

Yonamine

Só China

Opening 22 March | 10 pm

23 March to 9 May



"You know marrying money is a full time job
I don't need the aggravation
I'm a lazy slob
I hang fire, I hang fire
Hang fire, put it on the wire"
The Rolling Stones, 'Hang Fire', Tattoo You, 1981

Yonamine's artwork is marked by the interaction of means of production, expressed in the way each one of his pieces is built. The artist redeploys hierarchies of cultural signifiers and sociological typologies in a cumulative praxis that is ever expanding, following his own experiences as a mundane and cosmopolitan individual, who recognizes his instinct of communion and feels part of the world in any place.

From Luanda – his hometown – to Muyehleketete, in Mozambique, passing through Cali, Colombia, as an artist in residence – where the Tattoo You series was started –, to his latest travels through the Orient on the way to Australia, Yonamine appropriates images and actions that he recognizes as signs of miscegenation. The artist explores the ambiguity between coloniser and colonised, cultural manifestations (ancestral and contemporary), encapsulated in a globalised world that is marked by colonial transition.

This conjunction of signifiers reveals a prolific and diverse artistic practice, confirmed in this exhibition. We see it in the Indian ink drawings over Chinese newspapers (these newspapers being one of his first strong visual impressions arriving at the orient) used as base material to intertwine drawings appropriated from tattooing and scarification.

Another piece, CAN (from the series Tattoo You, that addresses influences such as the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix and Hélio Oiticica), is a video installation where the author stages a percussion orchestra using the rhythm of tattoo needles on tin cans. Here we feel an attention on the act of incising a body, being it a scarified tree trunk from Oceania or tattooed coca leaves. Attentive to the body as an ethical, moral and economic signifier, the artist presents it as the agent of manufacture and the simultaneous place for risk, trade and the sensitive, gentle, matter of all initiation ceremonies. The exhibition "SÓ CHINA" ("ONLY CHINA") is another stage of Yonamine's field work, an experience dispersed throughout a diversity of contexts, embodying his work and research methods and allowing procedural decisions to be tested in the exhibition space; being it, overall, another moment for experimentation and confrontation.

João Silvério

February 2012

[1] Comparable to the artwork of Catherine Opie, who in 1999 produced a self-portrait where she reveals child drawings, carved on her back with a blade, and a winding tattoo on her right arm.

Yonamine (Luanda, Angola, 1975)

The artist is represented in several private and public collections namely: SD Collection – Sindika Dokolo African Contemporary Art (Luanda, Angola); BPA Collection - Banco Privado de Angola; BIC Collection – Banco Internacional de Crédito (Lisbon, Portugal); Ellipse Foundation Contemporary Art Collection (Lisbon, Portugal); Leal Rios Foundation (Lisbon, Portugal); PLMJ Foundation (Lisbon, Portugal); Hélder Batágia Contemporary Art Collection (Luanda, Angola); Rui Costa Reis Collection (Luanda, Angola).

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