

# From where I stand, my eye will send a light to you in the North

12 August - 21 October 2018

John Akomfrah (Ghana/UK) // Fernando Arias (Colombia) // Regina José Galindo (Guatemala)  
Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola) // Runo Lagomarsino (Sweden/Brazil) // Sarah Munro (Aotearoa, NZ)  
Otobong Nkanga (Nigeria/Belgium) // Siliga David Setoga (Aotearoa, NZ)  
Jasmine Togo-Brisby (Australia/Aotearoa, NZ) // Jian Jun Xi (China)

Curated by Gabriela Salgado  
Exhibition design by Andrew Kennedy

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## LIST OF WORKS

### John Akomfrah

*Tropikos*, 2016

single channel colour video, 5.1 sound

36 minutes 41 seconds

© Smoking Dogs Films; courtesy Lisson Gallery

John Akomfrah's *Tropikos* is a mesmerising portrayal of the ocean as a site of incommensurable beauty and a recurrent stage for his poetic-political filmmaking, as seen in his *Vertigo Sea* video triptych presented at the 2015 Venice Biennale.

The visually lavish *Tropikos* contains literary references from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Life is a Dream* acting as pointers to the spirit of the times.

Hovering between the mid-16th century and the present and shot on the coastline of Guinea and Sierra Leone as well as Plymouth Sound in Britain, the stunning scenes seem to be inhabited by living ghosts in a state of stasis. Woven as an experimental narrative, stark items and lost humans are highly imbued with deep symbolism, beckoning a transatlantic, unresolved human drama.

### Fernando Arias

*Enjoy your Meal*, 2008

single channel colour video

16 minutes 51 seconds

courtesy of the artist

Fernando Arias' short documentary traces the search for food and the often arduous tasks involved in retrieving it. Uniquely set in the Chocó region in Colombia's remote Pacific coast, the video shows the splendid rainforest where coastal fishing communities live in isolation from the rest of the world. Despite this, the sea is being stripped of its seafood by multinational fishing companies that export it to Europe and the USA, an economic development affecting not only Colombia's seashore but many other nations in the vast Pacific Ocean and beyond.

*Enjoy Your Meal* links the distinct lives of trawlers and fishermen together, revealing the unseen connections that exist everywhere in our globalised food chain, whose impact reverberates across every human habitat, even in this isolation.

PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



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**Regina José Galindo**

*Tierra/Earth*, 2013

digital colour video with sound

33 minutes 30 seconds

courtesy of the artist

Regina José Galindo's practice grapples with power and vulnerability in often hard core performances, submitting her body to hardship to conjure violence against women.

In her video piece *Tierra/Earth* we see her become gradually isolated by the gripping manoeuvres of a gigantic digger carving out the soil around her. Significantly, the Spanish title of the work equally refers to the land, the soil and by extension, the planet. In the film, the excavator's metallic shovel is operated by an invisible hand inside the digger's rotating cabin, perhaps alluding to the pervasive but often nameless land grabbing around us. Scale is wisely performed in the image by introducing a poignant disproportion as a subliminal carrier of state violence against individual bodies and the larger, collective 'body' of the dispossessed.

**Kiluanji Kia Henda**

*Redefining the Power III (Homem Novo/New Man series with Miguel Prince)*, 2011

triptych photography printed on fine art paper

150cm x 100 cm each

courtesy of the artist

Kiluanji Kia Henda's practice delivers an overarching enquiry into power shifts in Angola. Examining colonial monuments erected by the Portuguese imperial occupation of Africa, through to the equally lengthy domination of USSR-backed Socialism to the present day, Henda's witty conceptualism appropriates effigies and ghosts of dethroned rulers and local flavoured Communist propaganda, creating a third space that summons what Homi Bhabha called the 'unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation'.

In *Redefining the Power III (Homem Novo/New Man) series* the artist frugally exposes the complex parody that gives meaning to memorial sites. The triptych shows the timeline of memorials by including images of statues decommissioned during the Angolan independence movement (1961-1974) and the civil war (1975-2002) being finally replaced by living Angolans standing as everyday heroes.

**Runo Lagomarsino**

*If You Don't Know What the South Is, It's Simply Because you are From the North (poster version)*, 2009

stack of posters

42 x 32.5 cm each

courtesy the artist, Francisca Minini, Milano, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo and Nils Staerk, Copenhagen

"In Sweden, it was only in recent years that decolonial thought began to be discussed. When I was a student we were only presented the postcolonial idea, and I remember very clearly

that when I began to read and think in relation to Walter Mignolo and Grossfogel's texts, it was a very important moment for me, as well as it was important moving to São Paulo in 2009. It was like returning without return, a return to another South, or the idea of living in the world and in between worlds (as Mignolo would say)... It was also after that move that I took a greater interest in a discussion around materiality (possibly inspired by being in São Paulo and being part of the art scene and its history of art) ... There was a shift in my work where questions around performativity, movements and displacement became very central. The idea was that the works themselves had to take those journeys, to make those moves."

**Sarah Munro**

*Trade Item*, 2014-2018

unbleached calico, cloth, thread

30 x 30 cm each

courtesy of the artist

private collection, on behalf of Page Blackie Gallery

In recent years, Sarah Munro's practice has shifted from sculpture towards a series of works that address a highly charged, significant historical event in Aotearoa. Munro interprets a drawing by Tupaia, the Tahitian high priest and navigator who accompanied Cook on the Endeavour's first voyage acting as a mediator and translator for many Polynesian languages. Depicting a swap of crayfish for fabric between an unnamed Māori man and Englishman Joseph Banks, Tupaia's emblematic watercolour captured a moment in the 1786 expedition which becomes the historical matrix for Munro's series of embroideries showing a number of new exchanges. Presenting a scrutiny of land devastation caused by colonisation and its impact on deforestation through farming and foresting, Tupaia's image gains new meanings in our day.

**Otobong Nkanga**

*Social Consequences I*, 2009 (From the booklet 'No Be Today Story O')

*Limits of Mapping; Crisis; Segregation*

*Encroaching Barricade-Entangled-Endangered Species-Rationed Measures-Intertwined*

*Social Consequences II*, 2009 (From the booklet 'No Be Today Story O')

*Seize all you can; The Overload; Projectiles-Piercing Pressure-Hostage-Wastescape-The Overflow*

*Filtered memories 1977-1981*, 2009 (From the booklet 'No Be Today Story O')

*Home, 1977, Yaba, Lagos; Reduced to Ashes, 1978, Yaba, Lagos; Teargas, 1978, Yaba, Lagos; Blackout, 1978; Yaba Lagos; The Loss in Black Bubbles, 1979-81, Festac, Lagos - Ikono, Akwa Ibom*

lithographic prints

21 x 29 cm each

private collection  
©Otobong Nkanga

Employing a wide range of media, Otobong Nkanga explores the complex relationship of the individual and societies to the environment from which they emerge. Through pieces of mesmerising beauty she addresses the pain of colonialism - particularly in Africa - and the violent extraction of coveted raw materials. Nkanga's prints from the drawing series *Social Consequences* engage with such issues through graphical depictions of human bodies and natural resources engaged in dystopian entanglements. Her work focuses on the observation of stone and minerals to shed light on the contradiction of wealth-producing economies and their restrictive access to gains. Drawing eloquent parallels between minerals and language, humans appear to be connected by tools through processes of fracturing, cutting, carving or rusting, evoking the constant metamorphosis of language. Her analysis of minerals as a metonymy for society shows us that they, as us, are made of a great variety of elements that react to pressure, heat and other physical forces.

#### **Siliga David Setoga**

*This Land of Plenty*, 2018

3 light boxes

60 cm each

“‘Land of Plenty’ is a hopeful statement which promotes the notion of abundance. It does not take into consideration whether that land is contested, stolen, pre-occupied or belongs to someone else.

In my piece, *Land of Plenty*, the three images are connected through the theme of land and the feature of Hi-Vis yellow, which is used as an indicator of a hazard, as a homage to the worker and as the fact that people in Hi-Vis clothing become invisible (Hi-Vis = In-Vis), as if they were an extension of the machine. The alienation from land is the beginning of the loss of language and customs and eventually leads to a loss of Identity. For me, identity is tied to land, the greatest resource. Like the Maori proverb says: ‘Ko te aha te mea nui o te Ao’ / ‘what is the greatest resource in the Universe’...it is the People, the People, the People.”

#### **Jasmine Togo-Brisby**

*Sweet Jesus!*, 2018

installation

*Recruits: unknown*, 2017

*Kanaka converts: full immersion*, 2017

*Kanaka women in the sugar cane: Hambleton plantation*, 2017

triptych photography, Collodion on glass

23.4 x 30.6 cm each

*Sweet Jesus*, 2018

unrefined cane sugar & resin

courtesy of the artist and Page Blackie gallery

Jasmine Togo-Brisby's recent works materialise a painful recollection of historical facts in Australia and the Pacific. Such preoccupation is certainly common to world regions where colonial commerce comprised the enslaving of labourers in plantations and mines, and is expressed in the historical research, art and literature emerging from the Caribbean, Asia, South and Central America. Here the artist lays out archival photographs as metonymy of the past to compose portraits of three generations of women in her family. Alongside this historical digging, we encounter a sculpture made of sugar, the very material that spearheaded the establishment of the illegal slave trade between Melanesia and Australia. Writing in the space of the gallery the word 'Jesus', she suggests the impact of Christianity in the lives of the colonised, and the role it plays in accepting an imposed status quo.

#### **Jian Jun Xi**

*Empire*, 2018

red, blue and white tarpauline, steel

450 x 250 cm

Jian Jun Xi works explore the forces at play between the individual and political super structures. His celebrated performance works made in collaboration with Cai Yuan under the name Mad for Real presented the body as a site of resistance against war, imperial domination or the authority over artistic value. Instances of this include the pair jumping on Tracey Emin's *Bed* and urinating on Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* urinal at the Tate.

With customary humour, his latest work *Empire*, 2018, reflects on what the artist calls the Chinese "daydream" of global empire by appropriating the central rotunda of the Capitol building – seat of the U.S. government – to refer to the notion of "world power". Presented as a toppled steel and fabric structure, Capitol Hill is turned into a precarious dream. An ephemeral monument in a 1:20 scale imagining the fall of western domination.

## Artists' biographies

**John Akomfrah** (b. 1957) lives and works in London. He is a hugely respected artist and filmmaker, whose works are characterised by their investigations into memory, post-colonialism, temporality and aesthetics and often explores the experiences of migrant diasporas globally. Akomfrah was a founding member of the influential Black Audio Film Collective, which started in London in 1982 alongside the artists David Lawson and Lina Gopaul, who he still collaborates with today. Their first film, *Handsworth Songs* (1986) explored the events surrounding the 1985 riots in Birmingham and London, and won several international prizes, establishing a multi-layered visual style that has become a recognisable motif of Akomfrah's practice. Current projects include *Signs of Empire*, New Museum, New York, until 2 September 2018; *Purple*, Bildmuseet, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden, until 16 September 2018; *Sublime Seas: John Akomfrah and J.M.W. Turner*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, until 16 September; and *Precarity*, Nasher Museum at Duke University, Durham, DC, until 2 September.

**Fernando Arias** (b. 1963) was born in Armenia, Colombia, and works between Bogotá, the remote Colombian pacific coast of Chocó and London. Through video, photography, installation and actions he explores the human condition. Recurring themes include conflict, sexuality, religion, social and environmental issues.

In addition to his practice, Arias involves other artists and professionals on projects through his Foundation Más Arte Más Acción (More Art More Action). Here, Arias devises interdisciplinary projects to explore challenging social and environmental issues, often involving people from communities silenced by lack of opportunity. The foundation stimulates cultural exchange and dialogue in order to strengthen contemporary arts practice in Colombia and beyond.

**Regina José Galindo** (b. 1974, Guatemala City) is a performance artist and poet whose work explores the universal, ethical implications of social injustice, discrimination related to race, gender and other abuses involved in the unequal power relations that operate in our current society.

She has participated in events such as Documenta 14, 54, 53, 51; the 49th Venice Biennale; 17th Biennale of Sydney; II Moscow Biennale; First Auckland Triennial; and the First Biennial of Art and Architecture, Canary Islands. Galindo received the Golden Lion at the 51st Venice Biennale, and in 2011 received the Prince Claus Award.

**Kiluanji Kia Henda** (b. 1979, Luanda, Angola) employs a surprising sense of humour in his work, which often hones in on themes of identity, politics, and perceptions of post-colonialism and modernism in Africa. Practicing in the fields of photography, video, and performance, Kia Henda has tied his multidisciplinary approach to a sharp sense of criticality. In complicity with historical legacy, Kia Henda realises the process of appropriation and manipulation of public spaces and structures, and the different representations that form part of collective memory, as a relevant complexion of his aesthetical construction.

**Runo Lagomarsino** (b. 1977, Lund, Sweden) received a BFA from the Göteborgs Universitet Akademin Valand in 2001, and an MFA from the Malmö Art Academy, Sweden, in 2003. Born in Scandinavia to Argentinian parents descended from Italian émigrés who fled Europe during the First World War, Lagomarsino's biography charts the very colonial histories that his work examines. Committed to striking a balance between strident political argument and carefully considered formal composition, he examines how the overlapping histories of Spain's conquest of the New World and the modernist ideal of progress can be linked to contemporary events.

**Sarah Munro** (b. 1970, Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa) received a Doctorate in Fine Arts at Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. Munro was the recipient of the 2006 Frances Hodgkins Fellowship.

Munro's recent and ongoing *Trade Items* series consists of delicately embroidered works that respond to a watercolour on paper by high priest and master navigator Tupaia of Ra'iātea, dated 1769, depicting the exchange of a crayfish for a length of cloth or tapa occurring in the early weeks of James Cook's first survey of Aotearoa. Employing the use of repetition and substitution, Munro's series of embroideries are not historically accurate illustrations but rather contemplations in cloth and thread of the ongoing repercussions of the inceptive trade recorded in Tupaia's watercolour.

Born in Nigeria and based in Antwerp, **Otobong Nkanga** (b. 1974) works in performance, drawing, photography and installation examine how raw minerals are transported through covert economies and transformed into desirable consumer objects.

Nkanga's first ever US survey exhibition, *To Dig a Hole That Collapses Again*, 2018, takes its name from the 'Green Hill' in Namibia. The name is a direct translation of the town of Tsumeb, once a hillside of rich in oxidized copper before the metal ore was extracted.

From her research in Namibia came *In Pursuit of Bling* at the 8th Berlin Biennale, followed by exhibitions at Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, 2015; Portikus, Frankfurt, 2015; and M HKA, Antwerp 2016.

**Siliga David Setoga** (b. 1975, Aotearoa, New Zealand) completed his Master of Fine Arts from Whitecliffe College of Art and Design in 2013. This study provided Siliga with a contemplative space for investigating language, word play and representation. Reflecting his upbringing on the border of fa'a Samoa and Mt Eden, Aotearoa New Zealand, Siliga is focused on the New Zealand-based Pacific experience. As well as an extensive exhibition career his work has been featured in major institutions such as Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, The Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland and the British Museum, London.

**Jasmine Togo-Brisby** (b. 1982) is a fourth-generation Australian South Sea Islander, whose great-great-grandparents were taken from Vanuatu as children and put to work on an Australian sugarcane plantation. Togo-Brisby's research examines the historical practice of 'blackbirding', a romanticised colloquialism for the Pacific slave trade, and its contemporary legacy and impact upon those who trace their roots to New Zealand and Australia through the slave-diaspora. Based in Wellington, Togo-Brisby is one of the few artists delving into the cultural memory and shared histories of plantation colonisation across the Pacific, her practice encompassing painting, early photographic techniques and processes, and sculpture.

**Jian Jun Xi** (b. 1962) is a seminal British Chinese artist. He graduated in 1986 from the Central Academy of Art and Design (now The Art College of Tsinghua University) and graduated with MA from Goldsmiths' College, University of London in 1995.

Xi is one of the founders of Concept 21(观念21) - which is the first performance art group in China, he moved to UK in 1987 and alongside with artist Cai Yuan established MadForReal art group. Among the intervention works created by the pair, *Two Artists Jump on Tracey Emin's Bed* and *Two Artists piss on Duchamp's Urinal* were praised as "The most creative and advanced performance art today". Xi has exhibited in solo and group shows in more than 20 countries.