

LA TRAVERSE

*Seas, Lands and Bodies  
Crossed*

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With the artists  
Malala Andrialavidrazana, Francis Alÿs,  
Shivanjani Lal, Louisa Marajo, Tuly Mekondjo,  
Otobong Nkanga, Jean-Paul Thibau

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**A proposal by Cécile Bourne-Farrell**  
Spring 2023 (28 april-21 may 2023)

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# *Seas, Lands and Bodies Crossed*

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Each in their own way, the works of the six artists scrupulously chosen for La Traverse, evoke the question of the displacement of people and goods following conflicts but also the ecological disasters suffered by the populations. These artists offer a unique, generous and critical view of the consequences of unbridled capitalism and climate change. From sugar cane to potatoes, from the construction of dams to the relentless exploitation of land and people, many people also migrate to better places.

In her photographic compositions, **Malala Andrialavidrazana** develops a rich imagination, based on illustrations taken from banknotes that refer to colonial exploitation. **Otobong Nkanga**, highlights references to the environment endangered by the despoiling of land and the extraction of indigenous people. **Jean-Paul Thibeu** proposes to create other relationships between art and life, in order to explore a more relevant existence that is more attentive to human relations. The potato is a commodity from which rich narratives and unexpected experiences can intersect and connect; it functions as a common medium. **Shivanjani Lal** constructs temporary landscapes that she sees as shifting sites of diasporic healing, places of transition at the heart of her artistic practice. **Tuli Mekondjo** pays homage to her grandmother who, like many Awaambo women, was sterilised, eliminated or displaced in Namibia. **Louisa Marajo** crosses seas and lands in search of different temporalities that revive by superimposition the toxic flames of our buried waste. Finally, **Francis Alÿs**, in his collages, highlights the proximity of two continents separated by only 13km of sea that carries migrants in its waters on makeshift boats. According to the Migration Portal, by the end of 2022, approximately 5.9 million people in 84 countries and territories are living in displacement as a result of disasters that occurred not only in 2020, but also in previous years (IDMC, 2021)<sup>1</sup>. The majority of mobility in the context of environmental and climate change, including disaster-induced displacement, occurs within country borders and forces people to migrate. The intensification of climatic phenomena and the oppression of people over each other lead to the displacement of people which drastically changes the trajectories of lives from Sudan to Ukraine.

This project *Seas, Lands and Bodies Crossed* will take place under the sign of performance and the unique presentation of works deployed in this space of all imaginable potential interactions.

**Cécile Bourne-Farrell.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/themes/migration-environnementale>

# Artists

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## Malala Andrialavidrazana (F, Madagascar)

**Malala Andrialavidrazana**, (born in 1971, lives and works in Paris, France) Since the early 1990s, the artist has been developing an anthropological study that focuses on rites and memory. Far from the exotic and fantasized clichés of the Western world, Malala Andrialavidrazana draws a tactful sociological portrait of the geographical area with which she shares her own history.

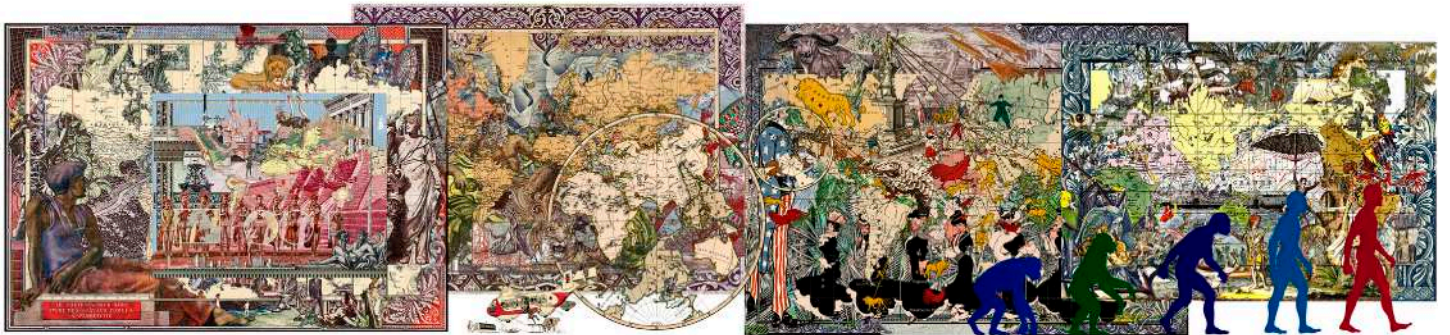
<https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/malala-andrialavidrazana/>

1/ *Rolling Figures* 1.0, 2022

Single print hand-coloured with pigment ink

420cm x 100cm

Courtesy of the artist



**Image:** Malala Andrialavidrazana, 'Rolling Figures 1.0', 2022, Courtesy of the artist

## Francis Alÿs, (Belgique, Mexique)

**Francis Alÿs**, (born 1959, Belgian, based in Mexico). His work emerges in the interdisciplinary space of art, architecture and social practice. He has created a diverse body of art and performance works that explore urban tensions and geopolitics. Using a wide range of media, from painting to performance, his work examines the tension between politics and poetics, individual action and powerlessness.

<https://francisalys.com/>

2/*Untitled*, 2007

Graphite, acrylic and collage on vellum paper

27.9 x 35.6 cm

Private collection Saint-Ouen



**Image:** Francis Alÿs, 'Untitled', 2007, Private collection, Saint-Ouen.



## Shivanjani Lal (Fidji/Australie)

**Shivanjani Lal**, is a Fijian and Australian artist and curator. She is a member of the Indian and Pacific Ocean indentured labour diaspora, which links her to a long history of family movements; her work uses personal grief to capture ancestral loss and healing. Shivanjani Lal uses storytelling as a methodology to account for lost histories and prepare the future for healing. She uses intimate images of her family from photo albums, as well as videos and images from contemporary travels in Asia-Pacific, and objects (both handmade and not) that reconstruct temporary landscapes.

<http://shivanjanilal.com/about>

<https://www.no20arts.com/shivanjani-lal>

3/ 4 *Lines Across a Horizon – Ba*, 2021

Print on cotton cloth, colour photograph (printed by Marine Lines Bombay) red kite thread (from Byculla, Bombay)

33x48cm

Courtesy of the artist



**Image:** Shivanjani Lal, '4 Lines Across a Horizon – Ba', 2021, courtesy of the artist



4/ *I am remembering*, 2021

Brown paper (from Marine Lines, Bombay), ornate kite thread (from Byculla, Bombay), haldi (turmeric) and chuna powder (from Deptford, London)

45x30cm

Courtesy of the artist

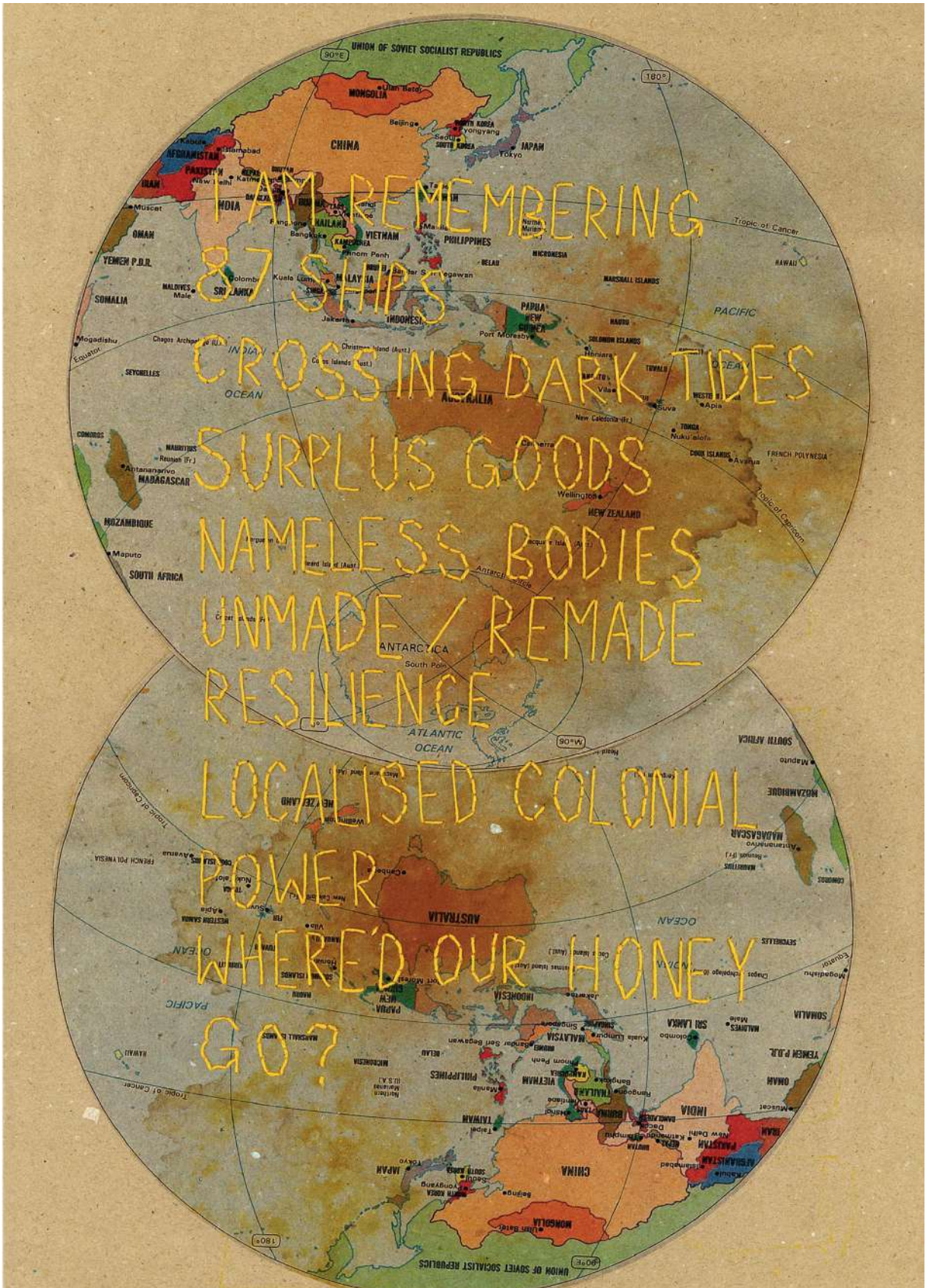


Image : Shivanjani Lal, 'I am remembering', 2021, courtesy of the artist



5/ *Paal*, 2021

Sugar bags (from Sigatoka Town Fiji), green kite string (from Bycully, Bombay),  
98x108cm

Courtesy of the artist



Image: Shivanjani Lal, 'Paal', 2021, courtesy of the artist



## Louisa Marajo, (Fr/Martinique)

**Louisa Marajo**, (born 87 in Martinique, lives in Paris). Her work is the result of the construction of multiple memories articulated around the figure of the sea, which represents the overcoming of borders and the bridge that connects Africa, the mother country and its descendants, the inhabitants of the Caribbean. A compilation of numerous photos, drawings, paintings and sculptures, her work plunges us into a labyrinth where everything transforms, from one temporality to another, in a disorientation that is both chaotic and orderly. Since 2018, she has been interested in the ecological disaster represented by the proliferation of sargassum in the Caribbean Sea. The artist associates this plague with the current migratory chaos: how to welcome what we reject? How to overcome entropy?

<https://louisamarajo.com>

6/ *'Chaos, Souffle'*, 2021,  
mixed media on hahnemühle paper  
70x50cm  
Courtesy of the artist



**Image:** Louisa Marajo *'Chaos, Souffle'*, 2021, courtesy de l'artiste



7/ *'J'ai traversé la Mer'*, 2022

Video on loop

Courtesy of the artist



**Image:** Louisa Marajo *'J'ai traversé la Mer'*, 2022, video on loop, courtesy of the artist

## Tuly Mekondjo , (Namibie)

**Tuly Mekondjo**, (born 1982 in Angola, lives in Windhoek) is a self-taught Namibian artist who works with mixed media, including embroidery, photo transfer, paint, resin and mahangu (millet) grain, a staple food in Namibia. Drawing on colonial and wartime photographic archives, Mekondjo's practice explores Namibia's history and identity politics.

<https://gunsandrain.com/artist/tuli-mekondjo/>

8/ *"Meekulu tu tula omwenyo / Grandmother revive us"*, 2021,

Image transfer, gold marker on canvas, cotton embroidery thread, crochet thread, silk fabrics,  
96 x 95 cm

Private collection, London



**Image** : Tuly Mekondjo, *"Meekulu tu tula omwenyo / Grandmother revive us"*, 2021, private collection, London



## Otobong Nkanga (Nigeria, Belgique)

**Otobong Nkanga**, (born 74 in Nigeria, lives in Antwerp) The performative dimension permeates different media and generates all kinds of mediums connected to the landscape and architectural themes of the artist's work. Human traces attesting to lifestyles and environmental issues, Architecture and Landscape serve as a starting point for the narrative and the performative act. She metonymically reflects on the different uses and cultural values connected to natural resources.

<https://www.otobong-nkanga.com>

9/Etude pour "*Alterscape stories, Uprooting the Past*", 2006

24,2x24,2cm (x3) triptych

Study framed in matt white, museum glass

Study Colour print on paper

Private collection, London



**Image** : Otobong Nkanga, Etude pour 'Alterscape stories, Uprooting the Past', 2006, private collection, London

## Jean-Paul Thibeu (France)

**Jean-Paul Thibeu**, (lives in Rasteau, in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region)

«Meta artist», researcher and teacher, his practice is an arrangement of experiences that aim to question the «artist self», its modalities and its activities (displacements and transformations). The forms of these experiences vary according to the places, the durations, the proposals and the interlocutors involved. Through constant experimentation he creates a poetics of existence.

Most of his work is based on the notion of displacement (meta) - physical displacement and mental displacement.

<https://reseau-dda.org/en/artists/jean-paul-thibeu>

10/“*Méta-radeau de la Traverse*”, 2023

Variable size

Courtesy of the artist

- Raft: an assembly of pieces of wood or various floating elements that are linked together to form a kind of floating floor.

- Meta-rail: is a vehicle for «meta protocols» to conjugate different fugues - it can be «mental» or concrete.

The meta-rail is designed for multiple uses:

\* It is an object of experimentation. It allows for escapes, real and imaginary drifts, and to explore de-performances... An experimental «epoch» in art, where migration, exodus, drift, fugue are put into play...

\* Processional object. Disassembled into different modules, the meta-rail can be transported on the backs of men by several people from one site to another, and become the pretext for various experiences of wandering. \* It is a plateau object. It is also a walkable promontory that allows different activities....



**Image** : Jean-Paul Thibeu, détail of ‘*Méta-radeau de la Traverse*’, 2023, courtesy of the artist



## Cécile Bourne-Farrell (France)

**Cécile Bourne-Farrell** is an exhibition curator for public and private structures. Since 2015, she is a visiting curator in the Department of War Studies, King's College London, and at Arts Cabinet, London. Her curatorial projects focus on decolonial practices based on a curatorial ethos between artists, institutional and private infrastructures. Current curatorial projects include 'Antson' ny tontolo miaina/Interpeller le vivant', Antananarivo, Madagascar, 'A Dobradiça 2 biennial', 2023 Mação, Portugal, and 'Mapping Injury', working with Vivienne Jabri in the Department of War Studies, King's College London. Cécile Bourne-Farrell is a member of AICA, AWITA and CIMAM and writes regularly about contemporary artists.

[www.cecile-bourne-farrell.com](http://www.cecile-bourne-farrell.com)

Cécile Bourne-Farrell thanks the artists for their generous participation.

# Infos pratiques

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**La Traverse**

Espace d'art contemporain & évènements, Marseille

16 Traverse Ste Hélène, 13007 Marseille,

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Sur RDV

<https://www.latraversemarseille.fr>

Exhibition from 28 April to 21 May 2023

**Opening on the 28th of April, from 6pm to 10pm**

- Performance by Louisa Marajo at 7:30pm

**Sunday 7th of May, from 1pm to 7pm:**

- Performance 'Méta-Ikébana' by Jean-Paul Thibeau.
- Open days of the exhibition.
- Guided visit of the exhibition with the curator Cécile Bourne-Farrell, from 2pm.