

27.04. – 11.07.2021

# CIMA CIMA

Kapwani Kiwanga

# LE CRÉDAC

CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN  
D'IVRY – LE CRÉDAC  
La Manufacture des Cèllets 1, place  
Pierre Gosnat 94200 Ivry-sur-Seine  
France +33 (0)1 49 60 25 06  
www.credac.fr

Free admission on booking only (by  
phone or on our website)  
From Wednesday to Friday: 2-6 pm  
On weekend: 2-7 pm  
Closed on public holidays

Metro 7, Mairie d'Ivry  
RER C, Ivry-sur-Seine

CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER OF  
NATIONAL INTEREST  
Member of the TRAM and d.c.a.  
networks, Crédac receives support from  
the City of Ivry-sur-Seine, the Ministry of  
Culture - Regional Directorate of  
Cultural Affairs of Île-de-France, the  
Departmental Council of Val-de-Marne  
and the Regional Council of Île-de-  
France.

Exhibition produced with the support  
of Centre Culturel Canadien à Paris,  
and in collaboration with journal AOC.



## ÉDITO

“The origin of our world is the leaves: fragile, vulnerable and yet able to come back and live again after going through the bad season.”

Emanuele Coccia in *The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture*, ed. Polity, 2018

Originally titled *A Certain Distance*, Kapwani Kiwanga's exhibition was scheduled to open last spring, but the closure of cultural venues brought everything to a standstill.

In this original project, the artist was interested in proxemics, an approach developed by the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1914 - 2009) who defines space as a cultural product and, more specifically, social distances as a variable determined by norms specific to each culture.

This subject, at the heart of the artist's project, resonated incredibly well with the social distances we were suddenly forced to respect in this period of pandemic.

No doubt because this subject seemed too close to current events, we decided together to rethink the entire exhibition.

*Cima Cima* is articulated around the epistemologies of botany, subjugation and resistance, by introducing the question of the migration of seeds - here those of rice, or tomatoes - through the work of her guest, the artist Noémie Sauve. Indeed, the displacement of seeds or men, builds or deconstructs the world.

Kapwani Kiwanga continues her research to reveal what is invisible in the historical elements. She proposes to us, in a subtle way, forms charged with alternative investigations.

In the context of her exhibition, Kapwani Kiwanga has chosen to organize a series of round tables with the Crédac team. Indeed, it is important for the artist to broaden her subject by questions that are not only related to her work, but in relation to the conception she has of the world.

Claire Le Restif

Round tables available on Crédac's Facebook account and website (in French):

- Anne de Malleray and Noémie Sauve: “Can we still inhabit the landscape ? The landscape as a support for fantasized actions”
- Marcos Ávila Forero and Malcom Ferdinand: “How do histories of domination, especially colonial ones, or imperialism, influence questions of ecology and economy?”
- Zahia Rahmani and Kapwani Kiwanga : “Reconciling through form, art as meta-language of new exit strategies”
- Kapwani Kiwanga, Claire Le Restif and Emanuele Coccia: “About *Cima Cima*”

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Studio Kiwanga, Paris  
Loïc Chambon and Fanny Legros
- École du Breuil, Paris  
Alexandre Hennekinne, Frédéric Triail, Léonard Nguyen Van Thé
- The Renaissance Society, Chicago  
Karsten Lund, Caroline Picard, John Paul Morabito
- MMK — Museum für Moderne Kunst, Francfort  
Susanne Pfeffer, Lukas Flygare
- Galerie Poggi, Paris  
Jérôme Poggi, Camille Bréchnignac
- Centre Culturel Canadien — Ambassade du Canada en France  
Catherine Bédard
- Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry — Le Crédac  
Claire Le Restif, Jean-Denis Frater, Jérôme Girard, Julia Leclerc, Sébastien Martins, Ana Mendoza Aldana, Mathieu Pitkevich.  
Technical team: Hugo Bonnifait, Christian Giordano, Julien Rodriguez, Colin Thil

## PARTNERSHIP

The exhibition is produced with the support of the Centre Culturel Canadien à Paris and in partnership with the AOC newspaper.



Centre  
Culturel  
Canadien  
Paris

Canadian  
Cultural  
Centre  
Paris

## BIOGRAPHICAL BENCHMARKS

KAPWANI KIWANGA, born in 1978 in Hamilton, Canada. Lives and works in Paris.

Kiwanga's work focuses on narratives that outline asymmetries of power, highlighting the sometimes unexpected witnesses of these histories. Her visual arts practice seeks to give shape to dormant or unknown archives.

Recent solo shows include *Flowers for Africa*, at Centre Pompidou in Paris; *new work* at Kunstinstituut Melly (Formerly known as Witte de With) in Rotterdam ; *Plot* at Haus der Kunst in Munich.

In 2020, Kapwani Kiwanga was awarded the Marcel Duchamp Prize.

NOÉMIE SAUVE, born in 1980 in Romans-sur-Isère. She lives and works in Paris.

Noémie Sauve's art practice goes beyond the constraints that are inherent to the different artistic disciplines, directly and closely engaging with the world. In collaboration with various specialists (bio-engineers, volcanologists, taxonomists, architects, researchers, farmers...), she works, with singularity, across several mediums and fields.

Her series of drawings *motif vivant* [living pattern] includes seeds that can be planted and potentially bear fruit. This work resonates with the issues addressed throughout this exhibition: how to adapt the gestures, ways of living, and thoughts fuelled by the past knowledge we have inherited and that does not aim to preserve idealised nature in which to take shelter, but instead to face our need to adapt to an imperfect and toxic world.

## KAPWANI KIWANGA, CIMA CIMA

The exhibition title, *Cima Cima*, refers to “Cimarrons” or “Maroons”, terms of Arawak origin, which were included in Spanish language to refer to people living in conditions of slavery, who became “fugitives” in the Americas. Once emancipated, these women and men had to implement strategies to preserve their freedom. This required the setting of precarious villages ready to be left behind in order to hit the road, exceptional agriculture allowing for their survival, and the domesticating of plants, brought along from their native land, to be adapted to a new environment.

*Cima Cima* thus raises the question of deliberately concealed actions allowing for survival. It addresses the history of forms of resistance, and the practice of creative unruliness as a way of life ensuring freedom.

It is precisely the cultivation of plants and their role as witnesses of human history that interests the artist here, as well as their sometimes ambivalent function: the plant that nourishes, the plant that heals, but also the plant that kills either indirectly or deliberately as poison.

### ROOM 1

In the main exhibition room of Crédac, Kapwani Kiwanga proposes *Matières premières* [Raw materials] (2020), a forest of raw paper, made from sugarcane fibre. The floor-to-ceiling sheets of paper prevent one's understanding of the space at first glance and invite the public to a constrained route. Fragments of reforged sugar-cane knife blades are occasionally grafted onto the paper, which, coupled to the hindered movement, evoke oppressive sensations.

### ROOM 2

In the second exhibition room, Kiwanga invites, Noémie Sauve — an artist supporting Clinamen's Agricultural Contemporary Art Fund (an organisation accompanying farming practices through the dissemination of artworks), presents three pencil drawings from the series *motif vivant* [living pattern] (2018 - 2020 - 2020), containing saved tomato seeds.

Partially concealed and facing the picture window, a field of *Oryza glaberrima* rice is installed within the space. According to oral (hi)stories, African rice travelled to the Americas hidden within the hair of West African people, who were forced into the state of slavery. This history of *Oryza glaberrima* has survived orally. The plant is grown in the North of South America thanks to these people's know-how.

Léonard Nguyen Van Thé, a landscape architect and gardener, assists Kapwani Kiwanga throughout the exhibition to cultivate the rice at Crédac.

In the same exhibition room, a recent work of the artist produced for the Renaissance Society in Chicago is presented: a tapestry wherein glass replicas of the grains of *Oryza glaberrima* rice are sewn into the fabric, recalling the transoceanic journeys.

The series *Lazarus*, four white silkscreen prints on paper, is also in room 2. These works by Kiwanga take 19th and 20th century illustrations depicting “Lazarus taxa” — animal species that were thought to be extinct and that reappeared in nature after many decades.

## SALLE 3

The third room presents the work *The Marias*, recently shown at the Kunststituut Melly (Formerly known as Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art). This piece consists of two colored paper reproductions of a *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*, also known as a peacock flower. This plant, native to the Americas and the Caribbean, is shown as a budding branch on a first plinth, and a flowering branch on a second base.

Widely cultivated as an ornamental plant today, this plant was used for its abortifacient properties, notably by women in conditions of slavery, brought by force to the territories where the peacock flower is endemic. Refusing to procreate in a system created in such a way that these women no longer legally possess their own bodies is a political act and a way of reclaiming this fundamental right.

The work also refers to the history of privileged women in Victorian era Europe. For these women, society did not expect them to work, but rather to occupy themselves with hobbies such as making of ornamental paper flowers, exceptional replicas of the natural flowers from which they draw inspiration. This work thus questions different experiences of conditions of womanhood between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Finally, *The Marias* focuses on the personal story of Anna Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), a naturalist and painter known for her botanical illustrations and metamorphoses of caterpillars into butterflies in Suriname.

Her legacy in the natural sciences is undisputed, but her research journey reminds us of the ambivalent status of these scientific operations whose discoveries are made at the price of a domination of the flora and fauna.

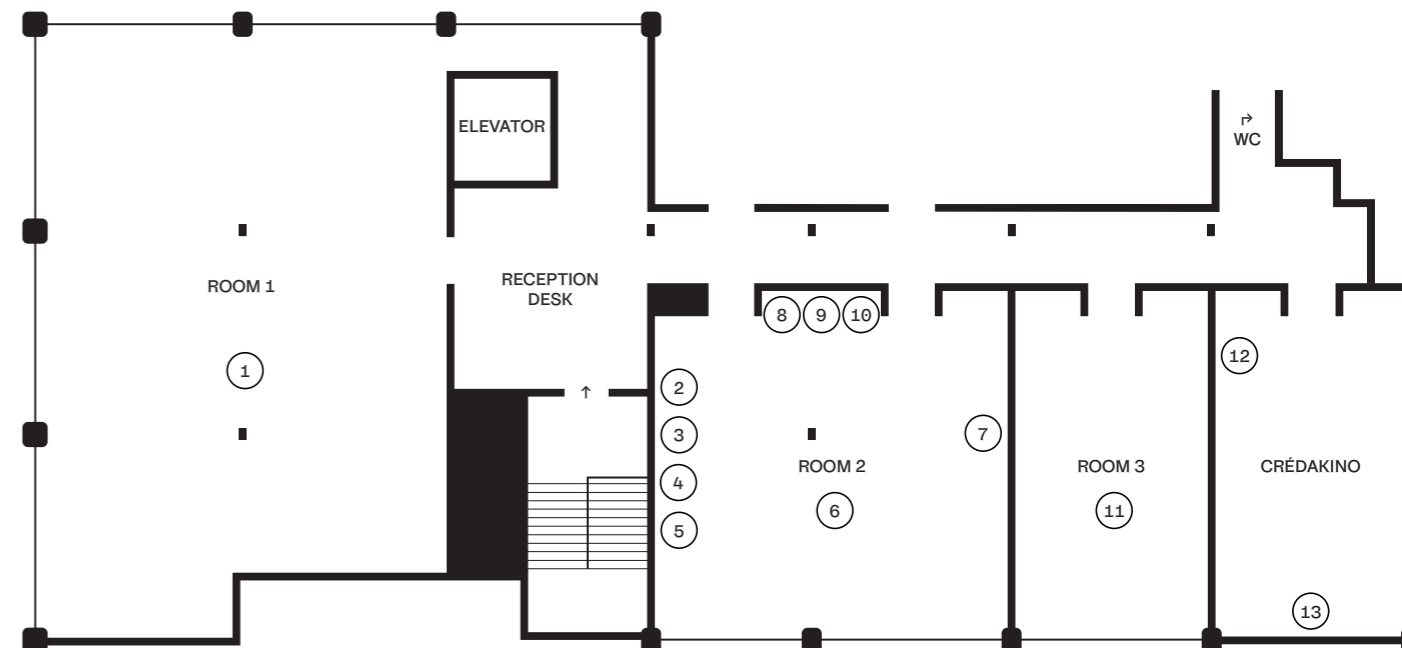
## CRÉDAKINO

The video *Vumbi* (2012) was made in the Ifakara region in rural Tanzania. It shows the artist cleaning the foliage of a shrub covered with a layer of red dust, in order to make the initial green foliage reappear. The *vumbi*, this red dust that settles, is a typical phenomenon in times of drought.

“This repeated, meticulous and delicate gesture is on the edge of performance, of the daily gesture, and of that of a healer. The household action is here taken out of the domestic context to settle in the nature. Work of Sisyphus, both ephemeral and vain, it nevertheless joins all the artist's reflection around the motivational power of belief: each gesture, even the smallest, can carry meaning and lead to greater changes.”<sup>1</sup>

A print reiterating this gesture at another site in Tanzania is on display in this room.

1 Excerpt from the exhibition *Ujamaa*, Kapwani Kiwanga, Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, France (24.04. – 09.10.2016).



### ROOM 1

- 1 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Matières premières*, 2020  
Industrial paper made of sugar cane resin, metal.  
Co-production Centre d'art contemporain d'Ivry - le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine and Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt

### ROOM 2

- 2 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Lazarus: Potorous gilbertii*, 2016  
Silkscreen on paper Rivoli 240 g.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris
- 3 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Lazarus: Eupetaurus cinereus*, 2016  
Silkscreen on paper Rivoli 240 g.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris
- 4 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Lazarus: Heosemys depressa*, 2016  
Silkscreen on paper Rivoli 240 g.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris
- 5 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Lazarus: Dryococelus australis*, 2016  
Silkscreen on paper Rivoli 240 g.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris
- 6 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Oryza*, 2021  
*Oryza glaberrima* rice, clay balls, pozzolan, water, water pumps, galvanized aluminum tanks, powder coated aluminum structures, UV lamps.  
Production Le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine
- 7 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Repository*, 2020  
Tapestry, glass.  
Production John Paul Morabito for the Renaissance Society in Chicago
- 8 Noémie Sauve, *motif vivant n°5*, 2020  
Pencil and tomato seeds from peasant seeds selected and cultivated by Guillaume Leterrier, passage Machouart in Aubervilliers in Seine-Saint-Denis, former headquarters of the association Clinamen.  
Courtesy of the artist

- 9 Noémie Sauve, *motif vivant n°6*, 2020  
Pencil and tomato seeds from peasant seeds selected and cultivated by Guillaume Leterrier, passage Machouart in Aubervilliers in Seine-Saint-Denis, former headquarters of the association Clinamen.  
Courtesy of the artist

- 10 Noémie Sauve, *motif vivant n°2*, 2018  
Pencil and tomato seeds from peasant seeds selected and cultivated by Guillaume Leterrier, passage Machouart in Aubervilliers in Seine-Saint-Denis, former headquarters of the association Clinamen.  
Private collection. Courtesy of the artist

### ROOM 3

- 11 Kapwani Kiwanga, *The Marias*, 2020  
Installation with wall painting, two paper plants on custom pedestals.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris

### CRÉDAKINO

- 12 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Vumbi*, 2012  
Digital photograph, color pigment print on Hahnemuhle 308 g paper.  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Poggi, Paris
- 13 Kapwani Kiwanga, *Vumbi (Poussière)*, 2012  
Video HD, PAL, color, sound 16/9, 31 min  
Collection of the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Marseille  
Courtesy of the artist