

Minia Biabiany

Portfolio

Imane Farès

41 rue Mazarine, 75006 Paris
+ 33 (0)1 46 33 13 13 – contact@imanefares.com
www.imanefares.com

Courtesy of the artist and Imane Farès, Paris

Minia Biabiany



Photo: Santiago Quintana

B. 1988. Works and lives in Guadeloupe.

Minia Biabiany's work explores Caribbean narratives, decolonization processes, and the connections between language, body, and territory, drawing on a practice that combines installations, videos, and pedagogy.

Her work has been presented in numerous exhibitions, including the São Paulo Biennial (2025), *Assemblée narrative : fragments de récits de roches et d'eaux* at Musarth, Guadeloupe, 2025), *Earthly Communities* at the KunstMeran, Italy, 2025, *Eaux souterraines - récits en confluence* at the Frac Poitou-Charentes (Angoulême, 2025), *Réalisme magique: Imaginer la nature en dés/ordre* at Wiels (Brussels, 2025), the Mercosur Biennial (Porto Alegre, 2025), Semillero Caribe x Persona Curada (ENSAD, Paris, 2025), *Dlo a rasin* (James Madison University, Virginia, 2024), *difé* at Palais de Tokyo (2022), 10th Berlin Biennial, TEOR/ética (San José, Costa Rica), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Cráter Invertido (Mexico), SIGNAL (Malmö), Mémorial ACTe (Guadeloupe), Centro León (Santiago, Dominican Republic), Corcoran (Washington) and La Verrière (Brussels). She was also awarded the Prix d'Art Contemporain de Sciences Po in 2019.

In 2016, she initiated the Semillero Caribe collective project in Mexico City and continues her pedagogical research with Doukou, a platform for experimentation exploring the concepts of Caribbean authors through the body and feeling.

Her first multilingual monograph, *Ritmo Volcán*, was published by Temblores Editions.

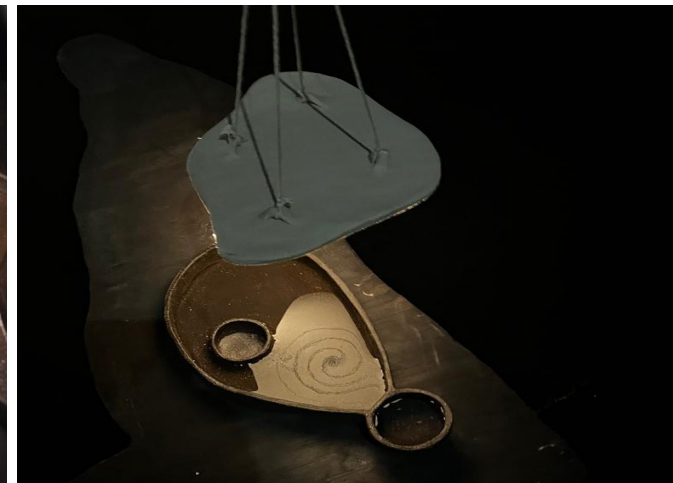
Le reflet d'une branche dans l'eau de ma rivière rouge

Musarth

September 20 — November 2025

"NIGHT. I look up at the sky. The space of my body, with its porous boundaries, resonates first with where I am, then with depth itself. A slight dizziness, thanks to distant suns imprinted on my retinas when I close my eyes. My own night. That evening, I reflect on the drawings of constellations, on what these projections of lines and dots say about how a community or group understands the world — its narrative: the why of its presence, its geography, the how of its origins, the writing of its bodies. A narrative shaped from a specific time and space, sustaining both past and future. Greek names of mythological constellations do not resonate with my here, nor do those from other civilizations suggested by my phone's sky-reading app. Yet they are the only ones I know, even slightly.

During a discussion with archaeologist Benoît Bérard as part of our research to better understand current issues in Caribbean archaeology, he mentioned the appearance of the crabe cirique constellation above the horizon as a marker of the annual solar cycle for the Kalinago people. It is one of the rare constellations whose name, function, and form have survived colonial violence. In his article *Quelle heure est-il M. Colomb ?*, Benoît Roux writes: "Emerging in the morning, in the East, at the end of May, the Pleiades mark the beginning of the rainy season in the Caribbean islands and, with it, the annual migration of land crabs — whose Carib name (sirik) appears to be the origin of that of the star cluster (Chíric) — as they move toward the shore to spawn [...] The rising of the Pleiades in the East, in early November after sunset, on the contrary signals the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the dry season. [...] The Pleiades therefore characterize, in a dual and ambivalent way, both the dry season and the rainy season."





olho de cana, zyé a kann [olho de cana, olho de cana]

Bienal de São Paulo 2025
September 6 — January 11, 2026

In guadeloupean creol “zyé an kann” meaning “eye of sugarcane” refers to the nods marking the stem of the sugarcane with roots bands and from which a new sprout can grow. Biabiany plays with that common say and with no stems, turns the sugarcane nods into 400 eyes looking at us and tearing dried sugarcane leaves. Those gazes are a possibility to see and be seen by the women and men enslaved who were forced to cultivate sugar cane fields but also connect with lineage and passing memories. Working on her connection with her female lineage for several years Biabiany proposes here what she calls “punctuations”, small ceramics hung, operating like metaphors or quotes related with objects, figures, emotions and stories of the women who came before her. Their verticality responds to the flat horizontal water containers reflecting all parts of the ceiling. Those circles of black water are doors to look from different perspectives but also directly integrate our image to what surrounds us. The soil is above us, close, talkative but whispered.

Woven to all those elements, the sound of the entire installation is a collaboration with the sound designer Thierry Girard aka Thyeks whose proposition is structured in three movements like a natural cycle: the initial call - awakening of the living, deep, slow resonances -, the migration - evolving textures, fluid movement, the dispersion - fragmentation and propagation in space with unpredictable echoes. It is not a flourishing garden that welcomes us, but the extractive practice of monoculture. That practice was introduced during the colonial era, of planting, cultivation, and harvesting single crops such as sugarcane, cotton, and plantain, have led to the erosion and destruction of soils. The sugarcane field is not only defined by containment and extraction, but also by chosen moments of opacity, where figures defiantly choose to remain unseen. Evoking scenes of escape, maroonage, and concealment, these disembodied eyes, and the voices that trail them, symbolize the designed opacity of rural Black space. Black space.





água do céu, série o céu com olhos-raíces (water from the sky, serie the sky with rooted-eyes)

March 27 — June 1, 2025

The installation *água do céu, série o céu com olhos-raíces* (water from the sky, series the sky with rooted-eyes) is part of the ongoing work of Minia Biabiany, who offers an open reflection on how the territory of Guadeloupe can generate its own temporal, sensory, and cosmic references. In this series, the aim is not so much to represent the sky as it is mapped by science, but rather to reinvent it from a situated perception, from the island ground, from the stories, the bodies, and the rhythms that inhabit it.

Starting from the blue crab's constellation, Minia Biabiany brings forth a starry imaginary deeply connected to the living. This constellation becomes a motif, a guide, a matrix from which the ceramics take shape. Fragmented, unfinished, submerged in water, these forms compose a floating cartography, where the star-points emerge as shifting, suspended markers.

The ceramic gesture, always linked to the aquatic element, here evokes ritual, tactile memory, and the fragmentary becoming of objects. *água do céu, série o céu com olhos-raíces* offers a listening to the territory through the breaking apart of forms, the silence of water, the discontinuous twinkling of stars. The reference points are no longer linear; they are inscribed in another temporality, where bodies, materials, and récits créoles engage in dialogue with the cosmos.





the sky with rooted-eyes

Galerie Imane Farès, Paris
January 25 — March 15, 2025

For *the sky with rooted-eyes*, Biabiany creates a new constellation — the frog — traced from the night sky of Guadeloupe at the time of the exhibition. Each star of the constellation is embodied in a ceramic sculpture, and together they outline the image of this nocturnal amphibian, whose song signals the shift from day to night. The sculptures are reflected in water-filled calabashes placed on the ground. This creates a dynamic interplay, a mirroring between water, earth, and sky, between the cosmic and the everyday.

Inspired by the Blue Crab constellation—one of the few traditional constellations of the Kalina people that has endured through the ages to reach us, and whose rise above the horizon signals the solar cycle —Biabiany reimagines celestial cycles from her own perspective. Her interpretation provides us with new ways to position and orient human bodies in space.

The works of the installation are interconnected by ropes braided from banana fibers, interspersed with organic sculptures of charred wood, each representing distinctive elements of Guadeloupe's natural environment. Braiding, which is central to Biabiany's practice, becomes both a storytelling tool and a quest for fresh metaphors to express her relationship to the land, and an act of resistance against the erasure of language. Rooted in orality and deliberate slowness, it serves as a thread for reconsidering how we structure narrative and language.

The banana flower—a recurring motif in the installation—embodies the duality of Guadeloupe's history. It simultaneously symbolizes the harmful health effects of chlordecone¹ poisoning and the medicinal properties of the plant itself. Through this contrast, Biabiany explores the land's ability to reclaim its own memory and heal the wounds of colonialism, creating a space where memory, poetry, and politics converge.





dlo a rasin (water from the roots)

Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art, Harrisonburg, VA
September 17 — October 18, 2024

Minia Biabiany's solo exhibition explores links between Virginia, where a toxic chemical chlordane (also known as kepone) was produced in the 1960s and places where it was exported for use as an insecticide- including Biabiany's home island, Guadeloupe. Chlordane is both carcinogenic as well as an endocrine disruptor and its pervasive contamination of soil and water has resulted in Guadeloupean population developing a predominance of nervous and reproductive system diseases, including the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world.

Working with collaborators in Hopewell, Virginia — a small town to the east of Richmond known as "The Chemical Capital of the South," Biabiany questions this town's relation to Guadeloupe, engaging those harmed by this toxicity, community and environmental activists, and those impacted by continuing legacies of slavery, colonial exploitation, and environmental racism.





soplo

Trueque, MAC Panama, Panama
May 24 — September 9, 2023

In *soplo* exhibition, Biabiany explores the relationship between the body and space, in connection with the historical, colonial, and identity-related perceptions of Caribbean territories. She selected two paintings by Panamanian artist Haydée Victoria Suescum, titled *Figuras esenciales* and *Hojas/Pulmones*, which feature an organic and dreamlike aesthetic.

These works inspired an installation composed of sculptures representing medicinal plants common to both Guadeloupe and Panama, such as elderberry, calaguala, and fennel. These sculptures, combined with Suescum's paintings, form a «healing forest,» symbolizing the connection between human bodies and nature, and inviting visitors to reflect on breathing and reconnecting with their environment.





difé

Palais de Tokyo, Paris

October 19, 2022 — January 1, 2023

Titled *difé*, meaning «fire» in Creole, her solo exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo continues with the installation *Nuit* in the group exhibition *Shéhérazade, la nuit*. Natural, transformed, or manufactured materials, realities and fictions, figures and metaphors intertwine and punctuate the spaces. They guide as much as they constrain movement and perception, imposing a certain slowness on the body.

The *difé* exhibition traces a path between figures of banana trees made of burnt wood and ceramic pathways forming a fragile and shifting alphabet on the walls. The banana tree evokes the history of Guadeloupe—its brutal exploitation, its monocultures for export, and the ongoing ecocide caused by the use of chlordecone, a pesticide employed between the 1970s and 1990s in plantations with the complicity of the French state, which continues to poison the soil, water, and inhabitants to this day. The presence of fire reflects an imaginary shaped by a land transformed by the volcanic activity of La Soufrière—a voice of lava that alters, expands, and reshapes. A gentle fire that consumes silence.

Rooted in a personal archaeology that considers the body as a territory of relation and in relation, the artist transposes a real place marked by various traumatic events into a psychological landscape.







the lengh of my gaze at night

2022

HD video, color, sound

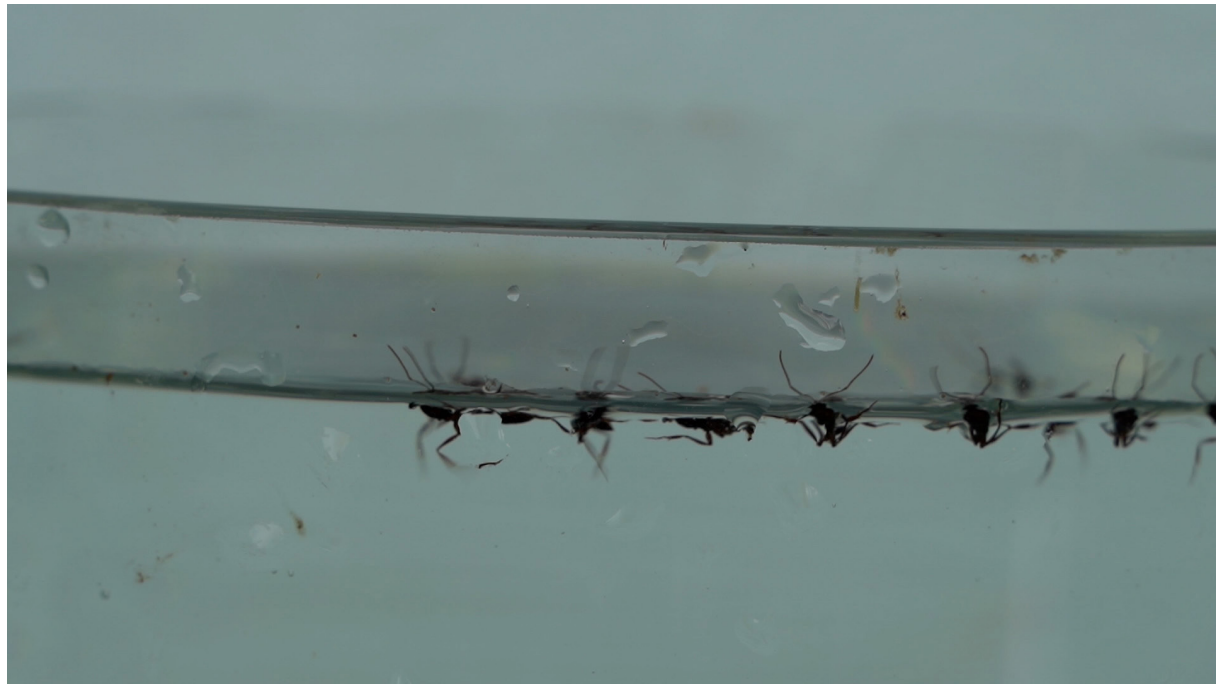
8 minutes 10 secondes

Edition of 3 + 2 AP

«The sea tastes of ancestors.»

How does our mental space influence and shape the way our bodies perceive and move? At its own rhythm, a weaving takes form upon the water, upon its historicity. Perception and imagination become one. From the context of Guadeloupe—a Caribbean archipelago shaped by French assimilation—a stream of thoughts on land, water, and human relationships to the earth is projected onto an old classroom blackboard, interwoven with the gestures of preparing a calabash, a traditional vessel.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/668720967/681292dec4?share=copy>





l'oubli présent, lectures tracées

La Grand Café, Saint-Nazaire

October 8, 2022 — December 31, 2022

Many cultures have imagined shapes by connecting certain stars with imaginary lines. Everything is a sign: constellations have been used for celestial and terrestrial navigation, as well as to guide sailors. Associated with myths, they have also been invested with the power to read destiny.

Why does the farthest reach the closest? This seems to be the question Minia Biabiany poses as she reclaims the language of constellations. Printed on fabric, her drawings evoke a history where we encounter plants with healing properties, symbols of emancipatory political movements, La Soufrière—the volcano that has accompanied the artist since childhood—and animals. These constellations are connected by cotton threads to small ceramic pieces, shaped either geometrically or drawn from myth, depicting figures such as a mermaid, a fish, or a uterus.

On the ground, large undulating lines resemble the depth contours of nautical charts. Made of coarse salt—a material of purification and preservation—these reliefs disrupt our movements, inviting a careful and deliberate approach.

The artist also integrates charred wooden sculptures that resemble mental doorways, engaging with memory. Here, Minia Biabiany references the ties connecting Guadeloupe to the African continent and Gorée Island, known as the largest slave trade center on the African coast. Today, Gorée houses a vast memorial complex, including the *Door of No Return*, commemorating the deportation of millions of enslaved people.

But Minia Biabiany's doors are not without return. Adorned with black beads, punctuated with openings, and crossed by taut threads like ropes, they are doors that speak—of forgetting, which is inseparable from the act of remembering. They are doors that, once again, bring the earth and the sky closer together.





Peaux de terre, pétales tombés

Fondation Pernod Ricard
Bonaventure (Trafiquer les mondes)
September 7, 2021 — October 30, 2021

One of the great challenges of our time is for knowledge to be transformative—to awaken the imagination, to make the world even more fascinating, to free us from the dullness of «we already know» and «it's nothing but.»

In a world as fragile as ours, what can the artist do if not create beings and worlds, question truth, repair or short-circuit history, heal and repopulate the imagination, weave new narratives, or unravel the threads of possibilities buried within reality?

This exhibition brings together a generation of artists with diverse and multifaceted practices, deeply engaged with pressing social, identity-related, and global issues. They navigate an era of uncertainty, where the current crisis only heightens the sense of ambiguity and unpredictability.



L'orage aux yeux racines

Les Tanneries, Amilly
January 23 — May 30, 2021

Throughout *L'orage aux yeux racines*, Minia Biabiany continues her long-term research into the processes of constructing Guadeloupean and Caribbean identities, while also questioning the evolving role of Black Caribbean women within these societies. This research is both the source and the result of a subtle, sensitive, and delicate artistic exploration, interwoven with fine meshes and hybridizations. It navigates the thresholds between personal and collective histories, current realities and specific territories—at the intersection of art, nature, society, and politics—guided by vibrant intuitions, historiographic re-readings, and deconstructions of inherited representations from systems of past and present domination, whether colonial or patriarchal.

This continuity in the artist's intention and approach nonetheless gives rise to something new. Here, Minia Biabiany chooses to highlight the essential, intimate, and intuitive place of drawing in her practice—particularly her drawings on paper, whose plasticity and protean nature she seeks to test in space for the first time, between two- and three-dimensionality. In this way, the exhibition marks an aesthetic and poetic transformation, creating the conditions for an epistemological and epiphanic rupture—one that the artist experiences and unfolds through a site-specific installation that offers a double reflection on her roots, whether geographical, historical, cultural, or artistic.

Blending the aerial, terrestrial, and maritime through materials, forms, and contents with strong cultural, historical, and metaphorical resonance, the installation created by Minia Biabiany is structured around a singular dialogue between delicate sculptures made of white wire—playfully stretched and weighted here and there with hybrid objects composed of Lambi conch shell fragments and carved mahogany wood—and a constellation of scattered drawings. Rendered through line work or cutouts, in felt pen, ink, or using banana skins (rob a poyò), these delicate drawn variations—sometimes abstract, sometimes figurative, enigmatic or evocative—unfold along two minimalist wooden branches carved into vanishing lines, while others flutter at the tips of bamboo stems embedded directly into the side walls.





learning from the white birds

2021

video HD, color, sound

5 minutes 58 secondes

Edition de 3 + 2AP

The “kyo,” the Creole name for the egret, returns to the same tree every night. This cycle becomes a pulse, inviting reflection on breathing and its connection to learning.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/668720967/681292dec4?share=copy>





nuît

Palais de Tokyo, Paris

October 19, 2022 — January 1st, 2023

Within the group exhibition *Shéhérazade, la nuit*, her installation *nuît* unfolds on the ground, tracing the traditional weaving pattern of the nasse, a trap system that the artist associates with the narrative of the territory, the voice of water, of the ocean as a cemetery—an echo also present in the video *the length of my gaze at night* (2022).

Suspended at varying heights beyond the human scale, sculptures with cutouts evoking both organic forms and elements of traditional Guadeloupean architecture have been burned, bearing witness to the violence of their gradual disappearance. Playing with different intensities and rhythms through shifting shadows and organic sculptures in wood and ceramic, the artist creates subtle events within the space.

With minimal means and through a perceptual rather than representational approach, Minia Biabiany transforms the tensions of her lived environment into an imaginary, poetic, and political insular landscape. Through interwoven narrative, sensory, and material threads, she examines the traces of the slave system and its ongoing colonial condition on bodies and territories.



musa nuit

La Verrière, Fondation d'entreprise Hermès,
Brussels

June 27 — September 5, 2020

The third artist invited by Guillaume Désanges, Minia Biabiany, contributes to the *Matters of Concern | Matières à panser* cycle with the exhibition *musa nuit*: a reflection on the sexuality of Guadeloupean and Caribbean women today and how it remains unconsciously marked by history. In the Brussels space, the visual artist creates a sensual and metaphorical journey, where handcrafted objects, sculptures, and a banana flower (also known as *musa*) contribute to the reactivation of a repressed memory. Born in Guadeloupe (France) in 1988, Minia Biabiany envisions the exhibition as a ritual, allowing her to address questions of identity in a way that is both poetic and politically engaged.





musa

2020

video HD, color, sound

14 minutes 7 secondes

Édition de 3 + 2AP

Conceived as an interwoven conversation between the historical legacy of slavery, the maternal lineage, and sexuality, the video Musa explores the female body, seen both as a vessel of trauma and as a space of healing.

Video link: [https://vimeo.](https://vimeo.com/432857558/051319eaab?share=copy)

[com/432857558/051319eaab?share=copy](https://vimeo.com/432857558/051319eaab?share=copy)





my uterus was a hull
for four centuries

J'ai tué le papillon dans mon oreille

Magasin des Horizons, Grenoble
January 30 — July 26, 2020

Minia Biabiany's works initiate a dialogue between the exhibition space and the meticulous arrangement of objects she creates in situ. She crafts her pieces using humble materials or those drawn from vernacular practices. Here, she invites the viewer on a sonic and physical journey toward an elsewhere — that of her archipelago: the Caribbean.

Minia Biabiany weaves connections between all her installations. The end of one becomes the beginning of another, like an exquisite corpse. Her most recent video, *Toli Toli* (2018), ends with the phrase: «Butterflies cause blindness when they blow into your ears.» «I killed the butterfly in my ear» thus begins from a state of blindness. The inability to see what is present slowly shifts toward the realization of a lost knowledge of one's own land — a consequence of a long history of assimilation policies, of dominant forces sustaining oblivion, and of a disconnection from one's surroundings. Minia Biabiany's exhibition invites us to feel and think differently, to attune ourselves once again to breath, and to revive buried stories. To see and think. To think and feel.

Deliberately organic, her installations intertwine voices and the rallying sounds of conch shells, whose repetition carries us like a refrain. Carried by the wind, these words, images, and sounds become the voice of stories in motion. In her video *Pawol sé van*, Minia Biabiany reclaims and subverts the Creole expression «pawol sé van» — «words are just wind» — taking the opposite stance. The narrative here is spoken in the first person, as a way to reconnect human beings to their environment, to the earth.

This exhibition thus compels us to confront what remains unthought in our French colonial history. The artist subtly insinuates this within each assemblage of materials — from banana leaves, to bamboo strands, to sliced conch shells. Far from any spectacular denunciation of slavery, colonization, or the endemic pollution of her overseas territory, Minia Biabiany subtly threads together the colonial legacies that still linger — and continue to kill.





Toli Toli

Akademie der Künste, 10th Berlin Biennale, Berlin
June 27, 2018 — September 5, 2020

Carrying throughout the installation *Toli Toli* (2018) in a revival of a forgotten past, elderly voices sing a song that was part of a traditional children's game in rural parts of Basse-Terre, an island of Guadeloupe. In the game, a child would find a *toli toli*, a butterfly chrysalis the shape of a tiny finger, point it in a direction, and playfully imagine a distant or (un)known destination through the words of the song. Today, the children of Basse-Terre no longer know this song.

Reflecting on knowledge systems, gestures, and narratives that are disappearing or already lost, Minia Biabiany explored the old technique of weaving bamboo fish traps for the installation *Toli Toli*. With great difficulty the artist managed to find a fisherman who could teach her this skill. In the work, weaving becomes a metaphor for the painful entanglement of Guadeloupe's tropical environment with the colonial past and present. Biabiany's traps cast shadows on the floor. Like ghosts they disappear and reappear, depending on the movement of the viewer through the space. Shifting between revealing and erasing the meshwork of an elusive past, the spectator enters the schizophrenic state of the islands.



toli toli

2018

HD video, color, sound

10 minutes 14 secondes

Edition of 4 + 1 AP

Toli Toli uses the spatial metaphor of an old children's song to summon a political and layered narrative of the Guadeloupean territory.

In this video-poem, the "toli toli" — which means "butterfly chrysalis" in Guadeloupean Creole — evokes directions toward an inner elsewhere, toward spaces and distances shaped by the presence of coloniality.

While recounting the story of a landscape where shadow holds the "power to name," two hands appear to ceaselessly weave with an invisible material, linking the technique of bamboo weaving to the very structure of language.

Both the song and the bamboo weaving technique — once used to make fish traps — have nearly vanished from Guadeloupean culture and knowledge.

By re-associating the act of weaving with the act of storytelling, the woven bamboo sculptures rise and cast shadows directly onto the viewer's skin, guiding their movement through the exhibition space.



Video link: <https://vimeo.com/474487496/b25ee36dc-f?share=copy>



the diktat of the space makes the lie bigger

Qui vivra verra, qui mourra saura (Who will live will see, who will die will know)

Crac Alsace, Altkirch

June 13— September 15, 2019

With *Qui vivra verra, Qui mourra saura (Who will live will see, who will die will know)* Minia Biabiany explores the forgotten knowledge that structures the traditional Guadeloupean «case» garden.

The «case» garden is one of the earliest forms of territorial appropriation and construction for the enslaved people of Guadeloupe. It is both a space for domesticating nature and a site of social relationships, particularly those between the living and the dead. The garden surrounding the dwelling consists of successive «shells» of ornamental, medicinal, or therapeutic plants that protect, heal its inhabitants, or enhance this private yet visible space.

The dwelling itself is built from a two-room module, approximately 2.80 × 5.60 meters, covered by a tin roof with two or four slopes—serving as the base for an expansion process. It typically has two doors on each long side and one on the shorter sides. Extensions are made by adding new rooms through the existing French doors, which then become interior doors—gradually transforming the house into a labyrinthine space according to the family's needs.

Its layout reflects a concern for protection, with careful cleaning of its surroundings and the presence of protective plants guarding against acts of witchcraft by spirits or through the placement of objects. The color of the house walls also conveys the diplomacy of its occupants with spirits, whether benevolent or malevolent. Blue signifies maximum protection, red repels attacks and manifests strength.

Finally, depending on its dominant color and the shape of its leaves, a single plant may have a different name depending on whether it is placed in front or behind the house. When planted at the front, *Qui vivra verra* promotes longevity, whereas at the back, *Qui mourra saura* facilitates the transmission of knowledge between generations.

The shell-like structure of the case garden serves as a tangible site of negotiation and mediation with the invisible. Although its structure still exists today, its meaning has almost entirely faded.



pawòl sé van

2020

video HD, color, sound

13 minutes

Edition of 3+ 2AP

Pawòl sé van takes weaving as a paradigm for reconfiguring narrative. In continuity with the video *Toli Toli*, this work draws a poetic voice from the land, allowing us to hear both the coloniality of Guadeloupe's current condition and its inherited legacy.

The wind becomes a form of resistance — a constant reminder that, despite French colonial assimilation, dispossession, and a dramatic ecocide, the land continues to speak..

Video link: [https://vimeo.](https://vimeo.com/708034170/88369f8005?share=copy)

[com/708034170/88369f8005?share=copy](https://vimeo.com/708034170/88369f8005?share=copy)



blue spelling

2016

video HD, color, sound

2 minutes 22 secondes

Edition de 3 + 2AP

Perhaps this dream belongs to the remembered echoes of the non-linear time of Caribbean history.

Created from an accumulation of chalk drawings on a blackboard, this video begins with an intimate questioning of self-recognition.

As in light sleep, when the perception of time shifts — like a fractured echo.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/257204718/f2b98ce-4ce?share=copy>

