



Janilda Bartolomeu
Black Atlantic Visions

Kseniia Bepalova
Not a Map, but a Trace:
Former Soviet Land
Reclaimed

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Women Looking At Men

PROGRAMMERS OF THE FUTURE

14 — 16 July 2023

FONDS 21

VRIENDEN
LOTERIJ

ALLEN & OVERY

Programmers of the Future End-of-Year Showcase

Seeing the Unwritten

Bianca Lucas

The new Eye talent development trajectory **Programmers of the Future** present its first projects during a mini-festival. The programmes delve into alternative ways of interpreting marginalized realities through film programs and installation works.

From July 13th to July 18th, three new film programmers present their takes on stories and types of cinemas that represent a new generation of film programming and moving image curating. For the past 10 months through workshops, expert sessions and meetings with the Eye team, these Programmers of the Future have been inspiring the Eye Filmmuseum to look towards previously underexplored narratives and to gain a glimpse into present and future discourses, as well as to reopen history to a more all-encompassing, holistic reading.

Programmers Janilda Bartolomeu, Korée Wilrycx and Kseniia Bepalova are the very first to take part in the first edition of this talent development scheme, which was set up by Eye Filmmuseum and Fonds 21 in 2022.

The showcase will take place in three forms: a series of in-cinema film programs at Eye (July 14th-16th), [an online slate of programmes on the Eye Filmplayer](#) (July 7th-indefinite), and [an accompanying exhibition](#) (July 13th-18th) in the new talent hub [Moving Arts Centre Amsterdam MACA](#). Both physical presentation (at Eye Filmmuseum and MACA) will be accompanied by opening celebrations, performances, talks with artists and public discussions.

New generations of audiences

Programmers of the Future was initiated by Eye Filmmuseum in response to an increasing realization that the world has been, and still is, undergoing dramatic changes and par-

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adigm shifts in the last few years. Environmental concerns, various civil rights movements, and the global health crisis have made it abundantly clear that new generations of audiences, programmers and curators are growing up in a fundamentally different and constantly changing society. Equality and inclusion, the need for a different relationship with nature, and rapid innovations in the field of digital culture must be addressed in the way art and cinema are mediated to the public.

For Eye, it is important to not only look at the history of cinema and past of exhibition practices, but also to have a forward-facing outlook on narratives that have been missing from the dominant canons. This includes ways of exhibiting that go beyond the black box that is the cinema room or the white space exhibition configuration, but look at the colourful field in the middle to create an inviting space where audiences can reflect on various possible replies to complex and important questions.

Zeitgeist

Handpicked from an open call that reeled in close to 200 applications, Janilda Bartolomeu, Kseniia Bepalova, and Korée Wilrycx proposed a range of diverse research questions that connected the history of cinema and moving images to the present world and Zeitgeist. Eye's hope was to help them thrive,

learn, gain access to resources, but also peel the Institution's ears to new ways of understanding cinema and moving images. And by extension, new ways of connecting to the world.

Without purporting to have the answers, their programmes do bravely delve into alternate ways of interpreting certain realities that are too often pigeon-holed: considered 'marginal', even though they concern 'minorities' that, together, constitute a vast chunk of the world.

Just because something is unwritten, doesn't mean it does not exist. This sentence from Janilda Bartolomeu's program notes might very well sum up the scope of ambitions this first generation of Programmers of the Future has taken upon itself.

The result of these meetings and feedback sessions are three fascinating programmes:

Not a Map But a Trace: Former Soviet Land Reclaimed, compiled by Kseniia Bepalova, follows alternative visual geographies of the former Soviet Union. The films show damaged landscapes that still encapsulate the memories of oppression, and so are recaptured from the dominant narratives of state Socialism. The programme probes the dangers of the imperial vision, and in so doing underlines the urgent need for new forms of cross-border connection and communication.

Black Atlantic Visions, compiled by Janilda Bartolomeu, is a stimulating, nuanced programme of cinema from the African diaspora. Bartolomeu found a number of hidden treasures that reveal how the current wave of Black filmmakers is resisting notions of a singular reality and the 'right way of looking' imposed by colonial powers.

Shifting the Focus: Women Looking at Men, compiled by Korée Wilrycx, investigates the many ways female artists reflect in their work on men and masculinity: from the sensual and erotic to the psychological and academic. They do so through satire (for example in *Le bonheur*), by reversing the male gaze or by showing the negative consequences the patriarchy has on men, as well as on women.

The Desire to Connect

Central to their research was the question that no matter where you- the potential reader- or I, or the on-screen protagonists are from, how we've lived, what we've learnt and then tried to unlearn - the fundamental human need always remains the desire to connect.

Keep your hearts open, your eyes wandering, and your ears attentive to what both screams and murmurs- and enjoy the ride that Kseniia, Korée, and Janilda have worked tirelessly on, for you, over the course of 10 months with so much care and patience. ◊

The complete program and information about ticket sales can be found at eyefilm.nl/programmersofthefuture

A speculative continent

Janilda Bartolomeu

Black Atlantic Visions is a showcase of contemporary films and video installations from artists from the region also known as the Black Atlantic. In the absence of traditional archives, these people held onto histories and reinvented cultures through the conscious abyss of the Atlantic Ocean- accessed through their imagination, spirituality, and speculation.

My journey towards *Black Atlantic Visions* started in January 2018, when I was volunteering at the Video Library of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. That was the only way I could afford to see as many films as I wanted and combine my uni work with my volunteering hours. At this time, I was still in the early stages of my artistic research into my Cape Verdean heritage, still negotiating my way as a filmmaker. I was finding ways of interacting with my general and ancestral histories as they were unwritten and largely immaterial due to repercussions of the island's colonization.

It was then, still gleaning for personal, cultural as well as historical reflections in the world around me, I saw *Café com canela* (2018). A Brazilian film by Ary Rosa and Glenda Nicácio, about a close-knit Afro-Brazilian community in Bahia, collectively and delicately handling daily life, grief, personal transformations, and ancestral connections. This tender film generously offered a reflection of my state-of-being, my search, as well as a connection to a different yet familiar community from across the Atlantic. Mainly, it revealed to me the importance of cinema in constructively interacting with immaterial colonial heritage and its postcolonial echoes.

Speculative continent

With similar intimate intent, *Café com canela* is the first film set to screen during *Black Atlantic Visions*. The program I curated for Eye's Programmers of the Future. It is a showcase of contemporary films and video installations from the region also known as the Black Atlantic. A speculative continent with the Atlantic Ocean as its centre, which through sheer colonial violence became a conduit through which the African diaspora (dis)located from Africa, to 'the Americas' and Europe. In the absence of traditional archives, these people held onto histories and reinvented cultures through the conscious abyss of the Atlantic Ocean- accessed through their imagination, spirituality, and speculation.

Café com canela is as much a gateway for me to the many Afro-diasporic films that have come from similar inspirations, as it is a key for you to enter this program. It comes from pregnant, churning silences, that take up conscious space within our lived experiences as Afro-diasporic people. Silences which philosopher Bayo Akomolafe refers to as 'the gasp', a liminal space where magical realism, the Gods and anything too immense and complex to risk categorization resides.

This idea is beautifully illustrated halfway through *Café com canela*, as Violetta's grandmother, Roquelina, passes away, peacefully, well-loved and of old age in her bedroom. Her passage to a different world, the 'Other Side' is indicated by a simple shot of her bedroom. The only indications of her existence are her unmade bed, her white knitted sweater perched on a chair, and the fresh flower offerings on her altar. The quietude of her loss is only animated by the magical reflection of moving water that comfortingly engulfs her bedroom walls. The borders between this articulated reality dissipate, and multiple worlds melt together with this one.



Janilda Bartolomeu is a film programmer, filmmaker and researcher. She has a Master's Degree in Comparative Arts & Media Studies. As part of Research & Development at Het Nieuwe Instituut she researched notions of spectrality within the various (post)colonial contexts, as well as the immaterial knowledge production of the Cape Verdean community in Rotterdam, through various film techniques. Her cinematic interests include postcolonial hauntings and memory, speculative genre and finding co-creative ways of film programming. Janilda is currently based in Rotterdam.

Opacity

I am still touched by this scene and how this single poetic image bears a particular form of knowledge not only encapsulating the whole film, but particular conditions of postcolonial life, and thus creation. Silent immaterial knowledge, depicted in one poetic image. You will have to see it, as words still fail to describe the density of this scene, as they have failed me throughout this process of creating *Black Atlantic Visions*.

Another ripple of this knowledge can be found in *Waves: Black Atlantic Shorts*, the shorts screening taking place in the evening of 15 July. One of its films, *Pattaki* (2018) by Everlane Moraes, masterfully and without dialogue reflects upon the source of this knowledge, the Atlantic Ocean. A source of active silence, and opacity where immense strife is purposely turned into defiant acts of regeneration. In the film, a small community in Havana wanders in a dense darkness, seeking water as a safeguard, in order to encounter the magnetic powers and possibilities of Yemaya, goddess of the sea.

This all reminds me of philosopher, creative ancestor and fellow islander Édouard Glissant, whose work in *Poetics of Relation* (1990) helped me navigate this immense source of immaterial knowledge the Atlantic Ocean harbours – without access to any traditional archives, books or monuments. Both a graveyard and a site of opportunities. This is where traces of our African ancestors (original languages customs, religions, memories) still reside beneath the waves. Despite violent practices, these people learned how to breathe under these opaque waters and regenerated new populations, cultures, rituals, gestures, and creole languages on new lands surrounding the Atlantic Ocean.

Air conditioners

The Atlantic Ocean, thereby a physical manifestation of this 'gasp', consciously gave birth to the constellation that is the African diaspora and *Black Atlantic Visions* honours this. Considering that, not everything can and needs to be articulated through words. Cinema plays a crucial part in relaying the immaterial knowledge and gasps that despite their variations, connect us all.

In *Black Atlantic Visions*, tiny currents of these colonial negotiations and postcolonial re-imaginings resurface through the works of contemporary filmmakers, as mentioned before, but also through films such as *Atlantique* (2019) by Mati Diop, and *Air Conditioner* (2020) by Fradique from filmmaking collective Geração 80, in which air conditioners, weighed down by mysterious forces, start falling from buildings across Luanda. While at MACA, *Image Frequency Modulation*, a 2021 installation by Cameroonian multi-disciplinary artist Ethel Tawe relays ancestral memories and oral traditions.

I invite you to join this rich constellation, by bringing your hearts, your thoughts, and your timelines. May this program be a means through which we melt times together, where we are collectively open to seek and reach beyond the screen and its usual narratives and temporalities, break fourth walls, reimagine the boundaries of sight and sound, as well as blur realities, genre definitions, and medium boundaries. In the spirit of Glissant, may this be a collective moment of bowling water in our hands, slowly letting it drip through our fingers back to the Atlantic, just as he intended. ◊

Café com canela

On landscapes and colonial imagery

Kseniia Bepalova

Not a Map, but a Trace unearths colonial histories hidden in the earth of places that used to comprise the Soviet Union. The selected films highlight damaged landscapes, borderlands, and roads as witnesses to historical traumas. In search of new connectivities, they reclaim the wounded landscapes from the oppressive narratives of state socialism.



Kseniia Bepalova is an independent film researcher and a Programmer of the Future at Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam. Her current programming and research project ties together the cinematic representation of landscapes, resource extraction, and colonialism. Kseniia collaborates with Amsterdam-based art and research collective Fuck Healing (?) and is a part of the pre-selection team for the European Shorts section of Sarajevo Film Festival. Her interests include decolonial cinema from ex-Soviet states, environmental cinema, and the notions of land, border, and cosmopolitanism. She graduated Cum Laude from the MA program in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

Landscapes are never neutral: the way land is represented is always a political statement translated into the language of aesthetics. Being sensitive to historical wounds, indigenous and decolonial filmmakers have long been aware of the importance of the images of land – stolen, damaged, and inscribed with colonialism through the imposed borders. Yet, for places that were once (or are still) colonies of Russia and the Soviet Union, this discourse barely exists in the public sphere, and their histories are still rarely acknowledged as the histories of colonisation. The lack of decolonial discourse serves as one of the driving forces for the program *Not a Map, but a Trace*, which consists of the in-cinema screenings at Eye Filmmuseum, an [exhibition at MACA](#), and an online programme on the [Eye Film Player](#). The selected films explore the material earth as the most explicit witness of colonial violence. In particular, they explore damaged landscapes as sites of historical memory, borderlands as places of rupture, and roads as spatial connectors. By paying attention to these images of land, the program counteracts the imperial practice of cinematic mapping: in the same way as French and British empires, the Russian and Soviet states were commissioning films from the 'exotic' distant corners of the empire to control them. The program *Not a Map, but a Trace* re-appropriates the process of cinematic mapping to trace alternative geographies of countries and places previously dominated by Soviet power.

Moving through space

The program revolves around two key images: a damaged landscape and a (rail)road – a static and a mobile way of exploring space in cinema. The image of the ruin from Olena Newkryta's experimental film *Ruins in Reverse* (2021) gives the main trajectory for the program. It studies the ruins of the standardised Soviet apartment block appearing in the steppe landscape in the south of Ukraine. This familiar image referring to Soviet history, reveals that material spaces are the witnesses of the historical traumas. Newkryta's film does not imply that such ruins are the symbols of nostalgia, as they are in a lot of art dealing with post-socialist architecture. Rather, in

the film, the ruins acquire a generative potential to work through the traumatic past and form a future. The second leading motif is that of a railway that drives the exhibition at MACA. The central piece, Tekla Aslanishvili's film installation *A State in a State* (2022), portrays the disruption of the railroad infrastructure in Caucasus. Through the encounter with a railroad worker, audiences are told the stories of spatial damage, fragmentation, and failed connectivity. This brings the film in conversation with the general programme's motif of the landscapes wounded by imperial infrastructures. Aslanishvili's film is put in dialogue with the installation based on classic Soviet propaganda film *Turksib* (Viktor Turin, 1929). This installation invites questioning of the railroad infrastructures which were colonial enterprises in the past: Turin's film tells the story of the conquest of the Central Asian land with railways, representing the 'progress'.

Weaving a net

What should we do with this visual legacy when this imperial fantasy turns into real violence and war? What kinds of films can challenge imperial imagery? The first step in this program is to look at what we are left with – at the damaged landscapes that are no longer the imaginary dwellings for a happy socialist society, but the silent testimonies to the repressive histories. Beyond the disrupted roads, the motif of damage finds its aesthetic shape in the depiction of fragile borders in *Letters to Max* (Eric Baudelaire, 2014) and *Extinction* (Salomé Lamas, 2018), abandoned landscapes in *Georgica* (Sulev Keedus, 1998) and *Moscow Time*, military conflicts in *The Lighthouse* (Marya Saakyan, 2006) and *Volcano* (Roman Bondarchuk, 2018), and, more abstractly, in the aesthetics of alienation common to many showcased films.



Letters to Max



Ruins in Reverse



A State in a State

Making a program exposing Soviet colonialism requires navigating the complex path of thought where every wrong move risks descending into an authoritarian utopia. The program seeks to expose the violence inherent in such utopias, highlighting the failure of socialist dreams manifested in border conflicts. The motif of utopia remains in images of the futuristic constructions and infrastructural dreams: it becomes an aesthetic strategy to process the forward-looking communist ideology and open alternative futures. Thus, *State in a State* is not about post-Soviet infrastructure, it is about infrastructure that connects Caucasus with Turkey and Europe - it goes beyond and creates new mental connectivities.

Even if this program could be understood in terms of geography, it should be a heterogeneous geography that paves the way beyond the notion of the post-Soviet and allows this space to weave different paths of relationality with other places, starting with Amsterdam. Is there room for a utopia and nuance in times of war? Perhaps not. Still, for those living in the safety of European cities, it is of crucial importance to reflect on the underlying causes of war and violence.

The aim of this program is not to create a map – that is an impossible task unless we retreat to the familiar totalizing visions. Rather, the aim is to weave a net – to trace the line that comes from one node to another, where Amsterdam is also one of the intersections. ◊



Women Looking At Men

Beyond the female gaze

Korée Wilrycx

There is no such thing as a unified 'female gaze', as films by Yvonne Rainer, Alice Diop, Agnès Varda and Amanda van Hesteren demonstrate. Works that dare focus their gaze on the men, each in their own unique way, Korée Wilrycx writes. She compiled the programme 'Women Looking At Men': a programme of film screenings, online programming and an exhibition of work by contemporary, young female artists.

When I tell people I'm putting together a programme around 'female directors who examine men and masculinity' their first reaction is always: "Oh, like *Beau travail* by Claire Denis?" And indeed, that is the most well-known, clearest example of such a film, as well as the film that prompted me to compile this programme.

Creating a programme with exclusively female directors can feel a bit like a trap. Am I not – as a woman – now myself participating in the exclusion and categorisation of female directors by locating their 'gaze' alongside that of their male colleagues? And are the classifications 'female' and 'male' not an expression of a far too binary way of thinking – one no longer appropriate to our time?

Outsiders

There's a kernel of truth in both suspicions but, looking at the example of *Beau travail*, I feel that this programme has value, whatever the case. How Claire Denis plays with the exchange of gazes in her film, how she turns the male gaze around... Her gaze as a woman is not simply a 'female gaze', but a very deliberate commentary on that male gaze.

This awareness is what I have in mind for this programme, with specific attention to the unique perspective of female makers; the perspective of outsiders looking, from a distance, at the world of men – a world to which they usually have no access. This is made very clear in the short documentaries that open my programme: *Vers la tendresse* (2017) by Alice Diop and *I Want To Go Higher* (2023) by Amanda van Hesteren. In both of these films, the female directors infiltrate groups of men and, in doing

so, show how they deal with their relationships and women. It shows how, they too, are sometimes victims of the patriarchy, and of the strict 'rules' they have to comply with in order to call themselves a 'man'.

Alice Diop does this by interviewing four men from the banlieues of Paris, who behave in accordance with what is expected of them, even though it soon becomes clear that other desires and urges are also in play. Amanda van Hesteren casts her disarming gaze at a number of male models, who go to Thailand to work on themselves. Here too, we learn more about their insecurities through conversations with the filmmaker. In this way, both directors succeed in breaking through the hardened facades of these males.

Two sides of the same coin

The distance from which these female directors look is, in fact, only an apparent distance. Both worlds are two sides of the same coin, which exert an ongoing influence on one another and the boundaries of which – thankfully – are increasingly blurring. The big difference being that the oppressed position of women – in particular of non-white, non-heterosexual, non-cis, women – has obliged them to think much more about what a term such as 'femininity' means. Consider for example that famous sentence from Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxième sexe*: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." Isn't it then logical that women have also started to look at the implications of terms such as 'masculinity'?

The Man Who Envied Women (1985) by Yvonne Rainer, the closing film of my programme in Eye's cinemas, takes a very different look at masculinity. This film principally looks, in a sarcastic, witty way, at the benefits men derive from the patriarchy; how they use it, for example, to justify their own infidelities. The film is rooted in – misogynist – psychoanalysis, but uses this as a kind of 'weapon', just like Laura Mulvey did ten years previously in her famous essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). In this essay, she used various concepts from Freud and Lacan to demonstrate that classic Hollywood cinema inevitably places the viewer in a male subject position with the woman on screen as an object



Korée Wilrycx (Antwerp, 1993) graduated with distinction from Luca School of Arts in Brussels, where she made films on a wide range of themes, always from an investigative viewpoint, with a focus on intimacy and an urge to break through the heteronormative, patriarchal framework. She obtained her Master's in Film Studies and Visual Culture from the University of Antwerp, where her love for film developed further; not only as a maker, but also as a spectator, critic and researcher. Her thesis focused on the portrayal of bisexuality in film, adding further depth to her research into gender and sexuality in the seventh art. She is now building on this passion, this time in the role of programmer in Eye, where she is following the talent development traineeship Programmers of the Future.

of desire, thereby giving rise to the both lauded and derided concept of the 'male gaze'.

Tongue-in-cheek

This sarcasm, this tongue-in-cheek way of looking at this male world, can also be seen in *Le bonheur* (1965) – the title should above all not be taken literally – by Agnès Varda. This film is part of the online component of the programme, which can be seen from the 21st July on the Eye Film Player streaming platform. Once again, we look at infidelity and how few implications this seems to have for the man. The women – consciously – have very little to say, and at the end of the film it becomes painfully clear that the woman's situation brings anything but 'happiness'. The films I refer to above are just a sample of the programme, but even this small sample shows how varied the female gaze can be. The [exhibition](#), which opens on the 12th of July in MACA in Amsterdam, focuses primarily on how contemporary makers are challenging and redefining this concept, also in other art disciplines such as video art, fashion and photography. In Tracey Moffatt's work *Heaven* (1997), for example, we see how the male gaze is brutally turned around when she points her camera at male surfers getting changed by their cars at an Australian beach. We also see probing or tender gazes: for example that of fashion designer Sky Verbeek, who analyses what defines masculinity through fabrics and patterns. Or in the work of photographer Angie Dekker, who focuses her lens on her partner with such intimacy that she presents a vulnerability we seldom get to see.

Humor and irony

Through the lenses of female makers, this programme reveals the complexity of masculinity and the impact of the patriarchy, leaving enough space for humour, irony and self-reflection. The works challenge us to think about the social structures that influence masculinity and the consequences of this for both men and women. It is not simply dividing female makers into a separate category, but it's a recognition of the seeming outsider who observes the world of men from the periphery, both now and then. In order to liberate female makers from the singular (fe)male gaze, and to strive for a film world beyond the gendered gaze. ◊