no longer with the memory
but with its future
PAULA NASCIMENTO
No longer with the memory But with its future ........................................... 12

ANA NOLASCO
Freedom in one’s eyes – The Pathway of the Stars ........................................... 24

MARISSA J. MOORMAN
Path to the Stars ........................................................................................................ 40

YARA NAKAHANDA MONTEIRO
Path to the Stars ........................................................................................................ 56

NEGARRA A.KUDUMU
Figuring out freedom .................................................................................................. 62

ANA SOPHIE SALAZAR
Interview ......................................................................................................................... 70

VITTORIO URBANI
Even the mud reflects .................................................................................................. 76

EXHIBITION ..................................................................................................................... 78

BIOGRAPHIES ............................................................................................................... 86
Paula Nascimento

NO LONGER WITH THE MEMORY
BUT WITH ITS FUTURE
'no longer with the memory but with its future' is an exhibition by the artist Monica de Miranda at Oratorio di San Ludovico, on the occasion of the 59th Venice Biennale, that brings together a new body of works. Monica de Miranda’s interdisciplinary practice investigates convergences between politics, identity, gender, memory, and place and the complexities of identity construction within her own geographies of affection.

The multidisciplinary project is articulated around three complementary research axes: continuities and discontinuities of history, by creating a parallel between the liberation struggles in Africa and the struggles of the diaspora; women’s struggles throughout history - colonisation, gender, and identity: a reflection on the Anthropocene and the several paradigm shifts that humanity faces.

The exhibition title ‘no longer with the memory but with its future’ reflects the dialectic relations between past, present, and future through creative engagement with historical traces that project and imagine new futures. It displays a cosmovision tending towards new modes of understanding human subjectivity, moving forward the necessary discussion around the relations between human dimensions, such as language and politics, and the environment in which we dwell.
The exhibition is constructed around a central piece, the film; Path to the Stars - which takes its name from the homonymous poem written in 1953 by Agostinho Neto. The film was shot along the Kwanza River, the longest river in Angola and the cradle of the kingdom of Ndongo. Through the vitality and strength of mother nature, an analogy between the body and territory is created — the river is intrinsically related to the history of the Atlantic, the territory being the first body to be penetrated by the colonisers in search of material wealth. As past, present and the future converge in the waters of the Kwanza, the water works as a material that unites all animate and inanimate beings in sharing the consequences of their actions, intertwining social, cultural, capital, and geophysical flows.

By introducing the point of view of black feminism and the “oppositional gaze” (bell hooks) in which gender and race stereotypes are deconstructed, the film follows the journey of a Heroine from sunrise to sunset, confronted by her own shadow and by different temporalities and micro-narratives, proposing a counter-narrative composed of the complex biographies that overlap and interact: the past and the anti-colonial freedom fighters, the uncertainty of the present, the desire to belong, projection of the future and the longing to reach a symbiosis with nature. This central piece works structurally and conceptually as a river from which branches and layers of stories and metaphors unfold, a rhizomatic and relational reading on history without a specific chronology. The soundtrack to the film, a soundscape composed by Mónica’s long-time collaborator Xullaji, references radio broadcasts and space shuttle transmissions, evoking other spaces and times.

Opening the exhibition is a text piece, a fragment from a poem and works as a prologue to the (film) narrative. Mónica’s use of hypertext in the character’s dialogues and the poem functions as a metanarrative. It disrupts the linearity of the images and introduces a new body that manifests through a voice that brings to attention memory and the future simultaneously — another dimension made up of disjointed temporalities and multiple rhythms.
The exhibition also includes a photographic installation exploring the relationship between femininity and nature. The sisters or Twins have been a recurrent image in the artist’s work — they amplify the meaning of identity. Twins carry a double or triple identity that confuses or overlaps but is always distinct and individual and highlights the in-between-ness and the double self — a characteristic of the hybrid subjectivities of diasporic identities. From those same waters that carry manifold histories, the three sisters emerge in the present.

Mónica de Miranda’s use of allegories introduces a particular cosmovision and different ontologies rooted in the African and Afro diasporic experiences. In this body of works, the artist explores new ways of considering human subjectivity, language, and politics, challenging us to think of the multiple dimensions of the human and its relationship with the environment that surrounds us and to see how historical, social, and political questions exacerbate environmental issues.
In ‘Path to the Stars’, the “territory” is not understood as the river, land, forests, and the inhabitants of this ecosystem but as a porous space where relationships between humans and the environment occur. It is also history, memory, culture, and spirituality - the space where individual and collective identities are built and constantly transformed.

When humanity faces various challenges such as increased discrimination, global warming, wars, and ecological disasters, ‘no longer with the memory but with its future’ opens meaningful discussions on belonging and creates an opportunity to share and seek future directions through creative reflection and imagination.

NOTES
1. Agostino Neto, Angola’s first president.

2. The Kingdom of Ndongo (or the Kingdom of Dongo, Angola (Ngola)) was a pré-colonial state located where Angola is today, created by the Ambundu/Mbundu ethnic group. The Mbundus spoke Kimbundu, a Bantu language, and occupied a large part of West-central Africa, along the lower Kwanza and middle Kwango (Birmingham). During the 16th century, as the Atlantic slave trade expanded, Ndongo encountered a new reality with the Atlantic as its backdrop. Because of its location and the contact with the Europeans, Ndongo was closely linked to the Atlantic and therefore exposed to the effects of the slave trade on a world scale. Ndongo society lived through a series of transformations resulting from contact with different ways of thinking, languages, religions, and a diversity of products that became part of the day-to-day life of the local population.
Ana Nolasco

FREEDOM IN ONE’S EYES –
THE PATHWAY OF THE STARS
'O Caminho das Estrelas' [The Pathway of the Stars] is a reference to the poem with the same title by Agostinho Neto, leader of the Angolan liberation struggle, which evokes a state of consciousness that can create its own conditions of experience and alter reality through action. The film follows the journey, from dawn to dusk, of an ex-combatant of the Angolan struggle for liberation as she travels by boat past the banks of the Kwanza River, the birthplace of the Ndongo kingdom, a pre-colonial African tributary state of the Kongo kingdom, created by sub-groups of the Ambundu, and led by King Ngola. A metaphor of a female place that threads through various times and spaces, a serene-faced woman intently observes the nature that surrounds her, while her body slowly merges with the watery currents of the river. Various characters appear throughout this journey: a shadow, an old woman and a child, soldiers who try to read their future in the lines of a map of Angola, and an astronaut, all of whom spin their stories in the murmur of the river.

As the largest exclusively Angolan river, the Kwanza, which flows into the Atlantic south of Luanda, was, during the colonial period, a major access route between the coast and the interior of the continent for transporting goods, including enslaved people. Thus, it is linked to the history of the Atlantic, and is part of the space in which goods, people, ideas and technology were transacted between South America, North America, Africa and Western Europe.

Past, present and future converge in the waters of the river, with memories from the history of the construction of Angolan identity, and of women whose role in the struggles has been forgotten. Like a spiritual journey of self-discovery, it poetically uses the Kimbundo language, the intertext, and silence, to express the unspeakable. Thus, along the banks of the river, the woman soldier has several encounters with herself, as she becomes a woman of water, a woman of land, and finally, a woman of language. The bodies flow into each other through the water; metabolically, through the involvement with all living and inanimate elements of the water cycle; metaphorically, through the embodiment of states of mind and memories; or even symbolically, through the cultural construction which weaves the narrative along the banks of the Kwanza River.
These fluid bodies call to mind the concept of hydro-feminism developed by Astrida Neimanis (2017) from a lineage of feminists, such as Haraway, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous, among others, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, and the rhizomatic thought of Deleuze. The concept of the body as aquatic, sharing the same hydro-commons with other beings, both animate and inanimate, contradicts the inherited notion of the Western Enlightenment that the individual is universal — in reality, understood as middle-class, male, white, and heterosexual — and is isolated and autonomous (Neimanis 2017). Climate change has led to a shift in spatial and temporal scales, and highlighted the interdependence between all beings and elements at a planetary level, through flows that are not only “geophysical, meteorological and technological” but also stem from “power, politics and economy”, which affect one another, and are indistinguishable from each other.

By not giving primacy to the human being, hydro-feminism undermines the hegemonic, anthropocentric and phallocentric Western viewpoint without, however, denying the otherness that results from embodied experience, situated in a particular space and time, through what Astrida Neimanis calls, the “post-human politics of location” (2017, 26–30). This notion seeks to preserve the diversity of an embodied subjectivity, rooted in a particular spatial-temporal context, and to distinguish it, in this sense, from the post-anthropocentric and post-humanist movements that emerged at the beginning of the millennium. Putting all beings — animate and inanimate — on the same level, blurs racial, gender, and social differences, which are situated in a certain social and historical context and influence the cartographies of flux.
This understanding of “materially embedded and embodied localities and power relationships” (Braidotti 2011, 14) is evident in this film. Among other aspects, it is revealed in the cosmology of the astral maps drawn by the soldiers, representing China, Angola and the United States, and reflecting the past and the present, in which Angola was once a violent stage for the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, and where China has now replaced the United States in the search to expand markets for products, energy, and natural resources.

Here, the trans-species and trans-corporeal approach of hydro-feminism implies an ethical commitment through the element of water, not only as a metaphor, but as a material element that unites all animate and inanimate beings in the joint consequences of their actions. Thus, it draws attention to the entanglement of the flow of capital and geophysical, cultural and social flows, implicitly criticising the patriarchal structure of capitalism and its extractivist mentality, as well as what Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Ana Paula Meneses call “epistemicide”, i.e. the suppression of local knowledge by alien knowledge (Santos e Meneses 2000). This process is implicit in the term “Anthropocene”, which attributes responsibility to an abstract and universal human being, ignoring the fact that the consequences of ecological changes are not equally shared by all, or that, in global terms, women and communities are the most vulnerable and bear the greatest burden, without having enjoyed its benefits.

Through a palimpsest of texts, the voices of Agostinho Neto and Luandino Vieira are summoned along the riverbanks, as symbols of the struggle against colonialism, and the female voice is invoked through the poems of Cláudia R. Sampaio, which weave through the narrative in dialogue with texts by Yara Nakahanda Monteiro and Mónica de Miranda. This hypertext deconstructs the linearity of the narrative to the extent that the audiovisual images of the encounters with different characters become disconnected from the previous and subsequent images, in other words, from the movement. Instead of time deriving from action, as in the moving-image, movement submits itself to time, creating a “crystal-image” (Deleuze 1983). In this way, the unfolding of memory, contemplating itself in the waters of the river — an image of the unconscious — contaminates the moving-image that becomes a fluid body, a cinematographic body. The aquatic-body of the woman, insofar as it is a threshold between the past and the present, is a manifest-body of the present, and of “Afro-nowism” (Nwagbogu 2021).
Having awoken to the danger threatening nature, there is an urgent need to make “small things audible” (Sampaio), and create a non-anthropocentric vision of nature, beyond the fetishism of the sublime or the instrumentalist visions of capitalism. In a way, this theme has indirectly been a dominant feature, patent in much of Mónica de Miranda’s work, which eulogises the simplicity of nature without treating it as a subject. Hers is a perspective that, nowadays, is drowned out by a representational logic that takes Nature as a sign of something transcendent, or as pure inert matter to be exploited.

Despite the different layers of narratives that intertwine along the banks of the river, these characters seem insignificant in the midst of nature that — with practically no human intervention, except at the very end — carries on, oblivious, in its irreducible otherness. Using travelling shots or general panoramic views, as opposed to a neutral viewpoint, nature is shown, not in its relation to the subject, but as self-sufficient, thereby foregoing the exoticizing proximity that often characterises representations of places on the African continent. Consequently, these images evoke the value of nature itself, regardless of its representation, without being legitimised or appreciated by external instances or criteria.
The landscape, as an open finitude (Subject) — in the sense that it is both de-limited, and refers to a whole, of which it is only a fragment — establishes itself as a “‘unity’, but not an entirety” (Seel 2011 [1996]). Indeed, this framing is always made by the observer who perceives it, so that the observer always finds themself included in the landscape itself, which is thus “Nature aesthetically perceived”, in other words, perceived by the senses. Yet, in a way, in ‘O Caminho das Estrelas’, what is out of frame in the travelling shots, and alternating panoramic views, ultimately circumvents this framing, so that everything beyond the screen forms a whole with the moving images, taking the centrifugal nature of the screen to its limit (Bazin 1992, 200–201).

The simplicity of nature being itself, is revealed to a gaze that does not see the present as an instrumental way to achieve something in the future, or as a ghost of a past. In this sense, the landscape here evades aesthetic perception, that is, perception through the senses of an observer, but forms an organic whole with a “crystal-image”.

The awakening of an awareness of the contiguity between human and non-human bodies, opens up a space of hybrid spatial-temporal transition, a “third space” (Bhabha, Hall 2015). Despite being marred by colonialist and exploitative relationships between human beings, and between human beings and nature, this also constitutes a “potential space of intense and original creativity” (Hall 2015, 18–25), where identities can be dialogically renegotiated through their differences. In this never-ending process, the past-present is renewed, and creates a new “collectively constructed spatio-temporal territory, shared and occupied together” (Braidotti 2011, 16).
Although the film is set in Angola, the story of its struggle for freedom constitutes a starting point for a meta-reflection on the identity-forming process itself, both at an individual and collective level, and repositions it in a reciprocal relationship with nature. Where the film is shown, ambiguous phrases have been placed in the foyer that can be read in various ways and sequences, inviting the visitor to abandon the causal logic of linear and homogeneous time, and to open up their imagination to other spaces and times. Unlike the historicist notions of the modernist regime, the past is not conceived as something irreversible, but rather as something that can be reinterpreted retrospectively in order to imagine alternative futures. Finally, ‘Three Sisters’, from the series ‘Pathway of the Stars’, reminds us that it is in the present, in the same waters of the river, that the future and the past are immersed: the three sisters who appear here on the banks of the Kwanza River, can be seen as embodiments of that third space, as a space of reinvention and self-discovery.

NOTES
1. Agostinho Neto was leader of the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) between 1962 and 1979, and the first President of the People’s Republic of Angola, a former Portuguese colony that has been independent since 1975.

2. The poem was part of a collection entitled ‘Sagrada Esperança’ [Sacred Hope] that collected poems from 1940 to 1960, many of them written in the prisons where the political leader and poet was held. The book produces a cartography of the Angolan struggle that progressed through various states of consciousness, from self-awareness and the elimination of the dominant ideology, to the alteration of reality itself through action. The poem, ‘O Caminho das Estrelas’ [Pathway of the Stars] evokes the diminution of the abstract ideal, and the opening up to immediate sensorial experience: “Not abstract [...] but concrete/ draped in green/ of the fresh fragrance of the forests after rain”, a precondition for beginning a journey with “Freedom in one’s eyes / Sound in one’s ears” (Neto 1953, 66).

REFERENCES


‘Path to the Stars’ follows a river. The river Kwanza. The film itself is like a river, drawing from many sources but cutting a path all its own. Combining, cinematic and theatrical aspects in equal parts, ‘Path to the Stars’ tells a story of Angola’s liberation struggle along the river, recounted by Carlota, a guerrilla fighter, a woman, never named but embodied by actor Renata Torres.¹

A PHOTO

Carlota lived and died during Angola’s independence. We know her from Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski’s account of Angolan independence, ‘Another Day of Life’. The single photo that exists of her comes from Kapuscinski’s book. Shortly after he met and took her photo, Carlota died in an ambush. We don’t know her last name or really anything about her. Sources are fragmentary, incomplete; they leave a trace, but offer little concrete to deepen our understanding. Like the bubbles children blow from bottles, de Miranda breathes life into the photo to create a possible story, a story that floats along a river, on a path to the stars — to somewheres, otherwise, and futures.
Mónica de Miranda and Yara Nakahanda Monteiro wrote the film’s script, drawing on lines and the spirit of Angolan writer José Luandino Vieira and Portuguese poet Cláudia R. Sampaio. Inspired in part by Vieira’s ‘O Livro dos Rios’ (2006), de Miranda’s film is an act of historically grounded poetic license, a riff, perhaps, on what Saidiya Hartman calls “critical fabulation.” Like the river plants with tenuous roots that bob around Carlota, floating Ophelia-like in the river, the script and film grow from the imagination to elaborate the experiences of those marginalized in official historical accounts. The story puts out roots down into the shifting sands, below the moving water, and reaches toward the light. De Miranda gives Carlota new life.

Vieira opens his book with a dedication, a tribute, and an epigraph. These are textual acts that, like pouring libation, recall ancestors and nod to interlocutors. He dedicates the book to those with whom he was imprisoned for anti-colonial activities in Tarrafal in Cape Verde, in tribute (or as he says “re-tribute”) to Langston Hughes, and with an inscription of the words of Njinga Mbandi (Queen Njinga) of Ndongo and Matamba, as related by the Portuguese conqueror and historian António Oliveira Cadornega. De Miranda’s film draws upon all these historical layers.

Like a river’s tributary, Vieira moves through the first lines of Hughes’s poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”: “I’ve known rivers:/ I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.” Vieira begins: “I’ve known rivers. I’ve known rivers ancient as the world, full of inhuman blood.” Carlota speaks these words at the beginning of the film. Hughes speaks of rivers that nurtured civilizations — the Euphrates, Nile, and Congo — and of a river that symbolized the entanglement of dehumanization and industry — the Mississippi — a river that was also a great conduit of African American culture.
For Vieira and de Miranda, the river is the Kwanza. From its source in Angola’s eastern Bié province, the river travels north and then west, where it empties into the Atlantic. If the myth of Portuguese nationhood is wrapped up in the story of navigating oceans, made heroic in Luís de Camões’s poetic cycle ‘Os Lusíadas’, Vieira draws us to rivers, the pathways to and from Angola’s interior, to reframe Angolan national identity to the places where wars for sovereignty and against foreign control were fought, and where culture swirls, while never forgetting the connections to other lands, rivers, and civilizations and the violent history that Hughes, Vieira, and de Miranda demand that we conjugate together.

Citing Njinga Mbandi, Vieira reminds us that Hartman’s “critical fabulation” has ancient antecedents.

<< In dubio chronichae, pro fabula...>>
Dizem que disse — assim mesmo, em latim — Njinga Mbandi, rainha, a António de Oliveira de Cadornega, historiador, na comprovada presença de Frei Giovanni Antonio di Montecúccolo, o Kavazi.

Na nossa cidade de Santa Maria de Matamba, aos dezenove dias do mês de Dezembro de 1663, dia de Santa Olímpia Viúva.

These few lines encapsulate the trouble with history. The citation in Latin, spoken by Njinga Mbandi, inflected by Vieira’s contemporary Angolan diction “assim mesmo, em latim”, written down by Cadornega and witnessed by the Italian priest, Cavazzi/Kavazi (again, an Angolan re-inscription of his name) enacts the transition from the oral to the textual as an act of chronicling. The writer intervenes to retrieve this from the past and put it to present use to imagine, to tell the story and the memories of those who did not write the official history books. In this case, the guerrilla combatants.
De Miranda deploys filmic invocations. The opening shot on the river is a gesture both to Vieira and to Sarah Maldorar, the first filmmaker of the Angolan liberation struggle (Martinican by birth), who interpreted Vieira’s ‘A Vida Verdadeira de Domingos Xavier’ in the film ‘Sambizanga’, in which Maria, Domingos’ wife and not Domingos himself, is set as the main protagonist. ‘Sambizanga’ opens on a river, although in this case, at a rapids, full of the rush and tumble of the water’s energy. De Miranda’s title echoes visual artist António Ole’s film, ‘On a Path to the Stars’ (1980), a poetic homage to Agostinho Neto, the first Angolan president, and himself a poet. Both Ole and de Miranda borrow their titles from one of Neto’s poems.

ELEMENTS

De Miranda builds ‘Path to the Stars’ from these diverse sources. Like Maldoror before her, she offers a riposte to Maria Calafate Ribeiro’s question: “And now, José Luandino Vieira? Where are the women, the creators of new generations?” (2012) Precisely fifty years after Maldoror’s film, de Miranda’s perspective results in a different, but equally Black feminist intervention. She does not explain the anticolonial struggle, it is a given, but she reimagines it. Unlike Maldoror’s work, this is not narrative filmmaking. Instead, it is a reflection in moving images, sound, and words by a highly regarded Angolan-Portuguese visual artist.
De Miranda’s visual work uses her technique of putting still photography into motion, to great effect. The depth of field is balanced. Actors pause. The work is unhurried but never slow. At a table Carlota and her Shadow (played by Sunny Dilage) are seated side-by-side, the former in a white gown, the latter in a high-necked black dress, Victorian and stiff. They face the river and without expression eat roast hearts. The English expression ‘eat your heart out’ means, look at me and be envious. This scene expresses something else. Swallow your heart. Put fear behind you, put emotion aside, and look ahead.

In this scene, Carlota is twinned: as young and old, black and white, or night and day. De Miranda’s use of twins, doubles, and even triples, asks viewers to question time, difference, and similitude. An older woman guides a young girl, who naps on her lap. Three young women dance around a fire and stand still, returning the camera’s gaze, their long braids linked one to another, like chains of flowers. And three women: an astronaut, the older woman, and Carlota, embody different generations as their dialogue entangles the past and the future.

Theatrical elements are anti-naturalistic. Instead of realism that absorbs viewers into the story, de Miranda’s slowly moving stills draw our eyes to the relationship between the human and the natural world. Actors deliver lines that are closer to poetic recitation than conversation. We wonder: how do humans act under conditions of war? How do women act to realize different futures?

Color and costume are elemental: black, white, blue, and camouflage. We never see a flag, and the colors so closely associated with the MPLA — red, black, and yellow — do not appear. We might catch traces of the flag in forms, if not in colors, as in the horizon, that “narrow line that divides,” or in the star or stars of the title, and the ambitions of the astronaut and the astrological maps of two male soldiers.
The soundtrack, produced by the artist Xullagi, is critical to the film’s force. It is layered and distorted, bending time and transporting us through space. Non-diegetic elements predominate, again offering an anti-naturalism that tugs at our conscience. We hear radio broadcasts, a speech by an African-American preacher, and transmissions from a space shuttle launch. Sounds bring the outside world in, and place this story within the larger arc of late 20th century history — of the US civil rights movement, of space exploration, of decolonization, and the distinct language of a liberation movement that spoke in local languages to elude the Portuguese military.

Two main characters, Carlota and the Kwanza, propel the film. Except when we see Carlota submerged, they often operate at different speeds. Carlota moves slowly, her features at ease, her gaze often distant. The river buzzes with life in and along its banks, and is dense with vegetation. People and their stories are temporary here, but the river endures. We see Carlota and her Shadow in a small boat, still, before a briskly moving background.

River and water evoke ancient temporalities that cycle and spiral, challenging the triumphant teleologies of political discourse. They demand we be present with them, or they will overtake us. The river is a teacher, never a student.
STARS

Stars are light, in a different time. They register hope, signal distance, and other worlds. ‘Path to the Stars’ speaks of Angola’s liberation struggle, but its relationship to chronological time is ambivalent. We flow with the river and Carlota through the three acts of one day and into the next. Two radios, a plastic encased mirror, an astronaut, and soldier’s camouflage are the only indicators of a particular historical moment. Other temporalities coexist - the past, present, and future at once, astrological time, and the stars in the sky and the stars below Carlota’s feet.

What was once here is no longer. Landscape erases as much as it sets the scene. A building in ruins is an explicit visual reminder of change and decay. Overgrowth is stealthier. If the river marks the land like a scar and as a tattoo, vegetation hides the signs of war. The present can overwrite the past. But in the present: “when we remember, it is not with memory, but with its future.” Memory is one form of the past’s futures. Still, Carlota cautions, “when you visit the past, wipe your feet.” Because we must imagine other presents and futures too.

Stars sparkle with a future, even as they deliver light to us that left the star long ago. Stars are at the nexus of science and magic and at the center of cosmological time, the time of the universe. The female astronaut embodies this future-directed vision and desire in ‘Path to the Stars’, reminding us of Afrofuturism’s African as well as its diasporic sparks. Two soldiers study the astrological chart of the Chinese nation (a nation with a star flecked flag). Military precision should measure the distance between “consciousness and the darkness” and of “hate.” The soldiers parse the chart as if it were a map of pasts and futures, spiritual and mundane. One says to the other “we’ll transport ourselves from here to there, beyond. These centuries have been an intermediary phase.”

Photography scholar and historian Patricia Hayes describes liberation movement photos from Zimbabwe as crafted in the “future tense.” De Miranda’s film troubles those certainties. As Carlota says, “There’s no way to get the time right.”

NOTES
1. Angola’s anticolonial war began in 1961 and continued until April 25, 1974, when Portuguese military officers (who were fighting wars in Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau) overthrew the Portuguese state. The Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola declared independence on November 11, 1975. However, the country soon fell into civil war, and the rival sides only signed peace accords at Luena in April 2002.
Yara Nakahanda Monteiro

PATH TO THE STARS
Now I want to remember all those we lost
Restore the Earth, rivers, and skies
I am the ever-changing water
Through which our memories flow

The cold shadow
Swallowed the beautiful
The plants hide
The rivers retreat
To the orbit of your pristine center
I stay here
I am here
In the metallic void
Unprotected
Violated.

I don’t forget who I am
I remember who you are
Earth

Long ago
With the birds,
I went North and South
East and west
Now, what is left for us
In the twilight of this
Inhospitable earth

In the fourth house
I raise the sun
Navigating onward
Creating
Dreaming
Forgetting the past
For a thousand secrets
Still hide in the woods
Intimate thoughts and visions
Traced in the shadows
Illuminated by red fire.
We ignore the oracles
Blindfolding ourselves
Cursed by
Scattered seeds:
Absence
Scarcity
I know...
What exists in Me
Is out there
Nothing separates us
May I break
May I burn
The death of death
Resurrects Life
Far from human flesh

Rite of Liberation
The flame
Destroys and renews
We heal

Sun in Scorpio, Moon in Aquarius
18, 24, 7
Duality
In Sagittarius
We carry the chimera
Peering at the stars
Witnessing other worlds.

The Sun trembles and the Moon shakes
Duality
In Sagittarius
Fire, Earth, Air, Water
Four, Zero, Three, Four.

My soul
Bared in sleep
All I have to declare is
Hope.

I move on through the stars
New world
In search of Life
Old world
In the darkness
Negarra A. Kudumu

FIGURING OUT FREEDOM
Monica de Miranda’s most recent solo exhibition, ‘no longer with the memory but with its future’, debuted at the 2022 Venice Biennale at the Oratorio di San Ludovico on April 20. Curated by the Lisbon and Luanda based curator Paula Nascimento, the anchor of this exhibition is the film titled ‘Path to the Stars’, which follows the riparian journey of the film’s heroine from sunrise to sunset as she threads together various narratives all of which have been situated and thus marked by the Kwanza River, one of Angola’s longest.

In de Miranda’s film, the Kwanza River is the site where personal and collective histories must come together and attempt resolution for the good not just of the heroine, as is implied by the film, but for the general good of all Angolans. The film opens with the heroine rowing her boat down the river dressed in a two piece army fatigue suit. After a moment she ceases rowing and notices herself standing on a bank next to a cage containing pigeons. This scene is potent with meaning; a contemplation by the heroine about what her role in this landscape, in the transition from past to present to future must be.

She states,

“The future arrived. No longer to forge hope. The matrix of humanity in the current of the Kwanza. We walk with an absent gaze. When we recall, it is no longer with memory. But with its future. What can I do if I am this inside-out person, seeing from inside out. The explosion coming first and then the skin on the entrails. An unending landscape.”

Understanding rivers as the earth’s first roads is a fitting setting for the main character’s reckoning with her own personal familial histories, Angola’s still unresolved colonial past, and the heroine’s hopes and dreams for a future yet uncertain. The history of Kwanza River is an important reference point as it is via this river that the Portuguese were able to enter the Kingdom of Ndongo first in 1560, and again fifteen years later under the direction of Dias de Novais, who had been granted control over Angola by the then King of Portugal. Soon after, de Novais and his army eventually invaded and completely took over the Kingdom of Ndongo. The then King of Ndongo, Ngola Kilombo kia Kasenda, would be unsuccessful at staving off the Portuguese, but it would eventually be his granddaughter, the infamous and incredible Njinga Mbande, who would take up the mantle and continue the fight against the Portuguese.
This powerful monologue spoken against the backdrop of the winding of the River Kwanza and it’s lushly verdant backdrop recalls both the perpetual movement and permanence of this river as it courses through extremely intense, agitated, and violent histories. The heroine speaks as if she is a seer who with each row down the river experiences a stream of visions relating to Angola’s colonial past, present, and possible future realities.

Likening the film’s heroine to one of the African continent’s most powerful Queens may be coincidence, but it creates an opportunity for deeper exploration. As Njinga pursued the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Ndongo, so does the film’s heroine pursue her own sovereignty and by extension, she can be viewed as an advocate for the continued liberation of Angola from the specter of its colonial past.

“So remember, don’t do anything that does not suit you, proportionally in body and spirit. And every time you visit the past, wipe your feet.”
Of the enslaved Africans forcibly taken from their home territories to the Americas by various European slave traders, Bantus comprised a significant number. These diverse peoples carried their spiritual beliefs with them. Central among these beliefs was a great concern for being, which when remixed and resettled within the conditions of slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean, became a spiritual technology with one main goal — liberation. While the socio-political conditions of colonial and post-colonial Angola differ notably from those of the Americas, the ultimate goal and the center of the discourse is freeing oneself from the writ large enslavement of colonialism in all its forms, and returning to being as broadly and vividly as possible.

De Miranda eloquently and elegantly captures the spiritual work of liberation when the heroine is in dialogue with the mother figure who is obviously unsure and unwilling to embark upon this journey down and through the Kwanza River. Understood through a spiritual lens, the journey down the Kwanza is a journey into one’s personal and collective past that cautions against remaining stuck in a time that can only offer the memory of hardship and duress. To note the way this struggle happens to and within the body is to note the body’s innate desire and ability to remain free of pain and suffering. The advice the heroine gives this mother figure, “wipe your feet” reminds us that while it is not taboo to revisit the past, it is counterproductive to the goal of liberation to remain in the past. The act of wiping one’s feet goes beyond a simple act of cleaning and becomes a rallying call for moving forward physically and spiritually towards a liberated future.

Most acts of spiritual transformation require water to clean away the energetic debris blocking an individual’s passage from this world to the next. Water prepares the body to move fluidly through the battles it must encounter to secure its liberation. Birds that inhabit rivers and their surrounding areas serve as metaphors for the necessary flight path one is launched into to move out of stagnancy into transformation. So much of that flight is across and around water, so it is no surprise to observe the film’s main character in constant contact with all of the elements that represent the river and its ebbs and flows.

With few exceptions, the heroine is typically pictured alone or as a member of a pair — she and an older woman, she and a young girl, she and a middle aged male soldier. These pairings remind us of the breadth of archetypes that have been affected by Angola’s colonial past. No one is exempt. No can avoid the permanence of this history, whether they lived it or not.
In the final scenes of the film, we see for the first time the heroine observing herself as a part of a trio of women. Only the two youngest women — the heroine and the astronaut — speak. The eldest woman dressed in white remains silent. Later, another trio of young women appear connected by hair framed in a scene where briefly they are a group of five, including, yet again the heroine and a maternal figure dressed in black. The heroine and the trio of young women are shown circling a fire as if participating in a purification ritual. Shortly thereafter, the trio of young women are dancing in the dark along side the fire and the heroine is seen with a torch walking into the darkness.

On the trail of time, we look at the stars, and when I slept, I went forward dreaming of our Kwanza River, drawn as if it were a three-tailed boa constrictor.

The final four minutes of the film show one of the young girls pouring water on a dead fish as if to revive it but perhaps to prepare it to be used as sustenance. Again, the river offers sustenance, in this case in the form of food, but the cost is sacrifice — a literal or figurative death. The film closes with the astronaut looking out onto the Kwanza River, offering an impression of hopefulness. The vision the heroine recounts as the astronaut looks out onto the river reveals a dream of a snake that is known for its deadly qualities but is also a symbol of profound transformation and rebirth. As rebirth nears, the anchors and dead weight of the physical plane begin to wash away and our sights can be set on greater endeavors.

The film ‘Path to the Stars’ is the metaphor for the path to liberation. What we encounter on this path through the toil, the confrontation, and the discomfort is that the river will lead us where we need to go to find all that we seek. Inevitably, we must turn our faces towards the sky, away from our scarred and misshapen pasts on earth, in the hope that a new path can be illuminated for us. No matter whether it is day or night, it is always a star that will guide us and if we are brave enough to follow it, we can find our freedom too.
In the most recent work by the artist Mónica de Miranda, the insightful observation of Heraclitus of Ephesus that “no one can bathe twice in the same river, for the second time the river is no longer the same, nor is the person the same”, takes on a new meaning. The artist allowed the Kwanza River, the longest river in Angola, to direct her in the creation of a new body of work that documents precisely those changes over time, almost always imperceptible to the immediate senses, narrating a history of colonial violence, war, and independence processes from an ecofeminist perspective.

Articulating both document-based and fiction, we embark on a journey through a “whirlwind of frames and senses that make it impossible to have any chance of quiet before the text, the images and the metanarrative of this place in constant transformation”.

The gesture of redrawing the past goes not only to redefine the future, but also to trace a metanarrative from a feminist place of speech that resists the gaze of hegemonic, patriarchal and colonized cinema. The story is told with freedom, from a position of autonomy. The present, the past and
the future are understood as intertwined, building the future, but “with full awareness of all the issues that we have to deal with and that sometimes we don’t like, both from the past or the present”. The artist articulates a space-time that is not fixed, but connects and flows with matter, with the land, with the river. “Nature carries historical elements, it was she who was giving me the directives, the guidelines, to write the dramaturgy of the work itself”. The film “links the material to the spiritual and to the place where the whole narrative unfolds with several layers of understanding, from the emotional and psychological story in the development of the main character, as to the understanding of the history of the liberation movements themselves”. Both the landscape itself and the way it is presented assume active viewers who engage not only with their senses, but also emotionally and affectionately. Through image and sound, various connections are made to the “elements of liberation, of the diaspora in other parts of the world, and reflect how the local is also connected to the global”.

In this written interview, Mónica is joined by exhibition curator Paula Nascimento to talk about their long-standing collaboration, the origins of this new work, its implementation in Venice, and the recurring themes in their respective works. The deep interconnection between different spaces and times can be seen as part of a broader exploration that connects various artists from the diaspora. As people with stories of displacement, the constant changes that would accumulate naturally and slowly without warning become strong disruptions felt on the skin. It is clear, then, that neither the river has remained the same, nor are we the same.

Ana Sophie Salazar (AS)  How did you meet and how did the decision to collaborate together on this project come about?
Paula Nascimento (PN)  We have known each other for a few years. I was doing research for the project ‘Ilha de São Jorge’ and I saw Mónica’s work, especially the photographic work related to the remnants of colonialism in the urban space. I got in touch, we met and I invited Monica to join the project - a roving exhibition, which was initially presented on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice during the 14th Architecture Biennale (2014) under the theme ‘Absorbing Modernity’, which addressed how modernity was introduced, absorbed, denied, dreamed of in the context of Portuguese-speaking African countries. As part of this project, we commissioned Mónica the video work ‘Hotel Globo’. After this experience we began a collaboration that has extended over several projects and of course it culminates, but does not end, here.

Monica de Miranda (MM)  The artist/curator relationship and collaboration has been an ongoing relationship in which we have been following each other’s work over time.
The video that emerges from the first collaboration, ‘Hotel Globo’ was later presented in a solo exhibition at MNAC, for which I was nominated for the Novo Banco awards (2016). For the exhibition ‘no longer with the memory but with its future’, the collaboration came about quite spontaneously. I had been in this investigation on the Kwanza River for some time and was filming in Angola with the production company Geração 80 the film ‘Caminho para as Estrelas’ for an exhibition at the Jahmek Contemporary Art gallery in Angola. In line with Paula’s curatorial interests, an opportunity arose for us to come together and present this project in Europe. We had an invitation from the Nuova Icona cultural association to make an exhibition in the Oratory of San Ludovico in Venice, an independent space, but with a long history of supporting international artists. It has hosted exhibitions with artists such as Nástio Mosquito, collaborations with Ikon Gallery and other institutions, and has been an important space for the organization of the Venice Biennale since its foundation in 1993.

**AS** Mónica, how did you come up with the idea for this work? When and how did the project start? How was the process of creating and developing the characters? How do you draw the bridges between past, future, and present?

**MM** The idea has been around for some time from my many encounters with the Kwanza River. The river has inhabited my imagination since I was a child, with stories I heard from my mother and grandmother. When I went on vacation to Angola with my daughter, we spent several periods by the river. It has incredible beauty and enormous spiritual strength, but hidden behind this beauty there are many other invisible stories of violence and war. I have always been fascinated by the strength that nature carries, the intense vegetation that populates its shores and the estuary where various currents converge and meet the Atlantic. There, many memories and stories are summoned. What looks like untouched nature has a history that is unnoticeable to the eye, so these were the stories I wanted to tell.

The film was written by me and Yara Nakahanda Monteiro, with allusion to some texts of the Angolan writer João José Luandino Vieira and the Portuguese poet Cláudia Sampaio (‘I no longer lie down in a death pose’), but ‘O Livro dos Guerrilheiros’ by Luandino Vieira was the greatest inspiration. The title of the film comes from the heteronymous poem ‘O Caminho das Estrelas’ by Agostinho Neto and signifies the imagination and projection of a place that can transmute all the colonial violence that was experienced at the time and the aspiration for a future of independence. The work does not formulate answers, but rather poses questions that legitimize this plunge into memory, ending up being a fabrication with both documentary and fictional moments. After focusing on geography, in its broadest sense, he fixes his gaze on the guerrillas in order to, from their voices, capture the guerrilla war in the figure of Carlota as an experience in motion, as
the reality of a present that could not yet know the wrongs, the rights, the euphoria and the frustration.

The main character [played by Renata Torres] was built from research I’ve been doing over the years on the contributions of women to the liberation struggle in Angola, mainly around the figure of Carlota. She lived and died during Angola’s independence and became known through the book ‘Mais um Dia de Vida: Angola 1975’ [1976] written by Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski. A simple photograph that exists in the book has made this character become a token that represents this struggle. Shortly after the photo was taken by the journalist, Carlota died in an ambush. The other characters are three twins who keep appearing and asking the viewer questions regarding issues of identity, difference, time, space. They represent the three spaces of time - past, present and future. An old woman (played by Maria Manuel), the guide, a child (played by Elaine Costa), tell stories about war, peace, life, spirituality. All these characters were chosen around the story of the river itself, but they are also archetypal characters from our unconscious, who help us to understand our own individuation process.

AS  The Kwanza River, the longest river in Angola, plays a major role here. What is your personal relationship with this river? It was also the route by which the Portuguese invasion of northern Angola began. On the one hand, the entire installation uses the river as a metaphor for flow, with its tributaries and effluents and the overlapping layers of history. I really like this idea of a river that feeds, that is marked by all these events that have been and are to come. This vital energy of the river, how does it translate into the work and the installation?

MM  The Kwanza River begins in Bié, travels from north to west, and flows into the Atlantic. The river and the water evoke the ancestral, cyclical temporalities, challenges of a political discourse that we want to reflect. The Kwanza River is a living organism that carries within the history of Angola - the history of the liberation struggle, the civil wars, the pre-colonial histories, and the stories of the various ecological disasters that are happening in this contemporary period. In other words, everything happened around the river, which was a transport vehicle that connected the Atlantic so all the routes of the past can be studied through the river itself, the stories it carries, on and around its banks. Portuguese expansion used this river to transport enslaved people and goods, connecting Angola to Europe and the Americas. Around the memories and around the stories that I researched, the characters began to emerge, that is, they are actively linked to the history of the river itself, and it was the river with its stories that built the characters. I functioned as both listener and transmitter. The actors have come to give
voice to these stories. The river as a vehicle is essential to understand the story being
told from Carlota. A river is a living body that references ecofeminism, or its particular
form of hydrofeminism, proposed by Astrida Neimanis ['Bodies of Water: Posthuman
Feminist Phenomenology’ 2017], where there is an ecosystem between the physical
body, the astral body, emotional and psychological. All these types of corporeality are
understood through the concept and metaphor of water itself, which flows, transports,
carries memory.

AS Paula, in this work by Monica, how do the themes that you have been
working on in other projects emerge, such as the intersection of visual arts
with current geopolitical constellations? On the one hand, these are historic-
ities that are read through contemporary lenses, on the other hand also the
simultaneous occupation of various spaces and times which is something
that characterizes the work of diaspora artists.

PN This project brings several layers of reflection, interconnecting with various aspects
of my curatorial research, and expands our collaboration in a way. I am interested in con-
temporary readings of historical narratives and their deconstruction of time’s linearity.
The film comes with these layers, but does not fixate on an explanatory reading of the
story, being more of a construction that points to other futures, to a place of reinvention
of cultural identity itself. Kwanza [and the transnational processes associated with that
space] serves as a starting point for global reflections - in particular the relationship of
human beings with the environment. I am more interested in thinking of the territory
as a space of confluence of diverse times, and therefore permeable and in constant
transformation.

AS More concretely, how will the work be displayed? How will the space,
the scales, be thought out? What are the means? How will the sound be used?

PN The space where the exhibition takes place is an Oratory, a small chapel from the
16th century, which, since 1996, has been used as an exhibition space, although it retains
its characteristics. The exhibition is ‘site-specific’, adapted particularly for this place, and
is arranged in three spaces. The centerpiece is the film ‘O Caminho para as Estrelas’ and
from there the other pieces emerge - a text installation that works as a prologue, reflecting
on the complex realities and tensions between various layers of history and memory,
from the individual to the collective level; and the photographic installation ‘As Três
Irmas’ in large dimensions. The video installation is wide format and the sound extends
over several layers, transporting us to other places - spacial exploration, colonization,
language, liberation, and independences.
MM  The sound of the film is created by Xullaji, a collaboration we have been strengthening over time, also reflects the complex interconnection between the three time-spaces evoked by the film. We have some sounds that come from the past, the sounds of the liberation radios in Angola that were crucial for the independence and defeat of the colonial regime. We also hear transmissions from space and sounds that have resonances with star wars.

AS  I would like you to comment on this movement out of the urban context, which is more present in other works, and into a rural context, as well as on the idea of landscape as a container of history. How do the very historical elements that are recorded and contained in the landscape influence the narrative and the dramaturgy?

PN  This movement can already be seen in previous series - Mónica has always worked with landscape and territory. For example, in the project ‘Panorama’ [2017] nature assumes a crucial role both as a testimony of man’s action and as a testimony of history, imposing itself on architecture. The deconstruction of the concept of landscape and the dualism between natural and artificial landscape is present in Monica’s work, not only in the built sense, but in the sense of the migration of species itself.

MM  My work has always reflected on an urban archeology, on emotional spaces, but I have also been working with the landscape, the territory, and the extension of that urban in a broader mesh of an excluded, peripheral territory that is on the margins, or this nature that is being conquered by construction and man in the Anthropocene. In the ‘Panorama series’ I reflected on the space-wound-landscape: abandoned spaces in Angola with colonial wounds that were devoured by nature itself, forming a regenerated landscape. The land is a living body in endless transformation, the territory and the landscape are history. By researching history in terms of the elements that are contained in the landscape we can understand the interconnection between humanity and the history of our planet, that even influences geological transformations, as Dipesh Chakrabarty states in his research ‘The Climate of History in a Planetary Age’ [2021]. It is also important to rethink our notion of time and the relationships between individual, collective, planetary times. The landscape and nature teach us about all this, and if we really listen, we will recognize cyclical movements and their fluidity in permanent transmutation.

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“Even the mud reflects”... this contradictory line is part of the flow of conversation between the two main characters in ‘Pathway of the Stars’, Monica de Miranda’s film. It flows as the narrative flows, as a little boat travels, alone on the quiet but mysteriously menacing river, bordered by palm trees.

It is a still fragrant Nature, but also shows signs of humiliation: you see the banks of the river tainted by mud, many of the palm trees are burnt or dead.

And, alongside the boat, also flowing, but at a different speed, are clumps of leaves and fallen branches, suggesting that these materials may, in an unknown future, become ever denser, collecting the flotsam carried by the current, and finally morph into islands. A new world, on which a new way of living may one day find a welcome.
The sober conversation between the two women continues with an aura of eerie spirituality: the water flows in the same way and matches the flow of emotions and sensations. The two women interact with a third, dressed in camouflage gear, introducing the brutal presence of war, militias, social unrest, and chaos into the natural world of the river.

The procession flows “from the consciousness to darkness”, an inversion of the rational order, to discover a new truth.

The eyes of the two characters are equally tired as if they have seen too much already, and not all of it pleasant.

There is a sense that something spiritual is going to happen, a prophecy uttered, maybe a verdict issued, definitive words spoken among the palm trees.

But in the end, everything melts into a view of the river’s water joining the sea in the evening glow, maybe a final moment of forgiveness, the visual metaphor of a peaceful, compassionate fusion.

We are delighted to welcome Mónica de Miranda’s unique video accompanied by photography in the exhibition ‘no longer with the memory but with its future’ curated by Paula Nascimento, on the occasion of the 59th Venice Biennial, between 23 April and 29 May 2022 in the Oratorio di San Ludovico’s exhibition programme: in line with the openness to a diversity of languages we have always defended.

The Oratorio is not just another of the, frankly too numerous, “locations” which host temporary exhibitions during the Venice Biennale. This show is framed within a clear and self-aware cultural landscape. In the last two years, in close collaboration with the Fondazione Morra of Naples and other partners, we have concentrated on championing the self-awareness and sustainability of cultural actions in the art world of the South. It is a political gesture: we want to turn away from the colonial domination of Northern European and North American countries, which are still predominant and predatory in the field of culture, and to do this, we have to develop and actively encourage “horizontal conversations” among equal partners from Southern parts of the world.
in your gaze, when I recall
in the memory, but with its future
I do not forget,
when I arrived, yet is infinite
ANA SOPHIE SALAZAR
Ana Sophie Salazar is a curator, writer and co-founder of the Museum for the Displaced, a para-institution that addresses issues around forced migration, displacement and statelessness. Through undisciplined explorations of nomadic, poly-linguistic and cross-cultural subjectivities, her work proposes inventive ways of questioning current geopolitical mappings. From 2016 to 2020, she was Assistant Curator of Exhibitions at the NTU Center for Contemporary Art Singapore. Ana has a master’s degree in Curatorial Practices from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and a degree in Piano from the Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa. She participated in the Shanghai Curators Lab (2018), in the mentoring program Project Anywhere (2020-21), and is currently curator-in-residence (2021-22) at Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral, Germany.

ANA NOLASCO
Ana Nolasco holds a Doctorate and Master of Aesthetics and Art Philosophy from the School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon. She is a tutor in Art and Aesthetics at the High Institute of Education and Science Lisbon. She has published articles in Field - A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism (USA), African arts (USA), Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art (USA), Shima (Australia), among others. She has contributed essays and other publications among them; Dialogical Art: Cartographies of Memory and Affection in the Work of César Schofield Cardoso, Hangar Books, 2021, Creating Kinship Together: Collaborative practices in Art and Design, Universität Tübingen, 2020, and Social Art – Echoes of Machim, Springer, 2019.
MARISSA J. MOORMAN
Marissa J. Moorman is a Professor of African Cultural Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Her research focuses on politics and culture in colonial and independent Angola. Moorman’s work explores various media and their uses, the practices and meanings people develop around them, and their relationship to power shifts over time. Author of two books: Powerful Frequencies: Radio, State Power, and the Cold War in Angola, 1931-2002 (Ohio University Press, 2019) and Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, 1945-Recent Times (Ohio University Press, 2008), she is currently working on a book about the Luanda Trial of Mercenaries in 1976. Moorman is also an editor of The Journal of African History and on the editorial collective of The Radical History Review. She is an active member of the editorial board of Africa is a Country and co-edited volumes and special issues. Her research has been supported through Fellowships from ACLS, Fulbright Hays, and the SSRC.

MÓNICA DE MIRANDA
Mónica de Miranda is a Portuguese artist of Angolan origin who lives and works between Lisbon and Luanda. An artist and researcher, her work is based on themes of urban archaeology and personal geography. Monica’s practice is interdisciplinary, utilising drawing, installation, photography, film, video, and sound in expanded forms and within the boundaries between fiction and documentary. She is one of the founders of Hangar (Artistic Research Centre, Lisbon). In 2014 and 2019, she was nominated for the EDP New Artist Award at MAAT (Lisbon). Her work is represented in several public and private collections, including Calouste Gulbenkian, MNAC, MAAT, FAS, the Nesr Art Foundation, and the Municipal Archive of Lisbon. She has exhibited widely nationally and internationally, participating in several Biennales. Prominent exhibitions/biennales include: Europa Oxala (Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; Mucem, France, 2022), Thinking about possible futures (Biennale del Sur, 2021), African Cosmologies, Houston Fotofest (2020), Taxidermy of the future (Biennale Lubumbashi, 2019), Architecture and Manufacturing, at MAAT in Lisbon (2019); 14th Biennale di Architettura di Venezia (2014); São Tomé e Príncipe Biennale (2013).
NEGARRA A. KUDUMU

Negarra A. Kudumu received her MA from Leiden University (2006) and her BA from Dartmouth College (2001). She is an interlocutrice working at the intersection of art and healing with a focus on contemporary art from the Pacific Northwest, Africa, South Asia, and their respective diasporas. Her most recent curatorial projects include group exhibitions for the Lisbon-based gallery MOVART, at the 2021 ARCO Madrid art fair, and three exhibitions during her tenure as curator at CoCA Seattle featuring works by artists Selma Waldman, Meghan Elizabeth Trainor, and Rajaa Gharbi respectively. Negarra was a member of the inaugural 2021 cohort of fellowship awardees for the Marian Goodman Gallery initiative in honor of the late Okwui Enwezor. Negarra regularly lectures, participates in talks, and moderates panels on various topics relating to contemporary art. Over the past four years, she has been invited to speak in Calgary, Toronto, Amsterdam, and Harare on a range of topics most notably arts education, artistic practice, and alternative artistic, pedagogic, and cultural praxis. Negarra lives and works in Seattle, WA as full time cultural entrepreneur.

PAULA NASCIMENTO

Paula Nascimento is an architect and independent curator based in Luanda. She is the co-founder of Beyond Entropy Africa (2010-16), a research studio that has worked in architecture, visual arts, and geopolitics. She developed a series of artistic and curatorial projects including Luanda Encyclopedic City, and the award-winning Angola Pavilion, Biennial of Venice in 2013. As an independent curator, she worked on interdisciplinary projects exploring themes related to geopolitics, post-colonial cities, and contemporary readings for historical themes. She curated several exhibitions in Angola, South Africa, Portugal, and Italy, and participated in Experimenta Design, Triennale di Milano, Bamako Biennial and the Lubumbashi Bienniale. Since 2019 she has been curator of Foco África at Arco Lisboa. Paula is currently the chair of the artistic committee at Nesr Art Foundation and associate curator of the VII Lubumbabshi Biennale. She has received several awards, including the Golden Lion for best national participation at the Venice Biennale in 2013, the Arcvision Special Award - Women for Expo in 2015 in Milan, and the Certificate of Excellence - African Architecture Award in 2017.
VITTORIO URBANI
Vittorio Urbani is an independent curator, based in Napoli, Italy, as director of the non-profit organization ‘Nuova Icona – associazione culturale per le arti’ based in Venice, he has organized contemporary exhibitions and curated art books and catalogues since 1993. He was invited as visiting curator to Vancouver (1999), Istanbul and Baku, Cardiff, and Rotterdam, Helsinki, Tbilisi and Yerevan, and Zagreb. He was also invited as co-selector for the ‘Kyoto Prize’ in 2006 and 2009. He was invited to select Italian participations in the Second Quadrilateral Biennial, Rijeka, Croatia, 2007, the Biennial of Caucasus ‘Art Caucasus’, Tbilisi, Georgia, and in Sinopale, 1st and 3rd Biennial of Sinop (Turkey). He is a member of the International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art and the IBA (International Biennial Association). Since 1995 Vittorio Urbani and Nuova Icona have organized several shows in Europe and the USA, with a special interest in artistic projects concerning cultural exchanges with Turkey and the Middle East.

YARA NAKAHANDA MONTEIRO
Yara Nakahanda Monteiro was born in Angola in 1979 and moved to Portugal when she was two years old. She writes poetry and fiction. Monteiro studied screenwriting and contemporary art. She has collaborated in creating scripts and screenplays for audiovisual arts, and is a curator for podcast programming. Her stories and poetry have been published in various magazines like Granta and Revisa Pessoa. She is a regular guest speaker at universities on feminism and Afro-European identities and narratives. Monteiro graduated in human resources and has worked in this field for 15 years as well as in diversity & inclusion and talent management. She has lived in several cities, such as Rio de Janeiro, Luanda, London, Copenhagen, and Athens.
FILM

DIRECTOR
Mónica de Miranda

ORIGINAL STORY
Mónica de Miranda

SCREENPLAY
Mónica de Miranda &
Yara Nakahanda Monteiro

PRODUCER
Jorge Cohen

DIR. OF PHOTOGRAPHY
&E ASST. DIRECTOR
Ery Claver

TEXTS
Mónica de Miranda
Yara Nakahanda Monteiro
Claudia R. Sampaio
(excerpts from the book
‘Já não me deito em pose de morrer’)
José Luandino Vieira
(excerps ‘O livro dos Guerrilheiros’)

MUSIC
Xullaji

PRODUCTION
Geração 8o
Jahmek Contemporary Art
Studio Mónica de Miranda

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
Marta Neves

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Mónica de Miranda
Prudenciana Hach

1° CAMERA ASSISTANT
Agostinho Alfredo

2° CAMERA ASSISTANT
Kátio Oliveira

DRONE OPERATOR
Kátio Oliveira

SOUND OPERATOR
Agostinho Alfredo

MIXING & MASTERING
Soundslikenuño

SOUND EDITION
& SOUND DESIGN
Xullaji and Gaia Olino

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
André Eiuba

BOAT PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
César Fernandes (Black)
Lourenço Mateus

ARTIST DIRECTION ASSISTANTS
Josemar Pina
Jéssica Júlio (Telly)
Justino Calei (Ito)

IMAGE COMPOSITION
Ricardo Jesus

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CAST
Renata Torres (Carlota)
Sunny Dilage (Shadow)
Maria Manuel (Wise woman)
Raul de Rosário (Army man 1)
Orlando Sérgio (Army man 2)
Sandy Manuel (Astronaut)
Elaine Costa (Kid)
André Eiuba (Builder)

DANCERS
Eugenia, Diogo, Bernardo,
Fernanda, Daniela, Francisco, Afonso,
Francisca, Francisco, Cassua

EDITION
Márcia Costa

POST PRODUCTION
& COLORIST
Xavier Franganito

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EXHIBITION

no longer with the memory
but with its future
Oratorio di San Ludovico, Venezia
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By Mónica de Miranda
Curated by Paula Nascimento

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