

Abel Rodríguez

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Territorio centro indígena / Territorio indígena, 2021

Ink on paper
50 cm x 70 cm
Acquisition with means of the Georges und Mirjam Kinzel-Fonds, IVc 27612, IVc 27613

The works of Abel Rodríguez are an important contemporary voice for the way of life of indigenous communities and the protection of tropical forests. In his works, he manifests his knowledge of the forest and creates references to ways of being-in-the-world, social transformation processes, and current challenges such as climate change. He grew up in the Nonuya and Muinane indigenous communities in Colombia, where he was first introduced to local healing and plant lore by knowledge bearers and later became known nationally for his extensive knowledge. While working with the NGO Tropenbos, he began making illustrations to help biology and botany students identify plants. During the period of armed conflict in the 1990s, he lived in exile in Bogota. There, drawing became his medium for recording and sharing his knowledge.

Ocaina, Witoto

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One female and two male statues foonhunraaga, approx. 1963

Wood, pigments
155 cm, 151 cm, 161 cm
Coll. Jürg Gasché, IVc 26752-IVc 26754, Commission from Noé's father. Noé was the last festival leader of the Ocaina in the 1970s

The demand of the European and North American industry for natural rubber for seals or car tires had disastrous consequences for the people of many regions of Amazonia. Enslavement and debt bondage led to the collapse of local societies. Due to the despotism of Casa Arana and its successor, the Peruvian Amazon Rubber Company, financed with British capital, 30,000 Witoto, Bora and Ocaina died in the Colombian Putumayo region between 1880 and 1915, killed by mistreatment or disease. Reinterpretation of the history, from the rubber boom through the civil war to the present day, is an important concern for the indigenous communities. The Kuirú family has been in contact with the museum since 2007 to consult the collection of ethnologist Jürg Gasché. Gasché has been conducting research among the Witoto, Bora and Ocaina since 1969. In particular, the animate ritual objects from his collection are both witnesses to changes and important starting points for maintaining and reconstructing social and ritual relationships. An important ceremony is the transfer of rights and duties from a father to a son. Two pairs of statues accompany the ceremony as witnesses.

Extractive Zones

Human-environment relations are radically changing through the interventions of extractive industries and knowledge technologies. Against this background, the exhibition tests the critical dialogue between contemporary art and museum artifacts.

Ecocides are shaping our current world and the end of the Anthropocene way of thinking, in which humans were central. The exhibited works bring together both local and embodied knowledge of human and non-human relationships.

«Extractive Zones» is about social ecologies and the —often indigenous— spaces that are characterized on the one hand, by a high degree of biodiversity, and on the other, by a long history of the extraction of resources, and (neo)colonial relationships and extractivism. The exhibited works highlight the importance of ignored knowledge practices and systems, as well as alternative designs of the world that reach beyond simply thinking about progress. The aim is to make the multi-layered knowledge history of the objects visible in order to encourage reflection —guided by a decolonial understanding— and to uncover a vast area of alternative historiography.

Artistic interventions by Maria Thereza Alves, Carolina Caycedo, Uriel Orlow, Abel Rodríguez and Claudia Salamanca take stock of the global present. Together they show alternative perspectives of agency and possible forms of coexistence in a new way.

Carolina Caycedo

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Patrón Mono, 2018

From the *Water Portrait Series*
3 channels, HD video
4'32", color, sound
Sound by Cay Castagnetto
Courtesy of the artist

“Patrón Mono portrays the lower Cauca river canyon, located in the department of Antioquia, Colombia, currently affected by the crisis of the Hidroituango dam. The muleteers, fishermen and artisanal miners that make up the canyon culture refer to the Cauca River as Patrón Mono (Blonde Boss), both for its yellow color and for the gold found in its waters and sands. For them, it is the best employer in the world, it does not set schedules and it never refuses to pay, it always provides them with fish and gold. The images that make up the triptych of projections show footage of gold artisanally harvested from the Cauca River, as well as footage taken in the same canyon.” (Carolina Caycedo)

Felix Speiser

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Excerpt from manuscript "Ethnology of the Aparai", Brazil, 1924

Paper, pencil
Felix Speiser Research Archive, MKB 09-0074

The mapping of the world shows how European ideas dominated local and indigenous knowledge systems. An important practice of ethnographical fieldwork was the recording of travel routes and the description of research areas that were remote from a European perspective. Whether local names of rivers, mountains, places, and landscapes eventually entered the literature, were adapted to other languages, or were named after European places, or the explorers themselves, was up to the discretionary power of the early travelers.

Uriel Orlow

1

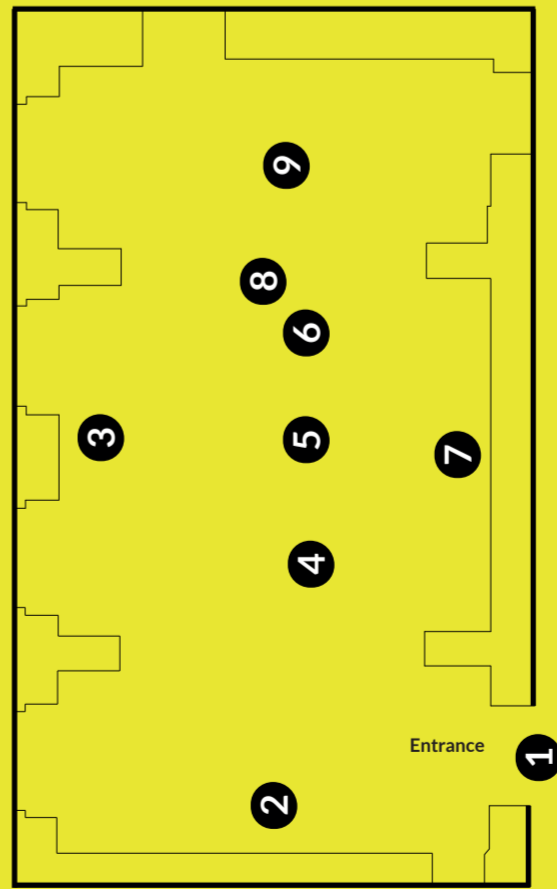
What Plants Were Called Before They Had a Name, 2015-present

5/6-channel sound installation, 22'40"
Voices: Gugu Baloyi, Mamane Cele-Mtshali, Phillip Dikotla, Patricia Maletswa, Thulani Maphumulo, Rethabile Possa, Nomathole Pumla Gaylard, Bradley van Sitters, Pule Welch
Courtesy of the artist

“European colonialism in South Africa (and elsewhere) was both preceded and accompanied by expeditions that aimed to chart the territory and classify its natural resources, in turn paving the way for occupation and exploitation. The supposed discovery and subsequent naming and cataloguing of plants disregarded and obliterated existing indigenous plant names and botanical knowledge and imposed the Linnaean system of classification and its particular European rationality.” (Uriel Orlow)

The installation functions as an oral glossary of autochthonous vegetation that lists their indigenous names in a dozen South African languages, including Khoi, SePedi, SeSotho, SiSwati, SeTswana, xiTsonga, isiXhosa and isiZulu.

Exhibition map



- 1 Uriel Orlow
- 2 Uriel Orlow
- 3 Claudia Salamanca
- 4 Ocaina, Witoto
- 5 Felix Speiser
- 6 Manfred Rauschert
- 7 Maria Thereza Alves
- 8 Abel Rodríguez
- 9 Carolina Caycedo

Manfred Rauschert

6

Maps, aparai nonolö, based on drawings by Juutala Aparai and KOulapalewa Aparai, 1968-1970

Paper, pen, paint
25.2 cm x 62.5 cm, 73 cm x 102 cm
Aparai; Brazil, Pará, Bona
IVc 14724, IVc 14725

In the late 1960s, an increasing number of initiatives attempted to incorporate indigenous ideas into the recording of geographies. These approaches were guided by Western scientific norms, but gave more space to the incorporation of indigenous designations. Although these maps are limited in what they can reveal about local ideas, access to historical maps and archival records is important for Indigenous people today. They provide unintended evidence of the extent of their former habitat and thus form the basis for today's land rights claims, an approach to beating colonial strategies at their own game.

Uriel Orlow

2

Learning from Artemisia, 2019-2020

3 channels, LCD screens, HD video, color, sound, 14'18"
Collaboration: Lumartemisia CAE RDC, Lumata and Dr Constant Kansango Tchandema
Painting: Musasa
Musicians: Muteba Ardoz, Jean Tshitshi – orchestre jeunes étoiles des astres
Translation: Sando Marteau, Lord Nassor
Special Thanks: Christine Bluard, Sandrine Colard-de Bock, Joseph Gaylard, Domitien Ramazin Beyla, Gabriele Salmi, Alain Sengar, Bruno Tshilond, Anne Welschen and Ateliers Picha, Lubumbashi.
Support: Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council, Africa Museum Belgium
Courtesy of the artist

An in-depth research into the medicinal plant *Artemisia afra*, this installation is an atmospheric, harsh and informative journey through the histories of medicinal plants and their relationship to geopolitics. *Artemisia afra* is an indigenous plant cultivated in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) among other African countries. Despite its effectiveness, the simplicity of its administration and the sustainability of its production, it is not recommended as treatment by the World Health Organisation, which favours the pharmaceutical industry. For this project, Orlow worked with a women's cooperative in Lumata, DRC. In the DRC, whose colonial and postcolonial economy has been dominated by extractivism, *Artemisia afra* can help us imagine non-extractive relationships to natural resources as well as local and sustainable healthcare solutions.

Maria Thereza Alves

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Rio Doce: Sweet No More, 2017

Sculpture, linen and acrylic paint
337 cm x 165 cm
Courtesy of the artist

The failure of a mining waste dam owned by the Samarco Company in the town of Mariana in Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 2015, resulted in a disaster which caused the death of 19 people, and unleashed millions of tons of toxic mine tailing into the Rio Doce (Sweet River), which is a water source for the Krenak people, whose territory the river flows through. To this day, Rio Doce continues to be contaminated. Alves' work is emblematic of the challenges and violences affecting indigenous communities around the world, not only as an artist but also through her political and activist commitment since the late 1970s.

Claudia Salamanca

3

Notas de pie de página al libro Las Plantas de los Dioses de Richard Evans Schultes y Albert Hofmann, 2019

LCD screen, HD video, color, sound, 10'35"
Courtesy of the artist

This work intervenes in the famous book by Richard Evans Schultes and Albert Hofmann titled *Plants of the Gods*. The intervention is carried out in two copies: in one, the images have been deleted, while in the other the text has been removed. The synchronization of both interventions in the video attempts to shift the relationship between the visual and the textual in the ethnobotanical literature of the hallucinogenic plants and works as a critical comment on failed drug policies in today's Colombia.

Museum der Kulturen Basel

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Image
Carolina Caycedo, *Patrón Mono*, 2018
Manfred Rauschert, 1968-1970