

## **Decolonial Imagination and the Unmaking of (Post) Colonial Cities and Tongues: History, Memory, and Futurity in the Work of Angolan, Mozambican, São Tomean, Cabo Verdean, and Portuguese Contemporary Artists**

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**ABSTRACT:** This essay argues for the importance of attending to the visual production of contemporary artists concerning critical, decolonizing perspectives on notions of Portuguese heritage and influence in Portuguese-speaking African countries. Several artists have been looking critically at sculptural, architectural, and linguistic structures, to name a few, left by Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde, and Guinea-Bissau, as well as in Portugal's urban landscapes. The examined case studies are relevant works by the artists Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola, b. 1979); Ângela Ferreira (Mozambique, b. 1958); Filipa César (Portugal, b. 1975); Olavo Amado (São Tomé and Príncipe, b. 1979); Filipe Branquinho (Mozambique, b. 1977); Mónica de Miranda (Portugal, b. 1976); René Tavares (São Tomé and Príncipe, b. 1983); Irineu Destourelles (Cabo Verde, b. 1974); and Grada Kilomba (Portugal, b. 1968). These artists bring such physical and linguistic colonial remnants to light from an ethico-political perspective with inventiveness and wit, employing artistic disruption in order to think critically about psychic and systemic coloniality in the postcolonial present and to conceive of decolonized futures.

**KEYWORDS:** contemporary art; decolonizing heritage and influence; cities, architectures, and languages; history, memory, and futurity

**RESUMO:** Este ensaio argumenta no sentido de se reconhecer a importância da produção visual dos artistas contemporâneos no que a perspectivas críticas e descolonizadoras das noções de património e influência portuguesa nos países africanos de língua oficial portuguesa diz respeito. Vários artistas têm olhado criticamente para as estruturas escultóricas, arquitectónicas e linguísticas, entre outras, que foram deixadas pelo colonialismo português em Angola, Moçambique, São Tomé e Príncipe, Cabo Verde e

Guiné-Bissau, assim como nas paisagens urbanas de Portugal. Os estudos de caso em análise são obras relevantes dos artistas Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola, 1979), Ângela Ferreira (Moçambique, 1958), Filipa César (Portugal, 1975), Olavo Amado (São Tomé e Príncipe, 1979), Filipe Branquinho (Moçambique, 1977), Mónica de Miranda (Portugal, 1976), René Tavares (São Tomé e Príncipe, 1983), Irineu Destourelles (Cabo Verde, 1974), e Grada Kilomba (Portugal, 1968). Com inventividade e humor, estes artistas trazem à luz ético-politicamente e perturbam artisticamente tais vestígios coloniais físicos e linguísticos, com o intuito de pensar criticamente sobre a colonialidade psíquica e sistémica no presente pós-colonial, e de conceber futuros descolonizados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: arte contemporânea; descolonizar património e influência; cidades, arquitecturas e línguas; história, memória e futuridade

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In this essay, I will argue for the importance of attending to the visual production of contemporary artists concerning decolonizing perspectives on notions of Portuguese heritage and influence in Portuguese-speaking African countries. Several artists have been looking critically at sculptural, architectural, and linguistic structures (among other kinds) left by Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde, and Guinea-Bissau, as well as in Portugal's urban landscapes. These artists bring such physical and linguistic colonial remnants to light from an ethico-political perspective with inventiveness and wit, employing artistic disruption in order to think critically about psychic and systemic coloniality in the postcolonial present and to conceive of decolonized futures (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2000 and 2011; Sousa Santos 2010; Mbembe 2001).

According to Ann Stoler's elaborations on imperial debris as both ruins and ruinations, such "leftovers" are neither merely "rendered into neglect" nor simply "valorized for insistent remembrance" (2013, x). Following her suggestion, my decolonial analysis is sustained by the recognition that one must move

away from the nostalgic European gaze upon ruins, . . . treat them as symptom and substance of history's destructive force, . . . take the measure of the "fragility" of capitalist culture from the decaying structures left scattered across our urban and rural geographies, . . . attend to the force of these fragments and the traces of violence left in its wake. (Stoler 2013, ix)

This approach implies a turn to material ruins as forms of socioeconomic, environmental, and psychic ruination, that is, as not simply “memorialized, monumental ‘leftovers’ or relics” but mostly “what people are left with”: “what remains blocking livelihoods and health, . . . the aftershocks of imperial assault, . . . the social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things” (Stoler 2013, 9; original emphasis). These effects are to be found “in the corroded hollows of landscapes, in the gutted infrastructures of segregated cityscapes and in the microecologies of matter and mind” (9). Thus, by looking at apparently “inert remains,” I examine “their vital refiguration” with Stoler’s “pointed” question in mind: “How do imperial formations persist in their material debris, in ruined landscapes and through the social ruination of people’s lives?” (9).

My case studies are manifold, which gives this essay a panoramic nature, although it is also structured along three main axes of analysis: colonial monuments (the longest section, which requires further segmentation for the sake of clarity); modernist architecture; and language and text. In the first section, I examine works by Kiluanji Kia Henda, Filipa César, Olavo Amado, and Ângela Ferreira around colonial statuary in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Portugal (which also necessitates a brief discussion on a postcolonial statue in Luanda and an anticolonial photograph, agronomy, and militant film in Guinea-Bissau). In the second section, I focus on instances of modernist architecture built by the Portuguese in Mozambique and Angola through works by Filipe Branquinho, Kiluanji Kia Henda, and Mónica de Miranda (while not forgetting Cold War-era examples of socialist modernism built by the Soviets in Luanda). In the third section, I analyze works by René Tavares, Irineu Destourelles, and Grada Kilomba, which address the coloniality imbedded in language and text, as well as historical and contemporary strategies of resistance and reinvention.

## 1. Decolonizing Colonial Monuments

### 1.1 Kiluanji Kia Henda’s *Homem Novo: Balumuka and Redefining the Power*

In the twelve-part photographic work *Balumuka (Ambush)* (2010) (Figs. 1–2),<sup>2</sup> Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola, b. 1979) has appropriated colonial ruins—and their attendant ruinations—in the urban landscape of Luanda in order to “ruin” them actively; that is, he has brought them to the visible surface of photography in order to undermine whatever symbolic power they might still embody. Such leftover structures

of Portuguese colonialism have included fallen and broken colonial statues of male so-called heroes (Diogo Cão, Paulo Dias de Novais, Pedro Alexandrino, Afonso Henriques, Luís Vaz de Camões, among others),<sup>2</sup> “ambushed” at the São Miguel fortress by the upright solidity of the Angolan Queen Njinga Mbandi.<sup>3</sup> In Kia Henda’s images, the queen temporarily “reenacts” her resistance against colonial occupation in the seventeenth century while the Kinaxixi square, where her pedestal used to stand, undergoes a profound and as yet unfinished urban transformation.<sup>4</sup> Awaiting the completion of the construction works, her bronze statue has been placed at the São Miguel fortress, where the Museum of the Armed Forces has been housed since independence, albeit neglected and closed for a long period due to the civil war (1975–2002) and the lack of appropriate conditions. Kia Henda photographed the fortress-museum before its renovation, reopening, and renaming as the National Museum of Military History were completed in 2013 (that is, before there was a definitive idea of what to do with these colonial leftovers) and when the construction works taking place both at Kinaxixi and the museum put the statues in motion, permitting their encounter. They were ultimately incorporated into the reopened museum’s collection and display, with Njinga’s statue prominently placed at the entrance, where it remains today.

At the time of *Balumuka* (and the earlier and related *Transit*, from 2009),<sup>5</sup> this colonial statuary was still “stranded,” while awaiting some sort of final destination. According to Kia Henda, it was impossible to exhibit after independence; ironically replicating the migratory discourse of “Fortress Europe,” he equated these monuments to citizens with expired visas, waiting for deportation (Kia Henda 2010; Kia Henda in Knoppers 2015; Kia Henda in Hossfeld 2018, 68). He added that they could be exchanged for all the Angolan objects taken by the Portuguese during colonialism, which currently belong to Portuguese museums (Kia Henda in Knoppers 2015). Because these statues were expelled to the



Figs. 1-2. Kiluanji Kia Henda, part of *Balumuka (Ambush)*, 2010. Twelve digital chromogenic prints on matte paper mounted on aluminium, 166 x 110 cm each. From the series *Homem Novo*, 2009–2013. © Kiluanji Kia Henda. Courtesy of the artist.





fortress—a colonial “embassy” of sorts, erected in 1575 by Dias de Novais—where they remained exiled, unwanted, and out of sight, they have shared the space with military equipment from several historical periods: the Portuguese colonial occupation from the sixteenth century onwards; the mass settlement of the hinterland during the so-called pacification military campaigns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which occurred in the wake of the Berlin Conference of 1884–85; the liberation war (1961–74); and the civil war (1975–2002). That is to say, the statues have mingled with colonial, anticolonial, and Cold War traces left on Angolan soil by Angolans, Portuguese, Soviets, Cubans, and South Africans, among others. In Kia Henda’s work, the then-decayed colonial fortress/postcolonial museum emerges as a palimpsest of Angola’s various times (and spaces) of occupation, struggle, and resistance—a material archive opening onto the transnational and transhistorical complexity of Angolan colonial and postcolonial history, with lingering effects in the present.<sup>6</sup>

The leftover structures examined by Kia Henda also included the colonial pedestals left vacant by the “ambushed” and “stranded” statues, as is evident in *Redefining the Power* (2011) (Fig. 3). Here, the artist collaboratively orchestrated and photographed the pedestals’ temporary occupation or squatting by several young performers, who are poets, designers, and activists; friends and fellow cultural workers he admires. Both *Balumuka* and *Redefining the Power* form an integral part of the series *Homem Novo* (New Man) (2009–13), the title of which is indebted to the Marxist-Leninist conception of revolutionary subjectivity and nationhood. Similarly to many other revolutionary contexts, the expression “new man” also infused the rhetoric of revolutionary Angola, and is still inscribed in the country’s national anthem.<sup>7</sup> As a whole, the *Homem Novo* series carries out a heterogeneous, critical, and ironic investigation not only of colonial, anticolonial, post-independence, and Cold War remnants, but also of the new post-Cold War and post-civil war symbols and heroes of the nation. As opposed to both the orthodox “new man” of the socialist revolution and the politicians, oligarchs, and media entertainers of global capitalism, to which Angola now fully belongs, Kia Henda celebrates other revolutionary subjects, artistic work and creativity, friendship and collaboration, activism and nonnormative genders and sexualities, as contributing to a more democratic society. Real and fictive; solid and transient; stone-made, metallic, and human; sculptural and performative—Kia Henda shows the nation’s old and new symbols as not only enmeshed in Luanda’s urban space, but also made visible so as to upset



Fig. 3. Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Redefining the Power III*, 2011. Three photographic prints on aluminium, 80 × 120 cm. From the series *Homem Novo*, 2009–13. © Kiluanji Kia Henda. Courtesy of the artist.

neoliberal views of progress and development and patriarchal conceptions of subjectivity, including the revolutionary. Njinga’s imposing figure and opposing gesture, alongside those of the performers Shunnuz Fiel, Didi Fernandes, and Miguel Prince on the vacant pedestals, might be said to call for the imagination of other, decolonial futures.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2 Filipa César’s *The Embassy, Cuba, and Cacheu*

As far as colonial embassies, fortresses, archives, and statues are concerned, the work of Filipa César (Portugal, b. 1975) similarly demands our attention. In *The Embassy* (2011) (Fig. 4), César filmed the “gazing” hands of the Guinean archivist Armando Lona perusing a colonial photo album of the National Historical Archives in Bissau. The work’s title pays homage to Chris Marker’s *The Embassy* (1973), a Super 8 short feature film depicting a large crowd of asylum seekers packed into a foreign embassy. Although the country where the tense events unfold is not identified, it becomes clear that it is Chile after Pinochet’s military coup on 11 September 1973. Loosely inspired by Marker’s *Embassy*, while also departing from it, César’s film ascribes the status of the embassy to the archive, insofar as the latter is shown to be a space similarly leading towards a foreign country of sorts—in this case, the past (Lowenthal 1985). César thus transferred Marker’s spatial and geographical elaborations on border-crossing to time and



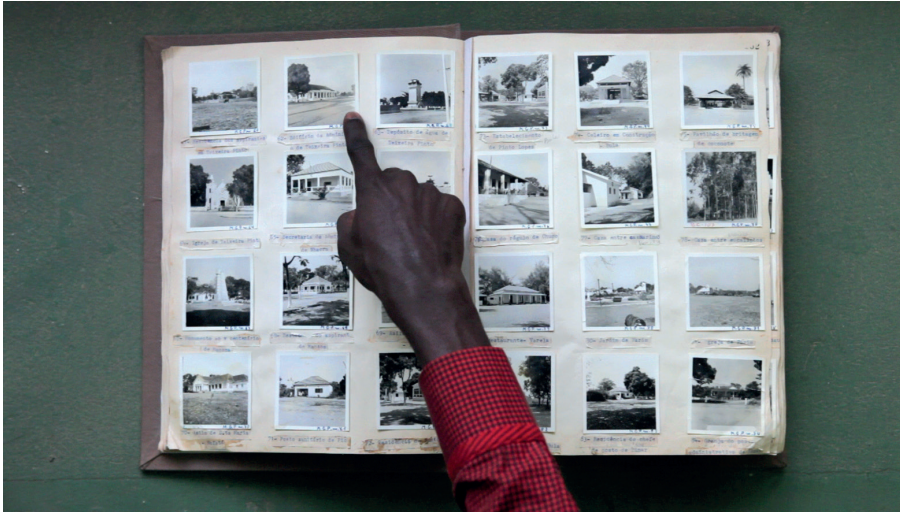


Fig. 4. Filipa César, *The Embassy*, 2011. Video still. © Filipa César. Courtesy of the artist and Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon.

history, while both artists can be said to have filmed these passages from an ethico-political perspective. In César's video, Lona's "viewing" hands and words point to and contextualize, respectively, the photographs in the colonial album, whereby he not only takes the spectator to the colonial past but, most importantly, deconstructs the colonial gaze that fixed and catalogued bodies and landscapes—including urban spaces with their colonial statues and monuments.<sup>9</sup> This decolonizing gesture culminates in the image of a loose photograph, found in between the album's last pages, of a PAIGC school in a liberated zone.<sup>10</sup> This is an image of struggle and revolution that highlights the fundamental role that education and culture played (Cabral 2013, 267–82, 283–98; Vaz Borges 2019). However, revolution is not devoid of contradiction in this image; in fact, Lona concludes by commenting on how the symbol of the party, inscribed on the cover of the PAIGC school book being read by the students in the photo, became the symbol of the nation in an entanglement marked by "fusion or confusion" (César 2011).

Thereafter, César made other films about another archive, the remains of which she found in peril of disappearance in 2011. *Cuba* (2012), *Conakry* (2012), and subsequent films in what she has named the *Luta ca caba inda* project, revisit the history of the National Film and Audiovisual Institute (INCA) of Guinea-Bissau,

in the framework of the PAIGC liberation struggle and post-independence nation building.<sup>11</sup> Founded in 1977, the institute holds films made before and after independence by filmmakers such as Flora Gomes, Sana na N'Hada, and the late Josefina Lopes Crato and José Bolama Cobumba, as well as films from countries supporting the Guinean struggle, some films from Portugal, and copies of films left by Marker when he visited the country in 1979.<sup>12</sup> The leader of the PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral, had sent Gomes, N'Hada, Crato, and Cobumba to Cuba to train with Santiago Álvarez at the Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC) in 1967.

In *Cuba*, images of Álvarez's *Año 7* (*Year 7*) (1966) and of Cobumba, Crato, Gomes, and N'Hada's unfinished *Guiné-Bissau: 6 anos depois* (*Guinea-Bissau: 6 Years Later*) (1980) unfold on a screen and on the bodies of three performers: the Guinean filmmaker Suleimane Biai; INCA's former director, the Guinean Carlos Vaz; and the Portuguese actress Joana Barrios. They read aloud excerpts from Cabral's *Estudos agrários* (*Agrarian Studies*) (1988), which gathers his agronomic texts from 1949 to 1960, and from his "A arma da teoria" (*The Weapon of Theory*), the lecture he gave at the Tricontinental Conference in Cuba in 1966 (Cabral 2013, 239–56). *Cuba* initiated César's ongoing examination of the role played by Guinean militant cinema and its internationalist networks of solidarity in both recording and strengthening the liberation struggle and the decolonizing nation building. These processes were, in turn, deeply nourished by Cabral's agronomic knowledge and experience of land and soil (acquired in Cuba, in the Alentejo region of Portugal, in the final course of study for his agronomy degree, and later in Guinea-Bissau and Angola), and by the emancipatory relevance he ascribed to theory and culture.<sup>13</sup>

César filmed *Cacheu* (2012) in between the more literally archival *The Embassy* and *Cuba*, while anticipating the latter's cinematic focus (and marking the actual inception of *Luta ca caba inda*) (Fig. 5). Somewhat similarly to Kia Henda's *Balumuka* at the São Miguel fortress in Luanda, *Cacheu* harnesses the haunted atmosphere of the Cacheu fortress (built in 1588), in northwestern Guinea-Bissau, for an active work of remembrance. Both Kia Henda and César choreograph a dance of ghosts performed by the stone specters of colonial statues: dead and yet hauntingly present (Derrida 1994; Gordon 2008), fallen from their pedestals, lying broken in graveyards of imperial debris (Stoler 2013), and yet demanding the living to recognize the enduring violence of their fallen gestures. Even more demanding, however, of both the living and these colonial dead, are the



Fig. 5. Filipa César, *Cacheu*, 2012. Video still. © Filipa César. Courtesy of the artist and Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon.

statue-less ghosts of the millions of enslaved Africans who were taken through Cacheu, São Miguel, and all the other fortresses on African shores toward the Americas (Sharpe 2002).

Beginning a strategy that César would use in subsequent films of the *Luta cabala inda* project, *Cacheu* comprises a 16 mm single shot of a performative lecture on, and in front of, a screening. The performer, Joana Barrios, analyzes various screened images of the Cacheu fortress and of the Portuguese statues that, depicting figures from different colonial periods (Teixeira Pinto, Honório Barreto, Nuno Tristão, and Diogo Cão), were relocated to the fort in postcolonial times.<sup>14</sup> The visual analysis allows Barrios to delve into the centuries-old history of occupation and enslavement led by the Portuguese in the region, and of the Guinean resistance and struggle. The images include photos of Cacheu's statues from 2010 and 2012, and fragments from several films: César's *The Embassy* (the moment when Lona signals the photo where the statue of Teixeira Pinto is still standing on its pedestal); Marker's *Sans soleil* (Sunless) (1983), which shows Pinto's and Barreto's fallen, broken statues;<sup>15</sup> and Gomes's *Mortu nega* (Death Denied or Those Whom Death Refused) (1988), with Tristão's and Cão's statues standing on the floor before relocation.<sup>16</sup> In her lecture, Barrios comments on Cacheu's photos with slightly adapted script excerpts from Marker, Alain

Resnais, Ghislain Cloquet's *Les statues meurent aussi* (*Statues Also Die*) (1953), and Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni's *Brutalität in Stein* (*Brutality in Stone*) (1961), as well as the linguist Daniel Duku's reflections on decolonizing the language of the so-called discoveries.<sup>17</sup> In an important moment, Barrios is interrupted by a recorded Guinean voice of a man recounting his memories of these statues in his own Creole words. Just before the end, *Cacheu* lingers briefly on the moving image of a cauldron where food for enslaved people was once cooked, which, placed at the center of the fortress, memorializes the violence of enslavement and its legacies, and pays homage to those who died, survived, and resisted.

Although these dead colonial statues have been “buried” in *Cacheu*, the undying haunting of their violent histories and legacies, made visible on the screen, lives on beneath the veil of denial and amnesia. Although monuments celebrating colonial figures have fallen in the past and continue to fall, and while important counter-monuments have often been erected in their place through activism and art (even if only temporarily, at times), such a fall must be made truly deadly as an actual epistemic and structural decolonization and reparation.<sup>18</sup> Otherwise, no matter how fallen, broken, and out of sight, such statues will keep haunting lives undyingly. In Stoler's (2013, 9) terms, these ruins' violent histories and legacies must be remembered and examined so that their attendant social and psychic ruinations are, themselves, ruined. According to Derrida's hauntological spectropoetics—which is “not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations”—in order to live “more justly” one must “learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts” (1994, exordium; original emphases). This “being-with specters” (Derrida 1994, exordium) should aim at the decolonial healing afforded by the possibility to “properly bury” the traumatic past (Sharpe 2002; Kilomba 2008, 146), which requires remembrance first and foremost, and the desire for a future otherwise. Significantly, for Derrida, spectral justice concerns responsibility for those who are “not yet” as much as “those who are no longer” (1994, exordium).

### 1.3 Olavo Amado's *(Re)Descobertos*

As opposed to the colonial statues' ruined condition in Kia Henda's photographs and César's video, in Olavo Amado's (São Tomé and Príncipe, b. 1979) sartorial intervention for the camera in the photographic series *(Re)Descobertos* ([Re] Discovered) (2013) (Fig. 6), they seem to have risen again, but only ostensibly.<sup>19</sup>





Fig. 6. Olavo Amado, *(Re)Descobertos*, 2013. Inkjet print on matte paper, 70 x 100 cm. From the series *(Re)Descobertos*, 2013. © Olavo Amado. Courtesy of the artist.

In fact, despite the statues' fairly well-preserved condition, the artist's gesture of dressing them up in colorful African-cloth garments necessarily and humorously disturbs any heroic grandeur they could evoke, especially considering their eminent placement at the entrance of São Tomé's National Museum, at the São Sebastião fortress. Amado critically acknowledges the prominent visibility ascribed to the statues by their location as he mocks it. His intervention makes them even more conspicuous, but in a noncelebratory and humorous fashion: it reverses the colonial relationship of "discoverer versus discovered" by turning the Portuguese into the (re)discovered, as the title suggests. They also emerge as reappropriated and Africanized by São Tomeans, and therefore much more in line with the histories of struggle and resistance told by the National Museum's display. Finally, the work's title warns against not only the untruth of the so-called discoveries, but also the dangers of ongoing patterns of coloniality and the neocolonialism at work in capitalist forms of European "rediscovery."

#### 1.4 Kiluanji Kia Henda's *A descoberta* and Ângela Ferreira's *Messy Colonialism, Wild Decolonization*

In Lisbon, Kia Henda, Ângela Ferreira (Mozambique, b. 1958) and others have also looked at the ways in which the grand narrative of the so-called discoveries continues to deny the violent histories and memories of slavery and colonialism. This denialist narrative, in addition to thriving at all levels of public education (including many sectors of Portuguese academia), remains deeply embedded in celebratory monuments, many of which were built under the aegis of the Estado Novo dictatorial regime (1926–74), while others have been erected much more recently.<sup>20</sup> This denial contributes to perpetuating the present-day legacies of such violent pasts in the form of an enduring structural racism in contemporary Portuguese society, conveniently swept under the carpet of an anxiously maintained lusotropicalism, now repackaged as *lusofonia* and the idea of a benign Portuguese influence around the world.<sup>21</sup> Due to intersections of race, class, and gender, those who continue to carry the heavy burden of such a collective denial are, today as much as yesterday, nonwhite bodies (Black, Romany, and other racialized communities) and, in particular, cis- and transgender racialized women (hooks 2015; Davis 1983; Collins 2009; Crenshaw 1989; Vergès 2019). After many decades of resistance and struggle, antiracist and intersectional feminist grassroots organizations are bringing structural racism and the processes of memorialization of slavery and colonialism into the public sphere with increasing visibility.<sup>22</sup>

Ferreira's video and sculptural installation *Messy Colonialism, Wild Decolonization* (2015) (Fig. 8), like much of her other work, involved exploring several archives. In the Portuguese Film Archive and in open-access online archives, she found filmic and photographic material relating to the *Padrão dos Descobrimentos* (Monument to the Discoveries) in the Praça do Império (Empire Square) in Belém, Lisbon. The monument had previously been the setting of Kia Henda's

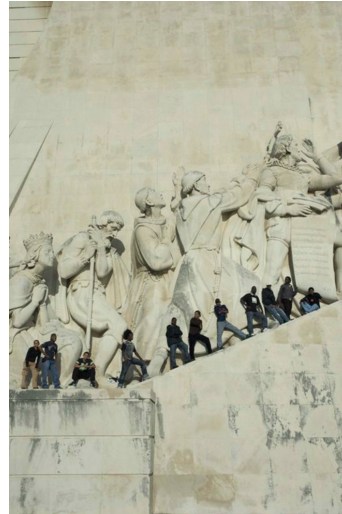


Fig. 7. Kiluanji Kia Henda, *A descoberta*, 2007. Inkjet print on cotton paper, 188 x 120 cm. © Kiluanji Kia Henda. Courtesy of the artist.

A *descoberta* (The Discovery) (2007) (Fig. 7), which depicts black youth squatting the structure, as choreographed by the artist, and mockingly “discovering” it.<sup>23</sup> The image brings to the fore the black subjectivity that remains structurally marginalized in Portuguese society through urban segregation—a powerful legacy of the colonial and enslaving violence that is silenced by the monument’s celebratory narrative.

Almost a decade later, Ferreira used her archival material to make a video to be screened on a wooden sculpture that recreates the crates and boxes of the Portuguese settlers who left the former colonies in 1975.<sup>24</sup> The video and the sculpture intend to reflect on how the site of the Padrão dos Descobrimentos symbolically marked both the beginning of the Portuguese colonial enterprise as envisioned by the Estado Novo regime from the late 1930s and its collapse in the mid-1970s, after thirteen years of war waged against the Angolan, Mozambican, and Guinean liberation movements (1961–74). The first, temporary version of the Padrão was inaugurated at the Exhibition of the Portuguese World, organized by the regime in 1940 to celebrate the anniversary of Portugal’s founding in 1140 and Portuguese independence from Spain in 1640. A permanent version of the monument was inaugurated in 1960, in commemoration of the anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator—the inaugural figure, both historical and mythical, of the so-called age of the discoveries—in 1460.<sup>25</sup> Ferreira’s video begins with images of the Padrão’s construction, pertaining to the newsreels *Imagens de Portugal* (Images of Portugal) nr. 186 (1959) and nr. 193 (1960), the latter of which depicts the building of the sculptures that became the Padrão’s main decorative elements at the atelier of Leopoldo de Almeida.

The sides of the monument, in the shape of a caravel facing the Tagus estuary, are occupied by an ascending parade of kings, conquerors, explorers, scholars, and poets, led by Henry the Navigator, and sculpted in the large-scale, epic style typical of Estado Novo statuary—stone heroes demonumentalized by Kia Henda’s black subjects. The façade takes the form of a cross, within which appears the image of a sword—a powerful metaphor for the entanglements between the discoveries, evangelizing/civilizing mission, and conquest.<sup>26</sup> The films that Ferreira uses to recall these histories were also made in the context of the Estado Novo’s propaganda initiatives.<sup>27</sup> Her short-length silent video piece is a potent reminder of the regime’s ideological investment in grand cultural events, monumental public sculpture, architecture, and cinema in order to promote and celebrate itself; and of the fact that the histories of some of these



Fig. 8. Ângela Ferreira, *Messy Colonialism, Wild Decolonization*, 2015. Installation view, GIBCA—Gothenburg International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Roda Sten Konsthall, Gothenburg, 2015. © Hendrik Zeitler. Courtesy of the artist.

cultural productions have still not been critically reexamined outside of some academic circles.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that such newsreels were sponsored and controlled by the Estado Novo underscores the importance of what comes next in Ferreira's video piece. About forty years later, the wooden crates of returning settlers piled up at this very same site—the Padrão monument—some of them remaining there for years awaiting clearance, caught up amid the revolutionary period. The video ends with two images taken by the photojournalist Alfredo Cunha in 1975, depicting what Ferreira terms the “spoils of the end of colonialism . . . standing up against the Monument to the Discoveries” (Ferreira 2015): the crates and boxes that the installation renders sculpturally.<sup>29</sup> Cunha's images poignantly testify to the ironies of history in showing what remained of the so-called discoveries next to their very monument: a hurriedly “crated empire” in pieces.<sup>30</sup> Shipped to Portugal and stacked next to the Padrão, the crates ultimately demonumentalized it.

In this investigation and many others, Ferreira looks at historical events in a way that does justice to their complexities and contradictions, inviting us to

do the same. She confronts us with the absence of a rigorous public debate on the violence of the colonial enterprise—a colonial violence that goes back to the beginning of the Portuguese empire and far predates the Estado Novo (as was made evident by its own cultural manifestations celebrating historical moments of colonial discovery and conquest, which the regime powerfully reconfigured within its own dictatorial framework). Ferreira also considers, however, the difficulties and consequences of a decolonization process that involved the sudden mass arrival of many Portuguese from the former colonies who were practically strangers in the former metropole. Many of them resented the loss of the empire and were undesired and unwanted by the revolution. Far from victimizing former settlers, Ferreira is interested in examining how decolonization remained psychically unfinished.<sup>31</sup> The violence of colonial exploitation and the loss of the empire in a bloody war were silenced to the extent that Portuguese society has become amnesiac and nostalgic, repressing and whitewashing the colonial past and, as elaborated by Paul Gilroy (2004) with regards to the British context, ultimately disallowing a thorough consideration of its enduring legacies.

## 2. Decolonizing Modernist Architecture

Some artists have also examined the ways in which the remnants of the modernist architecture left by the Portuguese in the former African colonies have been reappropriated in postcolonial times. Mostly through photography and video, Kia Henda and Mónica de Miranda (Portugal, b. 1976) in Angola, and Filipe Branquinho (Mozambique, b. 1977) in Mozambique, among others, reflect on the many pasts—colonial, post-independence, post-Cold War, post-civil war—told by the often decaying, and yet reinhabited, modernist buildings of 1950s and 1960s Luanda, Maputo, and elsewhere. These artists, gazing without nostalgia at these pasts through architecture, critically engage with a present marked by oligarchic capitalism and its neoliberal conceptions of progress and development, which prompts them to imagine other futurities. Particularly in Luanda, such conceptions have been materialized in, and through, the neglect and demolition of downtown architectural heritage and the forced eviction of inner-city slum dwellers to make way for the glossy skyscrapers and waterfronts of a deeply segregated and gentrified urban space.<sup>32</sup>

Branquinho, who has a background in architecture, photographed contemporary Maputo in the *Interior Landscapes* series (2011–15) (Fig. 9) by examining the exterior views (building façades and a coastline panorama) and, especially, the





Fig. 9. Filipe Branquinho, *Cine Theater Africa, Audience*, 2011. Inkjet print, variable dimensions. From the series *Interior Landscapes*, 2011–15. © Filipe Branquinho. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Magnin-A, Paris.

indoors of several iconic buildings of the city's colonial and postcolonial history and cultural life: the Scala, Africa, and Gil Vicente movie theaters, the Iron House, the Natural History Museum, the Historical Archive, the Mozambican Radio, the Center for Photographic Education, among several others (Pinho 2015). Unlike in previous series, which relied more heavily on portrait,<sup>33</sup> the artist depicts a profound sense of inhabitation of many of these interiors through close attention to architectural structures such as corridors, doors, walls, and windows, as well as furniture and other objects evincing human presence in seemingly vacant spaces, with few photographic subjects posing for the camera. The series shows most of these buildings as not only fairly preserved (with some exceptions), but also, importantly, in active use as spaces for labor, study, leisure, commerce, and religion, despite the apparent human absence.

As a whole, the series becomes a visual archive and cartography of sorts, mapping a possible journey across the city's past and present through an architecture that is notably (though not exclusively) modernist. Particularly in Mozambique and Angola, modernist architecture became an integral part of the so-called



Figs. 10-11. Kiluanji Kia Henda, *The Spaceship Icarus 13, Luanda*, 2008, and *The Astronomy Observatory, Namib Desert*, 2008. Photographs mounted on acrylic frame, 120 x 80 cm each. From *Icarus 13*, 2008. © Kiluanji Kia Henda. Courtesy of the artist.



modernizing plans of the last decades of Portuguese colonialism. Maputo, Luanda, and other cities were sites of architectural, urban, and social experimentation by more progressive architects, where racial segregation nonetheless persisted, and finally became spaces for a reappropriated, recreated modernity to be inhabited by Mozambicans and Angolans after independence. Thus, despite the buildings' colonial origin, Branquinho's photographs avoid the dangers of nostalgia by highlighting their contemporary life and their status as Mozambican historical and architectural heritage.

However, the modernist architecture examined by contemporary artists also includes post-independence constructions from the Cold War period, especially in Angola. The mausoleum where Agostinho Neto is supposedly buried was built in Luanda by the Soviet Union in 1982, three years after his death in Moscow.<sup>34</sup> Kia Henda's *Icarus 13* (2008), inspired by Cold War histories and fictions of space conquest as well as Western antiquity myths, humorously reconfigures the mausoleum into the Icarus 13 spaceship (Fig. 10), which, thanks to the creative efforts of a team of Angolan scientists, successfully completed humankind's first journey to the sun in 2006.<sup>35</sup> Other shots in Kia Henda's script include those of the Astronomy Observatory in the Namib desert (Fig. 11)—in fact, the Cine-Estúdio, an abandoned modernist movie theater left unfinished by the Portuguese in the city of Namibe in 1975.<sup>36</sup> Kia Henda's subsequent film, *Concrete Affection—Zopo Lady* (2014–15), draws on the Polish journalist Richard Kapuściński's 1976 book *Another Day of Life* and uses the quasi-sculptural vestiges of architectural modernism in contemporary Luanda to narrate a fictionalized story of sudden departure in the chaotic summer of 1975, when the Portuguese desperately packed their belongings in crates and massively abandoned the city on the verge of civil war.<sup>37</sup>

Miranda's *Panorama* series (2017–18) also draws on modernist architecture in Angola. Her previous work, *Hotel Globo* (2014–15), had already critically examined the changing urban surface of Luanda through video, photographic, and performative incursions into the interior landscapes of the 1950s Hotel Globo. Until recently, the modernist hotel had still functioned in downtown Luanda, where, as stated earlier, the architectural heritage has been increasingly replaced with luxurious high-rise buildings.<sup>38</sup> In Miranda's work, modernist buildings, including the Hotel Globo and, subsequently, the Hotel Panorama and the Karl Marx Cinema (called Avis before independence; see Fig. 12), become spatio-temporal and affective "lenses" through which her own and her collaborators' bodies gaze at, inhabit, and reappropriate the multiple geographies and histories of the



Fig. 12. Mónica de Miranda, *Cinema Karl Marx*, 2017. Inkjet print on fine art paper, 103 x 249 cm. From the series *Panorama*, 2017–18. © Mónica de Miranda. Courtesy of the artist.

city.<sup>39</sup> As a diasporic subject between Portugal and Angola, Europe and Africa, Miranda negotiates double and doubling experiences of belonging, including those inherited from her Angolan family, from which an unbelonged sense of shared, communal dwelling might be said to emerge.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. Decolonizing Language and Text

As the post-independence renaming of the Avis Cinema in Luanda as Karl Marx Cinema makes evident, language is inextricable from power.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the Portuguese language as heritage and influence in African countries that were formerly Portuguese colonies has played a major problematic role not only in the postcolonial project of lusofonia, but especially as a so-called civilizing tool during colonialism: its top-down spread, more institutional than real, involved many forms of symbolic and epistemic violence. The mastery of the Portuguese language was imposed as evidence of civilization, and as one of the many conditions for African subjects to gain access to a never-fully-equal citizenship.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the creoles of Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe, alongside the many national languages that have survived in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, are living proof of resistance. Although the post-independence governments opted for Portuguese as the official language in their unifying nation-building efforts and in order to avoid ethnic divisions, the Portuguese language in Africa has often become more institutional than quotidian. Moreover, Portuguese spoken around the world is recognized as plural and increasingly hybridized, while Portugal's version of the language has become provincialized

(Chakrabarty 2008). However, two decolonial tasks remain unfinished: countering the notion that Portugal's version of the language is the original and correct one (as opposed to all the allegedly subsidiary and distorted variants), and revaluing African languages and creoles. Significantly, several governments in Cabo Verde have had it on their agendas to make Creole the country's official language, followed by Portuguese as the second.<sup>43</sup>

In line with the resistance historically inscribed in the creole languages and other forms of cultural creolization (Glissant 1997) and hybridity (Bhabha 1994), René Tavares (São Tomé and Príncipe, b. 1983) has reflected through painting, drawing, and photography on the African reinventions of European traditions at work in the Tchiloli theater, dance, and music performances of São Tomé and Príncipe, notably in his series *Tchiloli Family* (2011) and *Tchiloli Unlimited* (2019) (Tavares 2020) (Fig. 13), among others.<sup>44</sup> The Tchiloli (meaning “theater” or “tragedy” in São Tomean Creole) retrieves medieval stories around Charlemagne, following a 1540 text by the blind Madeiran playwright Baltazar Dias, *A tragédia do Marquês de Mântua e do Imperador Carlos Magno* (The tragedy of the Marquis of Mantua and the Emperor Charlemagne) (Valverde 2000; Seibert 2009; Barros 2010).<sup>45</sup> It tells the story of the murder of Valdevinos (the nephew of the Marquis of Mantua) by Dom Carloto (the son of and heir to the Emperor Charlemagne), who, despite being Valdevinos's best friend, was in love with his wife Sibila. The story ends with the emperor ordering the execution of his own son, as a justice-restoring punishment for his crime.

The circumstances of the introduction of Dias's play in São Tomé are contentious, with some scholars proposing that it was taken to the archipelago, in the form of its nineteenth-century adaptation as found in Almeida Garrett's *Romanceiro* and other sources, by São Tomeans travelling from Lisbon (Seibert 2009; Valverde 2000). However, despite the lack of archival evidence, other scholars seem to accept that Dias's play might have been introduced around the time of its writing by sugar-plantation owners and other travelers from Madeira—an account initially propagated in the 1960s by Portuguese intellectuals indebted to lusotropicalism (Seibert 2009). Whichever the case, it seems that an appealing factor for the strong penetration and local reinvention of this text by São Tomeans might have been its thematic focus on issues of legal justice and equality and its evidence of retribution for the transgressions committed by those in power, at a time (depending on which version one follows) either of slavery in the sugar plantations (sixteenth century) or of forced labor in the cocoa- and coffee-producing *roças* (from the late nineteenth century).<sup>46</sup> Despite lusotropicalist



Fig. 13. René Tavares, *Tchiloli Unlimited*, 2019. China ink and pigment on rice paper, 46 x 77 cm. From the series *Tchiloli Unlimited*, 2019. © René Tavares. Courtesy of the artist.

interpretations of the Tchiloli as an instance of so-called harmonious cultural encounter between the Portuguese and the São Tomeans, this practice seems to have emerged as a cultural expression of resistance against colonialism.

Having worked previously around the plastic qualities of theater through painting and drawing, Tavares's interest in the Tchiloli grew over the years out of a concern with São Tomé's cultural identity, history, and heritage—a creole African identity arising from a long and complex history of resistance to Portuguese colonialism, slavery, and forced labor, embedded in richly inventive forms of material and immaterial cultural heritage, including the Tchiloli.<sup>47</sup> Despite the form's European source, Tchiloli performances are deeply informed by various story-telling, acting, dancing, musical, and spiritual African traditions. The cultural creolization and hybridity at work in the Tchiloli should not be mistaken, therefore, for fraternal acculturation.<sup>48</sup>

For his part, Irineu Destourelles (Cabo Verde, b. 1974) has critically examined the coloniality that continues to pervade psychic and social lives in Cabo

Verde by devising a hybrid language that is a sort of anti-creole for video. In *New Words for Mindelo's Urban Creole* (2014) (Fig. 14), besides resisting the potentially fetishistic traps of representing bodies and landscapes by replacing them with text, Destourelles ironically presents a new glossary made from a mix of references from Greek mythology and names from Portuguese colonial history, which seems to have been emptied of African influences. These neologisms (made up of old words) appear consecutively as dictionary entries in white font on a single black screen, the rhythm of their sequential emergence signaled by a repetitive sound. Their definitions describe contemporary phenomena, which, although apparently recent, testify to enduring class-, race-, and gender-based legacies (under new guises) of slavery and colonialism in the postsocialist, neo-liberal, globalized, and touristic present. The entries refer to situations of colonial amnesia and Eurocentric alienation (some of which resonate with the works examined earlier, such as “dysnomia, *v.* to let a colonial building become derelict; to avoid analyzing and understanding colonial events”; “amechanon, *n.* a fanatic supporter of a European football team”); racism and colorism (“arminisme, *v.* to want to have a child with a person with lighter skin, preferably a Caucasoid”); kleptocracy and corruption (“adefage, *v.* to appropriate governmental funds to set up a private construction company”; “apatesme, *v.* to receive money from a drug baron to finance political or economic projects”); the oversexualization and sexual exploitation of black bodies by white tourists and “expats” (“agriuse, *n.* a child sex tourist”); among other aspects (Destourelles 2014).

Destourelles's ironic and critical invention of these new words arose from his awareness that the coloniality they describe often remains silenced and unaddressed in the Creole-speaking Cabo Verdean daily life, particularly in Mindelo (where he has lived, having been born on the island of Santo Antão), the capital of the island of São Vicente and commonly referred to as the country's so-called cultural city. Compared to other islands in the archipelago, São Vicente's permanent colonial settlement took place much later (only in the nineteenth century); and, with more of a commercial (ship supply) than agricultural nature, it is generally thought to be less marked by the centuries-old importation of enslaved labor from West Africa (which occurred in islands such as Santiago, the first to be colonized in the fifteenth century) than by a purportedly cosmopolitan mix of traders and seafarers, particularly British. Of course, the complex migratory history within the archipelago complicates this narrative. In any case, distinct colonization patterns seem to have resulted in a contemporary condition in



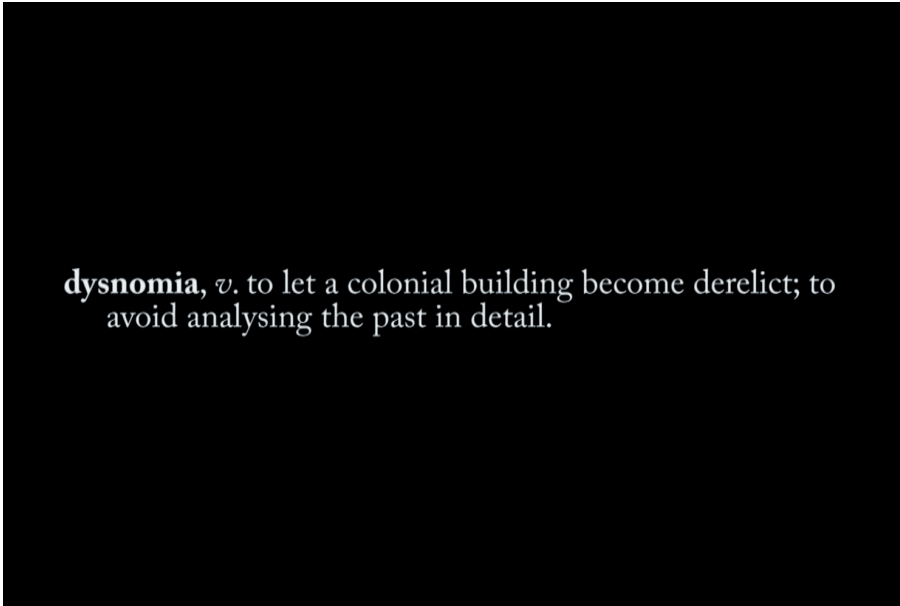


Fig. 14. Irineu Destourelles, *New Words for Mindelo's Urban Creole*, 2014. Video still. © Irineu Destourelles. Courtesy of the artist.

which relationships to the colonial past and African heritage differ across Cabo Verde's islands, with Mindelo's inhabitants often perceived as, and critiqued for, being more Eurocentric. Although the title of Destourelles's work underscores Mindelo's social and psychic realities through language, the work as a whole speaks critically of the country's postcolonial and postsocialist condition of enduring coloniality.<sup>49</sup>

Inasmuch as language has played a key role both in colonialism's strategies of domination and in postcolonial regimes of coloniality, it remains a site of resistance and a fundamental part of any real project of epistemic decolonization. *The Most Beautiful Language*, to quote the title of one of Grada Kilomba's (Portugal, b. 1968) two solo exhibitions in Lisbon in 2017, should be the one whose dictionary includes the living words, meanings, and practices of consecutive negation, frustration, ambivalence, identification, and decolonization as the necessary decolonial steps for black subjects. As far as white subjectivity is concerned, such a process should be one of successive denial, guilt, shame, recognition, and reparation (Kilomba 2008).<sup>50</sup> Although Kilomba elaborates on both psychic trajectories in her book *Plantation Memories* (2008), it is in the silent



Fig. 15. Grada Kilomba, *The Dictionary*, 2017. Installation View, *Grada Kilomba, The Most Beautiful Language*, Galeria Av. da Índia, Lisbon, 2017–18. © Bruno Lopes. Courtesy of the artist and EGEAC/Galerias Municipais, Lisbon.

video piece *The Dictionary* (2017) (Fig. 15), which was on view in *The Most Beautiful Language*, that she invites not only her readers but also her viewers, particularly white ones, in gallery and museum settings, to read her dictionary entries for denial, guilt, shame, recognition, and reparation.<sup>51</sup> These appear sequentially in small white font on five black screens, demanding the viewer's proximity and dislocation. The screens' slightly mirroring surfaces, in turn, return the viewer's own image, inviting self-reflection (at once visual and epistemic, physical and psychic) and self-implication (Kilomba and Escórcio 2017). In fact, although reparation is the ultimate goal, Kilomba's inclusion of the preceding words/stages in *Dictionary* highlights the protracted temporality of what should be envisaged positively as an ethico-political, rather than moral, continual process of reckoning and accountability, awareness and responsibility, the discomfort of which is to be welcomed and embraced.

In conclusion, these reflections on the decolonial images and imaginations, by means of which contemporary artists from Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde, and Portugal have examined critically notions of



heritage and influence in Portuguese-speaking African countries (and in Lisbon's cityscapes), offer a panoramic and inescapably partial view of diverse artistic practices, trajectories, and contexts. Each of these artists has unearthed histories and memories and envisioned futurities from the standpoint of hyper-specific social contexts and personal experiences, and through fairly distinctive and deeply collaborative practices. Despite the limitations inherent to any selection—which I have nonetheless tried to sustain by highlighting aesthetic and ethico-political connections among the works—I hope to have made my own decolonial contribution by historicizing these artists' significant gestures. They can be said to ultimately assemble in their shared urging for critical remembrance and imagination, and for decolonizing strategies of systemic reparation.

#### NOTES

1. *Balumuka* means “to stand up” or “to rise,” as well as “to ambush” (in military jargon) in Kimbundo (Kia Henda in Hossfeld 2018, 68).

2. Diogo Cão was the first known European to arrive at the mouth of the Congo River in 1482; Paulo Dias de Novais was the first Portuguese governor of Angola and the so-called founder of Luanda in 1576; Pedro Alexandrino was a nineteenth-century explorer and governor of Angola; Afonso Henriques was the first king of Portugal in the twelfth century; Luís Vaz de Camões was the sixteenth-century poet who wrote *Os Lusíadas* (*The Lusíads*) (1572), an epic poem about the so-called discoveries, and is a major figure of Portuguese literary history.

3. Daughter of Ngola Kiluanji (the ruler of the Ndongo kingdom in the sixteenth century), Njinga Mbandi (1582–1663) was the queen of the Ndongo and Matamba kingdoms in the seventeenth century and a skilled military strategist and diplomat, who is still seen in present-day Angola as a symbol of resistance against Portuguese occupation (Heywood 2017).

4. Njinga's pedestal goes back to the colonial period: from 1937, it held a World War I memorial depicting an allegory of Victory (by the Portuguese sculptor Henrique Moreira); however, the statue was commonly referred to as Maria da Fonte (the nineteenth-century leader of a popular revolt in northern Portugal). Although formally named Largo dos Lusíadas, the square was commonly referred to as Largo Maria da Fonte or Largo do Kinaxixi (due to the neighbouring Kinaxixi market, built in 1950–52, in turn named after the Kinaxixi lagoon). The Victory statue was dynamited in 1974 and replaced with a Soviet tank (supposedly the one in which Agostinho Neto, the anticolonial leader and first president of independent Angola, entered Luanda to proclaim independence). Njinga's statue was commissioned by the state, produced by the North Korean Mansudae art studio, and placed on an altered version of the pedestal in 2002, where it remained until

the beginning of the construction works in the Kinaxixi square in 2008. The modernist Kinaxixi market (by the Portuguese architect Vasco Vieira da Costa), the Cuca building, and other structures were demolished to make space for a shopping mall and luxury high-rise buildings. An empty remnant of the pedestal remains amid the construction works, halted since the 2014 oil crisis. Kia Henda is currently working on a project about this site's history: *Red Light Square—History is a Bitch: Kinaxixi*.

5. *Transit* is a photographic work depicting the disassembled statue of Paulo Dias de Novais, with its four pieces lying on the ground.

6. See also Alfredo Jaar's video *Muxima* (2005) and Jo Ractliffe's photographic series *Details of Tiled Murals at the Fortaleza de São Miguel, Depicting Portuguese Explorations in Africa* (2007) (Ractliffe 2008). These tiled murals were made for the Museum of Angola, installed in the fortress in 1939. With the beginning of the liberation war in 1961, the fortress became the headquarters of the Portuguese armed forces.

7. The lyrics of Angola's national anthem, "Angola Avante" (Forward Angola) (1975), were written by the writer Manuel Rui and the music composed by Rui Mingas.

8. On Kia Henda's *Homem Novo*, see also Siegert (2017).

9. Hands have also played an important part in Chris Marker's *Le fond de l'air est rouge* (A Grin without a Cat) (1977).

10. The PAIGC (Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde) was the Marxist-Leninist liberation movement led by Amílcar Cabral until his assassination on 20 January 1973. The liberated zones were the areas, in southern Guinea-Bissau, from which the PAIGC armed struggle (begun in 1963) had managed to expel the Portuguese armed forces, and where the independent nation-state was rehearsed before the unilateral proclamation of independence in September 1973. Portugal recognized the independence of Guinea-Bissau after the Carnation Revolution (which overthrew the Estado Novo on 25 April 1974) in September 1974.

11. Since then, César has made *Mined Soil* (2014), *Transmission from the Liberated Zones* (2016), *Spell Reel* (2017), and *Quantum Creole* (2019), among other films. *Luta ca caba inda* is the Guinean Creole for "a luta continua" (the struggle goes on). On this project, see, among others, César and Smith (2011); Moukouri (2012); César (2016; 2018a; 2018b); and César et al. (2017).

12. The Guinean films were digitized at the Arsenal—Institute for Film and Video Art in Berlin in 2012 (César 2016). Marker was invited to Bissau by Mário Pinto de Andrade, the Angolan poet who was a founding figure of the MPLA (Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola) and its first president between 1960 and 1962. Clashing with the party's more totalitarian wing, he and his brother Joaquim Pinto de Andrade led the *Revolta Activa* group in 1974. Forced into exile, he left for Guinea-Bissau, where he became minister of information and culture in 1978–80. He was the partner of the French-Guadeloupean filmmaker Sarah Maldoror.

13. Ângela Ferreira has also examined important connections between militant film, farming, and other collective activities in the context of FRELIMO's liberation struggle and decolonization in Mozambique, most notably in *Political Cameras* (2011) (Balona de Oliveira 2016c).

14. Teixeira Pinto was the army officer leading the so-called pacification campaign in Guinea-Bissau in 1913–15. Honório Barreto was a nineteenth-century governor and slave trader. Nuno Tristão was the first known European to reach Guinea's coast in 1445. Diogo Cão was the first known European to arrive at the mouth of the Congo River in 1482.

15. Marker's *Sans soleil* includes footage of the Bissau carnival that was likely filmed by N'Hada and Gomes, as they were both (with Jean-Michel Humeau) camera operators in Sarah Maldoror's *À Bissau, le carnaval* (*Carnival in Bissau*) (1980), the film for which, according to Maldoror, such footage was originally shot. Together with Thierry Sabatier, Josefina Lopes Crato worked on the sound. In his film, Marker thanked N'Hada—who, at the time, was INCA's president—for the carnival images (Piçarra 2020).

16. Importantly, those whom death refused in Gomes's film are the Guineans who, having fought against Portuguese colonialism and survived the war of liberation, had to continue the struggle of post-independence nation building.

17. Marker's script ("the society of statues is mortal. One day, their faces of stone crumble and fall to earth. . . . An object dies when the living glance trained upon it disappears" [1953]) is quoted out of sequence in different moments. Barrios's final statements on these statues ("The living intentions behind their original production seem to keep them undead. . . . Although they seem haunted, death refuses to take them" [César 2012]) echo, in addition to Gomes's film, Kluge and Schamoni's critical reflection on Nazi built heritage: "Every structure left to us by history expresses the spirit of its builder, even if later used for other purposes. The abandoned buildings of the Nazi party serve as witnesses in stone to a time that played host to the most terrible events in German history (1961)."

18. Recent falls occurred with the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement in South Africa in 2015, to confederate monuments with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the US, and, after George Floyd's murder by the police in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020, to colonial and white-supremacist statues in the US, the UK, Belgium, etc. As to counter-monuments, see, for instance, the unveiling of Kehinde Wiley's *Rumors of War* (2019) in Times Square, New York, in September 2019, and its permanent placement in Richmond, Virginia, in December 2019, countering the history told by the city's many confederate monuments (Ugwu 2019; Stamberg 2020). See also Marc Quinn's controversial *A Surge of Power* (*Jen Reid*), a sculpture installed overnight on the empty pedestal of slaver Edward Colston's fallen statue in Bristol on 15 June 2020. Because there was no public debate on its placement, it sparked intense criticism from many black British artists, who rightly saw it as an instance of white appropriation (Price 2020). Quinn's work was taken down the following day by local authorities, who intend to initiate a public discussion involving the black community on what to do with the vacant pedestal.

19. The three statues represent the Portuguese Pêro Escobar, João de Santarém, and João de Paiva. Escobar and Santarém are known as the first Portuguese to arrive in the archipelago—its so-called discoverers—and Paiva was one of its first colonizers.

20. In 2017, a statue of the seventeenth-century Portuguese Jesuit priest and writer Padre António Vieira was erected in Lisbon, raising criticism from antiracist activists and scholars due to its representation of Vieira converting three childlike indigenous people from Brazil, where he lived, and the fact that it was built with public funds and without public debate. Although Vieira considered that indigenous peoples should not be enslaved, he nonetheless defended their conversion, as well as the enslaving of Africans, facts which are usually silenced in Portugal, where Vieira is celebrated as a so-called precursor of human rights.

21. After the Second World War, The Estado Novo appropriated lusotropicalism, a concept originally theorized by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s, to justify Portugal's maintenance of its African colonies when other European countries started to decolonize. It propagated the idea that the Portuguese mixed more with the African populations they colonized and were more benevolent toward them than the other European colonizers, ideas that still pervade in Portuguese society (Castelo 1998; Anderson et al. 2019). "Lusofonia" generally refers to the group of Portuguese-speaking countries—Portugal and its former colonies—and operates institutionally through the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), an international organization founded in 1996 that works along the lines of the British Commonwealth and the Francophonie. On critical perspectives around lusofonia, see Cahen (1997); Margarido (2000); Barros (2009); Barros Varela and Costa (2009); and Barros Varela (2014).

22. An important memorialization initiative countering the celebratory narrative was the proposal by Djass—Association of Afro-descendants for a Memorial to Enslaved People in Lisbon, which was chosen by the people of Lisbon through the municipal participatory budget voting process in 2017. Subsequently, Djass invited the artists Grada Kilomba (Portugal), Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola), and Jaime Lauriano (Brazil) to present their proposals for the memorial, which were voted on in six public gatherings across the city, notably in the Lisbon suburbs where many African and Afro-descendant communities live; these communities were especially invited to participate. The winning proposal was Kia Henda's. Djass's modus operandi contrasted enormously with Lisbon mayor's tourism-driven, top-down plan for a Discoveries Museum, which received fierce opposition from activists, artists, and academics.

23. Kia Henda carried out this work in collaboration with the TDK Association from Bairro da Quinta Grande, in Lisbon's northern periphery. Other artists, such as Jota Mombaça and the authors and actors from the play *Aurora negra* (Black Dawn) (2000), Cleo Diára, Isabél Zuaa, and Nádia Yracema, have also performed at the Padrão. On the ways in which the memory of the empire is celebrated in Lisbon's urban space, particularly in the Belém area, see Peralta (2013; 2017) and Peralta and Domingos (2019).

24. More than half a million Portuguese departed from the former colonies, some of them second- and third-generation settlers who had never been to Portugal. Arriving in the former metropole, these immigrants were commonly referred to as *retornados* or returnees, a name that persists today, but with which these former settlers never identified since they felt they were arriving in a foreign place rather than returning home. The Institute for the Support of the Return of National Citizens (IARN—*Instituto de Apoio ao Retorno de Nacionais*) was created by the revolutionary government in 1975 in order to support the relocation of these former settlers; it was closed in 1981. On the *retornados*, see Peralta and Oliveira (2016); Peralta et al. (2017); and Peralta (2019a; 2019b).

25. The temporary version of the Padrão was designed by the architect Cottinelli Telmo in collaboration with the sculptor Leopoldo de Almeida. Telmo's design was kept for the permanent construction, led by António Pardal Monteiro (Telmo had died in 1948), while Almeida himself recovered his original sculptural design. On the colonial section of the 1940 Exhibition of the Portuguese World and other colonial exhibitions in Portugal and abroad, see Ferraz de Matos (2006).

26. The sword, in turn, is decorated with the cross of the *Ordem de Avis*, a military and religious order devoted to the conquest of land from the Moors and the expansion of Christianity in Portugal in the twelfth century; the Avis dynasty—which initiated the so-called discoveries in the fifteenth century—was connected to this order. Below, Avis will reappear as the colonial name of a modernist cinema in Luanda.

27. The newsreels *Imagens de Portugal* were made in three series between 1953 and 1970 (Piçarra 2015, 144–223). The images used by Ferreira belong to the second series (1958–61), produced by Doperfilme under the direction of Perdigão Queiroga (Piçarra 2015, 152–68).

28. The square in front of the Padrão is decorated with a large-scale floor piece in limestone designed by Luís Cristino da Silva, depicting a compass rose and a world map of the routes taken by the Portuguese during the so-called age of the discoveries. This square was offered to Portugal by apartheid South Africa in 1960 (at the time of the Padrão's permanent construction), a fact that is seldom referenced.

29. The video's script unfolds on Cunha's images. For a history and visual analysis of the Padrão, in the context of the Exhibition of the Portuguese World in 1940, its permanent construction in 1960, and Cunha's photographs in 1975, see Sapega (2002; 2008).

30. Ferreira used the phrase *império encaixotado* (boxed or crated empire) as the subtitle of her work on at least two occasions: in her contract with the Portuguese Film Archive for access to the newsreels and in the solo exhibition *Ressignificação* (Resignification) at the *Colégio das Artes* in Coimbra in 2016 (Olaio and Carvalho 2017). For now, this remains the only time when the work (which has traveled extensively) was exhibited in Portugal, in a version made in collaboration with students from the University of Coimbra.

31. On the nonvictimization of former settlers, as well as the limits of the Padrão not only as a monument but also as a container and archive of objects and events, see

Ferreira (2017). On this and other works on mass settler return from the former colonies, see Balona de Oliveira (2016a; 2017a).

32. Regarding post-civil war Angola, see Soares de Oliveira (2015) and Schubert (2015). After a post-war period of accelerated growth in Angola, the decrease in oil prices from 2014 onwards caused a severe economic and financial crisis, which halted the construction of many of these skyscrapers. Both this interruption and the exorbitant prices of finished buildings have produced an urban landscape of new empty ruins alongside the old.

33. Some of Branquinho's portrait series include *Ocupações* (Occupations) (2011) and *Showtime* (2012–13).

34. Agostinho Neto was the leader of the MPLA between 1962 and 1979 and independent Angola's first president. The mausoleum was completed and repaired by the North Korean Mansudae art studio only after the end of the civil war, and it was officially inaugurated on 17 September 2012 in commemoration of the ninetieth anniversary of Neto's birth. Neto's sarcophagus is secured in a central and closed area of the mausoleum, out of visitors' sight (Siegert and Vanin 2019; Martins and Cardina 2019). See also Jo Ractliffe's photographic work *Mausoléu de Agostinho Neto* (Agostinho Neto's Mausoleum) (2007) (Ractliffe 2008) and Ondjaki (2008), which features the mausoleum and its surroundings prominently.

35. Although turning the mausoleum into a spaceship obviously involves fiction, the project was faithful to what Luandans commonly call the mausoleum: *fogueteão* (spaceship). Further, the spaceship aesthetics was intentional on the part of the Soviets, inspired by Neto's renowned poem, "O caminho das estrelas" ("The Path of the Stars") (1953) (Neto 1977), which can be read on its interior walls, among other poems, speech fragments, and a eulogy. For an in-depth analysis of Kíia Henda's *Icarus 13*, see Balona de Oliveira (2019b).

36. The Cine-Estúdio was designed by Botelho Vasconcelos of the Atelier Boper (Hurst and Fernandes 2015, 166–77).

37. For an in-depth analysis of this work, see Balona de Oliveira (2016a; 2017a).

38. The Hotel Globo has also been an important artistic hub: it harbored artists' studios and the nearby SOSO gallery (an exhibiting space for the Luanda Triennial), and has hosted the Fuckin' Globo exhibitions since 2015 and the Ateliê Mutamba and the Jahmek gallery since 2022. For an in-depth analysis of Miranda's *Hotel Globo*, see Balona de Oliveira (2016b; 2017b; 2019a).

39. Designed by the Portuguese architect Carlos Moutinho very likely between the 1950s and 1960s, the iconic Hotel Panorama decayed progressively during the civil war and was eventually abandoned. A renovation and expansion plan was designed in 2007 but never carried out (Magalhães and Gonçalves 2009, 61, 211). The Cinema Karl Marx was designed in the early 1960s by João Garcia de Castilho, the Portuguese architect of many other modernist buildings in the city (such as the open-air Cine-Miramar, designed with his brother Luís Garcia de Castilho in 1964) (Hurst and Fernandes 2015, 221).

40. For an in-depth analysis of Miranda's *Panorama*, see Balona de Oliveira (2017c; 2018; 2019c).

41. The colonial nomenclature for some African countries, cities, and streets was widely changed upon independence. In Luanda and Maputo, for example, many streets and squares were named in homage to heroes of the liberation struggle as well as socialist and pan-Africanist figures.

42. The mastery of Portuguese, among other requirements, was formalized through successive legislation comprising the *Estatuto do Indigenato*, which, until 1961, distinguished between *indígenas* (indigenous), *assimilados* (assimilated), and whites. The *assimilados* were considered civilized and therefore “almost” Portuguese, while the *indígenas* were seen as uncivilized and occupied the bottom of the colonial social hierarchy. On the Portuguese so-called civilizing mission between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, see Bandeira Jerónimo (2009). On the Portuguese classification of Africans throughout several colonial periods, see Castro Henriques (2019).

43. Creole is the maternal language of Cabo Verdeans, while Portuguese is the country's official language, although Article 9 of Cabo Verde's constitution declares that the state should promote the conditions for the former to become official on an equal footing with Portuguese (Direção de Serviços Parlamentares 2010, 28). See, for example, Céu e Silva (2017). For a more in-depth analysis, see Veiga (2009).

44. According to some, Tchiloli derives etymologically from the Portuguese *tiroliro* (fife), the transverse flute used in the play (Seibert 2009). While the Tchiloli is most common in São Tomé, in Príncipe its equivalent is the *Auto de Floripes*. On the latter, see Lemos Martins and Palinhos (2013).

45. Dias's text was presumably written in 1540 but published only in 1665 in Lisbon (Valverde 2000).

46. The formal abolition of slavery in São Tomé and Príncipe took place in 1875 but it continued in practice as forced labor. Enslaved people were replaced by *serviçais*, subsequently called *contratados*. It should be added that São Tomeans' historical resistance (escapes, hinterland *quilombos* or *mocambos*, revolts, etc.) to both slavery and the subsequent forced labor culminated, firstly, in the destruction of many sugar plantations in the sixteenth century and the concomitant decline of sugar production, which was transferred to Brazil and later replaced by cocoa and coffee, and, secondly, in the importation of forced labor (*serviçais* and *contratados*) from Cabo Verde, Angola, and Mozambique after abolition. The surviving former forced laborers, who stayed in the archipelago after independence in 1975, and their descendants comprise contemporary São Tomean society, with the inherited colonial hierarchy that kept them at the bottom having far from disappeared in the postcolonial period. On this colonial hierarchy and its legacies, see Seibert (2015). On São Tomean *quilombolas* and their descendants, the *Angolares*, the 1595 slave revolt led by Amador, and the lusotropicalist denial of São Tomean resistance by the geographer



Francisco Tenreiro, see Seibert (2004; 2012). On the continuities between slavery and forced labor, see Bandeira Jerónimo and Monteiro (2019) and Castro Henriques (2019). On forced labor until 1962, see Monteiro (2018).

47. The application of the Tchiloli for inclusion in UNESCO's immaterial world heritage list was first announced in 2009 and reiterated, most recently, in 2018 (Lopes 2018).

48. On Tavares's Tchiloli-related work, see also Nolasco (2020).

49. On Cabo Verde's colonial history and its contemporary legacies, see Barros Varela (2014); Cabral (2015); and Lima and Robalo (2018). On Cabo Verde's discomfort with its anti-colonial history from the 1990s onwards, see Cardina and Nascimento Rodrigues (2020). On Destourelles's work, see also Nolasco and Destourelles (2016).

50. *The Most Beautiful Language* took place at Galeria Av. da Índia in Lisbon between October 2017 and March 2018 (Rapazote 2018). Kilomba's other 2017 exhibition in Lisbon, *Secrets to Tell*, was on view at MAAT from October 2017 to February 2018 (Ferreira de Carvalho 2017).

51. Besides the 2008 book format, *Plantation Memories* also took the shape of a performative video in 2015. For an in-depth analysis of this and other works by Kilomba, see Balona de Oliveira (2020a; 2020b).

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