

Annotation: SCAC Marestaing

In July and August 2019, I took up a two-month artist residency at SCAC Marestaing*, which is situated in Montesquieu Volvestre, France. The residency requires the artist to use the studio facilities at hand and to have a presentation of work, as well as to produce a public artwork to install in the sculpture garden on the property.

During the two-month residency, I produced a body of work and held a solo exhibition titled *Un balai pourquoi pas une balai?*, which opened on 9 August 2019 (co-incidentally, Women's Day in South Africa). I also created a large scale, public sculpture, titled *C'est comme ça* for the sculpture garden.

My approach to both the production of the exhibition and the public artwork was to further my interest into the thematic inquiries and analyses of the domestic role of women. It was imperative for my positioning that the locality was included in some way. This was achieved through a participatory method, by requesting members of the public to contribute a domestic item, namely a wooden broom, to be used in the making of the artworks. The exhibition and the public artwork are titled in French.

The title of the exhibition asks why a broom is a male object in the French language, and not female (in the French grammar objects are being genderised). The question posed continues a long-standing investigation in my work into traditional gender roles – and in particular, those of women. Domestic objects become metaphors in this exploration, where my work implores wooden clothes pegs, irons and clothes hangers and other such quotidian objects. At SCAC Marestaing, a substantial number of the artworks were made from wooden broomsticks, many of which were donated by neighbours and community members from Montesquieu and other nearby areas. Thus, these objects contain their stories and in this body of work, the artworks take on the form of collective narratives, speaking about broader notions of home, the domestic, service and servitude.

The public sculpture, *C'est comme ça*, is a three-meter sculpture of a clothes peg, made from steel and a series of horseshoes obtained in the vicinity of the residency. The inclusion of this object is a metaphoric reference to the idea of domestication, likening the domestication of horses to that of women. It questions the patriarchal desire for women as “tamed”, subservient, docile. These ideas were also explored in other works in the exhibition – specifically in the artwork titled *Over domesticated*, in which a found broomstick is strewn with rusted nails, obtained from the horseshoes. In other works, the contributed broomsticks were, labour intensively, sliced into segments, thus dismembering them. They were then re-configured into sculptural forms comprising several pieces.

*In 2018, my work was exhibited at the 13th Dakar Biennale in Senegal, Dak'Art, curated by Simon Njami. In response to the theme “The Red Hour”, my work included an installation using red pigment and a large, two-meter sculpture of a domestic iron made from concrete. It was for this art piece that I received a sculpture award, given by SCAC Marestaing de Montesquieu Volvestre and Solidarité Laïque.