

Grada Kilomba

Biography

Grada Kilomba (b. 1968, Lisbon, Portugal) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer born in Lisbon and living in Berlin. Her work draws on the repressed history of colonialism and its legacy on memory, trauma, race, gender, and knowledge production: 'who can speak?' 'what can we speak about?' and 'What happens when we speak?' are three constant questions in Kilomba's body of work.

She is best known for her subversive writing and her unconventional use of artistic practices, in which she gives body, voice and image to her own text, using a variety of formats such as Staged Reading, Performance, and Video Installation. In her work, Kilomba intentionally creates a hybrid space between the academic and the artistic languages, and uses storytelling as a central element for her decolonial practices.

Kilomba's work has been described to have the powerful beauty of touching 'the colonial wound' with a surgical precision, 'bringing a new, experimental and compelling voice to contemporary art and discourse' (ARTE Brasileiros 2016). She decolonises by subverting content, undoing standard practices and inventing new methods and places of expression. Kilomba entered the contemporary art world, in 2016, when she was invited and commissioned to develop a artwork for the 32. Bienal de São Paulo.

Her work has been presented internationally, including: 10. Berlin Biennale; Documenta 14, Kassel; 32. Bienal de São Paulo; Rauma Biennale Balticum; The Power Plant, Toronto; MAAT Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon; Galeria Avenida da Índia, Lisbon; WdW Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Secession Museum, Vienna; Bozar Museum, Brussels; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, among others.

With roots in Angola, São Tomé e Príncipe and Portugal, Kilomba studied Clinical Psychology and Psychoanalysis at the 'ISPA- Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada' in Lisbon. There, she worked in the psychiatry department with war survivors from Angola and Mozambique. Strongly influenced by the work of Frantz Fanon, Kilomba started writing, and developing projects on memory, trauma and colonialism, extending her concerns to form, language, and performance. Recognised for her academic excellence, Kilomba received a Ph.D. fellowship from the German Heinrich Böll Foundation, and moved to Berlin, where she attained a Doctorate in Philosophy (summa cum laude) from the Freie Universität Berlin, in 2008. Since 2004, She has been lecturing at several international universities, and last, was a Professor at the Humboldt Universität Berlin, Department of Gender Studies.

Her written work has been published in numerous international anthologies and translated into several languages. She is the author of *Plantation Memories* (2008) a compilation of episodes of everyday racism written in the form of short psychoanalytical stories, and released at the International Literature Festival, Berlin. And the co-editor of *Mythen, Subjekt und Masken* (2008), a pioneer anthology on Critical Whiteness.

In 2010, as part of her „Performing Knowledge“ project, Kilomba started experimenting with the performance of theoretical and political texts on stage. Particularly acclaimed became her staged reading „Plantation Memories“ (2012) based on her own book; and her lecture-performance "Decolonising Knowledge" (2013), a piece reflecting on the concepts of knowledge, race, gender, and violence: "What is acknowledged as knowledge? And what is not? Whose knowledge is this? And who is acknowledged to produce knowledge?"

She was invited by the Maxim Gorki Theatre, in Berlin, to develop the distinguished artist talk series 'Kosmos²' (2015-2017), a political intervention in the cultural discourse/ practice, in collaboration with refugee artists.

Since 2016 Kilomba is represented by the Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Solo Exhibitions

2018 *Secrets to Tell*, The Power Plant, Toronto

2018 *Speaking the Unspeakable*, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa

2017-2018 *The Most Beautiful Language*, Avenida da Índia Gallery, at the Municipal Galleries of Lisbon, Portugal

2017-2018 *Secrets to Tell*, MAAT - Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology, Lisbon, Portugal

2017 *The Most Beautiful Language*, Gallery Avenida da Índia, EGEAC, Lisbon

Group Exhibitions

2018 *The Black City, Glosses*, E-Flux Gallery and ParticipantInc., New York, USA

2018 *Do Silencio a Memoria*, Paco das Artes, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2018 *Frieze Art Fair*, London, UK

2018 *In Context: I was waiting for this Past*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2018 *Art Basel*, Switzerland

2018 *We don't need another hero*, 10. Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

2018 *Frameworks*, International Film festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands

2017 *Incerteza Viva - Live Uncertainty*, selected artist to represent the 32. Bienal de São Paulo, Centro Dragão do Mar de Arte e Cultura, Fortaleza, Brazil

2017 *3. Berliner Herbstsalon*, Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, Germany

2017 *The Silences Between*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2017 *Incerteza Viva - Live Uncertainty*, selected artist to represent the 32. Bienal de São Paulo, at the Palace of Arts, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

2017 *SouthSouth - Let Me Begin Again*, Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2016 *O futuro será uma réplica - The future will be a replica*, Consul of Portugal in São Paulo, Brazil

2016 *Incerteza Viva - Live Uncertainty*, 32. Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

2016 *Vulnerability*, Rauma Biennial Balticum, Rauma, Finland

2016 *Knowledge Unbounded*, Department of Arts and Aesthetics Exhibition, University of Stockholm, Stockholm, Sweden

2016 *Banquete Antropofágico - Anthropophagic Banquet*, Department of Contemporary Arts Exhibition, University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Teaching, Lectureships and Workshop

2017 Academy of Arts Berlin, Berlin, Germany

2017 Transmediale, House of the World Cultures, Berlin, Germany

2017 Art Fair Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

2017 Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, Germany

2016 AfroTranscendente, São Paulo, Brazil

2016 Goethe Institut Salvador da Bahia, Bahia, Brazil

2016 Berlin University of Arts - UdK, Berlin, Germany

2016 Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland

2016 Mousonturm House of Arts, Frankfurt, Germany

2016 University of Accra, Accra, Ghana

2016 Goethe Institut São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

2016 Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, Germany

2015 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Vienna, Austria

2015 Theatre Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin, Germany

2015 University of Linköping, Linköping, Sweden

2015 Free University Berlin, Berlin, Germany

2015 University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Holland

2015 University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

2015 Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, Germany

Awards and Merits

2018 Awarded by Frameworks at the international film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands

2016 Artist-in-Residence, Vila Sul, at the Goethe Institut Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

2016 Artist-in-Residence, Revolting Mass/Massa Revoltante, at the Goethe Institut São Paulo, Brazil

2015 Named a "Woman of Excellence" by the Sonne Magazine, Berlin, Germany

2011 Awarded as one of "The Most Inspirational Black Women in Europe" by the BWIE, Vienna, Austria

Academic Record and Residencies

1998 Degree on Clinical Psychology and Psychoanalysis, Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada, Lisbon, Portugal

2008 Ph.D., Doctorate on Philosophy, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Publications

2008 *Plantation Memories. Episodes of Everyday Racism* (5th Edition), Münster: Unrast Verlag
2005 *Mythen, Subjekt, Masken* (3rd Edition), Münster: Unrast Verlag (co-editor)

Performances

2017 Documenta 14, Kassel, Germany
2017 SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin, Germany
2017 Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa

2016 Teatro Vila Velha, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil
2016 32. Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
2016 Wits Theatre, Johannesburg, South Africa
2016 Theatre Münchner Kammerspiel, Munich, Germany
2016 Goethe Institut Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
2016 TheaterTreffen, Haus der Berliner Festspiele, Berlin, Germany
2016 Secession Museum Vienna, Vienna, Austria
2016 University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
2016 University of Accra, Accra, Ghana
2016 Mostra Internacional de Teatro em São Paulo
2016 Bozar Museum for Contemporary Arts, Brussels, Belgium
2016 SOAS University of London, London, UK

2015 Theatre Münchner Kammerspiel, Munich, Germany
2015 Antwerpen Museum, Antwerpen, Belgium
2015 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Vienna, Austria
2015 Theatre Maxim Gorki Theatre, Berlin, Germany
2015 International Arts Center José Guimarães, Guimarães, Portugal
2015 Theatre Ballhaus Naunynstrass, Berlin, Germany
2015 Oslo House of Literature, Oslo, Norway