

Binta Diaw “In Search of Our Ancestors’ Gardens”

Opening Wednesday 22nd January 2020, from 6.30 pm to 9 pm
23rd January - 31st March 2020



Binta Diaw, Paysage corporel III, 2018, chalk on giclée print on 100% cotton paper mounted to dibond, 60 x 90cm, csy the artist and Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio

Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio begins the new year by keeping with its vocation of researching new visions, proposing the exhibition by Binta Diaw, a young Italian-Senegalese artist at her first solo show in her hometown.

Binta Diaw’s research reveals two deeply interconnected souls: an intimate and autobiographical side that pushes her in the continuous struggle between her Italianness and Africanness, into an identity space of negotiation which includes both; on the other side a mature and passionate knowledge of Black, Cultural and Feminist Studies.

An important reference, in this sense, is the African-American writer, poetess and activist Alice Walker, author of the collection of essays “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” which represents a symbol book of Black Feminism, for its political strength and social claims through which Walker has given voice to the suffering, tragedies, injustices and oppression experienced by black women yesterday, as today. The modernity of the book, leads the artist to identify herself in the words and the continuous questioning of the author: “What does it mean to be a black woman and an artist -in the Italian political and cultural context?—”

The title of the exhibition, “In Search of Our Ancestors’ Gardens” enlighten the ancestral importance of Ancestors. They are traditions, rituals, bodies, stories and voices never listened and invisibilized by those who have written history in their way. Through an anti-colonial logic, the exhibition is presented as a memorial space. Space which gives visibility and importance to Life, through the symbology of the soil seen by the artist as inscribed in the human body.

This interpretation emerges with immense visual power in the work “Chorus of Soil”. “Chorus of Soil” is a reproduction of a slave ship, on a large scale, of an 18th-century plan made of soil and seeds. The installation is conceived as a space of memorialization, but also and especially as a space of new life because it manifests itself in the material used, where new buds can grow.

The choice to plant melon seeds comes from a reflection of the artist that led her to consider the link between cotton slavery fields and mafia plantations in southern Italy, where thousands of male and female migrants are systematically exploited and live under the threat of the “caporali” (illegal recruiters of agricultural laborers). The work assumes an impressive symbolic value of the fragile equilibrium between life and death, and between past and present.

The natural elements also return in the works “Paysage Corporel I, II and III,” in which the artist has photographed different parts of her own body. The photos have been reworked with the use of chalk, tracing on the photographic surface, traces of colours that turn the lines and forms of the body into harmonious and ideally endless journeys, paths, landscapes. These traces are the result of a process of questioning, of continuous soul-searching related to the cyclical movement of women, nature and art.

Binta Diaw (Milan, 1995) Binta Diaw is an Italian-Senegalese visual artist.

Her research focuses on the creation of installations of different sizes and works on social phenomena such as migration, contemporary and still colonial narratives, anthropological and social aspects in the European context, the relationship of the body to nature and the complexity of its identity.

She studied Fine Arts at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan and Grenoble at the École d'art et de design de Grenoble-Valence, in France, where she obtained the DNSEP (master).

During her first year of her Master's degree, she moved to Berlin for a four-month internship at Savvy Contemporary, an art and research space focused on dialogue and exchange between different non-Eurocentric art mediums. Over the past two years, she has developed her research through an intersectional feminist methodology based on physical and personal experience: herself, as a social body and her position as a 2nd generation black woman (born in Italy to Senegalese parents).

First a sculptor, she started sculpting because it is the best way for her to communicate with people her views, her social report as a black and Italian woman.

She is interested in learning more about people's feelings when they look at her artwork, in the hope of giving them the opportunity to reflect and deconstruct reality. She uses different methods to make her works, such as moulding or assembling and cutting her materials. In Binta Diaw's art, the materiality of the subject is very important. She prefers natural and symbolic materials. In general, paying attention to this aspect can be a way to understand her works.

Exhibitions and Participations

2020

- YGBI Research Residency Ontario College of Art and Design, Florence, Italy
- Participation to the project "Seeds for future memory", Villa Romana, Florence, Italy

2019

- Workshop "Q-rated Napoli", Quadriennale di Roma, Rome, Italy
- Group Show "Soil is an inscribed body", Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
- Group Show "Artefici del nostro tempo", Centro culturale Candiani, Venice, Italy
- Finalist at the Premio Nocivelli, Verolanuova (BS), Italy

2018

- Workshops with the artists Daniela Ortiz and Gaëlle Choisne between Grenoble and Paris (Fondation Kadist and Musée MACVAL) through the platform "Pratiques d'Hospitalité" by Simone Frangi and Katia Schneller at the École d'art et de design de Grenoble-Valence, Grenoble, France
- Internship at Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
- Internship at Archive Books, Berlin, Germany
- Collaboration with the artist Satch Hoyt in the project "Cleopatra's chariot"
- Live performance with the artists Ibrahim Quraishi and Olani Ewunnet, Galerie Wedding, Berlin, Germany

2017

- Group Show "La Bellezza resta- Farfalle", Associazione Heart à Vimercate (MI), Italy

2015

- Group Show "Ricordando il futuro", Palazzo Grimani, Venice, Italy
- Sculpture workshop "Codice Italia" directed by Nino Longobardi, 56th Venice biennale, Venice, Italy
- Group Show "Artisti all'opera", Fonderia artistica M.A.F. Pioltello (MI), Italy
- Participation to "L'arte che non sembra: anche colorare è un modo per creare", La Lettura-Il Corriere, Milan, Italy
- Participation to the Festival internazionale dei depuratori- Depur art in atto, Milan, Italy

2013

- Internship in Fashion Design at Pino Grasso-Ricami di alta moda, Milan, Italy

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