not what fraternal vows they made)
2025, video, 10:07 min

Vilanismo (CNTR Manifesto)
2022, video, Carandiru, São Paulo, 2:12 min

Black men from the hood cleaning the headquarters of the National Arts Foundation (FUNARTE)
2023, video, 2:21 min

Cortejo Negro (Edição IMS) [Black Procession (IMS Edition)]
2024, video, 2:44 min

A compilation of videos documenting various conspiracies by the Vilanismo Brotherhood: the first public reading of the manifesto, held at the former Carandiru site on the 30th anniversary of the massacre; two recordings of the *Cortejo Negro* (Black Procession) – in São Paulo (2024) and *Curitiba* (2026); a recording of the online meeting where the brothers chose the name for the installation to be presented at the 36th Bienal de São Paulo, inspired by Conceição Evaristo's short story "A gente combinamos de não morrer" (We Agreed Not to Die); and a video of the cleanup and renovation mutirão at one of the spaces occupied by Vilanismo. Mutirão is an Afro-indigenous technology of collective mobilization to carry out a certain task. It is usually related to the construction of houses in the outskirts.

* S A V V Y . D O C
Display of selected books

SAVVY.doc is S A V V Y Contemporary's library archive and documentation center. The radical archive aims to encourage and therefore to enable access to rare, unnoticed or ignored documents. Our shelves are home to a multitude of written texts spanning from critical theory to literature, from art magazines to political analysis, from exhibition catalogues to poetry collections.

The SAVVY.doc archive is constantly growing in its diversity and complexity as it accompanies the research of all projects and exhibitions that we undertake. Being conscious of the responsibility of the traditional archives as an instrument of the state in order to perform that act of "chronophagy" which leads some pasts to be commemorated and some forgotten (Mbembe), we aim our radical archive to be a space where archivists, artists, researchers and objects actively interact in a performative process of archiving.

NOT ALL TRAVELLERS WALK ROADS – OF HUMANITY AS PRACTICE

A Concept in Three Fragments for the 36th Bienal de São Paulo

By Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

Disclaimer: This Bienal is not about identities and their politics, not about diversity nor inclusion, not about migration nor democracy and its failures...

Claimer: It is about humanity as a verb and a practice, about encounter(s) and the negotiations upon the meeting of varying worlds, it is about dismantling asymmetries as a prerequisite for humanity as a practice, it is about joy and beauty and their poeticalities as the gravitational forces that keep our worlds on their axes ... for joy and beauty are political. It is about imagining a world in which we place an accent on our humanities.

FRAGMENT I
Da Calma E Do Silêncio

Quando eu morder
a palavra,
por favor,
não me apressem,
quero mascar,
rasgar entre os dentes,
a pele, os ossos, o tutano
do verbo,
para assim versejar
o âmago das coisas.
Quando meu olhar
se perder no nada,
por favor,
não me despertem,
quero reter,
no adentro da íris,
a menor sombra,
do ínfimo movimento.
Quando meus pés
abrandarem na marcha,
por favor,
não me forcem.
Caminhar para quê?
Deixem-me quedar,
deixem-me quieta,
na aparente inércia.
Nem todo viandante
anda estradas,
há mundos submersos,
que só o silêncio
da poesia penetra.

– Conceição Evaristo, "Da calma e do silêncio"[1]

The concept for the 36th edition of the Bienal de São Paulo is a proposal to think, listen to, see, feel, perceive the world from the vantage point of Brazil – its histories, landscapes, philosophies, mythologies, and complexities, for the fiction that is Brazil is a culmination of many worlds and their tangents. That said, the emphasis will be laid on listening as the fundamental ground for practising humanity. As Jacques Attali wrote in his seminal essay *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*: "For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible."[2] We seem to have inherited a world crafted by people who have tried to see the world and read the world. One could say that, to conjugate humanity as a verb, one must learn to listen to the world, listen to lands, listen to plants and animals, listen to people, listen to the voices of the waves that caress the shores, to the grumbling of waters, to the winds that carve the sand and the contours of the Earth, listen to the murmurs of stones and hills and mountains, listen to the plethora of beings that make up our estuaries. It is safe to say that there is a correlation between the impossibilities of listening and dehumanization, as well as the disenfranchisement of people, the appropriations of lands, and ultimately the destruction of the environment.

In this proposal, the physical and philosophical space of the estuary will be used as a metaphor for spaces of encounter, of negoti-ations, of exchange, of living, of survival, of nourishment, of struggle, of despair, of repair, of rehabilitation, of needs... spaces in which practices of humanity could acquire new meanings.

From the Santos Estuary or the Bertioga Estuary in São Paulo to the Capibaribe Estuary in Recife and the Patos Lagoon Estuary that extends from Porto Alegre

1 Conceição Evaristo,"Da calma e do silêncio", in *Poemas da recordação e outros movimentos* (Rio de Janeiro: Malê, 2008), 122.

2 Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

to Rio Grande, the moment when two waterways meet each other, like a river meeting the sea, is a moment of negotiation of physical and chemical asymmetries that creates an extraordinary ecosystem flourishing with crabs, crocodiles, fish, migratory birds, mangroves, oysters, phytoplankton, snails, seagrass, sea turtles, zooplankton, and even humans. The particularity of an estuary is its interdependence. Each being has a role, a niche (for example, the niche of oysters is filtration, with each oyster filtering up to fifty gallons of water per day), in the suste-nance of each species, in the ecosystem at large, and in the blossom-ing biodiversity, especially thanks to the varying salinity levels that arise when sweet water meets salty water. Estuaries are thus important for a vast spectrum of beings as habitat, resource, space for reproduction or transition in our ecosystems, and their existences are crucial for our environments. Estuaries serve as coastal buffers in times of erosion, floods, or storms, just as they help in filtering freshwater. But due to massive urbanization, dredging, overfishing, pollution, oil and gas drilling, etc. on a planetary scale, the ecosys-tems of estuaries are losing balance, just as humanity is losing its grip on itself and the world.[3] By invoking the plurality of beings and their coexistence and contingencies within the space of the estuary as a metaphor for human relations with themselves and others, the project tangentially alludes to the 27th Bienal de São Paulo in 2006 titled *How to Live Together*, curated by Lisette Lagnado, as well as the 2nd Bienal, in 1953 (also called Guernica Bienal), in terms of the agencies and urgencies at stake.

When Conceição Evaristo writes in "Da calma e do silêncio", that "Not all travellers / walk roads / there are submerged worlds / that only the silence / of poetry penetrates", one can think of estuaries as the epitome of those submerged worlds penetrable by the silence of nature's poetry and at the same time as the path of coexistence that is woven when the different worlds of sweet and salty water encounter each other, as a path that humankind as travellers could take.

Brazil was birthed by the violent encounter between Indigenous people, European colonizers, and enslaved Africans. Every civilization stems from an encounter, no matter how violent some might be, and some take more time than others to germinate. For the germination and proper cultivation to happen, one might need patience to bite and tear words to the marrow of verbs, stamina to stare into the distance so that clarity of the smallest move-ments in the far can be impregnated inside one's iris, as Evaristo insinuates. Which paths do we take in the practice of humanity as a verb? How do we afford ourselves the privilege of going off track, off the road, embracing errancy, getting lost, finding other worlds?

FRAGMENT II
Une Conscience En Fleur Pour Autrui

Ma joie est de savoir que tu es moi
et que moi je suis fortement toi.
Tu sais que ton froid dessèche mes os
et que mon chaud vivifie tes veines.
Ma peur fait trembler tes yeux
et ta faim fait pâlir ma bouche.
Sans ta force d'être un feu libre
ma conscience serait plus seule
que la terre morte d'un désert.
Ma vie offre des clefs émerveillées
à la perception de ta propre essence.
Lorsque tu veilles sur ma liberté
tu donnes un ciel et des ailes
au mouvement de mon espérance.
Mon désir d'être heureux, s'il cessait
un instant de compter avec le tien
tomberait aussitôt en poussière.
Quand tu saignes au couteau mon
identité nos consciences vont ensemble à l'abattoir.

[My joy is knowing that you are me,
And that I am deeply you.
You know your cold dries out my bones,
And my warmth brings my life to your veins.
My fear makes your eyes tremble,
And your hunger pales my mouth.
Without your power to be a free flame,
my awareness would be more alone
than the dead earth of a desert.
My life offers enchanted keys
to the perception of your very essence.
When you guard my liberty,
You give wings and sky
to the motion of my hope.
My longing to be happy – should it cease
to reckon with your own, even for a moment –
would fall at once to dust.
When you cut my identity with a knife,
our minds go together to the slaughterhouse.]

– René Depestre, "Une Conscience En Fleur Pour Autrui"[4]

The artist Leo Asemota once asked the question: "When you look into the mirror, who do you see?" He went ahead to respond to himself that there is, of course, the possibility of seeing only yourself, but when he looks in the mirror, he sees all the people who came before him and all in his keeping. This spirit of vertical and hori-zontal interconnectedness might be another crucial element in the conjugation of humanity.

In this era of deep political and social crisis in which we find ourselves in the world, the question of who we see

3 Emily Caffrey, "The Importance of Estuarine Ecosystems", *Ocean Blue Project*, oceanblue-project.org/what-is-an-estuary.

4 René Depestre, *En état de poésie* (Petite sirène), (Paris: Les éditeurs français réunis, 1980). Translation from French by Sergio Maciel. Translation of the poem's title: "A blossoming conscience for others".

when we look in the mirror becomes even more important. To see a multitude in the mirror is to recognize the existence, the concerns, and eventually care for its well-being.

The nation-state is one of those constructs that seems to see only itself when it looks in the mirror. That's why we fortify our borders with walls, fight wars, expel migrants, destroy the environment, etc. Could we actually look into the mirror and see humanity? In all its shapes and colours, with all its long and shortcomings, with all its shades of grey, and all its imperfections? As it stands, the mirror in which we seem to be stirring is shattered into pieces, and instead of a reflection we seem to be seeing infinite refractions that lead to oblivion. But even a broken mirror can be mended. To engage in that process of mending, however, one must allow oneself to be guided by and consent to René Depestre's maxims in "Une Conscience En Fleur Pour Autrui": "My joy is knowing that you are me, / and that I am deeply you" or "My life offers enchanted keys / to the perception of your very essence".[5]

Humanity is a practice. Humanity is a verb.

It can be conjugated.

> FRAGMENT III
> The Adamant Beauty of the World
>
> Rising from the abyss
> is the sound of centuries. The song of Ocean's valleys.
>
> On the Atlantic Ocean floor sonorous seashells tangle with skulls, bones, and iron balls turned green.
> These depths hold the cemeteries of slave ships and of the
> many men who sailed them. Deeds of a greedy Western
> world, violated borders, flags raised and fallen. ... But
> these transported Africans undid the separations of the
> world. They too opened up the Americas' vast spaces with
> violent bloodshed. ...
> The remains of these ancestors shipped away to become the silt of the abysses, all those former worlds,
> were ground down until they truly became a new place.
> One world made Africa laminary. The Africas impregnated
> distant worlds. This fact makes it possible to see the
> Whole-World and to comprehend it – the Tout-Monde given
> to everyone, valid for everyone, multiple in its totality,
> based on the sonorous abysses.
>
> – Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, "The Adamant Beauty of the World"[6]

The estuary of Recife is a space of multiple encounters. Not only the meeting of sweet and salt water, but also the first port in the Americas where enslaved people abducted from Africa encountered the so-called New World. Since its founding in 1537 upon Portuguese colonization, Recife has been a remarkable site in which that which has emerged from that abyss, that chasm, despite despicable violences, has been able to manifest its intractable, adamant beauty. A site in which the rumours from and the depths of that abyss still resonate in all engulfing ripples and manifest themselves as that notion of *Tout-Monde*.

That "adamant beauty of the world" birthed, in Brazil, some of the most important artistic and cultural movements of the twentieth century: the "anthropofagia movement" of the 1920s, that gave form to and informed a Brazilian avant-garde and led both to the "Manifesto Antropófago" and an aesthetics and politics that Oswald de Andrade called "Cannibalist transnationalism" (a philosophy that called for the cannibalization, the ingestion, and the digestion of other cultures as a way of asserting Brazil against European colonial and post-colonial cultural domination, as was so magnificently exposed in the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, curated by Paulo Herkenhoff with Adriano Pedrosa); the Teatro Experimental do Negro [Black Experimental Theater] (TEN), a movement founded by Abdias Nascimento in 1944 to tackle the dearth of Black presence and dignity in the national performing arts, initiating a movement of Afro-Brazilian play-writing that also engaged politically by bringing the anti-racism struggles to the 1946 Constituent Assembly and influencing the proposition of the Afonso Arinos Act, 'the first legislation geared to curb racism';[7] the Cinema Novo's "Eztetyka da Fome" [Aesthetics of Hunger] movement, filmically formulated by Glauber Rocha in 1965, understanding cinema as an important tool and weapon for the revolutionary struggle; the Tropicalismo movement of Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Tom Zé, and Torquato Neto in the 1960s, advocating with their *Tropicália ou Panis et Circencis* manifesto for a "field for reflection on social history" through music, film, and other artistic expressions that synchronized African and Brazilian cultures and found a political voice at the height of the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship; or the Manguebit movement of the 1990s in Recife, that stood for a musical revolt against the socio-political, economic, and cultural stagnation, for a resistance against the neo-liberal agenda that had usurped most of Latin America,

5 Depestre, *En état de poésie.*

6 Édouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, "The Adamant Beauty of the World", in *Manifestos*, tr. Betsy Wing and Matt Reeck (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2022).

7 "O teatro dentro de mim", Itaú Cultural, 2016, ocupacao.icnetworks.org/ocupacao/ abdias-nascimento/o-teatro-dentro-de-mim.

that advocated for a cultural memory that embraced all the aforementioned attributes "given in all, valid for all, multiple in its totality",[8] and that opted for a way-out of the socio-economic cul-de-sac through a pidginization of sonic scapes and genres like makossa, Congolese rumba, reggae, coco, forró, maracatu, frevo, as much as rock, hip hop, electronic music, and funk. The Manguebit movement and its manifesto "Caranguejos com cérebro" [Crabs with Brains], written in 1992 by singer Fred Zero Quatro and DJ Renato L, were brought to life by two legendary bands and two albums from 1994 whose titles betray their intentions: Mundo Livre S/A's *Samba Esquema Noise* [Samba Scheme Noise] and Chico Science & Nação Zumbi's *Da Lama Ao Caos* [From Mud to Chaos]. This is the crux of Fragment III.

In "Manguebit", the very first song on *Samba Esquema Noise*, Mundo Livre S/A sings of the transistor, of Recife as a circuit and the country as a chip; they sing of Manguebit as a virus that contaminates the eyes, ears, languages, sound waves, and this virus is spread through UHF with the help of needle-antennas inserted in the mangrove in the estuaries. They sing of the land as radio and the destruction of the land and the tributaries. This was an anthem for the strange times then and now.

Chico Science & Nação Zumbi's first song in *Da Lama Ao Caos*, titled "Monólogo ao pé do ouvido (vinheta) / Banditismo por uma questão de classe", is a fierce double hymn of defiance. In "Monólogo ao pé do ouvido", they sing of their movement as a musical evolution to modernize the past, they sing of how fear gives rise to evil and how the collective feels the need to fight against pride, arrogance, glory, and how demons destroy the fierce power of humanity: "Viva Zapata! / Viva Sandino! / Viva Zumbi! / Antônio Conselheiro / All Black Panthers / Lampião". And in "Banditismo por uma questão de classe", they tell a story of bandits, of the talk of solutions and progress, and how this can be done with the killing of innocent people by the forces of law and order. They sing of banditry as survival, as a necessity, as a consequence of class struggles.

That these bands refer to a free world and to Zumbi's nation in their names is no coincidence. That they are from Recife is no coincidence either. After all, it was in Recife that the I Congresso Afro-Brasileiro took place in 1934, which included activists like Solano Trindade, who was, by the way, also part of the Frente Negra Pernambucana and the Teatro Experimental do Negro.[9] And even more importantly, it was in the states of Pernambuco and Alagoas that the great Francisco Zumbi (1655–1695) of Kongo heritage, who went down in history as Zumbi dos Palmares, claimed his kingdom, fought against the Portuguese colonialists, resisted against the enslavement of Africans, freed his people, and resettled them in the kingdom of maroons, the quilombos, that Abdias Nascimento later qualified as some of the first democratic spaces and structures in what is today Brazil. The quilombos were the foundation on which movements like Manguebit could be built more than 300 years later.

Fragment III is a deliberation on the Manguebit movement and its manifesto "Caranguejos com cérebro", understood as an exposé of a collective social brain.

In Michael Muthukrishna and Joseph Henrich's 2016 paper "Innovation in the Collective Brain", they reflect on something many in non-western cultures have actually known since time immemorial:

> Our societies and social networks act as collective brains. Individuals connected in collective brains, selectively trans-mitting and learning information, often well outside their conscious awareness, can produce complex designs with-out the need for a designer – just as natural selection does in genetic evolution. The processes of cumulative cultural evolution result in technologies and techniques that no sin-gle individual could recreate in their lifetime, and do not require its beneficiaries to understand how and why they work. Such cultural adaptations appear functionally well designed to meet local problems, yet they lack a designer.[10]

The authors elaborate on the origins and machinations of collective brains by discussing their "neurons" and pointing out how individual brains evolve in accordance with the acquisition of culture – the so-called cultural brains (brains that evolved primarily for the acquisition of adaptive knowledge). Which is to say that "our cultural brains evolved in tandem with our collective brains."[11] Muthukrishna and Henrich show how "cultural brains are linked into collective brains that generate inventions and diffuse innovations", as well as examine the ways in which "collective brains can feedback to make each of their constituent cultural brains 'smarter' – or at least cognitively better equipped to deal with local challenges."[12]

The threads with which the fabric, the cultural brain, the collective brain of Recife of the "Caranguejos com cérebro" were woven span from the encounter of different worlds that were forced to cross paths almost 500 years ago, as well as the different social entities, from the family to the plantation to the samba school, to different social networks. As Muthukrishna and Henrich point out,

> The most basic structure of the collective brain is the family. Young cultural learners first gain access to their parents, and possibly a range of alloparents (aunts, grand-fathers, etc.). Families are embedded

8 Glissant and Chamoiseau, "The Adamant Beauty of the World".

9 Amurabi Oliveira, "Afro-Brazilian Studies in the 1930s: Intellectual Networks between Brazil and the USA", *Brasiliana: Journal for Brazilian Studies* 8/1–2 (2019).

10 Michael Muthukrishna and Joseph Henrich, "Innovation in the Collective Brain", *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 19 March 2016, royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rstb.2015.0192, 2.

11 Muthukrishna and Henrich, "Innovation in the Collective Brain", 2.

12 ibid.

> in larger groups, which may take many forms, from egalitarian hunter-gatherers to villages, clans, and 'big man' societies, from chiefdoms to states with different degrees of democracy, free-markets and welfare systems, to large unions.[13]

Next to the people, the geographical and geological bearings of Recife also play an important role in the manifestation of that cultural and collective brain that birthed the Manguebit movement. Recife is situated at the confluence of the Beberibe and Capibaribe rivers, proceeding in their majesty to empty themselves in the mas-sive body of water, the South Atlantic Ocean, from whose belly, from whose vault, the voices still sing. Topography and climate also con-tribute to the making of knowledge. With its tropical forest, high rainfall, its monsoon climate, its estuaries, and high relative humidity, Recife has been called the daughter of the mangrove, with its Parque dos Manguezais that too lends its name to Manguebit. But this natural, ecological richness of Recife, which could be a dream for some, became a nightmare for the people of Recife. In Alice de Souza's article "Life Reborn in the Mud",[14] she writes about Ilha de Deus (God's Island), an island of Recife that had been generally neglected due to its decrepitude in the 1970s and 80s – there was no water, no electricity, no attention from the government. In the middle of these dire socio-political and economic conditions, the island was called Ilha sem Deus (Godless Island). As if the neglect of Ilha de Deus wasn't enough, in 1983, two nearby factories provoked an environmental disaster by dumping waste from soap production into the water, thereby intoxicating fish and sea plants, which were the main means of subsistence in the area. This led to starvation and mass exodus of the islanders in search of greener pastures. At the same time, crime skyrocketed on the island, which had become a hiding place for gangs. This was not restricted to Ilha de Deus, as the ruthless construction in Recife, the intoxication of the environment by industries, the dumping of waste in the rivers, and the perishing of lives in the city's mangroves (that had become oversaturated with plastic and other wastes) led to an auto-suffocation. If the rivers and estuaries of Recife were the veins and arteries of the place, then the city was suffering from a terrible thrombosis.

It was against this backdrop that the Manguebit movement emerged as a cultural revolution in the 1990s, to say "no more", accompanied by several environmental groups that planned to replant mangrove seedlings, folding up their sleeves and going knee-deep into the mud to clear the estuaries from plastic.[15] This new movement came with a new sound: Manguebit.

Fragment III pays homage to the Manguebit movement, as a descendant of all the great movements that ever came out of Brazil. As Melcion Mateu writes in his essay "Nação Zumbi: Two Decades of 'Crabs with Brains' (and Still Hungry)":

> The term 'manguebit' is itself a hybrid, portmanteau word containing a reference to local landscape ('mangue' as said, 'mangrove swamp', 'marshland') and global technology ('bit' or binary digit, as in computer science): a movement rooted in its landscape but connected to the global technology. … A parabolic antenna put in the mud became the concept image to describe a movement that aspired to connect the local culture to the global scene.[16]

Which is to say that the Manguebit is a conceptual paradigm that brings together the notions of maternity, fertility, diversity, and productivity with the notion of a technology, digital media, or computation that can facilitate syncretism, that can bridge the gap not only across the Atlantic, but between those that survived on land and those still locked up in that abyss. Technology in this context serves a double purpose of connecting but also subverting. Manguebit should also be understood as the possibility of creating technologies, sciences, and arts that do not only reflect the quotidian but are also fundamental for the subversions of the terrors of normativity. The technologies and sciences that were conceived to deprivilege the masses are actually misappropriated and perverted from their original purposes, in what we might call weapons of mass subversion.

The Manguebit manifesto "Caranguejos com cérebro" directly relates to the people of Recife, who are colloquially referred to as crabs living in the mangrove. Crabs, like some other lobsters and shrimps, are known to be masters of navigation of their territories and even territories unknown, since they have a sophisticated memory. They have been found to have the cognitive capacity for complex learning despite their rudimentary brains. In the article "Clever Crustaceans", Erica Westly states that crabs "can remember the location of a seagull attack and learn to avoid that area. In mammals, this kind of behavior requires multiple brain regions, but a study published in the June issue of the *Journal of Neuroscience* suggests that the C. granulatus crab can manage with just a few neurons."[17] The experiments made by neuroscientists at the Universidad de Buenos Aires to test the memory skills of crabs showed that they could retain information for more than twenty-four hours, which is the clinical benchmark for long-term memory in most animals, including humans. And even more: they showed the ability to apply their acquired knowledge to their own well-being and survival.

The researchers attributed this behaviour to the crabs'

13 Muthukrishna and Henrich, "Innovation in the Collective Brain", 4.

14 Alice de Souza, "Life Reborn in the Mud", *Believe Earth*, 17 November 2017, believe.earth/ en/ life-reborn-in-the-mud.

15 de Souza, "Life Reborn in the Mud".

16 Melcion Mateu, "Nação Zumbi: Two Decades of 'Crabs with Brains' (and Still Hungry)", *Crítica Latinoamericana* (5 December 2012).

17 Erica Westly, "Clever Crustaceans", *Scientific American Mind* 22/5 (November 2011), 14.

lobula giant neurons that might have the possibility of storing information about different stimuli. It is known that crabs learn from their mistakes, that they are ambidextrous, that they have a sense of compassion that leads them to protect their territory, and that crab mothers are very caring, said to place snail shells around their young ones to increase their calcium intake.

This is an invitation for artists, scholars, and people from varying walks of life to reflect on the social and cultural brain of the collective, which embodies the ambidexterity, intelligence, and prudence of the crabs as a way of being in the world, as a way of being better humans. This is also an invitation for them to deliberate on spaces like estuaries and mangroves, spaces that are evidence of solidarity, a coexistence of a variety of beings, plants, animals, and mycelia that mostly assist and subsist each other, if left alone by the human. So, if such creatures with what we, humans, might call "primitive brains" could exercise such proficient memories and such compassion, why can't humans? Or can they?

The relationship between crabs and humans that is cen-tral to the Manguebit movement had already been described in Josué de Castro's seminal novel *Of Men and Crabs*, published in 1967. By then, de Castro had earned fame for his path-breaking ecological work on the politics of hunger titled *The Geography of Hunger*, published in 1946. Being a physician in Recife, de Castro had done studies with workers' and declared that their "basal dis-ease" was hunger that manifested itself clinically as anemia, protein-calorie malnutrition, among other ailments. He linked the socio-economic realities of the people of Recife to their biological manifestation of hunger. In *Of Men and Crabs*, written while in exile in Paris, he tells a fictional tale of poverty related to his childhood, narrating the tragic life of the young João Paulo. The author interweaves the story of the pathetic condition of the people around the boy with the story of Father Aristides, whose craving for the guaiamum crabs is insatiable. In that space of exile, and hopelessness, de Castro gifted the world a book that paints the reality of "the wretched of the earth". It is no surprise that the main character, João, disappears during a disastrous flood that literally erases the whole settlement. But as de Castro writes, what we take with us is, "humans fashioned of crab meat, thinking and feeling like crabs; amphibians, at home on land and in water, half-man, half-animal; fed, in their infancy, on that miry milk, crab broth."[18]

These relationalities of beings across land and waters, those in the swamps, so playfully and critically put forth by Mundo Livre S/A and Chico Science & Nação Zumbi; these relationalities between different genres, between gods, humans, and other existences put forth by Oswald de Andrade; these relationalities proposed by de Castro; these relationalities that mediate the rumours from several centuries ago to the rumours of today, that negotiate between the voices in the vault and the voices of those who are still surviving, all these relations speak to an exhaustive and resilient brain: the Mangue Brain. The first Mangue manifesto, "Caranguejos com cérebro", was structured as a trilogy: "Mangue – The Concept", "Manguetown – The City", "Mangue – The Scene". Now, we can imagine Mangue – The Exhibition. An exhibition that negates the Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest, and instead advocates for coexistence, interdependence, love, and joy as the basis for the adamant beauty of the world.

18 Josué de Castro, *Of Men and Crabs*, tr. Susan Hertelendy (New York: Vanguard, 1970).

WITHIN THE MELANCHOLY OF OUR DREAMS WE THRIVE

Reflections by Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock

On the 14th of June earlier this year, I found myself standing in front of a painting by Kerry James Marshall at the Kunsthaus Zürich. I had entered the exhibition carrying my own inhibitions towards Black portraiture works in general. Multiple factors – the fetishization and production for a certain gaze, the commodification and demand for images of Black bodies to hang in the private living rooms of collectors – were and continue to be worrying. Not only does this seduce artists to lean towards a certain form of practice in order to be "marketable", but one is left with the contradiction of the desire to possess the image of a Black body while the conditions of Black and Brown life continue to be so unequally distributed. And yet, standing in front of the work with the title *Slow Dance*, I couldn't help but be taken by a familiar scent that the scenario of the work transported. Marshall's composition of two lovers holding each other in a room encompassed by green wallpaper covered with flowers invites us into an intimate scenario, an evening dance, after and despite the day passed. It wasn't necessarily only about what the eye can meet, but the composition reminded me of early movies where Black and Brown bodies were featured. There was a strange compassion towards the protagonists, a dreamy bond through one's own experience mirrored and the happiness one felt for the peace the actors embodied prior or after dramatic incidents of the plot.

A familiarity, or contentment rather, as tender as a greeting: *I see you, I can see me*.

Our parents' struggle, shame and frustration resembles a room in a home one grew up in. You learn to feel solidarity towards those who have been made to stand outside – outside the frame and the promises of a society that has preached but never distributed its idea of humanity equally.

Long before indifference can be understood, it is experienced. A solidarity and recognition that arrives before language. A tenderness that precedes cognition. Perhaps this is where our political consciousness begins. Not presented in an argument or a theory, but as rage, scandal, deep mistrust and solidarity with the people that endure injustice and that we belong to.

It is the space where recognition becomes blurred. Before we know what value constitutes, we are taught what worth looks like. The scholar Prof. Hamid Dabashi shared in the invocation program for the S A V V Y Contemporary project *Geographies of Imagination*[19] that a woman in Texas asked him during breakfast where he came from; he answered that he was from the US. She smiled and meant where his accent was from. He asked her if she truly did hear or rather see his accent.

Over time we inherit an elaborate architecture of value: museums, academia, collections, markets, art histories, nations and institutions. The members-only club decides what is elegant, what is preserved, what constitutes the canon, becomes omnipresent – and what remains outside.

The pedestal was never about height. It is about permission.

And perhaps this is why earning one's place at the imagined top does not resemble arrival as we have witnessed numerous times but was painfully underlined just recently by the media witch hunt followed by suicide of Prof. Jason Arday. Recognition does not equal safety and still comes with its own conditions and timing.
We find ourselves in the reality where on the 6th of September 2026, the far-right AfD was just three seats shy of the total majority in the state elections in Saxony-Anhalt in Germany. The story of the rise of the fascists has been demystified and one understands that they have always been here.

But so have we.

One might be tempted to simply complain about the growing obstacles, dramatic cuts throughout vital sectors like health, education or social facilities that are sacrificed for the sake of warmongering, but we aren't the type of people that eye an easy road. At S A V V Y Contemporary – the laboratory of form-ideas – we are not unfamiliar with constraint and scarcity. In fact, the institution was imagined and therefore existed long before it opened its doors in Berlin despite the disbelief in its force.

Now, 16 years after Prof. Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung founded the space, we open our doors to *Architectural*

19 Geographies of Imagination,Invocations program at SAVVY Contemporary 14.09.–15.09.2018, savvy-contemporary.com/de/projects/2018/dis-othering

Echotones, the first exhibition realised this year.

Not because the questions asked have become less urgent, but because the logic behind the machinery that allows cultural and intellectual work to happen has changed. Funding cuts do not only translate to fewer exhibitions. They determine who gets to speak, who gets to be seen, which forms of knowledge are allowed to thrive, and which dreams can be afforded the time to be rendered into our futures.

Resistance, too, needs material conditions.

It needs space, a warm meal, funding, solid people and trust. It needs room to breathe the vision into existence beyond immediate survival.

To co-create and con-spire a project with a collective that is rooted in an unapologetic culture of resistance is therefore as close to reflecting the contemporary as close can be.

It is a response to the violence of the past that meets us here.

The exhibition anchors us in a less abstract but tangible reality. The works that have been produced in Berlin prior to the opening connect directly to the nodes of sentient beings. They use the tools of lived experience, sensuality, political resistance, spirituality and memory without losing their context nor forgetting the deep embeddedness of Black history and its context within Brazil and its region. The exhibition proposal carries the spirit of Abdias do Nascimento, who urges in his text *Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Political Alternative*: "The crystallization of our concepts, definitions and principles must express Black collective experience, in culture and in praxis, reincorporating our integrity as a people in our historic time, enriching and expanding our capacity for struggle.[20]

Walking through the exhibition space, one can sense freedom in the form of lushness where scarcity is expected. Works that shift time and space, tumbling the logic of separation and imagined belonging. The proposition by the Vilanismo collective shares fragments of lived experiences, rituals and manifestation of tenderness where otherwise could be imagined. Sound is made accessible beyond the archive and holds space as guardian of tender memories. Images interfere with images, until the promise of a single, stable frame begins to collapse under its own weight. Black masculinity delivered from the normative gaze.

"Quilombo does not mean escaped slaves, as the conventional definitions say. It means fraternal and free reunion, or encounter; solidarity, living together, existential communion. Quilombist society represents an advanced stage in sociopolitical and human progress in terms of economic egalitarianism."[21]

In this proposed constellation within the S A V V Y Contemporary space, the Black male body thrives unconfined by external definition and expands beyond the chapter of the middle passage or fugitive existence. Be it within the realm of our dreams, fleeting conversations or organised gatherings: This collaboration and exhibition is a reminder that we must insist now more than ever on ways of being that feel wholesome, unconfined and joyful.

Together.

force amour beauté

20 Abdias Do Nascimento: "Quilombismo: An Afro-Brazilian Political Alternative", *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2, Afro-Brazilian Experience and Proposals for Social Change (Dec., 1980), p.160.

21 ibd., p.161.

PULLING AGAINST GRAVITY

Affective Notes In Dialogue With Vilanismo's Contra-Manifesto

By Billy Fowo

> Entre nós Amefricanos e aliados, Ubuntu!
> (Eu sou, porque NÓS somos) é essa a real questão!
>
> Among us Amefricans and our allies, Ubuntu!
> (I am, because WE are) – that is the real issue!
>
> – Vilanismo Contra Manifesto, Point Two

AN EERIE FEELING

The times we find ourselves in carry a deep sense of familiarity. Checking the news every morning, one cannot help but feel confronted by the rise of racist, authoritarian, and right-wing extremist ideologies. What might sound like the shadows of the past catching up with us seems to be amorphous. It comes to us as raw and unfiltered information, amplified via our screens through a tap, post, like, or share.

About two weeks away from what could turn out to be a historical election for the city-state capital of Germany, Berlin, the pressure seems to be mounting even more than usual, and rightfully so. Results from the neighbouring Saxony-Anhalt state proclaiming the right-wing extremist-classified Alternative für Deutschland as the winner of the regional elections just a few days ago leave many of us puzzled, but not surprised. With a campaign primarily centred on the idealization of, and a return to, a historically powerful Germany basking in all its grandeur, the blue party, through its political agenda, had clearly defined its roadmap towards such a return, and one of the major obstacles on its way seemed to be the so-called bad migrants, or essentially non-white and non-German-read folk, depicted as ideal scapegoats and the root cause of the decline of the nation.

But this is nothing new!

In fact, what the election results in Saxony-Anhalt triggered in many of us, beyond the eerie feeling, fear, and frustration that transcend the confines of any individual assessment, is the need to push back through collective mobilization and action.

> *O risco nos une!*
> *Envelhecer sendo VILÃO é gingar em meio ao risco.*
> *Doutorar-se é transitar entre o risco.*
> *Pensar, portando nossas peles, é UM RISCO.*
> *"Banditismos por pura maldade, banditismo por uma questão de classe"*
> *Cometemos contradições entre corpo, capital financeiro / simbólico.*
> *Surfando o trem de nossas contradições como seres humanos a plenos pulmões, bordamos com a linha da vida os mantos da anunciação de nossa auto visibilidade, pois Capoeira é boca que tudo come, arte é boca que tudo come*
>
> *Danger brings us together !*
> *To grow old as a VILLAIN is to sway amidst risk.*
> *To pursue a PhD is to navigate through risk.*
> *To think, whilst inhabiting our own skins, is A RISK.*
> *"Banditry out of sheer malice, banditry as a matter of class"*
> *We create contradictions between the body and financial/symbolic capital.*
> *Riding the wave of our contradictions as human beings at the top of our lungs, we embroider, with the thread of life, the robes heralding our self-visibility, for Capoeira is a mouth that devours everything; art is a mouth that devours everything.*
>
> – Vilanismo Contra Manifesto, Point Thirty One

A THIN LINE BETWEEN HYPERVISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY

Be it within predominantly white cities such as Berlin or majority black cities such as Salvador do Bahia, inhabiting the worlds we live in as a black person means finding equipoise on the thin line between hypervisibility and invisibility. This exercise, for which we constantly need to find the right tools, remains a challenging one, and one could undeniably argue that there is no one solution that solves every problem.

When Marielle Franco, Brazilian politician, sociologist, feminist, and human rights activist, was shot and assassinated on March, 14th 2018, the motive behind this gruesome act was clear. Marielle Franco, an Afro-Brazilian woman, an outspoken person denouncing police brutality and extrajudicial killings to which the majority of the black population all over the country, and particularly in her hometown of Rio de Janeiro, fall victim, was considered to be stepping out of line. Her activism was a rejection of the aforementioned binary, by which black bodies are either invisibilized – and, by extension, denied a voice or hypervisible and, by extension, imposed a derogatory reading. Doing so was claiming presence rather than

seeking representation.

> *Acompanhar de perto a narrativa construída de nossas histórias é preciso. Seguindo os passos literários de Lampião ao revisar em vida sua própria biografia, não deixando os "Macacos" controlarem as nossas vozes.*
>
> *It is essential to keep a close eye on the narrative that has been constructed around our stories. We must follow in Lampião's literary footsteps by reviewing our own biographies whilst we are still alive, and not let the "Monkeys" control our voices.*
>
> – Vilanismo Contra Manifesto, Point Twenty Three

PULLING AGAINST GRAVITY

"Until the lions have their own historians,
the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."[22]

The issue with History with a capital H is how much shadow it has cast on other narratives. Often one-sided and affiliated with domination and conquest, History with a capital H aims at glorifying the oppressor and completely omits the oppressed, or at least reduces the oppressed to the position of being just the victim.

History with a capital H could be perceived as a gravitational force that weighs most of the black communities down to the floor and aims at keeping them in such a position. In times during which narratives are constructed, hijacked, and the work of undoing realised by several subjugated communities is being undone, it is of the essence that our voices echo even louder and that we perpetuate traditions of story-making and storytelling.

> *Somos VILÕES, Crias, Pivetes, somos todos classificados ainda pela lei de vadiagem, temos como herança colocar os nossos corpos para discutir o uso e a construção da cidade.*
>
> *We are VILLAINS, kids, street urchins; we are all still classified under the vagrancy law, and our legacy is to put our bodies on the line to challenge the use and development of the city.*
>
> – Vilanismo Contra Manifesto, Point Thirty

VILANISMO – A COUNTER-MOVIMENTO

Vilanismo is an attempt to think about an architecture of blackness free from the pull of gravity that constantly tries to weigh us down to the ground. It is the unfolding of a counter-movement (cntr movimento) that centres black lives in its manifold forms through fragility, endurance, resistance, self-affirmation and self-narration. It is a gesture that echoes the iconic slogan "¡Patria o Muerte! ¡Venceremos!", but rather than pledging allegiance to a homeland or nation-state, Vilanismo's counter-movement breathes new meaning into the slogan such that one could reinterpret it as "humanidade ou morte, nós venceremos" (humanity or death, we shall win).

22 Achebe, Chinua. "The Art of Fiction No. 139." Interview by Jerome Brooks. *The Paris Review*, no. 139 (Fall 1994): 144.

M O R E I N F O R M A T I O N
savvy-contemporary.com

S A V V Y Contemporary – The laboratory of form-ideas is an artistic organisation, discursive platform, place for good talks, foods and drinks – a space for conviviality and cultural plurilog. S A V V Y Contemporary is a public and independent organism in perpetual becoming, animated by around 25 members and a network of collaborators, co-creating community and communities it breathes with. Founded in 2009, S A V V Y Contemporary situates itself at the threshold of the West and the non-West to understand their conceptualisations, ethical systems, achievements, and ruins. It develops tools, proposes perspectives and nourishes practices towards imagining a world inhabited together.
The space was founded in 2009 in Berlin-Neukölln by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, S A V V Y 's artistic director until 2022. From 2023 onwards, the space – located in Berlin-Wedding since 2016 – is under artistic direction by Renan Laru-an alongside the executive directors Lema Sikod and Lynhan Balatbat-Helbock.

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