



MUSEU
D'ART CONTEMPORANI
DE BARCELONA

UNDEFINED TERRITORIES. PERSPECTIVES ON COLONIAL LEGACIES

► *Undefined Territories* is a reflection on the notion of territory in an expanded sense of the term. It goes beyond the mere geographical to encompass questions of identity, culture, history and time, within the framework of colonial legacy.

► Through works by artists from diverse geographies and diasporas, the exhibition articulates the enduring imprint of the colonial repression and disenfranchisement of native populations. Colonisation was not only territorial and economic, but also cultural through the imposition of structures of knowledge and modes of representation

► The evocation of memory and revision of historical narratives attest to how structures that were imposed centuries ago established the paradigms by which we continue to abide today.

► Artists include: **Maria Thereza Alves, Lothar Baumgarten, Black Audio Film Collective, Alán Carrasco, Mariana Castillo Deball, Sandra Gamarra, Jeffrey Gibson, Maryam Jafri, Kapwani Kiwanga, Naeem Mohaiemen, Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga, The Otolith Group, Pala Pothupitiye, Superflex, Munem Wasif and Dana Whabira**

► A centrepiece of the exhibition is Naeem Mohaiemen's (b.1969) acclaimed film *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017), which meticulously weaves together both archival footage and new shots with the narration of historian Vijay Prashad (b. 1967), to articulate the momentum and solidarity of the NAM's leftist ideologies and unravel the complexities behind its unfortunate failure.

Title: *Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies* **Opening:** 16 May
Dates: 17 May – 20 October **Organisation:** Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
Curator: Hiuwai Chu



PHOTOS: <http://www.macba.cat/press/territorisindefinit2019/>

► Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies

Press Conference: 16 May

Opening: 16 May

Dates: 17 May – 20 October

Curated by: Hiuwai Chu, curator, MACBA

In April 1955, representatives of 29 newly, and struggling-to-be, independent countries from Asia and Africa gathered for a conference in Bandung, Indonesia, to champion common interests of national sovereignty, decolonisation, anti-imperialism and economic development. The international meeting of new geopolitical alliances represented 54% of the world population at the time and signalled a pivotal moment for postcolonial political order. From this encounter emerged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) formed by nations that embraced the above and shunned the polarities of the Cold War – the Third World.



Naeem Mohaiemen, *Two Meetings and a Funeral*. © Michael Nast

A centrepiece of the exhibition is Naeem Mohaiemen's (b. 1969) acclaimed film *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017), which meticulously weaves together both new and archival footage with the narration of historian Vijay Prashad (b. 1967), to articulate the momentum and solidarity of the NAM's leftist ideologies and unravel the complexities behind its unfortunate failure.

Looking further back from this historic moment the exhibition starts with works that address the imprint of colonial repression and dispossession, as well as the ways in which imperial powers have exerted control through epistemic structures, such as political mapping and language. Through the works of artists from varied geographies and diasporas, the exhibition also points to the challenges of independence and the postcolonial condition. As the first President of Indonesia, Ahmed Sukarno (1901–1970) warned in his opening speech to the attendees of the Bandung Conference: 'Colonialism has also its modern dress, in the form of economic control, intellectual control.... It is a skilful and determined enemy, and it appears in many guises.'



Mariana Castillo Deball, *Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan*, 2013.
Wood and ink. Overall dimensions variable

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Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies

Work List

Jeffrey Gibson

Look How Far We've Come

2017

Panted mural

Courtesy of the artist



The phrase 'Look how far we've come' is embedded in the multi-coloured mural by the Choctaw-Cherokee artist Jeffrey Gibson. The sentence is open for interpretation; however, given the unlikelihood of the US ever being decolonialised, it can only be read as ironic. The patterns, which are inspired by Native American motifs, are also reminiscent of American modernism, which has appropriated aesthetics from the former.

Mariana Castillo Deball

Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan

2013

Xylograph with router CNC (252m²)

Courtesy of the artist and Barbara Wien Galerie, Berlin



Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan is an enlargement of the detailed map of the ancient Aztec capital (now Mexico City) that the conquistador Hernán Cortés sent to King Charles V of Spain, along with letters describing the large, highly organised city and its people. These descriptions included the ritual of human sacrifice, which was instrumentalised in depicting the Aztecs as barbaric and in need of civilising by the Spanish empire. The map, originally published in 1524, became one of the first and most widespread images that Europeans had of the Aztecs and New World. It captured the European imaginary and garnered support for the conquest of the territory. However, the city had already been destroyed by Spanish forces in 1521, three years before the map's publication.

Alán Carrasco

Chinkachiy

2019

Wall painting

Courtesy of the artist



Chinkachiy means to eliminate or erase in Quechua. In this work, Alán Carrasco has painted a faint portrait of Túpac Amaru II (1738–1781), the indigenous leader of the uprising against Spanish rule in Peru. Long after his brutal death, his image has remained an icon for independence and indigenous rights, including being commemorated on different currencies of Peru, such as the 50 Soles de Oro bill (designed by the artist Germán Suárez and upon which Carrasco has based *Chinkachiy*) and its last apparition on 500-inti banknote. However, since the fall of General Juan Francisco Velasco Alvarado's leftist government (1968–75) and the vindication of his figure by the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement during the internal conflict in Peru (1980-2000), Túpac Amaru II has slowly been omitted from the official narration of Peruvian history. The figures who have appeared on the new Peruvian Sols since 1991 are all criollo or white.

Lothar Baumgarten

Salto (Pipa Cornuta)

1977

Vinyl

MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation



Lothar Baumgarten's work is characterised by his strong interest in the Americas and their indigenous populations as well as by the passage of time and its influence on nature, human knowledge, economics and power. This work addresses the repressive politics of naming and how renaming by imperial and colonial forces was a strategy for claiming possession and control. The artist uses the simple tactic of relaying the names of rivers of La Gran Sabana in the native language as a way of restoring memory and vindication of place and language

Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga

Nation State - Part 1. Exercise #1. History. Christopher Columbus

2013

Ink jet print on paper

40.7 x 151.5 x 3 cm / 40.7 x 40.7 x 3 cm

MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation



Nation State - Part 1. Exercise #1. History. Christopher Columbus looks at the way in which the state uses monument building as a way of cementing historic memory. Composed of photographs of the monument of Christopher Columbus erected in Barcelona for the Universal Exposition in 1888 and accompanied by a text that describes the role of Columbus in the colonisation of the Americas, the work attests to the continued glorification of Columbus, even years after the independence of Spanish colonies in the Americas.

Maria Thereza Alves

This is Not an Apricot

2009

Watercolour on paper

26 x 36 cm (20 pieces)

Collection of Samuel-Weis



This work depicts twenty different indigenous fruit that the artist found at a market in the Amazonas, all of which the vendor referred to as apricots although they were clearly different from one another. The scientific name of each fruit is indicated on the watercolours. Their original indigenous names have been obliterated through years of linguistic imperialism, which continues into the present.

Munem Wasif

Land of Undefined Territory

2016

Black-and-white photographs

Courtesy of the artist and Project 88



Comprising twenty-one black-and-white photos, *Land of Undefined Territory* is a meditation on the way we define space as well as our political relationship to land. The non-descript terrain depicted has been one of the most historically contested areas between India and Bangladesh, with shifting borders that have been defined by post-colonial divisions and war.

Sandra Gamarra

Mercancía I (bodegón)

Merchandise I (Still life)

2018

Oil on canvas

80 x 120 cm

Courtesy of the artists and the Galeria Juana de Aizpuru

Private collection



Mercancia II (Museo)

Merchandise II (Museum)



Recurso I

Resource I

2018

Coloured earth on paper

161 x 201 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Juana de Aizpuru



Sandra Gamarra uses landscape and still life painting, both genres closely linked with European colonial expansion in distant lands, to allude to the imposition of the Western gaze and the marginalisation of native populations by considering them the inferior 'Other'. Overlaid on the paintings are hand-written excerpts by Enrique Dussel, Victor Stoichita and Mario Rufer about modes of representation and power, objectification and monetisation of culture through a system of transnational capitalism that was propelled by colonialism

Black Audio Film Collective

Expeditions 1 - Signs of Empire

1983

Ektachrome 35 mm slides transferred to video, colour, sound, 26 min

Black Audio Film Collective, John Akomfrah. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery, London



‘An investigation into colonial fantasy’ reads one of the slides of *Signs of Empire*. This phrase lays the ground for a succession of archival photographs from the British colonial era juxtaposed with contemporary reportage. Together with piercing texts and a sombre soundtrack interspersed with political speeches, what unfolds is a powerful storytelling of colonial constructs of identity and how they resonate with contemporary realities in Britain.

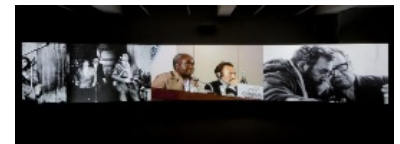
Naeem Mohaiemen

Two Meetings and a Funeral

2017

Three-channel video installation

Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata



Two Meetings and a Funeral articulates the momentum and failure of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), formed by newly independent countries that shunned Cold War polarities and championed common interests of national sovereignty, decolonisation and economic development. Weaving together archival material and contemporary footage, the film unravels the complexities behind NAM’s leftist ideologies and contradictions through a chronicle of Bangladesh’s critical shift from Socialism to Islamism, focusing on the NAM meeting in Algiers in 1973 and a meeting of its ideological counterpoint, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, in Lahore in 1974.

Pala Pothupitiye

Colombo Fort

2016

Acrylic paint and ink overprinted on paper

56 x 76 cm



The Other Trade

2016

Acrylic paint and ink overprinted on paper

81 x 245 cm



Ptolemy's Map of Sri Lanka

2016

Acrylic paint and ink overprinted on paper

56 x 76 cm



Kilinochchi Map

2016

Pencil and ink on map printed on paper

65 x 91 cm



Vavuniya Map

2016

Pencil and ink on map printed on paper

65 x 91 cm

Collection of Singapore Art Museum



Cartography is a powerful tool; its lines institutionalise borders and its text legitimises place names. In *Other Maps Series*, Pala Pothupitiye presents us with reimagined cartographies through richly illustrated narrations over official maps that blend mythology and colonial history, as well as detailing Sri Lanka's history of occupation by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, and its civil war of over a quarter of a century, putting in question the idea of rigid sovereign territory.

The Otolith Group

Nucleus of the Great Union

2017

HD video, colour, sound, 32 min 30 s

Courtesy of the artist and LUX, London



Nucleus of the Great Union revisits the journey that African-American novelist Richard Wright made to the Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1953 to accompany the Conventions People's Party on their campaign for independence from British rule. The film is a digital unpacking and reconfiguration of the archive, which is composed of over 1500 photographs that Wright took on this trip and which remain unpublished. A poignant part of the film is when the narrator, Saidiya Hartman, recounts local boys in Ghana telling her that they wished their ancestors had been enslaved so they could now be as rich as Americans.

Superflex

Kwassa Kwassa

2015

Digital video, colour, sound, 17 min

Commissioned by Beaufort Beyond Borders 2015 and Marrakech Biennale 6.

With the support of the Danish Art Council.



Kwassa kwassa translates as 'unstable boat'. The film poetically tells the recent history of Mayotte, one of the islands of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros that chose to be recolonised by the French in 2011, making it the European Union's most distant region, with less than 80 km separating it from its closest independent neighbouring island. The imagery focuses on small, handmade fiberglass fishing boats, their construction and the voyages they enable. The work is a visual meditation on migration, economy, citizenship and history.

Kapwani Kiwanga

Flowers for Africa

2014-17

Floral arrangements



Collection of Cristophe Guillot, courtesy Galerie Poggi, Paris

Private collection, courtesy of Galerie Poggi, Paris

Collection of FRAC Poitou-Charentes

Collection of FRAC Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur

Collection of FRAC Île de France

Courtesy of the Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg

Courtesy of Galeria Tanja Wagner

Courtesy of the NOMAS Foundation, Rome

Flowers for Africa revives historic memory through reconstructions of floral arrangements based on archival photographs related to the independence ceremonies of African countries. Florists are asked to make interpretations based on the photographs, with varying visibility of the original arrangement. Over the duration of the exhibition, the flowers are left to wither and dry, alluding to notions of impermanence and flux, as well as to the challenges of independence.

Maryam Jafri

Independence Day 1934-75

2009 (ongoing)

54 black-and-white photographs

Courtesy of the artist and La Veronica Galleria, Modica



Through long-term research in over 30 archives, mostly from countries of origin, this series brings together photographs that document the first Independence Day of former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The images are arranged according to type of event and range from parades to official ceremonies. The aesthetics and organisation of the events are very similar despite disparate geographies and temporalities, revealing how these new nation-states have, in the process of becoming independent, often adopted the same political aesthetics – and systems – of their colonisers.

Dana Whabira

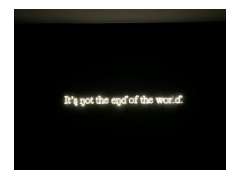
Black Sunlight

2017

Video, b/w, sound, 2 min 2 s, and neon sign

21 x 356 cm

Courtesy of the artist



Black Sunlight explores language as a tool of repression and manipulation. The title is taken from Dambudzo Marechera's cult novel that was banned in Zimbabwe in 1981 for being obscene and Euro-centric. Written in neon is the phrase 'It's not the end of the world', with the letter 'L', which does not exist in Shona, darkened to create another meaning. Together with a video of a Shona lesson that includes excerpts from an interview with Marechera, the work points to the calculated misinterpretations of indigenous language and how ideas of African nationalism were often invoked to justify totalitarian regimes across the continent.

Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies Related Activities

LECTURE

The Shortest Speech, with Naeem Mohaiemen

Naeem Mohaiemen uses essays, photography and film to explore failed utopias within the historical narratives of the international left. His film *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017), presented at the exhibition *Undefined Territories*, articulates the momentum and solidarity of the **Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM)** leftist ideologies and unravels the flaws that led to its failure.

In this lecture, **Mohaiemen looks at one of the 'marginal' figures of the 1973 NAM conference in Algiers**, drawing our attention to **moments that hint at future internal conflicts**.

Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, S. Rajaratnam, is scheduled to speak on the fifth day, by which time the crowd has thinned and attention has faded. He begins with a reference to the prepared speech he provided to the interpretation team in advance. Since everyone already has a printed copy, he decides to skip the officially approved text and deliver extemporaneous remarks: 'You will get two speeches for the price of one plane ticket. And it will be the shortest speech of this conference.'

His comments come after days of dramatic, denunciatory speeches, and could be read as a veiled reference to the record-breaking addresses by Cuba's Fidel Castro and Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito (both over one hour). The break in protocol is followed by sharp remarks on trade, economic cooperation, birth control and oil dependence. But as TV cameras pan the audience, it becomes clear that many world leaders have not bothered to put on their conference headphones.

Mohaiemen's film inverts the allocation: Castro and Tito are seen briefly, while S. Rajaratnam's voice guides the New York and Algiers chapter. The 'pivotal' moment that emptied out third-world solidarity came not only from a fatal dependence on carbon-based energy by 1974, but also by a failure to comprehend Rajaratnam's provocation: 'We all agree on what we are against, but what exactly are we for?'

FRIDAY 17 MAY, at 7 pm

Venue: Convent auditorium

Free admission. Limited places. Advance booking required.

LET'S TALK ABOUT **UNDEFINED TERRITORIES. PERSPECTIVES ON COLONIAL LEGACIES** GUIDED VISIT

The Group of Black-African Thought, Practices and Activisms ([GPPAAN](#)) takes us on a tour of *Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies*

SATURDAY 6 APRIL, at 6 pm

Venue: Museum floor 0 **Admission:** Free. Advance booking required

EXCLUSIVE ACTIVITIES FOR **MACBA AMICS**

Hiuwai Chu, the exhibition's curator, takes us on a visit of *Undefined Territories. Perspectives on colonial legacies*.

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY, at 6 pm

Venue: MACBA

Visit in Spanish.

Exclusive activity for MACBA Amics. Free admission. Limited places. Advance booking required.

FRIDAY 14 JUNE, at 11 am

Venue: MACBA

Visit in English.

Exclusive activity for MACBA Amics. Free admission. Limited places. Advance booking required.

CURSO

Aura Cumes: *'Seguimos vivos': Pueblos Mayas, colonización permanente y horizontes de vida* ('We are still alive.' Mayan peoples, permanent colonisation and life horizons)

3, 4 and 5 July, 7–9 pm

Venue: Convent auditorium **Admission:** Free. Limited places. Advance booking required.

UNIQLO Saturdays

AFROFUTURIST Saturday

With the participation of Kapwani Kiwanga, Jokkoo Collective and the Group of Black-African Thought, Practices and Activisms.

Saturday 28 September

Venue: Capella MACBA **Admission:** Free thanks to UNIQLO. Limited places. Advance booking required.



FOTOS: <http://www.macba.cat/press/territorisindefinitis2019/>

■ **MORE INFORMATION AT** macba.cat and @MACBA_Barcelona

Segueix-nos a:    **#TerritorisIndefinitis**

■ **MACBA:** Plaça dels Àngels, 1, 08001 Barcelona, macba.cat

■ **TIMES:** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 am – 7.30 pm. Tuesdays except public holidays, closed. Saturdays, 10 am – 8 pm. Sundays and public holidays, 10 am – 3 pm.

■ **Ticket valid for one month**

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