

@dagp

Pour le droit des artistes

la culture avec  
la copie privée

Euridice Zaituna Kala, © Adagp, Paris, 2020



## ***I, the Archive***

**Euridice Zaituna Kala**

from 09.19 to 12.19.2020

Villa Vassilieff

**Opening : 09.19.2020, 2pm - 8pm**

Press breakfast : 09.18.2020, at 9am

In September 2020, the artist Euridice Zaituna Kala takes over the space of Villa Vassilieff with the exhibition *I, the Archive*. Under the fellowship initiated on the occasion of the ADAGP - Villa Vassilieff research grant. This project takes as its starting point the archives of the Marc Vaux collection kept at the Centre Pompidou. Kala was invited to consult this archive and the artist immersed herself in it in search of familiar figures by intersecting her personal memories with constructed references.

On a proposal by Mélanie Bouteloup ; Curated by Camille Chenais ; Actor-actresses : Salomon Mbala Metila, Lou Justine Moua Nedellec, Louna Philip ; Sound engineer : Marion Leyrahoux ; Seamstress : Carla Magnier ; Recording studio : Time-Line Factory, Valentin Gueriot ; Handler : Romain Gâteau

Euridice Zaituna Kala's project *I, The Archive* is supported by the ADAGP - Villa Vassilieff scholarship, in partnership with the Kandinsky Library, MNAM-CCI, Centre-Pompidou.

1. Ann Cvetkovich in Tammy Rae Carlan and Ann Cvetkovich, “Sharing an Archive of Feelings: A Conversation”, *Art Journal* 72, n°2 (Summer 2013), accessed on August 31, 2020: <http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=3960>

2. A former carpenter who retrained as a photographer after being injured in the First World War, Marc Vaux photographed more than 6,000 French and international artists, their work and workshops in Montparnasse and Paris. Vaux shot more than 127,000 photographs during a career that spanned from the 1920s to the 1970s.

3. Euridice Kala and Lucy Cotter, “Becoming the Archive: A Dialogue with Euridice Kala.” *MaHKUscript: Journal of Fine Art Research*, 2017, 2(1): p.6, accessed on August 31, 2020: <https://doi.org/10.5334/mjfar.27>

4. Frédéric Worms, “Vivre avec ou sans les images : quelle différence ?” in Dork Zabunyan (dir.), *Les images manquantes*, Les Carnet du Bal n°3, Paris, Éditions Le Bal, Textuel, CNAP, 2012, p.13

5. Euridice Zaituna Kala, July 29, 2020, conversation with the author.

6. Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, Paris, Le Seuil 1971, reprint collection “Points Histoire”, 1996, p.26

7. Muriel Rukeyser, written at the end of a note to the initial publication of *U.S. 1* (1938), Editions Convici/Friede

Euridice Zaituna Kala is the archive. The archive is enmeshed in the pores of her skin, the folds of her memory and her recollections of meetings, texts and journeys. Invited by the ADAGP (Association for the Development of the Graphic and Visual Arts), Villa Vassilieff and Bibliothèque Kandinsky to work with the Marc Vaux collection<sup>2</sup>, Euridice Zaituna Kala has herself become the archive. Euridice has enthusiastically taken on this new role by searching for familiar figures from her memories and personal set of references: *Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, her father Getulio Mario Kala...* By becoming the archive, Euridice gathers, sorts and interprets information according to its affective value rather than its historical relevance. Becoming the archive means reclaiming power by writing history free of institutional norms. It means shedding light on people and geographical areas who have been deliberately excluded from historical accounts and giving visibility to groups of people who have been forgotten by hegemonic narratives. “*I became this other power that was going to foreground whatever I wanted and however I wanted to portray it, regardless of how it has been established in existing archives*”<sup>3</sup>. By approaching the archive through her individual subjectivity and focusing on people she is intimately connected to, the artist attempts to develop a plural, personal and deviant manner of recounting history.

As Euridice browsed the Marc Vaux collection, certain photographs caught her eye: a portrait of the Black model Aïcha Goblet, sketches of Josephine Baker by Jean de Botton and two portraits of unknown nude Black models. The artist was drawn to these familiar bodies which resembled her own. Euridice reflected on these bodies’ presence in these photographs and their absence from the archives from which monolithic narratives of modern art have been constructed. Rather than reproducing these photographs in her exhibition, the artist instead chose to use narration to draw attention to the bodies frozen and framed in these images – trapped by the projections and fantasies of others.

Euridice Zaituna Kala is also interested in absent images: those that have gone missing, those never taken by Marc Vaux, those that have never been located. Who misses these missing images? How did they go missing? Do they exist somewhere else other than in the Vaux photographs? The Marc Vaux archives are a mammoth collection. They contain more than 127,000 photographs and feature more than 5,000 listed artists and 11,000 boxes of glass plate negatives. Usually praised for their breadth and comprehensiveness, Euridice demonstrates that, like any archive, the Vaux collection is defined by its creator’s subjectivity and material constraints. Figures like Ernest Mancoba, Gerard Sekoto, James Baldwin and Katherine Dunham do not feature in the collection. “*There are no missing images unless someone is missing them*”<sup>4</sup>. Someone must miss these images for their absence to be noticed. History sorts between the remembered and the forgotten. “*In Paris*”, Euridice told me, “*images were sorted by erasing Black bodies. Now, I have a utopian dream of redressing this imbalance by putting these bodies back into the archive that erased them*”<sup>5</sup>.

Paul Veyne described history as “*patchwork knowledge*” or “*mutilated knowledge*”<sup>6</sup> due to the scarcity of archives and sources. Yet, history often states, delimits and orders things or sets facts in stone. Here, instead, Kala chooses to ground her exhibition in doubt, uncertainty and interpretation. Absence becomes tangible, visible and audible. Absence also becomes fiction. Voices guide visitors as they walk through the exhibition. This sound piece, written by Euridice Zaituna Kala, blends references to Marc Vaux’s photographs and other photographs with mentions of Black historical figures who spent time in Paris and autofiction based on her own experiences as a Black, Mozambican, African and migrant woman. The piece is a sensorial narrative inspired by Léopold Sédar Senghor’s *Royaume d’enfance* (Kingdom of Childhood). Senghor used this image to describe his attempts to recreate the lost paradise of his childhood in his poetry by rediscovering the power of a child’s imagination. Fiction fills the gaps in archives and joins the dots between partial historical records. “*Poetry can extend the document*”<sup>7</sup>. Bodiless narrators give a voice to Marc Vaux’s voiceless images, whispering a story

that blends different periods, characters and continents. The narrative mixes Mozambique and Paris; the artist's family history with Marc Vaux's family history; and the past with the present. It reflects on the difficulty of accessing archives and the challenges of appropriating them.

The voices in the exhibition are accompanied by sculptures and visual forms. The space is bathed in coloured lights. One particular material – glass – is particularly prominent in the exhibition space. Euridice Zaituna Kala's glasswork allows her to develop a quasi-physical connection with Vaux's archive, by reusing the material the photographer used to create the images in his collection: the negatives from Marc Vaux's view camera are mounted on glass plates. Euridice has engraved and drawn her own images and memories on rectangular pieces of glass that resemble those from the archive, as if adding to Vaux's collection by reinserting bodies that were excluded from it. However, the artist chooses to work on the glass with materials that fade over time or disappear, highlighting the fragility of our archives and the precariousness of our attempts to record our histories. Glass, as a material, exemplifies this fragility: how many negatives must have been lost by falling or through other accidents?

Elsewhere in the exhibition space, Euridice's glass silhouettes subtly recall the nude Black bodies in the archive. These bodies include a model shot by Vaux, a child immortalised by Ricardo Rangel and a male figure sculpted by Max Le Verrier and photographed by Vaux. Euridice makes these people whose names have been lost present in the space but does not expose them to the viewer. Their transparent silhouettes make the shapes of their bodies difficult to discern – as if they were present in negative. The artist uses these sculptures to question how Black bodies have been appropriated by various forms of representation. How can we rewrite the history of bodies when their images only persist through the gaze of the other? How can we once again give these bodies control of their own representation and return to them the privacy that photography has stripped them of? Rather than reappropriating their histories, Euridice affirms their existence. Further on in the space, the artist cuts up silhouettes of Josephine Baker's banana belt and the profile of Black model Aïcha Goblet in mirror aluminium panels. These women who embodied Western fantasies become mirrors showing visitors their own reflections, symbolising the projections and expectations that have been imposed on these bodies since the 1920s.

Euridice often told me that she imagined this exhibition as a dance with Marc Vaux, in which each partner takes turns at guiding the other. This dance takes place in a permeable space where the archives and the artist mutually influence one another. The artist is shaped by the photographs from the archive she questions in her work. The archive is altered by the gaze of the artist and in turn shapes the perceptions of visitors. Gazes leave a trace on their objects. Patrimony and archives are not sealed and demarcated spaces. They are meant to be questioned, appropriated and reworked. Visitors are, in turn, invited to become the archive – to construct and rewrite their own history. "*I am the archive; you are the archive*<sup>8</sup>."

Camille Chenais

Translation from French: Michael Angland

Euridice Zaituna Kala is a Mozambican artist based in Paris. Her artistic work focuses on cultural and historical metamorphoses, its manipulations and adaptations. The artist seeks to highlight the multiplicity of historical periods and social relations within the African continent which is at the heart of her reflections. These narratives take place in spaces of departures, encounters... in the form of installations, performances, images and books.

Euridice Zaituna Kala was trained in photography at the Market Photo Workshop (MPW-2012) in Johannesburg. She has participated in several collective exhibitions including the 1st edition of the Stellenbosh Triennial (2020), the second edition of the Lagos Biennial (2019), *Hubert Fichte : Love and Ethnology* at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2019-2020), the 14th Fellbach Triennial for Small Sculpture: *40,000 - A Museum of Curiosity* (2019), *The Power from Within*, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec (2018), *Mistake! Mistake! Said the Rooster... and stepped down from the Duck*, Lumiar Cité, Lisbon (2017), *Infecting the City*, Cape Town (2017) and *(Co) Habitar*, Casa de America Latina, Lisbon (2017). Her many performances include *Mackandal Turns into a Butterfly: a love potion*, La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec (2018) and *Euridice Kala Shows and Doesn't Tell*, galerie Saint-Séverin, Paris (2018).

She has been nominated for the SAM Art Projects Award (2018) and the François Schneider Foundation's Contemporary Talent Award (2018).

She is also the founder and co-organizer of *e.a.s.t. (Ephemeral Archival Station)*, a laboratory and platform for long-term artistic research projects, established in 2017.

Euridice Zaituna Kala. *Will see you in december... Tomorrow*. Installation, mixed techniques, variable dimensions, Museo di arte, Maputo, Mozambique, 2014.  
Image : Euridice Zaituna Kala © Adagp, Paris, 2020







Euridice Zaituna Kala, *I have changed in every way, way of it - #2*, Various woods, mirrors, paintings, lemon, 180 x 60 cm, 2018 - Cac-La Galerie, Noisy-le-Sec, Velvet, Thrones, Love. Image : Pierre Antoine, © Adagp, Paris, 2020



Euridice Zaituna Kala, *Medicine as Trees*, Installation of 3 LED billboards, MAGCP International Artist Residences, Cajaro, France, 2018. Image : Yohann Gozare © Adagp, Paris, 2020

ABOUT ADAGP - VILLA  
VASSILIEFF GRANT

**ADAGP & Villa Vassilieff**, sharing common vocations - working closely with artists, highlighting visual heritages and art history - co-created a research program that aims at developing the work of an artist on the circulation and reproduction of images, in relation to the research on the **Marc Vaux archive led with Centre Pompidou**.

This research grant enables artists to undertake the production of new works in a context favorable to the dissemination of knowledge. This program is conceived as an artistic research platform dedicated to the experimentation of non-linear models of knowledge production and distribution between researchers, contemporary artists, associations, cultural institutions and the general public.

This research grant is designed to enable an artist to develop a work over a period of several months (up to 12 months) around questions of **representation, production and circulation of images**. These reflections may be in the field of art (rereading art history, exploring neglected and marginalized life paths, reflection on the very making of images, ...) but also in the broader field of image production in a world saturated with information (political, economic, scientific, journalistic, ...).

ABOUT MARC VAUX

A former carpenter who took up photography after being injured in the First World War, Marc Vaux began in the 1920s to carry his photographic chamber around the various artist studios of Montparnasse and Paris. By the early 1970s he had produced over 127,000 photographs. The study of this collection, which is now housed at the Centre Pompidou and whose digitisation has just been completed, makes it possible to draw up a portrait of Paris as a creative centre with a hybrid and transnational language, nourished by individual histories or political and artistic commitments too often blended into the linearity of the official narratives of a homogenous modernity.

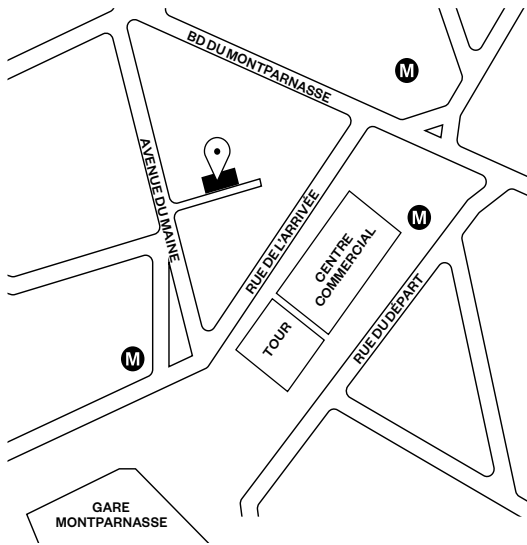
ABOUT ADAGP

Founded in 1953 by artists, ADAGP represents more than 190,000 authors around the world, in all disciplines of the visual arts: painting, sculpture, photography, design, comics, street art, video art, digital art, architecture... At the heart of an international network of 50 sister societies, ADAGP collects and distributes artists' rights, protects them and fights for the improvement of copyright. Today it is the world's leading visual arts authors' society.

ADAGP encourages the creative scene by initiating and/or financially supporting projects that enhance the value of the visual arts and promote them nationally and internationally.

Villa Vassilieff is run by Bétonsalon - Center for Art and Research. It manages two sites: Bétonsalon - Centre d'art et de recherche and the Villa Vassilieff, two cultural organizations of the City of Paris, labeled Centre d'art contemporain d'intérêt national by the ministry of Culture.

Villa Vassilieff, located in Montparnasse aims to reconnect with its history of an old artist's studio by inviting artists and researchers to take a contemporary look at this heritage. The programme of Villa Vassilieff is dedicated to un-explored resources and aims to rewrite and diversify the history of art. Villa Vassilieff leads a residency program dedicated to four international artists, researchers and curators every year.



BÉTONSALON —  
CENTRE D'ART  
ET DE RECHERCHE  
VILLA VASSILIEFF

**Villa Vassilieff**  
21 av. du Maine 75015 Paris  
tél. : +33.1.43.25.88.32  
info@villavassilieff.net

Free admission from Wednesday to Saturday from 11am to 7pm  
Group visits are free upon registration.  
All activities offered at Villa Vassilieff are free of charge.

**Access :**  
Métro line 4, 6, 12 et 13 : Montparnasse - Bienvenüe  
(Sortie 2 - Place Bienvenüe)

Find all the programming of  
the Villa Vassilieff on social networks:



Bétonsalon - Center for Art and Research & Villa Vassilieff are supported by the City of Paris, the Île-de-France Regional Board of Cultural Affairs – Ministry of Culture and Communication, the France Region, and the Paris Diderot University.

Bétonsalon – Center for Art and Research & Villa Vassilieff are members of d.c.a. / association française de développement des centres d'art, Tram, réseau art contemporain Paris/ Île de France, and of Arts en résidence - Réseau National.

Bétonsalon - Center for Art and Research & Villa Vassilieff are cultural institutions of the city of Paris, certified institutions of national interest by the Ministry of Culture.

Villa Vassilieff is supported by :



Île de France



Press contact **Villa Vassilieff** :

Press contact **ADAGP** :



Amélie Coutures  
Communications and  
outreach officer  
Villa Vassilieff

Marlène Chalvin  
Communication Manager  
ADAGP

d.c.a

TRAM



tél. +33.1.43.25.88.32  
ameliecoutures@villavassilieff.net

tel. +33.1.73.79.56.41  
marlene.chalvin@adagp.fr