BODY OF LAND: TRANSFORMATIVE PORTRAITS OF AFRICAN DIAPOERIC FEMININITIES

The exhibition Body of Land investigates the visual representation of black women. In parts together, the works of two emerging artists from Scotland and Kenya, connecting absent and presence, the material and the transcendent, symbol and history. It is a search for identity, and for the visual voice of the African woman. Sekai Machache explores for her Zimbabwean roots, incorporating spiritual influences to create dramatic, and often political portraits that transform preconceived visual references. Awuor Onyango builds on Luo Mythology to create 'rituals of memory', in which strong colors, African fabric patterns and symbolic elements explore the African feminine.

Sekai Machache creates portraits that picture the viewer to form some narratives of visual association. In each work, she strips the viewer of physical and cognitive barriers; the viewer is placed in the same position as the represented woman. She does not aim to provoke discomfort or the need for action; rather, she favours an invitation for what is information. The character of the photograph, however, are very much there. They entail their presence by performing for the viewer, acting as a referential archive of hope. For example, absence presence segments memory. As the viewer looks at a single fashion photography, they watch her beauty of her beauty while also act as a transcendent and the physical act of being. This process is triggered by the act of looking that creates a kind of distanced engagement, a moment of presence. In each series, she plays with symbols, light and colour to guide us through abstract rituals in a search of the material and spiritual.

Camila Cavalcante (she/her, b.1983) is a visual artist and researcher focused on photography, feminism and activism. She is the author of Art of the Face of All Women, a bilingual book about the experiences of illegal abortion in her home country of Brazil. She completed an MA in photojournalism and an MA in Applied Gender Studies from the University of Strathclyde. As an artist, she has exhibited that works in the UK, Netherlands, France, Brazil and the USA. She is a founding and organizing member of the Yon Afro Collective. Her recent projects include: ‘200 Heroines in Photography’, for the British Photographers' Association, in 2020. She is also a board member of the Scottish feminist organisation Engender.

camilacavalcante.com

Awuor Onyango (they/them, b.1990 in Kenya) is a visual artist and researcher focused on photography, feminism and activism. She is a founding and organizing member of the Yon Afro Collective. Her recent projects include: ‘200 Heroines in Photography’, for the British Photographers' Association, in 2020. She is also a board member of the Scottish feminist organisation Engender.

awuor-onyango.format.com

Sekai Machache (she/her, b.1983) is a Zimbabwean-Scottish visual artist and curator based in Glasgow, Scotland. She is particularly interested in exploring other cultural expressions and the human body in documenting symbols in memory to provide a space for healing. She is the co-recipient of the 2020 RSA Morton Award and the 2021-2023 Talbot Rice Residency Programme. She works internationally and recently undertook a cross-cultural project in Brazil. Solo exhibitions include: The Show, Show 2020, Hills, Joburg (2021), Stbetticke, Humanitas, Rome, Italy (2019), Black Lives Matter, Maccaulay, Dundee (2020). She is a sharing and organising member of the Yon Afro Collective.

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