

Friday, 4 June 2021, 13:00 - 18:00 (CET)

'Cause I'll never change all my colours for you

*Whitney Houston, I Have Nothing. 1993*

Play-White: Racial Passing and Embodied Images, gathers experts, artists, activists and researchers around the theme of image-making in racial passing to ask the following questions: What are the conditions of racial passing when looking at topics such as colonial trade routes, embodiment, shame, class betrayal, code-switching and performativity? What does historical and zoomorphic research bring to our current understanding of racial identity, ethnicity, social class or gender?

The concept of passing highlights the constructed nature of race and how images are complicit in producing aesthetic thresholds of identity. Knowingly or unknowingly the passer transgresses these identity boundaries. Through personal, historical and zoomorphic research new perspectives on loaded concepts such as image-making and racial passing are proposed in breaking with concepts such as taxonomy and categorisation.

Contributions by Bianca Baldi, POOL (Amy Watson and Mika Conradie), Shoniqua Roach, Sinethemba Twalo, Zayaan Khan, Kate Strain and Pieterneel Vermoortel

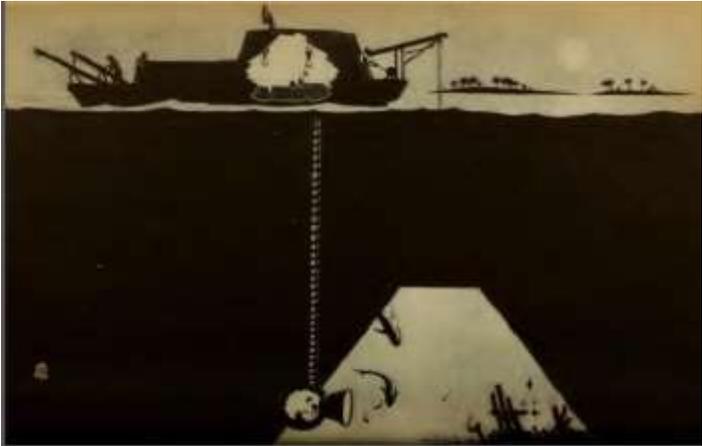
This symposium is a one-day online event hosted by Bianca Baldi with Sint Lucas School of Arts Antwerp, ARIA (Antwerp University), Grazer Kunstverein and Netwerk Aalst. This symposium coincides with a solo exhibition of Bianca Baldi's work at the Grazer Kunstverein, Austria and the launch of an accompanying artist's book published by K. Verlag, Berlin. The conference takes place within the framework of Netwerk Aalst's programme The Astronaut Metaphor.

Registration Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_LxlaHz5BTP2dXr9oQviwCQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LxlaHz5BTP2dXr9oQviwCQ)

**Symposium Opening**

13:00 – 13:30 Bianca Baldi  
*Keynote: Play-White*

13:30-14:45 Amy Watson & Mika Conradie (POOL)  
*Lecture: Remote Ocean: Staging Encounters*



Chair: Verena Borecky

**Reencounter: Descent**

14:45 - 15:30 Zayaan Khan  
*Presentation: Cuttlefish Bone*



Chair: Pieterneel Vermoortel

15:30-15:45	<b>Break</b>
15:45-16:30	<p data-bbox="397 317 602 342">Sinethemba Twalo</p> <p data-bbox="397 384 919 409"><i><b>Sonic Lecture: An Accumulation of Uncertainties</b></i></p> <p data-bbox="397 451 1438 636">The video of the performance begins with an extreme close up of Simone’s portrait. Her facial expressions are pensive and broody. Her eyes (like dark pools of uncertainty) gaze solemnly into the distance, threatening to divulge the machinations that torment her evasive sanity. The glance gestures elsewhere - to an (im)possibility perhaps. Her eyes marked with a thick black liner, profess a longing. They attest to a lingering absence that seems to also assail the observer. Her subsequent presence, and the posture it bears, relates a certain impertinence.</p> <p data-bbox="397 678 1438 959">Simone’s demeanour, iterates and re-iterates, to quote Saidiya Hartman (2019:1) “the plot of her undoing”. Hartman states: “the plot of her undoing begins with the man, the sovereign, the subject, the self-possessed, the able-bodied, the reasonable, the gendered, the neurotypical, it begins with the vertical hierarchy of life, with the uneven distribution of death, with the announcement “I think” and “I am” and “I own” and “I will,” with the possessive my and mine, with therefore and hereafter, with future increase, with the sanctity of property, with the map of the territory, with the deed that says get the hell out and affirms that there is no place for her anywhere, with the court order that declares her a squatter and a trespasser, with the mortgage for mud people, with the eviction, with no human involved”.</p> <p data-bbox="397 1001 1438 1220">The camera’s gaze studies Simone’s every expression. She begins. Nina plays a note on the piano, articulating one word: “Feelings”, before pausing. As she continues, the viscerality of her sonicity and cadence register a moment of doubt. Her brows furrow, albeit, she continues on. Within this moment of confusion, a statement is uttered: “I do not believe the conditions that produced a situation that demanded a song like that”. Her performance, untethered from the savagery of propriety, vacillates between a realisation of loss, to an understanding of the capacity of structures of feeling to impel a (be)coming otherwise.</p> <p data-bbox="397 1257 683 1283">Chair: Petra Van Brabandt</p>
<b>Finale: Acceptance</b>	
16:30 - 17:15	<p data-bbox="397 1430 574 1455">Shoniqua Roach</p> <p data-bbox="397 1497 1065 1522"><i><b>Lecture: Feel Free: Or, An Ode to Black Mothers in Three Parts</b></i></p> <ol data-bbox="397 1564 764 1656" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Patti LaBelle, If Only You Knew</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Lauryn Hill, To Zion</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Megan Thee Stallion, Outside</a></li> </ol> <p data-bbox="397 1694 602 1719">Chair: Bianca Baldi</p>
17:15-18:00	<b>Panel discussion, questions</b>

## BIOS

### **Sinethemba Twalo**

In their ongoing research on sonic cultures, Sinethemba Twalo uses recorded interviews, archival recordings, soundscapes and fictional accounts to reflect on an emergent poetics of the end. (un)necessary Instructions for an emotional insurgency is the title of a series of performative gestures, Twalo has been presenting which interrogate the affective present. The works are interested in the performative nature of language, the politics of noise, and that which has been marked by time and affect. They are a founding member of NGO- NOTHING GETS ORGANISED. Sinethemba was a 2014 Humanities fellow of the Akademie Schloss Solitude. Twalo has contributed and/ or presented work in various platforms including the 10th Berlin Biennale (2018), The 2018 Taktlos Free Jazz festival in Zurich, the 3rd Black History Month Florence (2018), the 32nd Sao Paulo Biennial Public Programme (2016) and the 8th Jerusalem Show (2016) amongst others. Twalo is a graduate of the MAPS programme at the Ecole Cantonale d'art du Valais in Sierre, Switzerland. They are a PhD candidate in Art History at the SARCHI Chair in South African Art and Visual Culture at the University of Johannesburg. Sinethemba is Curator of Public Engagement at the Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria.

### **Zayaan Khan**

Zayaan Khan works as an artist using the local urban and ecological relationship/s to understand the elements that build ecosystems. Through curiosity, research, experimentation and engagement, her work finds a resting place through food as a means of understanding the world, particularly seed, land (and sea) and our collective heritage. Influenced by tradition, both inherited and the creation of new ones, reclaiming culture and reviving tradition through progressive interpretation in order to enact a listening of the future and a steady present survivalism. She is currently completing her PhD on our relationship with seeds through the Environmental Humanities South at UCT.

### **Shoniqa Roach**

Shoniqa Roach (PhD Northwestern) is a Black Queer Feminist Writer and assistant professor of African and African American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Brandeis University. Her peer-reviewed work appears or is forthcoming in Feminist Theory, The Black Scholar, Signs: journal of women in culture and society, differences: a journal of feminist cultural studies, Feminist Formations, Journal of American Culture, antipode: a radical journal of geography, and Feminist Studies. She is currently at work on her book manuscript, Black Dwelling: Home-Making and Erotic Freedom, an intellectual and cultural history of the ways in which Black homes have been tragic sites of state invasion, as well as paradigmatic entry-points for Black women artists, activists, and intellectuals to imagine, rehearse, and enact Black erotic freedom. Her research has been supported by an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) fellowship and the Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. She sits on the editorial board of Signs: a journal of Women in Culture and Society.

### **POOL (Amy Watson & Mika Conradie)**

Mika Conradie is a writer and curator. She has produced curatorial, editorial and research projects for and with the Market Photo Workshop, Lagos Photo Festival, Jakarta Biennale, Re-Directing East at CCA Ujazdowski Castle, the Johannesburg Contemporary Art Foundation and the GALA Queer Archive. She is a founding director of POOL.

Amy Watson is an independent curator and a founding director of POOL, a Johannesburg based not-for-profit art organisation supporting artists through collaboration, commissioning, and the production and presentation of new work. Most recently she curated the exhibitions How ToDisappear (2020) and Soft Architectures (2019) at Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg and Cape Town. In 2017 she curated the exhibition Ângela Ferreira: South Facing at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. She is a 2016 fellow of the Gwangju Biennale Curator Course and a 2015 fellow of the Glasgow International Curatorial Exchange. Watson holds an MFA in Curatorial Practice, Goldsmiths College, University of London and an MAFA from The University of the Witwatersrand.

### **Bianca Baldi**

Bianca Baldi is an artist based in Brussels. In her work she deals with the role of narrative as a means of knowledge production in both fictional and historical contexts. She is interested in the staging of identity and history and explores these themes in photography, film, writing and publishing, which she often combines in the exhibition format as installations. Her work has been featured in large international exhibitions such as the 11th African Biennial of Photography (Bamako), the 11th Shanghai Biennale, the 8th Berlin Biennale of Contemporary Art and group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Bern, Extra City Kunsthal Antwerp, Kunstverein Braunschweig and Kunstverein Frankfurt. Recent solo exhibitions include Versipellis at Superdeals in Brussels (2018), Eyes in the Back of Your Head at Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof (2017) and Pure Breaths at Swimming Pool in Sofia (2016). Her forthcoming publication Play-White is published by K Verlag and co-edited by Netwerk Aalst and Grazer Kunstverein. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in 2007 from the Michaelis School of Fine Art in Cape Town, South Africa and

completed her studies at the Städelschule in Frankfurt. She is currently doing a PhD at Sint Lucas School of Arts Antwerp / ARIA (UA).