

PRESS RELEASE

CASSI NAMODA

Night Always Returns

September 5 - October 25, 2025

303 Gallery, New York

Reception: Friday, September 5, 6-8PM



303 Gallery is pleased to present *Night Always Returns*, an exhibition of new paintings by artist Cassi Namoda.

Painter and visual artist Cassi Namoda crafts images that bridge the personal, the spiritual, and the continental. Drawing from a bricolage of literatures and art histories, her work interweaves memory, dream, cinema, and ecology to transfigure the mythologies as well as the contemporary and historical narratives of post-colonial Mozambique. Vital to her practice is a signature filmic storytelling voice, where recurring characters, locations, and motifs inhabit her canvases like vignettes that merge the documentarian with the magic realist.

Namoda's newest exhibition, *Night Always Returns*, unfolds across four nocturnes, each exploring ideas of animality and the sensual aliveness that emerges after dark. Throughout the exhibition, human, animal, and elemental figures are shown in paired relationships that reveal symbolic mirrors and the porous boundary between human and natural worlds.

The first nocturne is set in the moments just after sunset, as the familiar world begins to transform. Here, Namoda revisits her recurring *Visit from Ancestor* scene, where a trio of wild chimpanzees approaches a father and his children. The father, comforting his uneasy children, understands the greater meaning of the animals presence.

Elsewhere, in the title piece *Night Always Returns*, a fisherman navigates his dugout canoe across the Zambezi River after a days work. Against the vivid orange and pale mint of Namodas figures and sky, the inky green waters below gently glow and undulate with the current.

As is familiar in Namoda's practice, the work is brimming with art historical references, reimagined through visions of African time, place, and context. In a moonlit lagoon scene, children play in waters that recall the moon paths and rolling, silhouetted landscapes of Milton Avery. Not far away, *Moon Path, Shell Collector and Octopus in Nacala* shows a solitary woman crouched in shallow waters, scanning the sandy bottom in darkness. A trail of green moonlight briefly illuminates her search, while a pink octopus watches from the shoreline.

Passing into the world of dreams, the next section imagines scenes of transfiguration in vivid crimsons and deep umbers. In *Ancestral Eruption in Namaacha*, lineal connections flow through the blood-red stream of a waterfall cascading down atop a group of young boys, while nearby, a hibiscus reaches its highest bloom in the night.

In the final nocturne, *The Nostalgic Melancholy of Deolinda*, a lone woman feeds seagulls by the shore, her downcast silhouette set against a mottled, rust-colored night sky. Namoda draws on Bonnard's *Bather* in *The Existential Break of Marias Self-Destruction*, where a figure rests in a tub beside a dying antelope, a single arrow still projecting from its side. As the title suggests, the parallel between these two figures evokes their shared casualty at the hands of ecological or colonial forces that are perhaps not so dissimilar.

As in the exhibitions other shifting scenes of night, darkness becomes both an alienating and unifying force, leaving figures exposed to instinctual drives and ancestral presence.

In attunement with the exhibition, Namoda has created a media work titled *Amin* the Arabic word for *Amen*, meaning so be it.

The video is composed of short archival sequences, combining imagery and acoustic elements drawn from Namoda's time in Quelimane, her mother's birthplace and current home.

Rhythmic pounding, breath, humid air, and prayer unfold in a trance-like rhythm. In this ode and homage to ancestral land, Namoda conjures the magical real of her inherited interior landscape.

Night, the great night, would always return it would always come back, the longed-for night, with fresh and tender pastures shining beneath the mysterious gaze of the stars; night of horror with brute beasts peering through the disquieting shadows of the thicket; silent night, in which silence is the principal weapon of the weak; violent and enchanting night in that vast East African continent.

Jose Maria dEca de Queiroz, Santuario Bravio, 1964

CONTACT

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Image: Cassi Namoda, *Night Always Returns*, 2025. Oil on linen.