

ENG

# Terra Incognita

19 March- 30 April, 2022

Stephan Balkenhol  
Lungiswa Gqunta  
Sarah Naqvi  
Margit Lukács & Persijn Broersen  
Miguel Angel Rios



Sarah Naqvi, *Ethymology of the Erased*, 2021, various materials and techniques, 59.4 x 84.1 cm

**AKINCI is proud to present works by Stephan Balkenhol, Lungiswa Gqunta, Margit Lukács & Persijn Broersen, Sarah Naqvi and Miguel Angel Rios in the group exhibition Terra Incognita.**

Appearing for the first time in Ptolemy's *Geografia*, the term *Terra incognita* was used from the rediscovery of the book in the 15th century onwards to describe unknown territories in European maps. In the attempt to understand nature, humankind tries to signify its surroundings and its role within it through the arts, scholarship and sciences. Longing for knowledge, nature is categorised and classified by man, imposing a lens through which it can be understood, however from the viewpoint of the categoriser. Throughout history, this tendency has imposed a hierarchy on nature, land and its inhabitants. How does the way we classify nature influence the way we treat it? Climate and migration crises form a confrontation with a system of manmade borders and a relationship with nature that seems to be shaking to its foundations. Challenged with an ever changing world, old terrains become once again Terra incognita. Can a place we once knew be re-known?

The artists in this exhibition each focus on different aspects of these issues. In his sculptures, carved out of blocks of wood, **Stephan Balkenhol** was one of the first artists of his generation to reintroduce the human figure into contemporary sculpture. Often depicting archetypes, his work transcends temporality and evokes the question what it means to be human, now, then, and in the future.

**Lungiswa Gqunta** grapples with the complexities of the South African post-colonial cultural and political landscape through her work. Focusing on creating multi – sensory experiences that attempt to articulate the social imbalances that persist as a legacy of both patriarchal dominance and colonialism, Gqunta

exposes different forms of violence and the systemic inequality in South Africa. According to Gqunta, the installation *Building Mountains* (2021) - shown at AKINCI - is celebrating the quiet moments of Black revolt nestled in homes and in the many places our eyes can't reach. Within her oeuvre, *Building Mountains* makes part of an 'ongoing site of excavating different methods of collective healing and resistance'.

The perception of nature and the construction and manipulation of landscape play a prominent role in the work of **Margit Lukács and Persijn Broersen**. The work '*Fix the Variable, Exclude the Accidental, Eliminate the Impure, Unravel the Tangled, Discover the Unknown*' (2021), initially created for the Annex in Centraal Museum Utrecht and now on display at AKINCI, is based on Carolus Linnaeus' botanical work "Hortus Cliffortianus" (1737), in which he classified the exotic plants imported by Amsterdam based director of the Dutch East India Company George Clifford III (1685-1760). Carolus Linnaeus classified these plants according to his own system. However, he did not necessarily base his classifications on an objective observation of the plants, but on an idealised version. In the video by Broersen & Lukács shown at AKINCI plants come to life as a fierce crowd and threaten to break free from the straitjacket imposed on them.



Lungiswa Gqunta, *Building Mountains*, clay, rusted iron, size variable, at Rijksacademie Open Studios, 2021

**Sarah Naqvi** is an Indian contemporary artist working in Amsterdam. Naqvi's works, which received international recognition, have been described as subversive, and are noted to cover topics such as gender, sexuality, race and religion, while advocating for various social and feminist causes. Naqvi's most recent work includes the film *How does one say queen in Islam*, 2020. The film invokes formative childhood memories in a surreal surrender of self to unrecognised forces of time and space. It unravels imaginary, familiar, yet unplaceable terrains, that are marked by symbols of friendship and care that subvert the rigid structures of the patriarchy. In the wanderings of her dream, a young girl encounters the women who have fought for liberty in former times; some can be found in myths, others are based on historical figures.

**Miguel Angel Rios** was born in Catamarca, Argentina, but chose to settle in the USA in the 1970's and lived and worked later in both the USA and Mexico. In the early 1990's Rios started working on his 'Mapas', large

installations of folded material departing from colonial maps of European origin. His 'Mapas' can be found in various important collections, a.o. at the MoMA New York. Ríos always chooses carefully the space of action, be it in his films or the manipulated cartographic maps: it is the space where extremes meet, where existence is at stake, or as Raphael Rubinstein wrote: 'at the verge of chaos where borders burn'.

## Biographies

**Stephan Balkenhol** (1957, Fritzlar, Germany) attended the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg from 1976 - 82, with tutors including Ulrich Rückriem, Nam June Paik and Sigmar Polke. He has exhibited widely in galleries and museums around the globe, e.g. major solo exhibitions at Lehmbrock Museum, Duisburg, DE (2020) Museum Jorn, Silkeborg, DK (2020), Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Malaga, ES (2018), the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, RU (2016), Austrian Landesgalerie Lin, AT (2014-2015), Kunstmuseum Ravensburg, DE (2014), Musée de Grenoble, F (2010-2011), Deichtorhallen Hamburg, DE (2008-2009), Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden/Baden, DE (2006), the National Museum of Art, Osaka/Tokyo, J (2005), Sprengel Museum, Hannover, DE (2003), Fries Museum Leeuwarden, NL (2001), Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, DE (1998), and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., USA (1995). He has made a number of sculptures for the public space; e.g. Germany, Italy, France and the



Netherlands and in the USA. Balkenhol was awarded the French Order of Arts and Letters (2014). Stephan Balkenhol's works are in many museum collections, including the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, the National Gallery in Berlin and The Museum of Art in The Hague.

**Lungiswa Gqunta** (1990, Port Elizabeth) is a visual artist working in performance, printmaking, sculpture and installation. From 2019-2021, Gqunta has been in residence at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. Gqunta has also obtained her undergraduate degree at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in 2012 and her MFA at the Michaelis School of Fine Arts in Cape Town in 2017.

In addition to her practice, Gqunta is one of the founding members of iQhiya, with whom she participated in Documenta 14 and Glasgow International. She has participated in the Manifesta 12 (2018) and the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017) and has also been included in the group exhibition 'Not a Single Story II' at the Wanas Konst Museum in Sweden. She has been actively involved in the South African art scene, having exhibited with both the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art and the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), as well as held two solo exhibitions, Qwitha (2018) and Qokobe (2016), with WHATIFTHEWORLD gallery in Cape Town, SA. In 2019, AKINCI presented both her installations 'Feet under Fire' and 'Sleeping Pools' within the exhibition 'Heroines Now'.

Gquntas work has had a solo exhibition at the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, DE (2021) and will have a solo exhibition at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK (2022). Recent exhibitions were at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, (2021), Centraal Museum Utrecht (2021 - 2022) and Marres House for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, NL (2021). Her work forms part of the public collections of the MMK Frankfurt, Kunsthall Zurich, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, The University of Cape Town and Zeitz MOCAA.



Margit Lukács & Persijn Broersen, *Fix the Variable, Exclude the Accidental, Eliminate the Impure, Unravel the Confused, Discover the Unknown*, 2021, Videoinstallation with 5 synchronized projectors, stereosound, 06:30 minutes

**Margit Lukács** (1973, Amsterdam) & **Persijn Broersen** (1974, Delft) studied at the Sandberg Institute and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Their films, installations and graphic work have been shown internationally, a.o. at FOAM Photography Museum in Amsterdam, NL (2020) Kunsthall Viborg, DK (2019) A Space Gallery, Toronto, CA (2020), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, DE (2020), Rencontres Arles, FR (2019), Art Wuzhen, CN (2019) Kasteel Oud - Rekem, BE (2019), Biennale of Sydney AU, (2017) Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL (2014), MUHKA (Belgium), Centre Pompidou (Paris, F), Shanghai World Expo, Kröller Müller, NL and Casa Encendida Madris, ES (2012). Their films have been screened at various festivals including LAForum, Oberhausen FilmFest, Kassel Dokumentar und Filmfestival, Rencontres Paris Berlin at the Louvre, Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, the New York Film Festival, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, and the International Film Festival Rotterdam. The film 'Establishing Eden' was nominated for the 2016 IFFR Tiger Awards. In 2015, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam acquired the site-specific work 'Ruins in Reverse' (2015), specially made for the museum's escalator. In 2022 Het Centraal Museum Utrecht acquired the work 'Fix the Variable, Exclude the Accidental, Eliminate the Impure, Unravel the Tangled, Discover the Unknown' (2021), which was specially made for the exhibition 'The Botanical Revolution'. A public commission for the Noord Zuid Line Amsterdam led to a new work for the metro station in Amsterdam - Noorderpark: De Poorten van Noord. Their work will be presented at E22, Esch-Sur-Alzette, European Capital of Culture, Luxembourg.

The work of **Sarah Naqvi** (they/them, 1996, Mumbai, India) engages in narratives themed around religious and societal stigmas. They had their first solo exhibition *Bashaor* at Clark House, Mumbai in 2018, followed by their second solo exhibition, *Sharam o Haya*, at Ame Nue, Hamburg in 2019. In the same year, they were part of 'Heroines Now', a group exhibition at AKINCI, alongside Melanie Bonajo (NL), Anne Wenzel (DE), Gluklya (Natalie Pershina- Yakimanskaya) (RU/NL) and Lungiswa Gqunta (SA). Their recent shows include *Hunger* at AKINCI (2020), *Inherited Memory* at Tarq, Mumbai (2020), *Viral self-portraits* at Moderna galerija, Ljubljana (2020) and *Escape Routes* at the Bangkok Biennale (2020). Naqvi has been part of other group exhibitions such as *A beast, a god, a line*, curated by Para Site Director, Cosmin Costinas at MALLAM Contemporary Art

Museum, Chiang Mai, TH (2020/21); Kunsthall Trondheim, NO (2019); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL (2018); Para Site, Hong Kong (2018). Their work was also shown at TS1 Yangon, MM (2018); *The Regimes of Truth*, curated by Shaunak Mahbubani, New Delhi, Apexart NY (2018); *Micro subversions Playbook, Conflictorium*, Ahmedabad, curated by Avni Sethi and Venkataraman Divakar (2018) and *The Exhaustion project*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, curated by Abhijan Toto (2018). In 2021, they were a resident artist at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Sarah Naqvi was also one of the two representing artists for India at the Bangkok Biennale, *Escape Routes*, 2020.

They were a recipient of 'The Phenomenal She' award in 2019 conferred by the Indian National Bar Association and the NID Ford Foundation Grant in 2018.

**Miguel Angel Ríos** (1943, Catamarca, Argentina) has had solo exhibitions at museums across the world, including Röda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg, SE (2019), Galería Barro, Buenos Aires, AR (2019), MUCEM, Marseilles, FR (2017), ASU Art Museum, Temple, USA (2015), Museum of Fine Arts Houston, USA (2013), Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City (2013), Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, USA (2012), Museo Carrillo Gil, México DF (2011), Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2009), Maison Européenne de la Photographie MEP, Paris (2011 and 2009), Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2008), and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2005). His videos have been screened during La Biennale de Lyon, FR (2015), Liverpool Biennial, GB (2011), and the Biennale of Sydney, AU (2010).

Ríos participated in group exhibitions at a.o. Suzanne Dellal Centre, Tel Aviv, IL (2021), Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2021), UCCA Dune, Qinhuangdao, CN (2019), Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, IT (2018), The Parkview Museum Singapore (2017-2018), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland, NZ (2016), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, DE (2015), Centro del Carmen, Valencia, ES (2014), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA (2014), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, FR (2013), Busan Museum, KR (2012), Tranen Contemporary Art Center, DK (2012), Molaa Museum of Latin American Art, USA (2011), The National Museum in Warsaw, PL (2010), and Daros Exhibitions, Zürich, CH (2009).



Miguel Angel Ríos, *Los Cuatro Vientos - The Four Winds*, detail, 1993-1994, Pencil, Cibachrome mounted on pleated canvas, 210 cm diameter (74,8 inch)

He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and has received numerous awards including the John Guggenheim Fellowship (1998) for his work exploring the mediums of painting, drawing and collage. Ríos' work can be found in many international collections, a.o. the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, NL, Daros Latin America Collection, Zurich, CH, MoMA, New York, USA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA, and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona, ES, and is included in a large number of private collections.