



The Recovery Plan: Conversation Series

African Diasporic Reflections Rooted in Italy **Black History Month Florence** **in collaboration with** **SACI Florence and the Museo MA*GA**

Rooted in the recovery from historical amnesia and the recovery of Blackness in the Italian sociohistorical context, this six-part virtual series presents tandem dialogues by contemporary artists alongside scholars and researchers. Each session profiles art exhibitions and archival findings that connect Italy to the African continent while exploring contemporary socio-political concerns and the formation of identities across diaspora.

MODERATOR

Justin Randolph Thompson, Co-Founder and Director of Black History Month Florence and project director for The Recovery Plan

REGISTRATION

You must register for each event individually. To register, please click on the hyperlinks below, then enter the password: **TRP**

CONVERSATIONS

Oct. 6 @ 5p (Eastern time)

[Binta Diaw with Angelica Pesarini: Italianness and the Colonial Gaze](#)

Oct. 13 @ 5p (Eastern time)

[Raziel Perin with Simao Amista: Spirituality in Diaspora](#)

Oct. 27 @ 6p (Eastern time)

[Francis Offman with Jessica Sartiani: Coffee's Materiality and Exploitation](#)

Nov. 10 @ 5p (Eastern time)

[Victor Fotso Nyie with Patrick Joel Tatchedu Yonkeu: Cameroonian Roots in Italy](#)

Nov. 24 @ 5p (Eastern time)

[Emmanuel Yoro with Jordan Anderson: Based Anti-Racist Activism](#)

Dec. 1 @ 5p (Eastern time)

[Justin Randolph Thompson and Janine Gaelle Dieudji: Curatorial Activism](#)

The Recovery Plan: Conversation series

African Diasporic reflections rooted in Italy
BHMF in collaboration with SACI

The Recovery Plan is a six-part series of conversations presenting tandem dialogues by contemporary artists together with researchers in various fields designed to highlight Afro-Descendent perspectives on Italy. Rooted in the recovery from historical amnesia and the recovery of Blackness in the Italian socio-historical context, the series of virtual conversations is presented in dialogue with five exhibitions that place art works alongside archival findings that connect Italy to the African continent. Each conversation shares the research and art works developed with a behind the scenes look and direct engagement in the capacity of art to narrate contemporary socio-political concerns and the formation of identities across diaspora.

Moderator:

Justin Randolph Thompson, Co-Founder and Director of Black History Month Florence and project director for The Recovery Plan

Conversations:

1) Binta Diaw with Angelica Pesarini

Italianness and the Colonial Gaze

2) Raziel Perin with Simao Amista

Spirituality in Diaspora

3) Francis Offman with Jessica Sartiani

Coffee's Materiality and Exploitation

4) Victor Fotso Nyie with Patrick Joel Tatcheda Yonkeu

Cameroonian Roots in Italy

5) Emmanuel Yoro with Jordan Anderson

Jerry Masslo and Italian Based Anti-Racist Activism

6) Justin Randolph Thompson and Janine Gaelle Dieudji

Curatorial Activism

The Recovery Plan
Museo MA*GA Gallarate

September-November 2020

BHMF

in collaboration with Ontario College of Art and Design, The
Student Hotel, SACI and Villa Romana

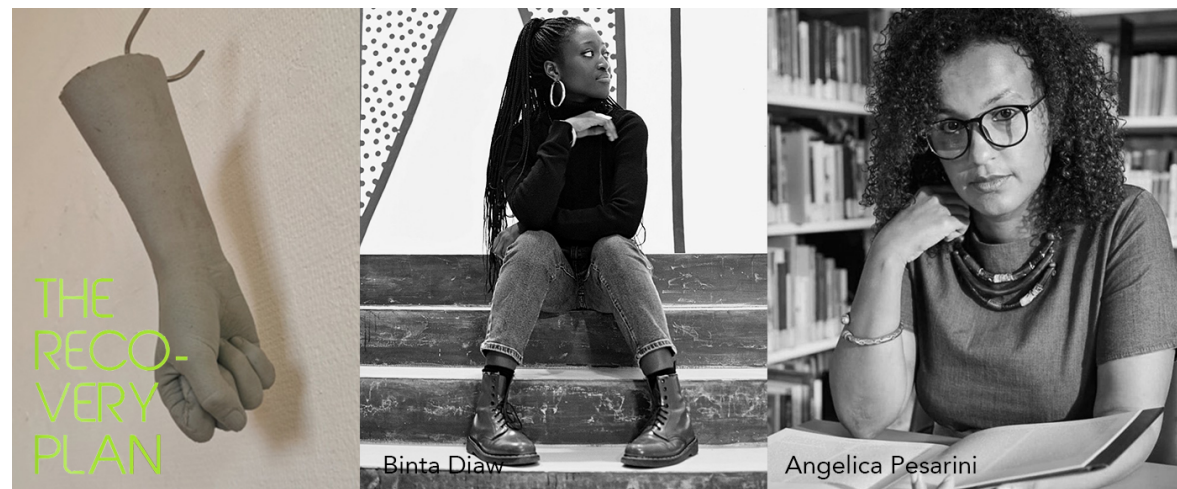
The Recovery Plan is a pop-up Black cultural center and research project created by BHMF as a form of infiltration and occupation that is itinerant, experimental and cross-institutional. For the fall season, a collaboration has been formed with the Museo MAGA around the occupation of their Project Room, Reading Room and other fragments of the institution providing a research platform, exhibition venue, library-on-loan program and forum dedicated to Italian rooted meditations on Afro-Descendent cultures. The project focuses upon two ongoing research projects developed by BHMF, the YGBI Research Residency designed to collectivize afro-descendent artists under 35 years of age residing in Italy and the Black archive Alliance engaged in the emergence of research in Italian archives meditating upon the relationship between the African continent and the Italian territory. Transforming the spaces of the museum into a fleeting cultural center, a series of exhibitions highlight the YGBI Research Residency through placing five researchers in tandem with the residency's five artists. The project affords a glimpse of the broad range of cultural work and scholarship being carried out within the Italian panorama with a transnational focus that bridges communities that are part of the cultural landscape of Gallarate and the region of Lombardia to a broader Italian context.



Part I: Italianness and the Colonial Gaze

Binta Diaw in dialogue with Angelica Pesarini

Moderated by Justin Randolph Thompson



The first conversation of the series features the art of Binta Diaw reflecting upon the de-construction of the colonial gaze and re-appropriation of the images of African women from a fascist era publication called *La Difesa della Razza* (The Defence of the Race). Diaw's new series is created through a phototransfer technique which layers into collage applied directly to the gallery walls. Diaw is set in dialogue with Afro-Italian Sociologist Angelica Pesarini whose research engages Italian colonial history with a specific focus on women. The conversation is undercut with images and video from the exhibition featuring the work of Binta Diaw along with visual displays of the archival research carried out by Pesarini.

Biographies:

Binta Diaw, born in 1995 is a Senegalese-Italian visual artist based in Milan, Italy. Her research is aimed at the creation of installations, videos and sculptural works that comment on social phenomena such as migration and immigration, anthropology as well as her body in relationship with nature and notions of identity. Defying the Western gaze through a subverted reality, her practice questions perceptions of Italianness and Africanness in relation to her own cultural heritage and upbringing.

Embracing visual art with a strongly intersectional, afro-diasporic and feminist methodology based on a physical, personal experience, she is ultimately able to explore the multiple layers of her blackness, herself as a social body and her position as a black woman in a Western context. She studied Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera in Milan and obtained an MA at ESAD Grenoble-Valence, in France. In 2018 she moved to Germany for an internship at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin. In 2020 she debuted with her first solo show at Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio in Milan.

Angelica Pesarini is Professor of Sociology at New York University in Florence where she teaches "Black Italia", a course dedicated to the analysis of the intersections of race, gender and citizenship in Italy. She holds a PhD in Sociology and Gender Studies in England and worked as a professor of Gender, Race and Sexuality at Lancaster University before returning to Italy in 2017. Pesarini's research focuses on the performativity of race in colonial and post-colonial Italy and the racialization of contemporary Italian political discourse. Pesarini has previously investigated the relationships between gender identity and economic activities in some Roma communities living in Rome, analyzing risk strategies, survival and opportunity in the context of male child prostitution in Rome. She has published several academic essays and participated in various collective publications.

Part II:
Spirituality in Diaspora
Raziel Perin in dialogue with Simao Amista
Moderated by Justin Randolph Thompson



Raziel Perin



Simao Amista

This second conversation of the series features the art of Raziel Perin rooted in codified meditations on cultural identity as understood through a lens of dislocation. Working across mediums with elements that draw upon Dominican Voodoo traditions passed down from his mother, Perin is set in dialogue with Afro-Brazilian Italian anthropologist Simao Amista. Amista's work reflects upon African diasporic spirituality and this exchange will tap into cultural retentions and the significance of spirituality in grounding displaced communities. The conversation is undercut with images and video from the exhibition featuring the work of Raziel Perin along with visual displays of the archival research carried out by Amista.

Biographies:

Raziel Perin was born in 1992 in the Dominican Republic. He received a BFA in Visual Arts at Naba Milano. Drawing upon his personal experience, mental associations and cultural references, Raziel Perin creates mysterious, unexpected and direct works of art that recall precise moments of clarity and dense memories that evoke the complexity of the process of reconciliation of the diasporic identity freed from Western stereotypes. Perin was born in the hinterland of the Dominican Republic where he lived until the age of four. In 1996 he moved to Northern Italy with his mother. His artistic production takes shape between two very distant realities, rooted in the need to be accepted as "the Other" and at the same time feeling the duty to suppress the sensitive part of his personal history, which constantly re-emerges. The introspection and reconnection with the echoes of those ancestral bonds that seemed to have been severed in this process of 'whitening' are the result and are channeled into drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations that unite and synthesize a series of recurring elements. His body of work conveys a compelling visual metaphor of the layers of personal memory and cultural history that inform and intensify his experience of the present.

Simao Amista is an anthropologist and doctor of Italian-Afro-Brazilian descent. A scholar of African and Afro-descendent religions and spiritual philosophies, he has been working for years in the field of hospitality and education.

Part III: Coffee's Materiality and Exploitation

Francis Offman in dialogue with Jessica Sartiani
Moderated by Justin Randolph Thompson



The third conversation of the series features the work of Francis Offman engaging the materiality of coffee and the capacity for abstraction to carry a socio-psychic dimension. Drawing upon the national heritage of coffee in the context of his native Rwanda, the dialogue is expanded upon through an analysis of the colonial legacy of coffee's production and exchange. Offman is in dialogue with Jessica Sartiani whose research is simultaneously physical and academic, reflecting upon the history of the cultural exchange of coffee and the impact of this history on our contemporary consumption, with a focus on the Italian claim to the product. The conversation is undercut with images and video from the exhibition featuring the work of Francis Offman along with visual displays of the archival research carried out by Sartiani.

Biographies:

Francis Offman was born in Butare, Rwanda in 1987. He moved in Italy in 1999 and lives and works in Bologna. After studying Administration Sciences at the Università degli Studi in Milan he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna where he studied Painting with Luca Bertolo. In 2018-2019 Offman participated in several group exhibitions including *Tragitti divaganti, distrazioni da una meta* during *Open Tour 2018*. In the same year he took part in the Q-Rated workshop in Nuoro promoted by the Quadriennale of Rome. In 2020 he participated in the *YGBI Research Recidency* organized by Black History Month Florence in collaboration with Ontario College of Art and Design in Florence. He is one of the selected artist of *Mediterranea 19 – Young Artists Biennale* (San Marino, 2021).

Jessica Sartiani is a Florentine coffee trainer and coffee expert. With an Italian father and a mother who is half Filipino and half African-American, it is through her origins that her journey as a woman of coffee begins. Trained and attentive to contemporary sub-cultures of coffee, she started her work a decade ago in one of the pioneer coffee shops in Florence, Ditta Artigianale. Working at Dittà Artigianale, she had the opportunity to study and reflect upon all of the labor, transportation and exchanges that precede the product being served in coffee shops. This research pushed Sartiani towards an ethical engagement in valorizing the producing countries. Her experience evolved with the opening of the first specialty coffee in Italy and in dealing with the training of baristas and customers. She has participated in various competitions such as the Brewers Cup, to improve her contact and relations with the public and enrich her background and has been part of coffee training projects in Honduras, Lithuania and with several local coffee start-ups.

Part IV: Cameroonian Roots in Italy

Victor Fotso Nyie in dialogue with Patrick Joel Tatcheda Yonkeu
Moderated by Justin Randolph Thompson



The fourth conversation of the series features the work of Victor Fotso Nyie reflecting upon the aesthetic and social dimensions of Cameroonian artistic traditions as transplanted in Italy. Shifting in materiality towards terracotta Fotso Nyie's work redefines the ceramic heritage of Italy through material and formal experimentation. His work is set in dialogue with Cameroonian artist and cultural activist Patrick Joel Tatcheda whose work and research seeks to highlight the longstanding Cameroonian population within the context of Italy, cultural exchanges between Italy and Cameroon around arts education and the importance of activism in maintaining a sense of community. The conversation is undercut with images and video from the exhibition featuring the work of Victor Fotso Nyie along with visual displays of the archival research carried out by Tatcheda Yonkeu.

Biographies:

Victor Fotso Nyie was born in 1990 in Douala, Cameroon and lives and works in Faenza. In 2018 he attended the Biennium of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. He attended the Istituto Tecnico Superiore Tonino Emiliani / Diploma of Superior Technician for the design and prototyping of ceramic products, Faenza, IT in 2015. His artistic research leads him to explore human variety and beauty while incorporating dimensions of spirituality in his work. He creates art that recalls his homeland in Africa and which merge with other geo-cultural realities that metaphorically describe the globalized world in which we live. He has participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions including *The Armory Show* in New York City (2020), *Stand P420 Gallery* (2020), *III Biennale d'Arte don Franco Patrino* curated by Gianni Ceroli at the Museo MAGI '900 in Pieve di Cento (BO) (2020) and *To Be Going To* curated by Francesca Bertazzoni & Davide Ferri at the P420 Gallery (2019). In 2020 he participated in the project *Research Residency* curated by BHMf in collaboration with Ontario College of Art and Design and The Student Hotel (Florence). Fotso Nyie is also the winner of various awards including the *Roberto Daolio Prize* (2018). His next exhibitions will be at the Museo MAGI '900, Pieve di Cento (BO), IT (2020) and the *Biennale del Mediterraneo*, Republic of San Marino (2020).

Patrick Joël Tatcheda Yonkeu was born in Cameroon in 1985, and lives and works in Bologna. He moved to Italy in 2009 where he received a scholarship to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna and obtained a Master's degree in Visual Arts in 2016 with a research project on the theme of Zen in the arts. His interest in metaphysics remains the basis of his practice, which concerns the relationship between human beings and nature and our place in the universe, and he searches for forms of spirituality more suitable for our times. His research is based on the idea of existence as a harmonious flow whose balance must be preserved and often refers to themes of life and death, the visible and the invisible and energy in its infinite forms. He deepens this research through numerous collaborations between Africa and Italy and by creating seminars on intercultural painting with schools and associations in Emilia-Romagna.

Part V:
Jerry Masslo and Italian Based
Anti-Racist Activism
Emmanuel Yoro in dialogue with Jordan Anderson
Moderated by Justin Randolph Thompson



The fifth conversation of the series features the work of Emmanuel Yoro engaging a hybrid space between virtual platforms and design charting a poetic meditation on racist violence in contemporary Italy. Yoro's interdisciplinary project is a meditation on the figure of Jerry Essan Masslo, a South African refugee and activist murdered in 1989 in Italy, which sparked an anti-racist protest of over 200,000 people in Rome and subsequent shifts in national legal policies towards immigrants. Drawing upon a range of archival sources his work takes on the form of hyper-collages. Yoro is placed in dialogue with writer and researcher Jordan Anderson whose research is layered with complex understandings of identity, diaspora and sexuality. The conversation is undercut with images and video from the exhibition featuring the work of Emmanuel Yoro along with visual displays of the archival research carried out by Anderson.

Biographies:

Emmanuel Yoro is an Italian visual artist of Ivorian origin who divides his time between Vicenza and Milan. Adopting an artistic practice that embraces collage, design, fashion, graphics and photography, he breaks down into images the questions of the multiple facets of his cultural identity and different nuances of queerness. An Afro-diasporic sensibility and a raw and monochromatic aesthetic characterize his research and recent artistic production, always in the attempt of a wider redefinition of the self that dwells in the crux between past and present, memory and imagination.

Born and raised in Kingston Jamaica, Jordan Anderson is a fashion and culture journalist and creative director who is currently based in Milan. His work often magnifies and explores political themes in and outside of the fashion industry including race, gender, sexuality, identity and cultural ethics. He contributes to a variety of publications including Document Journal, Teen Vogue, Vogue Italia, and The Face and is currently online editor and editor-at-large for Twin Magazine and nss magazine respectively.

Part VI:
Curatorial activism
Justin Randolph Thompson in dialogue with
Janine Gaëlle Dieudji

THE
RECO-
VERY
PLAN



Justin Randolph Thompson



Janine Gaëlle Dieudji

The last conversation of the series features the curators of the project The Recovery Plan in a conversation engaging curatorial activism in relation to a half decade of arts based activism in the context of Italy. Drawing upon the broader framework of the curatorial project of The Recovery Plan, this dialogue seeks to reflect upon the nature of institutional occupation and infiltration and the necessity of collective labor in shifting cultural perspectives. Black Archive Alliance as a template for alternative forms of academic research and YGBI Research Residency as a form of collectivizing activism around young artists are the focus of this conversation which are elaborated as rooted in long term visions with pop-up applications.

Biographies:

Justin Randolph Thompson is a new media artist, organizer and educator born in Peekskill, NY in '79. Living between Italy and the US since 2001, Thompson is a Co-Founder and Director of Black History Month Florence. Justin's work and scholarship engages local communities as living yet fleeting monuments. Thompson teaches art at several universities and develops strategies for the initiation of annual and biennial cultural projects of international collaboration. His art has been exhibited internationally in venues such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Reina Sofia, and the American Academy in Rome. Thompson is the recipient of numerous awards including the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, a Franklin Furnace Fund Grant and a Visual Artist Grant from the Marcelino Botin Foundation.

Janine Gaëlle Dieudji is a "multilocal" art agitator and facilitator based between Florence, Paris and Marrakech. Since 2017, Gaëlle has Co-Directed and led BHMF initiating a broad spectrum of projects and collaborations. Currently the Exhibitions Director of the Musée d'Art Contemporain Africain Al Maaden in Marrakech, she works as an external advisor/collaborator for the production and development of cultural events and festivals of Art and Cinema in Florence and elsewhere. She also assists artists in the development of their work as well as in increasing their visibility by connecting them with other art professionals, collectors and press media.