

Annotation: Dakar

Two individual but related pieces were shown at the 13th Dakar Biennale, Dak'Art 2018 as part of the main programme. Curated by Simon Njami, "The Red Hour" references Aimé Césaire's play *and the dogs went silent*. In this text Césaire deals with issues of emancipation, freedom, and responsibility. The curatorial text describe 'The Red Hour' as: "the coming of age. It is the moment when one emancipates oneself from what has been by transforming it and giving it a new strength. It is the hour of metamorphosis and transformation."

My contributing works comprised two pieces; "Tainted Memory" and "Venus"

"Venus" is a large scaled sculpture of a domestic clothes iron made from modelled concrete. The curatorial ideas of responsibility, and freedom were interpreted through the position of the female as a domestic subject. The iron in my work has come to symbolise a sense of simultaneous burden and responsibility. Enslavement and Freedom. In its enlarged form, it draws on references like Claus Oldenburg through magnifying the ordinary. The quotidian is emphasised through this larger than life object, and so are the complexities of the domestic female. The Iron is genderised by virtue of its associative usage.

The title "Venus" is Goddess and further reference to the famous "Venus of Willendorf" sculpture without being figurative. As a young student I was struck by the Venus of Willendorf figure and its surprising lack of scale. How its image surpasses its size. Thus, I wanted to amplify the size of the iron sculpture whilst paying a kind of homage to the figure and concept of a Venus.

I am particularly attracted to the base of the iron and its triangular shape as an associative and accepted feminist symbol. The installation was purposefully presented to show the upward pointing triangle of the base of the iron. This was contrasted with an inverted triangle on the wall; "Tainted Memory".

"Tainted Memory" is a temporary installation made from kum kum powder, which is typically used, amongst other uses, by married Indian women as a small dot on the forehead; a bindi, to demote marriage. It is symbolically sacred and sanctified. The kum kum installation on the wall is a memory...an imprint, an **impression**. The title plays on the word tainted as a pigmented powder and also as an imprint or memory that may not necessarily be positive. The pigment further emits a strong scent and thus the installation was asensory one. The of daily living was illustrated through the use of this material, echoed in the ritual of everyday chores through the representation of the large iron sculpture.

The overall concept of my work somewhat opposes Njami's curatorial statement and questions the real possibilities of emancipation women and the perceived sense of freedom as a false one. Further, it questions the potential for transformation in a patriarchal environment.

“Venus” was awarded the inaugural sculpture prize by Scac Marestaing de Montesquieu Volvestre and Solidarité Laïque. The award was a two-month residency at Scac Marestaing in south France, which I conducted in 2019.