





DAS PROMESSAS QUE A GENTE FEZ KIKÁ CARVALHO

TEXTO | TEXT **MARCELO CAMPOS**

ABERTURA | OPENING
10.09.2022 15H - 19H

VISITAÇÃO | VISITS
10.09 — 22.10.2022

TER-SEX | TUES - FRI **11-19H**
SAB | SAT **11-17H**

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**DAS PROMESSAS
QUE A GENTE FEZ**
KIKI CARVALHO

TEXTO MARCELO CAMPOS
10 SET — 22 OUT 2022



To blue

So black it's almost blue, a trivial commentary in lands where racial differences are seamed by a routine prejudice brokered to those who can be exempted from blackness. Thus, colorism has, for a long time, refined gradations and terms that go from the bluest blue to the least brown to draw a distinction between blacks and whites. Such distinctions confirm or deny our belonging to African ancestry.

Ultramarine blue, in the exhibition *On the promises we made*, by Kika Carvalho, is the protagonist and a trigger for racial metaphor. In most paintings, shoreline landscapes prevail. The beach, an allegedly democratic venue who welcomed, over the course of four centuries, in colonized countries, the swarms of people coming from the African continent under inhuman conditions. Even though, to this day, it remains held by a bourgeoisie that believes to be its rightful recipient. In the artist's paintings, a black population walks on the shores, works in fishing, has fun, dives. These scenes are common in Brazilian and African coasts. The presence of islands leads us to wonder: Espírito Santo or Luanda? All, there, are backlit, so black they're blue.





Nº1 (Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022

Oil on canvas

120 x 120 cm



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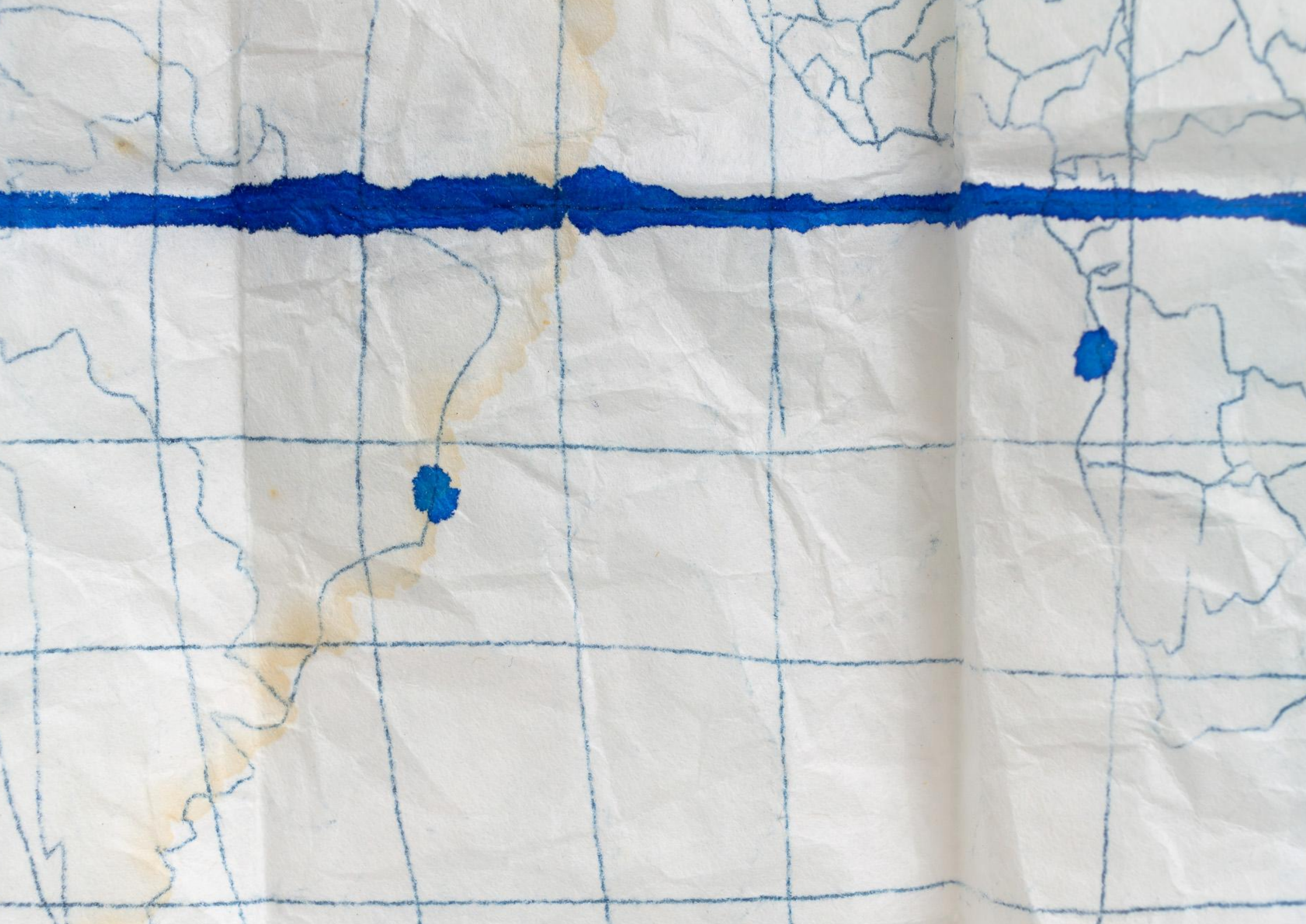


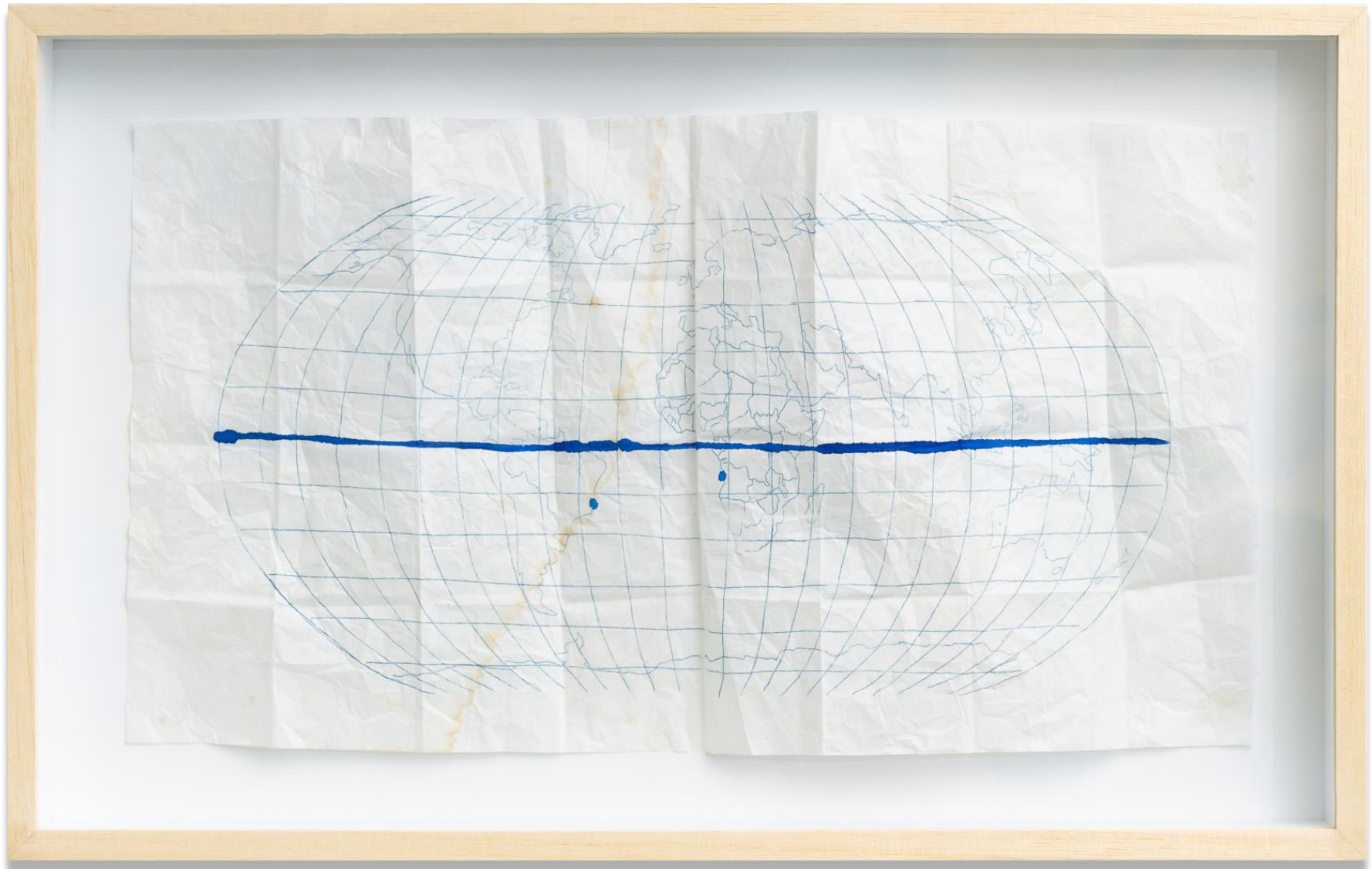
Identity (triptych), 2022

Acrylic on tiles

15.4 x 46.2 cm







Deriva continental, 2022

Ink and carbon drawing on Japanese paper
34 x 54 cm







Volta pra casa, 2022
Oil on canvas
150 x 200 cm



The artist, like many in her generation, acknowledges the hip-hop movement as the main gateway to issues pertaining to art, culture, and raciality. Kika, in fact, is a *bomb*, an identity symbol for graffiti signatures that course through the urban environment leaving their written mark on store doors, walls, trains, bridges.

On the promises we made brings together roughly thirty works by the artist stemming from a residency in Luanda, Africa. In Angola, a country that lived many years as a colony, still exploited by oil and diamond extractivism, Kika Carvalho recognized herself, as she shared the insular experience with the people from that place. Hailing from Vitória, in the state of Espírito Santo, Kika lived, in Luanda, alongside individuals who, like her, had grown used to holding the sea in their eyes. How does it feel to look at the sea so intensely, we wonder? To have the horizon line as a constant compass. In contrast, in her writings the artist states "I did not come with purpose", an impossible observance if we consider the Yoruba cosmogony, in which we are all born with a purpose. Luanda, in the artist's images, carries the skin and the sea's blue as the prevailing color. Blue, then, occupies a dual stance between a metaphor for the skin and the deep sea. The color blue, then, replaces black and brown, colors identified in the chestnut hue of the African-descendant's complexion.



Ilhada I, 2021
Color pencils on Japanese paper
30 x 20 cm



Ilhada II, 2021
Color pencils on Japanese paper
30 x 20 cm







Guia, 2021
Graphite and gold leaf
on Japanese paper
60 x 40 cm



The word *retinto*^[1], here many times painted, layer upon layer, to the maximum limit, until it contains every color, derives from painting. As we look at Kika Carvalho's works, this interest redoubles, because, as a painter, she has become used to perform such an act. On the other hand, to be more or less *retinto* became a source of conflict, unfortunately, a divide for black people who, as Sueli Carneiro teaches us, lose, thus, the possibility to defeat whiteness, stealing from us colors that were always our own.

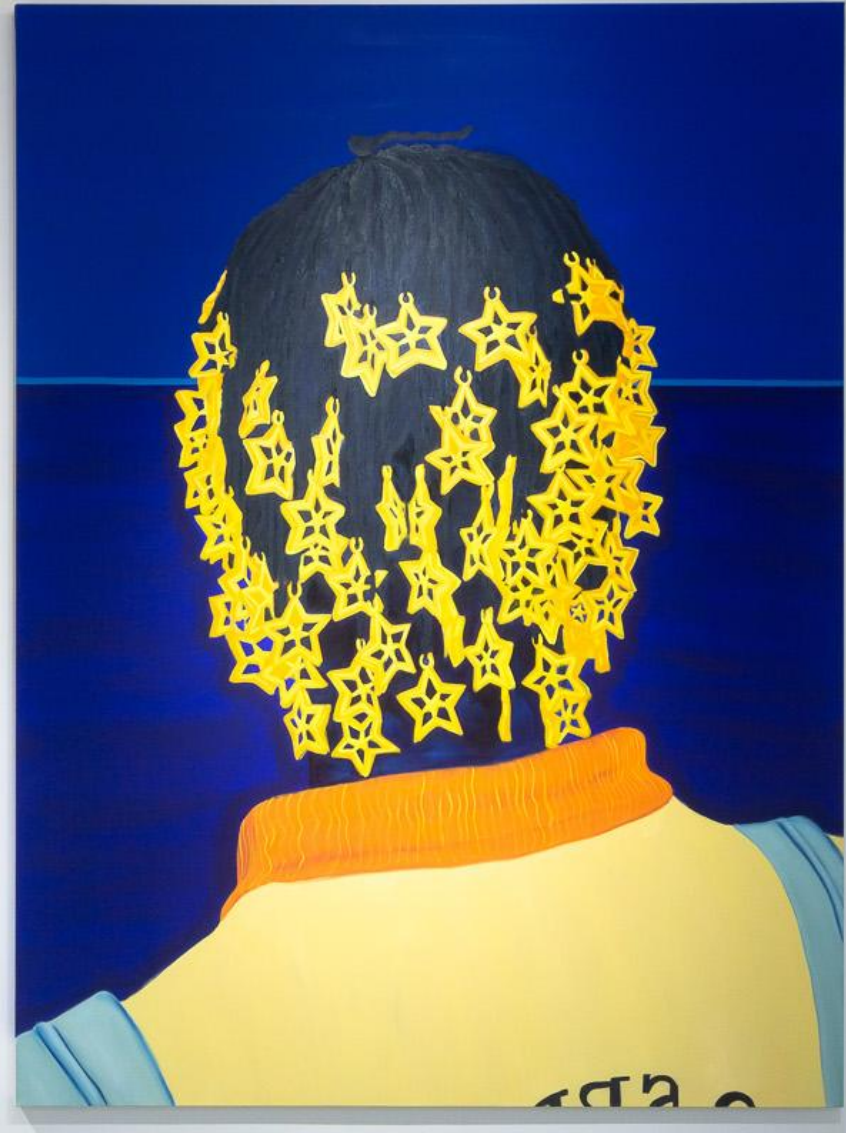
Kika Carvalho, addressing the issues raised, chooses to never use the color black, always preferring to accumulate, *retint*, assemble all colors. All leading to blue. In the paintings, the artist tends to focus on the skin of the characters, the darkest places, in shades that near the night's pitch darkness. Allegorical identifications that, in a racist society, fall upon the darker skins. But the stigma must be surpassed. In *Out of the Dark Night*, Achille Mbembe explains to us the need for an "afropolitanism" bound to surpass the dues regarding the future, as African ancestry bestows us with a "glorious past".

[1] TN – In Brazil the word *retinto*, literally "redyed" or "retint", is often reserved to describe individuals with very dark complexion.





Doze Novembros #1, 2022
Oil and acrylic on canvas
200 x 150 cm



Doze Novembros #2, 2022
Oil and acrylic on canvas
200 x 150 cm





Lado B, 2022

Cyanotype on 300g Canson paper
86 x 86 cm





Kika Carvalho makes, in painting, the intentional use of backlighting, a fact highlighted as we partake in the photos the artist uses in her research. The bodies become, thus, ever blackened, or, to coin a neologism, “blued”, in opposition to the sunny present in the scenes that surround them. Therefore, Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic and Rosana Paulino’s red Atlantic meet, while Kika negotiates another hue, an Ultramarine Atlantic, where the color, now, pours from the ocean to the bodies. Sea and skin are identified with each other, congregating in shades of blue. A color, perhaps, resulting from and surviving so many tears. Tears, such as the ones who will not cease to sprout from the eyes of a mother in a short story by Conceição Evaristo. Her daughter, as she faces her, could only see tears and tears. And concluded: “The color of my mother’s eyes was the color of water.”

The characters the artist paints, in a way, arise as affirmative, aware. A fact that should be emphasized, before anything else, is the beauty of the people who are portrayed and know themselves to be beautiful, hold themselves that way. Teenage girls wear jewels in their hair, using current pendants, made or plastic or rubber, shaped like seashells and stars, topping up their braids with vibrant colors, yellows, fuchsias. Kika Carvalho witnessed this scene in Luanda, thus creating a time lapse, as it resembles the ancient practice of adorning one’s hair with cowries, now renewed in a contemporary self love shout back by those who could spend a lifetime brimming with stigmatizations. Perhaps, such a reference causes the artist to see herself, negotiating the past and the future, pride and pain. All this stands before the sea that carries the diasporic trauma of the Atlantic crossings but inaugurates another future.





Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
30 x 30 cm



Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
30 x 30 cm



Untitled, 2022

Oil on canvas

30 x 30 cm

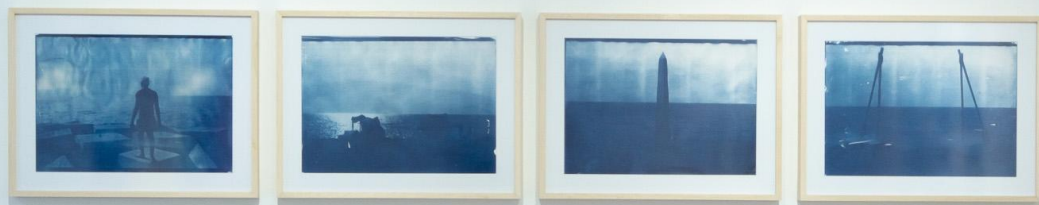


Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
30 x 30 cm



Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
30 x 30 cm





The blue Kika Carvalho uses is, on one hand, present in the robes of holy virgins, Our Ladies. A noble color that becomes ever so richer as we think that, in the early stages of her process, Kika took it from the cheapest and most popular product, the *pó xadrez* pigment brand. It's curious to think back to Mbembe as he questions origin myths and says: every origin adds up to a stack of banal things, in this case, banal colors. But, here, we're dealing with a self engendering.



Das promessas que a gente fez #1, 2022

Cyanotype on 300g Hahnemühle paper

39.5 x 51.5 cm



Das promessas que a gente fez #2, 2022

Cyanotype on 300g Hahnemühle paper

39.5 x 51.5 cm



Das promessas que a gente fez #3, 2022

Cyanotype and digital collage on 300g Hahnemühle paper

39.5 x 51.5 cm



Das promessas que a gente fez #4, 2022

Cyanotype and digital collage on 300g Hahnemühle paper

39.5 x 51.5 cm



Untitled, 2022

Cyanotype on 300g Canson paper
39.5 x 51.5 cm







Nº 6 (Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022
Analog collage on 300g Canson paper
37 x 47 cm



Nº 4 (Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022
Analog collage on 300g Canson paper
40.5 x 32.5 cm

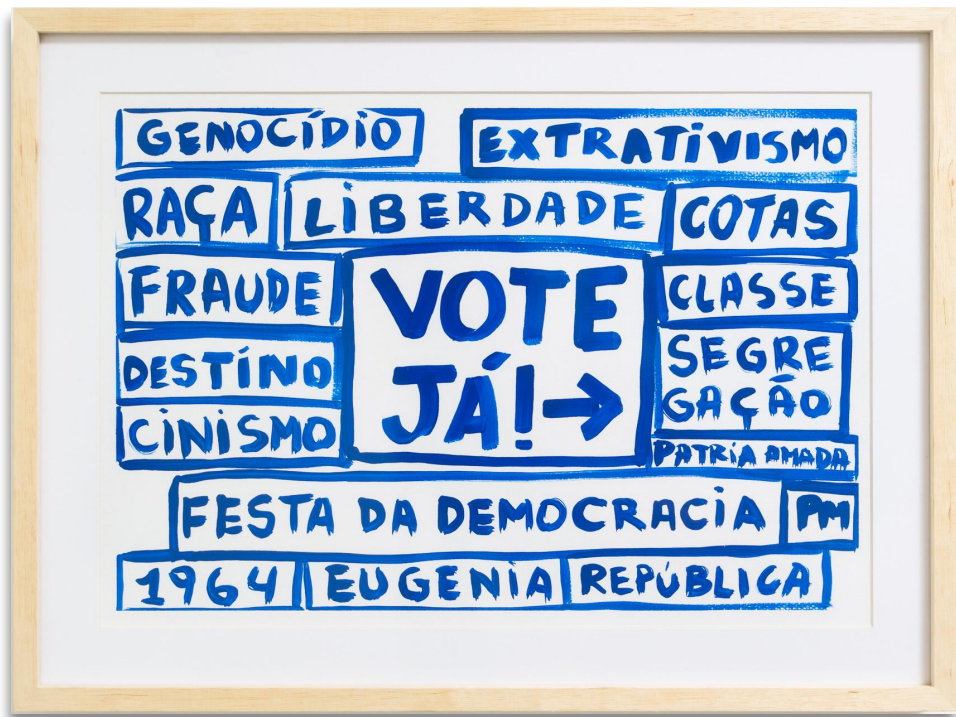


Nº 5 (Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022
Analog collage on 300g Canson paper
40.5 x 32.5 cm



GENOCÍDIO | EXTRATIVISMO
RAÇA | LIBERDADE | COTAS
FRAUDE | VOTE JÁ! →
DESTINO | CLASSE
CINISMO | SEGRE
SACRÃO
FESTA DA DEMOCRACIA PM
1964 | EUGENIA | REPUBLICA

CORRUPÇÃO | IDEALIZAÇÃO | ELEIÇÃO
SACRIFÍCIO | ESPERANÇA | PARAÍSO
LIBERTACÃO | UMA SO NACÃO
20 02 ANOS
GUERRA
INDEPENDÊNCIA | PETROLED
PRÉ-COLONIAL FANTASIA



Construindo uma nação I, 2022

Acrylic on Canson 300g paper

40.5 x 32.5 cm



Construindo uma nação II, 2022

Acrylic on Canson 300g paper

40.5 x 32.5 cm





Ela sabe, 2022

Cyanotype on 300g Hahnemühle paper
33.5 x 38 cm

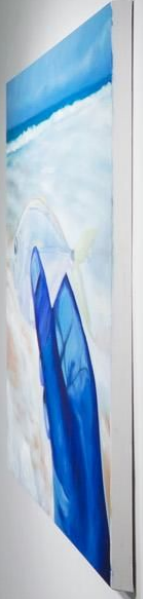




Tugas, go home! #1, 2022
Acrylic on Hahnemühle 300g paper
44.5 x 34.5 cm



Tugas, go home! #2, 2022
Acrylic on Hahnemühle 300g paper
44.5 x 34.5 cm









Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
153 x 310 cm







Nº 3 (Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022

Oil on canvas

120 x 120 cm







Nº 2 - Origem da vida
(Series "Filhos d'água"), 2022
Oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm







Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
70 x 50 cm



Untitled, 2022
Oil on canvas
100 x 80 cm





Amid the cast of paintings shown in this exhibition, the portrait of a fisherman stands out. There, he stares at us and, in his gaze, we see what could be fatigue, but, at the same time, brings us within the fold of his thoughts. The eyes, then, slowly, reveal themselves to be tender and intimate. They open like the gills of a fish. He's a head, *ori*, such as the origin of life in Nagos-Yoruba tradition. In the beginning of the world, *ejá* appears, a head that crosses the seas, *ejá*, a name translated as 'fish', but that, in fact, is but a head, opening the way beneath the waters. And he, Kika Carvalho's head-man, stares at us so we can, beyond the consciousness of trauma, fulfill our purpose, emerge from the deep sea, the ultramarine blue, and move forward.

Marcelo Campos

Associate Professor at the Department of Theory and Art History at the Arts Institute - UERJ and at the Graduate Programs in Arts (PPGArtes) and Art History (PPGHA). Chief Curator of the Museu de Arte do Rio - MAR..

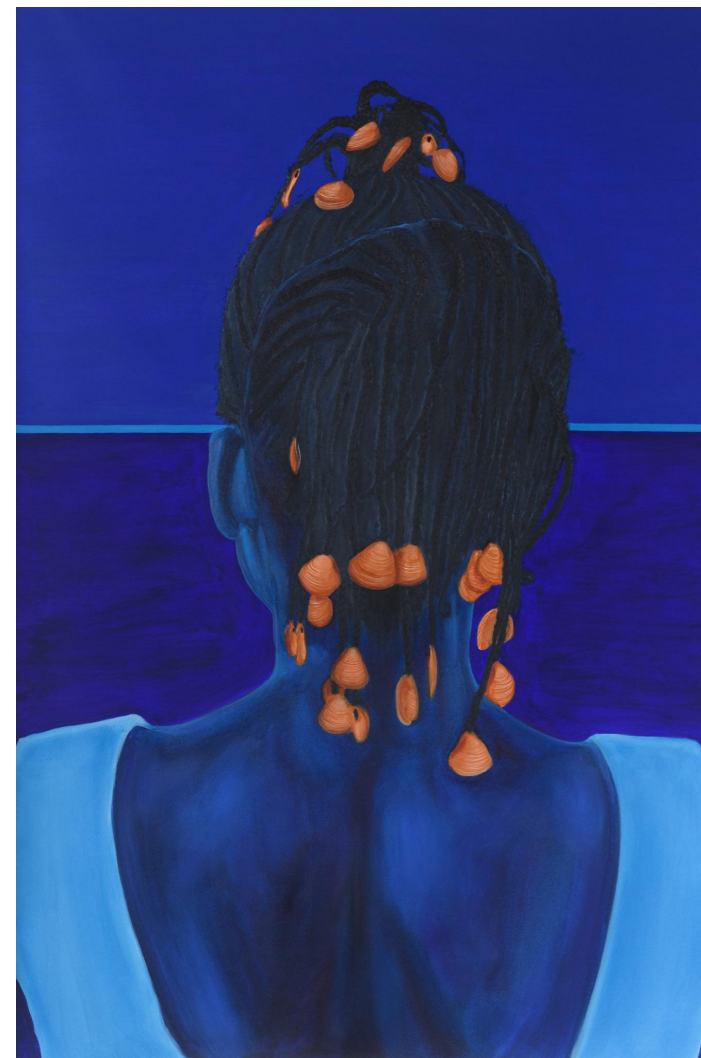




In the context of her first solo show at Portas Vilaseca Galeria, Kika Carvalho also participates in the group show “Um Defecto de Cor”, which opens at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) on September 10. The exhibition is based on the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of the 19th century, addressed in the book of the same name by the Minas Gerais-born writer Ana Maria Gonçalves. Displayed in the show are 400 art works, including drawings, paintings, videos, sculptures and installations by more than 100 artists, mostly black women. Kika Carvalho has developed the following diptych (shown on the right) especially for the exhibition, which runs until 2023.



Emi fé é #1, 2022
Oil and acrylic on canvas
150 x 100 cm



Emi fé é #2, 2022
Oil and acrylic on canvas
150 x 100 cm

KIKA CARVALHO

1992 - Vitória, ES, Brazil

Lives and works in Vitória, ES, Brasil

Graduated in Visual Arts from the Federal University of Espírito Santo - UFES. Since 2016, her artistic practice has been materialized in different supports, techniques and scales, with an attentive research around the color blue, which can be related both to the landscapes of the island city where she lives, as well as aspects of the history of painting.

The insular geography of the city of Vitória (in the state of Espírito Santo) somehow guides her production, which is crossed by overseas issues of presence and absence, so relevant to the Atlantic diaspora. Her production is also crossed by some experiences, such as the practice of urban painting and art education; in addition to participating in artistic residency programs, such as: Malungas (2018), with Brazilian artist Rosana Paulino; Outra Margem (2021); VILA SUL - Goethe Institut (2020); and Angola AIR - Luanda Art Space (2022).

Recently, Carvalho has participated in important group exhibitions, including: "Um defeito de cor", at Museu de Arte do Rio - MAR, Rio de Janeiro, RJ (2022-2023), for which she has developed two commissioned works ; "Crônicas Cariocas", at Museu de Arte do Rio - MAR, Rio de Janeiro, RJ (2021-2022); "Black Encyclopedia", Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP (2021); "Atenção para o Refrão", Goethe Instituto , Salvador, BA (2020) and "It was the Black Men and Women who Built the National Identity – Black Lives in Brazil", Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, SP (2020).

Her works are part of important institutional collections in Brazil, such as: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) and Mucane - Museu Capixaba do Negro. In 2021, the artist was nominated for the Pipa Prize.

MOST RECENT GROUP SHOWS

- *Um Defeito de Cor*. Curated by: Marcelo Campos, Amanda Bonan and Ana Maria Gonçalves. MAR - Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil (2022-2023);
- *Crônicas Cariocas*. Curated by: Marcelo Campos, Amanda Bonan, Conceição Evaristo and Luiz Antonio Simas. MAR - Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil (2021-2022);
- *Just Breathe...* Curated by: Felipe Hegg. The 55 Project Pop Up, Miami, USA (2021);
- *Arqueólogas do Afeto*. Curated by: Renata Felinto. Galeria Bruno Murias, Lisbon, Portugal (2021);
- *Outros Ensaios Para o Tempo - Gallery Week*. Curated by: Deri Andrade. Nara Roesler Gallery, São Paulo, SP, Brazil (2021);
- *Black Encyclopedia*. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil (2021);
- *Atenção Para o Refrão*. Goethe Institute , Salvador, BA, Brazil (2020);
- *"It was the Black Men and Women who Built the National Identity – Black Lives in Brazil"*. Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, SP, Brazil (2020);
- *The Showcase*. Pivô Gallery, São Paulo, SP, Brazil (2019);
- *Gira*. Museu Capixaba do Negro, Vitória, ES, Brazil (2019).



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DAS PROMESSAS QUE A GENTE FEZ

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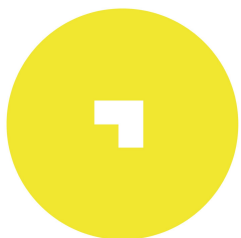
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