



Binta
Diaw



Binta Diaw (b.1995) is a Senegalese-Italian visual artist based in Milan, Italy.

Her research is aimed at the creation of installations of various dimensions and works commenting social phenomena, like migration and immigration, notions of identity as well as the female body.

Defying the Western gaze through a subversive sensibility, her practice questions perceptions of Italianness and Africanness seen as an extended symposium informed by her own cultural heritage and upbringing.

Embracing visual art with a strongly intersectional, afro-diasporic and feminist methodology based on a physical personal experience, she is ultimately able to explore the multiple layers of her blackness, her self as a social body and her position as a black woman in a Western context.

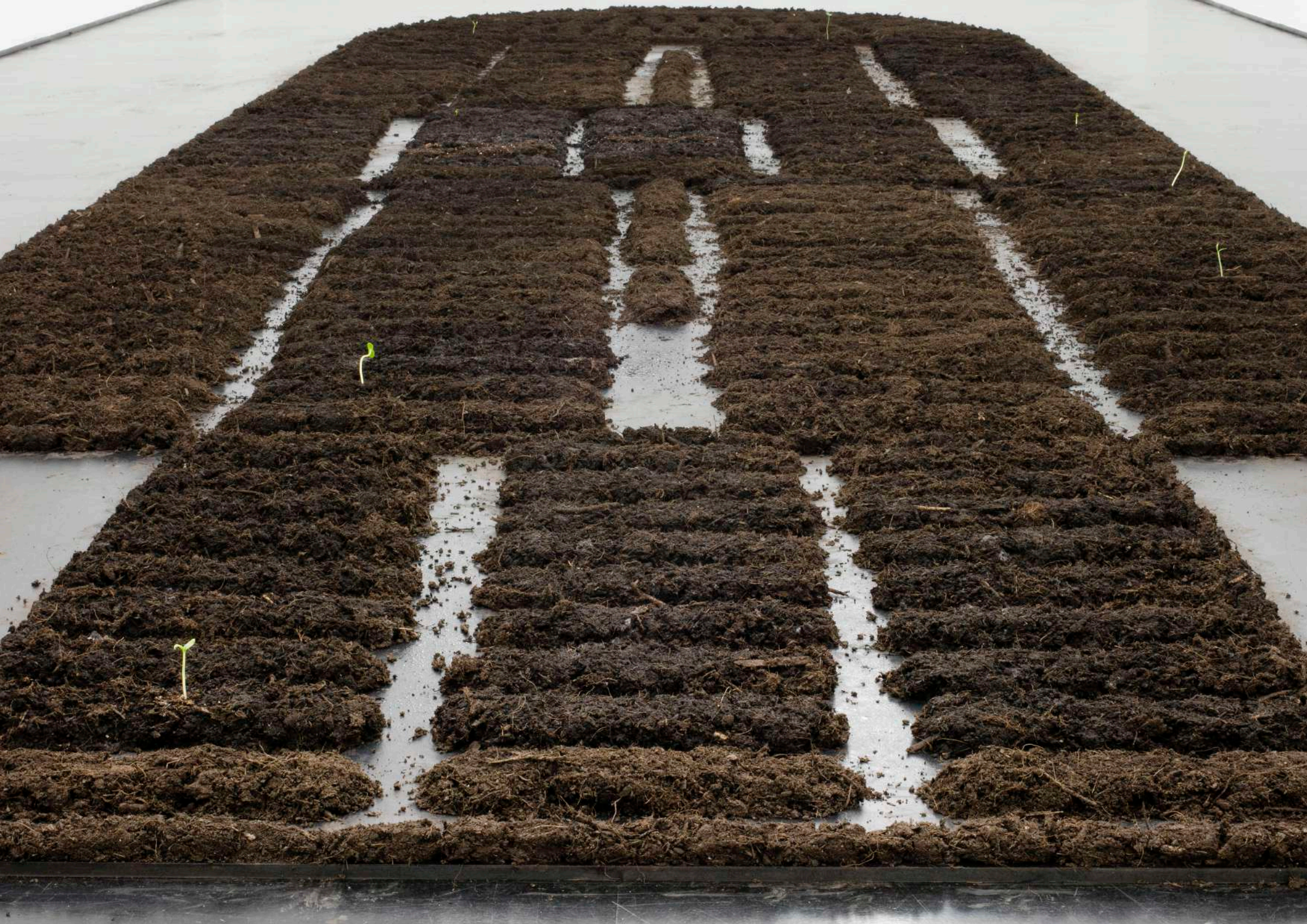
She studied Fine Arts at the Academy of fine arts of Brera, in Milan and obtained a MA at ESAD Grenoble-Valence, in France. In 2018 she moved to Germany for an internship at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin.

In 2020 she debuted with her first solo show, at Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio in Milan.

works



CHORUS OF SOIL
Soil, melon seeds, 2019





For a while, I have been interested in working with archives and archival material. A large part of the history of humanity has been hidden, not included in Italian textbooks and not recognized by Italian institutions.

In my research, I discovered photographic images that led me to reflect on the link between the slave trade and contemporary migration. The Chorus of Soil installation is a large-scale reproduction of an 18th-century soil and seed map.

I wanted to create a temple dedicated to the memory of all those women, men and children who lost their lives during the crossing.

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 for the installation, the ground, where new buds can grow.

I planted melon seeds because of their link to the mafia-operated plantations in southern Italy, where thousands of migrants are systematically exploited and live under the threat of the "caporali".

The soil is particularly important to me. It is a living and breathing entity. We are born in the soil, and the soil lives in our body, in what we eat and drink. The choice to use the word "chorus" comes from the sound of the ground. The installation speaks for itself. It reminds us of moving bodies, faces, stories, with cries and voices that challenge us, forming a chorus of sounds.

The purpose of this work is to use an almost unknown archive image to remember the past, to deconstruct it to understand current events.





DON'T
Extension hair, trestle, 2019



"If you want to know more about a woman,
a black woman, of course, touches her hair.
Because our hair carries our way. Because it is here that we carry all our
hopes, all our dreams, our wounds, our disappointments.
They're all in our hair."

Trey Anthony

Image, body and hair have always played a crucial role in the lives of African women. Don't, is a feminine, intimate and representative installation. As a black woman, born and raised in a Eurocentric context, I feel the need to push the "don't touch my hair" movement: a strategy of resistance against the exoticism of afro or curly hair legitimized by the privilege of white people. The hair strand and braids on the wall reflect the violence with which, by touching a woman's hair, one invades a personal and intimate area.

The hair on the easel, on the other hand, is a provocation. A provocation that invites the public to think before acting, rather than to act.



BLACK POWERLESS
Silicone, hook, 2019



"Black can never become white, but a white man can always exercise constant power over black."

Black powerless is a sculpture that explores identity issues, such as the Africanness (blackness) and Italianity of Afro-Italians, in the social, political and contemporary Italian context.

When I speak of Afro-Italians, I am referring to a large part of the "second generation": the children of the first wave of migrants born and raised in Italy.

Every young person, born or raised in Italy of foreign parents, has to wait 18 years to apply for citizenship.

Black powerless is, therefore, my moulded arm positioned as the very famous political symbol born in the early 60s, the black power.

My black power is positioned on the contrary and it is called black powerless: a fist that has no power. With this symbol and this part of my body hanging on, I want to represent the growing and bodily alliance of the Italians Afro descendent invibilised by the nation.

From here, the choice was made to use silicone, a wet material in contrast to the consistent violence exercise in Italy.



AFR...
Rope, 2019

"In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country.
It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and
tall, thin people who are starving.
Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates.
Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions"

How to Write about Africa, Biyavanga Wainaina

The installation is a reflection on the limits of Eurocentric language referring to identity, cultural and geographical attribution.

The focus is to deconstruct and rethink the word AFRICA, which is still used in a stereotypical and above all global way. This way of seeing Africa as a country is in stark contrast to reality. We are not talking about a country, but a continent that resembles 54 countries, more than 2000 languages, several religions, ethnic groups and hybridizations.

The work has three letters: AFR. After these letters, a piece of rope was placed on the wall for the public to use. The possibility of continuing the word has been thought as a way of going beyond all racist and stereotypical denominations that automatically takes us away from thinking differently and inclusively.

Following my Afro-descendence and my Italianity, I started to reflect on the complexity of my identity.

I am Italian, but I am African, I am Senegalese, but I am also Afro-descendant. I'm not just African.





ESSERE CORPO
Video installation, 2019



The video is a bodily exploration of the body's sensory capacities concerning the patriarchal and capitalist reality that takes us away from our natural state, being human beings.

Bodies are the living trace of our oppressions, our experiences and our actions.

The contemporary artificiality that keeps us apart and makes us forget who we are, has led me to think and make this video. With my body, movements and steps, I return to the primordial origins. Origins that are inscribed in our bodies as the earth is inscribed in us.

The body dances with the ground. This dance is a sensitive choreography that tries to re-construct and maintain the continuity of this indelible relationship between human beings and nature.

Being a black woman, I also feel the need to reflect on how the Western, patriarchal and capitalist society has always racialised women and nature at the same level. This dance of liberation and knowledge aims to show how nature can be seen as a common good with ancient roots.

The video is presented in three different screens placed on the ground to approach the horizontality of the earth. Black and white is a visual choice that helps the audience focus on movement.







TOUBAB BOU ÑUUL
Senegal flag, sound, 2019

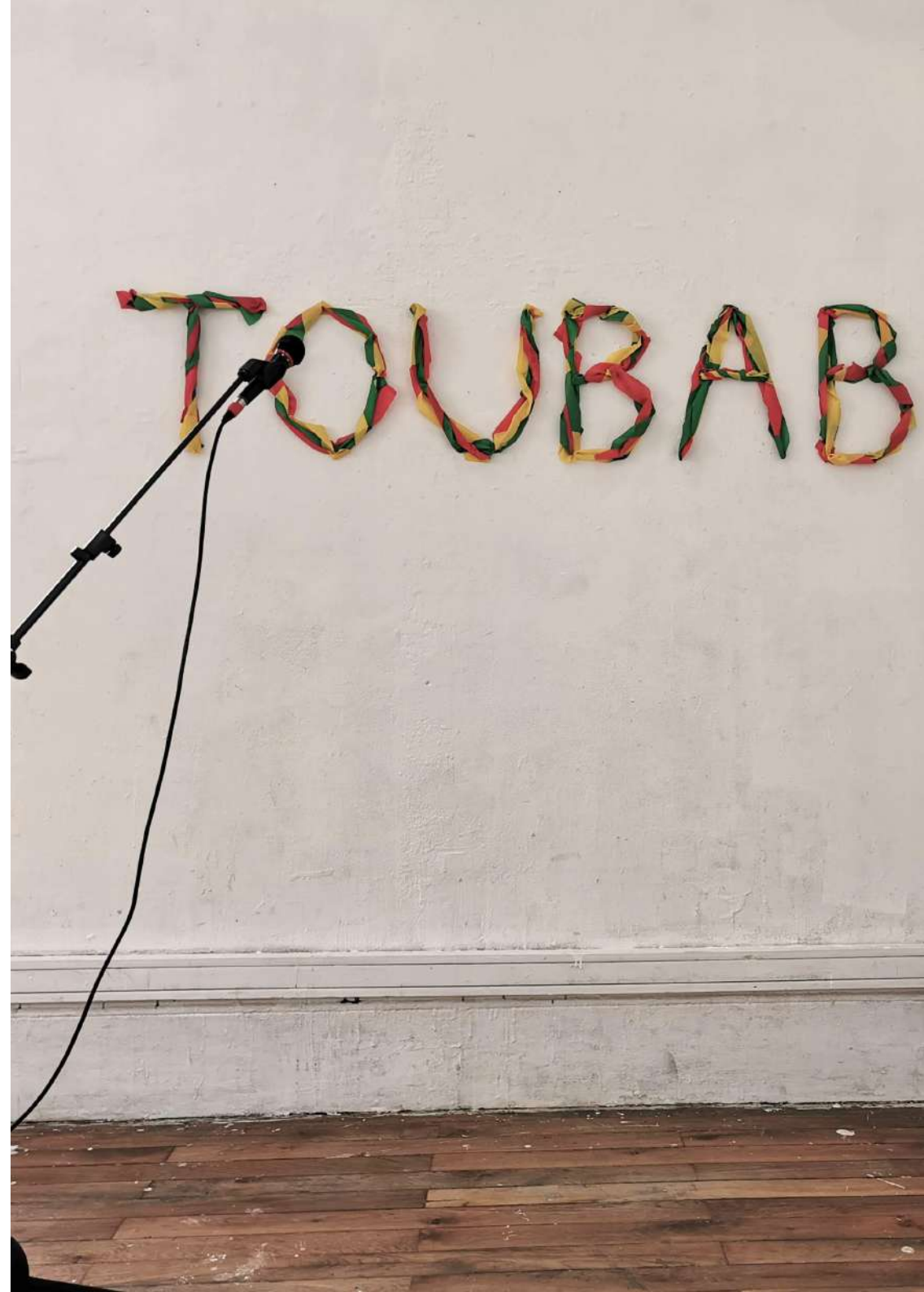
The new Italian generation lives and cohabits with shame, doubts, complexities and instabilities of identity and belonging.

But how is it possible to live between belonging and strangeness? This refusal of Italianity opens other doors: rather complex identity dimensions. Following this refusal, I started to think about my blackness, that is, my Africanness.

The installation is a reflection and a provocation on the identity denomination assigned by people to other people. I am attached to this word. Toubab, in Wolof, is used to define the white.h.e.s during the colonisation. This word is still used in the language of several West African countries.

In Senegal, my family calls me “toubab bou nuul”, a black woman who lives as a white woman.

The contradictions in this identification word are in conversation to the sound of several moments of Senegal's Independence Day. A sound that testifies to a celebration that still binds us to the coloniser.



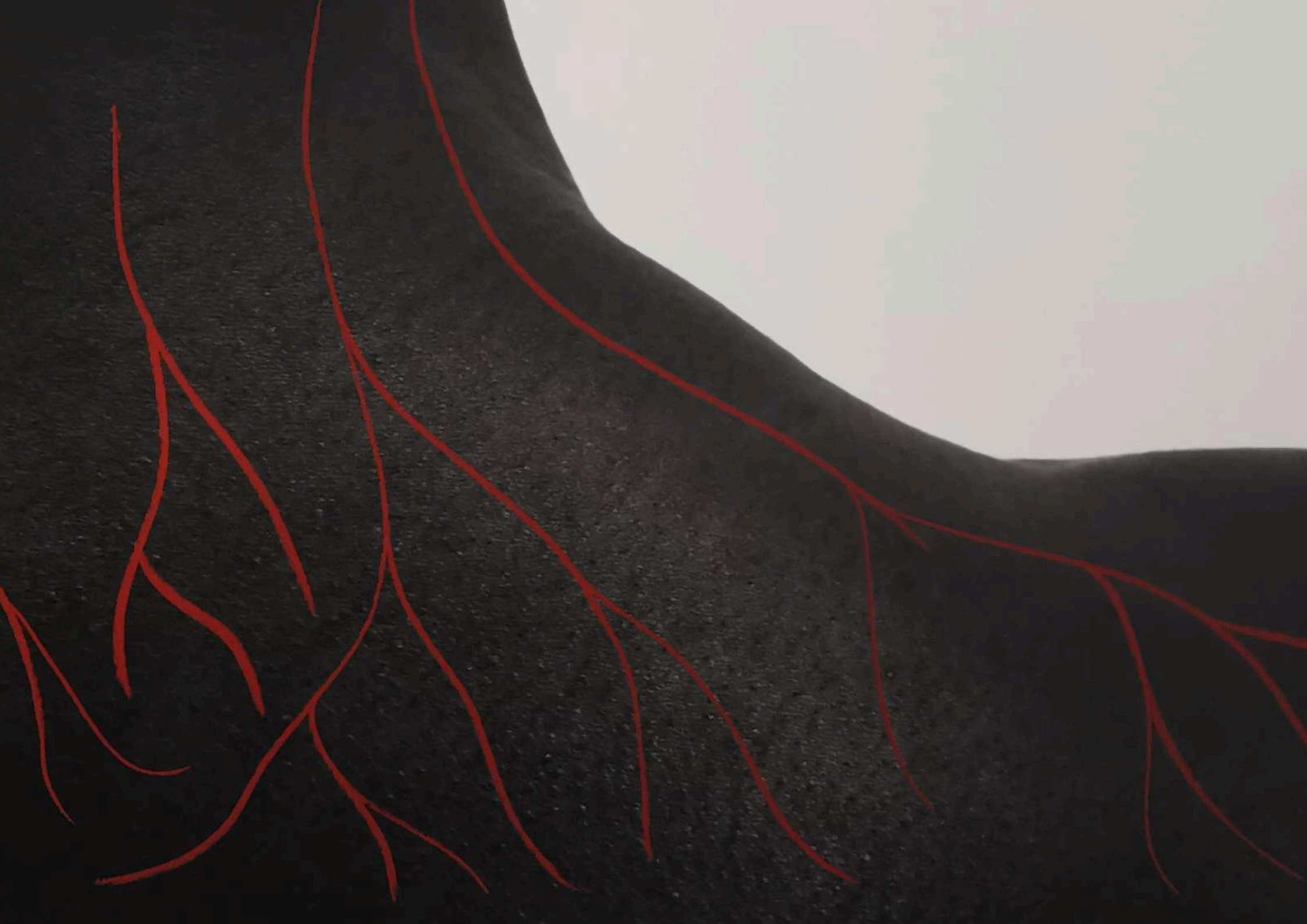


CORPOREL I, II, III
Chalk, cotton paper, 2018

The natural elements also return in these works "Paysage corporel I, II and III," in which I photographed different parts of my 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.









UNTITLED II
Recycled door, 2020

UNTITLED I
Different woods, 2017



The installation Untitled II, is part of a short residency in Tambacounda (Senegal), during the “Festival de l’union”.

The festival has been created by a young rapper and activist who is preaching to the Senegalese young generation, anti-migration movements. The door made in Tamba is a response to Untitled I, the first door I made in Milan in 2017.

The last one has been created during a critical moment in which waves of migrants started to arrive to the Italians coasts in irregular way. Thousands of migrants, women, men and children from many african countries, try to leave their homeland, because of desperation, frustration, poverty, disappointments and more.

The doors have no wall behind and no handle, because of the unknown future and destiny. It’s a way of reflecting in deeper way about leaving a homeland, loose your life during the trip, or arrive to an unknown land and feeling racialised and marginalized by local people.



TERANGA

Carpet, pillows, ataya, 2017

Teranga is an installation about hospitality.

The title itself means “hospitality” in wolof.

Moving the carpet of my living room to a gallery space, I wanted to see people reactions.

The action of moving part of my family house, helped me to rethink how it's difficult for Italy to accept the real and physical presence of different communities. The work try to deconstruct the political idea of boarders between Italians folks and the diaspora communities.

SOLO SHOW:

2020/

In search of our ancestors gardens, Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio, Milano.

RESIDENCY:

2020/

SEEDS FOR FUTURE MEMORIES in Tambacounda during Festival de l'union with Villa Romana in Florence and Thread Residency Sinthian, Senegal.

YGBI Residency, Black History Month, Florence.

WORKSHOP:

2019/

Workshop Q-rated Napoli, Quadriennale di Roma

2018/

Workshops with artists Daniela Ortiz and Gaëlle Choïsne 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.

2015/

"Codice Italia" directed by Nino Longobardi,
At the 56th Venice biennale.

GROUP SHOW:

2019/

Soil is an inscribed body, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin.

Artefici del nostro tempo, Centro culturale Candiani,
Venice.

Finalist at the Premio Nocivelli, Verolanuova, (BS)

2018/

Live performance with the artist Ibrahim Quraishi et Olani Ewunnet, Galerie Wedding, Berlin.

2017/

La Bellezza resta- Farfalle, Associazione Heart à Vimercate (MI).

2015/

Ricordando il futuro, Palazzo Grimani, Venice.

Artisti all'opera, Fonderia artistica M.A.F, Pioltello (MI)

ARTFAIRS:

2020/

Arte in Nuvola, Fiera di Roma, Rome.

TALKS:

2019/

Talk Conversation with the artist Carlos Martiel, FormeUniche, Milan.

2015/

"L'arte che non sembra: anche colorare è un modo per creare", La Lettura- Il Corriere, Milan.

Festival internazionale dei depuratori- Depur art in atto, Milan.

INTERNSHIP:

2013/

Internship in fashion design at Pino Grasso- Ricami di alta moda, Milan.

2017-2019/

MA, École d'art et de design de Grenoble-Valence, Grenoble.

INTERNSHIP:

Assistant and researcher at SAVVY CONTEMPORARY, Berlin.

2014-2017/

BACHELOR, Accademia di belle arti di Brera di Milano, Milan.

2009-2014/

HIGH SCHOOL, Liceo artistico Caravaggio, Milan.