

« **F(r)ictions of Intimacy** »

A group exhibition curated by Caroline Honorien

**with Mélissa Airaudi, Thelma Cappello, Soñ Gweha,
Roy Köhnke, Luna Mahoux and Pol Taburet**

Opening, Friday, January 26, 2024

Exhibition from January 27 to March 24, 2024

Open according to Café du Loup opening hours, closed on Mondays

Guided tour bookable by email at calm.centreartlameute@gmail.com Invited

An invitation by Oriane Emery & Jean-Rodolphe Petter

CALM - Centre d'Art La Meute invites **Caroline Honorien**, curator, art critic and independent publisher based in Paris. We are pleased to give her carte blanche for the third exhibition in the 2023/2024 program, entitled "Is there anything more thrilling than writing our own story? F(r)ictions of Intimacy is a group show featuring works by **Mélissa Airaudi, Thelma Capello, Soñ Gweha, Roy Köhnke, Luna Mahoux and Pol Taburet**. The exhibited artists live and work in the Paris region.

F(r)ictions: through and against*
Caroline Honorien

F(r)ictions of Intimacy is an exhibition that sets in motion a series of relationships. First and foremost, it is an attempt to exorcise a text that has been with me since its publication in 2019, and to which I keep returning, having long since taken the risk of pulling and distorting its proposition.

The exhibition takes its title from a (quasi-)eponymous book by Keguro Macharia. The Kenyan author proposes a reflection on rubbing from an Afrodiasporic and queer perspective. As the author reminds us, rubbing is both a plastic practice (to which the Surrealists gave their name last century) and an erotic one. But this eroticism is not only that of sexual relations, it is also that of poetry and transmission, to which Audre Lorde urges us. Macharia, no doubt also haunted by spectral texts, conjures up an episode from Alex Haley's *Roots* in his introduction. This book, which has also been adapted into a series, recounts the fate of Kunta Kinte, an African captive who became a slave in the United States and whom Haley claims is his ancestor. The passage reported by Macharia describes Kunta Kinte's transshipment. Allong in the darkness of a ship's hold, he hears the rales of pain and murmurs of revolt from his fellow slaves. He feels them, his skin against theirs, all bound by iron chains that damage and wound their flesh. In this "monstrous promiscuity" "As Macharia tells us, the modalities of a haptic rubbing unfold: through and against bodies, spaces, geographies and temporalities, relationships are forged.

On the face of it, the concerns of the artists in this exhibition may seem far removed from those of Macharia. Yet it updates the haptic grammar of minority relations.

*original version in French

I met Luna Mahoux after writing to her on Instagram because I'd missed her exposition at Treize (Paris). I wanted to understand how she articulated what appeared to me to be an interest in Afrodiasporic popular visual culture and music. I immersed myself with her in the blue light of her computer. As she scrolled through the archive of videos and photos she'd been assembling on the Internet since she was 10, I plunged with her into the blue of her computer screen. We moved through the important images of her life, those that have enabled her to build an intimate link with the black diaspora. As we moved along, I rediscovered moments that had made an impression on me or that I remembered more vaguely from Meek Mill rap freestyles to Black Lives Matter images and dance memories. In Luna's mouth and eyes, all these images that she re- and de-contextualizes are supported by their sometimes joyful or serious, always critical thickness. Behind an image of embrace, it's mourning that shines through, mourning. The light of a flash that burns its PVC tarpaulin protects the bodies with their opacity, as if to obey the injunction of the Black Lives Matter slogan inscribed on a cap.

It took me a few years to meet Roy. But his work has stayed with me ever since I first saw it at the Cité des Arts in Paris. His open, clinical flesh, a mass of plaster, tube and steel, was imprinted on my retina. They came back to me time and again, when I thought of the vulnerability of bodies that escaped norms, of those that we wanted to constrain, of those who had to invent new ways of being, of constructing themselves, of giving themselves to be read or refused. From a speculative and queer perspective, this work was both a counterpoint to and a crossroads for my own questioning of the subject of black (and queer) bodies, and of sensual, communal, elective or pirate (some might say "fugitive") relationalities. With their assembled and segmented exoskeletons, ringed and pitted with rust, Roy Köhnke's bodies redouble Karen Barad's question: when we touch "what is the distance that [...] separates? What is the measure of proximity?"

Over the years, Thelma Cappello and I have crossed different spaces: Paris 14, Noisy- Le-Sec, La Drôme. It was in the south of France that she read me an alternative version of the poem that assembles the words that resonate in this space. I had just explained to her how geographical and temporal rubbings, the way they enabled us to slide from one space-time to another, occupied the space of an article I was trying to write on time and (in particular) music. She told me about the place of wandering in her sound practice, and how it had given her a taste for field recording. We talked about vinyl and cassette tapes, black and brown, and how Louis Sude-Chokei and Arthur Jaffa had turned them into mediums that completed the atomization of the black body by technology, separating it from its voice and turning it into a consumable object. And yet, charged with emancipatory politics according to the hands that touch and assemble them. Rather than field recordings taken in nature or urban spaces, she sometimes proposes an ambiante tape with organic echoes that she has reconstituted from synthetic experiments and memories. A proposal recorded on cassette tapes that become damaged and distorted as words and time pass.

During the preparatory phases of the exhibition, as we worked with the artists to define their needs and consider the space, a friction emerged: the works by Soñ and Thelma both required open sound (without headphones). Together and through conversation, we tried to think how the audio of the works could have blended.

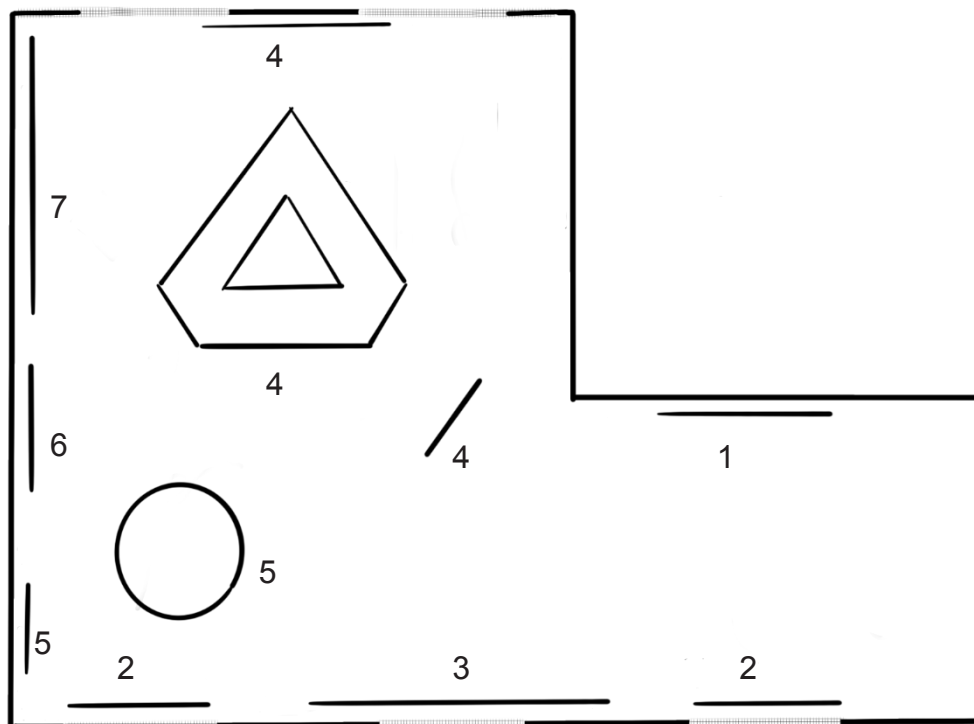
This attempt proved unsuccessful once in space. It was only after much discussion between Soñ and Thelma that the face-to-face solution was chosen. A solution that allows Thelma's open sound to plunge into Soñ's images, before immersing itself in the soundtrack of her video. In this anecdote, words, attentions and gestures undoubtedly characterize Soñ Gweha's artistic project just as much as the meditation he offers with Riding Apex: a visual artist and DJ, his production mobilizes speculation, seeks to bring collective spaces to the surface, spaces that can be invested with confidence, and rest there.

For just over a year, Pol and I occupied two adjoining studio spaces. To reach his studio, you had to pass through a curtain. I watched him emerge from the black surface of these paintings, the iridescent, magical figures that haunt and seem to move from one painting to another, like so many discreet, monstrous figures. Black figures, at once stars in the sky and reflections of water waves, recall the magico-religious soukougnan ("monsters of the night") of Guadeloupe. Black bodies like stars, hiding from us as they spy on us. Some « monstrous flesh" that refuses to perform and draws us into Baconian worlds, disquieting and sharp with their vivid, primary colors.

My words and Mélissa Airaudi's images coexist silently a few pages apart in a book published following an exhibition held at Mécènes du Sud in 2021. I knew her work only through the descriptions and images I had been given, until I finally saw a performance. Her work around narratives and archetypes, in particular around black and female bodies, immediately caught my eye: her perspective on the persistence and re-actualization of these images is delightfully (im)relevant in a world of social networks and screens like ours. Above all, his work reflects on performance in all its dimensions: the frictional history between the gaze, technology and the black body; work, particularly from the perspective of striptease; and the circulation of archives, art and content.

I met Lydia, my assistant, in a house that was, in a way, our home for a year. Even back then, she was driven by the desire to provide care to her relations. Whether they be friendships or simple encounters after performances. It's often said that curation means taking care of the works. Above all, it's about relationships (interpersonal and spatial) with and between artists, with and between the institution - Lydia is the kind of assistant who knows how to take care of this and create the spaces we were all able to inhabit together during the preparation of this exhibition.

I'd like to thank Noémi Michel, whose work on these anecdotes, real or arranged, has been a real pleasure, inspired by her podcast.



1. **Roy Köhnke (*1990, FR)**, *Wall Land #1*, IRL tube, strapping, string, beeswax, steel, 260x60x220 cm, 2023.
2. **Luna Mahoux (*1996, FR)**, *Untitled*, prints on canvas, dimensions variable, 2024.
3. **Thelma Cappello (*1995, FR)**, *Untitled*, tape recorders, cassette tapes, voice, soundtrack, dimensions variable, 2024.
4. **Soñ Gweha (*1989, FR)**, *RIDING APEX (OASIS VECTORS)* - video, triangular cushion and chime, dimensions variable, 2023.
5. **Mélissa Airaudi (*1991, FR)**, *Commençons par la disparition du réel* - installations, video, pole dance, dimensions variable, 2021.
6. **Pol Taburet (*1997, FR)**, *The Stripper* - oil, acrylic, alcohol on canvas, 200x160 cm, 2023.
7. **Roy Köhnke (*1990, FR)** - *Bugs waves (series)* - drawings on paper, 35x20x55 cm, 2021-2023.

Mélissa Airaudi (b. 1991) is a French artist and graduate of the Beaux-Arts in Lyon. Her performances question the representations and topos of feminine representation, myths and archetypes, notably that of the femme fatale or the medusa. She stages their re-actualization in a contemporary world where images and relationships are filtered through networks and new technologies.

Thelma Cappello (b. 1995) is a French composer who creates music using voice, performance, text, installation and radio formats. She specializes in the production of urban operas, using field recordings as a musical base. Her artistic approach combines operatic singing with sound design to create a lexicon of vocalizations that she structures as a poetic language. In her stage performances, she explores the immaterial, manipulating sound, scent and light. She is currently working on a research project focusing on the history and uses of voice resonance in architecture.

Soñ Gweha (b. 1989) mobilizes a transdisciplinary practice to explore Black, Queer and visionary mythologies and spaces of emancipation. Navigating between contemporary creation, research and the collective practice of transformative justice, she uses analog djing, sound and her voice as an instrument (under the pseudonym SOÑXSEED), the moving image, poetic narrative and gesture, as well as archival conversations, textiles and plant materials. Soñ's work thus invests different modes of expression and imaginaries (utopian, erotic, spiritual) in a quest towards the dismantling and emancipation of oppressive social norms and the connection between human-e-x-s and non-human-e-x-s, visible and invisible.

Roy Köhnke (b. 1990) French-Australian artist. Through sculpture, performance and video/sound installation, Roy Köhnke's practice fuses cutting-edge technologies such as MRI medical observation with elementary manual labor. His work aims to remove the limits of the body by reconnecting its physical and narrative specificities to its environment, while considering it as a land and a narrative in itself. Roy Köhnke's exhibitions could be science fiction, but then a queer science fiction inhabited by powerful beings in constant transformation. Together, they attempt to restore a body that has been fragmented and isolated by the development and domination of Western science.

Luna Mahoux (b. 1997) creates from a collection of images, music and words, gleaned from the Internet over more than a decade. She arranges this material in video montages or recontextualizes it with her photo prints. Her work focuses on the collection and transmission of personal and community black emotions and affects. She defines these gestures as practices of care, resistance and self-definition.

Pol Taburet (b. 1997) in France, where he currently lives and works. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including at the Longlati Foundation Shaghai, China (forthcoming April 2024); Pivô, São Paulo, Brazil; Lafayette Anticipation, Paris, France; Balice Hertling, Paris, France; C L E A R I N G, Los Angeles. Recent collective exhibitions include the 24th Prix de la Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris, France; Michael Werner Gallery, New York, USA; Gladstone Gallery, New York, USA; Bourse de Commerce - Collection Pinault. He was awarded the inaugural Reiffers Art Initiatives Prize in 2022.

Fictions of Intimacy

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www.c-a-l-m.ch
instagram: @calm_ch
email: calm.centreartlameute@gmail.com

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