

# Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix

PRESS RELEASE

## Still unresolved and very much ongoing

9th June – 5th August 2017

Private view and opening reception: 8th June 2017, 6pm

Yamamoto Keiko Rochaix is pleased to present 'Still unresolved and very much ongoing', a selection of works by Delaine Le Bas (UK), Thierry Geoffroy (France/Denmark), Elsa M'bala (Cameroon/Germany), Gideon Mendel (South Africa/UK), and texts from Bakwa Magazine and its editor Dzekashu MacViban (Cameroon).

Curated by Christine Eyene, the exhibition takes on the rhetoric of the importance of art 'now more than ever' – a discourse that gained currency on social media in the face of the crisis of humanism – to examine the relationship between the socio-political and aesthetics. Drawing from the British context as point of departure, the wave of exhibitions by Black British artists demonstrating the recurrence of the issues they addressed in the 1980s, and the continued relevance of their art to this day, this project is the result of ongoing conversations with artists who have always been alert to the fragility of democracies and concerned with the pockets of exclusions that exist in the so-called 'Free World'.

"Still unresolved and very much ongoing" is a quote from an essay by British art historian Kobena Mercer entitled "Iconography after Identity" (2005) in which he discusses Black British Art and the importance and complexities of apprehending identity-based, and by extension socio-politically oriented art, through the prism of iconography and iconology. The exhibition title also reflects the current climate of surreal revival of past forms of prejudice and injustice thought to be eradicated but resurfacing like a societal necrosis.

The exhibition opens with 'Rally welcoming SWAPO leader, Sam Nujoma, after thirty years' exile' (2016) from the 'Damage' series (2016) by Gideon Mendel, a rare large scale enlargement of a damaged negative of his 1980s coverage of the struggle against apartheid. The washed-out emulsion and the raised flags in this photographed political rally welcoming a South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) leader Sam Njoma after thirty years in exile, conjure up paintings such as Delacroix's Liberty Leading the People (1830). Presented for the first time will also be Mendel's new series 'Topographies' (2017), documenting remnants of the forcibly evicted Calais 'Jungle' refugee camp. The photographed items, treading on the fine line between forensics, archaeology and still life, bear testimony to the lives denied their humanity by strands of Western society.

Delaine Le Bas textile-based work and her meticulously embroidered pieces speak from a British Romany perspective to champion freedom of movement and challenge land grabbing, borders, and European identity discourses. Thierry Geoffroy's new works on paper will be a direct take on global issues and media manipulation, while highlighting the limits of the contemporary art system as agent of social change. Elsa M'bala audio experiments 'Imposer le Savoir' and 'Je Wanda' (both 2017) both address the legacy of European colonisation in Cameroon through language, reflecting the situation currently faced by Cameroon's Anglophone communities who stood up against their marginalisation from the French-speaking ruling class. Writings from Bakwa, an online magazine of literary and cultural criticism based in Yaounde, and excerpts from Scions of the Malcontent (2011), a collection of poems by Bakwa editor Dzekashu MacViban will provide a textual resonance to M'Bala's sound pieces.

In addition to the exhibition, two performances will be organised, both on Saturday 1st July. 'Critical Run' by Thierry Geoffroy will take place at 11am, and sound performance by Elsa M'bala in the evening. The latter is organised as part of the associate program for Art Night, when the gallery will be open till very late as many other galleries and art institutions in East London.

Please join us at the opening reception for the exhibition on Thursday, 8th of June, from 6 to 9 pm.

For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

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Address: 19 Goulston St, London, E1 7TP

Dates: 9th June – 5th August 2017

Private View: Thursday 8th June 2017

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Saturday, 11am – 6pm

Travel: Aldgate East, Aldgate, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel

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