



SCHLACHTENSEE

Ana Hupe

Women of the Fourth World

To be reborn from its own ashes,
the Phoenix must first burn. - Octavia E. Butler

The past is an abyss from which we can only perceive certain wrecks and simple – but crucial – genetic evidence. What made the first humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) leave Africa 70,000 years ago to walk the world? Of course, at the beginning of this journey is the Mitochondrial Eve, the matrilineal most recent common ancestor of modern humans. In primordial forms of kinship, gynocratic society¹ carried with it the power of community organization, which, by its mobility, and according to the unique origin hypothesis,² initiated a cycle of migratory flows that ended by expanding the occupation of modern humans on earth, replacing the other existing *homo* species.

Human populations continue in permanent displacement. In the installation *Women of the Fourth World* (2017), Ana Hupe portrays a contemporary community of women that has formed through a shared experience of having recently immigrated to a new country. Real and fictitious at the same time, this community was gathered by Ana Hupe through advertisements spread throughout the cities of São Paulo and Berlin, posters that looked to portray, in the first case, female African immigrants, and in the second case, female Latin American immigrants, in exchange for a small amount of remuneration.

Immigrants, nomads, expatriates, deportees, exiles, refugees, and the enslaved women: They all seem to merge under one same common denominator for those who fear newness, difference, and ‘the other.’ The claim that their bodies are fragile and their future is contemptuously precarious is intentionally misleading. Immigrants, as presented by Hupe, are not this ‘other’ from which the power of agency and enunciation is dismissed. Here, precariousness is reversed into the power to change reality.

In the installation, black and white portraits of immigrant women in São Paulo and Berlin seem to float in space hung away from the wall on metal plates. These photographs are in dialog with the *cartes-de-visite* tradition: a camera with four objective lenses was used to obtain, on the same negative, four independent photographs and thus multiply the number of cards. Albert Henschel, German photographer of the Brazilian court, applied the same technique in around 1850 to photograph royal members and people of African origin, free or enslaved, evading the usual exoticism by portraying them with the willpower of dignified subjects. In the case of Hupe, each portrait is, moreover, combined with written fragments taken from books found on erratic walks through the cities she has inhabited. Selected by the artist, these phrases construct a fable that unites origin and destiny, real and fictitious history.

¹ In a gynocratic society only the offspring in the maternal line are taken into account. Cf. C. Knight, ‘*Early human kinship was matrilineal*,’ in *Early Human Kinship*, N. J. Allen, H. Callan, R. Dunbar and W. James eds., Blackwell, Oxford, 2008, pp. 61–82.

² The unique origin hypothesis is the most accepted hypothesis within paleontology. It states that all human society descends from a single group of *Homo sapiens* who lived approximately 300 thousand years ago.



Women of the Fourth World, two-channel HD video installation, b&w, 16 min., installation view at São Paulo Museum of Image and Sound, part of Temporada de Projetos, Paço das Artes, 2017

EVE AND HER COMETS

Alongside the photographs, a two-channel video installation presents these same women reading and commenting on excerpts from the diary of the German naturalist Georg Heinrich Langsdorff and the biography of Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua, a native of Zoogoo kept as a slave in Brazil. By juxtaposing scenes of the women reading, the work reveals tensions that come from the meeting of multiple cultural perspectives. The historical distance of these texts, written in the nineteenth century, is updated and played with in the present, serving as a place for reflection on the current condition of migrant women.

The materiality of the artworks that comprise *Women of the Fourth World* – black and white photographs, photograms, videos, and LED lights – gives the installation an impression of a lost temporality between past and future. Aesthetic and poetic tendencies in the work become a futuristic fable in which a new cosmology is read: the tradition is allied to the DIY homemade technology; identity is constantly redefined in relation to time-space configurations. In this techno-poetic, the reality of the immigrant bodies, therefore, reconfigures a future on the margins of the narratives of the present.

Recidivist immigrant, Hupe integrates herself in her own fable with the sound installation *Lebensassistenz* (2017) (which roughly translates as *Assisted Living*). In it, the artist recounts her experience as a personal care assistant in Germany. The body put at the service of others, added to the already existing condition of vulnerability and foreignness, is the starting point for the abandonment and objectification of the body itself. The constantly subjugated work of the immigrant is, in contradiction, the driving force in most highly industrialized countries. This ambiguity generates, in both personal relations and in state policies, a mixture of repulsion and care and a combination of curiosity, prejudice, and racism.

The tactics of permanence and circulation in a world of increasingly closed barriers are presented with humor and legal impertinence in *White Marriage* (2017), a video that combines images of the performative binational wedding recorded at the opening of Hupe's exhibition in Berlin (which ironically took place April 1, 2017), with the narration of MC Xuparina (Marcela Maria, 1978 – 2016) on the use of marriage to obtain residence visas in European countries. The arbitrariness of procedures and the bureaucratic absurdity of the state machine are mocked by an action of solidarity that rehumanizes a society fragmented by the borders imposed by state capitalism.

In other works by Hupe, narratives are treated as individual threads that can be woven into unexpected new drawings for the patterns dictated by the unique line of colonialism. In *Leituras para mover o centro* (Readings to move the center, 2016), the artist builds a reading room as a meeting place where voices and stories that struggle against erasure emanate. Also in search of stories that resist and reverberate like echoes, the artist starts another project: *Muito futuro para uma só memória* (A lot of future for one single memory, 2017). Here, she goes to the backlands of Pernambuco (*sertão*) in search of fragments of the life of Maria Francisca da Conceição (unknown date of birth – 1961). As the artist enters, physically and poetically, a terrain that bears the marks of invisibility, racism, and social inequality, she touches on the harsh question of privilege and representation. Who has the right to tell his or her own story and to whom has the power to tell other people's stories been entrusted?

Hupe's aesthetic and political strategy is to hack history and formulate perspectives for a 'counter future' in a world hostile to autochthonous and afrodiasporic projections. The project questions white, patriarchal, and Western normativities and rationalism, which are the heirs of a Eurocentric Enlightenment that determined the development of science and technology. It therefore highlights the contradictions and omissions of history by offering new ways of elaborating on the present and the past in order to build a speculative fiction that brings together technology with myth, as well as collectivity with political power. Africa, its diaspora, and Latin America become an abundant source of possibilities for a future yet to be invented and not just the reminiscence of a failed colonial past. To symbolically rediscover the Mitochondrial Eve and her communal and matriarchal cosmology is, therefore, to sit in the comet of a non-linear time-space, to reaffirm the flow as a human condition and the exchange of barter as a factor in adaptation and learning.



Women of the Fourth World, at MIS, Sao Paulo, BR. Part of Temporada de Projetos - Paço das Artes, 2017. Black and white Photos (Analog print), 184 steel plates, 10 x 12 cm, magnets and nails.



Lebensassisten, 2017, 7 photograms, 24 x 30 cm, installation view at Galerie Mario Kreuzberg, Berlin

Ge(du)ld
du Geld

THE RETURN OF
THE BODY THAT KNOWS



Geduld Geduld
Ge
(du) ld Geld du
Gelduld

HOMO LABORANS
PRIMACY OF WORK OVER ALL OTHER FORMS OF ACTIVITY

ARTISANAL
UTOPIAS



What language do you use to communicate
to each other?

Who cooks the meals?

What are the full names of your parent-in-laws?

Who buys the groceries?

Do you have the same friends?
If so, please give their full names.

How often do you phone each other?

What did you do last weekend?

Do you have any photos together?



White



White Marriage, 2017, Ana Hupe and Manuela Morales, film still, HD video, 11 min., color, sound



Marriage

I AM NOT THINKING OF

CHOOSING,

BECAUSE I AM NOT IN MY HOME COUNTRY.



Winnifred, as described by Weston, a white man, seemed like slaves of their husbands.



They are not accepted here. But in Africa, your documents will be accepted there.



All the same, they are not accepted here. Africa made me.



This is absurd here, where most of the population is Black.



... and with peaceful intentions slowly civilize them.



and with peaceful intentions slowly civilize them.



and have to pass their lives hidden at home.



... and, despite their faces covered with shawls, they are quite flirtatious.



and, despite their faces covered with shawls, they are quite flirtatious.



All the judges, from 12 on, and also the stubborn and quarrelsome wives are locked in an isolated house.



I DON'T KNOW HOW THE WORK SYSTEM WORKS.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WOMEN ARE DESCRIBED AS SERVICES.

“AVOIDING TO LOOSE NOBLE BLOOD WITH MIXED MARRIAGES.”

I JUST WANT WHAT IS MINE AS A RIGHT.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

HERE IN EUROPE I NEED TO HAVE ANOTHER IDENTITY.

ALL THE TIME I LIVED IN EUROPE, I NEVER CONNECTED AFRICA AND EUROPE INSIDE ME.

... BECAUSE YOU ONLY SERVE TO REPRODUCE.

“AND WITH PEACEFUL INTENTIONS SLOWLY CIVILIZE THEM.”

“ONLY THE MEN SAT AT THE TABLE.”

FILM CREDITS BERLIN:

Director: Ana Hupe
Cinematography: Johannes Förster
Edition: Ana Hupe and Barbara Marcel
Production: Manuela Morales
Extracts from the texts:
1. 'Os diários de Langsdorff, volume II,' São Paulo (26 de agosto de 1825 a 22 de novembro de 1826).
Editors: Boris N. Komissarov, Hans Becher, Paulo Masuti Levy, Danuzio Gil. B da Silva, Marcos P. Braga.
2. 'Bemerkungen über Brasilien mit gewissenhafter Belehrung für auswandernde Deutsche,' Georg Heinrich Langsdorff, 1821.

FILM CREDITS SÃO PAULO:

Director: Ana Hupe
Cinematography: Ana Hupe and Janaína Miranda
Edition: Ana Hupe
Production: Camila Terra Rodrigues
Extracts from the text 'Biografia e narrativa do ex-escravo afro-brasileiro Mahommah Gardo Baquaquá,' 1845.



Women of the Fourth World, detail, installation view at Cafuné, Berlin

IMPRINT

Ana Hupe
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