

Opening 30 October 2021, 4 pm
 6 pm Concert by Orakle Ngoy feat. DJ Caipora
 Exhibition until 10 December 2021: Wed/Fri 2–5 pm

Carolina Brunelli, Joseph Kasau & Stéphane Kabila, Paulo Nazareth, Maya Quilolo, Wisrah Villefort, contribution by Denise Bertschi, opening concert by Orakle Ngoy.

Presented by SALTS, Waza art center Lubumbashi/DR Congo and Lago Mio Lugano artist residency in collaboration with Culturescapes 2021 Amazonia. Curated by Samuel Leuenberger, Patrick Mudekereza and Benedikt Wyss.

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 Hauptstrasse 12
 CH-4127 Birsfelden



“Quilombo” involves artists from three continents: Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo), South America (Brasil) and Europe (Switzerland). The coalition-based research and exhibition project comprised residencies in Lugano (Lago Mio) and Basel (SALTS and Atelier Mondial), and a workshop with the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel.

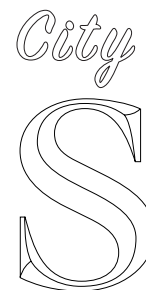
The project “Quilombo” was initiated out of a personal invitation between the Swiss-based institution SALTS and the Congo-based Waza art center, in order to collaborate, exchange, and learn from each other during a full year of co-programming and co-curation. The foundation for an intensive collaboration with the artists within the project is laid in the partnership with the Lago Mio Lugano artist residency on the Swiss border with Italy.

Once synonymous with escape and resistance, the term ‘quilombo’ today stands for a Brazilian settlement of African descent. Anthropologists and historians meanwhile have arrived at a new understanding of these rural communities, calling for a broader definition: Regardless of their specific history, quilombos share collective identities and notions, linking them to their African roots and making them fight common battles as people in DRC, Switzerland or anywhere else: against capitalism and racism, and for the equitable distribution of resources.

The research and exhibition project “Quilombo” attempts to build on the idea of a ‘Black Atlantic’, coined by British-Guyanese historian and writer Paul Gilroy in 1993 as a “Counterculture of Modernity” in the relations between Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Can we activate aesthetics sensitive to common concerns, taking advantage of the digital age’s challenges, particularly in the unexpected connectivity of our pandemic era? Social injustice has its roots in the history of exploitation of natural resources and human labor and continues to this day.

How can this be undermined by an alternative reading of human relations between the three continents, imagining an ecology that empowers humanism and diversity?

The project “Quilombo” will continue to develop in Lubumbashi and São Paulo over the next two years. A first catalogue is planned for Spring 2022 as part of the opening of the exhibition’s second itinerary at Lago Mio artist residency in Lugano.



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CAROLINA BRUNELLI

1 (Box) Access, 2021
Digital print on blueback 158 x 100 cm; song "Mama Africa"
by Birama Niang, 4:25 mins, loop

"A friend opened the first door but the others remained closed. Cara na porta. Everywhere I could see traces of contemporary quilombos in the city but was I allowed to document them?"

The accessibility problem reflects an inherent structure of the quilombos themselves: if everybody is allowed to enter, it would not be a place of resistance, so African culture in diaspora can flourish and survive. But like music alliances are fabrics weaving existences in time with respect and joy.

About the artist: Carolina Brunelli (born in 1988, resident in the project "Quilombo" in Lugano and Basel since August 2021) is a Swiss artist, born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, with a Brazilian mother and a Swiss father. Carolina has developed an awareness about the importance of the untold stories of oppression and resistance of indigenous and black communities in Brasil. Her Bachelor's graduation work (since 2020 MFA at the HGK in Basel) was a homage to all black women who lost their children.

JOSEPH KASAU & STEPHANE KABILA

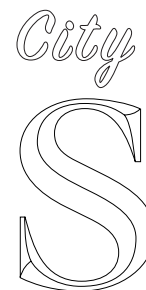
2 (Garage) Geste des dieux, 2021
In three parts
HD video, sound, plexiglass; sound, paper, strings, glue;
mirror, glass, laser print, cups

"Geste des dieux" (gesture of the gods) is an installation that combines sound, video, cartography and writing: through a series of discussions with different people (artists, activists, researchers, traditional chiefs, curators), the duo Joseph & Kabila put into dialogue new narratives on the issue of environmental management, thus questioning green colonialism.

During their residency, Joseph Kasau and Stéphane Kabila set up an exchange device with different people via zoom where they exchanged on the avenues of research that they intend to tackle in the framework of this work. These discussions were compiled in a sound piece in which the artists put the different conversations in dialogue to constitute what will later be their field of research for this project. The sound piece carries the voices of several Africans and Westerners driven by the desire to change narratives in the face of the Capitalism that has been eating away at the world for over a century now. But behind it, there is a real desire to tell stories of resistance as a perspective for changing narratives around environmental issues.

The question of land occupation has a prominent place in this installation-conversation where the artists, through a metaphorical video, take a critical look at the land as Space, Matter and Idea: A space where communities with indigenous knowledge live and are very respectful of the environment but are being chased off their own land in the name of global nature conservation policies that have so far only favoured the implementation of a capitalist system through tourism, mining, water, oil and forestry exploitation by Western multinationals. This further strengthens the power of the dominant over the dominated.

"Geste de dieux" is also a questioning of the way in which borders are drawn. The



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way in which powers are shared and the way in which narratives are told. The history of cartography cannot avoid the fundamental question of territories. How do lines affect the reality of local communities' lives? What are the potential conflicts that lines can produce? The answers vary according to culture and society, but cannot be reduced to practical purposes: travel, location, territorial management, resource exploitation, geopolitics, etc.

The village of Kalera is located 10,372 metres from here. Kalera lies between two national parks: Upemba and Kundelungu; on its river a hydroelectric dam is being built. Potential plans to build milling industries in the area and the reunification of two national parks threaten the local population with relocation. The lines on the maps are changing. The cartographic line is a performative gesture of power that creates space more than it represents it. It elaborates a new intellectual object whose meanings, cognitive effects and potential uses do not result solely from the addition of local information, measurements and empirical references mobilised in its genesis. How can maps enter into dialogue with the knowledge of local communities about ancestral practices of nature conservation?

You will find an additional text in the garage next to the cartography installation.

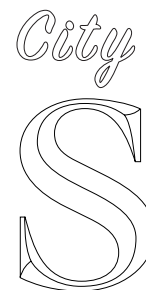
About the artist/curator: Joseph Kasau (born 1995, DR Congo, resident in the project "Quilombo" in Lugano and Basel since September 2021) graduated in Information and Communication Sciences from the University of Lubumbashi, specializing in performing arts (audiovisual, cinema, and theater). Kasau collaborates with Stéphane Kabila (born 1993, DR Congo, researcher and curator, studying in the MA Curatorial study program at the Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design at the University of Bergen (KMD) in Norway). The installation the duo Joseph & Kabila present as part of the "Quilombo" project is the beginning of a long research into the issues of global nature conservation policies and the green colonialism that logically follows from them.

PAULO NAZARETH

3 (Box) *_flamingos and other birds from the south: Migratory Archive
_how it didn't happen in Africa / America and Asia, 2021*
Archivist, archival furniture, file boxes, folders, clippings from newspapers, magazines, other local periodicals, digital clippings with images and news

In Paulo Nazareth's installation "_flamingos and other birds from the south", an immigrant woman from the African diaspora works as an archivist/librarian creating an archive of images and reports with clippings from newspapers, magazines and other local periodicals. The woman passed through Bologna/Italy, Paris/France and now settled in Basel/Switzerland. Her search continues by creating and organizing an archive of images about the arrival of immigrants from the political south to Europe – an archive that wishes to help others immigrants on their arrival so that they have greater protection and feel secure in a foreign country that is often hostile to them. The contracted archivist agent maps bodies, institutions and other NGOs that work to help immigrants in Europe, especially in the city and surroundings where it is established.

About the artist: Paulo Nazareth (non-physical resident in the project "Quilombo since August 2021) was born in the city of Borun Nak [Vale do Rio Doce] Minas Gerais, and is living as a global nomad. Paulo Nazareth's work is often the result of precise and simple gestures, which bring about broader ramifications, raising awareness to press issues of immigration, racialization, globa-



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lization colonialism, and its effects in the production and consumption of art in his native Brazil and the Global South. While his work may manifest in video, photography, and found objects, his strongest medium may be cultivating relationships with people he encounters on the road – particularly those who must remain invisible due to their legal status or those who are repressed by governmental authorities. In certain aspects, Nazareth deliberately embodies the romantic ideal of the wandering artist in search of himself and universal truths, to unveil stereotyped assumptions about national identity, cultural history, and human value.

MAYA QUILOLO

4 (Watertank) Maya Quilolo:
Who carries the Atlantic's secrets has learned to breathe
inside water, 2021
Drawings, plexiglass (words), fishing nets, video, chest, ceramics

"In this Atlantic route, I digest daily wreckage secrets. If I'm dried, I can become easy prey. Otherwise, I learned to live as an Atlantic fish and use the nets prepared to catch me to bewitch the evil. My name is Maya Quilolo, and to capture my Atlantic's secrets you need to learn how to breathe inside water."

At this time when the right to breathe is a privilege, the work "Who carries the Atlantic's secrets has learned to breathe inside water" reflects the unspoken Atlantic's memories. The wrecked ships, the enslaved lives, the witches drowned (as in the "Ryy", the river Rhine), and all those who survive as fish, talking with secrets deeply inside waters, surviving the traps, trying not to get caught.

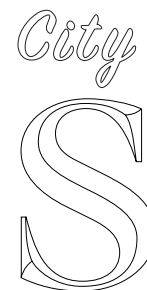
About the artist: Maya Quilolo (born in 1994, resident in the project "Quilombo" since August 2021) was born in a quilombola community in Minas Gerais. Maya graduated in Anthropology and Audiovisual in Belo Horizonte. She acts in the interchange between performance arts, visual arts, and cultural diversity – interested in multidisciplinary investigations that address the potential of the black body. Her research explores water as an element that connects different people, countries, organisms. For the performance *Ìpòrì* (2019, Nigeria) she crossed the Atlantic carrying water from South American rivers to the African continent – in order to express the transatlantic relationships. Maya's work is inspired by shamanistic techniques of the indigenous peoples from the Amazon, relating water as an element in connection with life, fertility, ancestry, the Atlantic crossing, and the diaspora.

WISRAH VILLEFORT

5 (Box) Dog, 2021
Magazine cover, polished stainless steel
50 x 40 x 0.2 cm

Lamb and dog, 2021
Magazine cover, polished stainless steel
50 x 40 x 0.2 cm

"Dog" and "Lamb and dog" are each composed by a fashion magazine cover displayed on a stainless steel. The gesture involved in making the pieces is motivated



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by the artist's observation of the influence of the animal iconography implied by the Catholic Church, a key colonial institution, on contemporary image-making.

6 (Garage) Keys, 2021
Various metals

Score: The keys of every door lock of the exhibition space to be made available to the artist. A copy of each of them to be displayed on a stainless keychain as specified by the artist.

Exhibition duration.

"Keys" draws its gesture from the artist's score-based instruction pieces usually addressed to the exhibition hosting institution, especially when working with them remotely. On the one hand, there is a commentary on private property, an essentially European concept fundamental to the colonization of the land in Brazil and elsewhere. On the other, with this piece, the artist invites the institution to work together with them, stretching the roles of each side of this relationship and conceiving critique as a collaborative act of trust and risk.

7 (Garage) Field, 2021
Wallpainting (paint, vinyl)

Score: The longest wall of the exhibition space to be marked with the indication of its length as specified by the artist, and a wall perpendicular to it to be marked with the length to complete the indication the area of one acre in square meters within the exhibition space as specified by the artist. The marks should be made on the average height of a commercial ox.

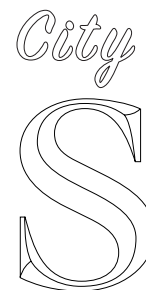
Dimensions variable according to the exhibition space.

A component of the Imperial System, the acre is a unit derived from the average field area that a drove of oxen could shove in one day before exhaustion. Nowadays, used mainly in Brazil, the USA, and England – particularly within economies dealing with large proprietaries – the acre is standardized by the International yard and pound agreement of 1959 as 4'046.8564224 square meters.

8 (Washroom) Tools, 2021
Two-channel sound piece, 5:59 mins, loop

The work combines bits of found-sound and the voice of the artist. In the piece, concepts such as animal colonialism and animal farming are associated in a narrative that follows their interest and research towards the relationship between nature and capital.

About the artist: Wisrah Villefort (Buritizeiro, 1989, non-physical resident in the project "Quilombo" since August 2021) is a mixed-race individual with African, Indigenous Brazilian, and European roots. Currently, they live and work in São Paulo, Brazil. Within their work, the artist incorporates sound, sculpture, text, photography, score, instruction, and video in installations, mixed and hypermedia pieces exploring the relationship between the concepts of nature and capital. In their more recent online work, EEE (2021), Villefort relocated an existing map that allows the visitor to track the geolocation of many vessels around the world to conceive a hypermedia work that addresses the flux of commodities that once started with the colonization of where is now called the Americas. During the "Quilombo" Project, Wisrah focused on their ongoing research towards the colonial structures that still to this day inform some of the dynamics of communities made vulnerable, human and non-human.



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DENISE BERTSCHI

9 (Box) Helvécia, Brazil, 2017/2020
Group of three works

HD video, sound, loop, 20 mins

The video *Helvécia, Brazil (2017)* was created in Helvécia, a village in the south of the State of Bahia, which is now an officially recognised “quilombo”. The unusual name can be traced back to Swiss settler colonialism. The Helvécia plantation was originally part of a larger colony founded in 1818 by Swiss and Germans and called Leopoldina. After the forest had been cleared, it quickly developed into one of the world’s largest coffee plantations. Switzerland also operated a consulate on the grounds of the colony. In its archives Bertschi has found documents relating to the possessions of the Swiss plantation owners, which also included African men and women who worked as slaves. In the video she documents the present-day situation in the town where no coffee has grown in a long time. Instead, nature is exploited with fast-growing Eucalyptus crops. In this thoroughly transformed landscape Bertschi goes looking for forgotten and suppressed stories. Inhabitants of Helvécia take her to sites of memory such as an overgrown cemetery or old fruit trees pointing to the Swiss plantation owners.

Two-channel HD video, sound, loop, 20 mins

On the two small monitors we see conversations Bertschi had in Helvécia. The stories of the descendants of formerly enslaved people are contrasted with those of the descendants of the plantation owners. Even though the Swiss coffee plantations are long since a thing of the past, the experience lives on in the sometimes painful memories of the inhabitants of Helvécia. Bertschi lends the oral testimonies a rhythmic structure by flashing text fragments taken from a book written around 1850 by Carlos Augusto Toelsner, the physician of the Leopoldina colony. The simultaneity of the two narrative layers highlights the inequality of the local population vis-à-vis the colonists, thus revealing the consequences of the activities of the Swiss business elites, which still have an impact today.

Eyelet embroidery on cotton, 3 textile pieces, 10 meters each

Added to the two video works are three ceiling-high pieces of broderie anglaise. The embroideries are based on various documents from the State archives in Bahia and the Swiss Federal Archives in Bern. They include passages from descriptions of the estates, emblems of the Swiss consulates in Salvador and at the Leopoldina colony as well as the inventory of a plantation owner of Helvécia, which also lists the names of all of his slaves. Bertschi relates holes in the documents caused by the tropical climate to the elaborate broderie anglaise which was produced at the St. Gallen textile factory and exported all over the world in the late nineteenth century. The first to buy the textiles were members of the upper class in Brazil where the Afro Brazilian Candomblé ceremony is celebrated to this day in white festive robes in the style of the St. Gallen embroideries.

About the artist: Denise Bertschi (born in 1983, contributing to the project “Quilombo”) is an artist-researcher and lives and works in Switzerland. She is currently a doctoral candidate at EPFL Lausanne in collaboration with HEAD-Genève, where she works at the intersection of artistic research and Swiss colonial history. Currently, she is in an artist residency at LA BECQUE end of 2021. In 2017-2018, Denise Bertschi spent several months in Johannesburg on a Pro Helvetia residency grant and four months on a commissioned research trip to Bahia, Brazil.



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Concert by Orakle Ngoy
featuring DJ Caipora
Opening concert, 30 October 2021, 6pm

About the artist: Orakle Ngoy is one of the rare female voices of Congolese hip hop. In her texts, she highlights the realities of life in the Democratic Republic of Congo and retells them from the special perspective of women. She raps about sexism and gender discrimination and appeals to respect for African women in general and Congolese women in particular.

On the stage of City SALTS Orakle Ngoy performs with local DJ Caipora.

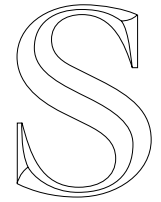
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Production team: Medhanie Abraham, Marco Kleiner, Fabian Santacruz

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